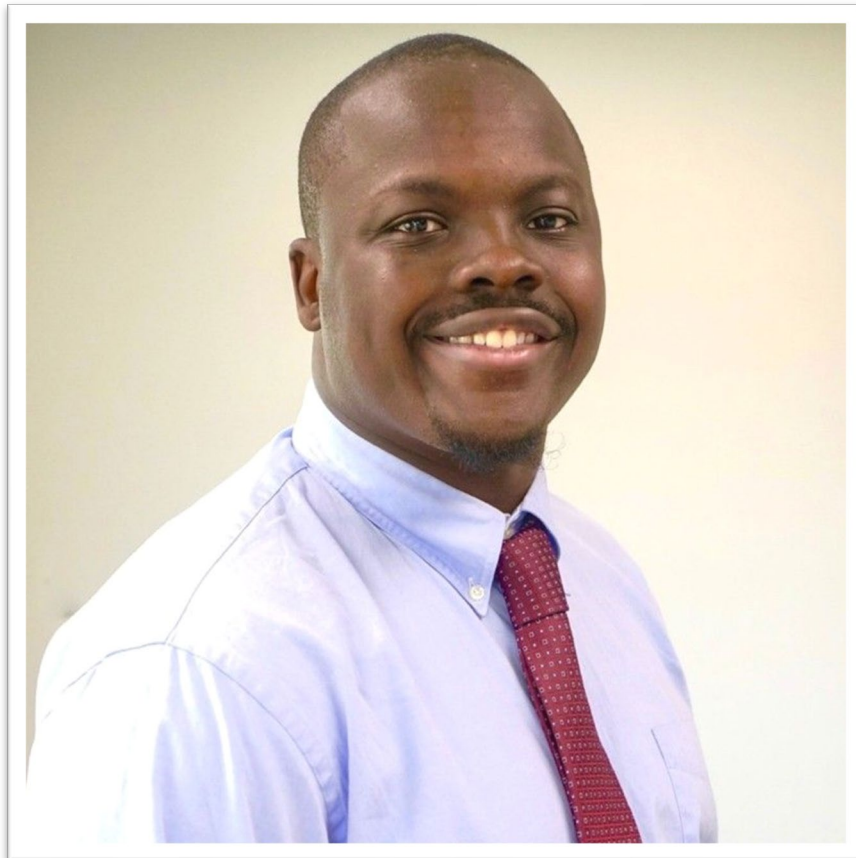


Team Member Spotlight: Senior Recruiter Kwasi Bandoh



At CommutAir, we have great people with great stories to share.

February is Black History Month, and we would like to take this opportunity to share the incredible stories of just a few of the high-performing members of our diverse team. This week we're featuring Kwasi Bandoh – One of our top maintenance and technical recruiters, Kwasi's amazing efforts on our team have recently seen him promoted to Senior Recruiter! Read on to learn about Kwasi's path and passion in aviation.

How did you first get into aviation?

My path into aviation was purely a stroke of luck! Before getting into it I was the managing director at one of the largest indoor soccer facilities here on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. So I had a lot of customer service experience but eventually, that job just became too much. When I started, I didn't have any kids or a wife and by the end of my time there, I had gotten married and had my first child. My career ended up taking a lot of time away from my family. I started looking for jobs, and the opportunity to become a recruiter aligned with my background in customer service and my experience working with people. The rest is history from there – aviation It's kind of like a bug, and once you catch it, you can't get rid of it!

What was your biggest challenge changing industries?

One of my biggest challenges in switching to aviation was just learning the industry itself. Prior to becoming an aviation recruiter, I'd only been on a plane twice...and one of those two times was my honeymoon down to Charlotte! I've now flown over 200 times since 2018 so I've come a long way in that time!

Working with a specialized work group like mechanics, you must really know what you're talking about. My first recruiting event was at a local high school. I was presenting and a student raised his hand and asked me the difference between safety wiring in automotive vs. aviation...and I had no idea what that was about. Fortunately, I wasn't alone and had some backup at the time from a coworker, but from there I made it my mission to learn as much as possible about aircraft maintenance. Learning the lingo and acronyms, what piques the interests of those applying, and what makes a good mechanic in general!

What's the best part about being a Senior Recruiter?

Aviation is a *massive* industry but it's really a 'small world' when it comes to the people working in it! I'm a big people-person and I'm always getting to know a lot of mechanics. Any time I get a chance to stop into one of our hangars or bases I do it. It was especially great the last time I got out to Lincoln (our newest base) because I hired many of the people working there!

So, getting to meet some of them in person for the first time was really rewarding. Being able to get to know them on a personal level is important because part of my job is bringing people on board and making sure we're holding up our end of the bargain by giving them the best experience possible as CommutAir employees. Some of these folks have moved hundreds of miles for the opportunity to join our team and I want to do my best to support them!



What are your plans for your future?

Looking forward I really want to stay in the aviation industry. Eventually I'd like to continue to expand my skills and grow upwards into the Human Resources world where I can continue working with people. Maybe in employee relations, PR, or perhaps even as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer! I do my best work when I'm interacting with people - whether it's helping them navigate through issues or helping them find the right fit.

To continue my growth, I began the process of getting my Society for Human Resource Management certification (SHRM) just before COVID - so I'm looking forward to continuing down that path and getting certified. We've been growing so fast here at CommutoAir that I'd love to continue to stay and move into my next role! I appreciate the opportunity and support that the community has provided me during my time with the company - it's been tremendous for my family and I.

What's it like being African American in the aviation industry?

It's extremely rewarding. Though there are times I'm the only African American person in the room, I don't mind! I'm a part of various groups that help spread awareness about the opportunities in the industry like OBAP (Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals) for lower income and minority children. It's important to help spread the knowledge and the opportunity, because a lot of people often don't know that there's more to aviation than being pilots and flight attendants.

Many people outside the industry tend to think those are the only jobs you can have within aviation. I love telling people how untrue that statement is! With airplane mechanics specifically, there's so much to learn and so much you can do with this career. It's much more detail-oriented than being an auto mechanic. In aviation you must be well-versed in safety and operations because timing and procedures are key.



What advice would you give to the next generation of aviation professionals?

Never limit yourself. The world of aviation is big! It's a huge industry that can take you anywhere. We literally move people from point A to point B, so if you can't be as flexible as the passengers that we're moving, your career isn't going to grow. One of my favorite quotes is: "Give a man a mile of road, and he can only go one mile but give a man a mile of runway and he can go anywhere in the world."

I think that the future generation needs a little bit more of a realistic view on what's available to you growing up and how many different avenues you can take to be successful. Growing up, trade schools weren't necessarily praised or viewed as a legitimate career path - getting a four-year degree was over-emphasized as the only way to succeed...which isn't true! Especially nowadays, everyone needs a plumber, an electrician, or an aircraft mechanic! They keep the skies safe!