

Connecting People And Possibilities Around The Globe

**An Interview with Sriram Krishnasamy,
Executive Vice President, Chief Transformation Officer and Chief Digital and Information Officer-Elect, FedEx Corporation,
and President and CEO, FedEx Dataworks**

EDITORS' NOTE On March 11, it was announced that Sriram Krishnasamy will become Chief Digital and Information Officer of FedEx Corporation effective July 1, in addition to his roles as Executive Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer for FedEx Corporation and President and Chief Executive Officer of FedEx Dataworks, an organization tasked with harnessing the power of the rich FedEx data ecosystem to help optimize internal operations, fuel innovation, and build more intelligent supply chains around the globe. Since joining FedEx in 1997, Krishnasamy has worked at multiple operating companies and held leadership positions around the globe – including stops in Dubai, Belgium, and India – before settling in Memphis in 2017. His 25+ years of experience at FedEx has contributed to his deep knowledge of the network and an unrelenting curiosity about the role of supply chains in connecting the world. Krishnasamy holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Madras.



Sriram Krishnasamy

COMPANY BRIEF FedEx Corp. (fedex.com) offers customers and businesses around the world a broad portfolio of transportation, e-commerce, and business services. With estimated annual revenues of \$88 billion, the company offers integrated business solutions through its operating companies that compete collectively, operate collaboratively and innovate digitally under the prestigious FedEx brand. Consistently ranked as one of the world's most admired and trusted companies, FedEx inspires its nearly 500,000 team members to remain focused on safety, the highest ethical and professional standards, and the needs of its customers and communities. FedEx is committed to connecting people and possibilities around the world in responsible and resourceful ways, with the goal of achieving carbon-neutral operations by 2040.

How do you describe FedEx's culture and values?

I believe that culture is an expression of your core values. Culture can evolve over time – and across a large enterprise like FedEx, you will likely have “sub-cultures” across teams and departments – but your core values should remain consistent across the board. At FedEx, our core values are anchored in something that we call our People-Service-Profit (PSP) philosophy.

The PSP philosophy was introduced by our founder and Chairman, Fred Smith, during the earliest days of FedEx: Create an environment of opportunity, trust, and respect for your people, commit to providing superior service to our customers at every touch point, and operate in a manner that produces sustainable profits, so we can reinvest in our people and our business for long-term success. This philosophy has stood the test of time, and each tenet is essential for the success of FedEx and must be in balance with the others.

Within my team at FedEx Dataworks, we have our own expression of the PSP values. Our unique culture within the wider FedEx enterprise can be described by four principles: bias for action – valuing progress over perfection, especially in times of uncertainty or ambiguity; accountability – we hold ourselves and each other accountable to do our best work, always addressing challenges with empathy and respect; inclusion – we approach relationships and interactions with curiosity, not judgement; and finally, growth mindset – always looking for opportunities to stretch, grow, and learn through experimentation.

What do you feel has made FedEx an industry leader and how do you describe the FedEx difference?

When Fred Smith started FedEx back in 1973, he didn't just found a company, he launched an entire industry. He created a global delivery network out of the belief that connections could make the world faster and more efficient.

One of the things I respect most about our Chairman is that he isn't interested in looking backwards. He's constantly thinking ahead – what will the world look like in 3,5,10 years? Back in 1978, he was famously quoted as saying “The information about the package is as important as the package itself.” His early belief in the power of information, visibility, and access shaped the entire supply chain industry and is directly reflected in our digital strategy today.

This entrepreneurial spirit and forward-thinking mindset have been keys to FedEx's success for the past 50 years. Our willingness to continuously evolve, expand, and invest in our physical and digital networks – through both organic growth and strategic acquisitions – has helped us stay one step ahead and meet the needs of our customers in an ever-evolving world.

The second part of the question – how do you describe the FedEx difference? – comes down to our Purple Promise. The Purple Promise states: I will make every FedEx experience outstanding. It's our collective commitment to go above and beyond for our customers and it's what unites every single FedEx team member. Our PSP culture and Purple Promise go hand in hand – by taking care of each other, we're able to take care of our customers, and drive growth for the company.

Will you elaborate on FedEx Dataworks and how do you define its mission?

FedEx collects petabytes of data every day as we facilitate the global movement of goods across our physical network, and in early 2020, a small group of team members from across FedEx came together to answer the question: how can we put that data to work to not only improve efficiency and accuracy of our operations, but to unlock net new opportunities for our team members, our customers, and their customers?

This data crossroads came at a time when the industry was expecting to see daily shipments double by 2026, driven by organic growth in e-commerce (a projection that was later accelerated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic). The early Dataworks team understood that FedEx would only meet this demand by providing a suite of services for internal operations and external customers backed by FedEx insights and rooted in a next-generation data platform.

From day one, the success of FedEx Dataworks has depended on two factors: first, investment in a centralized enterprise data platform – a single source of truth where data models are free from operational siloes and reusable/scalable across use cases; and second, building digital solutions on top of that platform that lead with empathy for the customer – whether that's an internal operator or an external customer.

Over the past four years, our mission has crystalized into making supply chains smarter for everyone. This mission is oriented around three strategic pillars and grounded in our platform mentality:

- Internal optimization: we're transforming our network with digital tools that help us work smarter, improve service, and increase efficiency.
- Digitize customer supply chains: we're committed to providing best-in-class digital experiences that help our customers optimize their own end-to-end supply chains.
- Move up the e-commerce value chain: we're designing a suite of differentiated

solutions that go above and beyond our core transportation business and help our e-commerce customers grow their businesses.

Today, our FedEx Dataworks mission of making supply chains smarter for everyone has become the vision statement for our entire FedEx enterprise. Building a digitally enabled FedEx isn't just the job of data scientists and data engineers. It's something we can all contribute to and benefit from – whether you sit in operations, IT, marketing, sales, HR, etc.

Will you highlight FedEx's DRIVE transformation and how this effort has been driven throughout the enterprise?

DRIVE was introduced in September 2022 on the heels of our quarterly earnings release. At the time, we were experiencing a sharp drop in volume driven by macro-economic headwinds. But due to the scale and breadth of our operations, we couldn't adjust our network capacity and reduce costs at the same pace that volume was declining. Our bottom line took a hit.

DRIVE was introduced as a way to drive business results and build resilience into our network. It is not a project, it is not a single event with a finish line, and it is not a cost-cutting exercise. DRIVE is a collective effort to optimize our network, improve service, reduce structural costs, strengthen our performance culture, and perhaps most important, establish a strong accountability framework for FedEx to thrive long-term.

Today, the DRIVE effort touches every single part of our business and is organized across 16 different domains led by senior leaders. We also stood up a transformation office to help facilitate change – providing the infrastructure, tools, and frameworks needed to deliver results. This structure is important, but for DRIVE to be successful – it can't be seen as a project or program. We all must be committed to thinking, working, and interacting differently. Three attributes underpin the DRIVE way of working and help keep us all accountable: we need the skills to identify and evaluate opportunities, the will to enact change, and the rigor to see changes through and ensure they add value.

Will you discuss FedEx's digital strategy and focus on driving digital innovation across the enterprise?

Digital is in our DNA at FedEx. Over the course of our 50-year history, we've introduced game-changing digital innovations like package scanning and tracking – setting the industry bar for consumers and businesses alike by creating what was up to that point an unimagined level of visibility.

Because of our early focus on digital and the scale of our physical operations, we have one of the richest data sets in the world today. That being said, our digital strategy isn't really about data; it's about problem-solving and unlocking new value for our customers. We're helping our internal users and external customers clearly define their business problems – whether that's an operations manager in the hub trying to recover a critical package during a winter weather event, or a customer trying to find the most sustainable route for shipping their packages – and using insights from our data to build solutions.

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Empathy for the end user underpins every part of our digital strategy. The centralized data platform we've built at FedEx Dataworks is like fuel for machine learning and AI technologies, and we're experimenting with exciting new applications every single day – working to get predictive, anticipate what's next, and build flexibility into our network. But empathy always stays at the forefront; even the most powerful technologies in the world are useless if we don't understand our customer and the context in which they're operating.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your management style?

As I mentioned in a previous answer, we have a few principles that define our culture at FedEx Dataworks. These are reflected in my own leadership style:

Growth mindset and inclusion: I believe there is rarely just one solution to a problem or one “right” answer to a question. As a leader, it's important to stay curious and embrace diversity of thought. I try to create an environment where my teams know that disagreement is okay – in fact it can be highly productive – as long as it comes from a place of curiosity and respect. When presented with a new idea or proposal, instead of asking why, which can lead to a limited mindset, I encourage my teams to ask, “why not?” which reflects a growth mindset. It's a small difference but opens a world of possibilities.

Bias for action: There's an old adage that says the only constant in life is change, and that is certainly true of our world today. Most people aren't comfortable with ambiguity. It's natural to feel paralyzed or stuck when the future isn't certain, but I believe times of change and ambiguity are incredible opportunities for growth. As a leader, I try to give my teams the backing and confidence they need to move forward with their ideas and be limitless in their belief of what's possible – especially when the future isn't clear. I call this having a bias for action – and it's one of our core principles at FedEx Dataworks.

Accountability: In our day-to-day roles, it's easy to get caught up in activities and lose sight of outcomes. The ability to clearly communicate priorities and then hold ourselves and our teams accountable to deliver tangible results is crucial for anyone in a leadership position.

In my position, I try to set a clear vision, remove obstacles when necessary, and empower my teams to take ownership of results. Every decision does not need to go through me. This sense of accountability should permeate all levels of the organization – from the interns to the C-suite.

You have been with FedEx for more than 25 years. What has made the experience so special for you?

On a personal level, FedEx has given me the agency to reinvent my career several times over. I've moved 18 times across six different countries during my 25 years with FedEx. My career has taken me and my family all over the globe, and I've had the opportunity to work with some incredibly talented and smart people along the way. This exposure to diverse ways of thinking and working has helped foster the growth mindset I mentioned earlier – I've been afforded the opportunity to take risks, embrace experimentation, and approach problems with a fresh perspective.

Throughout my career, I've also had a front row seat to the role FedEx plays in driving global commerce. Our purpose statement – connecting people and possibilities around the globe – is at the heart of everything we do. Whether we're distributing life-saving COVID-19 vaccines, delivering aid in the wake of a natural disaster, or helping an entrepreneur get their e-commerce business off the ground, our work matters and that's something that consistently motivates me. And we are just getting started. ●