

Air Canada appoints Anko van der Werff as President and Chief Executive Officer



Anko van der Werff to become President and Chief Executive Officer of Air Canada

[Air Canada](#) has announced that Anko van der Werff will become its next President and Chief Executive Officer, and a member of the Board, by the end of January 2027. Van der Werff, currently President and Chief Executive Officer at [Scandinavian Airlines](#), succeeds Michael Rousseau, who previously announced his retirement after 19 years with Air Canada.

“Our Board of Directors was impressed by the quality of experienced executives from around the world who expressed interest in the role,” said Vagn Sørensen, Chair of the Board. “We are delighted to have attracted and recruited an executive of Mr. Van der Werff’s stature to lead Air Canada. He has an exceptional breadth of international aviation experience and a proven 25-year track record, including his most recent forward-looking executive leadership at Scandinavian Airlines, Avianca Group, and Aeroméxico and earlier at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (now Air France-KLM) and Qatar Airways. We are confident he will drive further value-creating growth and transformation while maintaining our commitment to disciplined capital allocation.”

“Air Canada is a globally recognized airline leader. It is an honor to be chosen to lead this iconic Canadian company as it advances its ambitions and strategy, builds on its award-winning employee culture and customer value proposition, and prepares for an even brighter future,” said Van der Werff. “I look forward to working closely with Air Canada’s talented executive team and with all employees to fulfil our commitments to shareholders and customers. I am excited about relocating to Montréal and eager to get started.”

Sørensen also said, “The Board is grateful to Michael Rousseau for his outstanding leadership and extraordinary contributions, which are in large part responsible for the enviable position Air Canada

enjoys among global carriers. We thank him for that legacy and for his support with the transition.”

The selection of Van der Werff follows a comprehensive global search for the best person to lead Air Canada into the future, the July 8 press release said. The search considered a number of performance criteria, including the ability to communicate in French.

Rousseau’s retirement is effective August 31. He will continue to be available as needed throughout the transition. Following his departure and for the duration of the transition period, the Executive Committee will report to the Board of Directors.

Anko van der Werff will become President and Chief Executive Officer of Air Canada by the end of January 2027. A global aviation executive with more than 25 years of international airline leadership experience, he has held senior roles across Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Prior to joining Air Canada, he served as President and CEO of SAS Scandinavian Airlines, leading the carrier through a significant period of transformation and strategic renewal.

Before joining SAS in 2021, Van der Werff was Chief Executive Officer of Avianca, one of Latin America's leading airlines. Earlier in his career, he served as Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer at [Aeroméxico](#), held senior commercial leadership positions at [Qatar Airways](#), and occupied a number of management roles at [KLM Royal Dutch Airlines](#).

Van der Werff served on the Board of Governors of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) until June and has also served on the boards of several international organizations in the aviation, technology and business sectors.

He holds a master's degree in law from Leiden University and completed executive studies at Harvard Business School.

A native of the Netherlands, Van der Werff speaks Dutch. He is able to communicate in French. Aside from those two languages and English, he also learned Spanish, Italian and Swedish at different levels over the course of his international career, the Air Canada press release said.