

Voices of Aviation

Those who work at ACC member companies are making invaluable contributions to the development and operation of airports around the globe year after year. A worthwhile question, especially in today's industry 'churn,' is — Are those who work so hard on behalf of their companies also thinking about their career paths, what it means to be 'successful' as an individual and how to achieve professional 'success'? We asked some of the ACC members for their insights concerning successful aviation career development in the current and future marketplace.

ACC: What have you found has been the single biggest contributor to a successful career in aviation?

RODDY BOGGUS: A successful career is built on working very hard to develop a reputation of trust and a “can-do” attitude. A true “trusted advisor” can have a project handed over with the client knowing that it will be accomplished.

JOHN LENGEL: Building and maintaining strong relationships with clients and peers through involvement with the many organizations. Working together on industry initiatives as well as projects also fosters success.

STEVE RIANO: The single biggest contributor to building my successful career in aviation has been being part of a company that is involved in all aspects of airport development. Working for companies that provide airport planning, design, and construction, as well as serving as airport owners and operators, provides a unique perspective of the comprehensive business

enterprise. This can help ensure successful projects and satisfied clients.

DAVID STADER: I have benefited from being surrounded by talented and diverse people, whether they be peers, supervisors, clients or associates that challenge and support our aviation industry.

ACC: What are the keys to building successful client relationships?

RIANO: Successful client relationships are built on trust and the confidence that the services provided will result in exemplary projects. In our business, clients hire consultants to supplement their expertise in delivering successful projects that are not only on time and on budget, but go beyond the minimum requirements as defined in the contracts. Your ability as a consultant to truly understand the client's objectives and respond with creative thinking really goes a long way.

STADER: I always try to put myself in my client's shoes. Understanding what their objectives are, whether they be technical, political or something else, will enable you to build stronger, more valuable relationships. Clients go through ups and downs – be there throughout, just like you'd want people to be there for you.

BOGGUS: Be seen, speak and write. Like it or not, if you are not seen you do not exist. Speak about something you are passionate about and then write about it. It will make you an expert in others eyes. And, whether you are an expert or not, your research into it will soon make you

one. Don't always talk about business to clients; do not wear them out with asking for work. Find time to just develop the relationship as a person. That way, when you do need to have a business relationship you already have a personal one. It's much easier than a cold call. It's all about true customer relationship management customer relationship management (CRM).

MARY ELLEN EAGAN: My keys to building successful client relationships are developing personal relationships before business relationships; developing trust by delivering quality products on time and on budget, and not 'selling' — letting work speak for itself.

DAVID PESHKIN: Commit to what you are able to deliver and then deliver what you've committed to. As a consultant, recognize that while not every hour or day may be directly paid for, the time you contribute to the industry is often repaid in more meaningful ways.

ACC: What is the most notable change you have observed in the industry during your career?

PESHKIN: The flow of information has accelerated rapidly. Technology and social media allow us to be constantly connected in ways that just didn't exist twenty years ago. It's also interesting that FAA Advisory Circulars seemed to take forever to change and now they're frequently updated.

STADER: Globalization. The world continues to get smaller. What happens in Cyprus or Bangalore or Pyongyang now affects business, economics, politics and our industry. The sensitivities to these changes now seem more acute than ever.

RIANO: The trend toward automation in passenger self-service has transformed the business from both a user experience perspective as well as how we plan and design facilities around these technologies. Nowhere else is the impact of these enabling technologies so apparent and tangible than in the airport development sector. In addition, I have seen a significant trend toward airport privatization in the



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last twenty years. With government agencies facing deteriorating infrastructure while needing to address growing demand at the same time, privatization has become a viable option for continued growth at many airports around the world.

LENGEL: Significant pressure on cost reduction measures and doing more with less. Efficiency is the key. Clients need help from people that understand them offering minimal learning curve.

EAGAN: The biggest change I have noticed is that people do not have as much fun! We are too busy competing, being billable, and checking email to stop and appreciate each other.

ACC: Why are you excited about the future of aviation? Why is now an exciting time to be starting a career in aviation?

RIANO: Aviation is so dynamic and such a critical part of the world's infrastructure, it will always be an exciting business no matter when you choose to become part of it. Having worked on airport projects in many countries, I find myself traveling quite a bit and experiencing airports both as a user and as an industry professional. I also get to experience different cultures and meet people from all over the world. I always say that once you are part of the aviation business, it is in your blood and I love being part of the whole experience.

BOGGUS: It's wide open. The field is changing, and the world is our oyster. Aviation consultants include more now than just the usual commodity services. Clients are hungry to know what is going on around the world. It's a great time to be a problem solver and a great time to marry finance with aviation.

LENGEL: Aviation is unique and constantly changing. From politics to development priorities, you might face different challenges while your projects are being completed. Also, airports look to the future, plan for growth, and growth expectations have been documented. With this growth comes opportunity.

PESHKIN: There will always be problems and challenges and the ability to identify cost-effective solutions that meet clients' needs will always be in demand. If

you like to try to solve these problems and rise to the challenges, you've picked the right profession and will have a rewarding career.

STADER: I find it to be such a dynamic and innovative industry, filled with really

smart people trying to do really interesting things. There is amazing diversity and various tracks a career in aviation can take you. They're the same reasons I joined the industry and I must say, I'd do it again in a heartbeat! ➔

WHY THE Y?

By: Clinton Webster, Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC

To mimic the words of The Who's Roger Daltrey, I'm "talkin' bout my generation." Generational differences are a critical part of our lives at home, in public, and especially at the workplace. As times change and technology advances, employers are forced to adapt their business structures to stay competitive. As one generation of employees gains more experience, a new generation with a different mentality advances into the work place. However, these shifts in the mindset of employees are what help stimulate change and forward-thinking. Demographically speaking, the newest addition to the working world goes by the moniker "Generation Y" (or, commonly, "Gen Y") and consists of those born between 1980-2000. However, age is not the only difference between Generation Y and previous generations. The 70+ million people belonging to the Generation Y bring a very unique set of assets to the marketplace in their comfort with modern technology, versatility and proactive desire to contribute and be heard.

Often called Millennials, those in Generation Y grew up in an environment where rapid advancements in technology seemed second nature. Emails and text messages replaced hand-written correspondence, iPods replaced radios, and video games made Monopoly seem like a pastime. As industries like aviation advance, increased reliance on technology eliminates the excess time needed to draw plans, write reports, have a conversation, and create a physical product; therefore, it is in the best interest to a company to ensure that its employees are very tech savvy. Millennials have been groomed their entire lives to use technology to push these industries forward. Their familiarity with technology allows for quick adaptation to change and less time and resources needed for training. Millennials will help evolve with technology as they become increasingly familiar with each piece of equipment, software, or machinery. Adaptability and versatility are traits that serve Millennials well in all aspects of their career.

Multi-tasking plays a significant role in every workplace environment. It only takes a moment on a commute home from the office to notice the variety of events going on, either in your vehicle or with those around you: Are you eating, talking on the phone, changing the radio station, painting your nails? Maybe you are doing all of those at once. The fact is, the world we live in is now particularly suited to a generation that has grown up constantly bombarded with quick decisions and stimuli. Give a man a lemon, he will make lemonade; give a Millennial a lemon, he will make lemonade while on a conference call and writing a report. Because of a fast-paced mindset and ability to multi-task, Millennials bring a very efficient, highly energetic work ethic that translates into a constant desire to accomplish tasks faster, better, and cheaper which will help catapult the aviation industry into the next generation.

Millenials are driven by accomplishments and advancement, as individuals and for their company. These ideals usually mean high growth potential, but can also mean they tend to want to stir things up. They want to have their opinions heard and taken into consideration. They expect to add value to a company in not only the work that they do, but in the ideas that they present. The mentality of Generation Y is that they intend to influence corporate culture. Millennials are interested in opportunity, growth, and value in a company and are not afraid to look elsewhere if their current employer does not offer such values.

As Millennials begin to flood the workforce, companies resistant to change and defiant towards new ideas will fall short of their competition in this industry. Those companies offering opportunities to Gen Y young professionals will attract those who bring talent, passion, energy and new ideas. Companies who are able to harness these values will succeed well into the future by creating market opportunities for an up-and-coming generation. As a company adds encouragement, Millennials will work harder, and when a generation works hard it translates into efficiency and growth for entire industries. ➔ *Read more about Clinton and the ACC YP Forum on page 19.*