

Network: The Importance for Jet Flying at 37,000 Feet and the Corporate Boardroom

D. Kirk Beatty, Ph.D., CDI.D

Successfully obtaining one's first seat in the corporate boardroom, for a qualified board candidate, requires network, and a board network that knows a seat is sought. One cannot be timid or hope their network figures it out. They must promote themselves and say they are seeking a directorship. Success in business is, similarly, about promotion, building network, and soliciting opportunity. However, this is not the case for aviation's private carriage airlines. Though they may be for-profit, these airlines must forgo a key business tenet—advertise and promote the business or, like a board candidate, your skillset and value. Similar to a board candidate, however, private carriage airlines must have a network who knows of them, understands their value, and will therefore seek them out.



November 21, 2022

“Good evening Houston Center, WhiteStreak 6, flight-level 3-7-0, smooth ride.”

“WhiteStreak 6, Houston Center. Good evening.”

Enroute from Arizona's Phoenix Goodyear airport to Statesville Regional in North Carolina, I was up front on the flightdeck. We were completing the hand-off from Air Traffic Control's (ATC) Albuquerque Center to Houston Center. Traveling at 37,000 feet, Mach 0.77, and with benefit of wind behind our back, we were scooting along over 600 MPH. The aircraft for the evening was WhiteStreak 6, one in the fleet of Embraer EMB-145, 50-seat passenger jets. The same jet one often finds flying American Airlines from Charlotte to Philadelphia and other routes. Several WhiteStreaks¹ were in the sky that evening essentially on the same track at different points along the way. We were returning NASCAR Xfinity race teams to their home bases and race shops in the Charlotte Metro towns and cities of Mooresville, Concord, and

surrounding areas. Phoenix was the last race of the NASCAR 2022 season where Ty Gibbs won the Xfinity Series Championship.

Perched above Creation at 37,000 feet on the flightdeck of a jet airliner—nighttime, smooth air, clear skies, traveling over 600 MPH—it’s an incredible ride. We peered out into the infinite, star-speckled night sky. Below were the lights of distance cities among the darkness as we transitioned from the desert. Eleven o’clock, slightly high, was the bright, red ball of Mars. About one o’clock, off in the far distance, lightning flashed identifying weather to certainly avoid. Weather, particularly thunderstorms, is king in aviation. In this case, it is more akin to a grizzly bear we will not poke. This was my last flight for the weekend, where flying race teams gives way to carrying college basketball and volleyball teams until February, when NASCAR starts the next season in Daytona.

Limitation of Private Carriage Airlines

The operator is a *private carriage* airline.² Different from the *common carriage* airlines of Allegiant, Delta, United, and others that the general public is more familiar with, and unlike the charter operations of NetJets, *flyExclusive*, *Wheels Up*, and the like that fly the business elite, celebrities, and other persons and companies with means, the private carriage business is rather unique. Per FAA regulations, operators may not “conduct any operation which results directly or indirectly from any person's holding out to the public to furnish transportation.”³ In simple terms, they cannot advertise or otherwise solicit business.⁴ *Yes*, the operator is a for-profit business, but *no*, the operator cannot promote their for-profit business. How many MBA programs teach, *do not promote?*

Similarity with a Successful Path to the Boardroom

Like the path to the corporate boardroom, a private carriage airline must have a network that knows who they are and what they can do. However, in contrast to the boardroom path, they cannot solicit their network. Network is the number one criterion to be considered for an open corporate board seat.⁵ Thus, the first-time corporate board candidate will repeatedly hear they *must have network*, and that their network has to know a board seat is sought. They have to promote themselves and *hold out* for the opportunity. However, though network is also the number one criterion for a private carriage airline to acquire business, until a potential client takes the first step, the airline must resist any temptation to engage an opportunity. Once the relationship is established, it’s a different story. But until then, the private carriage airline has to ignore intuitive, business growth commonsense. Rather, they must believe like Kevin Costner’s character in the movie, *Field of Dreams*—*if you build it, they will come*.

Calling It a Night

“Atlanta Center, WhiteStreak 6. We have Statesville in sight and can cancel IFR⁶.”

“WhiteStreak 6, Atlanta Center. IFR cancellation received. No observed traffic between you and the Statesville airport. Squawk 1200⁷. Frequency change approved. Goodnight.”

“Squawking 1200, WhiteStreak 6. Goodnight.”

With this, the cordial conversation and radar coverage with ATC ends. We set up for the approach into Statesville Regional airport and complete another successful mission, returning race teams safely home to their families and friends.

Author:

- D. Kirk Beatty, Ph.D. - Corporate Directors International CDI.D certified board candidate, FAA certified Airline Transport Pilot (ATP), and Founder of DKBeatty and Datatech Information Services, Inc., www.datatechis.com, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kirkbeatty/>
DKBeatty: a provider of advisory services | Datatech: a provider of business technology services

LinkedIn Links:

- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/network-importance-jet-flying-37000-feet-corporate-boardroom-beatty>

Endnotes

¹ WhiteStreak is a pseudonym used for this article to respect the private carriage regulations and does not represent any operator.

² See <https://www.ecfr.gov/>, Title 14, Chapter I, Subchapter G. Part 125, Certification and Operations: Airplanes Having a Seating Capacity of 20 or More Passengers or a Maximum Payload Capacity of 6,000 Pounds or More; and Rules Governing Persons on Board Such Aircraft.

³ See <https://www.ecfr.gov/>, Title 14, Chapter I, Subchapter G. Part 125, Subpart A, §125.11(b), Certificate eligibility and prohibited operations.

⁴ See https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/advisory_circulars/index.cfm/go/document.information/documentID/22647, AC 120-12A - Private Carriage Versus Common Carriage of Persons or Property.

⁵ Beatty, D. K. & Alston, G. D. (2021). *A Pipeline to Real Opportunity*. Equilar C-Suite, Issue 36, Summer 2021, see https://csuite.equilar.com/issue_36_summer_2021/a_pipeline_to_real_opportunit.html. Also see <https://www.datatechis.net/media>.

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⁶ Instrument Flight Rules, regulations governing one type of civil aviation aircraft operations. The other type is Visual Flight Rules (VFR).

⁷ The aircraft transponder code for aircraft operating under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) that typically are not receiving Air Traffic Control (ATC) radar coverage services.