

MILLENNIALS IN BUSINESS AVIATION SEEK JOB TRANSPARENCY, NEW CHALLENGES

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“The baby boomers, who’ve been the backbone of our **business aviation** industry, are retiring,” said Sheryl Barden, president and CEO of Aviation Personnel International. “Now, we’ve got a new generation coming in, with all-new energy and new ways of solving problems: **millennials.**”

Millennials in Business Aviation Seek Job Transparency, New Challenges

With competition for aviation talent growing more competitive, business aviation leaders need to understand how millennials approach work, “so we can attract, train and retain them,” said Barden, introducing a panel of six fast-rising professionals in business aviation: pilots, schedulers and maintenance managers.

The panel, Attract Top Talent to Business Aviation Careers, was one of the first sessions to kick off NBAA’s Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA2015) on Nov. 17.

On stage was Kevin Flynn, 32, director of maintenance at AbbVie. When the company was spun off from Abbot Labs, Flynn helped launch the flight department, and was promoted over three baby boomers, some with manager experience.

“We acknowledged it was awkward,” said Flynn, “but I sat down with them, cleared the air, and brought them in on a lot of decisions.”

He also brought a millennial's approach to duty schedules, immediately throwing out the strictly regimented 8 a.m.-to-5 p.m. workday and letting his technicians set their own start times.

Lay Out a Clear Path

Barden asked the panelists how they think millennials' career expectations are shaking up the aviation workplace.

"What you describe as 'entitled' I would describe as ambition," said Ben Janaitis, an aircraft technician for DuPont. "I have goals and aspirations. If an opportunity opens up, I feel I owe it to myself to jump at it. I don't think anybody else is going to be guiding our careers or looking out for us."

While millennials don't expect employers to look out for them, they do look to their managers for clear goals, feedback and direction. "This is a generation that really wants to measure themselves," said Barden.

Jeff Measemer, 31, a captain for DuPont, agreed, saying social media puts extra pressure on his generation to achieve. "I have 100-plus pilots on my Facebook feed," he said. "When we see other people moving faster than we are, that gives the sense of impatience."

Do More Cross-Training

In a think tank-style breakout session, the panelists interacted with the audience, discussing recruiters on LinkedIn, competition from regional airlines offering large signing bonuses, professionalism and transparency in career development.

"The millennial generation really wants transparency, they want to know what's going on," said Shannon Roth, flight scheduling and dispatch manager for HP Enterprise. "They want to be included in meetings that managers might not usually invite them to."

And the millennials on the panel said they craved more responsibility. "Cross-training is huge," said Roth. "I take a lot of the same ground school courses that our pilots do. I find my team is more engaged because we're all advancing our career knowledge."

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