

Relationships really matter

Hunter Riley | Special to Albuquerque Business First | May 30, 2014

William “Rock” Collins said both he and his brother both knew they wanted to have careers in aviation; and both have reached that goal. Collins, who also has a background as a military and commercial pilot, is the president and COO of CSIAviation Inc.

What is an example of a skill or common practice you learned in aviation that helps you in your business career today? Leadership. I have a unique background in that I have acquired skill sets from both military aviation and commercial aviation. This unique perspective affords me the versatility to operate within multiple sectors where our particular business currently operates.

If you could give advice to the 20-year-old version of yourself, what would it be? Don’t change a thing! When I was 20 years old, I had long before formulated a plan of what I wanted to be when I grew up and I’ve never deviated. I wanted to work in aviation at four years old. I lived outside of an airbase and my brother and I decided that we were going to go into aviation and we both did.

Can you think of a particularly valuable lesson you’ve learned in your role as COO at CSI Aviation? Similar to military operations, people and relationships are the key to success. Good leadership, clearly defined objectives, quality talented and motivated employees who believe in the cause create synergetic results.

If you could go back to school and study something completely out of your areas of expertise, what would it be? Either law or accounting. An understanding of both sectors is equally relevant in the daily decision matrix of running an aviation company. In order to do my job that I currently do now, there’s a lot of interaction that I have with either legal elements or tax or accounting elements and those are things you don’t normally study in an aviation career, so I end up leaning on a lot of people for the expertise.

What is the best business advice you’ve ever received? Take care of your people, treat them with respect and dignity, ensure they know they are truly appreciated. Employees that believe they are a valued part of the solution will go above and beyond to meet company objectives. When your team can fully function as an inspired team their productivity exceeds the sum of all the parts.



William “Rock” Collins

President & CEO

CSI Aviation

Said both he and his brother both knew they wanted to have careers in aviation.

This creates speed and agility to capture market share and improves customer service. Their success furthers the positive work culture to achieve.

Where do you find inspiration in your industry? Aviation has always been fascinating to me. It ultimately intersects technology with human requirements. This can range from basic transportation of people and cargo to the increasing demand of persistent intelligence systems to saving lives through medivac.

What is a lesson you learned in school that you hold particularly valuable? School is a broad category. I graduated from college 30 years ago. I consider myself a lifelong student. Never assume you know everything and always seek to further expand your knowledge. I have been in and out of formal education courses throughout the last 30 years. The most valuable lesson is that there is always more to learn.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in getting into a career with aviation as a military pilot? I would say to the college student that wants to become a military pilot to understand that everything is competitive, and to achieve the highest results they can achieve to get accepted.

William “Rock” Collins

President/COO

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