

International contracts, Albuquerque home base

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COURTESY OF CSI AVIATION, INC.
William Collins

William "Rock" Collins is president and COO of CSI Aviation Inc., a worldwide aviation services company based in Albuquerque. Started in 1979, and with \$142 million in contracts for 2014 alone, CSI is a growing government contractor in the aviation field, offering worldwide air charter and aircraft leasing services to public agencies and private companies.

Collins's own background includes a stint as a senior captain with United Airlines and a long career in the Marines, where he achieved the rank of Major General and still commands the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing as a member of the Marine Corps Reserve. And yes, he flies an F/A-18 Hornet on occasion too.

Collins joined CSI in 2013, where he works alongside CEO Allen Weh. He spoke with Business First about building a performance-based business.

What does CSI Aviation provide that has allowed it to distinguish itself as a successful contractor? Without question — performance! Historically, CSI has achieved a performance rating of better than 98 percent. We are very proud of this rating, considering we operate both domestic and international operations 365 days a year to many destinations around the world. We understand the mission, its importance to the customer and the unique balance of safety and performance. Doing things right yields high performance in all areas for our customers.

How did your career path lead you to your current position as president and COO at CSI Aviation? I have flown and operated aircraft literally around the world. I have held positions of leadership and responsibility at all possible military levels in both aviation operations and aviation maintenance. A unique balance of both civilian and military aviation combined with a vast leadership experience in Marine Corps aviation has uniquely qualified me for this position at CSI.

Does your own experience as an officer in the Marine Corps and as a commercial pilot give you a valuable perspective for the work your company does? CSI serves

multiple markets in both commercial and government operations. In the Marine Corps I have held every level of command available to an aviator, to include being the Commanding General of the 4th Marine Air Wing. This position is in charge of the Marine Corps' entire reserve aviation. At United Airlines I flew several types of aircraft both domestically and internationally as a captain. This further enhanced my knowledge in customer service, FAA regulations, unions, and the many unique challenges to commercial aviation. Years of experience in both sectors are essential in this capacity at CSI.

Are there unique factors to serving the government as your client rather than, say, serving passengers at United, or other company/client relationships? Or do the same good business practices apply? First of all, both sectors demand superior performance. Relationships are vital to success and without question, safety is paramount.

The logistics of the work your company does sound daunting to a layman. How do you ensure quality results when there are so many moving parts?
The same as for almost any business — surround yourself with a superior team.

What are your goals for CSI Aviation in the next five to 10 years?
Expand our market base through diversity while remaining within CSI's core competencies. Continue to capture market share through superior performance.