

# Aviation Executive Monthly

Frank Jay & Associates – Airline, Aviation and Aerospace Executive Search



## Your Way Or Use A Search Firm: Corporate Perspective, *by Frank M. Jay*

A company seeking a senior leader or middle manager usually starts the hiring process for a new position or replacement by considering internal candidates, then considering individuals who they know or know of, and then by considering the use of a search firm.

### Advantages

This is the normal corporate hiring approach and, if time is not of the essence, then this approach can be an appropriate one. It covers all the bases and can be successful as a step by step process. It offers the opportunity to consider your own corporate resources (the current management and professional team) and connections (corporate external relationships and the capability of the human resources department) before proceeding to enter into a contractual relationship with a retained search firm. The benefits of this approach are:

- Offers the opportunity to save search fees – Obviously, no search fees are incurred when you hire from your own relationships and contacts.
- Hiring can occur more quickly – When a company promotes from within or hires from personal/corporate contacts, it typically speeds up the process since fewer candidates are considered and the interview process is reduced.
- Candidates may offer a reduced learning curve (promotion from within) – Candidates that are promoted from within the company already know the organization...its structure...and its issues and objectives. Candidates that come from personal/corporate contacts benefit from some of the same circumstances.
- Candidates may be “personally known” (promotion and external relationships) – Candidates that are promoted or come from personal/corporate contacts come with a “known” track record and relationships in place...all of which can be beneficial.

### Disadvantages

However, while this is a common hiring approach for a corporation, there are inherent disadvantages involved and they are:

*(Continued on Page 4...)*

## On The Move

**Aer Fayre** announced the promotion of *Allison Budd* from President & COO to CEO.

**Aero Centers** named former Signature Flight Support Senior VP Global Operations *Geoff Heck* as President & Chief Operating Officer.

**AeroVironment**, the UAV company, announced that *Paul "Church" Hutton* has joined as VP, Government Relations. Hutton joins AeroVironment from Mercury Systems where he led the company's government relations.

**Aerospace Industries Association** named *Ted Colbert*, Executive Vice President at Boeing, to replace former Spirit AeroSystems CEO *Tom Gentile* as chair of the AIA. *John M. Holmes*, President, CEO & Chairman of Atlas Air, was added to the Executive Committee.

**AerSale** has announced the retirement of *Bob Nichols* from his role as vice chairman and president of asset management after 15 years with the company. He will continue to serve on the Board of Directors.

**Air France-KLM Group** promoted *Oltion Carkaxhija* from EVP Transformation to EVP Strategy and Transformation. He has been with Air France KLM since 2018, and prior to that was with Air Canada.

**Airline Strategy Group** hired *Debbie Tempesta* as Senior Vice President. Tempesta was previously Director – System Network Control for United Airlines.

**Airways Aviation**, the world's largest privately owned group of aviation academies, named *Jose Antonio Costa* Chief Technical Officer. Costa was previously with Embraer and CAE.

**Alaska Airlines** promoted *Dante West* from Principal, Network Planning to Director, Revenue Management.

**Allegiant Air** promoted *Ken Brumfield* from Managing Director Quality to Managing Director MRO Operations.

**Atlas Air Worldwide** promoted *Artem Gonopoliskiy* to Executive VP, CFO. He was previously Senior VP, Financial Planning and Analysis, and Interim CFO for the company.

**Avelo Airlines** named *J. Somer Shindler* Director, Airport Relations. She joins from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, where she was Chief Development Officer.

**Aviation Technical Services (ATS)** announced the appointment of its new CEO, *Robert Cords*. Cords joins from Wheels Up where he was Executive VP of Fleet Operations and Infrastructure. He replaced *Paul Dolan*, who left ATS in November.

**Boeing** named long-serving insider *Stephanie Pope* to the newly created role of Chief Operating Officer. She was previously CEO of Boeing Global Services (BGS).

**Collins Aerospace** promoted *Rhea Antoine* from Executive Director, Aerostructures Quality to VP, Customer Quality & Supplier Quality.

**CommuteAir** promoted *Christina Richason* from Director of Financial Planning and Analysis to Director, Material Planning, Repair and Contracts.

**De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd.** promoted *Yogesh Garg* from Director, Sales-Asia Pacific to Regional VP Sales-Asia Pacific & Middle-East.

**Delta Air Lines** promoted *Hector Larin* from Director Raleigh & South East to Managing Director – Latin America, Canada and Caribbean.

**dnata** announced the appointment of *Willy Ruf* as the company's Managing Director for Switzerland. Ruf was most recently dnata's Head of Operations in Geneva.

**Etihad** named *Samson Lim*, previously GM Alliance Partnership in China at Delta Air Lines, as Head of Alliances & Partnership.

**Executive Jet Management** named *Megan Hardy* VP Human Resources. Hardy was previously VP Human Resources for Field Aerospace.

**Global Crossing Airlines** named *James Kimball* Senior VP Technical Operations. Kimball was previously VP Technical Operations for FEAM Aero.

**Honeywell** announced that *Ken Wallace*, previously Initial Fleet Procurement Director for Virgin Galactic, has joined as Director ISC Project Management.

## On The Move *(continued)*

**Horizon Air** elected Air Force veteran *Earl Scott* as the VP Maintenance and Engineering. Prior to joining Horizon, Scott was the Senior Director of Business Development, Air Force logistics solutions at Palantir Technologies.

**JetBlue** announced the appointment of *Dawn Southerton* to VP, Controller and Principal Accounting Officer. Southerton joins JetBlue from PepsiCo, where she held several finance leadership roles over nearly two decades, most recently VP and Controller for Pepsi Beverages Company. *Joe Lex*, previously with Delta Airlines, joined as Manager Central Baggage in Salt Lake City.

**Kellstrom Aerospace Group** appointed *John McKirdy* Chief Commercial Officer. McKirdy was previously Senior VP Technical Services for Kellstrom. *Eduardo Ferrer* joined as Director of Sales Latin America. *George Poh*, previously with Satcom, joined as Managing Director, APAC.

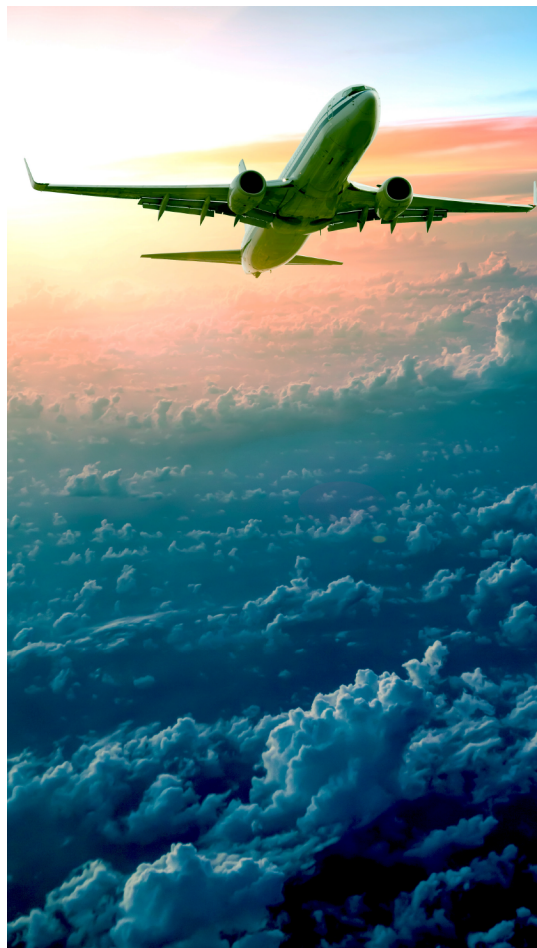
**KLM** will appoint *Bas Brouns* as CFO and Managing Director of KLM, effective April 24, 2024. Brouns will succeed *Erik Swelheim*. Brouns is currently the Senior VP Corporate Controller at KLM and has worked in the company for nearly 27 years.

**Los Angeles World Airports** announced the appointment of *John Ackerman* as CEO. Ackerman joins from DFW International Airport, where he was EVP Global Strategy and Development.

**LSG SkyChefs** promoted *David “DT” Thomas* to General Manager, Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). He is concurrently serving as the GM-BWI while the company searches for a successor.

**Memphis-Shelby County Airport (MSCAA)** announced that *Terry Blue* will be promoted to President and CEO when *Scott Brockman* formally retires from the CEO role at year end. Blue was previously EVP Operations & COO.

**Southwest Airlines** announced that *Justin Jones*, previously Senior VP Operational Strategy & Design, will become EVP Operations, reporting to COO *Andrew Watterson*. *Tony Roach*, Senior VP Marketing & Customer Experience, will advance to Senior VP & Chief Customer Officer. *Elizabeth Bryant* has been promoted to Senior VP & Chief People Officer, and *Whitney Eichinger*, previously Senior VP Culture & Communications, will become Senior VP & Chief Communications Officer. *Angela Marano* was promoted from VP Business Transformation to VP Artificial Intelligence & Data Transformation. *Jason Van Eaton* is being promoted from Senior VP Governmental Affairs & Real Estate to Senior VP & Chief Corporate Affairs Officer.



**SpaceX** announced that *Linda Srabian*, previously Senior Director, Engineering & Reliability at JSX, has joined as Senior Manager, Aviation Solutions.

**Spirit AeroSystems** announced that *Sam Marnick*, EVP and Chief Operating Officer, is leaving the company. Separately, Board Member *Patrick Shanahan* has stepped in as interim President and CEO following the departure of *Tom Gentile*.

**TrueAero** has promoted *Diarmuid Ahern* from Sales Director to VP – Global Sales & Business Development. *Jerry Leach* has been promoted to Director of Quality. *Juilana Nakamata* joined as Director of Sales & Business Development. *Fernando Kehl* joined as Director of Fleet Project Management. *Nicole Ellis* was promoted from Sr. Director to VP Business Intelligence. *Silvia Median Walters* was promoted from Sr. Product Line Manager to Director of Airframe Product Line. *Flavio Santos* was promoted from Corporate Controller to VP Finance. *Angela Geremia* was promoted from Sr. Director, Asset Management to VP Asset Management.

## On The Move (continued)

**United Airlines** promoted *David Terry* from General Manager-Cleveland to Managing Director-Los Angeles (LAX).

**WestJet** promoted *Jeff Hagen* from VP, Corporate Strategy & Fleet to VP Commercial Development & Strategic Partnerships, and promoted *Aaron McKay* from Treasurer to VP Fleet & Treasurer.

**Wheels Up Private Jets** promoted *Patrick J. Busscher* from VP Maintenance Control Center to Senior VP Maintenance and Technical Services.

**Wizz Air** named *Boris Rogoff*, previously Technical Director at Vueling Airlines, as Central Operations Officer.

## Your Way Or Use A Search Firm: Corporate Perspective, (continued from page 1)

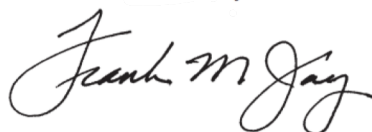
- Time required to hire – If a corporation is able to hire via promotion or personal/corporate contacts, then it can cut the timeline for the search. Unfortunately, since the candidate pool is greatly reduced, the likelihood of a hire is greatly reduced. Additionally, the likelihood of a GOOD hire is greatly reduced due to the size of the candidate pool. If no hire is made during this process, then the time involved is wasted. Also, because of the possibility of a BAD hire due to the limited candidate pool, then the possibility of a replacement search is increased which again increases the overall timeline for a **successful** hire.
- Candidate scope is very limited – As pointed out above, the number of candidates considered is greatly reduced when the company hires via promotion and personal/corporate contacts. In most cases, the larger the pertinent candidate pool, the better the chances for a successful hire.
- Candidate capability is not considered “relatively” – Candidate capability is relative to the responsibilities of the position and, with those responsibilities in mind, then in particular to the capability of other candidates that may be considered. In other words, a candidate by promotion can look great until you consider a larger group of candidates fully qualified for the position. When you see what you can get from the standpoint of available experience and abilities, the “in house” candidate may be seriously questioned. It is always beneficial to compare as many potential candidates as possible in order to make the very best hire.
- Previous relationships can prove detrimental – While previous relationships can prove very beneficial, they also can be very detrimental. They can “set the table” for real damage to be done to an organization because of “over dependence” on previous respect and personal connection and also based on a situation that may not relate at all to the position being filled or the organization involved.

### Best Option

When a company determines that a search needs to be completed, unless an obvious promotion can be made, we believe the best process is to open up “all the taps” and start all processes at once. In other words, consider and retain a search firm that is reputable and that knows your business...and at the same time, consider internal candidates and potential candidates known through personal/corporate contacts. Then, once the search firm is retained and on the job, give that firm the opportunity to interview internal candidates and your personal/corporate contact candidates. This should provide the best pool of qualified candidates while reducing overall timeline involved in completing the search. Additionally, it means that internal candidates are compared to a complete candidate pool and it shows to both internal and external candidates...as well as your management team...that you want to complete the best search possible. Lastly...and most importantly...it offers you the very best opportunity to hire the most qualified and capable person for the position.

And that surely is your utmost objective for the search.

Sincerely,



## Contact

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## About Frank Jay & Associates

Established in 1985, Frank Jay & Associates is the world's leading provider of retained executive search in the Airline, Aviation and Aerospace industries.

Since our beginning, Frank Jay & Associates has operated as a trusted adviser and strategic partner working with clients to evolve, upgrade and facilitate senior-level executive search for Airline, Aviation and Aerospace companies, ranging from major global, regional, international, cargo and related airlines, to Private and Corporate Aviation operators, Aerospace Manufacturers, and all of the companies that support these industries, including MRO operators, Ground Handlers, and others.

We work broadly across the Airline, Aviation and Aerospace landscape with specific expertise in recruiting senior leaders for operational

and functional areas that include finance, marketing, planning, flight operations, inflight, maintenance, manufacturing, engineering, and related areas. We also partner with private equity firms and the companies in their portfolios to execute pre-deal and post-deal acquisition talent and leadership initiatives. Due to our unique access to the most impactful and future-minded executives across the Airline, Aviation and Aerospace landscape, we are able to help our clients assemble teams that create impactful legacies.

