

Alumnus Talks about How to Make the 'Most of Your Pilot Career'

It's no surprise to Roger Battistoni ('94, 00, DB) that student pilots often aspire to work for an airline close to home. Many say it's their dream, but Battistoni helps them dream further.

Students often give him "deer in the headlights" looks when he talks about broadening spectrums and looking for jobs beyond the United States, Battistoni said. The seasoned pilot encourages students to consider a job as a personal business investment and points to the huge surge of pilot careers now opening in the Middle Eastern and Asian airline markets and the possibilities offered by corporate aviation.

That's just some of the guidance he offered during a recent fall visit to Embry-Riddle's Daytona Beach Campus. Nearly 60 students gathered in the College of Business building on Sept. 26 for Battistoni's now annually featured presentation, entitled "Making the Most of Your Pilot Career," which was co-sponsored by Embry-Riddle's Career Services Department and the Student Alumni Association.



For the past five years, Battistoni, a senior captain at NetJets and owner of MultiCorp Aviation, has dedicated his time and finances to come back to Embry-Riddle to discuss his experiences in aviation and help student pilots see beyond the rote career path of working for major commercial airlines.

"You hear about so many doom and gloom stories in the aviation world right now—about how (pilots) have had to switch airlines five and six times," said Battistoni, who has worked at NetJets for 13 years and went from being a first officer to a senior captain in just five years. "If you can change a few of the students minds or at least open their blinders up so they can possibly make good decisions along the way that affect their career—that's what it's all about."



At the end of the day, Battistoni said he knows new graduates are just looking to fly. Most of his advice is tailored to get students thinking about their long-term career plans.

Once they've had their first job and have started accruing two to four thousand hours of experience, he said that should be the time to start looking for a company where stability will lead to seniority.

"You do have choices out there and I'm not saying, stay at a regional all day long until your dream job comes along," he told the students.

"You need to focus a little bit more on just (the fact that) they have a 747 and 'I got to be based out of my hometown.'"

Those are important things to consider, but look at the bigger picture; look for stability, he said.

For Alan Larsen, president of the Student Alumni Association, Battistoni's presentation was an eye opener.

"We often just talk about what's happening here, domestically," said Larsen, a 20-year-old junior who aspires to become an airline pilot. "He gave me a global perspective that no one had ever shared with me before."

Now, Larsen said looking for prospects overseas no longer seems like such a foreign idea.