

FedEx Express

Pilots Unified in Obtaining New Contract

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In a year dominated by Section 6 bargaining, the FedEx Express Master Executive Council (MEC) saw in 2013 the continuation of internal improvements essential to the MEC's strategic plan. "Our strategic plan hinges on the development of our communication abilities and maintaining internal cohesiveness through regular contact and reporting," says Capt. Scott Stratton, the pilots' MEC chairman. "We were successful in 2013 because we substantially improved in both these areas. As an organization, we realize that our strength lies in communication on several levels."

The MEC spent the year refining its ability to communicate with the pilots. It used professionally produced videos, a revitalized pilot-to-pilot network, accessible in-person meetings, and interactive web technology. The pilots responded with regular feedback and support. "There is nothing more important than communication with the pilots. No matter the expertise that our volunteers bring, the goals come from the pilots. Without effective communication with the pilots, we would be nowhere," Stratton acknowledges.

The year started with the exchange of Section 6 openers after almost two years of work as part of the interim discussion model agreed to in the pilots' 2010 contract agreement. "In 2010, we elected to divest from historical negotiating processes and

engaged with FedEx management in a bargaining profile that met the original intent of the Railway Labor Act. We reached a short-term agreement contract with a few significant improvements and agreed to the interim discussion model," says Stratton. "We agreed to the ongoing process of interim discussions to minimize our next round of Section 6 bargaining."

Thus far, the decision to engage in interim discussions has paid off. In April 2013, the FedEx pilots ratified a letter of agreement concerning the



introduction of B-767s; much of the progress toward that agreement occurred in 2012 under the interim discussion model. Of the pilots voting, 87 percent supported the agreement. Later in 2013, the MEC reached an agreement with management concerning some significant foreign duty assignment (FDA) ongoing implementation measures that provided improved benefits to FDA-based pilots.

"In a matter of months, we reached two agreements that significantly aided our pilots, but we did it as we negotiated through other Section 6 issues. Needless to say, we are proud of these achievements. I attribute our success to hard work, unity, and MEC support. I think the MEC support was significant, in part, because

of enhanced communication among the MEC, the officers, and our committee structure. If we had not decided to improve that communication, I'm not sure that we would have achieved as much," Stratton says.

As the FedEx pilots move forward into 2014, obtaining an industry-leading contract is at the forefront of their goals. "The time for a contract is now. Our negotiators have already reached agreement on the core issues that need to be resolved. Our team—the pilots and their families, the MEC, the officers, the volunteer structure, and ALPA staff—are unified. I am convinced that the strength of that unity will bring us a proper agreement in 2014," says Stratton.

The 4,353 FedEx Express pilots are spread across the globe, represented by seven councils located in three domiciles as well as pilots assigned to foreign duty in Hong Kong and Cologne, Germany. Understanding the communications challenges that this global group faces, the MEC continues to engage its members through a variety of communication methods designed to better reach pilots, including a revamped website, interactive conference and video calls, video messages, e-mails, and text notification.

With more than 375 airports served worldwide, the airline has an extensive and varied fleet. The pilots deliver approximately 3.9 million packages and 11 million pounds of freight daily to more than 220 countries and territories, including every address in the United States. 

FDX at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: June 1993–1996; rejoined ALPA in June 2002

First ALPA contract: October 2006

Number of flightcrew members: 4,353

Headquarters: Memphis, Tenn.

Fleet: 91 B-757s, 3 B-767s, 23 B-777s, 71 A300s, 30 A310s, 63 MD-10s, and 64 MD-11s