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WHEN BUYING OR SELLING AN AIRCRAFT THE RIGHT TECHNICAL ADVICE IS VITAL

By Mark Paticky



Whether you're an aircraft buyer or a seller or just considering an upgrade to an existing plane, having the right technical support can make a huge difference between complete satisfaction and undeniable remorse. For buyers, a crucial consideration is the pre-purchase inspection designed to reveal any shortcomings requiring further consideration. Even though one selects a reputable factory-authorized service facility for the pre-buy, a highly skilled, knowledgeable, third-party technical resource can help navigate the process, interpret the findings and prevent considerable expense, headache, grief or regret, says Joe Esmerado, Vice President Technical Services for Parsippany, NJ-based Leading Edge Aircraft Solutions.

An independent third-party appraisal provides an educated evaluation that helps determine if the choice is the right one, or confirms if it's time to walk away, says Esmerado. His determinations are based on more than 50 years of experience in every aspect of aircraft maintenance and management from military aircraft to corporate jets and helicopters.

Esmerado launched his aviation career in the U.S. Navy as an aircraft maintenance trainee aboard the aircraft carrier Intrepid in the 1960s. After numerous aviation maintenance and management positions including stints as vice president and general manager of Butler Aviation-Newark and vice president of aircraft maintenance for Jet Aviation-Teterboro, Esmerado joined Leading Edge to provide indispensable technical support for aircraft owners, buyers and sellers.

With the customer's interests at the forefront, Esmerado oversees pre-purchase inspections, supervises pre-owned aircraft maintenance and refurbishment, performs on-site aircraft evaluations. In addition, in order to ensure the highest manufacturing quality and cabin interior completion, he monitors the owner's newly acquired aircraft as it transitions through the manufacturing process.

"At Leading Edge," he says, "our goal, starting with initial introductions and follow-on meetings, is

to learn enough about our client so that we can see the project through their perspective. We become the client's eyes and ears throughout the process, and when we do that, it almost guarantees that the client will be satisfied," says Esmerado.

In the case of a buyer, for example, "After we determine the aircraft category that best suits the mission, our service includes a technical review and intensive research before we decide on the specific aircraft type," says Esmerado. If the client prefers a pre-owned aircraft, "I'll go out and evaluate two or three finalists first-hand, rigorously review logbooks, evaluate the caliber of maintenance and assess necessary enhancements. Then I'll produce a detailed report with a recommendation to either go forward or reject the plane outright," he says.

If the buyer decides on a new aircraft, Esmerado visits the factory frequently to monitor the plane's construction and interior completion. "I schedule to see the aircraft at key milestones and communicate details at every visit." When the airplane taxis up to the buyer's hanger, there are no surprises other than pleasant ones, he says. "I can't tell you enough how good it feels to be part of making this happen."

For sellers, he says, "We get involved well before we list the aircraft. I do complete logbook research and have a careful look at the aircraft so we know how to price it. Then, when we get to the pre-buy, my job is to monitor all activity, protect the seller's interest and ensure that any repairs that the seller is obligated to pay for are in fact confirmed discrepancies and not merely someone's opinion."

It is clear that Esmerado takes a strong personal interest in each one of these projects. It's not just a mechanical process. He's emotionally involved in understanding the client's needs and fulfilling their requirements. Most important, Esmerado does this day in and day out with the entire Leading Edge team unlike typical outside consultants that may only handle these technical tasks once or twice in their career. This level of expertise and capability in-house is unique to Leading Edge, says Esmerado. "What that ultimately means to the client is unsurpassed service and value."

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