



FO Russ Picus, MEM LEC Candidate

Responds to the...

ALPAWatch Candidate Questionnaire

1. (ALPAWatch) Do you have any prior NWA ALPA experience? If so, what positions did you (do you) hold and when?

1. I had absolutely no ALPA experience prior to taking on the remainder of Dana Teasley's term as MEM FO REP. I stayed as informed and engaged as possible through meetings and reading ALPA literature. However, I spent a significant amount of time complaining about the Company and ALPA. I finally felt like it was my time to stop whining and start being part of the solution. In the months since taking on the position, I have found I can make a difference, and I can be a positive force on the MEC.

2. (ALPAWatch) Almost every pilot at this airline is flying more and has less time at home. Why are you volunteering even more of your time and effort for ALPA work?

2. For over 8 years I have been a MEM based DC-9 FO. In June I switched to MEM Airbus FO. After 9 years of living and working here in MEM, I think I have a pretty good handle on the views of the MEM pilot group. I also believe my personal views match the majority of the pilots here.

3. (ALPAWatch) What would you say is the best strategy to repair our contract? What does "Taking it Back" mean to you? How long do you think this pilot group should expect it to take to "Take it Back" and what will be the indicators that we have "Taken it Back"?

3. We hear a lot of talk about strategy. Demand bargaining, deserve bargaining, aggressiveness, Take it Back tactics, etc. It is obvious to me that we are an unhappy pilot group that wants to take a harder line with our management.. I agree with that sentiment. It is unfortunate that the only improvements we can get in our contract result from meltdowns in the airline operation. Pilot quality of life only becomes important to our management when it impacts the bottom line. (The short term bottom line at that) How do we work in this environment?

First, the MEC needs to stop the divisiveness. Personality issues among the MEC officers are slowing down progress and wasting our dues money. Debate on the issues is a healthy part of the process. We need to keep it at that level.

Second, we can and should be more pro-active. We are in a pattern where the company acts in a way we do not like. ALPA responds with grievances. We need to break this cycle. There are things we can do that are good for us and the company. We need to get out front. Third, we need to do a better job of communication. I have found in the last few months that even though the MEC is doing things the pilot group wants and needs, the pilot group doesn't know so there is a perception that nothing is happening. It

is getting better. Hotlines, Across the Table, R & I updates these are great. We need to be a little quicker and honestly we as pilots need to do a better job of reading the material. Communication flows both ways. Wilson Polling is an excellent tool. It has historically been very accurate. I would like to see a more inclusive feedback system. We should have the ability for 100% of the pilots to quickly communicate opinions to the MEC on major issues. The MEC shouldn't have to wait for Wilson Polls or have to guess the views of the pilot group.

4. (ALPAWatch) Tell us what you see as the pros and cons of the current pilot retirement system at NWA, including the transition to a DC Plan. With respect to retirement plans, how would you describe “equitable”? What steps can be taken to further secure the Frozen DB Plan?

4. Retirement is a big issue. It is dividing our pilot group. There are some with decent DB plans, some who will get a minimal TDC contribution, and new hires who will get nothing but a ridiculously low DC contribution. Not only is this a morale killer, but I think we will find NWA will not be a first choice for top notch pilot candidates with these retirement benefits. This is an issue that can not wait for the next contract cycle.

5. (ALPAWatch) Under what circumstances, that you can envision, should this pilot group ever take voluntary pay cuts in the future?

(ALPAWatch) No Response to this Question

6. (ALPAWatch) Do you support The Ethics Pledge (http://www.alpawatch.org/The_Pledge.html)? If elected, would you support incorporating it into the NWA ALPA Policy Manual? If you can not support the pledge in its entirety, why not? What are the individual elements of the ethics pledge that you do support and what are the elements that you do not support? Please elaborate on your reasoning as necessary.

(ALPAWatch) No Response to this Question

7. (ALPAWatch) What do you think the primary responsibilities are for the position you are seeking? How do those responsibilities relate to the everyday line pilot?

(ALPAWatch) No Response to this Question