



Measuring an FBO's true overall value

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Choosing an FBO should be based on a thorough evaluation of 4 factors—the safety, service, facility and true value that an FBO has to offer.

Evaluating safety

Does the FBO train its line service techs, CSRs and management team professionally and thoroughly in order to deliver quality professional service in a consistently safe manner? Does its staff represent a reputable and substantial experience level regarding delivery of the aforementioned criteria to its customers? And does the FBO request and/or require an insurance liability waiver from its customers?

Assessing service

Is delivering quality service consistently to you and your passengers a priority to the FBO staff? Does the FBO adapt a “can do” attitude to provide a level of service to you and your passengers to impress on you that your business is valued and appreciated? Is your ground service experience seemingly effortless, or is it a constant struggle from arrival until departure?

Can you get your O₂ and/or tires serviced easily if the need occurs? And can you get your fresh water and potty serviced? Will the FBO arrange for catering, limo, hotel and rental cars? Will it be proactive in following up to ensure that all are in place at the time it needs to be? Is automotive ramp access available? Will the FBO staff treat you and your passengers in a professional and courteous manner? These are all important questions.

Grading the facility

Is the FBO facility clean and modern? Does it offer you and your passengers the amenities you need and desire? Are the restrooms consistently clean, up to par and well stocked with the essentials?

Determining value

Is the fee structure for fuel and/or ramp fees competitive with the local competition on the field? When you weigh the importance of safety, service and facility, does the pricing represent a sound overall value in choosing the FBO?

As previously pointed out, treating price as the sole decision factor can be “penny wise and pound foolish” if it places your valued resources—aircraft safety and passenger satisfaction—in potential jeopardy. Since a flightcrew is accountable to passengers and aircraft



Photo by Jack Sykes

FBO lineman helps load bags onto a Gulfstream G150 at TEB. When it comes to delivering a consistent first-class product, there is no such thing as an unimportant detail.

owners for the overall service experience they receive, an FBO can either make that flightcrew look very good or very bad, depending on the level of ground service they receive when considering all of the aforementioned criteria.

So how does one ascertain and evaluate an FBO's reputation for performance in these critical categories? Fltplan.com, AirNav.com, an FBO's website, *Pro Pilot* and *Aviation Intl News* FBO surveys, and respected preferred FBO designations such as those of the Corporate Aircraft Association and NBAA forums, are all great places to start your investigative process. Personally, after doing some homework I would then call and/or e-mail the prospective FBO's general manager and/or owner and ask the important specific questions outlined above. I would then base my decision on the answers I receive and the manner in which I receive them.

In my opinion, FBOs must strive to provide the very best value they can to their valued customers through a combination of thorough training and superior service, coupled with clean, modern facilities and competitive pricing. The sum total is only as good as the individual parts which in turn comprise the overall true value of an FBO.



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