

▲ FEATURE

A Smart Approach to Customer Wellness

▲ DIVERSITY

How Color Biases Contribute to a Lack of Diversity in Aviation

▲ PRODUCT PROFILE

Handle More Flights with Less Capital Investment

airport business

LANDSIDE \ TERMINAL / AIRFIELD



Ninth Annual

40 UNDER 40

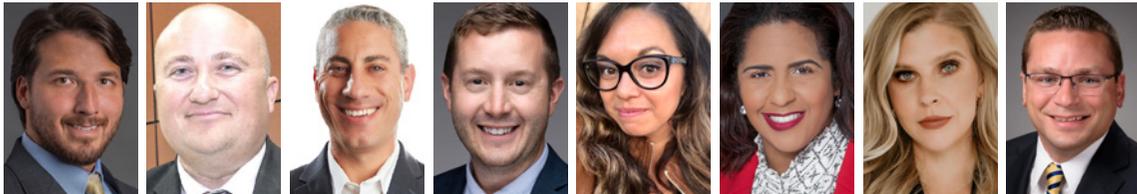
AVIATION'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST

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40 UNDER 40

The Airport Business 2020 Top 40 Under 40



The 2020 Top 40 Under 40 Showcases the top talent working in the industry and changing the way our aviation system works. All the winners were chosen for their commitment, drive and accomplishments during their career.

The ninth edition of the program saw hundreds of nominations from across North America submitted from a variety of different facets in the aviation industry.



Average number
of years working
in the industry:

10.3



WINNERS BY STATE



Average Age:
34.8

Youngest winner:
28



Blake Astran, J.D.

Blake Astran started his career as an attorney, but when a friend showed him a job posting for an executive search firm, Astran found himself on a career path he hadn't even known existed before.

"I didn't even know the executive recruiting industry existed," Astran said. "I was taught the industry from scratch."

The firm Astran joined worked heavily with transit agencies and port authorities, notably the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and it was decided that Astran would attend the AAAE conference that year to expand his network. And as chance would have it, ADK Consulting and Executive Search – Astran's current firm – was sponsoring at the event. Astran reached out to introduce himself and found they had an opening.

"It was a match made in Heaven," he said.

Astran joined ADK in 2018 and is now the firm's vice president of business operations. Utilizing his superb networking skills, Astran has inspired some of the best transit leaders to transition to the aviation industry, bringing fresh ideas and concepts to the organizations where these executives have been placed.

"I think of myself as a connector. I love finding executives for airports and having that affect change through other people. I love that I am changing someone's world in the sense that if an airport hires our firm to put in their new general manager or CEO, I'm calling people who are looking for jobs or finding someone out of the blue who may not be looking, but it's a position they haven't thought about and it would be great;

hopefully I am giving them a better position," said Astran.

Holding a firm belief that the right candidate can make a great difference to an organization, the local community and the industry as a whole, Astran has partnered with leading aviation organizations nationwide to help them find the very best executives to join and enhance their teams.

"I love what I do and I think that I am very fortunate to be able to say that."

With the future in mind as more airports earn their spaceport certification, Astran is preparing for the future by evaluating requirements and characteristics of the future leaders who will move that industry ahead. He is utilizing his close ties with local governments and multimodal transit agencies and port authorities to plan for new roles evolving from aerospace operations.

"I think that could be the future – commercial space travel," Astran said. "As that becomes more common place, I think that will be the future, having these airports set up to service both domestic travel, in the sense of staying in the world, but also be able to fly over the horizon and be able to see the world from a much different perspective."

Hometown: Rockville, MD

Alma Mater: University of Florida

Fun fact about yourself: I was on the University of Florida basketball practice squad.

Someone I look up to in the industry: Doug Kuelpman, boss and President/CEO of ADK.

My favorite thing about aviation is: Connectivity, the ability for people to go from one place to the next.

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40 UNDER 40



Edward W. Hart, RCDD

Edward Hart started his career at Arora Engineers as the network administrator, but the allure of what his colleagues were doing with aviation engineering began to grow on him. It wasn't long before he made the move.

"I wound up at the engineering firm and it had nothing to do with the aviation industry. Then once I got there and I started really exploring and understanding what everybody was doing there and having a technology background, I really want to understand that a little bit better," Hart said. "I became fond of the engineering process and what everyone was doing around me, especially in aviation, so I started to migrate into an engineering role."

lead, Hart is responsible for providing oversight and direction for Arora's special systems team, where he utilizes his training and over 13 years of experience with information technology systems and oversees multi-million-dollar network design projects for clients and agencies across the nation. Hart holds numerous professional certifications including Registered Communications Distribution Designer, CompTIA Security+, Digital Signage Certified Expert, and Crestron DigitalMedia Certified Designer 4K.

Currently, Hart is providing expertise for the \$1.2 billion Newark Liberty International Airport Terminal One Redevelopment Program. Hart is overseeing Arora's team of special systems engineers responsible for design of the low voltage, electronic video information displays, common use systems, emergency mass notification, public address/audio paging system, visual dispatch and docking guidance systems, and visual paging.

His approach to systems integration led him to develop highly specialized project specifications for Terminal One, which facilitates communication between systems that have seldom been required to communicate prior, in order to yield an enhanced view of facility metrics and operations.

Hart said that while he enjoys the entire engineering process from design to construction, it's seeing all the hard work pay off in a completed project that is his favorite part.

Hometown: Tannersville, PA

Alma Mater: Drexel University

Fun fact about yourself: I'm not that fun. I shattered the hardest bone to break in the human body, the femur, plus a broken fibula and torn ACL. I was skiing, and attempted a 720 (2 spins). I eventually got it the next season I was able ski, plus landed my first backflip.

Someone I look up to in the industry: Jason Shevrin, PE

My favorite thing about aviation is: The ever-changing environment and the ways that technology can affect a traveler in a positive way. We strive to enhance the passenger's experience through technology, among other aspects and at times finding an innovative solution can be a challenge. Then all the hard work pays off once you have found that proper solution.

Hart worked a dual role in both IT and engineering until 2010 when he gave up his IT responsibilities.

"Once I got into the engineering side, I got my Registered Communications Distribution Designer from BICSI and was able to take over as the special systems discipline manager," Hart recounted. He has been in the role ever since.

As the special systems discipline

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Rising to the challenge.

Driven to develop design solutions to meet the unique challenges the aviation industry faces, Jason Shepherd has what it takes to lead amid uncertainty. Congrats, Jason, on being named one of *Airport Business Magazine's* Top 40 Under 40.



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Congratulations

TO

Edward Hart, RCDD, DSCE

for being named to

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