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2020 Airport Business Top 40 Under 40: Roman I Mendez

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**Roman Mendez, Desert Jet Center
Desert Jet Center**

Roman Mendez first fell in love with business aviation when he was 18 years old while working for a large FBO chain. He began his career as a line service technician and quickly grew to love the profession. Mendez soon became the operations manager.

Captivated by the vision and culture of Desert Jet, he joined the company as the line service manager. "As soon as I got into it, I really fell in love with the people and the operations side of things," he said. Within two years, Mendez was promoted to general manager and has grown his customer base, increasing business activity at the airport significantly year-over-year and attaining 32 percent of the market share among three FBOs at the airport.

He collaborates with the general manager of Desert Jet Maintenance, Desert Jet's on-site FAA Certified Part 145 Repair Station, to provide one-stop-shop value to each company's respective customers.

Roman has been instrumental in developing the highest safety and customer rated FBO in the desert. Mendez's team continues to receive the highest number of customer reviews (all 5-star) across multiple airport resource sites, including Airnav, Fltplan.com and Foreflight. By encouraging a culture of safety and continuous improvement, he led his FBO to achieve IS-BAH Stage 2 registration. His entire FBO staff is also NATA Safety 1st certified. "I really like the customer service side of things. That's something I think is a forgotten art," he said. "In private aviation, with what we do, we really get the opportunity to cater to our clients, to give them a different level of service that a lot of us have come to forget."

As an essential business operating during the pandemic, Mendez ensured the safety of his employees, guests, and visiting crewmembers by quickly instituting CDC recommended guidelines and protocol throughout the facility and its services. Desert Jet Center became one of the first FBOs to offer cabin disinfection services to reduce and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 and one of only a few FBOs to provide the service free of charge.

- **Hometown:** Indio, Calif.
- **Fun fact about yourself:** I am a "Be The Match" donor of bone marrow
- **Someone I look up to in the industry:** Those that have mentored me over the years, many of which are part of my Desert Jet family
- **My favorite thing about aviation is:** I love the joy flying brings to people. When you fly it's the beginning of your next adventure