

"Low-cost carriers are the future But we've got less than 1 percent of the business. What we need to do is figure out how to grow that."

B. BEN BALDANZA

The Player: B. Ben Baldanza, 43

Latest Play: Appointed president and chief operating officer of Miramar-based Spirit Airlines Inc.

Background: The Rome, N.Y., native has worked in the airline business for 20 years. For the past six years, he was senior vice president of marketing and planning for US Airways. Baldanza has also held posts in finance and pricing for American, Continental and Northwest airlines. His three-year stint at Central America-based Grupo Taca was his most challenging, he says. "They were about the size of Spirit: big enough to matter and manageable enough to get my arms around."

Ambition: "When you work for a legacy airline, the unfortunate reality is the main thing you have to do every day is think about how to get costs down," he says. Costs are already low at Spirit, Baldanza says, so he focuses on other issues: "We have some great airplanes coming, we're looking at ways to give people more onboard entertainment, and we're finding new places to take people."

