

**PRINCIPAL SEAT**

Monisha Kaltenborn,  
Sauber F1 Team Principal

**Q&A WITH A LEGEND**

A business chat  
with Emerson Fittipaldi

# Paddock.

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## FIVE WAYS TO... ...GET FOCUSED AND FOCUS YOUR TEAM.

By Jason Middleton | We have **Jason Middleton**, President of Silver Air, the private jet management and charter company, to give us five relevant hints on how to focus your team. For nearly two decades Jason was a professional endurance athlete competing at the highest levels of triathlons and adventure racing both individually and leading teams through some of the most challenging terrain and situations in the world. Winning was always the goal, but racing Ironman and Eco-Challenge requires massive focus just to stay alive. Now as a professional pilot and president of his own company, focus continues to be critical to his team's growing success.

**"While those companies pitched clients on 'efficiencies', all I could hear was 'conflict of interest'."**

### 1. Define your reason for being

I launched Silver Air as a single pilot with a single plane and a single mission – to be the best owner advocate and service provider in the private aviation industry. When I first started flying charter for other companies, I saw how they would develop offshoot businesses and upsell clients on fuel, maintenance and hanger space. While those companies pitched clients on 'efficiencies', all I could hear was 'conflict of interest'. It was then that I decided to dedicate the rest of my career to focusing on a single aspect of aircraft management – being an owner-advocate. We call it 'pure management', and it has allowed us to focus ourselves like no one else in our industry.

### 2. Pick a team that shares your visions and believes what you believe

Focus provides motivation and direction. Your team absolutely must understand and be fully on board not only with what you're doing, but why you're doing it. From the very beginning, my business partners, team members and employees are carefully vetted and selected based on their core beliefs and how they map to our company's culture and mission.

### 3. Mould your environment to focus your team

We recently moved into a new office space in downtown Santa Barbara. Any big move like this can be a distraction, but we also saw it as an opportunity to build a modern environment that would encourage teamwork, communication

and productivity. We started by removing distractions. We built an open environment all funnelling back to a central operations hub – forcing the entire team to constantly focus on our central mission both figuratively and literally.

### 4. Bring the team together

Our team is all over the world and constantly on the move, hopping around different cities, states, countries, time zones, and with ever-changing schedules. So it's important to bring everyone together sometimes. Even if only virtually – to catch up, communicate, share stories and personal experiences, and remind us that we're all on the same team working towards common goals. Just as it can be important for people in any type of relationship to spend some time apart, it's critical to come back together to refocus and then go conquer.

### 5. Focused body, focused mind

I come from a fitness background and as a previous professional athlete and trainer, I've always believed strongly that body and mind have to be in good working condition to maintain a high level of focus and productivity. We work hard to promote a healthy lifestyle in our office, we title sponsor our city's premier cycling event, the Santa Barbara 100, and we're very fortunate to be in a city and business that are conducive to training and playing outside year-round. We've found that's critical to keeping our people healthy, happy and tuned into the company's direction.