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START *your* ENGINES

GE-AVIATION'S **SCOTT DONNELLY** IS FIRED UP ABOUT HIS COMPANY'S NEWEST ADVANCEMENT

WHEN GE-AVIATION TESTED ITS NEW new GENx engine for the first time this spring, Scott Donnelly had to be there, not because he's president and CEO of GE's aviation business, nor because the new engine represents a \$1 billion investment and 20 years' worth of development. He simply had to see the looks on the faces of the technicians who'd spent a good part of their careers bringing the engine to life.

Donnelly knows that look. He's worn it more than a few times himself. His path to GE's executive suite ran through the corporation's research and development center, where he oversaw the development of some of the composites and superalloys that ended up in the GENx engine. That's why Donnelly drove the 100 miles from his office in suburban Cincinnati to the isolated testing ground in rural Peebles, Ohio.

"Sitting around with the team as they put first fire in [the engine], being with the people who have been working without sleep, getting an occasional pizza slipped under the door — that's what it's all about." says Donnelly, who

graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1984 with a degree in electrical and computer engineering. "The pride on their faces when that thing turns on — it's a great feeling."

Donnelly's ability to understand the creative process and get behind the bold ideas of others is an important job requisite for the leader of a multi-billion dollar business whose success hinges on its ability to innovate.

The GENx engine, for example, represents some of the most advanced technology in the aviation industry. Made with lighter-weight composite materials, the GENx is more fuel efficient, produces lower emissions, and is quieter than its predecessors. The engine, which is still in the testing and certification stages, is part of GE's Ecomagination portfolio, a series of products designed to be more energy efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally conscious. The first of the GENx engines is expected to be in service in 2008, in Boeing's new 787 and 747-8 and in the Airbus 8350. Continental Airlines' fleet of 20 new Boeing 787 aircraft will operate with GENx engines.

But long before those engines would enter service, even before the cheers of the GENx development team could subside, GE engineers were on to the next big idea. "We already have a team working on what's coming out 20 years from now," says Donnelly. "You can take 15 minutes and feel good about how you're

doing on this one, but you've got to keep the pedal down. You can't ever stop."

These days, Donnelly's focus is split between the GEnx and a new engine that is similar, but designed for use in narrow-body aircraft. It could be 10 years before the engine enters service, but such long product development periods only make success more rewarding, he says.

"My job at this stage of the game is not to design this engine, but to push our teams to use more imagination, to be more aggressive," Donnelly says. "You only get a chance to design a new engine every 20 or 30 years. That's why technical people love this business so much. The challenge of pushing the limits never ends."

Donnelly began his career as a design engineer in the aerospace and semiconductor industries, following his graduation from the University of Colorado. In 1997, he was named vice president responsible for global technology operations at GE Healthcare. He later served as senior vice president and director of GE's Global Research Center, where he was part of a team that helped guide the corporation in its move into pharmaceutical diagnostics.

In 2005, Donnelly was appointed president and CEO of GE-Aviation. At 44, he's one of the youngest to have held the title. For the technology-loving engineer,

chasing innovation is the fun part of the job. But he also understands that the process, and the risks that come with it, are fundamental to the company's success.

"We have brilliant people who can literally spend 10 to 20 years of their life on these new technologies before they even make it into the marketplace," Donnelly says. "Sometimes, we start on things that don't ever really get there. But if you're going to do big things, you're going to have to be willing to make some pretty big bets."

— *Candace Goforth*

