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It's up, up and away with balloonist Jonathan Trappe

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[Jonathan Trappe](#) takes teamwork to new heights. With his Accenture colleagues as his ground crew, he attached 55 balloons to his office chair and soared to 15,000 feet.

Name: Jonathan Trappe

Location: Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Outsourcing service: Custom BPO

The Source (TS): How long have you been with Accenture?

Jonathan: Eight and a half years.

TS: What do you do in your job?

Jonathan: I am the technical projects lead on two eProcurement engagements. For technical projects, I manage risk identification and mitigation, scheduling, task management, coordination, synchronization—everything needed up to go-live conversion.

TS: What is the most rewarding aspect of your work?

Jonathan: Coming together to complete a job—when we're "all-hands," intensely focused on working together to deliver our best work.

TS: What's the best thing about working at Accenture?

Jonathan: Our people's commitment to our company, getting the job done and to each other. It's just a great group.

TS: What do you do away from the office?

Jonathan: I'm a licensed balloon pilot. I'm fascinated with cluster ballooning—a type of ballooning in which a single balloonist is attached to a cluster of relatively small rubber balloons inflated with helium or hydrogen. Unlike hot-air balloons, which can only fly for about an hour, gas balloons can fly for days non-stop. In fact, I recently completed a record flight of 68 hours, 46 minutes nonstop.

TS: Could you tell us a bit about what's been dubbed the "chairway to heaven"?

Jonathan: I recently used my office chair as a gondola in a cluster balloon flight. I flew it up to nearly 15,000 feet and traveled about 50 miles. The flight took 11 months of preparation and required oxygen, a transponder, aircraft radios and permission from air traffic control. All the gear was attached to my office chair, which is now retired and back in the office.

TS: What do your other Accenture colleagues think about your endeavor?

Jonathan: I can't say enough about the support they've given me. The real superstars are [John Baynon](#), [Hilary Bogner](#) and [Shawn Corkery](#), who served as my ground crew during "chairway to heaven." John and Hilary were out on the airfield at three a.m. on Saturday morning doing the very physical job of managing and inflating dozens of cluster cells—they drained 55 steel cylinders of helium. And Shawn was out on the airfield before dawn taking pictures, some of which made it on the front cover of *Ballooning Magazine*. With commitment like that, no wonder we have such a strong firm.

TS: What have you learned from your time spent aloft?

Jonathan: That you can't accomplish big goals by yourself. My colleagues have helped me live out my dreams.

TS: What's the best career advice anyone ever gave you?

Jonathan: When I started with Accenture, someone asked a senior executive how you become a partner. His response was, "Don't quit." He meant it literally—work hard and stay with the company. Accenture people are smart and capable, and the company is good at working with its people to develop their careers all the way to the senior executive level.

TS: What quality do you value most in a person and why?

Jonathan: The ability to tackle a problem and come out successful.

TS: Tell us one thing about yourself that others may be surprised to hear.

Jonathan: I flew my office chair to 15,000 feet. Once people know that, there's not much more I can say that would surprise them.

For more information, please contact [Jonathan Trappe](#).

