



Robert Wolf



Brandon Torres Declet

EDITORS' NOTE Robert Wolf is also Founder and CEO of 32 Advisors. He is a former Wall Street executive, has had numerous Presidential appointments and was named as one of the 100 Most Powerful People in finance by Worth magazine.

Brandon Torres Declet is a Co-Founder of Measure. Prior to founding Measure, he served as Counsel on Capitol Hill to the Senate Judiciary, Intelligence and House Homeland Security Committees, advised the NYPD Counter Terrorism Bureau, and held senior positions at the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. He also served on the UAS Registration Task Force Aviation Rulemaking Committee in November 2015.

COMPANY BRIEF Measure (measure.com) is the nation's leading Drone as a Service® company, providing turnkey solutions to acquire, process, and deliver actionable aerial data and media to enterprise customers. The company has pioneered drone applications in telecom, construction, energy, disaster response, live media coverage, and other sectors, utilizing best-in-class drone technology, highly trained pilots, and experienced data engineers to execute safe, legal, and insured missions that help customers achieve new cost and operational efficiencies.

What did you see in the market that made you feel the timing was right for this venture?

Torres: Three years ago, it was a very different world. I was thinking about the United States military using drones to collect imagery around the world and asked myself, if the U.S. military can find some value in aerial imagery, then is this something that a Fortune 500 company might be able to gain value from using as well?

We felt we were at the leading edge of a trend where drone technology was going to proliferate not just among consumers and hobbyists, but also among Fortune 500 companies. They would be able to gather additional data on their infrastructure and land that might allow them to improve processes and potentially save them money or discover ways to make more.

We bought a drone and began to fly it, but I always believed that if this was going to scale, someone was going to have to step in at the breach to understand the regulations and flight operations and how to process and deliver the data.

Drone Technology

An Interview with Robert Wolf, Chairman, and Brandon Torres Declet, Chief Executive Officer, Measure

That is how the idea for Measure was born. The goal was to create a full stack – the hardware, the software, and services – and provide a turnkey solution for big business.

Wolf: We believed the use of drone technology could add a more dynamic and productive output than traditional methods for inspection, imagery, and data collection and on a more cost-effective basis.

First, we had to get Fortune 250 companies comfortable with using drones because, when we started, drones were mainly used by the military. Thus, to get commercial and industrial companies willing to use Measure, we needed to make it simple to understand the value proposition and then we had to go through a long procurement process.

We recognized that the only way for us to be successful with our clients was to create a gold standard, turnkey solution that delivers real value. We have spent the past three years creating that. We had to recruit pilots and hired mainly former military pilots who are best in class when it comes to flying drones. We've also had to bring in engineers and data analytics specialists for the data and now we're finally getting into sales and business development. We have to ensure that we have created a safe, secure, permitted, and insured environment in order for these top-level clients to even let us in the door.

Is the value of this kind of service well understood?

Torres: It's somewhat understood. For certain applications, the value of our service is more obvious than it is with others. We're focused on four verticals – energy, telecommunications, construction, and media – and across those verticals, the value of the use of drones is clear.

Most of the clients we speak with are familiar with the technology. They aren't as familiar with all that goes into producing a data product that is usable, nor do they have a good understanding of the regulatory risks involved in flight operations.

Many believe that anyone can buy a drone and put it in the air and make the data that it collects usable, but there is so much that goes into making sure that a flight operation is safe and ensuring that the data that is collected is of some use because that data has to drive a process.

We've been working diligently to develop specific solutions.

Do you define the company as a service or as a technology business and is its impact more as a disruptor or innovator?

Torres: I'd call us a technology-enabled services company. We are absolutely disruptive in that there is no one like Measure out there. The industry is still somewhat dominated by the Silicon Valley-funded software companies that are trying to sell a software license. However, a software license doesn't get someone out in the field to do the flying, and we need real pilots, and trained people who understand the regulations, and the FAA.

We're working on fairly complex problems that have never been addressed before across all of our verticals. We're using technology but we also staff a fantastic crew of pilots who are out there in the field all the time flying these drones.

Wolf: We're proud that we have done north of 2,000 flights and, from a risk perspective, we've been near perfect and recognized as best in class, so we feel incredibly confident in our capability to deliver.

Our pilots go through an incredibly rigid Measure training program, so when they go out in the field wearing our logo on their shirts, our clients know that we are far more capable than the drone hobbyist.

What makes the dynamic between the two of you work so well?

Wolf: With my background running a company and Brandon's background of understanding the regulatory environment, we were able to make sure that we were spending money wisely in the first years. We were able to hire the right people, make sure our flight operations were not overly risky, and stay out of the grey area of regulation. This meant we had to make sure we were not taking undue risks with respect to the type of drones we were using and/or the type of permits we were getting.

Brandon and I speak all the time. We have some disagreements and constructively challenge each other, but because of our respect for each other and shared vision, we find a way to get to the right conclusion that is best for our clients, our employees, and our investors. ●