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Business Airport

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

April 2017

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In this issue

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BAI reveals how the world's elite athletes like to travel

UP FOR GRABS?

How Donald Trump's bid to privatize US air traffic control could affect business aviation

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Welcome

My background as an editor and journalist is mainly in technology and engineering. I've covered lots of different industries and sectors. I've written about aviation many times, both aircraft and airports.

So, when faced with learning the detail of business aviation for this esteemed publication – and having to do it fast – I was glad to discover that it shares many of the opportunities and issues that impact other sectors and the people within them. There are political and regulatory influences, technology and innovation drivers, business and management pressures. These topics and more are reflected throughout the magazine.

Our cover story on page 58 tackles a heated debate happening in the US aviation sector. ATC privatization is back on the political agenda, with the new administration keen to fund a modernization program. But is privatization an appropriate model for the world's largest ATC system, and what would it mean for FBOs and charter operators? Our USA-based reporter, Kathryn B Creedy, finds out.

ATC systems, this time in Europe, are also examined on page 70, as we look at how the latest technology can improve capacity and efficiency at business airports. The EBACE convention takes place on May 22-24, so we have an extensive guide to *Flying to Switzerland* on page 34. In addition, our regular city focus on page 86 this issue features New York's airports.

Then, if you need more guidance, on page 24 Saul Wordsworth shows a way for FBOs through the maze of internet marketing, apps and social media. Digital media and marketing can be baffling for the uninitiated and this

article should help you decide if and how it could add to your company's bottom line.

Still, while digital innovations are trending, it's become apparent during the short time I've been exposed to business aviation that it's a sector built on established and traditional principles. As our feature on page 50 reveals, uniforms are the embodiment of those principles. They are evolving, but their importance in terms of image and customer relations remains undiminished.

In contrast to the traditional, the leading startups in business aviation featured in the story on page 78 show that innovation is very much alive and kicking in the sector. These companies are rapidly establishing themselves by taking different approaches to customer acquisition and by using operating models that differ radically from those of the industry incumbents. While some fear that they may degrade the image and professionalism of the industry by broadening the use of private aviation resources, the business incentive behind acquiring customers from commercial aviation is irresistible.

Any growth in customer numbers will serve to complement the already solid performance by business aviation, as shown by the data from industry monitoring services on pages 8 and 12. The sector is off to a good start this year and this edition of *Business Airport International* reflects that. I also hope this issue strikes a good balance between management and business issues and technical industry-related issues, and in doing so offers something for everyone. Happy reading!

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A NEW VIP TERMINAL IS COMING TO AUSTRALIA,
LOCATED AT MELBOURNE AIRPORT.
OPENING IN 2018, **MELBOURNE JET BASE** LOOKS
SET TO BECOME ONE OF THE PREMIER
FACILITIES OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

Work is underway on Melbourne Jet Base, a VIP private jet terminal being built at Melbourne Airport in Australia. It will be part of the existing Melbourne Aviation Precinct – an aviation business park offering airport visitors a wide range of services, including hangar and apron parking; office, workshop and warehouse facilities; support equipment and fuel. With the opening of Melbourne Jet Base in 2018, the park will also have something specifically tailored to cater for business aviation guests.

The precinct is owned by Little Group, which has interests in property and investments, as well as aviation. The company will invest A\$100m (US\$76.7m) to make Melbourne Jet Base Australia's first curfew-free, purpose-built private jet base, built on the site of an old engineering and maintenance facility.

Founder and chairman of Little Group, Paul Little, is justifiably pleased to have a jet base of this nature in the works. "It's going to be on a par with the VIP jet bases of North America, Europe and the Middle East," he says. "Australia has never had anything like this before and it will be the ultimate gateway to the country for private jet travelers."

Main image: The interior will feature materials and colors influenced by the Australian landscape

Right: Among the facilities at Melbourne Jet Base will be purpose-built hangars for up to 20 jets



Job creation

How Melbourne Jet Base will meet expectations and demand

The opening of Melbourne Jet Base, and the business aviation customers it is expected to attract, will lead to an increase in jobs. "We are anticipating that the project will result in the creation of 300 jobs across Melbourne Jet Base and the Melbourne Aviation Precinct, where it is based," says Paul Little, founder and chairman of Little Group, the company behind both facilities.

Appealing to VIP guests, standards of customer service will need to be high, with some staff having already commenced their training. "To see how things should work, our CEO, Murray Rance, visited TAG Farnborough Airport in the UK, which is an established business airport," Little says. "Staff who will eventually be moved to Melbourne Jet Base are already working at the precinct. For example, we have a dedicated team of ground handling staff, and all private jet movements through the airport are handled by them. We want to ensure the highest standards possible."

Vital statistics

Location: Melbourne Aviation Precinct, Melbourne Airport, state of Victoria, Australia

Opening date: 2018

Operating hours: 24 hours

Runway length: 09/27 – 7,500ft;
16/34 – 11,998ft

Fuel: Jet A, Avgas 100LL

The monetary investment is considerable, and the architect's drawings reveal a sleek, spacious and well designed facility. Little must be convinced that there is a large potential customer base. "There are more than 1,000 business jets in the Asia-Pacific market," he says, "and we expect strong growth in private jet ownership."

Australian flavor

Something apparent in the design brief is that Melbourne Jet Base will reflect the country surrounding it. "The interior will feature materials and colors influenced by the Australian landscape," Little says. "Over the past 20 years of my own private air travel, I've experienced a number of FBOs throughout the world. With Melbourne Jet Base, we've sought to draw inspiration from the best elements of each of these, while endeavoring to give it a unique Australian flavor."

Designed by award-winning Cox Architects, with construction handled by Hutchinson Builders,

"Melbourne Jet Base gives more options – it will not be bound by curfew and will operate 24/7, whereas other facilities at airports here are subject to limited hours"

Paul Little, founder, Little Group

Melbourne Jet Base will take 18 months to complete. "The architecture draws inspiration from flight and aviation," Little reveals. "In the words of the architect, Melbourne Jet Base will be 'an evocation of the phenomenon of flight in architectural form'."

The long list of features is impressive. "It will have a full suite of FBO facilities and services," says Little. "That means purpose-built hangars with capacity for up to 20 jets of varying sizes; boardroom and conference facilities; secure underground parking; catering and entertainment; customs and quarantine; a flight planning room and rest area; fuel and maintenance; plus round-the-clock access to the jet base itself and the airport."

Working with the airport

Melbourne Airport might be getting an all-new facility for VIP travelers, courtesy of the aviation precinct, but will it simply complement what it offers already? The Jet City FBO, for example, is already available at the main airport itself. Currently all international arrivals are fed through the same channels, but there is a VIP lounge where private airline guests can wait away from commercial passengers. "We are working closely with Melbourne Airport and have their full support for this initiative," Little confirms. "Melbourne Jet Base gives more options – it will not be bound by curfew and will operate 24/7, whereas other facilities at airports here are subject to limited hours."

Little is confident that Melbourne Jet Base will be a success. "It's going to provide jet travelers with a dedicated FBO for their comfort and convenience," he says. "Their safety, security and privacy needs will be taken care of by our dedicated team, who will also ensure a smooth and effortless transit. We believe Melbourne Jet Base will be the finest private jet facility in Australia, if not the world." ○

Below: The VIP facility will open in 2018 as one of the best of its kind in the world

Special events

The best reasons for VIPs to visit Melbourne

Many of the clients making use of Melbourne Jet Base could be visiting for one of the city's high-profile events. The Australian Grand Prix, for example, currently takes place at the Melbourne Grand Prix circuit and kicks off the Formula 1 calendar every March.

In November the Melbourne Cup horse race takes place – known locally as 'the race that stops a nation' – with a public holiday declared for everyone working in the city and some parts of regional Victoria. It is the richest two-mile handicap in the world, and one of the richest turf races, with A\$6.2m (US\$4.7m) in prize money.

Another attraction for VIPs is sure to be the Crown Casino, located within a luxury hotel resort on the south bank of the Yarra River. A helicopter will be on standby at Melbourne Jet Base to take visitors direct to the casino.





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WEALTH REPORT REVEALS PRIVATE AVIATION HOTSPOTS

The USA is set to remain the busiest region for private aviation in the next decade, as the number of wealthy individuals there continues to rise. But, the size of private jet fleets is growing the fastest in Asia, a report has revealed.

Data from monitoring company Jetnet shows that the largest number of business jets, 12,717 aircraft, is operated from the USA and that the fleet has grown 31% from 9,457 in 2006. Mexico, with 950 jets, and Brazil, with 786, have the second- and third-largest fleets.

The number of private jets has grown the fastest in Asian countries over the past 10 years. Hong Kong's fleet experienced the largest growth with an increase of 535% to 127 jets, with China's jet numbers rising by 367% to 277.

Meanwhile, data from industry analyst WINGX shows that over 75% of the world's 1,000 busiest private jet routes are within the USA. The most

“The Chinese market is set to see strong growth. The government is starting to see the importance of business jets as a competitive tool for corporations”

Richard Koe,
managing director of WINGX

popular was from LA Van Nuys to Las Vegas McCarran, with 2,202 flights.

The data was included in luxury estate agency Knight Frank's annual *Wealth Report*, a survey of 900 private bankers and wealth managers from around the world, which offers information about ultra-high-net-worth individuals' investment and lifestyle spending.

The report estimates that the number of ultra-high-net-worth individuals in the USA will increase by 31% to 95,860 by 2026.

Richard Koe, managing director of WINGX, said, “Looking ahead, the Chinese market is set to see strong growth. The government is starting to see the importance of business jets as a competitive tool to support corporations in pursuit of regional trade opportunities.”

Hardy Sohanpal, regional sales director at Global Jet Concept, said, “There is potential for growth in the USA, depending on the new administration's policies. We've had inquiries from construction and finance companies.

“Globally, private jet numbers are likely to rise as the desire to travel efficiently with privacy becomes more of a priority for corporations and private individuals. The introduction of new apps and charter models that are competing to become the Uber of the airways is also likely to attract those who shuttle frequently between cities, traveling first or business class.” ○

The numbers

20,973
Total number of business jets in the world

70%
Increase on the 14,535 business jets in 2006

40%
Proportion of Latin America's wealthy residents that choose to fly non-commercially – the highest in the world

12%
Rise in the number of private jet flights in 2016 within the USA (1,704,678) compared with 2012

4%
Proportion of wealthy Australasians that choose to use private aviation – the lowest in the world

2%
Rise in the number of private jet flights in 2016 within Europe (409,149) compared with 2012

Source: Knight Frank Wealth Report 2017



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LONDON'S BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT EXTENDS OPERATING HOURS IN BID TO ATTRACT MORE TRANSATLANTIC AND MIDDLE EASTERN FLIGHTS

Biggin Hill Airport in London is extending its operating hours from next month in a bid to increase the number of flights it receives from the USA. The move is part of a series of projects to expand the airport and open it up to new markets over the next few years.

The operating hours extension, which was approved last year and comes into effect on May 1, will see the airport open from 6:30am to 11:00pm during weekdays and from 8:00am until 10:00pm at the weekends.

Robert Walters, business development director at London Biggin Hill Airport, said, "The extension allows us to accommodate earlier transatlantic flights, getting people off and out, be it to London and the City or Europe, for the working day and at night. Flights to the Middle East can now also take off and arrive in the early morning. We've never been able to do that before."

The new hours are launching as construction of an additional 140,000ft² office, hangar and business aircraft parking facility at Biggin Hill begins. Initial groundworks for the hangar have been completed and construction is due to begin this month. Construction of a 50-bed four-star hotel is also planned to start at the airport later this year.

In addition, GPS approaches are being installed on the runway, to make it easier for jets to land at Biggin Hill in adverse weather conditions.

"It's not just aircraft taking off and landing. It's creating jobs and a future for the airport"

Robert Walters, business development manager, London Biggin Hill Airport

Vital statistics

Location: London, UK
Operating hours: Mon-Fri
6:30am-11:00pm, Sat-Sun
8:00am-10:00pm
Runway length: 5,932ft
Fuel: Jet A1, Avgas



Bombardier and Signature

The extension to the operating hours and infrastructure enhancements at Biggin Hill follows two major contracts for the airport at its former RizonJet FBO facility, a 140,000ft² premises built in 2011 at a cost of US\$48m.

Both Signature Flight Support and Bombardier moved into the building last June. The facility features a terminal with private lounge areas, a boardroom and conference areas, which have been fully refurbished and branded by Signature Flight Support. The move quadrupled Signature's presence at Biggin Hill.

Bombardier services Learjet, Challenger and Global business aircraft at the facility, which features 32,990ft² of hangar space. The service center is fully equipped to perform scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, as well as modifications, avionics installations, and aircraft ground support.

Spitfire heritage

Biggin Hill Airport celebrated its 100th anniversary earlier this year. The airport has a rich and colorful history, including many proud links to the military.

There are dozens of RAF buildings on the site that once housed officers undergoing training and selection. There is also a Spitfire scramble hut and several Spitfire pens from World War II, complete with bunkers that would have once housed fuel and supplies, located on the far edge of the airfield.

A rare Spitfire has recently been restored by a company on-site, RAS Completions, which carries out paint work and interiors. Patsalides said: "Biggin Hill is promoting itself as London and as British with a strong heritage. We're the only airport in the Southeast dedicated to business aviation. We have many different elements; the capabilities offered here for aviation is unrivaled."



Walters said that the scale of the airport's expansion is unprecedented in its 100-year history, and that the airport authority has had to carefully negotiate with several stakeholders in order to successfully embark on multiple projects simultaneously.

"National government policy sets the tone and standards. The growing needs of the business aviation community need to be catered for. That all filters into the regional Greater London Authority and then local borough council and our 65 resident companies.

"You have to take a trickle-down approach. You get results by lobbying constructively and consistently and by demonstrating the value. It's not just about aircraft taking off and landing. It's about creating jobs and a future for the airport."

Above: **Biggin Hill is 12 miles from London**

Left: **The Bombardier service center was opened in 2016**

Another aspect of successful expansion is the quality of the plans themselves, which Walters said must be "suitable and sensitive to local needs". The founding of the London Aerospace and Technology College nearby as a local skills and jobs initiative has been a large part of building a relationship with the local community. "The challenge is making sure the community and government are with you," he said.

In addition, for the first time in its history, Biggin Hill is raising debt to finance its expansion. Last month it announced a £15m (US\$18m) finance package with HSBC bank. It's not a move that has been taken lightly by the management. Walters said, "Our plans require a huge level of financial investment. The airport is profitable and all our revenues are put back into it.

"This is a 20- to 25-year process. We are here to stay and are committed to continually investing in the future. We must guarantee that to our customers and tenants. Our job will never stop, introducing new entrants to the market, maintaining existing relationships. We must keep changing and innovating new ways of replenishing our income."

Serving the market

The extension to the operating hours is costing around £1m (US\$1.2m) to implement and means that the airport is open significantly longer than other nearby competitor airports, said Andy Patsalides, marketing manager, London Biggin Hill Airport.

The airport, which predominantly serves the business market, hosts 65 different aerospace-related businesses and 1,100 jobs on-site. A target has been set by the airport and the local London borough council, to increase the number of jobs at the airport site by 2,300 by 2030.

"We have space to expand and we want to attract new businesses here. But the primary job is to get private jets to base themselves here. Each based jet creates eight new jobs. We may be the fastest growing airport in the southeast of England, but it's not just the number of movements, it's the type of jets that's important, hence our focus on garnering more of the transatlantic private aviation market," he said. ○

EUROPEAN BUSINESS AVIATION TRAFFIC UP AFTER DIFFICULT 2016

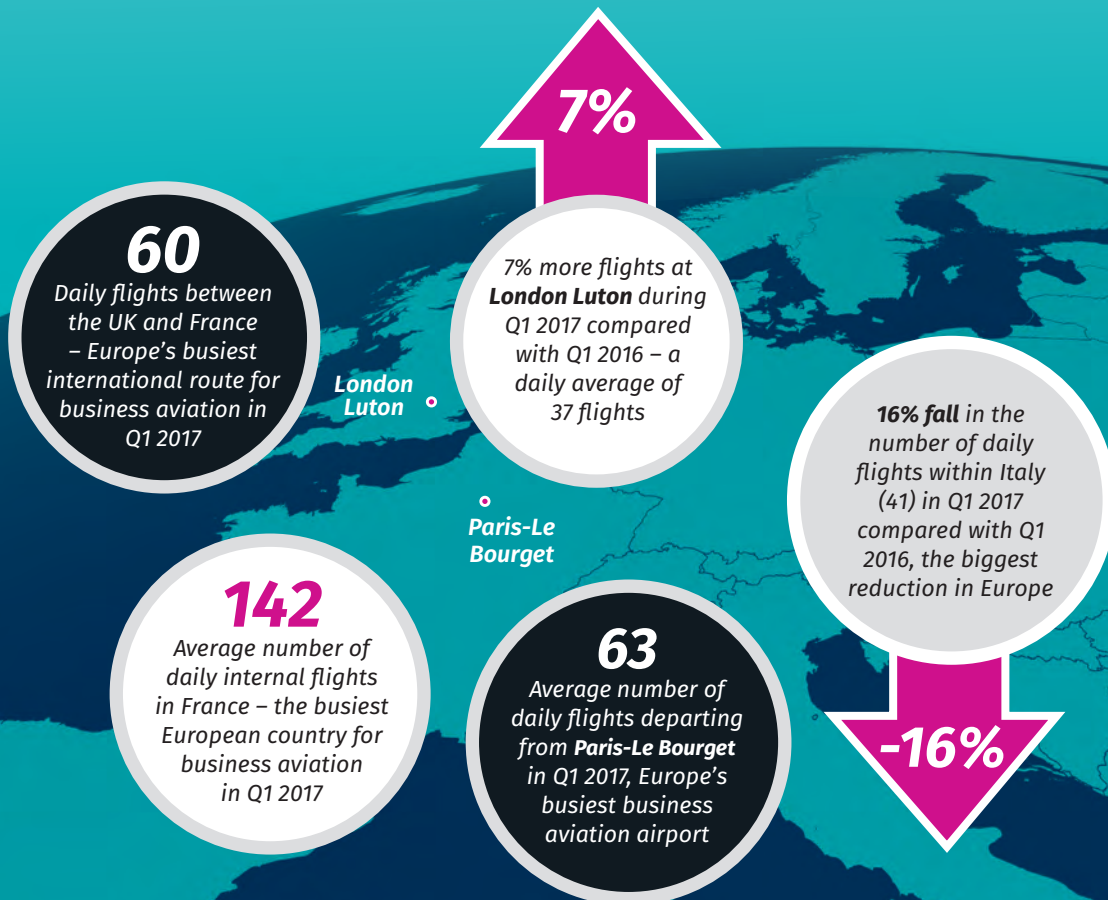
Business air traffic in Europe has seen a moderate increase at the start of 2017 after a steady drop in demand for flights at the end of last year. Historically the quieter part of the year for business air travel within the continent, January, February and March achieved growth of 6.4%, 3.6% and 9% respectively, with 44,795 flights in January, 46,270 in February, and 55,850 in March.

The findings of the DAIO (departures, arrivals, internal and overflights) report by the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) is good news for the sector after a steady drop in business flight demand since September of last year.

January saw a slight drop on December's figure of 45,480, but the increase in demand for February and March flights is hoped to be the start of increased summer demand as seen in previous years.

Brian Humphries, president of the EBAA, said, "Business aviation traffic generally follows business cycles, although there are always peaks and troughs according to the time of year. The end of 2016 may have marked the bottom of the current cycle as we have now seen months of continuous growth, a trend not seen for several years.

"We cannot make predictions about 2017, but we are hopeful that we will continue to see a steady, if relatively small, rise in traffic figures." ○



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“There’s increasing uncertainty about Britain’s position in the global business and general aviation market”

Marc Bailey



The CEO of the British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) debates the challenges and potential opportunities posed by the upcoming Brexit

At the British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA), the biggest national organization responsible for this exciting sector, our aim is to be the most influential voice for the industry in the UK, to listen and lobby on behalf of our members about what matters to them most. Certainly, a huge concern over the next two years will be the outcome of our government’s Brexit negotiations.

With Article 50 triggered on March 29, the expected two-year timeslot for these negotiations is finally underway. All kinds of topics, from trade to immigration – and airspace – will be discussed as part of the UK redefining its relationship with the EU.

But as a result of this, there’s increasing uncertainty about Britain’s position in the global business and general aviation market. Single skies and maintaining close ties with Europe are of paramount importance, which is why we are extremely pleased to have entered into a formal partnership with the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA). As part of this partnership, UK member companies join EBAA via BBGA, and all of the existing UK members of BBGA automatically become members of EBAA.

None of us can predict the outcome of the discussions that are taking place around Brexit, but we see a development like this as extremely positive. It strengthens our connections with our European friends, and will hopefully offer

some reassurance to businesses on both sides of the Channel.

Opportunity beckons

It might seem a little unfortunate for the timing of the Brexit negotiations, given that EASA has finally certified single-engine turboprops (SETP) for public charter operations. We’re excited about this development, because SETPs – particularly the Pilatus PC-12 – have enjoyed enormous success in North America, and entrepreneurial operators in Europe are doing well with their primarily fractional and membership models.

Aircraft like the PC-12 and Daher TBM900 open up a new entry level for charter and are poised to generate new business for our smaller general aviation airfields. These aircraft will also help make more efficient use of our established FBOs.

We can’t ignore, however, that a number of small general aviation airfields are under threat of closure in favor of housing, several in the southeast of the UK. How can we play our part to help secure the 400,000 new pilots our industry needs over the next decade if we lose our airfields? This is an important issue, and we are working with GAAC

and AOPA in this regard. Hopefully the government is not so engrossed in Brexit to see the potential with this and SETPs.

Preparing for change

To serve our membership better, we’re implementing change from the inside out with help from corporate behavior specialists. Sewells, working with us since the end of last year, was recently bolstered with the addition of a 12-strong volunteer group of varied expertise. We are working toward five new core values: Commitment, collaboration, integrity, resourcefulness and respect, and we will present our new Visions and Values later this year.

We are also supporting the Royal Aeronautical Society with its new initiative, Time to Rethink Business Aviation. This addresses challenges posed by Brexit, ill-suited regulations, and how to go about attracting new employees and customers, with several of UK’s MPs involved. This is a positive sign. ○



Above: EASA has certified single-engine turboprops for public charter use

Marc Bailey has worked in aviation for more than 40 years. He has been CEO of the BBGA for the past six years, and is also chairman and president of the European Council of General Aviation Support; a member of the EASA advisory board; and deputy chair of the UK maintenance error management group. For more on the BBGA, email rachael.paskin@bbga.aero or visit www.bbga.aero



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Words | Paul Willis

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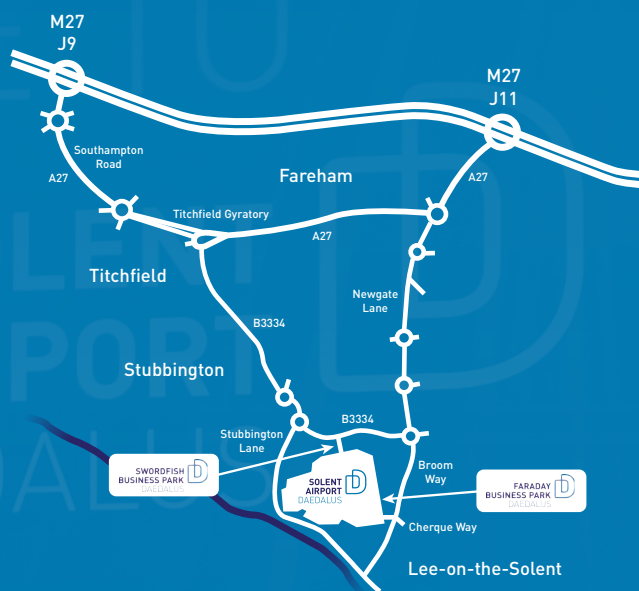




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Runway category:	CAA Licensed - Visual - Code 2B
ICAO Designator:	EGHF
Airfield Location:	1nm NNW of Lee-on-the-Solent
Airport ARP:	50° 48'53" N 001° 12'20" W
Grid Reference:	SU 561 019 GB
Radio:	118.925 MHz Call sign - 'Lee Radio' (AGCS)
Opening Hours:	7 days per week
Airfield elevation:	+32ft

Contact

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Handling Team**
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Last season the University of Hawaii's American football team, known as the Rainbow Warriors, kicked off their campaign with a game against the University of California's Golden Bears in Sydney, Australia.

A week later they passed through nine time zones back to the USA to play Michigan in Ann Arbor. Just seven away games later they had logged a total of nearly 50,000 miles of air travel.

Given their location, marooned in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the Rainbow Warriors are an extreme case. But their example shows how essential air travel has become to the sports industry. In the USA, where the size of the country means air travel is often the only option, teams in all the major domestic sports leagues fly to fixtures throughout the year.

"They're basically using air travel to commute to work," says Greg Raiff, CEO and founder of Private Jet Services (PJS), a US private aviation charter company with a number of pro-sports clients. "The difference is that if they don't show up to work, the show literally can't go on."

Two-thirds of PJS's business is focused on flying sports teams. Non-disclosure agreements mean Raiff can't reveal the names of those clients, although in a recent Forbes article he let slip the identity of one – the Boston Bruins ice hockey team. He says that since he founded the business 15 years ago, PJS has grown to become "one of the top two companies in the professional sports industry in North America". The other is Delta Air Lines.

Raiff attributes this growth in part to the success of scheduled air travel, which means major commercial carriers like Delta have less fleet available for sports team charters. "As their availability has been contracting, we have been picking up new professional sports team clients at an accelerating rate," he says.

The other factor Raiff cites in his success is his company's emphasis on punctuality – an essential component in attracting sports teams' business.



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Above: **Major League Baseball teams criss-cross the USA during a 162-game, six-month schedule**

Right: **Larger US sports teams may use modified commercial aircraft for transport between games**



"The reason we've been able to grow so well over time is that we've built a system that acknowledges that it's absolutely critical to get these folks where they need to go," he says. "So, there's always two back-up options."

Raiff contrasts his business model to leading private aviation company NetJets, which reserves the right to slide customers onto planes that leave up to three hours earlier or later on peak days. "Can you imagine doing that to a pro-sports team on their way to a game?" he asks.

Home advantage

But good timekeeping is about more than just making it to the fixtures. A 2009 study on the disruption in performance to US Major League baseball teams caused by long-distance travel found that teams hosting opponents who had traveled across a three-hour time difference – the maximum possible in North America – won 61% of their games. By contrast, where the time advantage was only one or two hours the home team had a 52% win rate.

For this reason, PJS is focused on reducing journey times to an absolute minimum, with Raiff saying that about 10 hours' planning goes in to every flight he operates.

"We track every moment of the journey," he says. "If I can load 15 minutes faster, make the screening process five minutes faster, clear the trays and get you going four minutes faster, that's 24 minutes I've saved. If I can do that 70 times a year, that adds up 30 to 40 hours. To professional athletes, that additional rest time can make all the difference, at least in a game or two."

Clive Chalmers, director of commercial jets at global aviation charter Air Partner, echoes Raiff's views, saying that when it comes to transporting pro sport stars, "tiny margins can make the difference between success and failure".

Air Partner works primarily in the European sports market and has clients from a range of professional sports, including soccer, rugby, Formula 1, golf and cycling. The operator has a number of contingencies to avoid delays.

"We have access to alternative aircraft should something happen to the primary aircraft," says Chalmers. "We try to use carriers that have some fleet redundancy."



"We track every moment of the journey. To professional athletes, additional rest time can make all the difference"

Greg Raiff, CEO and founder of Private Jet Services

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“We’ve had situations in the past where we’ve diverted to a different airport mid-flight to avoid the media”

Clive Chalmers, director of commercial jets at Air Partner



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Left: Major events such as the Super Bowl see players scrutinized by media as they disembark charter flights

Below right: Gulfstream aircraft are a popular choice for transporting athletes

The company also runs a 24-hour operations department that Chalmers says is vital, because many of the soccer clubs competing in Champions League fixtures fly back late at night “and problems tend to happen after hours”.

Like PJS, Air Partner has experienced a boom in business in recent years. Sports industry clients now account for a quarter of its UK business alone. Chalmers attributes the increase to the amount of extra money entering modern sports, especially soccer. This in turn has led to more fixtures as clubs try to cash in on the sport’s growing status, he says.

“A lot of the big clubs are going on pre-season tours that now tend to be intercontinental and long haul, especially to places in Asia, which has helped drive our growth,” says Chalmers. “Also, the size of tournaments has increased. Last year’s Euros in France was a good example. The number of teams competing was expanded, which meant more games, which in turn meant more of a requirement to move around.”

The exorbitant sums washing around in pro sports have influenced the way sports teams travel in other ways too. In the USA some pro teams are flown to games courtesy of their billionaire owners. For some years the Seattle Seahawks commuted to fixtures in a Boeing 757-200 that belonged to Paul Allen, the Microsoft co-founder who owns the NFL franchise. Meanwhile, the Dallas Mavericks basketball team have on occasion been loaned their entrepreneur owner Mark Cuban’s Gulfstream V, outfitted with underfloor heating and gold-plated interiors.

Tournament challenges

The stakes are high when athletes compete in major tournaments. And for the aviation companies tasked with looking after their transport needs, the pressure is on too.

For a start there’s the extra challenge of congestion. The Super Bowl, as well as being America’s biggest sporting event, is also the largest annual gathering of private jets. For the 2016 final in Santa Clara, California, there were an estimated 2,500 private flights. Jets had to be routed to 21 airports in and around Houston, Texas, for the 2017 final.

Similar congestion in air traffic was a feature of the Euro 2016 soccer championships in France.

“Parking space on the apron can be a battle,” says Clive Chalmers of aviation firm Air Partner, which oversaw charters for four national teams. “There are not only the teams but also supporters, corporate sponsors and the media.”

Added to this is the fact that most tournaments take place in the summer,

a naturally high-demand period. Airport authorities in host countries usually prioritize flights with teams on board to help circumvent these congestion issues. They also route opposing teams to different airports when the fixture is set to take place in a city served by more than one hub.

Yet another challenge of major tournaments is their unpredictability. Once teams reach the knock-out stages, they usually only learn the venue of their next game at short notice. “So you might get just a couple of days to arrange flights,” says Chalmers.

For the biggest sporting event of them all, the Olympics, the problem can be one of scale. For last year’s games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Air Partner transported the entire Hungarian team, about 300 people in total.

“There just wasn’t charter availability in Hungary for that number of travelers, so we had to bring in a Boeing 777 to pick them up,” Chalmers says.

Customization

A number of big-name stars also have private jets of their own, notably British ex-soccer player David Beckham, former boxing champ Floyd Mayweather and basketball legend Michael Jordan. Jordan has even had his famous Jumpman logo embossed on his jet’s tail, while the plane’s call sign, N236MJ, features his initials, team number and the number of NBA titles he won as a player.

While customized call signs might smack of vanity, Raiff says that PJS often customizes its charters, especially for its long-term sports clients. He offers the example of a team that wanted to entirely redesign the interior of a Boeing 757



Mike Fuchslocher/Shutterstock.com

Tailored transport

If transporting sports teams is becoming such a lucrative market for business aviation and charter companies, how long will it be before we see an aircraft specifically tailored to this type of client? Russian manufacturer Sukhoi displayed a private jet concept at a number of air shows last year, and even the Rio 2016 Olympics, where it had custom-fitted everything a sports team might need for treating injuries, strategy meetings and even fitness monitoring.

The so-called SportJet – based on Sukhoi's SSJ100 model – would be split into four zones, each containing different equipment. Key features include a specially designed massage table, where athletes can receive treatments for injuries, and a 'coach zone' with chairs and tablet screens,

where teams can discuss tactics or analyze a player's performance.

In terms of monitoring, sensors built into the seats and in the bathroom can detect physiological changes and monitor an athlete's hydration levels, alerting them or their coach via a smartphone app if action needs to be taken. For a thorough analysis, sports stars can also jump into a specially-designed diagnostics capsule during their flight to obtain more data.

Speaking to CNBC, Evgeniy Andrachnikov, senior vice president of sales at Sukhoi, said, "We do believe a market niche does exist in terms of an aircraft designed to carry a professional sports team. They travel a lot over long distances, they are getting injured and most hate to fly."



Above: Sukhoi's SportJet prototype features a range of equipment specific to an athlete's needs, from massage tables and coaching areas to diagnostics machines

"Athletes can be superstitious. There's one player we've flown for years who eats the same pre-game meal on every flight"

Greg Raiff, CEO and founder of Private Jet Services

to create a family room at the back. He says, "Aviation is a little bit like interior decorating. If you have the inclination and the money, we can certainly help you spend it."

In Europe, customization of aircraft tends to make less economic sense, because the jets are usually chartered on a more ad hoc basis. "Where Air Partner has seasonal deals, customization does happen," says Chalmers, citing the example of embossing a sports team's logo on the seat headrest covers.

Where customization is perhaps most evident is in catering for the players. Both PJS and Air Partner work closely with team travel managers, dieticians and coaching staff through the off season and throughout the playing season to meet players' dietary needs, which Raiff says can get very specific.

"Athletes can be rather superstitious," he says. "For example, there's one player we've flown for years who eats the same pre-game meal on every flight."



Below: Charter operators for sports teams often offer services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

At the airport, PJS and Air Partner favor using FBOs whenever possible. "It's a lot more seamless than the main terminal and it means our clients are not at risk of being hassled by the public," says Chalmers.

When private terminals are not available, Air Partner liaises with the airport authority to try to get airside access for the team bus, so that they can be picked up direct from the tarmac. If that's not possible, they will attempt to transfer through the terminal at a quieter time, or to pass through private security channels.

"If we're aware of a potential media intrusion we can take steps," says Chalmers. "We've even had situations in the past where we've diverted to a different airport mid-flight to avoid the media."

PJS also takes measures to protect players' privacy. Raiff says, "It's our responsibility to ensure that everyone working with us signs a non-disclosure confidentiality agreement and that we brief staff traveling with the teams that this is their private time, and that what happens on the plane stays on the plane. So far we've not had an incident where that trust has been violated."

Raiff says that more often than not, the respect they show the players is reciprocated. "My experience with professional sports teams is that these folks are substantially more respectful than some of the stories might lead one to believe," he says.

That said, he does recall one particularly interesting incident of having to fly a team coast-to-coast after they had clinched a major championship.

"It took a full three days to fumigate the plane after we got them off," he says, before adding quickly. "Of course, I'm not going to reveal which team that was." ○





skylink



Skylink Services Ltd is well-established and well known for the provision of ground handling services for Executive and Military Aircraft in Cyprus. It began operations in 1998, filling the gap in the Executive Aircraft ground handling market at both Larnaca and Pafos International Airports of Cyprus.

Over the last decade the company has grown significantly in size and reputation. Skylink Services owns and operates the only FBO facility at Larnaca Airport offering around-the-clock professional VIP aircraft and passenger handling services. Currently representing over 400 companies that own or operate executive aircraft worldwide, the company caters to aircraft ranging from very light jets to larger aircraft such as Boeing 747 and Airbus 340 and we are the preferred choice for most VIPs, celebrities and business persons travelling to or from Cyprus.

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Terminal was used by Pope Benedict XVI, on 6th June 2010, when he completed a historic official visit to Cyprus. In addition, the Terminal was used for the Heads of State during the second half of 2012 when the Republic of Cyprus was hosting the EU Rotating Presidency. Numerous Presidents and dignitaries have also used the terminal on official visits to Cyprus i.e Vice President of the United States Joe Biden, Former President's of the United States Jimmy Carter & Bill Clinton, President of Russia Mr . Medvedev, former EU commissioner Barroso and current EU commissioner Junker, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and many others.

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Digital dis

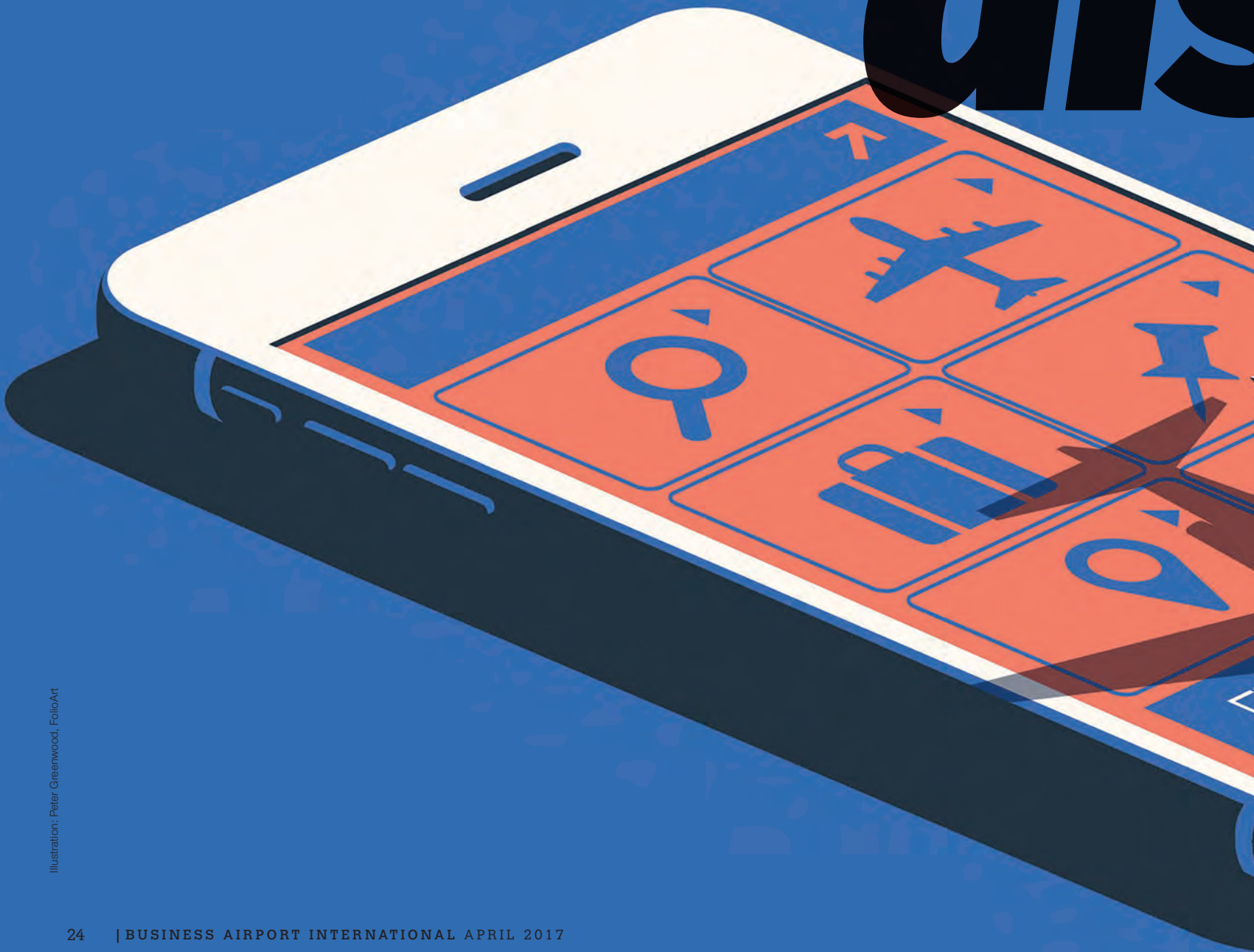


Illustration: Peter Greenwood, FolioArt

Disruption



Business Airport International talks to FBOs and charter jet operators about how to use the internet and social media to achieve real business benefits

Words | **Saul Wordsworth**

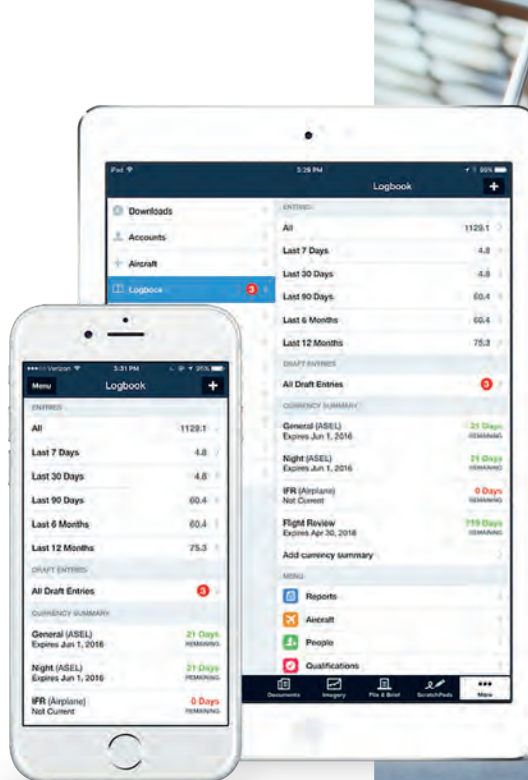
Business aviation is an industry steeped in tradition and one in which everyone, not least FBOs, trades on their experience and reputation. But things are changing. Today a new generation of digital customers engage with the world primarily via smartphone and are always online.

“Advances in technology are affecting the way FBOs do business in today’s market,” says Mark Jaraczewski, director of FBO operations for McKinney Air Center in Texas. “From the use of iPads with fuelling equipment to speed up invoicing to social media, we must continue to explore all avenues to give us a competitive advantage. Most of the top-rated FBOs have some type of digital technology that will give their operation a gain in performance or communication. Time is so important to everyone nowadays that we have to find processes that will not delay our customers or reduce employees’ performance.”

Investing in change

“If your name is not out there on Flightplan, ForeFlight or FuellerLinx, then you will struggle,” says Ryan Maxfield, general manager of Indy Jets, an FBO based at Indianapolis Regional Airport. “These are the apps and websites that 90% of pilots are using, at least in the USA. This has meant a big increase in marketing spend for us. We must be on those websites to put a competitive foot forward, because if we’re not then we won’t be seen.

“We considered creating our own app but there is not enough demand. Customers rely more on the industry staples I’ve cited. Otherwise guerrilla marketing – phone calls and emails – is the best way to reach people.”



Above: **Digital logbooks on iPads and iPhones are becoming increasingly popular with pilots**



“Clients are more knowledgeable and informed than ever before. FBOs must never underestimate them. Be honest and transparent and have everything available for them so that they can make an informed decision straight away. FBOs can play their price cards close to their chests, but they don’t have to be secretive. It is a competitive industry, but that is to everyone’s benefit. Clients often know more than the FBOs.”

Fiona Langton, general manager, XJet London

“Technology definitely plays a huge part in the future of our business and you need to stay on top of what is happening in the industry. We also understand that it takes the right balance of technology and personalized service and relationships to drive business into our facility. In this industry, ‘touches’ are so important to your ability to obtain a customer’s business.”

Don Campion, CEO, Banyan



Digital leadership



“Most top-rated FBOs have some type of digital technology that will give their operation a gain in performance or communication”

Mark Jaraczewski, director of FBO operations,
McKinney Air Center



“Ensure you have a digital and online presence on the key software used by the majority of private and charter operators. You need proper exposure on the net. No one picks up a phone or uses a map anymore to see what offerings there are in a city.”

**Ryan Maxfield, general manager
of Indy Jets**



“Invest in good photography and a good website. Customers who first come to private aviation from an app or website will also look online for their FBO choices. New technology is coming online in the near future that will allow closer integration with operators. Keep an eye out for the solutions that will work best for you.”

**Richard Thomas, vice president of
marketing, Stellar Labs**



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Above: **The AeroPlus Aviation Weather App** provides meteorological data in a visual way

Left: **Flight planning is often done online or via apps**

Jamie Santiago, chief brand manager with Dallas-based FBO Business Jet Center, comments, "Our email promotions let people know what's going on – customer events and so on. We also do a lot of web banner advertising and social media. There has been a marked increase in electronic service orders, with people using the website instead of calling on the phone."

Investment in a modern website is crucial. However they initially come into contact with an FBO, a client will invariably visit your site and judge whether they find it in keeping with their professional needs. Appearance, clear design, easy functionality and a full range of service options are essential to convey the appropriate message.

"Our website is constantly being updated and tracked," says Nancy Bouvier, marketing director of Banyan Air Service, an FBO in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "We use lots of videos and search engine optimization keyword rankings

to make sure we have a strong presence on the web. Email blasts work best for us. We don't have an app. It doesn't make sense to have one when we are on sites such as Airnav and Avfuel. I don't think pilots would download individual apps for each FBO they visit."

Digital expectations

On-the-ground expectations for a client in today's digital world are also high. Wi-fi throughout an FBO is a given and must be available on the ramp for crews to download aircraft operating history, update flight plans and update cabin entertainment. Fuel trucks must have wireless feeds back to the terminal to expedite billing. Digital flight planning is the norm with weather and updates now required. In addition, more aircraft have computerized logbooks that have to integrate with the maintenance, repair and operations.

Using data analysis tools, FBOs can gain valuable insight into their customer's movements and those of potential clients in a way that would not have been possible in the pre-digital age. Today most FBOs run a marketing analytics or CRM system to track customer information. Indy Jets uses TRAQpak, a web-based aircraft movement intelligence tool that provides live flight tracking.

"Not only does it give us arrivals and departures information updated by the minute, but it has very strong analytical tools that enable us to closely track where hot prospects are," says Maxfield. "We can monitor every GA jet operation and cut it up how it suits us: how often they visit the city, where are they flying to and from, what fuel and jet they are using. We can then approach these potential

"We don't have an app. I don't think pilots would download individual apps for each FBO they visit"

Nancy Bouvier, marketing director,
Banyan Air Service

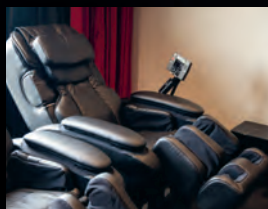
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Social media: handy tool or pointless plaything?

How and whether businesses should use social media is often a divisive subject. Here, three private aviation professionals attempt to settle the argument over whether it is appropriate for FBOs to use platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

"It keeps us in the forefront of their mind for the next visit. As customers like, comment and share our posts we are given exposure to potential new clients. Social media has also allowed us to establish XJet as a luxury brand outside the private aviation industry. We use Facebook for promotions and as a representation of who we are. We have fun with it, put photos up, make ourselves approachable. We use LinkedIn for connecting with new clients, business development and service promotion."

**Fiona Langton, general manager,
XJet London**

"Having an internet presence is key, particularly on social media. Aspiration plays a tremendous part in private aviation. People look at a picture of a private jet and want to be involved, they want to be part of that dream. FBOs have a tendency to be very crew-focused, whereas it's the customer they should be looking to attract. It is a case of offering the best services to the flying customer and promoting those services, while also getting influencers to buy into that."

Jonny Nicol, CEO, Stratajet

"Social media is powerful marketing tool for a lot of industries but I don't think it means much in the FBO world, at least not when you're marketing to your jet customers. It might work on a local scale, if you have a flight school for instance, or you're trying to attract community awareness to your air show, but not beyond that."

**Ryan Maxfield, general manager,
Indy Jets**



Above: **Social media can be used to present an aspirational brand**

Below: **Data such as fuel pricing is regularly updated and available online**

customers with a value proposition. We even use the technology to make weekly reports on our competitors."

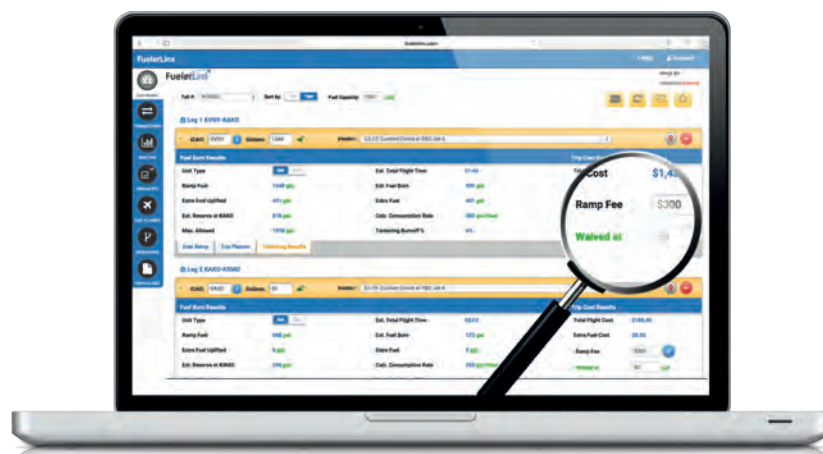
Charter operator XJet has done its best to remain ahead of the curve by investing in a system called FlightBridge for its daily operations, transitioning to the online platform in January 2016.

"FlightBridge recently released an app that allows pilots to create an account and order services direct," says Fiona Langton, general manager at XJet London. "For example, the pilot would select XJet London and order a rental car and hotel. That would go into our reservation system and we would get an email with the order. We are the only FBO to use the tool in Stansted."

Immediate results

The ability to provide instant quotes, monitor existing and potential business, and generally liaise with clients via email, Skype, text, WhatsApp and social media constantly and globally, leads to more business being done at a faster pace than ever before. What does this mean for FBO employees?

"Getting results immediately and accurately helps us with our customers," says Jaraczewski. "Having direct input technology at fuel trucks, fuel farms, and aircraft arrivals and departures, are major assets to FBOs. Cloud technology at front desks for flight tracking, with the ability to receive notifications, is essential to provide world-class customer service."





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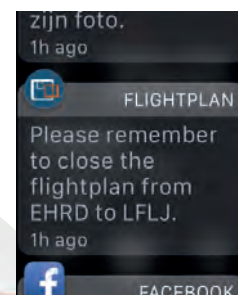
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Left: A presence across multiple platforms can help retain customers

Below: Tech-savvy customers will prioritize spending with businesses that support their devices



Jaraczewski adds that staying current and trying to find new market trends are the biggest challenges. "There are so many startup sites, new apps and service opportunities that it's difficult to stay in front of a growing digital world," he says. "FBOs need to do their research about which direction the FBO market is moving in. Finding your niche in the technology could be very beneficial to your company for operations and customer satisfaction."

"Greater and more immediate demands are being placed on us," says Maxfield from Indy Jets. "For example, we can't just put a note on our website regarding a price offer as you would at a gas station. There are 15 websites to update."

"Although the digital world means we can reach out to our clients, it's more demanding. We are constantly keeping an eye on our competition and have had to become more competitive on fuel pricing. It used to be difficult getting your hands on what prices and bulk discounts were available. The scheduler would have to call the FBO and work out a deal. But no one has time for that anymore."

"We also don't have as much ability to upsell the customer at the counter because they've already made their decision about where to buy and from whom based on an algorithm from a website."

Digital balance

It would be a mistake to overplay the FBO digital revolution. Business aviation may be fit for transformation, but that isn't the same as saying that it's ready. In the words of Paul

"The private jet market is still largely offline, manual and prone to mistakes around availability and pricing"

Paul Touw, chairman and CEO of online charter broker Stellar Labs

Touw, chairman and CEO of online charter broker Stellar Labs: "The private jet market is still largely offline, manual and prone to mistakes around availability and pricing."

"You have to maintain a balance," observes Santiago from the Business Jet Center. "Some customers still want to do things the old-fashioned way. This is not quite as abrupt a transition as it is for other industries, or even other parts of private aviation. There is so much face-to-face communication that still has to take place at an FBO because you're dealing with customers. Some verticals like retail can go full-tech. We are always going to interact physically."

Santiago is correct in her assertion that aspects of FBO engagement will always remain 'analog', but that's not to say that there isn't a wave of technology to catch. Is there a chance some will get left behind?

"Only if they are resistant to the change," concludes XJet's Langton. "There are investments FBOs have to make and maintain today. If they don't change or try to improve their communication and real-time performance they might lose ground in a very competitive market." ○



ground

With this year's EBACE in Geneva fast approaching, *BAI* puts business aviation in Switzerland in the spotlight

Words | **Chris Anderson**



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From May 22-24, the annual European Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (EBACE) will take place in Geneva, Switzerland. Thousands of visitors involved in business aviation – from operators and manufacturers to government officials and legal experts – will head to the city's Palexpo venue, with more than 500 exhibitors and 60 static aircraft on display.

In keeping with the spirit of the event, many attendees may choose to arrive by private jet, but according to Philippe Renz, a board member of the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) Switzerland, those wanting to land at Geneva Airport for the show may have trouble getting a slot – for any time they visit. “It’s an issue at Geneva and Zurich,” he says. “These airports in particular are two of the busiest in Europe, and sometimes during the week it is impossible for business flights to get access. People visit for events, conventions, meetings with various companies, and also ski charters. These are popular destinations.”

According to global charter company PrivateFly, Switzerland has the fourth-largest number of business aviation flights in Europe, behind France, Germany and the UK, recording an average of around 56,000 movements per year. Geneva is responsible for more than 36,000 of those, with Zurich accounting for almost 22,000, making them the second and sixth busiest airports in Europe respectively. Further analysis by WingXAdvance reveals that Geneva to Paris is one of the most popular business jet route within Europe, recording just over 100 flights per day on average, with Geneva to Nice and Geneva to Zurich among the others ranking highly.

The problem of the lack of available slots, which can hold back business aviation's potential, is one raised by Daniel Suter, CEO, DC Aviation Switzerland, which offers aircraft handling in Zurich, among other services. “The really busy time is from December until the end of March, the ski season,” he says. “You’ll have a lot of issues trying to find a slot at Geneva. Zurich is not as bad, but you’ll still have difficulty at peak times. You can understand why preference might be given to a commercial aircraft, due to the passenger fees – a single jet with one person on board doesn’t add up to much.”

“The busy time is December until the end of March. You’ll have a lot of issues trying to find a slot in Geneva. Zurich is not as bad, but you’ll still have difficulty at peak times”

Philippe Renz, EBAA Switzerland board member

Above: Sion Airport is a two-hour drive from Geneva, so a good alternative for those struggling to find a slot at the airport there

Right: Flying into Sion Airport means that visitors can also spend time in the town of Sion, surrounded by the mountains of the Rhone Valley and some of the finest ski resorts in Europe



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Above: **Bern Airport**, serving the Swiss capital, Bern, is also benefiting from the lack of slots at Geneva and Zurich

Left: **Gstaad** is a village not far from Bern Airport, famous for its nearby ski slopes, designer shops and luxury hotels

Big growth for small airports

Finding a slot at Geneva or Zurich has become such an issue that many business aircraft users have started to head to the smaller airports in Switzerland instead – fly into Sion, for example, and you can be driven to Geneva for that all-important event or meeting in just two hours, without the stress or hassle of navigating a major airport. “Plus we have the most popular ski resorts of the Valais Alps close by,” says Aline Bovier, director at Sion. “Just minutes after stepping from their airplane, visitors could be in a limousine or helicopter, being whisked away to Verbier, Crans-Montana, Saas-Fee or Zermatt.”

Other outposts offer the same convenience, with Bern Airport, serving Bern, the capital of Switzerland, another example. “Alternative airports are growing due to slot limitations, but also thanks to increasing marketing efforts,” explains José González, business development and key account manager at Bern Airport. “Over the past two years, operations related to business aviation have reported a two-digit growth rate, and it is an important segment for us after scheduled flights.”

Due to its picturesque location, Bern attracts roughly the same number of business aviation clients arriving for leisure as for actual business, with each taking advantage of the many conveniences on offer. “We are near a lot of tourist

“Alternative airports are growing due to slot limitations. Over the past two years, operations related to business aviation have reported a two-digit growth rate”

José González, business development and key account manager, Bern Airport

attractions, such as the Bernese Oberland region, the medieval city Lucerne, and world-famous ski resorts such as Gstaad, Grindelwald and Lenk,” González continues. “But we are also less than an hour from key cities in terms of business – Biel, famous for Swiss watches since the 19th century, is only a 50-minute drive.”

But the location is only one of the benefits. “We don’t have any slot limitations, besides our official opening hours, and passing through the airport is seamless, taking passengers from the main entrance to their airplane in less than 10 minutes,” González adds. “We have our own customs and border guards, all of the FBO facilities you would expect, with convenient and stress-free services that can be tailored to individual needs.”

Smaller airports taking advantage of the slot shortage seems to be a solution favored by the government. “In Zurich, there is an airport nearby, Dübendorf, and the plan is to relocate the business aviation from Zurich there,” says Renz. “But it will take around five years to get it ready, as it is a military facility at the moment. Business aviation in Switzerland is set to grow further, so the government needs solutions like this.”

Inside Europe, outside the EU

Switzerland finds itself in a unique position that while it borders with countries that are members of the European Union (EU), it is not one itself. It is, however, one of the 26 European countries that is part of the Schengen states, allowing travelers to cross its borders without passport checks. “If flying between the Schengen states, only security checks are needed before take-off, but you should still carry identity documents, and a Schengen visa may also be required,” advises Heinz R Aepli, senior VP group marketing and communications, Jet Aviation, which has FBOs in Zurich and Geneva.

But despite not being in the EU, Switzerland inevitably needs to work with it. “We fully participate with the EU legislation program in aviation,” Renz explains. “So we have adopted the safety regulations and other guidelines, and outside of Switzerland the EU countries will grant the same

Right: **Advantages of flying into Bern Airport** include no slot limitations and the promise of being transferred from the entrance to the aircraft in less than 10 minutes



Airports of Switzerland

Basel

Airport: Basel-Mulhouse Airport
Operating hours: 5:00am-midnight
Facilities: FBO provided by Air Service Basel
Runway length: 15/33, 12,795ft; 08/26, 5,971ft

Bern

Airport: Bern Airport
Operating hours: 7:00am-10:00pm
Facilities: FBO provided by Bern Airport
Runway length: 14/32, 5,676ft

Zurich

Airport: Zurich Airport
Operating hours: 6:00am-midnight
Facilities: FBOs provided by CAT Aviation, ExecuJet, Jet Aviation
Runway length: 10/28, 8,202ft; 14/32, 10,827ft; 16/34, 12,139ft



Geneva

Airport: Geneva Airport
Operating hours: 4:00am-midnight
Facilities: FBOs provided by Jet Aviation, PrivatPort, RUAG Aviation, TAG Aviation
Runway length: 05/23, 12,795ft

Lugano

Airport: Lugano Airport
Operating hours: 7:00am-10:00pm
Facilities: FBO provided by Lugano Airport Handling
Runway length: 01/19, 4,658ft

Sion

Airport: Sion Airport
Operating hours: 7:00am-8:00pm, summer; 8:00am-twilight (8:00pm with extension), winter
Facilities: FBOs provided by Alpine Jet Service, TAG Aviation
Runway length: 07R/25L, 6,562ft

Samedan

Airport: Samedan Airport
Operating hours: 8:00am-7:00pm, summer; 8am-dark, winter
Facilities: FBO provided by Engadin Airport
Runway length: 03/21, 5,905ft



Left: A VIP passenger lounge is just one of the facilities at ExecuJet's FBO in Zurich, as well as a private ramp

rights to Swiss carriers that they do to their own. But we do have some differences, like with internal flights between EU locations – so a Swiss operator cannot fly from Berlin to Munich, for example. This can be frustrating for customers.”

According to Erturk Yildiz, FBO handling manager of TAG Aviation, based in Geneva, there are benefits to being outside of the EU. “Our VAT is lower, just 8%, which is a good incentive,” he says. “A reduced amount applies to a lot of goods and services, with special rates for hotels.”

Nick van de Meer, COO of VistaJet, which offers charter services in Switzerland, has more advice, adding, “Although it is part of the Schengen states, with an open border policy, customs in Switzerland still need to be cleared when flying from anywhere inside the EU, so passengers should allow time for this process. Also, Switzerland is weather sensitive – in order to protect passengers, crew and the aircraft itself, we will not fly without undertaking all the necessary safety assessments and precautions.”

But while there may be a few considerations, most operators find that working in Switzerland offers much opportunity. Niclas von Planta, vice president of Europe for ExecuJet, says, “In 2016, there was a 6% increase in terms of business aviation from Swiss airports. It is a fairly stable market and we expect this to continue. There are some frustrations, particularly the slot limitations, but even despite this, business is still growing.” ○

EBACE preview

This year's European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE) in Geneva looks set to be one of the biggest yet. Around 13,000 business aviation professionals are expected over the three days, from May 22-24, with a long list of exhibitors, seminars and networking opportunities, plus a huge static aircraft display.

Highlights from the program schedule will see guest speakers sharing their opinions on Enhancing Security Together, Brexit and its Implications on Air Transport in Europe, and Best Practices in Environmental Impact Reduction. There will be a networking event just for women, with opportunities for students to find out more about a career in business aviation, and likewise for companies to discover upcoming talent.

Other highlights include the show's opening keynote address, which features Bertrand Piccard, chairman and pilot of the Solar Impulse project – the first solar-powered aircraft to fly around the world. The Maltese tourism minister, Edward Zammit Lewis, whose country currently holds the presidency of the European Union, will also stop by for the session, with the effects of Brexit likely to be discussed. More info at www.ebace.aero.

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Time to **re**



Santa Monica's runway is being shortened before it is closed in twelve years



late

Can one airport's struggle against closure provide lessons to others in the industry?

Words | **Kathryn B Creedy**

If there is one lesson to be learned from the decades-long battle to keep California's Santa Monica Airport open, it is that aviation advocates need to leave the airport, go downtown and defend their airport. In January this year the FAA surprised many when it agreed with local city officials to close Santa Monica Airport (SMO) by 2028 and shorten its runway almost immediately. The City of Santa Monica owns the airport, which is known for being a favorite with Hollywood celebrities, but the FAA is in charge of the operations there.

When the 4,973ft runway is shortened to 3,500ft it will effectively preclude up to 95.8% of jet operations and 37.6% of current turboprop operations, forcing the relocation of more than 17,000 annual operations.

Dave Hopkins, vice president of the Santa Monica Airport Association (SMAA), admits that SMO's advocates have failed to defend the airport effectively. He says: "If we had gone out into the community and advocated for the airport, explaining its value, this never would have happened."

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It's a view echoed by the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA), which acknowledges the need for a better mix of national and local advocacy. Off the record, other national organizations put it more bluntly, saying that local advocates often rely too much on national aviation associations' deep pockets to fight their battles. "Frankly, the locals, including the FBOs, really haven't been fighting that hard," one national organization says about SMO. "The people on the ground, who are there every day and have a vested interest, have relied on national organizations to do their work."

"Community education has to be driven by locals who support the airport. Our opponents cast us as Washington [DC] people who were not from Santa Monica – and there is merit to that. This could happen elsewhere. There are disputes at many airports."

Under threat

The city of Santa Monica is losing no time in its fight to close the airport. It approved the design phase to shorten the runway just a month after the FAA announced the settlement. The aviation community does not want to see a repeat of the demolition of Chicago's Meigs Field. In this 2003 case, the single runway airport was bulldozed overnight by city officials. The FAA fined the city of Chicago US\$30,000 for failing to provide the 30-day notice required when closing a chartered runway in 2006. The city also had to repay US\$1m it had been obtained from the FAA's Airport Improvement Program, which it had used to demolish the Meigs Field and build a park.

"If the settlement is implemented in good faith that will be good," says Ken Mead, general counsel from the AOPA. "If not, we want to be there to enforce it. We can't rely on the Department of Justice or the FAA, especially against a backdrop where the city continues to strangle the airport."

On another front, the NBAA has joined with four airport tenants to petition the US Court of Appeals. It wants a



Right: Santa Monica handles around 50 jet operations a day

Settlement delays JetSuiteX launch

The agreement between the FAA and the city of Santa Monica meant that JetSuite had to cancel plans for its February launch of JetSuiteX, a low-cost charter service that aims to compete with commercial airlines. The service, says Alex Wilcox, CEO of JetSuite, would have benefited locals currently traveling to LAX by removing the hassle factor of security and crowded flights. It has postponed starting the service until it has time to negotiate with the city.

JetSuite's right to access the federal airspace system, which has been built with public dollars, clashed with the city's position. The company was already struggling to launch because

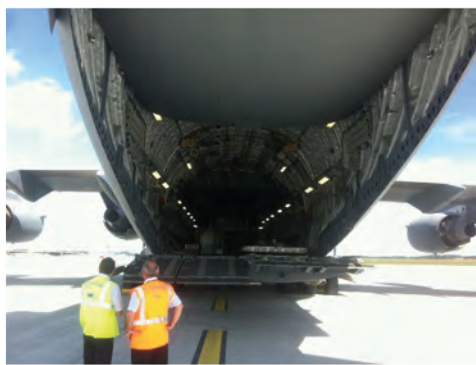
of the city's interpretation of its service as a commercial airline, which required an environmental impact statement. JetSuite had partnered with Atlantic Aviation to launch services from its facilities, which were already covered by the city's airport environmental impact statement.

"The airport's own rules allow commercial services," says Jol Silverstein, the attorney representing the NBAA. "But it put up artificial barriers for JetSuite to get a permit. It is not a commercial airline; it is a public charter. The city is also obliged by federal law to allow all types of service and its actions are not compatible with that."

"If we had gone out into the community and advocated for the airport, explaining its value, this never would have happened"

Dave Hopkins, vice president of the Santa Monica Airport Association





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Executive Handling in Lyon



Above: The airport is situated at the southeastern edge of the city and is linked directly to the beach

Below: Local protestors demonstrating at Santa Monica



On the defensive

If airport interests are going to fight anti-airport activists, they must have an array of facts they know are correct, says Dave Hopkins, vice president of the Santa Monica Airport Association.

"We have a plethora of noise data," he says. "Few US airports have restrictions like SMO, which is one of the top five restricted airports nationwide. SMO is micromanaging down to the smallest aircraft."

Records show that 99.5% of aircraft comply with noise regulations every month. "With 6,500 operations a month, that's 12 that don't comply," says Hopkins. Aircraft noise complaints involve 40 to 50 households who file 50 to 200 complaints. That's less than 1% of the 40,000 households surrounding the airport.

Hopkins likes to make a comparison with road vehicles because he says it puts airport issues into a stark context. He points to Californian vehicle traffic statistics. Since 1992 there have been 28,000 road accidents, resulting in 450 deaths. "The fatality rate is 50 times worse than for aircraft, he says. "The California Office of Traffic Safety ranks Santa Monica the most dangerous city out of 103 Californian cities in terms of traffic and pedestrian fatalities. If you dig deep, you wonder where the focus should be."

review of the FAA's settlement and to block any action to shorten the runway. NBAA president and CEO Ed Bolen has termed the FAA's acquiescence to SMO's closure "a one-of-a-kind development". Others have called it a betrayal. The SMAA's Hopkins says, "The FAA sold SMO down the river, upending 30 years of public policy toward airports. It decided to settle with no input from stakeholders, in contravention of statute and established public policy."

This lack of input and adherence to policy forms the crux of the NBAA's case. According to the business aviation association, the FAA settled the dispute in a manner that circumvented statutory and regulatory protections. Stacy Howard, NBAA's Western Regional Representative, says that restricting turbine aircraft operations at the airport will jeopardize many existing airport businesses and drive operators from SMO.

"We aren't talking about faceless businesspeople," she says. "Multiple businesses that are based at SMO and those headquartered in its vicinity, provide employment for thousands from the surrounding area. Curtailing aviation access to this vital airport would terribly impact them and hurt Santa Monica's economy."

A dangerous precedent

When the FAA announced the settlement deal, it stunned both airport advocates and Washington groups alike. According to sources close to the case, the FAA settled because it was worried about losing the ongoing court case over the future of the airport, which risked its immediate closure instead of the now 12-year delay. On the other hand, the city of Santa Monica was afraid a loss would keep the airport open in perpetuity.

SMO can take some hope from the 12-year delay. As FAA administrator Michael Huerta told the AOPA, it provides time to consider and arrange alternatives. American aviation groups have also objected to the way the settlement was reached. They say it is invalid because the process failed to meet congressional mandates for public comment and prove that the agreement benefits aviation. "There is no explanation of how aviation benefits from the shortening of the runway and the resulting elimination of most jet operations," says the NBAA's spokesperson.

Jol Silverstein, the attorney representing the NBAA, says that SMO's case sends the message that the FAA is not





“Frankly, we could do a better job of educating the people around the airport about its value. We also need to educate the city council and buttonhole them more than we have”

Ken Mead, general counsel, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association

Park planned for “antiquated” airport site

After closure, the city of Santa Monica plans for the 227-acre site to become a park, according to Nelson Hernandez, senior advisor to the city and manager for airport affairs. He cites legal restrictions that date back almost 100 years that require the land to be developed into an open space or park for recreation or cultural use.

“In 1926 voters passed a bond for a park and used the money to build Clover Field Park and the airfield, which was already surrounded by small houses,” says Hernandez. “At that time there were only small aircraft. After the war, jets came in, operations expanded and it went from a small airport to a jet port. It is too

antiquated to be a jet port for what the aviation industry has become. It is inappropriate land use at this time.”

Hernandez is unconvinced by the argument that aircraft technology has changed to mitigate noise impacts: “They may be quieter, but if you multiply a little bit of noise 18,000 times it is no longer a little bit of noise.” He also says that the economic impact of the airport is marginal, with few direct aviation jobs. “Considering the alternative uses for the property we have, it is our policy that not everything should be about money. It is also about public safety and the welfare of our community. That is what the city values most.”

willing to fight for aviation, even though its position in the past has been that the airport is a critical part of the aviation infrastructure in the Los Angeles basin. “Other airports now see that the FAA won’t push hard,” he says. “We could have a piecemeal disassembly of the aviation system. Our work defending airports has been largely a whack-a-mole game. Once cities realize their actions are not viable they disappear. That may change now.”

Silverstein notes that money is available for SMO to build a noise barrier, but that the city turned down FAA funds for soundproofing houses. Any new grants may have increased the city’s obligation to keep the airport open.

Not so fast

But does the loss of one airport matter in a business aviation airport system that numbers more than 5,000?

“Yes,” says Steve Brown, chief operating officer of the NBAA. “We have to keep it open and available because it is also critical from a national and international perspective. Airports exist within a network that is not just international or national but also regional. Santa Monica is in the Los Angeles Basin, which does not have enough capacity. It is an important reliever airport to LAX, Hawthorne and Van Nuys. Every other general aviation airport in the basin is already at capacity. What Santa Monica is doing just puts more pressure on.”

Local aviation experts also believe that the closure of SMO may increase aviation noise. Without SMO, flights into LAX can take more efficient flight paths, resulting in larger jets flying over the same neighborhoods that the SMO flights currently fly over. Many see SMO as a bellwether. “Broadly SMO reflects how some cities are unable to think of airports as an economic asset,” the NBAA’s Silverstein

Above: Noise complaints from nearby residents contributed to the decision to close the airport in 12 years

Below: The latest legal dispute over control of the airport has taken three years to settle

says. “Santa Monica has long elected officials that have not been supportive of the airport and over decades have tried to limit the utility of the airport and the economic benefits.”

The future

“Our goal is to keep this airport open for 12 more years to both piston and turbine traffic,” says the AOPA’s Mead. “Then it is about keeping it open forever. The officials on the city council could change and the city may begin to feel the economic impact if they cut the runway back.”

He also cites a need for community education. “Frankly, we could do a better job of educating the people around the airport about its value. We also need to educate the city council and buttonhole them more than we have.”

Here again it is up to locals. Hopkins, from the SMAA, says his organization has grown: “We raised US\$90,000 last year for a community education campaign. This year our goal is US\$150,000. We are probably the best-funded airport association in the USA now. We are going into the 12 regional neighborhood associations. We are going into the chamber of commerce and other organizations.

“We love showing off our airport. We invite the public in every month with new themes such as kids in aviation, news gathering and STEM education. We’ve started the process even if we are 30 years too late.”

And that’s the point, he says. “If you are going to fight for your airport you have to organize early, advocate often and don’t give up.” ○





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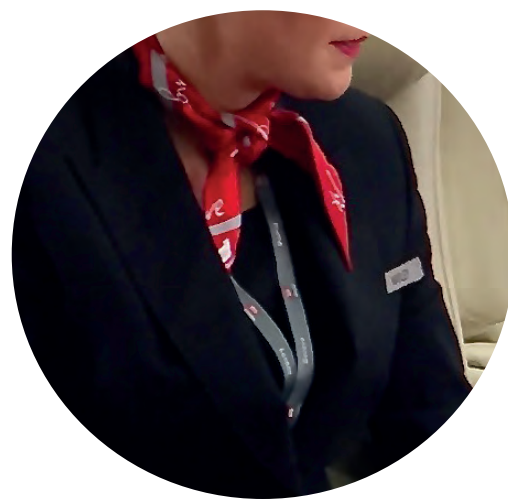
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When we travel on an airline, it's probably true to say that most of us don't think too much about crew uniforms. We are used to seeing the cabin crew smartly and fashionably turned out – it's the established custom and practice. On the flight deck, pilots wear white shirts with epaulettes.

The uniforms are designed to blend almost invisibly into the experience. If we see crew while on our way to the aircraft we barely give them than a second's thought, although they are acting as ambassadors for both the airline and the profession. Conversely, we would be shocked if the pilots were in jeans and polo shirts, or the cabin crew were in shorts and t-shirts. Casual dress may be commonplace today, but aviation is sticking to its traditions – uniforms are part of the experience. They project an image of trustworthiness and competence.

In the business aviation sector, the rationale for uniforms is different from an airline's because of the differences between the business models and customers, but common principles apply.

Professionalism is the top reason why executive crew uniforms are formal, particularly for the flight crew. Duncan Daines, group chief marketing manager, Gama Aviation, says, "While it is true that modern workplaces have become more diverse in their attitudes to workwear, one place that remains seemingly untouched is flight crew. In my view, this is for good reasons. While a uniform will never enhance the technical performance of the flight crew, once wearing it a crew member becomes 'in role'.

sions

“The uniform is like a business card – it should be well designed and clean. Poor appearance has a negative impact and gives an expectation of poor service”

Siegfried Axtmann, chairman
of FAI Aviation Group

“Donning the uniform automatically changes crew members’ roles and outlook. They are now responsible for the safety of the aircraft and those contained within it. They become ambassadors to the client – easily recognized, highly skilled professionals and representatives of the operating company.”

Neil Wright, managing director of Armstrong Aviation Clothing, agrees, “By the time someone has completed their training and become qualified as a commercial pilot, they will have spent enough money to buy a three-bedroom house and studied for hundreds of hours. Their uniform is a statement of this and we, as passengers, need to be assured of their skills while they are in charge of an aircraft.”

Confidence

The uniform instills confidence in us to fly with the operator, whose pilots are responsible for multimillion-dollar pieces of machinery and, of course, our lives. And ultimately, suggests David Waugh, managing director of clothing manufacturer Waugh Group, “Rank indicators mean that passengers are more likely to respond to the directions and commands of staff.”

If professional considerations are the most important reason to have uniforms, then brand image, which is more relevant for cabin crew, comes a close second. Most companies say that logos, while being an important brand identifier for the business aviation sector, do not need to be prominent on uniforms – minimal and subtle is best. After all, once onboard an aircraft, there’s little or no need to be reminded about the operator’s name. Bold brand-building activity is best left to the advertising and marketing campaigns. However, appropriate logo prominence is good for client-facing staff, alongside politeness and friendliness in engaging with customers, especially in airport buildings.

Siegfried Axtmann, chairman of FAI Aviation Group, says, “In business aviation, the uniform is like a business card – it should be well designed and clean. Any poor appearance has a negative impact on customers and gives an expectation of poor service.” In terms of positioning, there’s



Above: **Wearing a uniform can change a crew member's perspective to more readily accept responsibility**

Below: **Even more relaxed uniforms need rules to ensure staff remain smart**

Uniform essentials

Uniforms for the business aviation sector may be more specialist and bespoke than airline requirements, but there are nevertheless some useful best-practice tips to check out.

Armstrong Aviation Clothing says that the priority for a uniform is that it is fit for purpose. Gama Aviation says that a uniform’s details can be brand differentiators. Clearly there’s a need to have something that’s readily identifiable as a uniform, even if contemporary, but with unique elements such as colors and trims.

Flexjet says that how staff present themselves is hugely important. FAI says that branding on uniforms should be kept low profile, but with practicality in mind and always clean. FBO Partners says that there should be provision to mix and match uniform items while maintaining brand consistency, to add a degree of individuality and crew choice.



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“Uniforms are part of the value quotient, and a less-than-befitting appearance creates an inconsistent value proposition for a customer”

Douglas Wilson, president of FBO Partners

an overriding reason for well-dressed crew in the business aviation sector, Wright says: “For a small operator it is important to be attired to the highest standard. The crew are in closer contact with their clients, who have paid a premium to fly in business aircraft.”

Douglas Wilson, president of FBO Partners, says, “The uniform is an essential and visible extension of the operator’s brand. Though most of us endeavor not to judge a book by its cover, the same doesn’t hold true in a professional business setting where a transaction is implied between parties. Uniforms are part of the value quotient, and a poor uniform, or a less-than-befitting appearance, creates an inconsistent value proposition for a customer.”

Cultural considerations

It’s also important to understand that female uniforms should be designed to reflect culture variations – keeping heads and legs covered in certain Middle East countries is one of the most obvious requirements. There may be other, less prescriptive cultural factors that need to be considered. And if the client desires it, then why not?

TAG Aviation takes a different approach to uniform design in order to respect client preferences. Mark Hollands-Martel, head of cabin services, TAG Aviation



Above: **Inside the cabin, uniforms are part of the experience to many clients**

Left: **Uniforms have to offer a blend of practicality and smartness**

Europe, says, “We don’t really put a lot of focus on uniforms. As it stands, most of our clients prefer a non-airline type of uniform for the flight attendants – none of the crew in the UK wear one. They prefer smart suits. The client normally covers the cost; we give budgetary guidance. In the past we used to give the option of a TAG uniform, but it wasn’t taken up by the majority. And although the pilots have a TAG uniform, some clients prefer them in suits from Boss or Jaeger and we apply the braiding.”

TAG also says that in the executive sector, flight attendants are working in a cabin that is treated like an onboard living room, the client’s personal space. Hollands-Martel continues, “The attendants, although fully safety trained, are more like hosts and wear quality suits in black, gray or navy. Our VIP 757 crew wear a TAG uniform that is designed exclusively for us – we change the scarves, belts and ties to suit individual clients such as TCS World Travel and the Four Season Private Jet Experience. Grooming and personal appearance for all our staff is included in our etiquette and standards guide.”

Safety innovation

When it comes to the safety aspects of uniforms, there is not much room to maneuver. Hi-vis jackets or waistcoats are mandatory for those working airside. Such clothing is effective, inexpensive and easy to brand. Slip-resistant footwear and ear defenders are also a must. Referring to other safety aspects, Waugh says, “Uniforms can be designed now to use any number of different fabrics and materials. Fire-resistant fabrics are well proven and highly effective. We are now seeing the integration of LED light bulbs into garments to give better visibility in low-light conditions. Where appropriate, high-strength materials such as Kevlar can be used to make clothing that is incredibly strong and robust.”

It is likely that uniforms in the business aviation sector will continue on the same path for some years. With each operator having a uniform program to suit specific needs and variations, service qualities will probably remain

“Through our dress code we ensure that our flight crew reflects our brand values of impeccable taste and unmatched service”

Lisa Wellington, client services and marketing director, Flexjet



Above: Aviation uniforms have evolved through the decades but still reflect traditional values that customers find reassuring

A brief history of uniforms in aviation

In a way, the airline uniform story, especially for cabin crew, encapsulates the growth, evolution and popularity of aviation. Over the years, uniforms have evolved to be serviceable, practical and comfortable workwear, but have also been designed to represent corporate, cultural and national identities.

John Hill, assistant director of the San Francisco Airport Museum and curator of the Fashion in Flight exhibition, says, “Airline menswear evolved from a service orientation with waistcoats and hats, mimicking ship stewards and pursers, to semi-formal business attire, to sporty looks, to casual wear to hip minimalist designs.

“Womenswear has a broader historical range that began in 1930 with nursing-related attire, slightly militarized designs for authoritarian looks, to fashions of the times with respect to cuts and silhouette in the post-war travel boom. Among all garment types throughout history, it is hard to find one with more purposes and needs designed into a single outfit than female cabin crew uniforms.”

The question of when and how often to update cabin uniforms is

relevant for FBOs and the chartered executive jet sector. Over the years airlines have often used milestone events, new routes or aircraft introductions to launch a new uniform. If there’s a big budget involved, a high-profile launch or business development opportunity to promote, new attire might be viewed as essential for impact and the best promotional results.

Pilot attire has, by comparison, trodden a path of smart, conservative continuity. With the familiar dark suit and rank identification, white shirt and tie, little else is required to reinforce the image of a safe pair of hands and flying competence. Given that it is what passengers expect, going with alternative pilot uniform designs any time soon is not only unlikely, but wholly unnecessary.



largely unaffected by new developments. But with new technologies moving from concept to market faster than ever, wearable devices could quickly become part of the uniform ensemble. Aviation is unlikely to hold back once applications gain momentum.

Wilson says: “My greatest hope for ‘wearables’ would be that they are only used to ensure the safety of employees. My concern would be an abuse or inappropriate application, such as a ‘big brother’ means of employee tracking.”

It will be interesting to see how the inevitable fine line will develop between knowing where staff are located, important in a security alert or to enhance operations more broadly, versus safeguarding personal privacy. In terms of practical applications, Waugh says that pilot uniforms might include a life process monitoring device. “A pilot’s vital signs could be tracked continuously and relayed to a central operations center. Wearables are becoming cheaper, increasingly robust and more socially acceptable.”

There is no sense of urgency for the business aviation sector to implement wearable technologies, new fabrics and the like. Nevertheless there may well be an impetus to speed things up across the board as airlines press ahead, especially when it comes to safety improvements. If the costs of enabling facilities that are applicable to business aviation are proportionate to the benefit gains, then the pace of adoption could quicken.

Returning to uniform basics, it is a given that operators will offer high-profile, premium-quality and bespoke products. Flight and cabin crew are far more integrated with the product than in the airline sector. Lisa Wellington, Flexjet client services and marketing director, says, “Through our dress code we ensure that our flight crew reflects our brand values of impeccable taste and unmatched service. It helps to reassure our clients that everything we do is with the attention to detail they demand. The Flexjet uniform is discreet yet distinctive, an important message for us to portray to our aviation brokers and passengers.”

But perhaps the most succinct and definitive reason for uniforms in business aviation is offered by Alec Maguire, senior partner at FBO Partners, who says, “Uniforms, in their most elemental form, supply the wearer – first and foremost – with a sense of collaborative purpose.” ○

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ATC conflict

Privatization of the USA's air traffic control is back on the agenda under the Trump administration. BAI investigates the implications for private aviation

Words | Kathryn B Creedy

Illustration: Michele Marconi



“We have the largest, safest, most diverse and complex air transportation system in the world. But how do we ensure access for all Americans?”

Ed Bolen, president of the NBAA

Experts agree that the USA’s air traffic control technology must be modernized. In terms of technical innovation, the country lags far behind more than 60 other nations that have already separated air traffic management functions from the government.

Most also agree with the countless studies by the General Accountability Office and the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, which conclude that the FAA is not up to the job of modernizing ATC, after decades of attempts and billions of dollars wasted. But, the thought of separation, as proposed by the US government’s Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act, has struck fear into general aviation communities.

Ed Bolen, NBAA president, says, “We’ve got the largest, safest, most diverse and most complex air transportation system in the world. The communities we serve depend on access to the system. But how do we ensure access to airports and airspace for all Americans? We just don’t know how privatizing ATC would impact small and midsize companies, which represent 85% of our members. Some of the ATC systems in other countries used as examples don’t hold up at all when compared with the USA.”

Last to separate

The debate is highly controversial, but most stakeholders accept that something radical must be done. Three former FAA administrators, three former Department of Transportation secretaries, as well as the National Taxpayers Union and transportation researchers from both conservative and liberal think-tanks, are pushing for ATC privatization.

“After 30 years and billions spent, little has changed in the USA’s ATC system,” says Michael Boyd, president of Boyd International Group. “Pilots are still navigating the same way today in a new B787 equipped with the latest avionics – SatCom, GPS, ADS-B and ADS-C – as they did 40 years ago aboard a Boeing 707 with HF radio and a navigator.”

Robert Poole, analyst at the Reason Foundation think-tank, says the reason is simple: “The USA is the last major country that has not separated its ATC system from government. The success in Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand is why ICAO and the European Commission favor separation.

“The performance record of ATC corporations is very clear,” Poole continues. “Our government-run system lags behind reformed systems in dozens of other countries, and is subjected to both political micromanagement and the federal government’s chronic budget problems. The 60 or more foreign ATC corporations that have emerged in recent years are self-supporting from fees paid by their users – and completely independent of government budgets. They are regulated for safety, at arm’s length, by government safety regulators.”



Right: The ATC system in the USA has to support a mix of commercial and business aircraft operations

For privatization

According to the latest customer satisfaction survey from Airlines for America, 78% of Americans support reforming ATC so that the system can keep pace with modernization efforts as long as the federal government retains safety oversight. Here three experts give the arguments for separation of the system from government.

"After examining various models, I believe we need to establish a federally chartered, fully independent, not-for-profit corporation to operate and modernize our ATC services."
House Transportation Committee Chair,
Representative Bill Shuster

"Past legislation has exempted the FAA from procurement laws, added performance-based compensation and more, to no good result. The US\$15bn FAA budget nearly doubled between 1996 and 2012, and an [Inspector General] report showed productivity declined."

Paul Rinaldi, president of the National Air Traffic Control Association

"Under the current aviation tax system, business jets pay less than 1% of total aviation taxes that support ATC, even though they account for more than 10% of controlled operations. This massive taxpayer subsidy from the traveling public would be eliminated under any cost-based user-fee structure, so it is not surprising that the NBAA and its allies are using every tactic to obstruct reform."

Mark Scribner, senior fellow, Competitive Enterprise Institute



"Past legislation has exempted the FAA from procurement laws, added compensation and more, to no good result"

Paul Rinaldi, president of the National Air Traffic Control Association



"The funding issue could be addressed through changes in the FAA budgeting process"

Steve Dickson, senior vice president of operations,
Delta Air Lines

Against privatization

According to a survey by the Alliance for Aviation Across America, the League of Rural Voters and the Air Care Alliance, 60% of American voters oppose privatizing the ATC system and turning it over to a non-profit corporation. Here are three arguments against separation from government.

"We've got the largest, safest, most diverse and most complex air transport system in the world. The communities we serve depend on access to the system. We want to move forward on the new national airspace system, NextGen. We want to increase capacity, reduce our environmental footprint and increase safety, but we don't see that privatization is necessary."
NBAA president Ed Bolen

"Consumer groups and businesses have voiced concerns about the proposals. Privatization would hand over decisions about infrastructure funding, taxes and fees, consumer complaints, noise and many other priorities, to a board of private interests dominated by the commercial

airlines. These are the same airlines that have cut back flights to smaller communities by more than 20% in recent years, and have stated their intent to divert investment from small and mid-sized communities to large ones where the airlines are most profitable."

Mayoral alliance letter to Congress

"We believe that the funding issue could be addressed through changes in FAA budgeting without privatizing the organization. You don't see the same difficulties in other agencies of the federal government. If that's the problem, let's address it. You don't need to privatize."
Steve Dickson, senior vice president of operations, Delta Air Lines



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Right: The FAA's Air Traffic Organization employs 35,000 controllers, technicians, engineers and support personnel



“The USA is the last major country that has not separated its ATC system from government”

Robert Poole, analyst, Reason Foundation

In February the Eno Center for Transportation, a non-profit think-tank in the USA, published a study, *Time for reform: delivering modern air traffic control*, which called for a new government ATC corporation or an independent, non-profit organization to be formed. The USA is looking closely at Nav Canada as its model. The not-for-profit corporation was formed 20 years ago and has made a tidy business selling its advanced systems around the world, generating US\$105m over the past five years. Its technology is used in eight other countries, including Australia, the UK and Dubai.

Lobbying

However, last month opponents to ATC privatization also raised their lobbying effort with a letter to Congress, signed by 115 mayors from every state across the USA. The letter, from the Alliance for Aviation Across America, raises concerns about adopting the Canadian ATC model. It says, “We are concerned about costs and access. The Canadian, privatized system is more expensive than the system we have in the USA by miles flown. In the UK, the system has seen more delays, higher fares and reduced connectivity.”

Poole disagrees, “Nav Canada has modernized the world’s second-largest ATC system while reducing its cost and increasing its safety. With our economies of scale, the USA should have the lowest unit costs of any developed country. Nav Canada, with less than a quarter as much traffic, is significantly more efficient than the FAA, with an average cost per controlled flight hour of US\$335, compared with the FAA’s US\$453.



Left: The Air Traffic Organization controls more than 30.2 million square miles of airspace

Bottom: There is a zero margin of error for air traffic controllers



“The taxpayer subsidy would be eliminated under any cost-based user fee structure. It is not surprising that the NBAA is using every tactic to obstruct reform”

Marc Scribner, senior fellow,
Competitive Enterprise Institute

“So, establishing a customer-funded ATC corporation would provide net savings to the federal budget. Nav Canada is also far ahead of the FAA in implementing advanced technology such as GPS flight tracking and digital messaging between pilots and controllers. It is very clear that the potential of corporatization to lower costs is huge.”

User fees

The strongest objection to separation is the introduction of user fees to replace the aviation fuel taxes that are currently paid by business and general aviation. Business and general aviation companies are generally nervous about introducing foreign ATC models into the USA.

However, Poole says that business and general aviation shouldn’t worry about access for private flights. “Business jets in Canada pay weight/distance charges for each flight, as they do in every developed country in the world,” he says. “The AIRR Act said that user fees of any kind were prohibited by statute for both piston and turbine non-commercial general and business aviation. It also prohibits restricting airspace based on those who pay. The NBAA is scaring people about something that would be illegal for the ATC corporation to do.”

Marc Scribner, senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute think-tank, points out that any US ATC corporation would be required to structure its cost-based fee schedule under ICAO’s *Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services*. Indeed, studies suggest fees charged to users may actually decline over time as the system gains efficiency, as they have in Canada. The Eno Center for Transportation agrees, saying “the international experience demonstrates that commercialized providers can keep costs in check, upgrade their systems and improve safety”.



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Nevertheless, commercial business aviation operations would face user fees. The question is whether an industry still struggling to recover from recession can sustain another shock. They certainly don't want to take that chance. The NBAA's Bolen says, "We are concerned about the effect on the small and mid-size companies that make up most of business aviation in the USA. They are the backbone of the nation's economy and operate from places that are thinly populated. You don't see that in other parts of the world, where there are smaller numbers involved in business aviation."

Airline interests

Business and general aviation's other main concern is what many call the lopsided nature of the proposed agency's governing body. Objectors to ATC privatization say it would be heavily weighted toward airline interests and would result in non-airline aviation paying more for years to use the ATC system.

However, Poole thinks detractors are misrepresenting the make-up of the governing board and points again to Nav Canada: "The stakeholder groups called for in the legislation would nominate the specified number of board members, but they could not be employed or paid by any aviation company while in office. They would also have a fiduciary duty to the best interests of the ATC corporation. The Nav Canada board members are respected private citizens with various business backgrounds. In addition, with AIRR, airlines would have nominated only four out of 13 board members, and general/business aviation three.



"Corporatization would be more inclined than the very conservative Air Traffic Organization arm of the FAA to make use of innovations such as remote towers to expand tower service to a larger number of small airports.

A lot will depend on whether the President and Transportation Secretary Chao make ATC reform a priority."

Trump change

Proponents of ATC privatization see the advent of a new administration – one interested in large infrastructure projects – as good news. The White House's view of current modernization efforts is far from a ringing endorsement. "I hear we have the wrong system," President Donald Trump told airlines earlier this year. "I hear we're spending billions of dollars. It's a system that's totally out of whack. It's way over budget. It's way behind schedule. And when it's completed, it's not going to be a good system."

Regardless, it is doubtful whether any further political progress toward ATC privatization will happen this year. While the AIRR Act passed the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last year, it was opposed by the full House of Representatives. So far, the only action is new Committee hearings. Last year's AIRR Act was only the first round. In the meantime, stakeholders need to wring out more efficiencies from a system that will still be in use for some time. ATC only accounts for about a quarter of delays and cancellations. Modernization would yield a 12% reduction in emissions. Both statistics suggest that airlines are responsible for most of the problems, regardless of how modernization is progressing and how well or poorly the system is run.

For now, both the proponents and the objectors to US ATC privatization are far apart. There is little sign that they are interested in compromises that would bring them together. ○

"After 30 years and billions spent, little has changed in the USA's ATC system. Pilots are still navigating the same way today as they did 40 years ago"

Michael Boyd, president of
Boyd International Group



Above: During peak times there are around 5,000 aircraft in the sky in the USA

Left: Radar air surveillance traffic control tower

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Business aviation is a key contributor to the accessibility of remote regions because it flies to a large number of local destinations. In Europe alone it connects around 100,000 airport pairs, three times the number that scheduled commercial airlines cover.

A quarter of these airport pairs are not connected by any other direct means than business aviation. "This coverage could be further extended, but poor ground equipment at many smaller airports is a major impediment, as safe all-weather operations are made impossible," says Vanessa Rullier-Francaud, senior manager of European affairs at the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA).

Game changer

The use of satellite-based technologies to improve access and create additional network capacity is being introduced at airports, including business airports, around the world. For example, satellite-based navigation systems and precision landing enable flight routes to be



Satellite navigation technology promises to reduce costs and increase capacity for smaller airports

Words | Mario Pierobon

Satellite *shortcuts*

Satellite navigation benefits

There is increasing pressure on business aviation and stakeholders, such as regional airlines and feeders of all sorts at major hubs, to adopt satellite navigation technologies. According to the EBAA's Vanessa Rullier-Francaud, Europe must think of solutions if it does not want to aggravate the gridlock. Currently 68% of the 650,000 annual movements in the region fly to secondary or regional airports.

David Bowen, head of ATM operations at the SESAR JU, says that there is a real opportunity for regional and remote airport developments with a wider scale implementation of satellite navigation technologies to offload flights from some major airports that are capacity constrained today. Some airports that were not really an option in the past because of their susceptibility to adverse weather are also becoming a more credible option.



Above: **Vanessa Rullier-Francaud**, senior manager of European affairs, European Business Aviation Association

tailored better to suit local communities and airports, with curved routes and steeper approaches.

The European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System (EGNOS) is the satellite-based augmentation system (SBAS) covering Europe. It enhances the performance of current global navigation satellite system (GNSS) signals and provides integrity information for those signals. It is used for safety-critical applications such as approach procedures.

"The implementation of EGNOS-based technologies is a vital tool to improve access and safety at all airports and heliports, by providing precision-approach capabilities in all weather conditions without the need for an instrument landing system [ILS] or other ground-based aids", says Rullier-Francaud.

EGNOS enables approaches with vertical and lateral guidance – so-called LPV (localizer performance with vertical guidance). The EGNOS-based LPV approaches provide similar performances to ILS CAT I (200ft minimum decision altitude and 550m runway visual range) approaches, but do so without the costly ground infrastructure necessary for the implementation of ILS.

"ILS requires ground equipment that is not only very expensive to purchase, but also requires regular maintenance and recalibration for its daily use", says Rullier-Francaud. "The business case for LPVs is very interesting, especially for airports with limited budgets, such as regional airports. It is no coincidence that in Europe today no fewer than 18 countries already boast airports with EGNOS-based procedures, covering more than 250 runways. Moreover, another 500 LPV procedures are planned for implementation by 2020. This is encouraging, but it falls far short of, for example, the USA, which has already published LPV procedures for more than 3,000 runways."

Augmented approaches

The European Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) project, which ran for seven years and finished in 2016, included research to develop SBAS that enables LPV approaches, as well as ground-based augmentation of GNSS signals to enable precision approaches.

David Bowen, chief of air traffic management (ATM) at the SESAR Joint Undertaking (SESAR JU), says, "These technologies were demonstrated on a large scale by the Augmented Approach to Land project, which brought together air navigation service providers, airports and airspace users, including business aviation operators.

"Together they demonstrated how these technologies can facilitate access by business aviation in all weather conditions to smaller, regional airports that do not necessarily have the kind of ground infrastructure, such as ILS, needed to enable precision approaches".

The combination of stakeholders enabled demonstrations of several technologies that support approach operations. "EGNOS is of the most interest to business aviation because it has the benefit of being able to enable LPV approaches to airports that do not necessarily have the kind of ground infrastructure needed to enable ILS precision approaches," says Bowen.

Two parts of the Augmented Approaches to Land project dealt with the use of synthetic vision guidance systems



Above: **The use of satellite technology at business airports enables operations when visibility conditions are poor**

"The implementation of EGNOS-based technologies is a vital tool to improve access and safety at all airports"

Vanessa Rullier-Francaud, senior manager of European affairs, European Business Aviation Association



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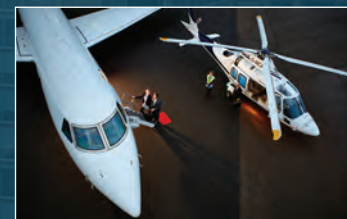


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A guide to satellite-based navigation aids

Traditionally, aircraft navigation technologies have used fixed ground-based beacons to guide aircraft along published routes via waypoints defined by these beacons. The use of satellite-based navigation changes that. The implementation of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) in air traffic management (ATM) procedures is seen as an important way of dealing with the airport capacity crunch.

Ground-based augmentation and satellite-based augmentation are two different types of augmentation of GNSS signals, says David Bowen, head of ATM operations at the SESAR JU: "A ground-based augmentation system is based on a network of fixed ground installations that transmits corrections to the aircraft in the immediate local area. It is extremely accurate and timely, but requires a ground infrastructure to implement. In terms of its accuracy and availability it can be used to support precision approaches to the same level of performance we have today for traditional ILS.

"With space-based augmentation enabled by EGNOS, corrections and refinements of the GNSS are provided by satellites, with the benefit that these corrections can be done anywhere within the coverage of EGNOS, which is most of Europe. However, it does not necessarily come with quite the same accuracy and availability of a ground based augmentation system. At this stage we are looking at enabling approaches with LPV supported by satellite-based augmentation systems.

"The key benefit is that there is no requirement for any ground infrastructure as long as the aircraft has an SBAS-capable radio, the appropriate navigation capabilities and the procedures in place."



Above: **Enhanced flight vision systems** give pilots increased situational awareness

Right: **Synthetic vision systems** combine satellite signals with a database of pictures of the surrounding terrain

Below: **Satellite navigation** can increase airport efficiency



(SVGS) and enhanced flight vision systems (EFVS).

The projects aimed to pave the way for the uptake of these technologies.

"In the final approach phase, synthetic vision guidance and enhanced flight vision systems allow lower decision altitudes and reduced runway visual range, providing increased accessibility to the airport in low-visibility conditions. When combining LPV with head-up displays, it will be possible to operate in conditions equivalent to CAT II, and most airports will become available whatever the weather conditions," says Rullier-Francaud.

Future research

EGNOS was certified for civil aviation use in 2011. The latest figures on LPV implementation at European airports show over 400 EGNOS-based procedures operational, serving over 200 airports. Over 950 LPV procedures are planned by 2020.

Procedures for complex terminal maneuvering areas (TMAs) are also being researched. A TMA is the controlled airspace around major airports. Rullier-Francaud says, "For historical reasons some important airports used by business aviation are in the TMAs of major hubs, such as Paris-Le Bourget in France, and TAG London Farnborough in the UK. While theoretically entirely devoted to business aviation, movements at these airports may be artificially constrained on grounds that have nothing to do with local capacity considerations, thereby having a knock-on effect on the overall grid.

"To unleash full capacity at these airports and hence minimize the disruption caused, one possibility could be

"There is no requirement for ground infrastructure, as long as the aircraft has an SBAS-capable radio and the appropriate navigation capabilities"

David Bowen, head of ATM operations, SESAR JU





Above: **Satellite navigation technology can enable steeper approaches at airports**

Below: **The Wide Area Augmentation System in the USA uses a mix of signals from satellites and ground stations**

“The technologies are enabling greater all-weather access to runways across the country”

Heidi Williams, director of air traffic services and infrastructure, NBAA

to exploit advanced technology to ensure independent arrivals/departures to/from satellite airports, while minimizing the impact on major airport traffic flows and on the environment. This is technically feasible and therefore warrants further investigation.”

Research, development and implementation of satellite navigation technologies are ongoing in other parts of the world as well. The SBAS in India is the GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) system and all aircraft registered in India will have to be equipped with an SBAS receiver by January 1, 2019. The FAA developed the Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) as the SBAS in North America for aviation use which has prompted thousands of LPV procedures to be published in the USA.

Heidi Williams, director of air traffic services and infrastructure at the NBAA, says that in the USA there are both benefits and challenges to overcome in the transition to a satellite-based national airspace system: “Certainly the challenges are with the roll-out of the technologies by the air navigation service providers. The challenges from the operators’ side are about looking at a cost/benefit analysis, determining when to equip the aircraft and making sure that this is done in a timely fashion and at a time when it is cost efficient for operations.

“The operators are already taking advantage of the opportunities in terms of equipping aircraft and also the greater efficiencies in WAAS approaches. The technologies are enabling greater all-weather access to runways across the country for our members, who use a much broader array of airports and landing facilities.”

Benefits and costs

One of the most important benefits for FBOs and charter operators is the safety improvement. “SBAS LPV operations reduce the risk of controlled flight into terrain by providing stabilized approach with vertical guidance,” says Rullier-Francaud. “Better situational awareness is provided to pilots through the provision of geometric vertical guidance. SBAS LPV implementation can support the withdrawal of conventional navigation aids, thus saving costs for maintenance and flight calibration.”

The safety and operational benefits can only be realized by investment on board the aircraft and on the ground. “There are an increasing number of LPV-capable aircraft available on the market and many offer an LPV standard avionics suite, including LPV capabilities. This is especially true for business aviation, which operates one of the most modern fleets in the world,” says Rullier-Francaud.

“More than 10 renowned business aircraft manufacturers currently offer LPV-capable models. And for legacy aircraft there is an ever-developing market for standard retrofit solutions, making it easier to benefit from LPV approaches. The cost is dependent on the model and age of the aircraft. The publication of an LPV approach is generally made at a very reasonable price and is a one-time cost approximately equivalent to one year of ILS maintenance, depending on the airport configuration. In addition the European Commission has guaranteed the use of EGNOS free of charge.” ○





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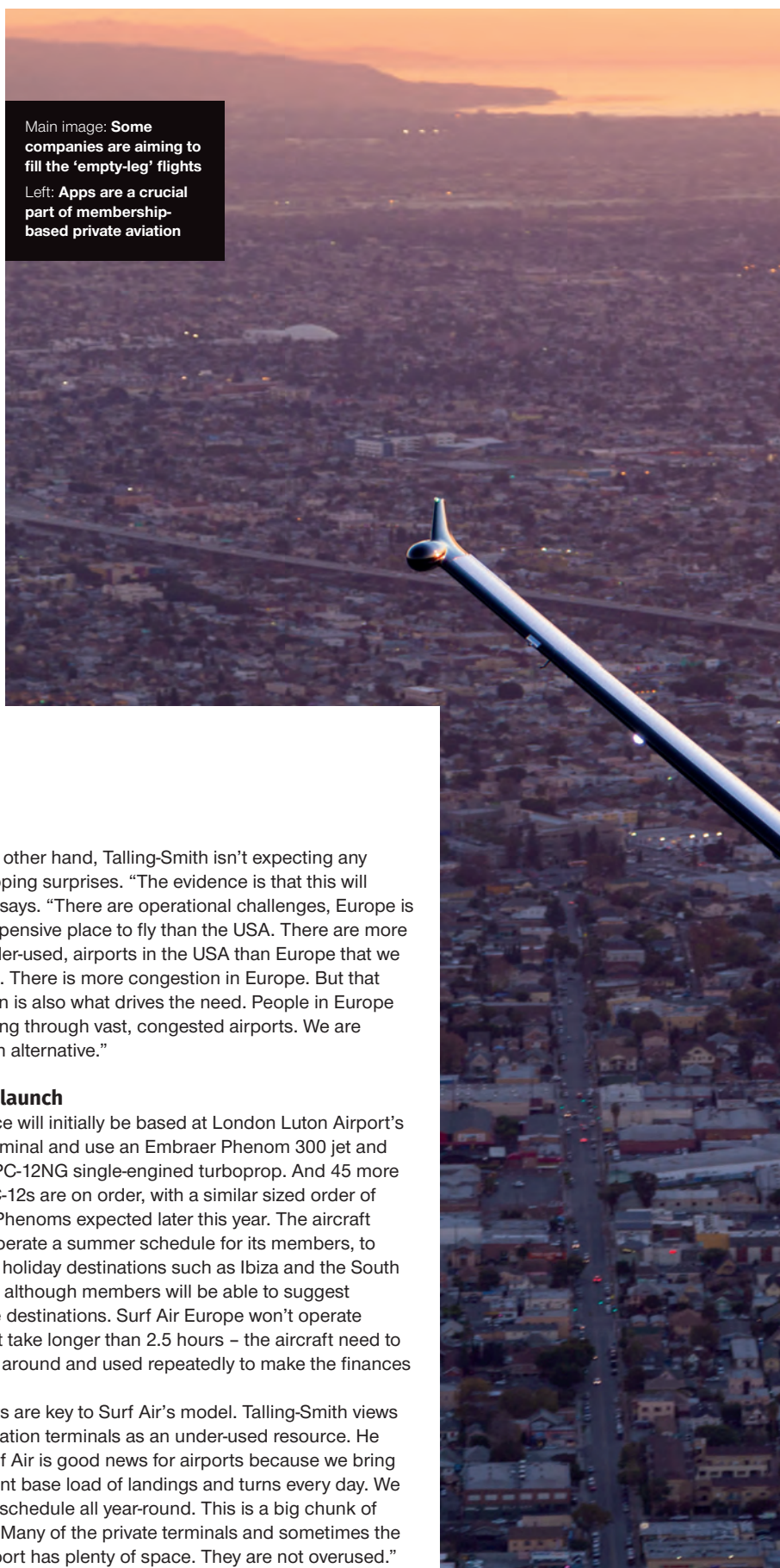
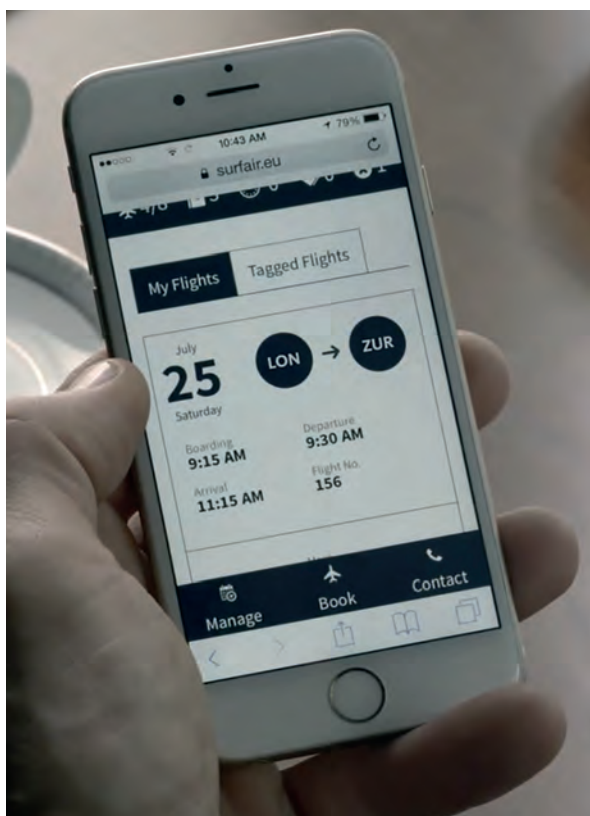


Startup Surf Air is using Pilatus PC-12s because of the aircraft's high reliability

The new wave of companies
aiming to exploit a middle
ground between private
aviation and commercial flights
is good news for airports

Words | Ben Sampson and Chris Anderson

A third way



Main image: **Some companies are aiming to fill the 'empty-leg' flights**

Left: **Apps are a crucial part of membership-based private aviation**

To call Simon Talling-Smith confident is to underplay the absolute faith he has in his product. The CEO of Surf Air Europe, which is due to launch in June, doesn't just *think* he is onto a winner, he seems to *know*

he is. He knows this because his startup is inheriting its business model from its California-based parent company, which has been successfully operating for the past three years. Members pay a monthly fee, starting at US\$2,400, to access unlimited travel on its scheduled services. So far in the USA, Surf Air has more than 3,000 members. "We offer unlimited flying for a single monthly fee. We do that by taking business aviation aircraft and private terminals and flying a scheduled service. We apply commercial aviation principles to the world of private aviation," he says.

Surf Air Europe has 200 members 'pre-signed' so far and expects to add to that number before the June launch. By the end of 2017 the global company expects to have tripled in size and be making a net profit with revenues of US\$100m. Yet there are no easy wins in aviation, and Talling-Smith is aware of how challenging launching a new airline can be. The launch of the European service was originally scheduled to begin in November 2016.

"Setting up an airline is not a trivial task," explains Talling-Smith. "Lots of people say they are going to start up this type of thing and then never do it. Finding the right partners, aircraft and agreeing the right terms with airports, with the right slots, is hard – harder with a new business model like ours."

On the other hand, Talling-Smith isn't expecting any show-stopping surprises. "The evidence is that this will work," he says. "There are operational challenges, Europe is a more expensive place to fly than the USA. There are more small, under-used, airports in the USA than Europe that we can utilize. There is more congestion in Europe. But that congestion is also what drives the need. People in Europe are traipsing through vast, congested airports. We are offering an alternative."

Summer launch

The service will initially be based at London Luton Airport's private terminal and use an Embraer Phenom 300 jet and a Pilatus PC-12NG single-engined turboprop. And 45 more Pilatus PC-12s are on order, with a similar sized order of Embraer Phenoms expected later this year. The aircraft will first operate a summer schedule for its members, to European holiday destinations such as Ibiza and the South of France, although members will be able to suggest alternative destinations. Surf Air Europe won't operate flights that take longer than 2.5 hours – the aircraft need to be turned around and used repeatedly to make the finances stack up.

Airports are key to Surf Air's model. Talling-Smith views private aviation terminals as an under-used resource. He says, "Surf Air is good news for airports because we bring a significant base load of landings and turns every day. We fly a busy schedule all year-round. This is a big chunk of business. Many of the private terminals and sometimes the whole airport has plenty of space. They are not overused."

“Surf Air is good news for airports because we bring a significant base load of landings and turns every day”

Simon Talling-Smith, CEO of Surf Air Europe



Above: Most of the startups plan to open up access to private jet aviation to more people

Wheels Up to launch in Europe this year

One of the original startups in the area of membership-based private aviation, US-based Wheels Up, plans to expand into Europe in the next 18 months.

The company, which was founded in 2013 by entrepreneur Kenny Dichter, operates a private fleet of Beechcraft King Air 350i and Citation Excel/XLS aircraft via an app that enables members to book, manage and share flights.

Wheels Up, which has sold more than 4,000 memberships, claims to be the world's fastest-growing membership-based private aviation company, with 72% membership growth between 2015 and 2016.

The company acts as an agent for its members and does not operate the aircraft, which are operated by licensed and registered carriers that participate in the Wheels Up program.

“We are a forward-thinking company always looking to be ahead of the curve and we are committed to delivering innovation to our membership,” says Dichter. “Our members tell us what they want and how they want it. Our mission is to simplify their travel in a complex world.”

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“We are creating a new business stream between commercial and charter flights”

Ruben Portz, co-founder and managing director of JetEight



Embraer's Phenom 300 jet will feature in Surf Air Europe's fleet from launch

The company is arguably being backed to a greater degree than most other recent business aviation startups. Talling-Smith says the company has raised “significant” funding over the last four years and continues to enjoy success in the capital markets. Nevertheless, one of the company’s greatest challenges is that it is a hybrid private/commercial aviation company. “People like familiar categories. Explaining what Surf Air is – and it’s difficult explaining it to the industry too – so that we aren’t put into the wrong category, is a challenge.”

The reason Talling-Smith is assured of Surf Air’s prospects is its laser-sharp focus on its target customer base. The company is aiming for frequent business travelers. People going back and forth on the same route, for their commute or business reasons. It wants to give them the private aviation experience, reduced journey times, increased reliability, executive level airport and aircraft experiences, at commercial prices. Its model aims to better use spare capacity at airports and charter operators. It is also using the latest internet technologies, both in consumer-facing apps and for back-room cloud processing of data to make its model possible.

Intermediary

Like Surf Air, German startup JetEight also aims to make private aviation more accessible to the masses, but will not operate its own aircraft. JetEight is marketing a ‘triangle’ of routes, between Frankfurt, Zurich and Berlin, and is targeting frequent business travelers, like Surf Air.

Co-founder and managing director of JetEight Ruben Portz says the company is aiming to make private aviation more transparent, in the same way online platforms such as JetSmarter and PrivateFly have, but is aiming at high-end business travelers instead of wealthy individuals. He says, “A lot of travelers fly the same route, so if we can pull them all together we can make a private jet airline.



Above: **Simon Talling-Smith** worked at British Airways for 20 years

Right: **The companies** are targeting frequent business travelers

“Commoditizing the so-called empty-leg flights of private aviation is a major new market. Around 30% of these flights are empty, and there is an opportunity to sell these seats.”

The traditional process of chartering a flight, for example from London to Germany, may involve calling operators to get competing quotes. There are existing relationships, both commercial and personal, on which this often depends. However, Portz says the target customer is always the high-net-worth individual, who isn’t very price sensitive and is approaching operators in the sector. “We are creating a new business stream between commercial and charter flights, a sort of scheduled private airline. We want to make private aviation more affordable and that makes us unique,” he says.

Single route approach

Bliss Jet is another European airline due to launch this summer, with a slightly different approach to targeting the same high-level business customers. Unlike Surf Air and JetEight, the company is focusing on a single route,



Bliss Jet plans to capture a lucrative slice of the London to New York market

“Democratizing private travel is selling it for a lower cost, which is a short-term strategy and will eventually hurt companies financially”

David Rimmer, president and CEO of Bliss Jet



London to New York, and is chartering aircraft from existing operators. Although the company has had the operating authority since last September, Bliss Jet plans to run its first flight in May, when it will launch one round-trip a week.

President and CEO of Bliss Jet David Rimmer says that the business will tap into an 800,000-strong first and business class customer base. A seat on the flights between London Stansted and New York’s LaGuardia will cost US\$9,999 each way.

Rimmer says, “We are very confident that our business is going to launch with people who have experience of private jet travel in the USA and Europe, who want that level of efficiency and service, but haven’t been able to get it between New York and London. Customers will save time. It’s a 30-minute check-in on both sides of the Atlantic.”

Rimmer is enthusiastic about the chance to introduce more people into private aviation, which he says will enable people to run better business ventures and spend more time with family and friends. However, with 20 years of experience working in business aviation, he is also cautious.



“There are two concepts we see often in these startups which I think are not good for the long term. One is an idea that security is a nuisance rather than a necessity. You’re putting strangers on an aircraft together. There’s an obligation to have a high level of security.

“The second is that democratizing private travel is selling it for a lower cost, which is a short-term strategy and will eventually hurt companies financially. You can’t sell products for less than it costs, and flying airplanes, chartering them, the costs of crews, the cost of fuel, making sure the owners and charter companies have a return, is key to the whole ecosystem of private aviation.”

Broader horizons

The opportunity to broaden the pool of customers is also very much at the core of Talling-Smith/Surf Air’s proposition to the industry. Without a doubling in the number of high-net-worth individuals in the world, he believes the growth rates of traditional business will be close to flat. “We have to fish in a bigger pond,” he says. “Surf Air will bring new people into business aviation faster than any other model because the price point is so much lower.

“We can access the funds to increase the scale of the business. We’re using the same assets and FBOs to augment the market. We can make them more efficient and bring more people in. We’re not diluting the market.”

Business aviation has seen many attempts at disruption over the decades. Many established players operate profitably on the same well-proven principles. However, entrepreneurs from outside of the sector are increasingly looking to build on those principles, by leveraging the latest internet technologies and making better use of business aviation resources. Industry incumbents and especially airports, should welcome the possibility of broadening the sector’s customer base. ○



Above: Bliss Jet president and CEO David Rimmer has worked in aviation for 20 years

Left: Bliss Jet aims to offer more luxury and efficiency than commercial airlines



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Words | Chris Anderson

Main airports for New York

John F Kennedy Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Sheltair. Facilities include ground handling, on-site Hertz rental cars, courtesy shuttle service, catering, free wi-fi, flight planning room, conference room, pilots' lounge, passenger lounge, available crew cars

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 4L/22R – 12,079ft; 4R/22L – 8,400ft; 13L/31R – 9,999ft; 13R/31L – 14,511ft

Distance from Manhattan: 15 miles



LaGuardia Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Sheltair. Facilities include de-icing services, ground support, concierge, catering, shuttle service, free wi-fi, conference room, flight planning/weather room, pilots' lounge

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 04/22 – 7,001ft; 13/31 – 7,003ft

Distance from Manhattan: 9 miles



Newark Liberty International Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Signature Flight Support. Facilities include heated hangar space, limousine service, catering, concierge, free wi-fi, business center, passenger lounge, snooze room, showers, rental cars by National

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 4L/22R – 11,000ft; 4R/22L – 10,000ft; 11/29 – 6,800ft

Distance from Manhattan: 15 miles



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Airport

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Municipal
Airport

Newark Liberty
International
Airport

Other airports near New York

Teterboro Airport

Operating hours: 24/7 (voluntary night curfew midnight-6:00am)

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Atlantic Aviation Services, Jet Aviation, Meridian Teterboro and two facilities from Signature Flight Support

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 1/19 – 7,000ft; 6/24 – 6,013ft
Distance from Manhattan: 14 miles

Essex County Airport

Operating hours: 6:00am-11:00pm

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Air Bound Aviation. Facilities include heated hangar, passenger lobby, pilots' lounge, Hertz rental cars on premises

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 4/22 – 4,552ft;
10/28 – 3,719ft

Distance from Manhattan: 28 miles

Morristown Municipal Airport

Operating hours: 8:00am-4:00pm Mon-Fri
Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by FTC Private Terminal and Signature Flight Support

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 5/23 – 5,998ft; 13/31 – 3,997ft

Distance from Manhattan: 42 miles

Long Island MacArthur Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Hawthorne Global Aviation Services, New York Jet Corporate Jet Center and Sheltair

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 6/24 – 7,006ft; 10/28 – 5,034ft;
15L/33R – 3,175ft; 15R/33L – 5,186ft

Distance from Manhattan: 55 miles

Republic Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Sheltair and Atlantic Aviation

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 14/32 – 6,833ft; 1/19 – 5,516ft

Distance from Manhattan: 30 miles

Westchester County Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Million Air White Plains, Ross Aviation (East and West), and Signature Flight Support (East and West)

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 11/29 – 4,451ft; 16/34 – 6,549ft
Distance from Manhattan: 33 miles

Stewart International Airport

Operating hours: 24/7

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by Atlantic Aviation Services and Signature Flight Support

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 9/27 – 11,817ft;
16/34 – 6,004ft

Distance from Manhattan: 63 miles

Westchester County Airport

LaGuardia Airport

New York City

John F Kennedy Airport

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French connection

Paris-Le Bourget Airport, just outside the French capital, is over 100 years old. Now dedicated to business aviation, its current renovation program will help set its course for the future

Not many airports can claim a history spanning more than a century. Paris-Le Bourget Airport, around 7km from the French capital, was founded in 1914, in the early days of World War I. Capt. Désiré Lucca had been tasked by the military with finding land just north of Paris from which planes could take off to counter the German offensive, and this was the site he chose. It officially opened as an airport for the public offering commercial flights in 1919, and celebrated its centenary in 2014.

Paris-Le Bourget also served as the landing site for Charles Lindbergh's historic solo transatlantic crossing in 1927, and remained the capital's only airport until the opening of Paris Orly in 1932. Since 1981 it has been dedicated to business aviation, and has now carved itself an exciting niche – many people consider it to be the leading business airport in Europe.

Major developments

For a location with such an eventful past, it makes sense for Paris-Le Bourget to be positive about how it moves forward. "The airport is currently committed to a sweeping modernization program," reveals Bruno Mazurkiewicz, director of Paris-Le Bourget Airport and general aviation aerodromes at Groupe ADP, the organization that oversees Paris-Le Bourget, Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Paris Orly. "Over the next two years we will invest €40-50m (US\$43-54m) to bolster our position as Europe's leading business airport, pursue our upgrade, and improve facilities and the equipment

available for maintenance companies and FBOs. In addition to this, we will refurbish old hangars and empty buildings, and beautify our outdoor areas.

"In order to increase the airport's appeal to the neighborhood, we are also building an aeronautical professional training center, set to open in September 2019. We hope it will encourage young people living near the airport to choose aeronautical careers. The ties that have grown between our airport and the surrounding communities are key to developing our activity."

Fit for business

There are many amenities available to business aviation customers at Paris-Le Bourget, with a number of companies offering FBO facilities. "We have many assets: an exceptional location 7km from Paris and near major business areas, flexibility in terms of take-offs and landings, and 24-hour operation," Mazurkiewicz continues. "There are also three runways suitable for all types of aircraft. Our clients can be sure to find the maintenance they need, too."

It seems that the French capital is also a key attraction – at least that seems to be the airport's explanation for coping with market turbulence. Until now, the crisis that has slowed down global sales of business aircraft has not affected us much," says Mazurkiewicz. "With nearly 54,000 movements in 2016, any drop in activity has been very limited. Paris is still very appealing, which directly benefits us. Paris will always be Paris."

Vital statistics

Location: Le Bourget, near Paris, France

Founded: 1914

Operating hours: 24/7

Runway length: 03/21 – 8,743ft; 07/25 – 9,843ft; 09/27 – 6,053ft

Fuel: Jet-A, Avgas 100LL



Above: **Paris-Le Bourget** had 54,000 movements last year

Inset: **Bruno Mazurkiewicz**, the airport director

Into the future

A future as prosperous as the previous 100 years will take careful planning. "Our goal is to keep our leadership position in Europe and increase the airport's appeal," Mazurkiewicz concludes. "To achieve it, we are investing in property to make it worthwhile for aeronautical companies to move here. We must also foresee the growth connected to the Grand Paris plan and are delighted that a metro station is scheduled to be built in the airport area in 2023. We need to be prepared for the Olympic Games if France is chosen and continue to create strong ties with the areas around us. The future looks exciting!" ○

PARIS-LE BOURGET AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 101



Dubai dreams

Making waves in the business aviation market in the Middle East is **DC Aviation Al-Futtaim**, based in Dubai – a collaboration between a local business group and Germany's largest private jet operator

Formed in 2012, DC Aviation Al-Futtaim (DCAF) is a joint venture between Al-Futtaim in Dubai, UAE, and Germany's DC Aviation. The company began by building a state-of-the-art hangar, maintenance facility, business offices and a VVIP reception facility at Al Maktoum International Airport. Completed in 2013, the DCAF hangar measures 61,000ft² and can easily accommodate four ACJ- or BBJ-type aircraft, or two ultra-long-range business jets, such as the Falcon 7X, Global Express or Gulfstream G550.

DCAF also supports maintenance on the Airbus 320, Bombardier Global Express and the Challenger 604/605 series aircraft. Other benefits include minimal taxiing time and unlimited slot availability, with VVIP customers able to park their jet right in front of the lounge, making use of the immigration, customs and security services available inside. There are also shower areas, a conference room and covered parking. Other services available from DCAF include aircraft management, ground handling and business jet charter.

Ready for expansion

The managing director of DCAF, Holger Ostheimer, is happy to reveal more about the company. "We are currently the only fully fledged VVIP FBO and hangar facility of the Dubai South project, of which Al Maktoum International Airport is a part," he says. "We offer customers the highest levels of comfort, convenience and privacy."

DCAF is expanding too. "We recently added a Dassault Falcon 7X aircraft to our managed fleet," continues Ostheimer. "We have five other aircraft under management, including two Bombardier Challenger 604, a Gulfstream G200, a Bombardier Global XRS and the Falcon 7X. Hopefully we will add another aircraft before the end of the year."



With an expanding fleet, will DCAF be needing more hangar space? "We

have actually started building our second hangar, which is expected to be in use by the end of 2017," Ostheimer adds. "It will more than double our hangar capacity, and enables us to add two single-aisle aircraft maintenance bays, with enough space for an additional workshop and equipment storage. It will also significantly increase the number and size of aircraft that can be accommodated at the facility."

Local opportunity

When asked about how the Middle East business aviation market differs compared with other parts of the world, the answer is simple: bigger, more demanding aircraft. "The UAE is a country with an above average number of wealthy residents, and this is reflected in the composition of the local and regional private and business jet fleet," Ostheimer confirms.

There are a number of significant regional events on

Above: **The DCAF hangar measures 61,000ft², and also features a luxury VVIP lounge**

Below: **Managing director Holger Ostheimer**



the horizon that could also drive the potential growth of the business aviation market in the Middle East, such as Dubai Expo 2020 and the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Ostheimer is confident that DCAF can stay ahead of the competition during this period of increased opportunities. "We put the customer at the center of everything we do," he says. "It is ingrained into the company DNA, and we firmly believe in not just meeting customer expectations, but consistently exceeding them."

"At our facility, aircraft owners and passengers can benefit from seamless processing and boarding, with minimal distance between the VIP limousine drop-off and aircraft steps, requiring mere seconds to board the aircraft, which is parked in front of the lounge facility. It is the attention to detail in areas such as this that proves we are ahead of the pack. Whatever happens, or however the market develops, this is how we will always be." ○

DC AVIATION AL-FUTTAIM

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 102



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Leading the way

Business aviation in the Middle East is growing, with the region's first dedicated facility, **Al Bateen Executive Airport** in Abu Dhabi, still ahead of the competition

The first dedicated business aviation facility in the Middle East and North Africa region was Al Bateen Executive Airport (ABEA), which opened in 1969. Conveniently located in the center of Abu Dhabi in the UAE, ABEA currently has a stand capacity for up to 50 private jets and operates on a 24/7 basis. Other advantages include fast and efficient turnarounds, no holding patterns and short taxi times.

ABEA began operation in the 1960s as the first international airport in the UAE capital, until Abu Dhabi International Airport opened 20 miles outside of the city in 1982. In 1983, ABEA was transformed into a military air base, in operation until the end of 2008, when local operator Abu Dhabi Airports took over and transformed it into a world-class executive airport.

As part of its vision to lead the business aviation and general aviation industry in the region, ABEA offers an FBO handling service, Munawala, which brings together all of the requirements for business aviation customers as a one-stop shop, under the management and coordination of a highly trained customer service team. It also hosts the biennial Abu Dhabi Air Expo, an iconic event in the global aviation calendar, and the only one of its kind in the Middle East.

VVIP access

Its proximity to the heart of Abu Dhabi makes ABEA the preferred choice for business employees and official delegations, with the short taxi and turnaround times creating a fast, hassle-free service. There are also a number of improvements being made to increase the levels of customer satisfaction further.

In 2016, the new VVIP terminal was opened for use by royalty, visiting heads of state, ministers, senior diplomats and high-level business executives. The 24,000ft² facility has been constructed to strict sustainability guidelines, and was rewarded with a high ranking on the Pearl Rating System – developed by the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council via its sustainable development initiative,



Estidama, to acknowledge a building's green credentials.

The terminal is a standalone structure, with its own dedicated car parking lot, immigration services and passport facilities. The interior of the building has been configured to the highest possible specifications, meeting the expectations of VVIP passengers. Included are an open majlis (seating area), private majlis, presidential suite, meeting rooms, offices, and male and female prayer rooms. Every aspect of the design, development and finish has been delivered to the highest standards, in keeping with the airport's desire to provide passengers with the best possible service.



Vital statistics

Location: Abu Dhabi, UAE

Operating hours: 24/7

Runway length: 13/31 – 10,500ft

Services: VVIP terminal with private lounges and conference facilities; on-site immigration and customs; crew lounge with work station, shower facilities and relaxation area; secure car parking; on-site gourmet catering provider

Above: Inside the VVIP terminal, with its large seating areas

Left: Short taxi times are one of the promises to visitors

Below: The VVIP terminal has been praised for its design

Plans for development

ABEA is currently in the process of several major modifications. These include the upgrading of the runway and road infrastructure of the airport, the installation of new parking facilities, hanger renovations, and the construction of a state-of-the-art entryway.

For 20 years, business aviation in the Middle East has catered mainly to the region's royal family members, but now there are wealthy individuals, CEOs or company directors and senior officials also using private jets. This has seen traffic across the region grow considerably, with Abu Dhabi becoming an important hub, thanks to ABEA.

The market in the Middle East continues to grow, with more demand, but also more competition and an increasing number of providers. Industry experts predict that the region will remain a promising market for the sector over the coming decade. ○

AL BATEEN EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 103

Software support

MyHandling is a web-based FBO management program developed by **OpsHorizon**. Easy to use and update, it is already being used by companies all over the world

Vital statistics

Founded: 2009

Services: Business aviation planning and management software

Products: MyHandling, a web-based FBO management platform

Customers: Used by more than 30 FBOs in locations all over the world



Many operators these days are turning to software to manage their businesses. Created by fast-growing tech company OpsHorizon, MyHandling is a web-based FBO management program, and a business success story. OpsHorizon was founded by Pascal Meyer, a former employee of Chambéry Airport in the French Alps, back in 2009, who had been trying to find a way to make airport operations run more smoothly. OpsHorizon is now projecting two-digit growth for 2017, keeping pace with the expansion of the past two years.

So how does MyHandling differ from the competition? "It has a range of features that we asked our customers to help us develop," says Meyer. "It's a simple, intuitive interface, so you don't need to work through the different levels to find what you need. Our parking optimization tool is one of the features that has really gone down well with our clients – if you look at airports like Chambéry, Cannes or Ibiza, they really struggle with parking during the peak season, but our colorful parking dashboard helps any operations team member see in a just a second the location of all the free spaces."

Flexibility is key

Those already using MyHandling – more than 30 FBOs worldwide – are able to specify the features they require and customize it to their needs. "We were

asked by a South American FBO if we could tailor MyHandling to suit the complexity of its taxation system," Meyer continues. "We base the programming around a specific core, then customize according to what is needed, so something like this isn't a problem for us."

Meyer points to another interesting client case in Spain, where the OpsHorizon team had to integrate a vast array of client data, accumulated over decades of operations. Then another client, the business aviation terminal at Toulon-Hyères Airport in southwest France, asked for specific features due to its dependency on French Navy hourly operations. "We designed a workflow, unique to this FBO, that makes sure

Above left: **MyHandling is a software tool designed specifically for FBO operation**

Above right: **Through its simple, intuitive interface, it handles a range of tasks**

Below: **Users can be informed about the movement of flights in real time**

the private traffic is not interfering with the military duties," says Meyer. "It has an easier way of handling the various validation steps, making the process faster and simpler, and a real time-saver."

Better features

The OpsHorizon team regularly updates the MyHandling system. "We added an invoicing feature last year, which has gone down well," Meyer adds. "It helps our clients to see instantly if their customers are in credit, paid cash or by credit card, or if they are in debt. Another feature is the reporting system, allowing, in one click, the ability to compare peak hours of different seasons, and predict patterns of development."

Further updates are planned for this year. "We're looking to include incident notifications, foreign object damage and maintenance alerts," Meyer reveals.

Customer service is also important, as is making sure that everyone gets the most from the system. "I have a close relationship with my clients and like to make sure they are satisfied," says Meyer. "One of the major issues with technology is that often we get so excited by it, we forget that it has to be easy for everybody to operate. It's important to help our clients get used to the system." ○

OPSHORIZON

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Reader Inquiry Number 104



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Regional support

Indochina Aviation Centre and Myanmar Aviation Centre has set new standards for flight support in Southeast Asia, and are a growing regional presence

It all started from humble beginnings and a challenging yet well-defined mission: open new stations for a major European tour operator's airline in Southeast Asia to operate scheduled flights into Myanmar and Cambodia. The mission was successfully accomplished, and by noticing the lack of a regional presence for specialized flight support, an expansion into new territory began.

Today, Indochina Aviation Centre and Myanmar Aviation Centre (IAC & MAC) provide ground services in five countries in Southeast Asia's Mekong region: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Vietnam. With a permanent operational presence in 13 airports, up to 55 airports are served seasonally or on demand – depending on client requirements. IAC & MAC is the only business and general aviation handling and supervision company covering so many countries throughout this dynamic region with a local presence.

Filling the void

The customer base has grown quickly from one scheduled airline to business jet operators, private jet operators, owner-operated aircraft, military customers, heads of state and other VIPs, as well

as passenger and cargo scheduled and charter flights. All of these operators benefit from the local expertise and regionally standardized handling procedures implemented by IAC & MAC, which results in a hassle-free operation, even in challenging destinations. Having successfully supported missions from the White House and Air Force One to an owner-operated single-engine airplane, the quality of service and hospitality that IAC & MAC provides is attracting an ever-growing customer base.

Local experts

With satellite offices in each country that it serves, IAC & MAC pays its taxes locally and creates employment opportunities. The company also takes its corporate responsibility very seriously. The companies are management-owned, thus ensuring a personal service for all clients. MAC also operates its own IATA and Myanmar DCA approved training center, working with its own staff and other regional industry stakeholders. Through partnerships with local hotels and restaurants, as well as food importers, transportation providers and its own sister company, AsiaTrips (which provides tailor-made travel

Vital statistics

Locations: All airports in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam

Founded: 2012

Services: Ground handling/ supervision, flight permits, crew and passenger services, ground transportation, catering coordination, fuel coordination



Above: **IAC & MAC prides itself on a bespoke service**

Below left: **Specialized flight support at many airports in the region is taken care of**

experiences), IAC & MAC has every aspect of any type of trip covered.

All services are tailor-made to each client's needs, as is the pricing. An operations control center in Bangkok coordinates all client operations before briefing the local teams for the execution of each assignment. This reduces the workload for the clients, as they only have to interact with one point of contact, even for a multideestination trip in the region. IAC & MAC is a member of the Asian Business Aviation Association (AsBAA) and the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), and recently exhibited at the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) Show for the first time.

Continuous expansion

With an increasing number of business aircraft flying to Southeast Asia, IAC & MAC has big plans for the future. The existing network is growing denser every year, as more airports are upgraded to permanent handling stations. Moreover, the coverage is set to be extended to countries not yet covered. ○

IAC & MAC

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 105



Philosophy of excellence

VINCI Airports is a French operator with international reach, but recently its focus has been on developing business aviation traffic at selected locations in its home country

VINCI Airports is a name well known in the field of aviation throughout the world. From its headquarters in France, it develops, builds, finances and operates 35 airports across the globe – 13 in France, 10 in Portugal, three in Cambodia, two in Japan, six in the Dominican Republic and one in Chile.

New additions

In November 2016, Lyon-Bron Airport – the third-busiest business airport in France – joined the VINCI Airports network, which helped to reinforce the group's position as a key player in the French business aviation sector. Located just 11km from the center of Lyon itself, with easy access to a major highway, the airport has hangar space and maintenance facilities dedicated to business aviation.

The company handled more than 21,000 movements throughout its southeast French network during 2016, of which its airports in that part of the country – Chambéry Savoie Mont Blanc, Grenoble Alpes Isère, Clermont-Ferrand Auvergne and Toulon Hyères – played a key role. VINCI Airports handled 8,000 business aviation movements at the new Lyon-Bron facility alone.

Perfect variety

The five airports operated by VINCI Airports in southeast France benefit from exceptional geographical locations. Chambéry Savoie Mont Blanc and Grenoble Alpes Isère are close to the French Alps and its ski resorts; Lyon-Bron is ideally located close to Lyon and its booming economy, culture and world-famous gastronomy; Toulon Hyères at the heart of the touristic Var region offers quick access to Saint Tropez and the rest of the Côte d'Azur; and Clermont-Ferrand Auvergne is a gateway to the Auvergne region and its famous industries.

Although each airport benefits from its own unique identity, in line with its



Above: Lyon-Bron is the latest facility in France to be acquired by VINCI Airports

Right: The lounge at the Clermont-Ferrand Auvergne FBO (right); transport to the slopes at Chambéry Savoie Mont Blanc (below right)

location and the profile of its clients, the facilities share the same 'philosophy of excellence' – an approach tailored by VINCI Airports that places customer satisfaction as the top priority above all else, with the sole aim of meeting passenger and crew requirements.

Excellent experience

All of the facilities managed by VINCI Airports in southeast France have their own business aviation terminal, which offers a pleasant atmosphere where passengers can relax before boarding. Private areas are also available for the crew, where they too can unwind and prepare for their flight.

To extend its offering, the VINCI Airports concierge service works with handpicked, quality partners to provide catering, car rental services and hotel accommodation, comfortable limousine transfers, or a quick and spectacular flight by helicopter. Every need is considered, with the aim of providing a seamless customer experience. ○

Vital statistics

Locations: 35 airports in France, Portugal, Cambodia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Japan

Services: Planning, operational launch, supervision, contract management, safety, security, network development, passenger service, maintenance, business partnerships



VINCI AIRPORTS

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 106

Strictly business

Dedicated business aviation airport **TAG Farnborough** is steeped in history and only a short distance from London – ideal for flying into the capital

In the world of business aviation there should be no compromise on quality and customer service. Every aspect of the journey should be tailored to meet the exact needs of the client, optimizing comfort and convenience for time saving and operating on routes not efficiently served by scheduled airlines. TAG Farnborough Airport, Europe's leading business aviation airport and a key gateway to London, offers an unmatched experience with award-winning, ultra-modern facilities staffed by an outstanding team of trained service professionals.

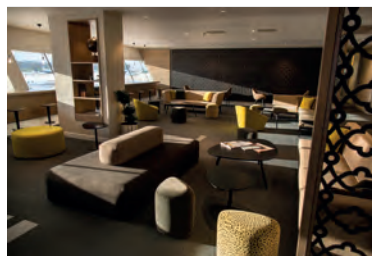
Farnborough holds a notable place in the history of British aviation, as it was the scene of the UK's first powered flight in 1908 and has been the proud host of the biennial Farnborough International Airshow since 1948. Once the headquarters of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), Farnborough was granted permission to be used as a business aviation airport in 2003, and since then flights into and out of the facility have steadily increased to over 25,000 per year.

Easy access

One of the key factors bringing this business to Farnborough is its location – only 35 miles southwest of London. Direct trains from the capital serve two stations in the town, taking less than 40 minutes, or the journey is an hour by car or 10 minutes by helicopter. The terminal building is easy to find, thanks to its elegant modern architecture coupled with the distinctive wave of the hangar space.

Farnborough distinguishes itself from the competition by offering a dedicated business aviation service rather than a private jet facility within a commercial airport. With a focus on delivering bespoke services for the business aviation market, TAG Farnborough Airport recently invested £1m (US\$1.2m) to create even more space for passengers and crew at its terminal building.

In response to an emerging demand for higher-volume business aviation flights, development of the award-winning



infrastructure includes a new lounge, accommodating up to 80 passengers or a corporate event, while continuing to offer privacy and comfort to individuals and small groups. Customers can also enjoy unique views of the airfield from a gallery seating area.

Other distinctive features include a TopBrewer coffee machine, which can be operated via an iPad, as well as a 'fuselage clock', coffee table and 'exhaust lamp' made from vintage aircraft parts. The airport has also introduced additional crew facilities, such as a quiet lounge and snooze room equipped with flat beds and a zero-gravity ergonomic chair, in addition to a complimentary gymnasium and shower facilities in a separate building adjacent to the main terminal.

Moving forward

The world of aviation is future focused, with a particular emphasis on responsible development. In 2016 The Green Organisation presented the airport with a Silver Green Apple Award in recognition of its commitment to reducing

Top: **The terminal and hangar space are easily recognizable**

Above: **The terminal has benefited from a £1m makeover**

environmental impact and continuous improvement through best practice. In 2017 the airport is set to further improve its carbon footprint by partnering with the local community to introduce 3,500 trees into the area, and is on track to achieve its goal of Airport Carbon Accreditation at the Neutrality level by 2019.

Commenting on the growing business aviation trend, Brandon O'Reilly, CEO of TAG Farnborough Airport, said, "Being a dedicated business aviation airport is advantageous to our clients, saving them valuable time with uncongested, efficient service and privacy throughout their travel experience. We pride ourselves on our ability to offer an award-winning service with uncompromising standards. As we look to the future we will continue to invest and enhance our facilities to serve our customers even better, maintaining our position as Europe's leading business aviation airport." ○

TAG FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 107

Smooth operator

Jeppesen has developed a new online platform for pilots and other personnel with cloud-based key functionality to help with everyday operations

Jeppesen, a Boeing company, in alliance with BoldIQ Inc, recently introduced Jeppesen Operator, a new online platform that integrates key business aviation functionality into a 'one-stop shop' self-service environment. It is built for pilots and operations staff and is available through the cloud with a modern interface, combining decades of knowledge and expertise.

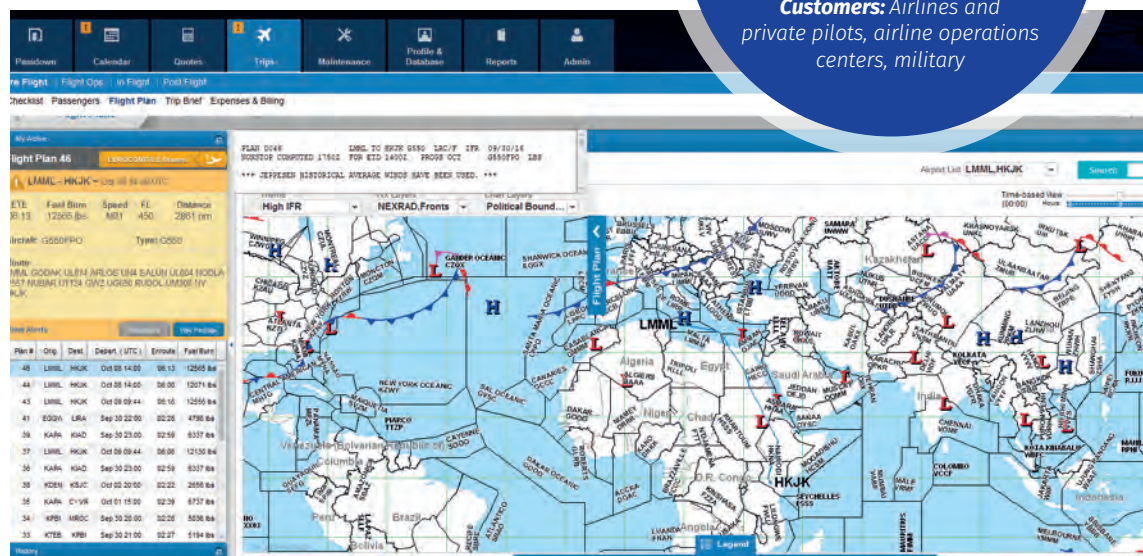
Specifically, Operator integrates flight planning, runway performance, weight and balance, crew scheduling and management with aircraft scheduling, domestic and international trip planning and reporting (financial, maintenance and custom). It will even factor in customer account management, real-time pricing and cost-accounting capabilities. Operator is web-based, so it is easily accessible from any computer or tablet through a web browser.

Operator ensures regulatory and business policy, and procedure compliance, using multiple rules engines, including those unique to a customer's operation, and provides a custom trip checklist. This is automatically generated and provides insight into the complexity and requirements for each trip, determining if additional resources are needed. This process enhances situational awareness and assures the trip will be released for flight.

Based on experience

The Operator platform combines Jeppesen's 40 years of experience in flight and international trip planning with BoldIQ's 10+ years' knowledge of on-demand flight operations and optimization into a single, united user platform. It improves data sharing, simplifies access and usability, increasing resource utilization, all backed by proven technology. The platform provides the seamless integration of scheduling, crew and fleet management, customer account management, real-time pricing and cost accounting, driven by advanced optimization capabilities.

Mike DiDonato, director of industry services at Jeppesen, says, "Jeppesen



Operator represents the culmination of years of meticulous research and proven in-production software, understanding customer-driven requirements and design work performed to create the next-generation business aviation tool. It allows operators to improve collaboration, increase productivity and reduce errors, with total operational control. Plus, Jeppesen's renowned global customer service team is available 24/7 to resolve any issues."

Concierge mode

When using Concierge in association with Operator, a customer has the option to connect with Jeppesen's international global trip planning experts for assistance with such tasks as managing flight plans, permits and handling arrangements and customs issues, or to establish a line of credit and eliminate operational financial concerns that could jeopardize a planned flight. Airport, FBO and vendor data for Operator systems is generated by the Jeppesen Aviation Database, the most comprehensive in the aviation industry.

Roei Ganzarski, president and CEO of BoldIQ, says, "The complexities and real-time dynamic nature of on-demand aviation operations are significant and much more complicated than those of other industries."

Above: Jeppesen Operator integrates a range of operating procedures into one seamless package

Pulling together essential business aviation elements in this way also requires the need for ensuring compliance with regulatory and business policies, and any operational procedures that may already be in place. Operator uses multiple rule engines, including those unique to a customer's requirements.

Future development

Looking ahead, Operator will combine with leading mobile apps that are already in use by operators for navigation, electronic flight bags and pilot operational interaction capabilities, further integrating planning and operations systems in an end-to-end digital management solution.

The company also provides a mobile crew portal that will soon be integrated into Jeppesen charting and Boeing Electronic Flight Folder applications, creating more operational efficiencies across common systems. Other new features and functionality in the works include disruption management capabilities developed with BoldIQ, and an app platform that will further drive business aviation efficiency, helping to prepare operators for the future. ○

JEPPESSEN

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Northern exposure

With its great facilities and stable weather, **Alaska Aerofuel** in Fairbanks is the ideal international tech stop for flights heading to Asia or into Europe over the North Pole

Alaska Aerofuel's FBO at Fairbanks International Airport in Alaska, USA, has for 35 years been the ideal tech stop for those flying between North America and Asia, from Europe into the USA over the North Pole, or just for anyone wanting to land in Fairbanks for a glimpse of the famous northern lights. "Our average tech stop is around 40 minutes, from touchdown to roll-out," says Jacqueline Dispoto, Alaska Aerofuel's director of marketing. "It's not a cargo-centric airport, so you don't get extensive cargo traffic, and we're also the only FBO in Alaska with its own customs and immigration. Both shave off considerable amounts of time."

Stable weather compared with the rest of the state also helps. "Our winter weather is often misunderstood," Dispoto continues. "But Fairbanks has an extremely dry climate, with low to no wind in winter. Our average snowfall is just over 1m per year, and it's a dry snow. Due to the lack of wind and the dry climate, we've only ever had three runway closures since 2001 – that's less than some airports have per day."

Cold weather testing

Low temperatures can affect passengers and aircraft, but Alaska Aerofuel has many incentives to help overcome these concerns. "We have free de-icing for international tech stops, which is not something I've seen another FBO based in a wintry location like ours do," says Dispoto. "Depending on the size of the aircraft, that could be anything up to the value of US\$5,000."

And in terms of de-icing the passengers? "We greet visitors with winter gear as they disembark," Dispoto adds. "It's only a short distance to the main FBO building, just a few meters, but we want guests to be comfortable."

The company has a few other ideas to beat the cold too, some of which have earned the attention of major aircraft manufacturers. "We have a climate-controlled hangar, and our line crew are highly trained, many coming from an Arctic aviation military background,"



Dispoto reveals. "But most interesting is that the major manufacturers of helicopters and aircraft choose us as their base for cold weather testing. They test the body, the avionics and the mechanics. We know that there is likely to be no issue with airplanes arriving here on the coldest of days, as most will have been here for testing and certification at some point."

A meeting of cultures

In terms of the amenities offered by the FBO, Alaska Aerofuel likes to make guests of all nationalities feel at home. "We have a full-service FBO, with a lobby lounge, crew lounge, snooze room, recliners and satellite TV," says Dispoto. "If it's a corporate tech stop, then people will only be off the aircraft for 10 to 15 minutes, so this suits their needs."

It is the little touches, however, that are unexpected. "We celebrate the culture of



Top: **Fairbanks's weather is stable, unlike most of Alaska**

Above: **Guests can relax inside with a specialty coffee or tea**

Below: **Hangar space and maintenance are available at the site**



Vital statistics

Location: Fairbanks International Airport, Fairbanks, Alaska

Operating hours: 24/7

Runway length: 2L/20R – 11,800ft;
2R/20L – 6,501ft; 2/20 – 2,900ft;
2W/20W – 5,400ft

Fuel: Jet-A and Avgas 100LL

Alaska, offering our very popular St Nickerdoodle roasted coffee from the North Pole," Dispoto explains. "We also feature internationally award-winning teas, and we've been trained to properly make and serve them for travelers from China, India and Europe, who are more discerning tea drinkers than most."

And if guests feel peckish? "As far as catering goes, we offer a wide variety of western and authentic Asian cuisine," Dispoto adds. "We have a restaurant in Fairbanks, and their chef from Fuzhou in China prepares it for us – not in the style for the westernized public, but how the travelers would be used to back home."

Ideal location

There are a lot of good reasons to plan a visit to Fairbanks, via Alaska Aerofuel. "We are very corporate jet friendly, and ideally situated on the globe for great circle-route advantages," adds Dispoto. "Also, our airport fees are much lower than at other facilities, and we have the longest, publicly available runway in the state."

"The airport itself is technologically excellent engineering-wise, and we serve as a hub for the entire Alaska Interior. We have many capabilities not usually found at airports this size. Our aim is to surpass your expectations in a part of the world where you least expect it." ○

ALASKA AEROFUEL

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Reader Inquiry Number **109**



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Atlantic stopover

Flying from Europe to the USA? Stop off at any of the **IGS** FBOs in Iceland when planning your trip across the Atlantic, with four convenient locations to choose from

Operating an FBO in the middle of the Atlantic can be challenging, but also rewarding. Iceland has always been a popular destination for technical and fuel stops for short-haul aircraft crossing the Atlantic due to its location.

Private traffic has increased over the past few years as more people are traveling to Iceland in private aircraft for overnight stops or longer on leisure travel. The amazing Northern Lights, glacial lagoons and untouched nature provide the ideal balance to the increasingly man-made view on mainland Europe and Asia. Since 1973, IGS has offered ground-handling services to all types of aircraft, ranging from the LJ35 to the A380. Nothing is too much trouble when it comes to servicing IGS clients.

Perfect pitstop

In response to the growing air traffic, IGS is now the largest FBO network in Iceland, offering services at Akureyri, often called the capital of the North; Egilsstaðir, the largest town in eastern Iceland; and, of course, Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. The proximity to all necessary services, such as hospitals, hotels and restaurants, makes Reykjavik the ideal place for an overnight stop. All services are coordinated from the IGS headquarters at Keflavik International Airport.

To meet the needs of overnight leisure clients, IGS has tailored handling packages, which include all basic ground-handling services, airport fees and excursion planning. Each handling package is subject to change according to the client's wishes – you might want to hop on board a 30-minute helicopter ride while the staff fuel your aircraft, or drive the famous Golden Circle where you will see Gullfoss, the largest waterfall in Europe, or visit Thingvellir, a national

Above: **The Northern Lights** are a favorite Iceland attraction

Below left: **IGS staff** are friendly, helpful and welcoming

Vital statistics

Location: Keflavík, Akureyri, Reykjavík and Egilsstaðir, Iceland

Founded: 1973

Experience: All staff attend yearly courses as according to the ISO 9001 certificate

Services: Ramp services, VIP handling, cargo handling, passenger handling, fuel and customs coordination, HOTAC and transportation, excursion planning



park and UNESCO World Heritage Site. IGS can make every experience unique, taking care of your aircraft needs while providing an unforgettable stopover.

Service and safety

In the ever-demanding world of regulations and standards, IGS knows that clients want high quality and consistent service, which is why it adheres to the ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 standards – reassuring for every customer that visits. This way, clients can expect the same level of service at each IGS service location throughout the country. In addition to service, the company also acknowledges the necessity of adhering to environmentally friendly practices.

IGS places great importance on three areas when it comes to servicing general aviation and commercial operators: safety, punctuality and service. The safety of the customer is always the top priority in regard to maintaining fast turnaround procedures – just 25 minutes for a single fuel stop. Whatever the needs of a trip, and however long the customer wants to spend in Iceland, IGS can help. ○

IGS

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Reader Inquiry Number **110**

World class

Copenhagen-Roskilde Airport is a facility near Copenhagen, Denmark, dedicated to business aviation. Its attention to detail has seen it voted one of the best FBOs in the world by its customers

For the past five years, Copenhagen-Roskilde Airport, near Copenhagen in Denmark, has been talked about as one of the best FBOs in the world. In 2016, for example, *European Business Air News* magazine readers voted it the best business airport among 400 competitors in Europe, the Middle East, Russia and Africa. A dedicated team is responsible for its impressive reputation, with each of them working hard to fulfill the customers' needs – operators, crew and passengers alike.

Only 30 minutes from Copenhagen by car, the location is owned and operated by Copenhagen Airports, which also oversees the main international airport in the city serving well-known commercial airlines. Copenhagen-Roskilde Airport is clearly much smaller, with the dedicated Roskilde Executive Handling team of 35 welcoming 622 flights during 2016, maintaining a tight focus on everyone who passes through. The airport has many regular customers, serving business charter companies such as NetJets, Air Alsie, North Flying and Air Hamburg.

Flexibility and service

It is no easy task for a seemingly humble airport to become such a highly regarded FBO, but the flexibility that Copenhagen-Roskilde offers visitors has long been one of the reasons for its success: the airport is open every day, all year round, and there are no special night restrictions. At the same time, the airport provides maintenance, repair and overhaul services, as well as ground handling.

Copenhagen-Roskilde also pays close attention to its customer service, with staff treating everybody with equal respect,



offering the same cordial treatment. The team works closely on a daily basis with a number of brokers and airlines, and also a wide range of other service providers, arranging the best-possible fuel prices, as well as discounts on hotel accommodation for customers. The goal of Copenhagen-Roskilde Airport is to be warm and welcoming, making every visit easier and more enjoyable.

Great features

One of the most distinguished tasks for Roskilde Executive Handling is to provide the best conditions possible for pilots and other staff groups, so that they feel at home in the FBO. This is why there is

Above: **Copenhagen-Roskilde is a 30 minute drive from the city**

Below left: **The airport has an executive handling team of 35**

an opportunity to relax in the special crew lounge, with entertainment and a focus on home-like comfort, or visitors can make up for lost sleep in the comfortable resting facilities, and the workout facilities are open 24 hours a day.

At Copenhagen-Roskilde, first-class service is key. With one of the fastest check-in procedures in Europe, and apron and meeting facilities only a two-minute walk from the car parking area, the entire routine becomes seamless. Passengers also have access to the exclusive VIP lounge, where Scandinavian design meets hospitality and luxury, along with an exciting view of the runway.

Copenhagen-Roskilde Airport is the ideal choice for anybody seeking an extraordinary service experience at a flexible international airport, with every need attended to. It is easy to understand why it is rated so highly by such a loyal customer base. ○

Vital statistics

Established: 1973

Location: Around 18 miles from Copenhagen, Denmark

Operating hours: 24 hours

Runway lengths: 03/21 – 4,920ft, 11/29 – 5,900ft

Fuel: Jet A-1, Avgas



COPENHAGEN-ROSKILDE AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 111

BusinessAir & AircraftforSale.com

1998 Gulfstream IVSP s/n 1356 ■ N970KG



4621 TT, U.S. Based & Operated, Fresh 192 Month c/w September 2015, Aircell ATG-5000 Go-Go High Speed Internet, Engines Enrolled on RRCC, APU Enrolled on Honeywell MSP, Security System, 15 Passenger Interior **\$6,496,000 • +1 (410) 573-1515**

2007 Gulfstream G200 s/n 163 ■ G-ZZOO



2866 TT, Collins Proline IV 5-Tube EFIS Flight Director and EICAS, Engines Enrolled on Pratt & Whitney ESP Gold, APU Enrolled on Honeywell MSP, Airshow 4000, ICG 200 Iridium Satcom, 10 Passenger Interior **\$5,495,000 • +1 (912) 965-7300**

2013 Gulfstream G650 s/n 6015 ■ N515PL



921 TT, Gulfstream PlaneView™ II / Honeywell Primus Epic Avionics, Rolls Royce BR725A1-12 Engines Enrolled on JSSI Platinum Program, Enhanced Vision System, Enhanced NAV / Synthetic Vision, 13 Passenger Interior **\$52,900,000 • +1 (912) 965-7300**

2005 Sikorsky S-76C+ s/n 760599 ■ N767P



7656 TT, WAAS UNS-1FW Flight System w/o LPV, Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System, Engine Inlet Barrier Filter, ProLine II Avionics, Dual Honeywell SPZ-7600 Flight Director/Autopilot, Jet Power Supply Modification Kit, 12 Passenger Interior .. **CALL FOR PRICE • +1 (410) 573-1515**

1994 Dassault Falcon 900B s/n 139 ■ N900SX



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2012 Hawker 900XP s/n N900PF ■ HA-0209



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5947 TT, Honeywell Primus 1000 Avionics Package, Collins TCAS 2000 TCAS-II, Satcom with Dual Connect Points, 4 Executive Club Seats with 2 Side Tables, 4 Seat Conference Group at LH Side and Credenza on the Right, Complete Exterior Repainting Done February 2013. **CALL FOR PRICE • +1 (561) 790-4000**

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A new venture

XLR Executive Jet Centres has been acting as a consultant to Solent Airport in the UK, helping it to become a dedicated hub for corporate and private jets

April sees the launch of a new FBO at Solent Airport, Portsmouth, UK. With the involvement of XLR Executive Jet Centres, which already operates FBOs at airports in the UK cities of Exeter and Coventry, Solent is about to enter an exciting new world.

This is the latest development for Solent, which changed its name from Daedalus airfield last year. Even with fierce competition from other airports in the area, the team at Solent recognized an opportunity, taking advantage of the corporate aviation market further.

Solent Airport is conveniently located within a 10-minute drive of the M27, which runs west to east along the south of the country from Cadnam to Portsmouth, giving direct access to the area.

The facility offers none of the flying constraints and complexity that other airports experience, and advantages include highly competitive handling fees and a team of dedicated professionals on hand to support every aspect of a customer's needs. Solent is well placed to capture regular visitors to other airports, and also nurture a new and growing corporate aircraft market for the region.

Inside the FBO

Solent Airport's FBO has a dedicated passenger and crew lounge, with complimentary refreshments and beverages, plus dedicated apron parking,

all without the usual congestion. As with other FBOs, Solent's team can provide weather briefings and local information to aid their clients, as well as special rates for catering, chauffeur-driven cars, refueling and corporate hotels.

Martyn Francis, manager of Solent Airport, says, "This is an exciting episode in the development of Solent Airport. Our decision to establish ourselves as a dedicated FBO airport came following in-depth research of the opportunities and demands of this sector.

"We've seen natural growth at the airport for some time," he continues, "and decided the time was right as part of our ongoing investment plan to create a new FBO center. Our aim is to position Solent as the airport of choice for those wishing to use the South of England as their gateway to the rest of the UK."

The right support

Becoming a dedicated facility for corporate and business jets may seem like a risky venture, so it is important to have the right advice and assistance to ensure everything goes to plan. Chris Beer, head of XLR Corporate Centres, says, "We are delighted to have been able to support Solent Airport with such a project. We knew from the outset the proposal to make Solent a dedicated corporate aircraft base was the right decision. It provides a

Vital statistics

Location: Solent Airport, Portsmouth, UK

Founded: 1917

Operating hours: 6:00am-9:00pm

Runway length: 05/23 - 4,294ft

Fuel: Jet A1, Avgas



Above: **Solent Airport** is focusing exclusively on business and private aviation

Left: **The FBO** has a dedicated passenger and crew lounge (inset)

gateway to the South of England, making it an ideal location for many corporate and general aviation users. Its future is bright."

While Solent's corporate center is small by comparison with some FBOs in the UK, what it lacks in size is more than made up for by the organization's attention to customer service. Solent sees a bright future, with major plans this year to build multiple high-specification business and general aviation hangars for new and existing clients. In addition, the Enterprise Zone established two years ago provides extensive capability to manufacturing, high-tech and precision aviation companies, as well as those specializing in marine engineering, from across the UK. ○

XLR EXECUTIVE JET CENTRES

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 112



Prime position

SEA Prime, the FBO operator at Milano Linate Prime airport in Italy, is to increase hangar space and its maintenance offering through selected agreements with aircraft manufacturers

SEA Prime, which manages the FBO at Milano Linate Prime airport in Italy and is set to open another facility at Milano Malpensa later this year, is in talks with a number of business aircraft manufacturers to establish new factory-owned line maintenance services. These will be available at the Milano Linate Prime site, where SEA Prime has 10 hangars and plans to build more as part of its infrastructure development. This is just one part of SEA Prime's continued expansion, which will see the launch of Milano Malpensa FBO later this year.

With the precise aim to develop maintenance services, in March 2016 the company announced that it had signed an agreement with Bombardier to open a new Bombardier line maintenance station within SEA Prime's facilities at Milano Linate Prime, servicing its Learjet, Challenger and Global aircraft. This is one of five stations that Bombardier is in the process of setting up across Europe.

The hangars themselves are modern and recently built, with the latest measuring 38,750ft², completed in March. SEA Prime's strategy responds to the industry trend that sees manufacturers at the forefront in the provision of maintenance services, given the rapid evolution of the technology used.

Partnerships with best in class

SEA Prime was founded over 50 years ago, and relaunched in 2015 to great success. Plans for 2017 and beyond are the result of a productive 2016, where



it opened the BMW Business Center in partnership with the German car brand, plus a pick-up service using the new BMW 7 Series, and also the Prime Gusto bar and restaurant, in cooperation with Gate Gourmet Italy, part of an international catering group, which can provide meals for on-board.

Toward the end of the year, it announced another alliance, this time with Associazione Montenapoleone, which oversees the fashionable Montenapoleone district in Milan, giving business aviation customers exclusive access to its high-end shops, restaurants and other attractions. For example, the latest clothes and fashion items in a customer's size could be waiting for

Above: **SEA Prime's Milano Linate Prime partners include BMW**

Below: **The company has 10 hangars at the airport so far**

perusal at the FBO or in their hotel room, a private viewing of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci at the Santa Maria delle Grazie could be arranged, or a top local chef could be called upon to prepare a private dinner.

Bright future

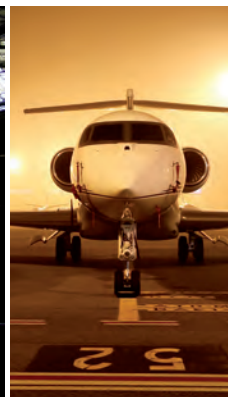
Chiara Dorigotti, general manager at SEA Prime, says, "As part of our plan to relaunch and expand the FBO in Milano Linate Prime, we have always believed that, in the development of exclusive services that meet the needs of passengers and clients, it was strategic to also offer maintenance services. This is why we are pursuing a constructive dialog with leading manufacturers of aircraft and helicopters, which will integrate with and improve the existing offer.

"In Milano Linate Prime, we closed 2016 with about 21,000 movements and a meaningful increase in the aircraft size and we have delivered the 10th hangar – significant numbers, which could rise further with the planned construction of the new hangars, as well as with the extension of our activities with a new FBO in Milano Malpensa." ○

SEA PRIME

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number **113**



Established in 2003, ATSD is an on-site professional partner and FSP (flight service provider).

After 12 years in business, ATSD has become one of Europe's largest providers of flight planning services.

Flight preparation has become increasingly difficult due to various limitations and restrictions in European and international airspace/airport structures, making flight planning and the arrangement of related services very time-consuming.

ATSD has set up a network with civil aviation authorities and handling agencies around the globe to provide a fast, efficient and smooth operational service to clients. Each year, the Dispatch Team provides more than 12,000 international flight briefings to various clients.

ATSD provides services to corporate aviation, commercial aviation, single pilots and aircraft owners.

All ATSD clients get access to the company's internal database via a browser-based tool: ATSD Flight Lookup. Alternatively, clients can use the ATSD App 1.0 for portable IOS devices. With both tools, clients are able to follow up the status of their placed flight orders, retrieving operational information and flight briefings.

ATSD is available 24/7 and will gladly take care of your flight preparation, providing you or your crew with all relevant data such as FPLs, OVFPs, route-related WX and NOTAM briefings, airport slots and necessary permits, and much more.



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FlyBangor.com



Space odyssey

An FBO for all seasons, **SPACE**, based at Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport in east-central France, helps clients visit the Alps in winter and get to their meetings in summer

Lyon is the second-largest urban area in France, with its historic center classed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. **SPACE**, an FBO located at Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport, one of two city airports, is well known for its 24-hour operation and ability to handle large aircraft. “An Airbus A380 can land here,” says Marie-France Memeteau-Broaly, **SPACE**’s managing director. “Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport handles both commercial and executive flights. The other airport, Lyon-Bron, is more dedicated toward business, but has a much smaller runway, and the opening hours are limited.”

The **SPACE** FBO has been operating since 2006, and has built a loyal and diverse customer base. “Our clients are based in 43 different countries around the world,” says Memeteau-Broaly. “Just the other week, we accepted our first ever from Hong Kong, which is another to add to the list. Many come to us as a referral from regular, fully satisfied clients.”

Access to the Alps

Most people fly into Lyon-Saint Exupéry to benefit from the facilities offered at **SPACE** with both business and recreation in mind. “Our busiest season is winter,” Memeteau-Broaly continues. “This is



mainly for customers going on to the ski resorts in the Alps. Lyon is also popular for its exhibitions and world class Light Festival every December. All year, we have business clients coming in for meetings – as Lyon is the second most strategic and economic city in France. We also have aircraft coming for parking when airports like Geneva, Nice or Marseille have none available.”

Despite the FBO peaking over the winter, the way it operates and manages its staff is not seasonal. “It’s permanent,” Memeteau-Broaly says of the workforce.



Above: **SPACE** is open 24 hours and welcomes aircraft of all sizes

Left: The **SPACE** FBO features a crew lounge and free wi-fi

Vital statistics

Location: Lyon-Saint Exupéry, Lyon, France

Operation hours: 24 hours

Runway lengths: 17R/35L, 13,124ft; 17L/35R, 8,760ft

Fuel: Jet-A

“Most of our staff have been with us a long time, they are very experienced, and we offer training for them regularly – in areas such as security, safety and ramp services – to maintain the level of quality.

“We work with helicopter and limousine companies, and our highly-qualified staff will meet customers and VIP officials and guide them through the transfer. We are also able to drive crew straight from the airport to their hotel with our own luxury vans, and provide negotiated crew rates with most of the best hotels downtown and at the airport.”

Ready for action

The dedication of the **SPACE** staff to customer satisfaction is way above the standard simple FBO service. “We have a crew lounge, including all services free of charge, with wi-fi, computers and printers, and refreshments available too,” says Memeteau-Broaly. “For the passenger lounge, we use one at airport, renting it out as required.”

This helps **SPACE** to be responsive, whatever the situation. “We’re an all-weather airport, and we remain open in the toughest conditions,” Memeteau-Broaly concludes. “The airport doesn’t close, and we always find a solution for the client.” ○

SPACE

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 114

Caribbean gateway

St Thomas Jet Center is a family-run facility in the Caribbean, and the perfect introduction to a fantastic island retreat. Whether the purpose of your trip is business or pleasure, it will exceed expectations

Flying into the beautiful US Virgin Island of St Thomas is simply breathtaking. Surrounded by intense aquamarine waters, a mountainous terrain and the most dramatic harbor in the Caribbean, this destination measures 3 x 13 miles and boasts a 7,400ft commercial runway at Cyril E King Airport for a picture-perfect landing.

St Thomas has long been considered the gateway to the Caribbean. The prominent St Thomas Jet Center facility and adjacent customs building dominate the far north side of the runway, where corporate aviation takes place. This family-run business, operated by Michael and Susan Hancock, has become a mainstay in the community and the Caribbean at large.

Together, the Hancocks have more than 80 years of aviation experience, both locally, domestically and in the international market. Their love of corporate aviation is evident by their hands-on approach, personal interest, investment in infrastructure, supportive staff and the wide appeal their business has garnered in the Caribbean community. This small, beautiful, inviting and experienced company welcomes the professional business aircraft captain and crew in every way.

Customs made easy

Customs clearance for business aviation customers to Cyril E King Airport just became easier thanks to a new facility paid for by St Thomas Jet Center. Previously, visitors had to mix with commercial aircraft at another part of the airport, but no longer have to relocate, saving valuable time.

The new facility, perfect for foreign arrivals and departures, is adjacent to the main St Thomas Jet Center building. It makes passenger transfers efficient and speedy every time.

From jet to yacht

St Thomas has the newest, deepest mega-yacht marina in the Caribbean. This facility has won high praise from the experienced, worldly and highly



knowledgeable crews that operate within this specialized industry. The adjacent restaurants and upscale shopping, along with available fueling services, complete the picture.

To provide total service to customers, St Thomas Jet Center's marine fuel division through Tri Island Energy is available at sizeable discounts. All fuel is EPA compliant and large volumes are quickly and readily available.

Caribbean air charter

The Caribbean's most prominent air charter company, Capitol Air, operates from St Thomas Jet Center. With five aircraft available, flying between three and eight passengers each, this small company has earned itself an enviable reputation, operating throughout the region.

Capitol Air will happily transport passengers, pets, flowers and spare parts anywhere in the Caribbean. Its aircraft are also available for sightseeing, commercial

Above: **St Thomas** has stunning scenery and tax-free shopping

Right: **Tri Island Energy** offers marine fuel island-wide



and private transport, business meetings on other islands, or just one-way connections to a commercial flight.

Capitol Air is also the only authorized US Virgin Island air charter business fully registered and permitted by Paris, France, to fly into St Barthélemy. This neighboring Caribbean island, French speaking, offers its own white sand beaches and designer shops, and is a truly luxurious destination. ○

ST THOMAS JET CENTER

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Reader Inquiry Number **115**

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In the southwest of France, **Bergerac Airport Dordogne Périgord** introduces business aviation clients to a world of gourmet food, amazing scenery and sport

An 80-year-old airport in the southwest of France, just 90 minutes from Bordeaux, Bergerac Airport prides itself on efficiency, personal care and a friendly atmosphere. An international facility, it caters to more than 300,000 commercial passengers per year, with 15 destinations (12 in the UK) operated by six airlines, including BA CityFlyer. Today, Bergerac is planning to develop its business and private aviation sector, focusing on an on-demand service at very competitive prices.



Bergerac Airport in southwest France caters to both commercial and business clients



In 2017 the Dordogne will have two major attractions – first, there is the recent opening of the Lascaux IV, otherwise known as the International Parietal Art Centre, a state-of-the-art replica of the historic Sistine Chapel. Officially opened in December 2016 by the French president himself, the location has already welcomed more than 60,000 visitors.

Then a major event happening in 2017 is the Tour de France, which will spend three days in the area from July 10-12. The Tour will cycle by the airport itself on July 11.

Bergerac Airport is open 365 days a year, enabling all customers to discover the delights of this beautiful region and everything it has to offer, whether their aims are for business or pleasure. ○

BERGERAC AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number **116**

Global FBO chain **Jet Aviation** turns 50 this year

From its humble beginnings in a hangar at EuroAirport Basel to a company with nearly 30 locations and more than 4,500 employees worldwide, no other aviation services provider offers more to business clients today than Jet Aviation. And as the company celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2017, it is poised for further growth.

Jet Aviation's international network of more than 20 FBOs provides passenger handling, aircraft refueling and quick turnaround assistance. A global team of professionals is trained to the highest service standards, ensuring excellent care for passengers, flight crews and the aircraft. In December 2016, the company's entire network of FBO facilities across EMEA and Asia received the IS-BAH standard.

Consistently ranked in the top 10 for FBO services in international customer polls, Jet Aviation has



Above: Jet Aviation's FBO at Palm Beach International Airport, Florida

been providing handling services since 1969, when it began operating facilities in Zurich and Geneva, Switzerland. More recently, it has been committed to increasing its presence in other locations important to its customers.

In January 2017, Jet Aviation acquired an FBO at Washington

Dulles Airport, featuring six hangars, 10 acres of ramp space and a newly renovated best-in-class FBO terminal building. On the USA's West Coast, the company is upgrading its FBO in Van Nuys to a state-of-the-art 17-acre facility, featuring a 20,000ft² LEED Silver-certified FBO terminal, including

shops, office space and a 42,000ft² tenant hangar, slated for completion in late 2018. Finally, having been established in Boston/Bedford since 1985, Jet Aviation is also building a new two-story 13,000ft² FBO, to be completed later this year. This will include a 40,000ft² hangar, as well as a 16,000ft² office and shop space.

Jet Aviation launched a new company logo and corporate emblem in 2017 to demonstrate its innovative culture and readiness to embrace the future. Rob Smith, Jet Aviation group president, says, "We look forward to building upon the traditions of quality, service and continuous improvement that gives us such consistently high standards no matter where we are." ○

JET AVIATION

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number **117**

Readers were inspired by new openings, and industry developments and opportunities

Have you visited our website, www.BusinessAirportInternational.com, lately? That's where we round up the latest news from the industry, week in, week out, as well as exclusive insights, interviews and reader opinion polls – more than enough to keep you going between print editions of the magazine.

Looking at our most-read stories of the past four months, it is clear that visitors were hungry for details of new FBOs – the announcement that Melbourne Jet Base will open in 2018, which we've looked at in detail at the front of this issue, ranked highly, as did the first images of the new Business Lounge at London City Airport.

Industry developments were also popular. Ranking top as our most-read story was news that the EU had approved single-engine turboprops for commercial use. These smaller aircraft use around 20-30% less fuel than models with two engines,

and can land at airfields not easily accessible by larger aircraft. The move also opens up the possibility of expansion for many smaller airports in Europe.

Ideas surrounding business improvement may also have been the reason that readers were clicking on the interview with Stefano Costi, whose company has released the Jet Scout online sales platform. The software aims to take the legwork out of responding to queries for quotes, which can often take up much of a charter company's time, ultimately making its operations more efficient.

Similarly, site visitors may have been looking to sharpen their business acumen by simply reminding themselves, who flies by private jet? An article exploring the different demographics, was also well read.

Visit the website to find out more. And stay up-to-date by subscribing to our weekly newsletter! ☐



Top 5 web stories

January-March 2017

1. EU approves single-engine turboprops for commercial use
2. Melbourne Airport to open VIP private jet terminal in 2018
3. London City Airport opens the Business Lounge
4. Interview with Stefano Costi, co-founder of Jet Scout
5. Who flies by private jet?



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Come and meet us at Stand U42

Business Airport International will be distributed at EBACE

On the web

For exclusive interviews and industry opinions, visit
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In the next issue

- Regional focus: Everything you need to know about flying to eastern Canada
- City focus: Heading to Barcelona
- Special focus: *BAI* gets up-to-date with the latest topics and trends from the aviation fuel marketplace
- The latest news and views from industry experts... and much more!

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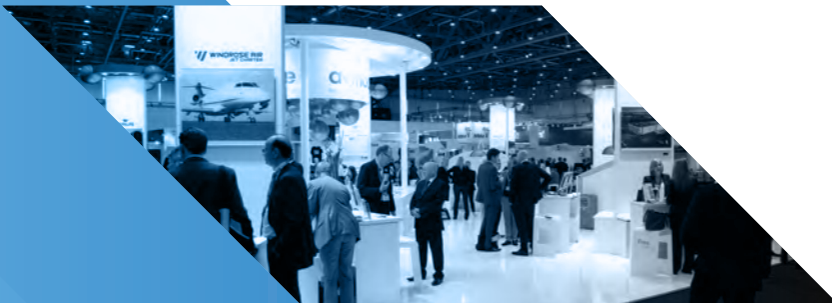
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ARE **UNMANNED AERIAL TAXIS** A THREAT TO PRIVATE AVIATION INTERESTS, OR TOO RISKY FOR WIDESPREAD USE?



Earlier this year the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), based in the UAE, revealed that it has completed testing an unmanned aerial taxi and plans to officially launch the service to the public in July.

The autonomous drones will be made by Chinese manufacturer EHang and carry one passenger at a time. The RTA said they will follow a series of preset routes.

Each EHang184 drone can travel at speeds of almost 100mph at altitudes of 300m. It would automatically start and stop, taking off

from and landing at predetermined locations. EHang says that the vehicles can fly for a maximum of 30 minutes.

Dubai wants a quarter of all individual trips within the city to be made in autonomous vehicles by 2030. But whether Dubai's drone service will be remembered as a brave first step or curious side note in the history of transportation remains to be seen. *Business Airports International* asked via social media and our weekly poll what the business aviation community thinks about the technology's chances of succeeding in its sector. ○

Your views

It's a great idea, but which insurance company will insure this type of transportation method? The risk is too high and the technology too young.
George Prentzas, chief pilot onshore/VVIP (RW), Falcon Aviation Services

I understand that the approved routes were exclusively over water with a 30m ceiling, give or take. The Dubai government may be writing it off as a marketing investment. Cars kill how many every year? I see public transport drones as a reasonable risk sometime soon for an evolving or new market. But human pilots will remain invaluable for the foreseeable future with most of today's traveling human habits.
Dave Woods, broker, pilot insurance center

Before this kind of traffic can start, it has to be clear what ministry will be responsible for safety and security. Perhaps the groups in charge of the military? In my country, Switzerland, this type of discussion takes years. And first of all, these vehicles MUST be powered by electricity!
Oscar Bürgis, director, AOM Holding

There's no question whatsoever that it will happen. The only question is when. Technology adoption lifecycles are compressing and the speed is proportional to the utility and cost. This is something that is a major improvement over the alternative – congested roads. So the question is at what pace fares will decline to levels where mass adoption

occurs. Many factors go into that, including artificial entry barriers such as legislation, obfuscation and litigation thrown up by deep-pocketed incumbents, such as, in this case, automobile manufacturers and perhaps airlines.

Howard Bart Freidman, chief operating officer, Jet Evaluation and Technical Services

I'll believe it when I see it.
Uwe (Rolando) Goehl, airline captain, Etihad Airways



Your comments

What do you think?
Is the introduction of unmanned aerial aircraft inevitable in the business aviation sector? Or is there still value in the human touch? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this or any other topic affecting the business aviation industry, so visit www.linkedin.com and search *Business Airport International* to join in with the debate.

LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com

Results taken from the weekly poll section on our website*

* at time of going to press

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Yes, it's something new and exciting

22%

No, more evidence is needed in terms of safety

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