

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF BUSINESS AIRPORT WORLD EXPO 2014, MARCH 26-27, FARNBOROUGH, LONDON

# Business Airport

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

October 2013



## Also in this issue

**China:** Are the barriers to entry being lifted?

**Air Passenger Duty:** Experts have their say

**USA:** Operators positive about market growth

## Top flight

How can five-star customer service help businesses gain a competitive advantage?

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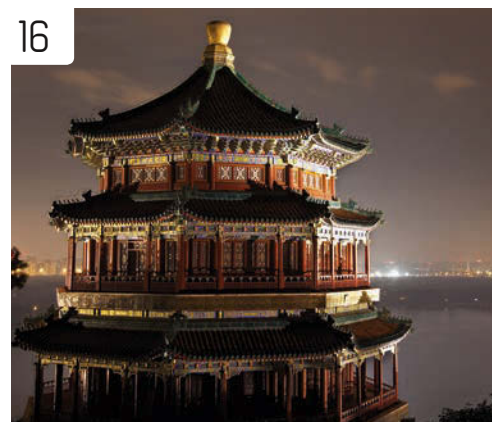
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# Welcome

I recently got married and, true to word, it was the best day of my life. The venue that hosted our ceremony and reception was named *Perfect Wedding* magazine's UK Wedding Venue of the Year in 2011, which is an impressive feat considering the hundreds of venues there are to choose from across the country. But the reason for our particular venue's success was clear on the big day: the level of customer service provided was second to none. For example, with half an hour to go before the ceremony, my mother spotted a hole in her tights, causing mass panic to erupt throughout the bridal suite. However, the staff were so attentive that before we even called reception to enquire whether they had a spare pair, a brand-new packet of tights was brought up to the room and the problem was solved.

It is this level of service that really makes the difference between a good and outstanding experience. Our venue was a pro at hosting weddings – it held one on 25 of the 31 days in August – but at no point did staff make me feel like my big day was any less special because they'd done it all before the previous day.

Making the customer feel as though they are the only important person to you is key to providing the best service. To quote the US author and poet Maya Angelou,

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." These are wise words and those in the service industries, such as business aviation, would do well to keep them in mind. In fact some already do, as evidenced in *Are you being served?* on page 36. Companies such as XJet, which topped the 2013 Pro Pilot's PRASE Survey for a number of factors including its customer service, work closely with the passenger to ensure they feel satisfied at every step of their journey. This includes providing five-star facilities, making hotel and transportation bookings and even compiling 50-page dossiers detailing every client's individual needs.

As customer service expert Dee Cooper explains, good customer service "is all about how to better engage the customer through experience and creating the memories". Going above and beyond customers' expectations is the most important factor when trying to stand out from a competitive crowd, and it is the little touches – such as a fresh pair of tights – as well as the big gestures that create those special memories and help your business grow through positive recommendations.

Hazel King, Editor

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# Jet Aviation Zurich opens expanded and rebranded FBO

Jet Aviation Zurich has opened its newly rebranded and refurbished FBO facility at Zurich Airport, Switzerland. The building, which has been erected alongside the existing General Aviation Center, features the same corporate look and feel that the company unveiled earlier this year at its Geneva FBO.

The roomier Jet Aviation Zurich FBO has a separate entrance with a new reception area and customer lounge incorporating the new branding. The company has also moved its operations center ramp-side, separating it from the customer area and situating it closer to the more spacious customs and immigration area.

"We are delighted with the enhancements to our FBO in Zurich, which highlight the quality of our handling services and our experienced personnel," said Monica Beusch, general manager of Jet Aviation Zurich and head of FBO Services in EMEA & Asia. "Our goal is to provide a positive customer experience by anticipating customer requirements and ensuring their utmost comfort."

According to Beusch, the company introduced its new branding in order to provide a premium customer experience by harmonizing the look and feel of all its facilities. It incorporates the company's long-standing deer

head logo, as well as neutral colors and plenty of light. "We want to ensure customers recognize the Jet Aviation design and feel welcome and relaxed — regardless of which facility they visit," she added.

Construction on the 753ft<sup>2</sup> customer lounge and 1,011ft<sup>2</sup> pilot/crew lounge began in August 2013 and is scheduled for completion in November this year. The crew lounge will also include a snooze room.

"Customers can expect a fresh and modern design with improved customer service. Now that the passenger lounge is separated from operations, our personnel are better able to

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"We want to ensure customers recognize the Jet Aviation design and feel welcome and relaxed – regardless of which facility they visit"

Monica Beusch, Jet Aviation



## Aircraft interiors contract in Moscow

In other news, Jet Aviation Moscow has signed an agreement with Kazan, Russia-based Tulpar Interior Group to offer scheduled full interior refurbishment capabilities out of its maintenance facility at Moscow Vnukovo Airport.

Tulpar Interior Group is said to be the only company in Russia providing the full range of aircraft interior services for commercial and VIP aircraft, and this new agreement

will see Jet Aviation Moscow add comprehensive interior refurbishment capabilities to complement its maintenance service offerings.

The new services on offer following the agreement include carpet replacement; minor repair or replacement of interior components; rejuvenation and protective coating of leather surfaces; fabrication of new seat upholstery; repair or replacement of coating or headlining on windows

and other panels; and rectification of any decorative varnish defects on veneer and hard wood.

"Our customers can now schedule interior modifications during planned maintenance checks, improving aircraft utilization," said Vitely Aleksikov, general director at Jet Aviation Moscow Vnukovo. "We are very pleased to expand our on-site services and offer our customers this additional support."

concentrate on the needs of the passengers and crew. The layout is more efficient, too, affording a bigger passenger lounge and ready access to the ramp," said Beusch.

The next Jet Aviation facility to receive the new branding will be at Seletar Aerospace Park in Singapore, where the company is currently constructing a new hangar. The reception area and customer lounge at the facility will have the new Jet Aviation brand design, with the project scheduled for completion in early February 2014.

The company is also updating its Boston/Bedford, Massachusetts, USA, FBO facility, which will be finished in December 2014. [↗](#)



Main: **Jet Aviation Zurich** is the second facility to receive the company's new branding

Above: The refurbished FBO offers a fresh and modern design

Left: Aerial view of main airport complex at Zurich Airport. Picture courtesy of Zurich Airport





# Bristol Flying Centre gains DfT approval to extend handling capabilities

Bristol Flying Centre (BFC) has been awarded approval by the UK Department for Transport (DfT) to handle all charter flights directly from its newly expanded facility, removing the previous restriction of not being able to handle charter flights over 10 metric tons unless they are privately owned or derogated flights. This approval opens up the potential for significant growth in movements for the business.

BFC will now be able to handle both private and charter flights of all sizes through its two lounges dedicated to both screened and non-screened passengers, which have CAA and UKBA approval to cater for up to 50 people. The in-facility UK Border Force checkpoint means customers never have to leave the FBO at any part of their journey and this enhances the efficiency and customer service levels for all arriving passengers. The FBO can also provide its customers with services to manage the temporary importation for VAT and duty, as well as APD fiscal representation.

"Bristol Airport has been incredibly successful in creating a product that suits low-cost operators and charter flights," commented Phil Brockwell, BFC Group CEO. "It has been our plan to create a world-leading business aviation site at Bristol

Airport and the airport management team has been instrumental in helping to make this happen. Our FBO is only a short taxi ride to the runway and 10 yards from our ramp. This, combined with a dedicated security gate to enable direct access to the aircraft for vehicles, ensures that our continued development of the BFC FBO makes perfect sense for passengers, operators and the airport itself.


"Without this approval, our private jet clients would have been subjected to the same interface as the millions of commercial airline passengers using the main airport facility," Brockwell continued. "The ability to provide a full 'private jet' experience is critical to the kind of product we offer and to what our passengers expect when flying from our FBO."

The management of BFC Group worked closely with Bristol Airport over the course of six months to win the DfT approvals, which provide the appropriate level of security for all executive aviation movements taking place away from the commercial airport.

Following the closure of Filton Airport at the end of 2012, BFC is now the only FBO in the Southwest of England. It has seen year-on-year business growth of 170% and now offers some



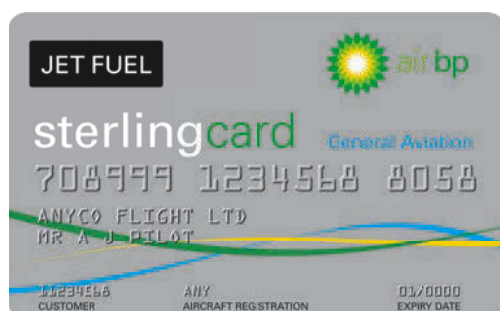
of the cheapest business aviation fuel in Europe. "Our goal is to be able to offer the cheapest fuel with service levels that surpass any other FBO offering," Brockwell said.

BFC's extended 6,500ft<sup>2</sup> FBO facility opened in March 2013 and includes two passenger lounges, a separate crew lounge, full security screening facilities and redesigned reception areas. 





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# CBAA announces Rudy Toering as new president and CEO

 Rudy Toering has been appointed president and CEO of the Canadian Business Aviation Association (CBAA) following an announcement by chairman Frank Burke at the association's Annual Convention in June 2013.

Toering, who has extensive experience in the business aviation industry with leading roles at FlightPath International, CAE and FlightSafety International, was chosen after a North American-wide search for a new president and CEO.

"Rudy Toering is a well-known and well-respected senior aviation executive with extensive international management and operational experience in business, general and commercial aviation," said Burke.

"He shares the same values and commitment to business aviation as our board: to serve the needs of all our members; to ensure the best possible environment for business aviation; and to promote a broad understanding and respect for business aviation's contributions to our economy and country."

Speaking in an exclusive interview with *Business Airport International*, Toering said he was very honored to have been given the role and would take the position very seriously to make sure the CBAA continues to grow.

"I have known of the association for a long time and was previously governor on the board of EBAA for four years, and this role is very similar – to be an advocate for business aviation

in the community," Toering added. "My role is the representation of business aviation and to ensure that I increase the value of what we do for our members, and be their advocate at Transport Canada and Industry Canada. I will work to protect the ability for our sector in aviation to be able to operate freely and to make sure that the business aviation aircraft, the tool for business aviation both on the private and commercial side, continues to be a real tool for members, and not hampered by one size fits all regulations."

Asked what his biggest challenges would be as president and CEO, Toering said it is important for him to increase the membership of CBAA and to work together with the NBAA, EBAA and IBAAC to ensure business aviation remains at the forefront of people's minds.


"One of the things that is very much in our favor is that our sector tends to have a very high safety record, and so my goal is to make sure that as an organization, if we say we are a safe sector, that we actually are, and that I'm proactive in putting in 'partners in safety' type programs that ensure that we actually do what we say we do," he continued.

Toering is also involved in the development of new regulations in Canada and will continue to work closely with Transport Canada on evaluating these new regulations. "In government circles and transport and regulatory circles, people move in and out of positions regularly and often those people are policy-makers and not necessarily

aviation-centered personnel. So that creates an additional challenge, as we have to give them a bit more of a briefing on what our sector is and how it operates. I am setting up one of those opportunities for Transport Canada. They're good people who really know their policies, and they know the things they need to do from their perspective; we're just going to give the incoming policy-makers a tremendous amount of knowledge about how a business aviation operation actually works."

Moving forward, Toering is positive about the future of business aviation in Canada: "The overall value of business aircraft production in Canada is expected to grow by about 22% between 2012 and 2021, and that is something for us to look forward to. We are not the biggest aviation sector in the international scheme, but that gives us the opportunity to grow because the breadth and size of Canada means business aviation is used to access many remote areas or non-serviced city pairs, which is very strong for our group.

"We will continue to educate government and the wider population about the importance of business aviation aircraft as a business tool rather than just a rich boy toy. Changing perceptions of the industry is something we have to keep in mind as we go forward with anything we want to do in the organization," Toering concluded.

To read the full interview with Rudy Toering, visit [www.businessairportinternational.com](http://www.businessairportinternational.com) 



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# Impress for success

“If scientists ever find out where the center of the universe is, some people will be disappointed that they're not it”

Customers are opinion multipliers, both in a positive and a negative sense. They pass on positive and negative perceptions to others by word of mouth. When negative, it can be destructive. When positive, it is preciously constructive and the lowest-cost manner of promoting a service or business.

Customers want to be impressed. After all, that is what they are paying for. Acquiring new customers is more difficult and costly than keeping existing ones. Losing an existing customer is twice as expensive: for one, it is a loss for the company, and two, a replacement customer needs to be found.

Customer orientation requires acting the way the customer likes it and wants it! It is not only the offered service that determines success; equally important is the way that customers are treated. Customer friendliness says, “We are happy that you are a customer!” Keep an ideal customer experience in mind and then try to offer that ideal experience. Exceed your customers' expectations and make them feel great.

If scientists ever find out where the center of the universe is, some people will be disappointed that they're not it. You may not want to call your business ‘Center-of-the-Universe’ either. But, how about placing a sign at the entrance to remind your customers: ‘Caution! By entering this facility you are becoming the center of our attention’?

Salvador Dali granted Perpignan railway station in France an entry in the history of art when he named it the ‘Center of the Universe’ after having experienced there, in his words, “a sort of cosmic ecstasy, stronger than all those I had before. I experienced a precise vision of the construction of the universe.” There is nothing wrong with giving customers the feeling that they are the center of the universe, without going as far as Dali's cosmic ecstasy.

The personal performance of any individual involved in a company, from the CEO to the person who cleans the lavatory, contributes to

the combined image of the operation. Anyone who has the slightest contact with a customer is part of the image, even if the cleaning person only says ‘good morning’ with a smile when the customer walks by.

Third-party service providers that offer a complementing service are also part of that total image: operator and catering; FBO and fuel service; airport and security. An FBO can be the beginning or the end of a flight by an operator. The reception of a charter operator's customer by an FBO employee reflects on the image of the operator. Therefore it is important that operators in general, regardless of where they are based, look for good understanding and cooperation with FBOs and airports and vice versa. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

Aunt Emma already knew it years ago. Aunt Emma? ‘Tante Emma Laden’ is the German equivalent of the mom-and-pop store. Can you imagine Tante Emma running her little general store in the village years ago? Pure nostalgia! She knew all her customers by name. She could carry on pleasant chit-chat. She gave the little kids a candy. She knew exactly about the shopping habits of her customers and tried to offer the right range of products. She could even give a cooking recipe or advice on how to remove fat stains.

Shopping at Tante Emma's store always gave you a good feeling, even if the prices were higher than at the supermarket. Tante Emma exercised customer relations management without having software or a computer. The human contact on offer was special: time to listen, the exchange of whole sentences. The store owner sells a bit of their personality along with the product and service. Isn't that what is sometimes missing from customer relations? ☺

**Commander Bud Slabbaert is an expert in strategic communications and business aviation development. He is also the initiator and chairman of BA-Meetup**



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# Hands on

Hazel King, editor of *Business Airport International*, spends a day at London Southend Airport to find out what it's like to be an executive handling agent



July 10, 2013

**9:00am:** I arrive at London Southend Airport to meet Hannah Lo Bao, executive handling manager for Stobart Air. Based at the airport, Hannah joined the company in May 2013 after working for NetJets in Lisbon, Portugal. We start by taking a quick tour of the newly refurbished £500,000 (US\$756,200) facility that includes a meeting room, a pilot's rest zone, chauffeur facilities and a large passenger lounge.

**9:15am:** The first job of the day is to deal with a 'drop in' – an unexpected flight – which first requires us to communicate with the watch room to get the fire marshals on standby to welcome the aircraft. We then have to be ready to greet the Beechcraft and its seven passengers. "I love these unexpected events as it provides me with a real challenge to provide the best customer service at short notice," says Hannah. "These events can make it more difficult for me to organize my day and you just have to go with the flow, but that is all part of the fun!"

**10:00am:** We begin working on outstanding admin tasks. Hannah not only coordinates and looks after flights arriving and departing from the airport, but is also working to get approval for dog clearance at the airport following requests from clients. "This requires me to work closely with DEFRA and other government departments. Some of my regular clients have dogs, so hopefully this will mean they will be able to fly into Southend with their beloved pet," Hannah says.

**11:00am:** Other administration tasks on the agenda are completing the handling requests from clients due to arrive and depart over the next few days. The forms are sent from the client with details on the number of passengers, catering requests, and fuel and parking requirements. Once this is checked over, Hannah sends back confirmation of everything, along with prices and quotes for parking, fuel, catering, and any other requested services. I ask her what her most unusual request has been: "I once had a couple that had flown out on their jet to Ibiza for a three-week holiday. While there, they wanted to get hold of an underwater scooter and so called me. I had to source it and arrange for it to be shipped out to them. It was a strange request but that's my job – to give clients what they want, when they want it."

**11:45am:** There is some pilot training taking place so we don our high-visibility vests and go out to the ramp to watch them maneuver the aircraft and perform multiple take-offs and landings.

**12:15pm:** We return to the front desk to answer more email enquiries. Hannah is also responsible for organizing the billing of customers and talks me through the process. "Some of our clients already have accounts with us, which means that all we require on the day is the pilot's signature to confirm they've received those services. However, most new clients pay with credit cards, which requires us to fill in an invoice."

**1:00pm:** A London Executive Aviation flight is departing at 6:50pm to Malaga, requiring us to fill in a General Aviation Report (GAR) form for immigration for when they return. We check all the passengers' names, passport numbers and dates of birth, and send this over to immigration. "It is important to make sure this is done correctly so that there are no hold-ups for the passengers when they arrive. Customer service is paramount here and we at Stobart Handling do everything we can to ensure a smooth journey," Hannah says.

**3:15pm:** The crew arrive for a crew change flight, which is scheduled to land at 3:45pm. Once again we're in communication with the watch tower to ensure everything is in place for a speedy handover and departure.

**4:30pm:** As London Southend is a 24-hour airport and a large proportion of its flights arrive late at night or early in the morning, with the operational staff clocking off at 12:30am and returning at 4:30am, Hannah needs to find someone to come in at 4:15am tomorrow to greet a flight from the USA. A couple of zero-hour workers can be called upon and Hannah also works varied hours to ensure passengers are greeted properly.

**5:00pm:** I leave the airport after what has been an insightful day watching how the whole team works together to ensure the best possible customer service. As Hannah says, "We're all working toward the same goal – to make customers happy." ✈





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# Watch





# this space...

China is one of the world's leading economies, making it a prime destination for high-net-worth individuals. However, flying into the country is still a challenge. With limited stands currently available for corporate jets, work is underway to make access easier

Words | **Selwyn Parker**

In the list of priorities for aviation in China, corporate jets come a poor third behind military and commercial flying. And while moves are afoot to make life easier for what is known there as general aviation (GA), operators must contend with a variety of challenges they don't find in Europe or North America.

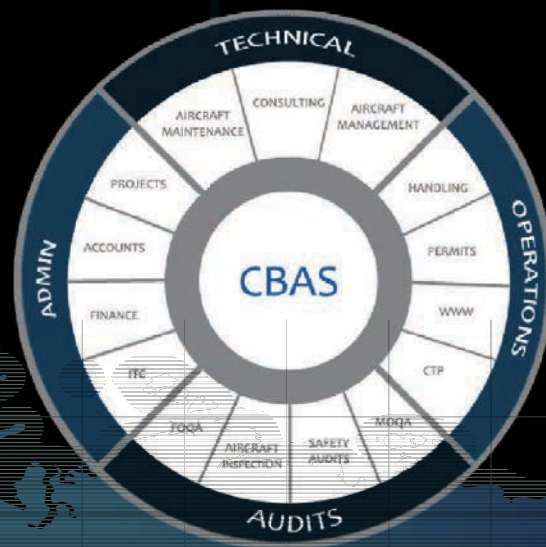
Take, for instance, Beijing, the most popular destination for corporate aircraft. Although a new GA terminal was opened just before the 2008 Olympics, the airport is so busy with commercial traffic that only one GA aircraft movement per hour is permitted during peak hours between 8:00am and 10:00pm. No vehicle access is permitted unless the flight is top priority, which in practice means medevac, diplomatic or VIP. And if the operator arrives outside peak hours to avoid congestion, delays are probable because most of the customs, immigration and quarantine staff will have gone home.



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CBAS assists corporate aircraft operators take a proactive approach to meet regulatory requirements, performance objectives, and quality goals related to safety and security. Our aviation specialists work with aviation clients to conduct independent safety reviews to identify and mitigate hazards in areas such as flight operations, ground operations, and aircraft maintenance. It assesses latent conditions, gaps in standardization, & misassumptions that could start a chain of events leading to an incident or accident.



### AVIATION AUDITS.

CBAS delivers safety solutions to clients in all aspects of aircraft operations. For corporate aircraft operators, we conduct audits, develop manuals and facilitate emergency response plans. For insurance companies, we offer guidance in helping their aviation customers operate with greater safety and security. Our team includes accredited auditors for the International Standard for Business Aircraft Operators (IS-BAO). Our audit team is led by industry professionals with extensive management and leadership credentials & thereby ensuring that a thorough, fair, effective, and timely audit is conducted. Software products customised to simplify implementation of SMS (Safety Management Systems) are also available to customers.



CBAS has been recognised by the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) as a Support Service Affiliate (SSA). CBAS is one of the few aviation organizations in Asia that have qualified as an SSA. SSA certified organizations have to demonstrate their capabilities and competencies with regard to IS-BAO to show that they are able to provide the most qualified implementation services to those business aircraft operators who wish to become IS-BAO registered.

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Beijing is the most popular destination for corporate aircraft in China



### Bring your own tow bar

Parking at Beijing? There are just five self-parking bays, which means most aircraft must be towed to the designated area. As Universal Aviation recommends, it may even be a good idea to pack your own tow bar, "especially for a Falcon 7X, as the airport doesn't carry one for this aircraft".

The corporate jet community also faces an unequal fight with the big boys of commercial aviation for facilities at Beijing and at the important destinations of Shanghai and Guangzhou. To guarantee services such as aviation fuel, lavatory and water, requests should be made well in advance, otherwise delays are pretty much inevitable. Nor is there exactly a surfeit of alternative airports for corporate jets. Any airport approved for foreign civil aircraft must have customs, quarantine and frontier inspection offices available – a requirement that automatically restricts their numbers. Officially, around 180 airports cater for privately owned jets, but that may be optimistic.

And that's if the operator is permitted to fly there in the first place. As Universal Aviation points out, many airways are reserved exclusively for the use of local airlines. It's the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) that assigns routes for general aviation and they are subject to frequent change. Indeed a third-party provider such as Universal Aviation updates its list of restricted and available airways every month.



Operators should bring a tow bar for aircraft such as the Falcon 7X when flying to Beijing

### Change is afoot

However, the authorities are learning the value of corporate aviation. Although there are considerable variations in the system for approving operating permits, it's much better than it was. Local operators, usually working with foreign partners such as major aircraft manufacturers, have helped educate the aviation bureaucracy about procedures as the number of business jets grows steadily. (According to Amstat, the business aviation research group, the China-based fleet currently totals 176.)

And the authorities now recognize that many foreign business people travel by corporate jets and that they have to make appropriate arrangements for them. In this, the one-year-old China Corporate Jet Alliance has been a catalyst. It's an influential association of foreign and local manufacturers and other interests that is working with the authorities on several practical initiatives, including the opening of upper airspace to business aircraft – quite a challenge given the powerful role of the military – and the reduction of taxes, fees and other charges.

The infrastructure is growing all the time. In April, Hong Kong-based Metrojet started offering maintenance and other services at Zhuhai Airport in Guangdong province in a venture with the Hanxing group. Soon to follow will be 15,000ft<sup>2</sup> of hangar space, workshops and storage facilities.

Aviation officials acknowledge the corporate fleet will grow rapidly over the next decade and new airports (being built at a rate of up to 10 a year, under a 12-year development plan) must be able to accommodate them. And while Beijing has its problems, the 24-hour airports at Shanghai – Pudong and Hongqiao – are becoming increasingly friendly toward corporate aircraft. "They seldom have issues with aircraft parking," points out Universal Aviation's Emily Zhao, "and GA aircraft are never parked in the commercial aircraft area." Hangarage is available for transient aircraft at 24 hours' notice.

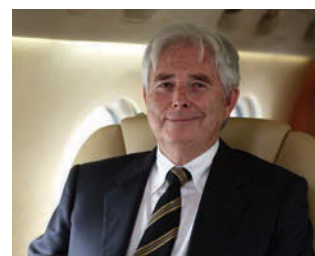
### Fees

Still, the fees aren't coming down. For take-off, landing, parking and air navigation, the charges

### Weather issues

China is prone to severe tropical storms, including typhoons originating in the South China Sea, so operators may have to be ready to reposition their aircraft, particularly below the latitude of Shanghai. As Universal Aviation warns, there may also be visibility problems. Beijing is a particular problem because of pollution as well as sand and dust blowing in from the Gobi Desert. At Shanghai, fog and haze can be an issue. "Operators may find it valuable at times to have an enhanced vision system," suggests the third-party provider.

And that's just southern China. During winter operations in northern China, operators are advised to budget for de-icing time. They may also be pleased they packed Prist anti-icing preparations on board. Nowhere, not even in Beijing, can operators rely on a de-icing truck coming to their rescue, because their top priority is looking after the airlines.



"With little or no flexibility in changing the flight schedule once approved, the business jet principle is somewhat compromised"

Denzil White, Metrojet



are up to 10 times higher than those for China-registered aircraft. One particularly punishing impost is the 'compensation fee' of US\$3,000 that is payable to the CAAC every time an aircraft enters China.

As New Jersey-based aviation consultant Brian Foley summarizes, citing among other things the requirement to request permission well in advance for the right to fly to a particular location – and being given the least preferred route: "There are a number of restrictions and inflexibilities when operating private aircraft in China that constrain its full sales potential."

In fact delays are the norm rather than the exception all over China, mainly because the military, which controls the airspace, puts its needs at the top of the list. According to a variety of sources, as little as 20% of the airspace is available for all civilian flights, in the complete opposite of the situation in the USA, Europe and the UK. The result is considerable congestion, with commercial aircraft having priority over corporate jets in already narrow air corridors.

As Denzil White, Metrojet's director of flight operations points out: "Every flight is subject to a military clearance, which can take between two and seven days for foreign-registered aircraft, depending on the classification of the destination airport." Inevitably, these restrictions militate against the convenience that owning a business jet is supposed to provide. "As it takes seven days to get a permit to visit a series of third-tier airports, with little or no flexibility in changing the flight schedule once approved, the business jet principle is somewhat compromised," adds White.

### Don't deviate

Always important in general aviation, in China the paperwork is particularly complex and operators should plan well ahead. Applications for non-scheduled and private flights by foreign-registered aircraft must be filed at least 10 days before take-off, partly because of the strict limits on slots, particularly at Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. For smaller airports, the application may take up to 15 days and even 30 days for restricted locations. "Business jets sometimes have to wait for days or weeks before they are allowed to fly," warns Foley.

And when the permit is stamped, locals warn it should be followed to the letter if at all possible. "Once a permit has been issued, it is advisable to



"At remote, restricted and many domestic airfields, you may be required to carry a Chinese navigator. He or she will sit in the jump seat and speak Chinese to controllers on approach"

Jimmy Young, Universal Aviation

avoid any changes to your planned journey since the CAAC may deny requests for changes and require the issuance of a new permit," points out US aviation law firm Cooling and Breckenridge. Even when followed to the letter, the usual limit is five stops.

### Language barrier

There are numerous other China-specific regulations. For instance, unless otherwise defined in the clearance, a foreign civil aircraft must carry Chinese crew members, usually a navigator and a radio operator. However, as operators point out, this can make sense in a country where little or no English may be spoken in regional airports. In fact many of the outlying airports put up technical information only in Mandarin.

"At remote, restricted and many domestic airfields, you may be required to carry a Chinese navigator," explains Universal Aviation's Jimmy Young. "He or she will sit in the jump seat and speak Chinese to controllers on approach, as needed. Chinese navigators also carry their own charts, as Jeppesen charts do not exist for many

smaller airports." (At the larger airports controllers speak excellent English.)

### Visas

No operator can land in China without a sponsor. This is the Chinese national who agrees to assume responsibility for you in a formal letter provided to the CAAC. Based at one of the cities on the itinerary, this estimable individual must be an actual person – a letter from a tourist operator or hotel will not suffice. Every repeat trip will require another letter from your sponsor, who may be contacted by the authorities.

Crews regularly run into problems with visas. "Both operator and handler will be fined if any crew member is found without a visa or with an invalid one," warns Mainland GroundExpress, a third-party handler at Shanghai and Beijing. On top of that "they will be detained and probably deported". For the record, crews need a C-type visa and, say ground-handlers, it's important to notify them beforehand of the type of visas held by each member of the crew. The ground-handlers can then keep the local authorities informed. And bear in mind that crew visas run out after seven days.

Making things easier, a 10-month-old immigration policy has streamlined the procedure for passenger visas. Citizens from 45 countries including most European, North American and some Latin American ones, who are transiting out of Beijing airport or Shanghai's Pudong and Hongqiao airports to a third country, can stay in the regions for up to 72 hours without a visa.

In short, China is steadily coming to grips with high-net-worth individuals with their own aircraft. "The China market is full of potential," concludes Metrojet's White. "It's just a matter of time before the issues are cleared." ☞



### Leave the muscle at home

Bodyguards are *persona non grata* in China – at least not armed ones. Private security personnel are not permitted on the ramp. Nor can they carry weapons. In fact, all firearms must be kept strictly under lock and key on board – and the authorities will not issue permits for them. In any case, China is considered to be a safe, low-crime country with the exception of a very few areas. And, adds Universal Aviation, "Airports throughout the country are very secure." However, for passengers who fear kidnapping or worse, it is always possible to arrange for protection by local muscle. Indeed the services of the local police can be hired in certain circumstances.



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# Soft target

The UK government has set its sights on business aviation with the extension of Air Passenger Duty on April 1. *Business Airport International* explores its impact on the industry

Words | Hazel King

The UK government's extension of Air Passenger Duty (APD) to cover all aircraft weighing over 5.7 metric tons from April 1 this year is no laughing matter for the business aviation industry. In fact global booking service PrivateFly.com has predicted that the tax will cause a loss in revenues of £4.6m (US\$6.9m) for the industry. In light of this, it could be argued that the reasoning behind levying another tax on a sector that brings approximately US\$5.4bn into the UK economy every year (according to a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers for EBAA) is rather weak.

However, it has also been suggested that passengers who can afford to travel via private jet can also afford to pay a little extra duty, and it is unfair for business class passengers using commercial airlines to have to pay a duty while their counterparts in the private sector don't. So who is right and how can the business aviation industry and the UK government work together to ensure the financial impact of APD is minimal?





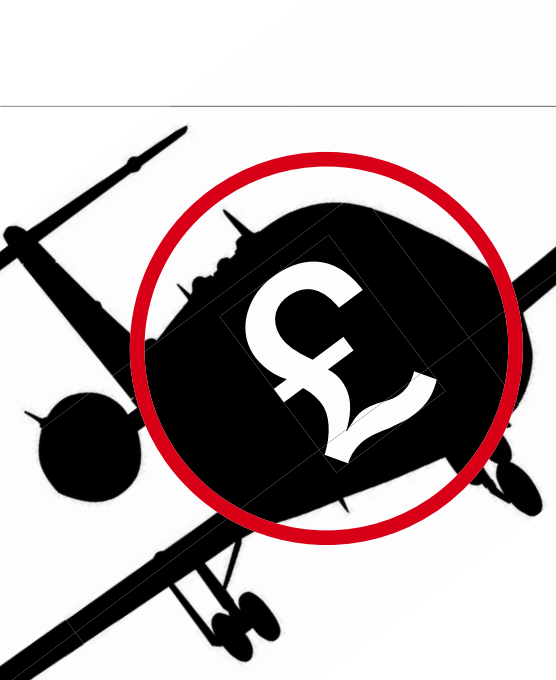
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## What is Air Passenger Duty?

APD is an excise duty that is charged on the carriage of passengers flying from a UK airport on an aircraft that has an authorized take-off weight of more than 5.7 metric tons. The amount of APD paid is determined by the number of chargeable passengers multiplied by the relevant APD rate (see Table 1).

There are a number of ways to pay APD, but all operators will have to register with HMRC within seven days of the flight occurring, or financial penalties may be applied. Most operators will pay monthly, however those whose APD liability for the year is likely to be less than £500,000 (US\$758,840) can apply to use the Annual Accounting Scheme. For those

operators with no more than 12 flights a year from UK airports and with APD not exceeding £5,000 (US\$7,588), registration may not be necessary and they can use the Occasional Operator Scheme.

There are some exemptions to APD, such as helicopters and Avgas fueled aircraft, as well as emergency, research and training flights. Some operators will be subjected to higher APD charges, namely those operating aircraft above 20 metric tons with fewer than 19 seats, as they are believed to generally provide a higher class of service. Operators flying these aircraft will be subject to double the standard APD rate in each distance band.

### Decision makers

There have been many arguments for amending and changing APD in the UK over the years. In 2008, the Labour government launched a consultation on changing the tax so that charges would be made on planes rather than passengers, but this was scrapped in November 2008 when Chancellor Alistair Darling decided to restructure APD to cover four distance bands set at intervals of 2,000 miles. Basically, the further you fly, the more APD you pay.

Then in the 2011 Budget, following the formation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, Chancellor George Osborne announced plans to extend the scope of APD to business jets. This was part of the government's plans to create "a simple tax system for air transport that does not hamper growth, which ensures a fair contribution toward public finances from the sector and which is consistent with the Government's determination to reduce emissions across all parts of the economy". Osborne also said in his 2011 Budget speech that it was fair to extend the tax to business jets, as "the wealthiest should not have to escape the tax that the ordinary holidaymaker has to pay". Following a number of tax consultations, it was announced that APD would be extended to include business jets with effect from April 1, 2013.

"I fully believe that the reason behind the extension of APD to business jets was a political one and stems back to an incorrect perception of what business aviation actually does," comments Marc Bailey, CEO, British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA). "I think the government's supporting team that is briefing ministers still think we're a group who support fat cats, and as a consequence it is seen as the right thing to do in the face of the media and public. And then there's this vague idea that there's some money to be had out of it, which isn't true."

### Calculating the costs

According to Bailey, one of the main failings of the decision to extend APD was the lack of regulatory impact assessment to understand the value of the taxation, which would have highlighted the stark contrasts between commercial and business aviation.

Currently, there are 200-300 scheduled airline operators subject to APD, which provides HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) with approximately £3bn (US\$4.5bn) annually. In contrast there are around 1,300 business jet operators that will have to pay APD, and government figures show it expects to get up to £5m (US\$7.5m) per annum (as published in HMRC's *Tax Impact & Information Note*, December 6, 2011). "If you add up what it costs industry to administer

and HMRC to administer and chase up, I think you'll find that it won't be far off costing more to implement than is actually gained," adds Bailey.

Part of the reason the figures are so low for business jets is that the sector is far less structured than the commercial side. "In 2012 over 3,000 private jet companies flew into the UK, with 75% having fewer than three aircraft in their fleet. Routes are not scheduled and the aircraft behave like taxis," comments Adam Twidell, CEO of PrivateFly. This may make it harder for HMRC to collect the duty from foreign operators.

The additional cost of flying from UK airports, in terms of time and money, is also a worry. "In isolation it will be okay. The cost of APD will be passed on to customers, but at the level it is at the moment for flights under 2,000 miles for moderate sized aircraft – £18-£36 (US\$27-US\$54) – it's not going to turn off individual clients from coming to the UK," says Bailey. "But if you put that together with the Emissions Trading System – which costs industry four times as much to administer as APD – and the initiative that is happening at the moment to charge business aviation for border force services, it becomes very expensive to fly here."

Other concerns include the financial liability of FBOs when operators repeatedly fail to pay APD (see *Payment protection* on page 26) and that the tax will put people off flying to (and from) the UK

## Air Passenger Duty

### Air Passenger Duty rates [1][2]

Bands (approximate distance in miles from the UK)	Reduced rate (lowest class of travel)			Standard rates [3] (other than the lowest class of travel)			Higher rate [4]
	From April 1, 2011	From April 1, 2012	From April 1, 2013	From April 1, 2011	From April 1, 2012	From April 1, 2013	From April 1, 2013
Band A (0-2,000)	£12	£13	£13	£24	£26	£26	£52
Band B (2,001-4,000)	£60	£65	£67	£120	£130	£134	£268
Band C (4,001-6,000)	£75	£81	£83	£150	£162	£166	£332
Band D (over 6,000)	£85	£92	£94	£170	£184	£188	£376

[1] From April 1, 2013, APD applies to all flights aboard aircraft 5.7 metric tons and above. [2] From November 1, 2011, direct long-haul rates for departures from Northern Ireland (bands B, C and D) were reduced to the short-haul rate (band A), irrespective of the destination. From January 1, 2013, the rates for direct long-haul flights from Northern Ireland will be devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive, and set to £0. Direct long-haul journeys from Northern Ireland are those where the first part of the journey is to a destination outside Band A. [3] If any class of travel provides seating in excess of 1.016m (40in) the standard rate also applies. [4] The higher rate applies to flights aboard aircraft of 20 metric tons and above with fewer than 19 seats

Table courtesy of HMRC <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/apd.htm>



## Payment protection

In some cases where APD is repeatedly unpaid by operators, HMRC has the power to make fixed base operators (FBOs) jointly liable with the operator for future APD that is due. In these cases, "it is important to carefully select your UK representative for payment of the APD and to ensure that the duties and obligations of both sides are properly and carefully documented," says Alan Polivnick, partner, Watson, Farley & Williams (Thailand) Ltd.

"FBOs should ensure that they are fully indemnified by

the non-resident operators, both in the contract or agreement to act as the administrative representative and with sufficient funds. They will need to ensure that their cash reserves anticipate changes in taxable flights; this is particularly important where the FBO is pursued by HMRC and has to retrieve funds from a non-resident operator through the legal system of the jurisdiction in which the operator has assets or is domiciled. This can often be a difficult, costly and time-consuming exercise given

the complex ownership and operating structures in use."

Polivnick suggests careful documentation is crucial for FBOs to protect them from financial penalties. "There are a number of details that are critical to determination of the APD and details of these must be kept, including details of passengers, origin and destination of flights, crew records and the rate of APD payable per passenger. These records need to be updated on at least a monthly basis but a prudent FBO may ensure that these records are updated more regularly."



due to increased paperwork and inconvenience. Already, BBGA members have had clients decide not to fly into a UK airport and some have taken their business out of the country. "At least 80% of what is done in business aviation is actually done to support corporate activity," says Bailey. "It generates money for the UK, so the last thing we should be doing is putting people off coming to trade here and bring in new business."

Michel Rubini, press officer at HMRC, comments that in a bid to counteract this negative impact, "HMRC is working closely with the industry to administer APD to ensure administrative burdens are kept proportionate." The BBGA is also asking HMRC to produce a one-year review of the APD extension – a "post regulatory impact assessment", as Bailey calls it – that will provide a clearer view of the gains for the UK government.

### Counter-argument

It may not be surprising that business jet operators have taken unkindly to APD, with the estimated cost and administration it entails, but the counter-argument for the need for fairness across the industry does make sense.

"It has always been an anomaly that business jets have paid no APD, simply due to the tax having been based on the number of fare-paying passengers," comments Cait Hewitt, deputy director, Aviation Environment Federation (AEF). "There could really be no logical justification for a tax being imposed on people traveling business class with a scheduled carrier but not on someone using their own plane. Given that using a business jet is probably the most environmentally inefficient way of traveling known to man, and that business jet users will on average be more able to pay the tax than any other group of air travelers, it was perhaps only a matter of time before a reform of APD was undertaken to include business jets."


But it is not just in the name of fairness that APD has been extended; the government is also hoping it will go some way toward helping reduce emissions. With the introduction of the distance banding system, APD now reflects the fact that longer journeys generate higher emissions than shorter ones. However, Hewitt thinks more could be done to encourage efficiency: "Ideally, we would like to see the tax structured so as to more directly incentivise

aircraft with better environmental performance, for example by introducing a charge per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> produced, but the government has always shied away from that, given its treaty obligations not to tax fuel used for international air travel. Because there is a fixed relationship between fuel burn and CO<sub>2</sub> regardless of aircraft size or type, namely that every tonne of aircraft fuel burned produces 3.15 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, levying APD on an emissions basis could be taken as a proxy for taxing kerosene, which would be illegal as the situation stands." (See *Fuel agreement* below)

### Re-investment

Bailey agrees that more could be done to improve efficiency within the aviation industry as a whole, not just the business jet sector. "APD revenue should be used for research and development into ways to save fuel, how to be more economical, improve the airspace and so on," he says. "At the moment there seems to be no benefit from APD for either scheduled or charter airlines. I would love to see a fixed link between the tax and R&D, and more money injected into universities to support the whole aviation sector and improve things."

For now it seems that opinion on APD for business jets will remain divided. However, by keeping open the lines of communication between government and industry, it is hoped things may improve in the future. "The Treasury and HMRC did engage extremely well with the business aviation industry to try and understand the situation. They have been as supportive as they could within the boundaries set by their masters," Bailey says. "I think government and ministers need to be more aware and understanding of what business aviation does, and that it is a feed for what goes on within many other operations in the UK."

"Business aviation and scheduled aviation providers are in no way in competition, and I think we should be working together as a complete aviation industry rather than have separate factions," he concludes. 

## Fuel agreement

It has been suggested that the UK government should impose a tax on aviation fuel to reduce emissions. However, according to the Chicago Convention, a fundamental treaty on international aviation created in 1944, airlines are exempt from paying taxes and customs duties on aviation-related goods including parts, stores and fuels. This means that if the government did impose a fuel tax, it would be illegal.

Experts have also suggested that imposing a fuel duty on all flights – not just EU ones – would lead to 'tankering', whereby carriers fill their aircraft as full as possible outside the EU to avoid paying tax. As



Antony Seely writes in 'Air passenger duty: recent debates & reform' published on July 16, 2013, "This would worsen the problem of aviation emissions, as aircraft would be burning up extra unnecessary fuel and adding to emissions whenever they did this, given the extra weight of the fuel tank."





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# *Flying the flag*





Ahead of NBAA in Las Vegas, *Business Airport International* talks to leading corporate fleet operators in the USA about the future of the industry and its associated challenges

Words | **Mark Huber**

 Direct Aviation Capital (DAC)'s US\$185m plan for the acquisition of Bombardier's Flexjet program – and an order for up to 245 new Bombardier jets worth US\$5.2bn – announced on September 5, 2013, signals a major consolidation in the fractional shares, prepaid charter, and aircraft management businesses in the USA.

DAC is the parent company of Flight Options, the second-largest fractional company in the USA. Under the deal, DAC-owned Flexjet will order 85 Bombardier business jets – 25 Learjet 75s, 30 Learjet 85s, 20 Challenger 350s and 10 Challenger 605s – with a combined value of US\$1.8bn. The company is also taking options for a further 160 Bombardier aircraft worth another US\$3.4bn.

DAC intends to keep both brands and differentiate them from each other based on service levels. Flexjet will operate newer aircraft, from one to five years old, as a premium service, while Flight Options will offer older or remanufactured aircraft and value pricing. While Flexjet has made recent gains, announcing an 83% growth in new business and a solid increase in flying hours during the first quarter of this year versus the same period a year ago, it has languished in perennial third-place and was often a cash strain on parent company Bombardier. With Bombardier's exit from the fractional game, only one major US OEM remains involved – Cessna, through its Citation Air division – and it is transitioning from a pure fractional to an aircraft/charter management business. And it may be next to go as OEMs increasingly realize that building and servicing aircraft are their best and most profitable core competencies.

The deal for Flexjet is the latest illustration that the charter and fractional markets are on the mend, in both the USA and Europe. Signals include a bold and optimistic order placed earlier this year by industry leader NetJets that is valued at up to US\$17.6bn for new jets from Bombardier, Cessna and Embraer.

Image courtesy of Flexjet



Even relatively small USA players such as PlaneSense and Executive AirShare are showing signs of growth. Internationally, the fractional model is spreading, with Beijing-based Deer Jet announcing in April 2013 that it would sell shares in Gulfstream G450 and G550 aircraft. The company already has 30 jets in its charter/aircraft management fleet. The only dark cloud is the recent bankruptcy of Avantair and the grounding of its fleet of 53 Piaggio Avantis, a slow-motion train wreck that has unfolded over the past few years and is largely ascribed to underpricing and poor management across that organization.

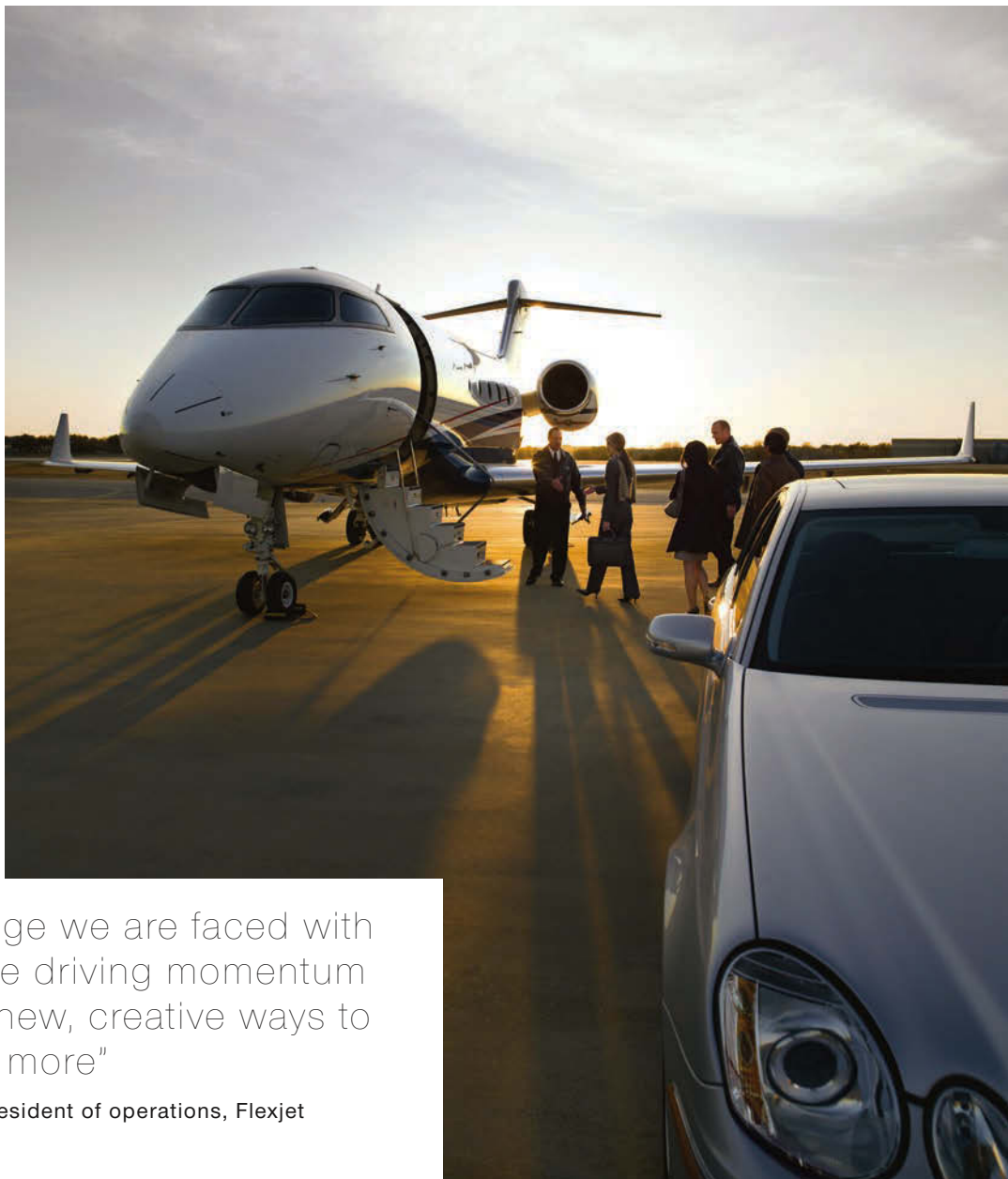
Against this backdrop, we asked top executives of the largest business jet fleets about the state of their businesses and future trends, FBO performance, and what they expected from this year's National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) convention in Las Vegas in October. Four organizations – NetJets, Flight Options, Flexjet and Jet Aviation – responded to our request (Flight Options and Flexjet both responded prior to the recently announced deal).

### Business is getting better

Top executives at the largest fleet operators were uniformly bullish on their outlook. A NetJets spokesman mentioned its order for up to 670 new jets over the next 10 years with customized 'Signature Series' interiors that include advanced inflight entertainment and a custom cabin design that includes specially selected fabrics and materials, customized seating, lighting and storage features, as well as advanced avionics and technological features to ensure maximum safety, reliability and operating efficiency. The orders cover Bombardier Challenger 300 and 605 models; Global 5000, 6000, 7000 and 8000 series; Cessna Citation Latitudes; and Embraer Phenom 300s.

Business is already picking up, says a company spokesman: "We have experienced improvement in business and we continue to see businesses and individuals invest in NetJets' private aviation solutions. The economy continues to improve and, as a result, the private aviation industry has experienced improvement. Continued growth will be dependent on a sustained economic recovery."

Flexjet's VP of operations, Jason Weiss, says, "Flexjet is seeing a turnaround in business and has entered into a period of growth. The challenge we are faced with is to continue driving the momentum and finding new, creative ways to deliver even more in the way of an exceptional owner experience. We're seeing a robust sales pipeline and stabilization in the economy, which



"The challenge we are faced with is to continue driving momentum and finding new, creative ways to deliver even more"

Jason Weiss, vice president of operations, Flexjet





"We need to ensure people's perceptions of business aviation is positive – it needs to be recognized as a job maker"

Gary Dempsey, president, Jet Aviation US Aircraft Services



Clockwise from top left: **NetJets' new Signature Series Global 6000** (photo provided by Donald Colantonio of Bombardier); **NetJets' private FBO at Van Nuys Airport** (photo provided by NetJets); **Flexjet has purchased 30 Learjet 85s**

together should enable Flexjet to continue growing and redefining the business model."

Weiss says the company's performance for the first half of 2013 was very encouraging: "Flexjet is thrilled to report 96% growth of new fractional and jet card sales when comparing January to June 2013 with the same period in 2012. In the first six months of this year, sales of new fractional shares increased by a notable 112%, while new jet card sales grew a solid 68%. As a result of ongoing growth, Flexjet continues to hire pilots and employees to satisfy increasing demand. We anticipate this growth trend to continue in the coming year."

At Flight Options, Matt Doyle, executive vice president of sales and marketing, likewise reflects on the improving business environment: "We are seeing a slow and steady increase in both fractional activity and our existing owners, who are continuing to increase their flying. It is always a challenge getting airplanes where and when our owners want them, especially on a holiday weekend, but thanks to the proprietary software used at our operations center we can anticipate this demand."

"We've been in the business for 15 years. For the past 12 months we've seen a slow and steady increase in demand – about 10%. We are seeing a change in the types of aircraft customers prefer as well," Doyle notes, referencing the Embraer Phenom 300 and the Nextant 400XTi, a remanufactured Beechjet. Nextant is also owned by DAC. Remanufactured aircraft lower the entry bar for many customers and are beginning to gain popularity in Europe, where their newer and more fuel-efficient engines also meet strict anti-noise requirements at airports. At this year's European Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (EBACE) in Geneva, Nextant announced the sale of 400XTi aircraft to Czech charter operator Time Air, which has become the first fleet operator of this type in Europe.

"Both those aircraft are super-light jets – larger than most light jets with the amenities of a medium size jet. So folks who would typically fly a midsize jet such as a Hawker 800 or Cessna Citation Excel are now getting the same capability – sometimes even more – out of these super-light jets, which are typically less expensive to operate," Doyle explains. "Some customers

who want to continue flying at a lower rate are gravitating toward these aircraft. Everyone is also looking for value and that is something Flight Options has always done well. Because we are not tied to a particular manufacturer, we can go out and look at which aircraft offer the best capabilities for our owners."

The strategy appears to be paying off for the company. Doyle says Flight Options' "conquest business", which he defines as fractional owners who come to the company from competing programs elsewhere, is up 25% year-to-date compared with 2012. Last year was also good for the company, he says, noting that fractional share sales were up 30% over levels in 2011. "For the first time in a long time, we are also seeing an increase in first-time fractional owners. Some of these people have chartered in the past, but never owned a fractional share in a structured program. We are seeing an increase in all facets of the business."

At Jet Aviation, aircraft management is taking on a leading role, with 10% growth in the Americas in 2013 compared with 2012. "We currently have around 100 aircraft under management in the USA," says Gary Dempsey, president, Jet Aviation US Aircraft Services, "and we are seeing similar levels of growth worldwide. Our aircraft charter company and Jet Professionals – our staffing company – are also seeing positive levels of growth, and I think this is mainly due to some of the countries we service requiring safety, security and transparency, which is what we offer."

In terms of future predictions, Dempsey is positive: "I see more of the same growth, but this will be limited without improvements in infrastructure. We also need to ensure people's perception of business aviation is positive – it needs to be recognized as a job maker. In the past couple of years, business aviation has created 1.5 million jobs in the USA, in metropolitan as well as rural areas, and we need to remind legislators of this every day."



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"One of our fundamental principles is fanatical attention to detail and we look for that in the FBOs we use"

**Matt Doyle, executive vice president of sales and marketing, Flight Options**

### Partnering with FBOs

FBOs can make or break a private flying experience and all the private fleet operators heavily focus on FBO performance, with most providers getting high marks. "We are looking for good security, clean facilities, excellent customer service and technical capabilities from the FBOs we use worldwide," comments Dempsey. "We partner with a number of companies globally who we know can consistently meet these criteria."

But some fractional and charter providers want to go one better. Much like the exclusive airline passenger clubs in commercial terminals, some large fleet operators are promoting the construction of private areas within FBOs reserved exclusively for their customers. NetJets partnered with FBO Maguire Aviation at the Van Nuys, California, USA airport, one of the busiest general aviation-only airports in the country, to construct a 10,000ft<sup>2</sup> private terminal for NetJets customers that includes a streamlined passenger transition to and from the aircraft ramp, modern furnishings, conference and business center capabilities, crew lounge and rest areas, and flight planning facilities.

"NetJets has excellent relationships with the many FBOs we work with across the country," comments a company spokesman. "This year, we chose the Stuart [Florida, USA] Jet Center as our top US FBO. NetJets presented it with our Service Excellence Award, a credit bestowed on the FBO that best meets NetJets needs for safety, service, facilities and amenities, and reliability. Additionally, NetJets has partnered with several FBOs, including Signature Flight Support, Maguire Aviation and Atlantic Aviation, to launch NetJets' private FBOs in locations around the country where we experience substantial flight demand, including Van Nuys, Atlanta and Palm Beach. The private use facilities we have created provide a customized, private experience to our customers flying in and out of some of their most popular domestic destinations. These dedicated use facilities enhance their overall travel experiences."

Flexjet's Weiss also has positive things to say about most of the FBOs that service his company: "Great service starts with a great attitude, and we are pleased to see this in many of the FBOs we visit. Flexjet has great partners in the FBO community, and we treasure these relationships. Our best FBOs understand and deliver outstanding service, which in turn enhances the overall experience for our owners. By paying attention to the details and providing

clean, modern facilities, paired with efficient service for fast turnarounds, they enable us to do our job more effectively."

Weiss explains that Flexjet looks for FBOs that offer amenities such as "quiet, private waiting rooms, internet access, newspapers, coffee and snacks, rental cars on the property and ample secure parking".

"Additionally, we like to see ground support equipment for the aircraft and comprehensive support for our crews," he adds.

Flight Option's Doyle says his company "looks for similarities in culture" when selecting FBOs. "We want FBOs that share our passion for customer service. One of our fundamental

principles is fanatical attention to detail and we look for that in the FBOs we use. We also look for their ability to handle our aircraft and also provide competitive fuel rates. Based on that, we have identified many outstanding FBOs who provide the service our customers expect and the attention to detail that we expect."

Doyle says Flight Options has an entire department that works with FBOs and melds customers' input into FBO evaluations.

All in all, the outlook for the corporate fleet operators' market in the USA looks positive, with collaboration between all business aviation suppliers remaining key to continued success in a competitive industry. <



Left and below: **NetJets' private FBO in Atlanta** (photo: NetJets)





“Our show continues to be central to the industry’s forward-looking perspective”

Ed Bolen, CEO, NBAA



## Session topics

There will be seven session topics at this year’s NBAA. Hazel King, editor of *BAI*, has chosen highlights from the three-day event:

## Looking forward to NBAA

The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) annual convention is the largest international gathering of the corporate jet industry and the fleet operators will be there, showing the flag and drumming up new business. This year’s show will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, on October 22-24.

Last year’s event attracted 25,150 attendees from 87 countries, 1,073 exhibitors, and 109 display aircraft. The show combines exhibits with large general and smaller educational sessions and workshops that feature world-famous leaders in aviation, government, the media, and other sectors with hands-on instructional sessions and lectures that focus on emerging trends, technology, operations and international issues.

NBAA CEO Ed Bolen says the 2012 convention showed “the business aviation community’s confidence and focus on the future”, noting that “our show continues to be central to the industry’s forward-looking perspective”. Leaders of the largest fleet operators apparently agree.

NetJets has a long history of participation at the show and this year will be no different. “The NBAA convention is the premier annual meeting place for the business aviation community. It brings together important business and industry leaders, government officials and key business aircraft service providers,” a spokesman says. “We are pleased to be a part of this important business aviation event.”

Flexjet also plans a large presence at this year’s show.

“The NBAA convention gives us the ability to meet with many of our vendors and suppliers face to face,” says Jason Weiss, VP of operations. “We look forward to seeing new products and being introduced to new vendors and service providers we may not have the opportunity to meet otherwise.”

And Jet Aviation will be on hand to discuss its latest service offerings with new and existing clients. “NBAA is always an important event for us – the number-one benefit for us is networking with other industry professionals and our clients so that we can see what is new, collect client feedback, and we also want to explain how we’re improving to meet our clients’ needs,” says Gary Dempsey, president, Jet Aviation US Aircraft Services.

## Career and leadership development

October 22, 10:30am-12:00pm

**The perfect storm: continuing to address the business aviation talent shortage**

Sheryl Barden, Aviation Personnel International

## Maintenance and technical issues

October 22, 1:00-2:00pm

**Fleet issue collaboration: improving safety, operating cost and reliability through the sharing of aircraft operational data**

Grant Johnson, Jeff Shutrump and John Peters, Airframe Resolution LLC

## Aviation management and aircraft ownership

October 22, 1:00-2:00pm

**Ensuring the highest resale value of your business aircraft**

Jeremy Cox, JetBrokers Inc

## Safety and risk management

October 22, 2:30-4:00pm

**Mitigating a hazard: our humanness**

Gene Benson, Bright Spot Inc

## Aircraft and flight operations

October 23, 9:00-10:00am

**EU ETS: compliance in 2014 and beyond**

Adam Hartley, Universal Weather and Aviation

## Airspace and airport access

October 23, 1:00-2:00pm

**Control your route destiny: learn how to make CTOP work for you**

Jim McClay, NBAA

## Industry update

October 23, 2:30-4:00pm

**Business aviation: sustainability in a world of change**

Dan Brown, Honeywell; Kurt Edwards, International Business Aviation Council; and Charles Etter, Gulfstream





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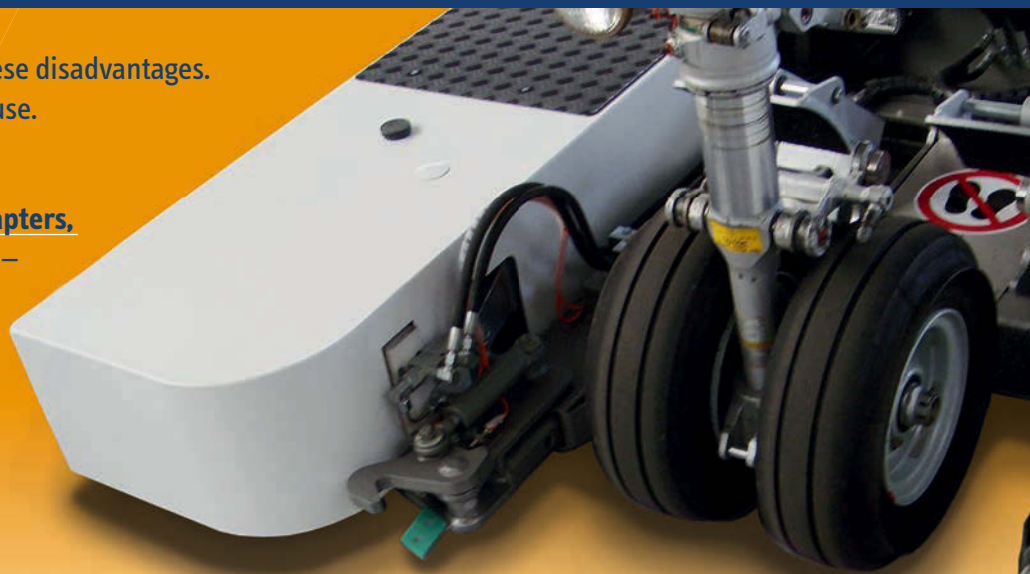


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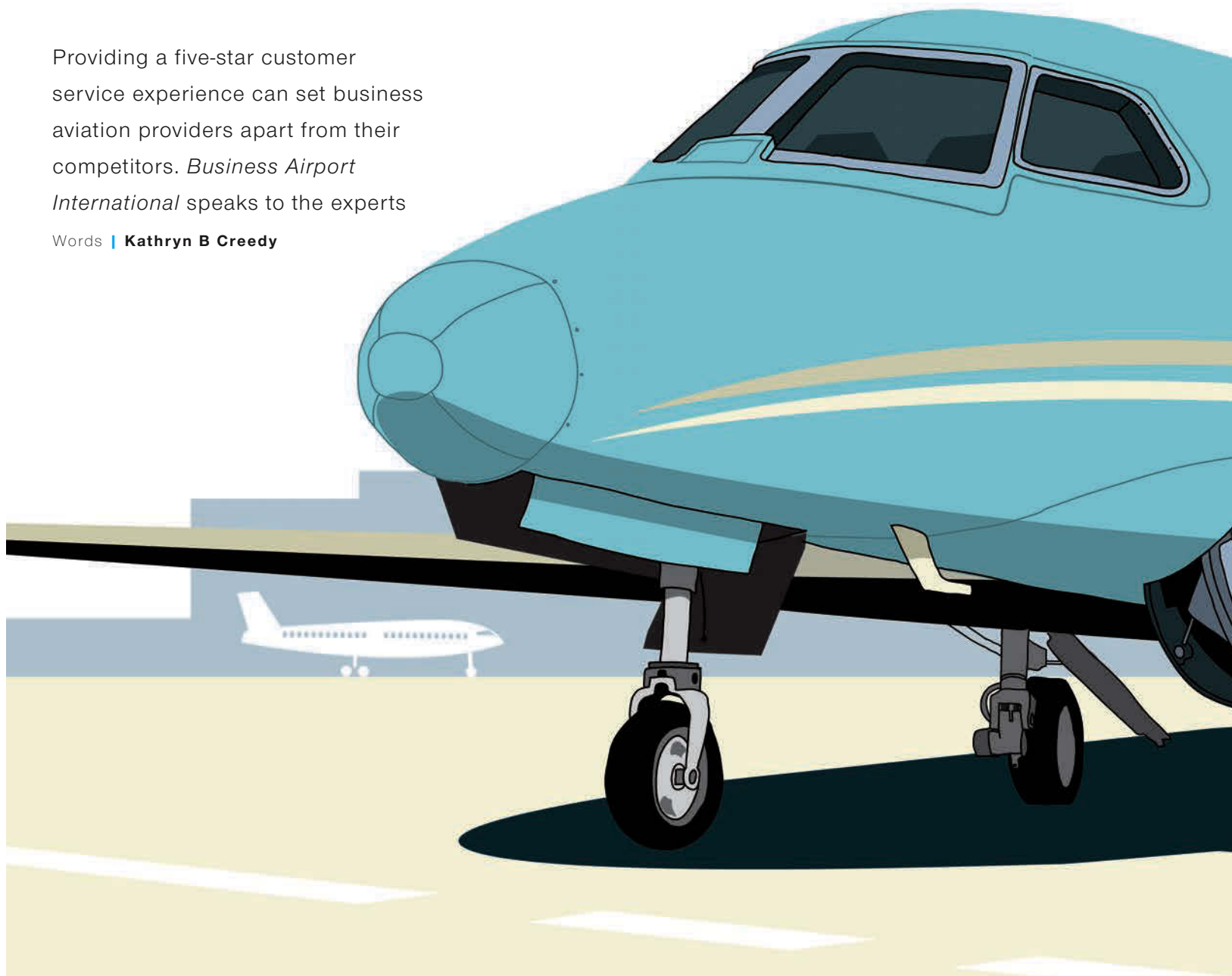




# Are you being *Served?*

Providing a five-star customer service experience can set business aviation providers apart from their competitors. *Business Airport International* speaks to the experts

Words | **Kathryn B Creedy**





While the old saying “getting there is half the fun” has long since disappeared from commercial aviation, it is re-emerging in the business aviation sector as those who cater to business and private jet passengers are setting a new standard at the airport, the FBO and on board. Corporate passengers are driving the change and business aviation providers are gaining new customers as they set themselves apart from a crowded market by providing a level of customer service that emulates top-of-the-line hotel, restaurant or automobile companies.

“Unfortunately, aviation certainly would not be known as a service industry if you look at what

is provided now,” says XJet CEO Josh Stewart. “We have to provide a truly rewarding customer service experience because that is the way the model is shifting.”

For Dee Cooper, creative director for Decide Creative Consultancy and former director of product and service at Virgin Atlantic Airways, anticipating the needs of the luxury traveler is essential. Cooper, whose company advises banks, restaurants and hotels, recommends creating memorable branded customer experiences that drive customer choice and loyalty. “It’s all about how to better engage the customer through experience and creating the

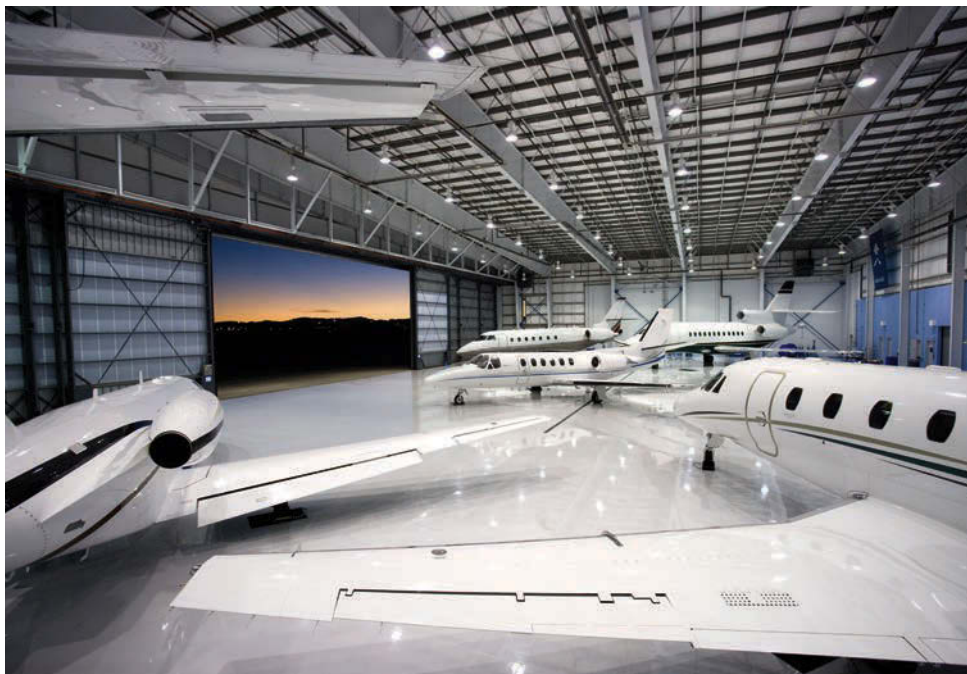


Illustration courtesy of Peter Mac



Right: **Business aviation passengers expect five-star facilities**

Below: **XJet's luxury hangar at Centennial Airport, Colorado, USA**



memories," she explains. "It is about the whole customer interaction and all the layers coming together in order to compete and increase sales."

With the commoditization of travel, success relies on the finer details – from the premium car that drives the passenger to the wing of the aircraft and online check-in for business flights; to meeting and greeting and getting all documentation and security squared away in the most efficient and easiest way possible for the passenger. "All that is a huge benefit that has value to the passenger and huge potential for the operator," Cooper says. "This is value engineering the entire journey and simplifying the interaction. It's about quicker, smarter customer experience. This service is not just about saving time, but creating exclusivity that passengers will brag about. Airports and FBOs are experts, and the benefits of a local concierge are huge."

### Understanding the passenger

In fact, some businesses have expanded beyond the FBO and airport to provide five-star concierge standards and door-to-door services that cradle



Above: **Providing a premium car service can enhance the customer's experience**

the passenger from the instant they know they need trip planning, through their destination experience and back home. Businesses are also targeting corporate flight attendants and hope to drive galley changes.

It all starts, according to Daniel Hume, managing director of Alison Price On Air, with understanding the passenger. "They live all over the world," he comments. "They shop at the best supermarkets. They have the best chefs. They know a good quality product and that is what they expect with business aviation as well."

XJet's Stewart agrees: "The old FBO model is broken, especially from the passenger perspective. We have developed the country club model, offering a membership. We only have 14 members, but we are completely focused on providing world-class facilities to world-class passengers. Most business aviation companies are stuck in the 1940s and 1950s, and are little more than a gas station geared toward pilots, but with more fuel-efficient models they have to expand to other services. They are using the pilot incentive model, but they have ignored the owners."

### The whole package

"We based our business model on a single question," Stewart continues. "If you are wealthy enough to own a plane, what is it you really want?"

And that is what we provide – including superior hangars for asset protection, because there continues to be a hangar shortage. We also book hotels, cars, whatever they need. We offer world-class facilities focused entirely on the passenger in the back. We also have 40- to 50-page dossiers on each member to ensure that we anticipate their needs. We have full 24-7 support while they are on their trip. All this is our competitive advantage. It is all about the travel experience and knowing what the traveler wants."

Stewart is so convinced the success of XJet lies in luxury branding that he is relocating the business from Denver, USA, to the new Dubai World Central (DWC) between Dubai and Abu Dhabi, noting the center of gravity in business aviation is shifting to emerging markets, especially the Middle East.

"North America will still be big, but the Middle East triggered the focus on luxury air travel," he explains. "These passengers demand a high level of service in every other aspect of their lives but are not finding it in business aviation. Consequently, it has to evolve to meet their expectations."

To be successful in the future, business aviation interests must go beyond the normal services by catering to the premium needs of business aviation users, Stewart says. "Private aviation owners are more savvy and are getting

"The key is anticipating customer needs, but that relies on a well-trained staff and giving them the proper tools to execute a flawless mission"

Warren Boin, vice president marketing, World Fuel Services





involved in the purchasing decisions, which puts a premium on parallel services such as world-class conference facilities and premium catering. We try to engage the passengers.”

Providing for the entire journey is exactly what Gruppo SAVE has done in Venice. “The Venice Experience starts when customers leave their homes,” explains general aviation supervisor Alessandro Semenzato. “We assign a personal assistant to the client to improve the customer experience in order to provide the same attention to detail as that of a five-star hotel concierge. The main concept is to improve the communication among providers, achieving the same quality standards throughout the trip. We work in partnership with the best providers to avoid any problems that could impact a client’s stay. We inspire our clients with unique experiences to enrich their travel. And their experience does not have to start on landing, or stop at departure. The Venice Experience includes crafting special onboard menus that replicate the Venetian dining experience.”

#### Engaging staff

World Fuel Services also identified the luxury-service trend and has grown its high-end service Air Elite brand to 31 centers worldwide.

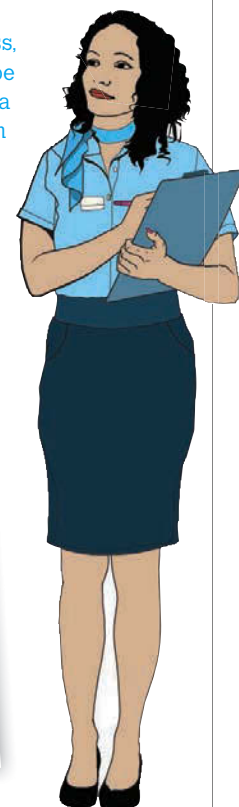
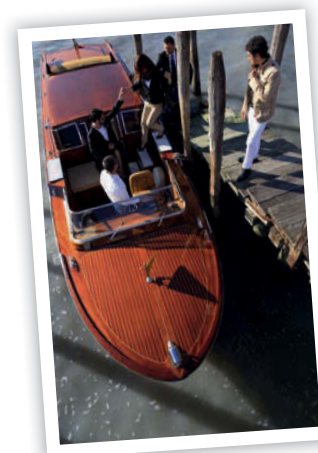
“The key is anticipating customer needs,” says vice president marketing Warren Boin. “But that relies on a well-trained staff and giving them the proper tools to execute a flawless mission. We benchmark our quality on Ritz-Carlton standards and have a propriety e-learning platform dedicated to a wide variety of customer service topics. It is completed over the course of months and reinforced by webinars. We also address something that is often overlooked. We are a firm believer that a happy staff makes for happy customers. If you focus on customer service ideas and you don’t connect to the employees, taking care of them, motivating them, valuing their ideas, then you aren’t capable of flawlessly executing premium customer service.”

Boin, whose company adopts the customer service quality of Nordstrom and Harrods for its Air Elite brand, believes companies must incorporate ideas from the most premium service providers, no matter what industry. “Those that do that will be well served,” he says. “This is a very important aspect of quality customer service. By treating the customers’ entire journey as your own service, you are anticipating their needs for that extra level of service. You empathize with the customer whether it is the passenger or the pilot, and you find opportunities to provide that unique



### Top 10 tips to achieve customer service excellence

1. Know your vision for customer service.
2. Define your customer’s journey and how it can be made memorable. Pay attention to the details, make sure you have a deep knowledge of the territory and its resources, and provide a discreet presence when needed.
3. Look at the best of the rest, learn from what they are doing, and bring that to business aviation.
4. Recognize and tout your natural strengths from the passenger perspective, whether it is a beautiful aircraft, the ability to park beside the aircraft, or a luxury facility.
5. Take care of your employees. No matter how wonderful or unique your services are, if your people are not aligned with your vision, it won’t work.
6. Hire the right people – those who see the glass half full, who are friendly and passionate about great customer service. Those features cannot be taught.
7. Train staff to the high-level luxury service of other industries such as hotels.
8. Remember, this is all about making money out of engaging your customers more, and creating premium products and services to gain market share.
9. You are in the service business, not the aviation business – but be passionate about both. Work as a whole group to provide premium executive service.
10. Empathize with the passenger and understand that the objective is to provide a more tailored experience.







Left: **Providing around-the-clock services ensures a smooth travel experience for passengers**

Below: **Aircraft galleys should be fitted with modern technology to provide the best food and drink on board**

"There is little glory in the job for all the hard work they put in. Our mission is to create a leading service, and create a relationship with cabin crews who are unsung heroes"

**Daniel Hume, managing director, Alison Price On Air**

travel experience. You are creating more value and it becomes a market differentiator. If you can provide a unique service and solve their problem, then you cement your relationship. It is all about anticipating their needs and using your expertise in aviation, in airports, to assist the customer in having a seamless travel experience."

Anticipating customers' needs is the trick. Stewart says the answer is in developing the customer profile. FBOs and airports must also develop profiles if they want repeat business. "We work with the Four Seasons in a reciprocal training deal," he explains. "The Four Seasons works with hundreds of clients and we don't, so that enables us to be even more personal. We cater to their unique experience and this takes them beyond their expectations."

#### **Targeting cabin crew**

For Alison Price On Air's Hume, however, part of the answer is working with the flight attendants. Indeed, the company is working on creating partnerships with international flight attendant training companies to go beyond the normal training to include elite customer service and culinary skills.

"We want to achieve more international consistency of service to meet the standards of our clients," he says. "All other food handlers are required to have certification except flight attendants, so we have developed the first legal food handling certification designed for them. Lots of companies are out there, but not many offer the premium level and products and services we do."

Alison Price was created from a high-level catering background, expanding to business aviation and providing a customized experience. "You tell us the restrictions and we can design a product that will make your life easier and give you something far superior to anything else out there," Hume says confidently. "We have designed a system for packaging the foods that is unique and now have more than three years' experience catering to such clients as Boeing, Coca Cola, Global Jet, Tag Aviation and Gama Aviation. My client is the cabin crew and they love this service."

Targeting cabin crew was a smart move, since they do the serving and place the catering order. "There is little glory in the job for all the hard work they put in," explains Hume, "but we create products and training that the passenger notices. Our mission is to create a leading service, and create a relationship with cabin



crews who are unsung heroes. We would also like to see aircraft galleys become more than an afterthought in interior design. Galleys are usually pretty rudimentary, small and lack refrigeration. Manufacturers and completion centers are missing the point since catering, services and food preparation are an extremely important part of the flight for the passenger."

Alongside good catering, health and well-being is another customer service target area. Flexjet has launched a new service that partners with Cooper Aerobics, a health and wellness center in Dallas, USA, to provide health education for owners on staying well during the journey – from remaining hydrated to battling jet lag. Flexjet president Deanna White pointed to the fact both partners are premium providers in their fields. The focus is on maintaining health, with many wanting to continue their healthy diet and lifestyle while they travel. The Flexjet/Cooper Aerobics team helps them do that.

Today, the best in customer service is more than just products; it is attitude and creativity, as well as emulating the top luxury brands. The jet set is now the luxury set and the business aviation industry has to change if it wants to meet the new demand. ☺



Photograph: Flexjet



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# Great escape

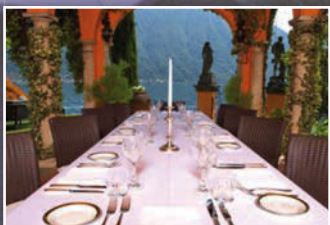


A number of private charter firms are opening up a world of opulent travel destinations to the business aviation market. *Business Airport International* takes a look at some of the best and most luxurious on offer

Words | **Hazel King**









## Maldives

**Venue:** Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa

**Location:** Villingili Island, Maldives

**Closest airport:** Gan International Airport, Maldives



### Venue

Situated on Villingili Island in the Indian Ocean, Villingili Resort and Spa is the perfect place to relax and unwind. And with its very own private airport, getting to the island couldn't be easier.

Once passengers arrive at the luxury resort, they are greeted with stunning views of the ocean. Accommodation ranges from private ocean retreats to tropical tree houses, all of which are equipped with modern conveniences and amenities.

The resort and spa is also jam-packed with activities for clients, from natural lagoons and nature trails to tennis, cycling, golf, diving and snorkeling. Guests can also book a number of excursions including dolphin cruises, night fishing, and sunset sailing on the resort's luxury yacht, Horizon.

CHI, The Spa at Shangri-La is a secluded sanctuary located in its own village within the resort and offers a range of relaxing treatments, as well as a yoga pavilion and steam rooms.

### Getting there

Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Gan International Airport is located five minutes away (one mile) from the resort by speedboat and offers a complete jet arrival and departure service, as well as fueling by Addu International Airport Limited. The airport can also accommodate helicopter landings and take-offs, and private taxi transfers are available.

The terminal comprises two lounges with a capacity of 75 passengers. The Business Lounge has a seating capacity of 50 passengers while the Executive VIP Lounge has a capacity of 25 passengers with an additional six-person Head of State appointment room. The terminal also includes a central hall with security screening, customs and immigration.

The airport handles B737, B757 and B767 aircraft operating as ad-hoc charters, and daily domestic flights with ATR42 and Dash 8 aircraft. In addition, business jets regularly use the terminal as ad-hoc charters. Costs for landing depend on the maximum take-off weight of the aircraft – currently US\$3.75 per 2,200 lb plus a fixed fee of US\$35. Parking is calculated at 10% of the landing fee for every three-hour block – the first three hours of parking is free.





## Venue

A favorite of the rich and famous, Lake Como in northern Italy has played host to some of Hollywood's elite, including George Clooney and Sylvester Stallone, who both owned homes on its picturesque shores.

Villa Lucia is situated on the western shore of the lake and is only accessible by boat. Set in 7.4 acres of perfectly manicured gardens, the property features an infinity pool, tennis court, cinema and gym, and comes with a private chef and butler. Villa Lucia was fully renovated by The Wow House Company in 2008 and accommodates up to 12 guests looking to relax in beautiful surroundings.

## Getting there

The closest airport to Lake Como offering business aviation services is Lugano Airport, which is situated 21 miles from the area.

E-Aviation is based at the airport and offers VIP handling, catering, limousine services and security personnel. Fueling, baggage handling and access to the VIP passenger and crew lounges are provided by Lugano Executive Airport.

The general aviation handling tariff at the airport is between CHF200 and CHF1,680 (US\$213 to US\$1,792) depending on the aircraft's maximum take-off weight, although aircraft and helicopters below 3 tons are free of charge. Lugano Airport is open 6:30am-9:30pm Monday-Saturday and 7:30am-9:30pm on Sunday.



## Italy

**Venue:** Villa Lucia

**Location:** Lake Como, Italy

**Closest airport:** Lugano Airport, Switzerland



**Pictures and information courtesy of:**  
**The Wow House Company**

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**[www.thewowhousecompany.co.uk](http://www.thewowhousecompany.co.uk)**

## Mustique

**Venue:** Mustique Cottage

**Location:** Britannia Bay, Mustique

**Closest airport:** Mustique Airport, St Vincent and the Grenadines



## Venue

Visitors to the island of Mustique in the West Indies are in good company, with music legends Bryan Adams, Mick Jagger and David Bowie all owning properties there. In keeping with the VIP atmosphere on the 1,400-acre island is Mustique Cottage, a three-bedroom private villa overlooking Britannia Bay.

Owned by The Wow House Company, the villa features spacious living areas and tropical gardens with a swimming pool and sun deck. All three bedrooms are en-suite, with the master bedroom comprising a private patio and outdoor shower area. Bedroom two also has a private patio, and bedroom three is situated in a castle-like turret.

As well as enjoying the villa's own beautifully landscaped gardens, visitors can relax on nine pristine beaches on the island and explore the rolling hills and lush terrain. Mustique provides an ideal hideaway for those in need of a break.

## Getting there

Flying to Mustique is straightforward – scheduled shared and private charter flights are organized daily through the visitors' certified villa advisor, and take 45 minutes from Barbados and 30 minutes from St Lucia. Currently, the airport only accepts propeller aircraft such as the 18-seat Twin Otter aircraft which is operated by Grenadine Airways. Flights to and from Barbados are operated twice daily, while St Lucia is served three times per week throughout the peak seasons.





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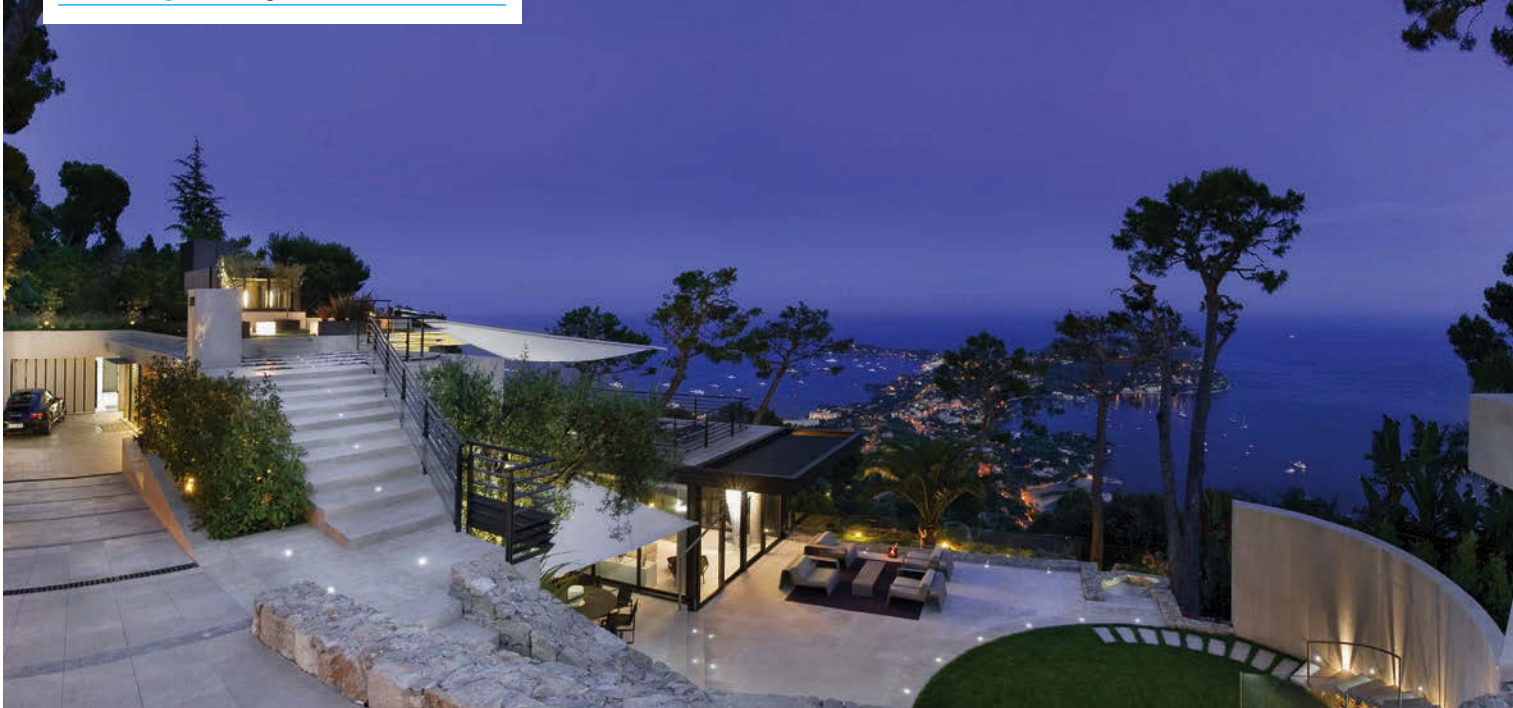


## France

**Venue:** One Authentic Properties

**Location:** Across France

**Closest airport:** Multiple, France



### Venue

Chapman Freeborn and One Authentic Properties have joined forces to offer seamless travel to some of the most exclusive destinations in France. Launched in June 2013, the companies provide a fully inclusive travel service with chartered flights to and from the most convenient airports in the region for all types of aircraft, including private jets, helicopters and VIP configured airliners. The eight properties on offer include 'super-prime' villas in the south of France, as well as opulent chalets in Courchevel 1850, all of which have been renovated and remodeled to combine modern comfort with their original charm.

Properties for hire include the five-star Peninsula 1, situated in the private estate of Les



Parcs de St Tropez and boasting uninterrupted views of the sea and the South Alps. The property has four en-suite bedrooms, each with their own private garden, as well as a swimming pool, manicured lawns and olive grove.

For travelers looking for luxury ski accommodation, One Authentic Properties offers Chalet le Blanchot in Courchevel 1850. The six-bedroom property has a home cinema, massage room and ski room, as well as a pool, steam room and jacuzzi.

### Getting there

The airports used by Chapman Freeborn for this partnership are Le Bourget in Paris; Nice, St Tropez, Toulon and Cannes in the Riviera; and Courchevel Altiporta/Chambéry for the chalets. "All of these airports are very well set up for corporate and private aviation with

dedicated private terminals and experienced, discreet handling agents with whom we've built relationships, so we know who to call when we need our clients looking after well, even at the larger airports," explains Michael Cooper from Chapman Freeborn.

### Opening hours for the airports

- Nice – 24 hours
- Paris Le Bourget – 6:00am–9:45pm for jet departures; 24 hours for arrivals and prop aircraft
- St Tropez – daylight hours and certain smaller types of aircraft only owing to runway length
- Cannes – daylight hours and certain smaller types of aircraft only owing to runway length
- Toulon – Monday-Friday 7:00am-10:30pm; Saturday 7:00am-9:00pm; Sunday 9:00am-10:30pm. This is a military airport so prior permission is required.



## Thailand

**Venue:** InterContinental Hua Hin Resort

**Location:** Hua Hin, Thailand

**Closest airport:** Bo Fai Airport, Thailand



### Venue

This luxury resort consists of a 119-room hotel, three beachfront villas with private plunge pools and a range of suites, making it an ideal place to relax in the heart of Thailand. Winner of the Best Hotel Thailand award at the International Hotel Asia Pacific 2013 Awards, Hua Hin Resort also features three luxury restaurants, a health and fitness center, spa, a number of lounges and bars, and a business center for those guests who just can't escape work.

### Getting there

For business jet passengers, getting to the resort is easy following the launch of an exclusive private jet service to the country by Jaras Aviation. The company offers a fast, flexible and personalized service to elite travelers and businessmen, departing from the Private Jet

Terminal at Don Muang International Airport and arriving at Bo Fai Airport in Hua Hin in under an hour. "We launched this service to increase revenues for both ourselves and InterContinental, as well as to increase awareness of business aviation in this area to our customers," explains Tanakorn Sisangthong, director of sales and marketing at Jaras Aviation.

The company is currently running two to three flights to the resort per month, at a cost of US\$3,500 per hour. However, customers taking up the luxury promotion package – which includes transfers by Cessna 550 Citation Bravo and a one-night stay in the La Residence presidential villa – will pay 200,000 baht (US\$6,207) per trip.

The Hua Hin resort is situated five miles from the airport and a private limousine service is available for the 10-minute drive. [↗](#)





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## Vital statistics

**Location:** Wevelgem, Belgium

**Operating hours:** 24 hours


**Runway length:** 6,030ft

**ICAO/IATA:** EBKT/KJK

**Reader enquiry number:** 101

# Easy option

Business aviation travelers seeking access to the center of Europe are guaranteed fast handling services at Kortrijk-Wevelgem Airport

 Flanders International Airport (FIA) is the handling company at Kortrijk-Wevelgem Airport in Belgium. It is a privately owned company that was founded in 1993.

The airport's location provides the perfect solution when you want to access the local area, but avoid the hassle of big airports and their traffic, such as Brussels and Lille airports. It is located in the heart of the 'Eurométropole', which means it takes less than 45 minutes to drive to Gent and Bruges in Belgium, and Lille in France. Brussels is one hour away and Paris two hours. FIA is a Schengen airport, meaning you can fly in, directly from anywhere in the world. Police and customs are available.

"Because we are surrounded by housing and industrial areas, we have to focus on business traffic, avoiding the environmental problems caused by regular airlines and cargo. But this also means that business travelers have no slot problems at our airport," says Guy Putman, general manager of FIA. "We are also surrounded by export-orientated activities, including multiple industries, interesting history (World Wars I and II); excellent tourist attractions (ancient cultural sites and famous restaurants); leisure facilities (golf courses and the seaside); modern hospitals; and


large exhibition centers (Kortrijk Xpo, Gent and Lille). It is obvious we focus on the international business and leisure traveler."

Night operations are also possible at the airport and FIA is very compact, which allows it to offer FIFO (fast in, fast out) services.

The local infrastructure has been adapted during the past few years, meaning that pilots can operate to and from the airport in almost all weather conditions with the introduction of LOC/DME-NDB modernized lighting.

With the increasing congestion of the surrounding airports such as Brussels and Lille-Lesquin, both in terms of air traffic and ground traffic congestion, Kortrijk-Wevelgem is an ideal solution for people needing to access Brussels or the west of the city.

FIA offers VIP customers all the services they are used to having worldwide: VIP catering, information, hotel and taxi/limo reservations, and cars at their disposal.

Kortrijk-Wevelgem Airport has a range of ground-handling equipment to look after most types of business jet. All the equipment is operated by the FIA team and is maintained to a high standard on a regular basis. 

[www.fiahandling.be](http://www.fiahandling.be)






# Progress report



The new FBO provider at Barcelona Airport is drawing on its 175-year history to provide the best customer experience

 February 1833. Heavily coated against the biting cold of one of the harshest winters on record, a young man sits on top of a mail coach for the 60-hour journey from London to Edinburgh, summoned home on the death of his father.

Bequeathed little and with a stepmother and two sisters to support, 25-year-old John Menzies turned to the only trade he knew and set up shop at 61 Princes Street, Edinburgh, as bookseller, stationer and print seller. It was a logical choice of profession for one whose only work experience had been as apprentice and assistant to booksellers in both capital cities, but he was a newcomer in an overcrowded marketplace and consequently found himself last in line for whatever thin profit could be squeezed from Edinburgh's fiercely competitive retail book trade.

So it was time to think again, and this is where the story really begins.

## Identifying the market

It was not so much a eureka moment of inspiration but the result of pragmatic market analysis that took Menzies on a mission back to London, taking maximum advantage of the many publishing contacts he had made during his time there to secure appointment as sole agent for their works north of the border. He had found his niche as a wholesale distributor of previously unavailable material from the likes of Dickens, Wordsworth and Thackeray, the business growing year-on-year as word spread and orders flooded in from booksellers and other outlets of all sizes across Scotland.

The rest, as they say, is history. But a pattern for progress had been set. Still in his twenties, John Menzies had demonstrated the vision to identify a market opportunity allied to energy, determination and single-minded decisiveness, to seize it and make it work – the hallmark Menzies approach that has sustained the business and seen it grow over the past 175 years.

In 1989, John Menzies plc took a first tentative step into the aviation business with the acquisition of the Scan International Group of air couriers. Less than 25 years later, Menzies Aviation is a leading independent provider of ground- and cargo-handling services.

Today, it operates from over 144 airports in 30 countries and employs more than 20,500 people. In providing a full range of passenger, ramp and cargo services to over 500 airline and airport authority customers, Menzies Aviation handles more than one million flight turns, 77 million passengers, and 1.6 million tons of cargo every year.





Passengers can relax in the three VIP lounges at Menzies Aviation's Barcelona FBO facility



### Vital statistics

**Location:** Barcelona, Spain

**Operating hours:** 24 hours

**Terminal space:** 22,798ft<sup>2</sup>

**Facilities:** Three VIP lounges, two crew rooms, VIP lavatory and meeting rooms

**Reader enquiry number:** 102



Standing still is simply not an option if it is to remain a major player in such a fast-moving industry, and that is why Menzies Aviation has taken a step forward into corporate and general aviation services.

The company offers ground-handling services for corporate and general aviation at more than 20 airports across Europe and has recently won the tender to be an FBO provider at Barcelona Airport, offering superb FBO facilities, as well as exclusive and personalized corporate and private aircraft handling.

#### Menzies in Barcelona

The new FBO at Barcelona Airport has a large facility area offering three VIP lounges, two crew rooms, a VIP lavatory and meeting rooms, as well as offices available for rental. The company's experienced ground staff are dedicated to ensuring that customers receive a tailor-made service, making the journey through Barcelona as exquisite as possible.

FBO facilities are included in the basic handling fee, which makes Menzies Aviation's service unique, as clients and crews have access to its VIP/crew lounges at no extra cost. Ensuring its clients feel as comfortable as possible is one of the company's main objectives, taking every detail into consideration.

Menzies Aviation's customer service is second to none. This comes from the practical application of the company's ethos of quality customer service developed over 175 years. The company is proud of giving each of its customers a world-class service and its goal is to exceed all of its customers' expectations. From small crews to large, one passenger or an entire delegation, the company's executive passenger and crew service is designed to provide a safe, smooth, fast and luxurious transit through its FBO facility.

These values are expressed in the appropriate acronym SPIRIT:

- Safety and Security – Safety comes first in everything Menzies Aviation does;

- Passion – It is the passion and pride of its people in the job that continues to drive Menzies Aviation's success;
- Integrity – Without the enduring trust and confidence of its customers, the company has no business;
- Reliability – Menzies Aviation aims for perfection, always striving to exceed the highest efficiency standards its customers might expect of their own staff;
- Innovation – Menzies Aviation takes a highly proactive role in developing solutions to the real world problems its customers may experience;
- Teamwork – Teamwork works. It is the essence of Menzies Aviation's business and the key to its success.

Menzies Aviation aims to provide unparalleled levels of service and security, helping to enhance the client's image based on its service. The firm's motto is: "We are service. We are security. We are reliable. We are Menzies Aviation".

<http://fbo.menziesaviation.com>





# Safe and sound

An innovative training program is teaching operators how to handle aviation fuel safely and correctly

OMEGA is a word that could easily be associated with a Cold War thriller, but in 21<sup>st</sup> century fuel parlance it is the name of the training program sitting at the heart of Air BP's fuel-safety strategy. The acronym stands for Operations Manual for External General Aviation, and is a training product designed by Air BP to ensure that customers can achieve the highest levels of operating safety standards when handling fuel. This focus on safety and quality of product delivery is at the core of Air BP's business development.

Miguel Moreno, general aviation manager for Air BP, comments, "Fuel is essential to operations at all levels in aviation and yet it is dangerous if not handled safely. There are the obvious examples of risk such as fuel spillage, which can be a fire risk or slip hazard. However there are the less visible issues too. Fuel may become contaminated and therefore unsuitable for use, or an incorrect grade of fuel could be put into an aircraft." Misfuel prevention is an area in which Air BP aims to lead the industry in raising awareness about its importance. "If incorrect fuel is put into an aircraft, there are safety issues that could be highly problematic, so we aim to help our clients mitigate this risk. At Air BP, we recognize that

fuel is very client specific – there is no one size that fits all, and for this reason we offer a variety of training modules and services that we adapt for each customer to ensure sustainable safety," adds Moreno.

## Operational excellence

The training and support has been developed based on the company's own decades of experience in handling fuel. Moreno believes it is important to share this knowledge with its customers to underpin high-quality aircraft fueling standards. The OMEGA program is just one example that epitomizes Air BP's focus on safety. Air BP promotes operational excellence from the moment fuel arrives with the customer, whether that's an airport, a refueling contractor or bulk client. It also advises on safe storage and quality testing through utilizing comprehensive tailored advanced checklists created for each specific client. In addition, for airports, it makes recommendations about how to move fuel safely around the airfield and delivers instruction for the safe filling of a range of aircraft tanks. Equipment maintenance and troubleshooting problems also form an integral part of the format. In addition the practical system can be modified as the airport

or client develops, therefore ensuring information stays current and, more importantly, meets local legal requirements.

Through incorporating all operational, maintenance, Health Safety Security and Environment (HSSE) and emergency response procedures, OMEGA enables customers to run their own operations in line with the rigorous standards required in the aviation industry. Air BP has a dedicated in-house training team responsible for devising and implementing each client's training modules.

## Emerging markets

In emerging markets, Air BP is adjusting services accordingly to implement efficient and effective knowledge transfer to support development across all elements of its customers' operations. A standardized Global Trainers' Network ensures that a common, consistent approach to the implementation of training is undertaken. In Brazil, for example, Air BP has noted rapid aviation expansion. It now works with six of the seven new national airports, and to support the increased demand is developing an Operators University scheme for local employees. The technical training resource is based in Campo





### Vital statistics

**Location:** 45 countries worldwide

**Fuel supply:** 7bn gallons annually

**Operating hours:** 24-hour call center

**Fuel cards:** Jet Fuel silver Sterling Card and Avgas blue Sterling Card

**Reader enquiry number:** 103



Above: **The OMEGA training program focuses on the safe handling of aircraft fuel**

Left: **Miguel Moreno, general aviation manager at Air BP**

de San Marte, which in recent years has become a major aviation center. Both new and existing employees attend the specially equipped training facility, which houses specific aviation equipment including pneumatic and hydraulic training simulators, and an aircraft wing to practice fueling operations. The 'university' complements the existing OMEGA product, and combined they aim to support sustainable, safe and reliable growth for Air BP.

Air BP anticipates that the Operators University will demonstrate to international customers the service levels that can be provided and will be mirrored in emerging markets around the globe.

Although training leads the safety focus, the technical team is an integral part of the safety process for Air BP clients. Once a client has implemented Air BP fuel systems and has been

through the required training, the technical team will undertake inspections to ensure that the standards are being maintained. For companies accepting the Sterling Card, it is only after a successful approval that they will be given permission to offer the product.

#### Long-term goals

From Air BP's perspective, providing the fuel is just the first step in a long-term relationship, which sees Air BP incorporating rigorous customer service. "Fueling is much more than just putting gas into the aircraft – a whole infrastructure must be implemented to ensure the product maintains its quality, that it is stored in the appropriate manner, and that the equipment is maintained to ensure continued safe fueling," says Moreno. Customers can operate knowing that if additional equipment is required, Air BP

has the capability to deploy it within 24 hours – minimizing any downtime or potential incident. Complementing the training, technical and operational support is a 24-hour advice line from a global team that offers coverage wherever Air BP has a client.

Looking to the future, Air BP is already developing new techniques and methodology. "We recognize the rapidly varying face of business aviation and are responding to shifting client demands," explains Moreno. The way in which training is delivered is already changing with the introduction of e-learning modules. Air BP is developing technology that enables great hands-on tablet-based training, and the use of smart tablets means easier access to training resources, particularly in remoter locations. Support services are looking at providing more automated data services and improved misfuel controls. The business as a whole is exploring Biojet co-processing opportunities and Avgas alternatives to continue to provide energy efficiency for all concerned. Although the Air BP airport fuel system of the future is still in its planning stages, one thing is for certain – at its heart will be the continued focus on safety, quality and reliability. <

[www.bp.com/airbp](http://www.bp.com/airbp)





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A skilled and experienced fixed-base operator ensures customers begin their visit in the right spirits, secure in the knowledge that their aircraft is being handled with efficient reliability



A fixture at Geneva Airport, RUAG Aviation's facility is one of the longest-established FBOs in the city. It has been providing customers with reliable and efficient services since the 1960s, operating first under the name of Transair, and later as Transairco. Customers of the RUAG Aviation FBO in Geneva enjoy a premium experience, based upon its unique blend of half-a-century of experience and the continuous modernization of its services and infrastructure.

### An exclusive environment

Situated at the north side of Geneva Airport, RUAG Aviation's FBO is designed to afford visiting passengers and crew members maximum privacy and comfort throughout their stay. The provision of a dedicated ramp for arriving and departing aircraft ensures that passengers are able to disembark and board their business jets with full privacy, while enjoying protection from the elements. Separate, recently refurbished and fully equipped VIP and crew lounges offer a range of modern comforts, such as dedicated workstations and rest areas, both of which are equipped with complimentary wi-fi.

Concierge services are also provided to guests at the FBO, with RUAG Aviation's specialists on hand to help ease subsequent travel arrangements. Support is provided for organizing flight plans and slot coordination with prior permission required (PPR), weather information and Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), to name a few.

Guests wishing to visit the city or surrounding areas can take advantage of an exclusive VIP limousine service, or – if your sights are set further afield – the convenient helicopter transfer service located adjacent to the facility's flight line.

### One-stop-shop handling and MRO

RUAG Aviation provides a comprehensive portfolio of FBO services on the flight line, delivering convenience and cost-effectiveness to its customers. These range from refueling and de-icing to ramp services such as pushback, tire pressure adjustments, oxygen refills and water and waste services. Aircraft parking and hangarage services are also newly available to customers upon request.

"We maximize efficiency by performing several different maintenance operations during a single downtime, adapting the process to your personal schedule," says Robert Zahler, FBO manager at RUAG Aviation. "Whether for a quick stopover or an extended visit, we are committed to making your experience with us comfortable, enjoyable and productive."



### Vital statistics

**Location:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Operating hours:** 24 hours (FBO); 6:00am-10:00pm (take-off/landing)

**Runway length:** 12,795ft

**Fuel costs:** Competitive

**Reader enquiry number:** 104



Above: **RUAG Aviation's FBO at Geneva Airport offers comfort and convenience for passengers and crew**

Left: **The MRO facility is an authorized service center for Dassault Falcon and Pilatus aircraft**

Quick turnarounds are routine for RUAG Aviation, with refueling possible within 10-15 minutes and a service guarantee of 30 minutes. The company accepts all major fuel cards and offers competitive fee plans to help customers minimize their operating costs. As an additional service, RUAG Aviation ensures the proper application for exemption of fuel tax regulations, subject to the aircraft and flight status. Leveraging its economies of scale, RUAG Aviation also offers lower fuel prices by passing cost savings directly to its customers. This allows for special rates on Carnet pricing as well as direct fuel purchase.


### Strong relationships with OEMs

RUAG Aviation's Business Aviation MRO facility in Geneva also has extensive experience, building upon its 25 years as an authorized service center for Dassault Falcon aircraft and 15 years as an authorized center for Pilatus aircraft. A

comprehensive array of MRO solutions, an experienced wheel and tire shop as well as an engine shop are also provided. Concurrently, RUAG Aviation offers interior refurbishments as well as avionics and cabin system upgrades, all of which are covered by in-house engineering services with DOA and A-DOA approvals.

RUAG Aviation's Business Aviation facility in Geneva is also an authorized center for Embraer, a major service center for Honeywell TFE and CFE engines, and a line station for Pratt & Whitney PT6 engines. Furthermore, it is an authorized dealer for Honeywell, Rockwell Collins and Garmin, among other avionic OEMs.

RUAG Aviation's FBO is accessible 24 hours a day. Commercial passenger flights are unrestricted throughout, with prior notice required and handling mandatory. Private aircraft can take-off and land between 6:00am and 10:00pm, during which the company is able to adapt to individual customer schedules. Exemptions also exist for diplomatic and military aircraft.

As part of the RUAG Aircraft Services Network, RUAG Aviation's Geneva site – together with its sister facilities situated in Munich, Germany, and Berne and Lugano in Switzerland – can serve almost any type of business aircraft currently in operation. 

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## Vital statistics

**Location:** Barbados/Jamaica

**Operating hours:** 24hrs/11:00am-5:00pm

**Runway length:** 11,026ft/8,705ft

**Aircraft restrictions:** None

**Reader enquiry number:** 105

# Local experts

A dedicated handling and fuel services provider draws on its 25 years' experience in the Caribbean to provide everything business aviators need across the island region

Airside entrance to IAM Jet Centre Barbados

The Caribbean is a beautiful and diverse cluster of island states, and Barbados-based IAM Jet Centre continues to use its deep local knowledge and know-how to support visiting aircraft from around the world. Over the many years since its inception in 1989, the company's network has spread to cover today some 24 airports, from Marsh Harbour, Bahamas, in the north, to Curaçao, Grenada, Suriname and Trinidad in the far southeast.

At all the airports where IAM and its representatives are located, arriving aircraft receive a warm, well-prepared welcome and passengers and crew are personally assisted with all local formalities as well as their own special needs and requirements. To this end, IAM Jet Centre is focused on its reputation as a trusted and relied-upon FBO services provider to most of the leading global flight service and fuel companies, including Jeppesen, World Fuel, Universal Aviation, Rockwell Collins and Multi Service Aero. Equally, scores of independent corporate flight departments and the leading fractional operators regularly look to IAM for support when visiting the Caribbean.

In addition to its extensive island-by-island VIP handling and fuel coverage at airports both large and small, IAM Jet Centre operates two five-star full-service FBOs in Barbados and Montego Bay, Jamaica. A third premium FBO is due to open in Grenada in December 2013. IAM Jet Centre Grenada will complement the growing reputation

of the island's exclusive resorts including Spice Island, Calabash and Sandals La Source – and as a leading superyacht destination.

### Barbados

Opened in 2004 at Grantley Adams International Airport, IAM Jet Centre Barbados offers multiple private lounge spaces, in-house customs and immigration processing, meeting rooms, a crew rest area, concierge services, controlled access for guest privacy and a reliable jet fuel supply. The Barbados flagship FBO offers ample secure parking and its 24-hour availability has proven exceptionally popular for rapid fuel transit stops to and from South America and southern Africa, as well as for the many operators serving the island.

IAM Jet Centre founder and managing director, Paul Worrell, notes that "the decision by British Airways to host its first-class passengers departing Barbados daily to London at our FBO, speaks to the level of sophistication we have achieved with the facility".

### Montego Bay, Jamaica

Exactly two years after establishing the Barbados FBO in the southeastern Caribbean, IAM Jet Centre Montego Bay was opened at Jamaica's tourism gateway, Sangster International Airport – anchoring the northwestern reaches of the IAM Caribbean network. "With a spacious dedicated parking apron, a fleet of 5,000-gallon jet fuel trucks, 4,500ft<sup>2</sup> of elegant lounge and



Active flight line at IAM Jet Centre Montego Bay

meeting space as well as in-house customs and immigration processing, our Montego Bay FBO provides an arrival and departure experience on a par with the best to be found in Europe," says Jamaica general manager, Edward Foster. "Very exclusive, very elegant and very secure."

Reflecting on its 25th year serving the business aviation industry in the Caribbean, Worrell adds, "Our core service philosophy remains based on the notion that premium visitors arriving on multimillion-dollar private jets to stay at the region's elite resorts and villas should absolutely have an equally elegant and remarkable experience at our FBOs." ✈

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## Vital statistics

**Location:** Basel, Switzerland

**Operating hours:** 6:00am–9:00pm


**Hangar space:** 80,000ft<sup>2</sup>

**Aircraft restrictions:** Up to the size of a BBJ1 or A320

**Reader enquiry number:** 106

# Show of strength

More than 70,000 art lovers came to Basel for a special event in June, keeping one Swiss fixed base operator very busy

 Air Service Basel's FBO at the EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse reported an extremely busy period during 2013's Art Basel fair in June, as Basel, Switzerland, once again became the central meeting place for members of the international art world.

Art Basel 2013 presented 304 galleries from around the world, exhibiting the work of more than 4,000 artists, which attracted a record 70,000 visitors over the six-day show. Representatives from more than 70 museums around the world attended the show, alongside major private collectors from North and South America, Europe and Asia.

Noting a slight increase in traffic compared with last year's Art Basel event, Air Service Basel handled more than 230 private and business aviation movements.

Conveniently located just 20 minutes from the exhibition halls in the heart of Basel, Air Service Basel handled record numbers of aircraft and passengers, with almost 50 arriving and departing flights on peak days.

"The Art Basel fair is always the busiest time of the year for our FBO and our team provided an excellent handling service to all our guests," says Air Service Basel's CEO, Claudio Lasagni. He also highlights the outstanding cooperation and teamwork of the various partners and authorities at EuroAirport Basel, with Air Service Basel's

FBO team a major contributing factor to this tremendous success.

### Increasing international traffic

Basel is famous for its fairs. As well as the famous Art Basel event, there is the big watch and jewelry fair that attracts people from all over the world, making Air Service Basel's FBO very attractive for both business and private flying.

Basel is also one of the centers of the pharmaceuticals industry in Europe, plus there are numerous tourist attractions in the area, with easy access by road to France, Germany and Switzerland. "We are very close to the Black Forest and the Alsace region, and we are not far from the Swiss mountains. An hour's drive will take you to many of the famous ski resorts in the region," explains Lasagni.

### A multitude of services

One of Air Service Basel's unique selling points is the large hangar space it offers. The parking hangars are available to accommodate aircraft up to the size of a BBJ1 or A320, on 80,000ft<sup>2</sup> of secure hangar space – be it on an ad-hoc basis, for home-based operations, or for long-term parking arrangements.

The hangars are located in a private area of the airport, with very restricted access, and are controlled by an accredited security agency. This



ensures the aircraft are parked in a completely safe and secure environment. The parking hangars are dedicated to the parking of business jets, and no extensive maintenance works or frequent client traffic are found nearby.

Private VIP lounge and meeting areas are also available, in a new, very personal and discreet environment.

### Authorized maintenance services

Air Service Basel also has a thriving maintenance operation, focusing mainly on Beech King Airs, but also including the smaller Hawker Beechcraft jets and Gulfstreams. These are the mainstay of the company's maintenance business, but it also works on a variety of other aircraft.

Air Service Basel's CEO is proud to announce that the company has recently been granted authorization to provide comprehensive line maintenance services on Dassault Falcon, Cessna Citation and Pilatus PC-12 aircraft. This enables the company to support the majority of its FBO clients if any technical support is needed for aircraft on ground, to the extent that a scheduled line maintenance check can be completed during an aircraft's overnight stay. 

[www.airservicebasel.com](http://www.airservicebasel.com)





## Vital statistics

**Location:** Maine, USA

**Operating hours:** 24 hours

**Runway length:** 11,440ft

**Fuel:** Self-controlled service supplied by Irving Oil

**Reader enquiry number:** 107

# The Maine event

Travelers wishing to experience the interesting history and exciting culture of Maine should choose Bangor International Airport as their gateway to the state

Bangor International Airport (BGR) in Maine, USA, is well known for quick turns, never closing, professional, friendly service and its strategic location. Bangor's location is great not only as a tech stop, but as a vacation destination.

"Stephen King, Hannibal Hamlin and Joshua Chamberlain have all called the Greater Bangor Region home," says Kerrie Tripp, executive director of the Greater Bangor Convention & Visitors Bureau. "As the third-largest city in the state, Bangor is a retail, cultural, educational and entertainment destination. The city of Bangor is honored to host musical acts such as Kenny Chesney, Celtic Women, the American Folk Festival as well as off-Broadway productions such as the *Blue Man Group* and *Beauty and the Beast*. With plenty of green space and beautiful parks, Bangor also offers much for the outdoor enthusiast. The Orono Bog walk is one of the hidden gems in the city – it's an amazing walk that keeps you in the city but makes you feel like you are in the middle of nature."

"Bangor is enjoying a renaissance of sorts with the completion of a US\$65m arena and conference center providing state-of-the-art facilities for conferences, trade shows, sporting events, musical acts and other entertainment.

There is also the announcement of two hotels to be completed in the next two years and several businesses moving into the city, in addition to the expansion of C&L Aerospace here at BGR," states Risteen Bahr, marketing manager for Bangor International Airport.

"BGR offers great service for our aviation customers, a newly reconstructed general aviation ramp and lighting upgrades, and the area offers many opportunities to relax and have fun. Bangor itself has much to offer, while the area within 1-3 hour drives offers even more. Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park are only an hour away, and Mt Katahdin, the Appalachian Trail, mid-coast Maine, 24 lighthouses, and moose safaris, are all day trips from Bangor. Lobster fresh from the ocean, handcrafted beers and wines, local produce and regional specialties all produce great dining experiences."

While BGR prides itself on exceptional service and great value, it also takes pleasure in the fact that the area provides a wide variety of chances to see the rocky Maine coast, mountains that meet the sea, mountains towering over lakes, the wealth of beauty all around, and the excitement of many outdoor concerts. Of course, autumn brings a special treat – foliage beyond compare



and a wealth of new culinary delights from the summer harvest.

So what Estevan Gomez discovered in 1525, and what Samuel Champlain saw in 1605, you can discover and see today – but with all the extra amenities today's establishments provide. The history of the area is still evident in the many museums and historic homes, and the culture of Maine is preserved in the traditions of each of the communities in the region.

While you enjoy Maine's hospitality, Bangor International Airport and Bangor Aviation Services will take care of your aircraft with 24/7 services, including fuel and all ground-handling services, backed by more than 40 years of experience. So the next time your travels take you in that direction, plan to use BGR – and better still, plan to stay for a while. ✈

[www.flybangor.com](http://www.flybangor.com)



## Vital statistics

**Location:** Stansted, UK

**Operating hours:** 24 hours

**Lounge capacity:** 2-200

**Runway length:** 10,000ft

**Reader enquiry number:** 108

# Family matters

*Business Airport International* talks to Penny Stephens, director at Inflight The Jet Centre, about how her family-run business is striving to change the passenger experience

## What is Inflight The Jet Centre and what do you offer?

Inflight is the longest established FBO at London Stansted Airport and we have built our business by word of mouth. We are an aviation family – my husband is a manufacturer of aircraft parts (military and civil) and has been able to fly since he was 17. I also learned to fly, although I wasn't very good and kept getting lost. Then I worked in aviation at Thurston Aviation at Stapleford in operations and also as cabin crew, and that is when aviation got in my blood. My daughter is married to a corporate pilot and my son flies too.

When building an FBO you have to think about both passengers and crew. We get to know what works and what doesn't from using the company aircraft as either crew or, if we are lucky enough, as passengers and arriving at places like ours throughout the world. It gives us a better insight than perhaps some of our competitors. Because it is a family run business – my daughter and I run the FBO and my husband and son run the manufacturing side – we have a vested interest in what we do, because if the customer isn't happy we know about it. No member of staff can hide any complaint under the carpet.

## What are your biggest challenges?

Our biggest challenge is dealing with the bureaucracy that surrounds aviation, and general aviation in particular, from the government authorities like the DfT and UK Border Force. It is 'one size fits all' and they don't differentiate between commercial and GA. In addition, we are faced with ever increasing taxes, charges and obstacles from the government to operating a successful business. UK Plc benefits enormously

from business aviation and in the past has been pro-active in attracting business and investment into the UK. This is now at great risk due to the taxes and obstacles which are now being put into place, making us very unattractive to visit and playing into the hands of other EU countries who welcome these people.

## How are you addressing these issues?

I am working with the British Business and General Aviation Association on the UK Border Force front but as anyone fighting the government knows, it is hard work. We have just met with Border Force in Whitehall for so called consultations with our industry. Actually it was them telling us that they are going to implement charging for immigration officers for business and general aviation – not a consultation. The next step is to lobby ministers directly and speak to the press about the potential for persons/bodies, not necessarily British, having the ability to buy their own immigration officers – something that cannot be healthy or fair. We will ask for full impact assessment to be carried out on the cumulative effect of all the above issues and the consequential damage and loss these issues will cause to our country.

## What projects have you been working on?

We have just completed a £3m (US\$4.5m) project to upgrade our facilities at Stansted – we moved into the passenger lounges in July 2012 and the office, operations and crew accommodation were completed in November 2012. These now include amazing passenger lounges that have the feel of a London hotel. I think the people using these jets deserve to be treated as if they are walking through the doors of the Dorchester, and that is

what I constantly try to create. They're light, airy and versatile – we have areas for 2-4 passengers right up to 200 passengers. I felt that aviation in the UK was really trailing behind the USA in terms of comfort, and a very important issue for me was to give the crew the maximum comfort and facilities because they're quite often ignored – but every bit as important as the passengers.

Having built the new facility, we still have the approach to the FBO to revamp and we are looking at building an extension to the taxiway so that aircraft as large as 757s can taxi direct to our door. We're currently working on the initial findings for the runway project and I hope it comes in at a reasonable budget because it would really enhance what we have here.

## How will you continue to improve?

We are quite far behind our competitors in terms of daily flight movements and I think we need help from the airport management to get the word out there about what Stansted has to offer the industry. The airport is in a unique position, with the regional aircraft going through the south side and business aviation on the north. People have no idea about what's on offer here and when I go abroad to find business and ask people if they fly into the UK, most say that they fly in two or three times a week but use Luton because they think it is closer to London. Inflight in particular is right on the M11 motorway and access to the city of London is vastly superior from Stansted than all other airports, other than City Airport who has limited operational capabilities. Access to the West End is an easy and reliable 45/50 minutes outside of rush hour periods. ☺

[www.inflightjetcentre.co.uk](http://www.inflightjetcentre.co.uk)





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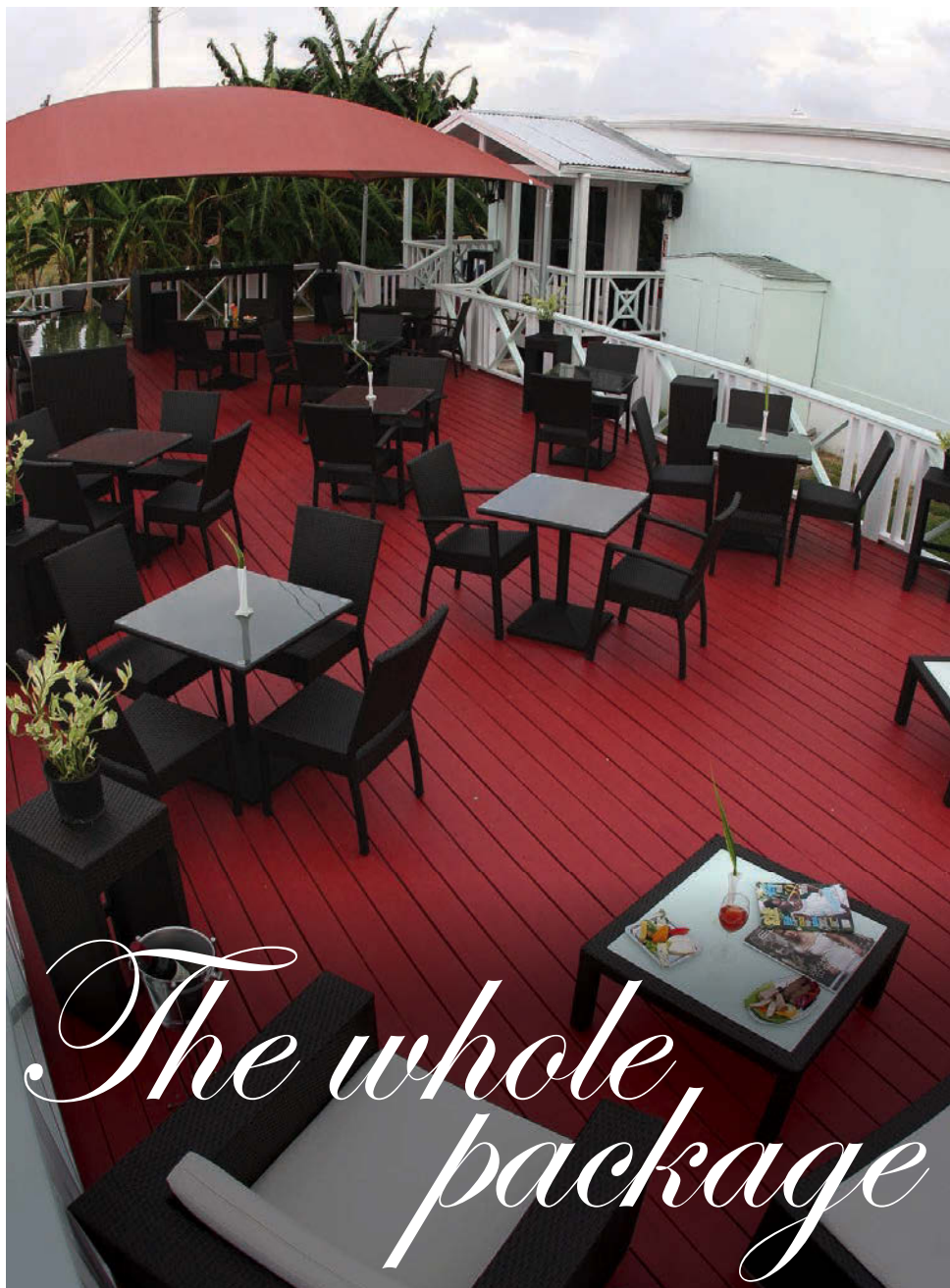
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Customers flying to the luxury islands of Antigua and St Kitts and Nevis can be sure of a smooth and professional experience from arrival to departure

FBO 2000 in Antigua has positioned itself as a dynamic player in the global FBO market. The organization was founded in 2001 and has since established satellite operations in St Kitts and Nevis as Nevis FBO Services.

Understanding clients' needs for safe, confidential and reliable service, FBO 2000 offers a high level of customer service 24 hours a day, which results in seamless processing for clients, from the arrival of the aircraft, to transfer to hotels, yachts or their private villas, right up to departure.

Upon arrival, immigration clearance formalities are completed on board the aircraft. Simultaneously, FBO 2000 staff oversee customs baggage clearance and handling. A combination of expertise, including ground handling, executive lounge service, baggage service and refueling service via FBO 2000 fuel subsidiary Bizjet-to-

Yacht, results in a seamless and enjoyable travel experience for the client.

Recognizing that it serves a diverse clientele with unique needs, the amenities at FBO 2000 are designed to exceed expectations. Discretely located away from the main terminal with smart decor is a comfortable VIP lounge with a play area for children, complimentary refreshments, customs and immigration offices, a conference room, weather and flight planning facilities, full bathroom facilities and the only FBO outdoor deck in the region!

In addition to the executive lounge service, FBO 2000 has introduced a 'meet and greet' initiative. High-end clients traveling via commercial airlines, and visitors to the island's prestigious hotels, are met by FBO 2000 agents and assisted in fast-track processing, baggage

## Vital statistics

**Location:** Antigua/St Kitts and Nevis

**Operating hours:** 7:00am-7:00pm

**Fuel:** Jet A1 and Avgas 100LL

**Aircraft restrictions:** Up to Airbus A340

**Reader enquiry number:** 109



handling, customs clearance, and hotel and transportation transfers.

Since the FBO 2000 terminal has met FAR Part 135, Air Taxi regulations for HAZMAT standards, security pre-screening and passenger handling can be completed at the executive lounge. Moreover at FBO 2000, the entire facility is patrolled by private security personnel and upon request personal guards are assigned to provide consistent aircraft surveillance.

Meanwhile, refueling is available via Bizjet-to-Yacht, the fueling subsidiary of FBO 2000. The proximity of FBO 2000 to the Jumby Bay dock and Shell Beach dock makes for a seamless transfer using Bizjet-to-Yacht.

Equally important to the entire operation is the Nevis VIP Lounge at the Vance W Amory Airport in Nevis. Its comfortable setting, beverage service, complimentary wi-fi and private restrooms are all centered on customer appreciation, which is the culture of the two FBO 2000 subsidiaries. The FBO 2000 ramp operation in St Kitts is another contributing factor to the overall success of FBO 2000. A team of professional and experienced staff ensures that clients' needs are satisfied, and all three destinations afford the opportunity of excellent golfing facilities.

FBO 2000 Antigua and its operations in Nevis and St Kitts are game-changers in the FBO industry. In addition to providing clients with convenient, reliable and personalized customer service, the facilities have contributed considerably to economic development within their respective markets. <

[www.fbo2000.com](http://www.fbo2000.com)





## Vital statistics

**Location:** Iceland

**Operating hours:** 24 hours

**Number of runways:** Four

**Fuel:** Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

**Reader enquiry number:** 110

# Customer focus

David Johannsson, general manager at Southair Iceland, discusses the company's latest developments and the importance of its customers for future success



## Tell us about Southair Iceland

Southair Iceland was established on June 12, 1972, and has been operating for 41 years. Initially Southair was based in a little wooden hut, affectionately referred to as 'The House on the Prairie', close to Building 787 and Hangar 831 at Keflavik Airport.

The company began operations with sightseeing and charter flights, and then ventured on to become a flying school. At that time the operation consisted of one passenger aircraft and two training aircraft. We now have many clients including Rockwell Collins, Jeppesen, Baseops, Colt, Skyservice and Royal Jet, to name just a few.

## What projects are you working on at the moment?

We have been looking into expanding our facilities. Nothing has yet been decided and plans are still just on the drawing board, but there are several possibilities. We have also added three new services: Meet and Greet for VIPs at Keflavik's main terminal, which is done in cooperation with FMS Flight Management Service; an FBO service at Akureyri (BIAR) in the northern part of Iceland; and we are in the process of starting ground handling services at Keflavik Main Terminal. The

plan is to have complete handling with check-in and ramp service. Our check-in system will be installed in September and we should be fully operational in October.

## Why did your company become a member of Avfuel?

Before becoming a member of Avfuel we were part of the Exxon Avitat FBO chain. When that suspended operations we started looking for a new partner and after careful consideration we chose Avfuel, which was a great decision as we have found cooperating with it very easy. Southair customers will benefit from Avfuel Contract Fuel, Avplan Trip Support and AVTRIP, which enables crew to accumulate points toward cash rewards.

## What do you have planned for the future?

We are currently expanding our facility at Keflavik Airport, but our main priority is our customers. Our staff are trained to treat our customers as guests. It is very important for us that people feel at home when they are at Southair Iceland at Keflavik Airport. It is our priority to meet our customers' wishes and do whatever we can to make everything happen. We believe that good and personal service will secure our future. <

[www.southair.is](http://www.southair.is)







## Vital statistics

**Location:** Moscow, Russia  
**Operating hours:** 24 hours  
**Runway length:** 6,725ft  
**Aircraft restrictions:** Up to Boeing 737  
**Reader enquiry number:** 111



All team members go through obligatory recurrent training every two years in certified training centers complying with EASA pt.174 and RCAA. Some engineers also have FAA A&P licenses and are certified to work on such aircraft types as the Falcon-20, Embraer 135/145/Legacy and Bombardier Challenger 604/605/850.

Ostafyevo's business jet maintenance center is now the largest in Russia and provides spare parts and consumables to western Europe for Dassault aircraft models Falcon-900/B/C/EX EASy/DX/LX, Falcon-7X and Boeing 737NG (BBJ). The airport also hosts a Eurocopter maintenance center.

Ostafyevo International Business Airport and Aviapartner are providing efficient access into the heart of Moscow for business aviation customers

For more than 10 years, Aviapartner handling company and Ostafyevo International Business Airport in Moscow have been providing the full range of services in business aviation. Ostafyevo is the first and, at the moment, only dedicated business airport in Russia. Aviapartner is the handling company servicing and organizing international and domestic flights at the airport.

### The airport

Ostafyevo International Business Airport is situated 7.5 miles from Moscow and is the nearest business airport to the city center. This airport complies with all ICAO and IATA standards for international and domestic flights. One of the greatest advantages of the airport is the absence of regular scheduled flights and, consequently, there is a very flexible slot policy. Ostafyevo Airport consists of a modern passenger terminal equipped with a VIP lounge,

conference rooms, crew retiring rooms, a luxury duty-free shop, and car parking reserved for clients' personal transport.

The airport has two modern heated hangar complexes that can accommodate eight aircraft each, including such popular business jet models as the Falcon-7X, Gulfstream 550 and Global Express. The airport also owns 26 secure outdoor aircraft parking places. The runway is suitable for all types of business jets up to the Boeing 737.

### Maintenance

The business jet maintenance center at Ostafyevo Airport is the first and the largest business jet maintenance center in Russia. Complying with all Russian and international standards (EASA pt.145, FAP-145, BDCA), it is now finishing the accreditation procedure to become a certified Dassault Aviation maintenance center.

### Handling and FBO services

The Aviapartner handling company provides a large number of handling and FBO services, including Jet A-1 (TS-1) fuel, de-icing/anti-icing (types I, IV), GPU, oxygen, air starter and air conditioning services, water supply, transfer services and catering. Aviapartner also provides all types of handling services for all airports in Russia and western Europe, gives all the types of entitlements for Russia and CIS countries, organizes charter business flights and helicopter flights including medical carriage, and handles all types of business aircraft.

### Exclusive Aviapartner services

The Aviapartner handling company organizes helicopter transfers for its clients via Eurocopter aircraft to all available helicopter pads in Moscow and its surrounding suburbs to facilitate clients' transportation within the city. Aviapartner also delivers exclusive services such as crew transportation within two miles of Ostafyevo International Business Airport. ✈

[www.aviapartner.aero](http://www.aviapartner.aero)



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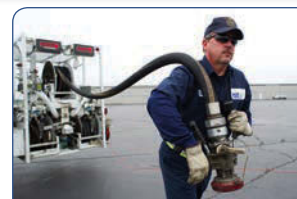
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## Vital statistics

**Location:** Russia, CIS and Baltic States

**Operating hours:** 24 hours

**Services:** Permits, airport slots, ground handling, catering, transfers, fueling, VIP lounge and navigation services

**Reader enquiry number:** 112



Alexander Chepurnov, managing director of Streamline OPS, talks about the challenges and developments of the Russian business aviation market



### Tell us about Streamline OPS.

Streamline OPS was established in 1991 and was the first private Russian flight support center. It subsequently developed into a handling supervision network at main airports in the country and other states forming the Soviet Union. Gradually, Streamline managed to cover all major international airports, maintaining its own stations and offering agent handling services to customers.

We are also working in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Our close cooperation with local companies in other countries has proved very efficient, especially in Azerbaijan, the Baltic States and Kazakhstan.

For Streamline, a Moscow-based company, Russia is the main area of operation and we feel as good as any of our competitors. The only exception is Vnukovo International Airport, where the local FBO management priorities differ from ours. We still hope to find mutual understanding at this airport as well, and to start representing our customers there. We welcome customers at Domodedovo and Sheremetyevo airports, and are confident that we provide the whole spectrum of services with high quality and at competitive rates.

Another major part of our flight support activities comprises obtaining permits for Russia and other countries. Being a certified Russian flight support company, Streamline obtains Russian flight clearances for our diverse range of customers, from private aircraft owners to commercial business jet AOC holders, from medevac flights to official government operations, and from a Bell helicopter to a 747 cargo aircraft.

### What projects are you working on?

Generally, our main goal today is to make our service even better to be able to cater for the

most sophisticated requirements from our clients. The main approaching event in Russia is the 2014 Sochi Olympics, where Streamline will be active at all airports in the area, including Sochi, Krasnodar and Anapa. Preliminary information from the airport management allows us to consult with our customers now, and current flights to these airports with Streamline's support demonstrate that we will be able to cope with the heavy traffic expected next February.

Another area requiring our special attention will be Belarus, where we feel the capacity of airports, especially Minsk, is underestimated by the market. Minsk Airport is finishing its runway reconstruction and hopes to attract more traffic through effective services and competitive rates.

Recently we have signed a number of contracts with Russian fuel suppliers, which we expect to become the basis for further development of our fuel sales. I hope our fuel rates will be attractive to our customers and help make their operations more efficient. Airports in Siberia and the far east region of Russia are very popular as fuel stops, so our efforts there are aimed at faster services and cheaper jet fuel – the two things each operator is looking for when choosing a fuel-stop location.

### How is business aviation developing in Russia and what part are you playing?

As one of the oldest companies in the Russian business aviation market, Streamline has witnessed its development from the beginning, and some good trends have been noticeable recently. One of these is the continuous process of establishing easier access to Russian airspace. The most recent step in this direction was the improvement of the application procedure,

making the permit-issuing process not only more flexible but also much easier, and thus cheaper and faster than before. Streamline, being a certified Russian flight support organization, will be happy to obtain permits for all kinds of operations through the Russian CAA.

Another important recent event is the opening of two business aviation terminals at Pulkovo St Petersburg Airport. The most interesting thing is that this is the first case in a Russian airport where two dedicated GA terminals of comparable capacity and efficiency are competing with each other. As Streamline works with both of them, our representatives will be glad to help customers make the right choices, advising on the essential features of each of the terminals.

### What is the most challenging thing about business aviation and how can this be overcome?

The decrease in the number of Russian operators and very high rates for services at Russian FBOs is the biggest challenge. While the first can be explained partially by the overall economic depression and will be reversed with the general improvement of the economic and financial situation, the second is inevitably a result of the very low number of such FBOs/terminals. In my opinion, this can only be solved by airports handing over services to private FBOs and with more private construction.

Another way is by the simplification of official requirements for business aviation terminals – today a small terminal in Russia is constructed according to the same requirements as commercial terminals designed to cater for millions of passengers. <

[www.streamline-ops.com](http://www.streamline-ops.com)





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## Vital statistics

**Location:** Moscow, Russia

**Operating hours:** 24 hours

**Terminal A area:** 32,292ft<sup>2</sup>

**Annual passenger capacity:** 75,000

**Reader enquiry number:** 113

# Easy does it



Smooth operations are guaranteed for customers using the new heliport at Sheremetyevo International Airport

Seeing that there was a high demand for modern infrastructure for quick, convenient and affordable air transportation, Avia Group made the decision to design and construct a helicopter pad for all types of business aviation helicopters. It opened its helipad at Sheremetyevo International Airport in Moscow, Russia, on September 10, 2013.

This helipad, the first in Russia to be located at an international airport, is intended for certified rotorcraft carriers under an agreement with Avia Group Handling, which operates the new heliport. The helipad can accommodate any mid-class type of helicopter, including the Mi-8MTV. It will be able to handle 10-15 flights a day.

The new location will increase mobility and expands the existing business aviation services at the airport, offering a time-saving solution for passenger transportation.

To assure smooth and secure organization, the Federal State Unitary Enterprise Aeronavigation

conducted flights in the areas surrounding Sheremetyevo. The test flights were carried out to explore whether it was possible to enter and exit the heliport and its surrounding territories without affecting the air-traffic movements within the airport. Following positive results, no delays in take-offs or landings are expected. "The most unique aspect of our new heliport is the fact that there is no need to confirm slots to land or take off," explains Mikhail Semenov, general director of Avia Group.

In the near future, Avia Group is planning to construct a third hangar complex for business aircraft and helicopters. According to the architectural concept, the hangar complex will include a three-storey administrative residential facility. The building will house engineering and traffic control services, employees and general handling staff of Avia Group. Avia Group's current hangar complex consists of two up-to-date hangars, plus areas for storage and maintenance.

The floor area of the hangars is 161,460ft<sup>2</sup> and the hangar apron is 247,572ft<sup>2</sup>.

### About Avia Group

Established in 2006, Avia Group LLC is focused on the development of services for business aviation customers at Sheremetyevo International Airport. Alongside its modern hangar facilities is parking space for 25 business aircraft and the recently constructed business aviation Terminal A.

Avia Group offers a full range of services to support business aviation flights, including endorsement of flight plans; Russian and foreign aviation authorities' permissions to carry out flights through domestic and international airlines for aircraft of Russian and foreign carriers; organization of aircraft maintenance of Russian and foreign air carriers at airports for return flights; tracking of the location of aerial vehicles; ground handling services; and aircraft de-icing. 

[www.avia-group.ru](http://www.avia-group.ru)



# Crowd pleaser



What constitutes good customer service?

*Business Airport International* took to LinkedIn to find out

With hundreds of business aviation charter firms offering a similar product, namely the hiring and flying of corporate jets, and FBO companies providing similar ground-handling services and lounge facilities, it can be difficult to stand out from the crowd.

But there is one commodity that these providers can use to better make a name for themselves: customer service. And not just the standard smile and brief hello to each customer that enters your building, but really pushing the boundaries and going beyond customers' expectations to provide a five-star service at all times.

In *Are you being served?* on page 36, Kathryn Creedy explores some of the lengths charter companies, FBOs and even aircraft caterers have gone to in order to be the best in the business and stand out from their

competitors. This includes working with the world's leading hotels to deliver superior training packages for staff as well as creating door-to-door services and health and well-being schemes. XJet even compiles 40- to 50-page dossiers on each of its members to provide a unique service to each and every one of them.

So what actually is good customer service? Can lessons be learned from other sectors to improve our own? How can we better understand what the customer really wants from us? And shouldn't business aviation service providers be striving to offer the best in customer service at all times anyway, rather than just providing it to beat the competition? *Business Airport International* asked LinkedIn members what they think constitutes excellent customer service. <

## Your views



**John Martin**, engineer manager at EPS Inc, writes, "The answers to your questions are

simple. You should have only one level of customer service – to treat every customer as your number one customer. There shouldn't be any difference between the customer flying a light sport, and the one flying in on a G5."



**Ozge Begum Koc**, management consultant, comments, "When considering the wide

range of services offered by fixed-base operators, such as passenger and baggage handling, aircraft fueling, air taxi operations, repair and maintenance of aircraft, aerial photography, ground transportation, car rentals, hotel reservations, rest lounges, aerial advertising, etc, it is observed that these practices contain opportunities within

themselves. Visualizing the whole process; determining all critical and risky areas; anticipating and identifying the requirements and expectations of pilots, flight crew, and passengers; and observing their discomfort and analyzing the reasons can be a starting point for process improvement and training programs. To increase quality and efficiency, we need to understand what quality and efficiency are from the target groups' perspective. Nowadays, it seems that many innovations and extra services have been presented, especially in lounges. However a lack of informative documentary concerning services and practices can be an unsatisfactory experience for passengers, especially those who prefer reading instructions instead of asking for details from personnel. Because of the importance of culture, priorities, ethical values, etc, services, practices and training can be differentiated, too."



**Jerry Angrave**, managing director, Empathyce Customer Experience, posts, "I'd

suggest that a good customer service is one that plays to what customers and clients value, what they deem to be value for money, and one that gives customers the right experience (for them and the P&L) so that when they come to fly again, there's no consideration of alternatives. The training for business aviation providers will therefore revolve around having the skills to develop the right customer strategy for the business, and then being able to engage the whole organization; knowing how to find insightful understandings of what it's really like to be a passenger/customer, and then being clear about what things need doing, how they will get prioritized and delivered. While there are many examples of how companies in other industries have gone about it, they will be based on what

works best for them. That will give a good starting point, but the real economic and commercial benefits of a customer experience program for business aviation providers will be found by focusing on what's best for their own business and client base."

## Your comments

**What do you think?** What does good customer service mean to you? Why is it important? Who do you think is leading the way? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this or any other topic affecting the business aviation industry, so visit [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and search *Business Airport International* to join in with the debate.

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