

The international guide to business airports, FBOs and ground support partners

Business Airport

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October 2016

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One of the most sweeping regulatory revisions in the FAA's history is taking shape

S&D:

Our guide to what makes a successful business aviation scheduler and dispatcher



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Welcome

As editor-in-chief of a variety of magazines, I am involved with many different industries, such as commercial aviation, logistics, air traffic, meteorology and, last but not least, business aviation. Over the years I have found out about the challenges, trends and opportunities faced in each sector. Each industry has its own strengths and weaknesses, but what makes business aviation in particular stand out from the rest is its focus on customer service. In my opinion, no other industry places such great importance on making its customers happy.

Good service doesn't just stop with the customer-facing operations. It extends through to the charter operators and brokers, FBOs, ground handlers, pilots, schedulers and dispatchers, and crew. Without the right motivated and trained staff, a business aviation company would struggle to take off.

In *Cherry picking* on page 31, I speak with four leading charter operators to find out what they look for when they choose which facilities to fly to. The overwhelming response from all four experts is that customer service is the number one thing on their checklist. VistaJet's chief operating officer, Nick Van der Meer, even makes a bold statement, saying, "It is almost irrelevant how modern and state-of-the-art your facility is; if your staff don't have the right attitude, then we won't use you."

Van der Meer and the other experts interviewed provide FBOs and business aviation airports with advice on how they can improve their service levels to attract more business. They also highlight some of the key issues that put operators off flying to a certain facility. This again comes back to customer service: "If there is no will from staff to want to do things correctly, then we will avoid using that company again," comments Van der Meer.

Another area that demands high service levels is scheduling and dispatching. In *Dream team* on page 60, we take a look at what makes a successful business aviation scheduler and dispatcher – a job role that is demanding, constantly changing, and extremely varied on a day-to-day basis. "The biggest challenge for a scheduler is the constant, frenetic pace," says Jim Lara, principal of business aviation consultant Gray Stone Advisors.

No matter what part of the business aviation industry you work in, it is essential to keep customer service at the forefront of your mind. Companies can invest millions in the right infrastructure and technology, but if their staff aren't up to the job, then business is likely to be slow. "It doesn't take much energy to differentiate yourself from others. Hire the right people and invest in them. It's that simple," says Van der Meer.

Helen Norman, editor-in-chief

"It doesn't take much energy to differentiate yourself from others. Hire the right people and invest in them. It's that simple"

Editor-in-chief Helen Norman
helen.norman@ukipme.com
Editor Hazel King (maternity leave)
Deputy editor Chris Anderson
Production editor Alex Bradley
Chief sub editor Andrew Pickering
Deputy production editor Nick Shepherd
Senior sub editor Christine Velarde
Sub editors Alasdair Morton, Tara Craig

Art director
Craig Marshall
Art editor
Nicola Turner
Design team Andy Bass, Anna Davie, Louise Green, Andrew Locke, James Sutcliffe, Julie Welby, Ben White

Head of production and logistics
Ian Donovan
Deputy production manager
Cassie Inns
Production team Carole Doran, Bethany Gill, Frank Millard

Publication manager
Jag Kambo
Project manager
Tom Eames

Editorial director
Anthony James
Managing director
Graham Johnson
CEO
Tony Robinson

Published by
UKIP
MEDIA EVENTS

Business Airport International
Abinger House, Church Street,
Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1DF, UK
tel: +44 1306 743744
email: jag.kambo@ukipme.com

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DESERT JET CENTER – THE FIRST FBO FOR INDEPENDENT CHARTER COMPANY **DESERT JET**, BASED IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – IS NEARING COMPLETION, RAISING STANDARDS IN THE REGION FOR FACILITIES AND SERVICE

Desert Jet, an independently owned aircraft charter and management company based near Palm Springs, California, could be delivering an early Christmas present for its customers and employees, with its first FBO, Desert Jet Center, set for completion in December. Located at Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport in Thermal, Desert Jet opened a temporary facility in June, with its permanent US\$5m home currently being built.

The FBO will be a significant milestone for Desert Jet's president and CEO, Denise Wilson, who founded the company in 2009. "We're going to have 10,000ft² of terminal space and a 22,500ft² hangar with climate-control technology," Wilson reveals. "A lot of the hangar will be given over to our maintenance facilities, while the terminal will feature a lobby area, a conference room and a pilots' lounge. In the back, we'll have office space, where at first we'll base our charter company and dispatch center, but the plan is to build another office building at some stage, moving that business into it and freeing up those sections of the FBO."

Desert Jet's temporary facility is located directly on the airport's main arrival ramp, close to the 8,500ft runway. It already offers fueling, parking, inside hangar storage, terminal services, aircraft detailing and FAA-certified maintenance on jet aircraft, with Wilson adding that even in just a few months of opening, the company

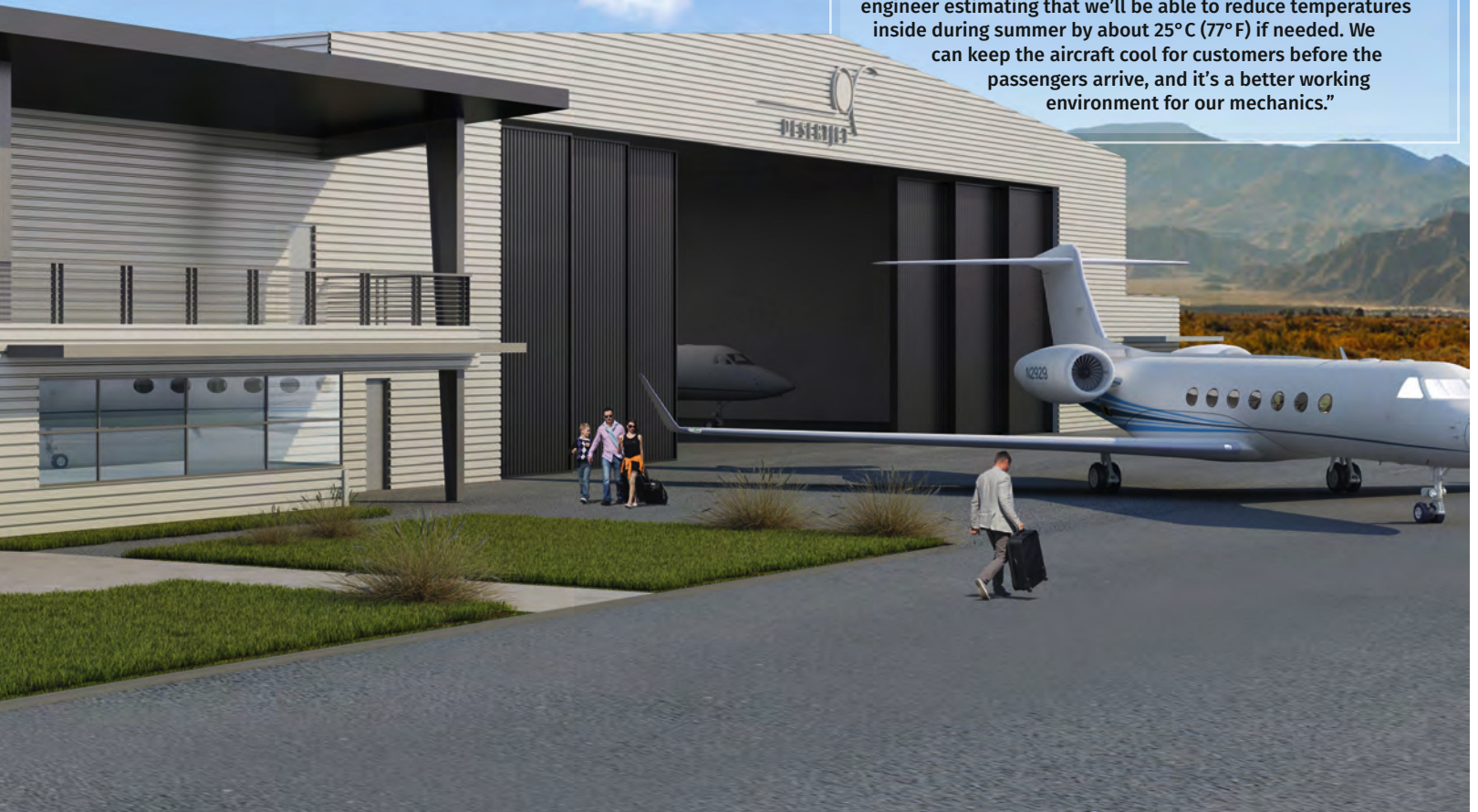


Main: Desert Jet Center, the first FBO for Desert Jet, will be ready by the end of 2016

Cool runnings

Desert Jet's FBO will boast the only climate-controlled hangar in Southern California

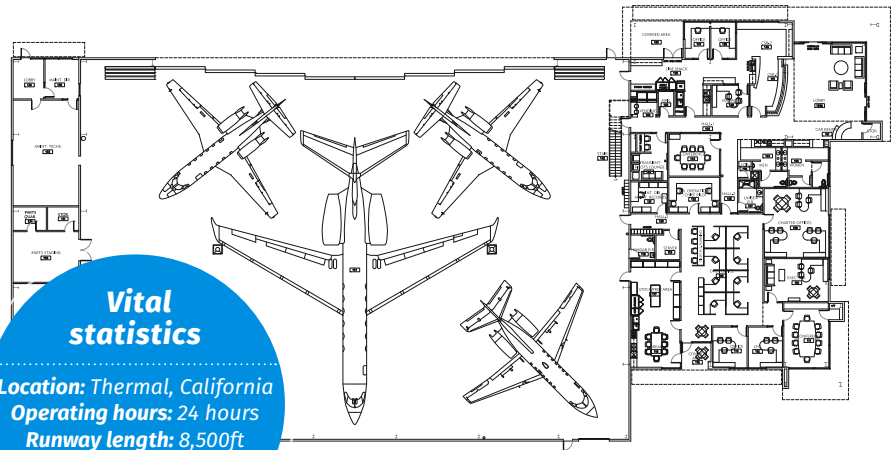
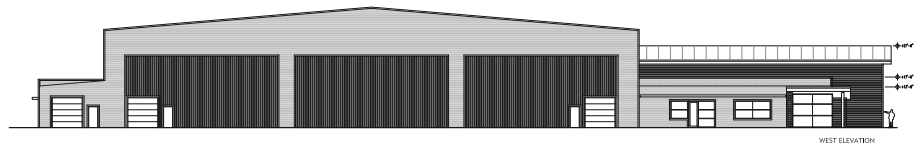
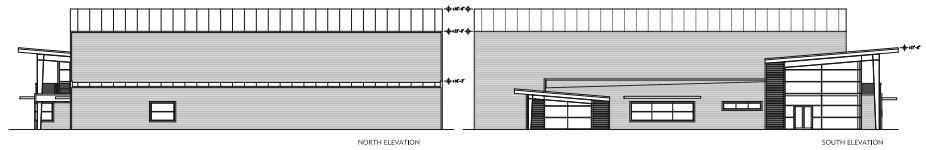
Temperatures in the Coachella Valley can easily reach 47°C (120°F) in the summer months, making hard work of aircraft operations and maintenance, with passengers also made to feel uncomfortable. Desert Jet has found a way to make the experience more bearable, by equipping its 22,500ft² hangar with both air-conditioning and climate control. "I don't know of any hangars in Southern California that offer this," comments founder and CEO Denise Wilson. "The hangar will have two 15-fan air-conditioning units and multiple fans, with our engineer estimating that we'll be able to reduce temperatures inside during summer by about 25°C (77°F) if needed. We can keep the aircraft cool for customers before the passengers arrive, and it's a better working environment for our mechanics."



ARRIVALS LOUNGE

has made its mark. “We already have the majority of the fuel sales at the airport,” she says. “It remains to be seen if it’ll stay that way, but with the response so far we’re seeing that people are eager for an independent alternative, at least at the airport where we operate.”

Wilson says that Desert Jet actually performed a survey of 2,000 pilots, asking them up front what they look for in an FBO. As a pilot herself, Wilson filtered this feedback along with her own experiences into the plans for Desert Jet Center. The bottom line: it’s all about customer service. “Being locally owned and managed, I think our approach to this is different,” Wilson explains. “We can be more personable and really make a person feel welcome. I’ve experienced it myself, and so have a lot of pilots, that the experience in some places can be pretty lackluster, or the staff are bound by corporate rules. Sure, fuel pricing is another consideration, but customer service is definitely up there.”

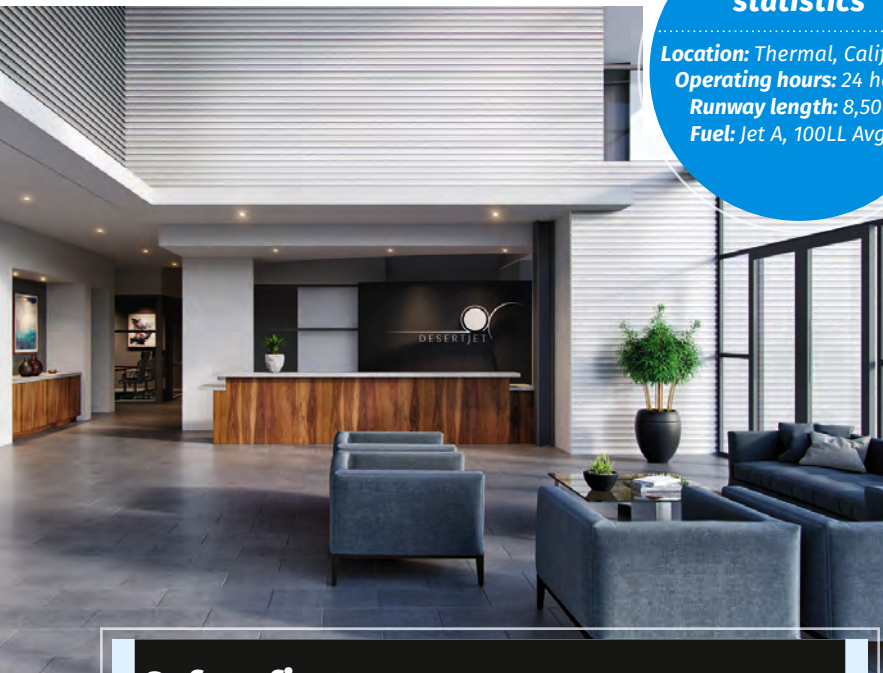


Vital statistics

Location: Thermal, California
Operating hours: 24 hours
Runway length: 8,500ft
Fuel: Jet A, 100LL Avgas

Above: **The new 22,500ft² hangar will be equipped with climate control**

Left: **Desert Jet is independent, which it says enables it to improve customer service**



Safety first

Industry accreditations are a priority for Desert Jet

Business aviation companies may often debate the importance of industry standards such as IS-BAH and IS-BAO, and whether it is worth taking the time to be assessed, often subjecting employees to further training when they could be working. For Desert Jet, which has 35 staff, and 10 currently employed at its temporary FBO, the value is definitely there. “In my view, it’s more important for the employees than anyone else,” says company founder Denise Wilson. “It’s a commitment from you to them, showing that what they do and their input is what holds the business together and helps us to continually improve. If the employees are happy, then this is noticed by the customers. It’s win-win.”

Better facilities

Operators may be tempted to work with Desert Jet on the promise of better service, but the company’s FBO will have plenty of other selling points. “We’re the only real full-service FBO in our region,” states Wilson. “We operate in the Coachella Valley, which encompasses Palm Springs and Palm Desert, just outside of the Los Angeles Basin and equidistant between Las Vegas and Phoenix. If an operator needs aircraft detailing or maintenance, we’re the only facility to offer those for a range of different jets.”

It seems that a lot can be drawn from other areas of the business too. “We already have a robust safety management system in place, as our charter company is IS-BAO Stage 3, and we’re currently working on our IS-BAH audit,” Wilson adds. “We’re also members of the Corporate Aircraft Association (CAA) and a preferred FBO for the Citation Jet Pilots, so these are big differentiators for us. They’re definitely going to help us get off to a great start.” ○



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NORTHEAST AIR IN PORTLAND, USA, IS MARKING NEARLY 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS BY OPENING A NEW US\$3.5M FBO FACILITY

Vital statistics

Location: Portland, Maine

Operating hours: 5:30am-10:30pm

Runway length: 7,200ft

Fuel: Jet A, Avgas

Northeast Air has opened its new FBO at Portland International Jetport in Portland, Maine, following an investment of US\$3.5m. The independent, family-run company was founded in 1969 and has been based at the airport ever since. For its new premises, it took the original main terminal building – which had fallen into disrepair in the 30 years since it had last been used as a terminal – and made it fit for the modern era.

Mark Goodwin, the company's vice president, who joined Northeast Air in 1977, explains what has been achieved: "The hangar and the existing building were all renovated – and by that I mean we stripped it back to the bare concrete and steel, with all new electricals and lighting," he says. "The tilted wall on top with our logo and our huge glass-fronted lobby area, that's all completely new."

Until the opening of the FBO in July, Northeast Air had been based in a much smaller building and is happy to have moved into its new, larger premises. "Our waiting room has gone from around 500ft² to 3,500ft², and we've got a bigger pilot's lounge, plus new areas for flight planning and weather briefing," Goodwin explains. "There's also a gym and a kitchen area, and the lobby has been designed with the feel of a high-end hotel reception."

Above: The huge glass-fronted lobby is the FBO's star feature

Right: Northeast Air wanted the feel of a high-end hotel lobby





Left: **The existing terminal building, new and improved**



“The exterior perimeter has a 10° outward slant, so the window construction was designed to withstand and support the weight of the tilted glass”

Mark Goodwin, Northeast Air vice president

Building of the facility began in February, with everything finished in just six months. For Goodwin, his favorite feature is the lobby area. “The skeletal structure is steel with a glass storefront,” he says. “The exterior perimeter wall has a 10° outward slant, so the window construction was designed to withstand and support the weight of the tilted glass – it’s different from a conventional vertical construction, and it gives the customer an amazing two-story view of the ramp.”

Preparation is key

Increased employee workplace pride and customer satisfaction were two of the benefits of investing in the new FBO. However, it was a challenge to keep the company’s various operations running smoothly during the construction. This became harder as the company started to transition from one building to the other. “We’re fairly integral to the running of the airport,” says Goodwin. “In addition to general aviation flights, most of which are business, we have a full maintenance and avionics department, we handle all of the airline fueling and de-icing over the winter months, and we’re also a factory service center for Pilatus.”

Goodwin remains convinced that the company being independent made the building cycle more efficient. “It means you can make decisions quickly, without a corporate ladder to go through,” he explains. “The mindset of the company is very much to stay an independent and keep it within the family. It was the father of our president who founded Northeast Air, and his son is now being groomed to carry on the legacy.” ○

Winter is coming

Northeast Air begins preparations for the winter period

The new Northeast Air FBO is opening with plenty of time for the company to prepare for winter – historically, its busiest period. “We’ve got about 70 full-time employees during the summer months, and we’ll go up to nearly 90 in the winter,” vice president Mark Goodwin explains. “The jump is based on the de-icing that we do, which is a six-month operation for us. It’s very large. We’ve got nine trucks dedicated to this one activity, as the big thing here is getting the aircraft off the de-ice pad as quickly as you can, so it can get back in the air. As you can imagine, we work very closely with the airport and all of the airlines to run the system like clockwork. Everyone has to play their part.”

GABRIEL LEVY, CHARTER SALES MANAGER AT **GO2JETS**, TALKS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF A WORLDWIDE JET CHARTER ALLIANCE



Global approach

The charter alliance offers a one-stop shop for customers

Go2Jets' private jet charter alliance includes members on four continents. The centralized sales office manages every aspect of the charter sale from quote to trip completion. Go2Jets currently has 27 aircraft ranging from the light jets such as the Hawker 400 to the long-range heavy jets such as the Gulfstream V. Go2Jets is a member of the NBAA and mandates either Wyvern or Argus safety ratings from each member operator.



Above: **Go2Jets is a worldwide alliance that unites top charter operators dedicated to a higher standard of safety and customer service**

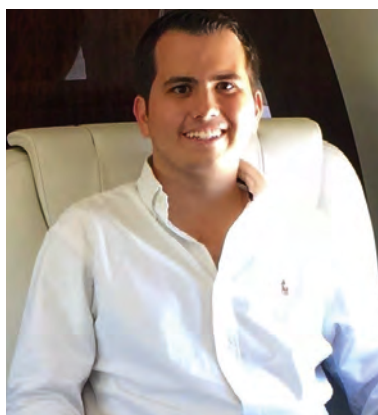
"The average company has maybe two or three aircraft in its fleet and limited budgets, so by creating an alliance we pool resources and can operate at a higher level"

Gabriel Levy, charter sales manager, Go2Jets

The concept of a jet charter alliance is simple, according to Go2Jets, a new US company that has launched one: operators around the world sharing the same high standards, working together to increase profitability and client satisfaction. "We saw a need to centralize efforts, especially in marketing and manpower, between charter companies in different regions," Gabriel Levy, Go2Jets' charter sales manager, explains. "The average company has maybe two or three aircraft in its fleet and limited budgets, so by creating an alliance we pool resources and can operate at a higher level."

Launched in August 2016, the alliance is still in its early days, but it is growing steadily, with Levy and his team on the lookout for new members. "There is no financial commitment, as long as the operator meets our safety and operational requirements, and doesn't affect the business of a current member, they are welcome to apply," he comments. "The basic requirements are a certain level of safety or a third-party audit, as well as specific insurance needs based on the aircraft size and region. We then work with the member to ensure their customer service is on par with our standards."

Companies that have enrolled so far include Redwings in Mexico, Helistar in Colombia, Global Exec Aviation in California and Nasjet in Saudi Arabia. "In the beginning, operators might seem



sceptical about the concept, but once they realize this is basically a turnkey program that will save them money in their first month of membership, they start to embrace the idea," Levy continues. "Our first members were from Latin America, and they have already seen an increase in volume and profits."

The benefits become clearer when considering the needs of the customer. "The end user can now roam the world without having to deal with multiple account managers," Levy concludes. "Basically, one call gets you an aircraft in all major markets. There is also the peace of mind that the safety requirements are the same throughout the alliance, and we are able to provide better pricing due to the centralization of efforts among members." ○

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TOM BERTELS, CO-FOUNDER OF **PARTNERS IN AVIATION**, EXPLAINS THE INNER WORKINGS OF HIS COMPANY'S CO-OWNERSHIP PROGRAM, WHICH PROMISES TO SLASH AIRCRAFT OWNERSHIP COSTS

If a company is trying to sell you on the benefits and convenience of working together in the business aviation industry, it makes sense that it should itself be founded by two industry veterans. Partners in Aviation was set up in 2016 by business aviation sales and marketing veterans Tom Bertels and Mark Molloy, and recently launched its core offering – a comprehensive private jet co-ownership program unlike anything that has come before, according to co-founder Bertels.

“There have been partnerships in the past – there still are – but this is a different type of partnership in that it provides an on-purpose path with the right legal framework and a detailed agreement,” explains Bertels. “With so many partnerships, things aren’t usually this well laid out, you get scheduling issues and things like that, so we went through every possible issue and put it to a team of industry experts to help us design the best plan.”

Bertels laughs when he describes the company as the Match.com of the business aviation world, but it seems a simple way to show how the service works. A prospective private jet owner with low-to-mid usage needs approaches Partners in Aviation, which then searches for a compatible co-owner in the same geographical region who wants to operate an aircraft in a similar way. “It’s like we’re cutting the cost of ownership in half,” comments Bertels.

“We put together the co-ownership agreement, and for day-to-day operations we



“We cover everything from the legal documentation to tax issues, and keep the co-owners separate so that they don’t get entangled. We’ve even worked out what happens if one partner goes under”

Tom Bertels, co-founder,
Partners in Aviation

also set the new owners up with a suitable management company, such as Jet Aviation, and we work with a few others too. My partner, Mark Molloy, saw a real need for this – companies and individuals who could afford the planes, but couldn’t justify it in terms of their usage needs. By teaming up with someone else, you can.”

Initially, the PIA Co-Ownership program will lock the owners in for three years. “We outline a definite term, when you get access to the aircraft, how you get out of the agreement, and also what happens at the end – helping you to sell the aircraft on or extending the agreement,” says Bertels. “We cover everything from the legal documentation to tax issues, and keep the co-owners separate so that they don’t get entangled. We’ve even worked out what happens if one partner goes under. It’s well known that co-ownership agreements can go south fairly quickly, which can put off somebody averse to taking risks. But we’ve made sure that all safeguards are in place.”

While only operating in the USA to begin with, Bertels and Molloy mention international expansion as a possibility. “The arrangement will work across a whole range of aircraft, from single-engine turboprops to large corporate jets,” Bertels adds. “It could be adapted for international owners. Our strategic partners operate all over the world, so that’s a good resource for us as we establish ourselves and determine when it’s time to do that.” ○

Service offering

Partners in Aviation provides a number of co-ownership services

- Co-owner identification, vetting and matching
- Proprietary ownership structure and documentation suite
- Mission analysis and aircraft selection
- Guaranteed maintenance plan
- Aviation expertise and consultation covering legal, tax, maintenance and aircraft and crew management
- Aircraft acquisition
- Aircraft sales and marketing



Tom Bertels
(left) and Mark
Molloy (below),
co-founders
of Partners in
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GLOUCESTERSHIRE AIRPORT, THE BUSIEST GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORT IN THE UK, HAS BOOSTED STAFF PRODUCTIVITY THANKS TO A NEW OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Gloucestershire Airport in the UK has implemented a new cloud-based operational management system called Centrik to help increase operational efficiency and simplify management tasks. Operations director Darren Lewington says that the new solution will help relieve pressure on staff at the airport: “We’re a small airport, but we’re the busiest general aviation airfield in the UK, handling 75,000 flights a year. We handle a broad cross-section of aircraft, from microlights to corporate jets, and we have to comply with the same safety guidelines as Heathrow or Gatwick, which is tough on our resources.

“The system, developed by Total AOC, handles a lot of the administration and document-control processes behind the scenes at the airport, freeing up staff to concentrate on more pressing tasks, such as strategic planning. It saves us time over our existing safety management system [SMS], which was effective but pretty resource intensive,” Lewington adds.

Early estimates suggest that the automation and increased data management of the Centrik solution have helped free up 2.5 days a week for the airport’s safety manager and three days a month for Lewington. Gloucestershire Airport currently makes use of Centrik’s SMS and risk management capabilities and is in the process of implementing

“We’re about to do our EASA assessment. Our report process will be very simple, as we can grant EASA access to the system, so they can log in and check things themselves”

Darren Lewington, operations director,
Gloucestershire Airport

additional modules such as training, quality and document control solutions.

The system makes data and documents available to each member of staff at the push of a button, ensuring everyone is kept up-to-date with developments. “We’re going to use iPads for the operations and maintenance teams, so when they are on the airfield doing inspections and repairs they can keep each other informed,” explains Lewington.

The system is still in its early stages, with Gloucestershire the second airport to adopt it after Biggin Hill. “The support we’ve had from Total AOC has been great, and any suggestions or changes we’ve asked for have been dealt with right away,” Lewington reports. “Another great thing about it is that we’re about to do our EASA [European Aviation Safety Agency] assessment. Our report process will be very simple, as we can grant EASA access to the system, so they can log in and check things themselves.” ○

More storage

New hangar projects are taking shape in Gloucestershire

There is a lot going on at Gloucestershire Airport currently, as Lewington explains: “Work has just started on a 11,000ft² general aviation hangar that will be completed by Christmas. We’ve also just completed an extension to our airport entrance road, and that will open up another area for development. A large hangar will be built on the site, which will be capable of housing two Bombardier Global Express aircraft. These investments are in response to demand – I get so many inquiries about storage, but we just don’t have the space to accommodate.”

Below:
Gloucestershire
Airport
celebrated its
80th anniversary
in 2016



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BOURNEMOUTH

- One of the busiest training airports in the South of England
- Substantial land availability for further FBO and MRO facility developments
- MRO capability for Bombardier, Challenger, Citation, Dornier, Learjet and Pilatus

MANCHESTER

- Gateway to the Northern Powerhouse region
- Two FBO's offering handling for all aircraft types and hangarage for up to Gulfstream / Global Express sized aircraft
- Two 3,000m+ runways offering 24/7/365 operational capability

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Key Contacts:

Conan Busby – Business Development Manager
Bill Blanchard – Key Account Manager





John Villanova

THE **LIMOUSINES WORLDWIDE** CHAIRMAN TALKS
GLOBAL GROWTH, INDUSTRY EVENTS AND STRONG
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

What was your career path to your current role?

I started out in the transportation sector when I was just 12 years old. My father threw me in the back of a station wagon and told me I was going to work. I arrived at the shop he worked at and I was handed a broom. From there I went on to undertake jobs in vehicle maintenance, fueling and later transportation management. In 1984 I decided to launch the luxury transportation business known today as Limousines Worldwide. Some of the clients we served in the early days were FBOs, charter operators and trip support companies. This business was going well and in 2009 we made the strategic decision to focus the business on the general aviation sector.

How has this business fared?

In the beginning we focused on developing a global network of transport vehicles for our clients. By working closely with partners, we developed a fleet of Mercedes, Bentley and Rolls-Royce vehicles, which according to market research were the preferred vehicles for general aviation clients.

Since 2009 the company has been extremely successful and we have doubled business. We now have offices in Los Angeles and Florida and we are planning to open an office somewhere in Europe in the near future. Our large international client base flies in and out of the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa.

What is the best part of your role?

As chairman of the business I get to plan the strategic direction. To enable me to do this, I attend around a dozen industry conferences every year. This is one of the best

"I believe our success is thanks to relationships we have forged at industry events. Our customers are our friends and they trust us not to let them down"

Below: **Limousines Worldwide's call center is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to assist customers' needs**

parts of my role. I really enjoy meeting old friends and making new ones at these events and talking about what is relevant in the general aviation industry. These events enable me to meet people from every part of the industry, including FBOs, charter operators and trip support companies. I believe our success is thanks to relationships we have forged at industry events. Our customers are our friends and they trust us not to let them down.

How do you stand out from your competitors?

We try to make our services personal for our clients. Most companies in the industry are very transactional, meaning that they only think about how business affects their bottom line. Our philosophy is very different. We aim to build long-term relationships with people. We don't initially build these relationships to gain business. We aim to make friends in the industry and stay in touch with people – whether they give us business or not.

By building close relationships with people we get to know their business, which means that if they have luxury transportation requirements we are usually best placed to meet their needs. If our friends continue to give us business then we will continue to grow in the future.

What is your dream holiday destination?

I would love to charter an ACJ or BBJ with 20 of my friends and go on a world tour, landing in six or seven countries and enjoying the local culture. I believe that our experience on earth is shaped by the people we meet along the way. It is an amazing world, filled with amazing people, so it's important to get out there and visit as many places and meet as many people as possible. I have been lucky enough to visit a lot of great countries around the world and I truly believe this has helped me build a successful business because I am constantly learning about the needs of different cultures.

What is the biggest trend currently affecting the business aviation sector?

I believe that shared flights and shuttle services will have a great impact on the business aviation sector over the next few years. These services could convince a lot of first class commercial passengers to start flying on business jets. Shared and shuttle services are cheaper than chartering your own private jet, so more people will be able to access the market. I also believe that we will see a lot more companies starting to offer these types of services. ○





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“I believe that IS-BAH does not satisfy all the requirements needed for a safe aircraft handling operation”

Graham Stephenson



The senior aviation consultant specializing in FBO development talks industry standards and whether they are worth the investment

There are many standards available to companies in the business aviation industry. What is important for FBOs, however, is that staff are trained to the same standards, so operators know what to expect when their aircraft are being handled.

In my opinion the best online training available for FBO staff comes from NATA and its Safety 1st Program, which provides the general aviation industry with safety-related resources, as well as online training programs. Part of the Safety 1st Program, IS-BAH (International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling) has been developed in conjunction with IBAC. With an SMS at its core, it is designed to promote the use of industry best practices for FBOs and business aircraft handling agencies.

Although IS-BAH was intended to meet the forthcoming requirements from the CAA for aircraft handlers to have an SMS in place, I do not believe it satisfies all the needs of a safe handling operation. It meets the basic principles of an SMS, which requires that staff have a training program in place, but it does not ensure that the training program meets the aircraft manufacturers' requirements when servicing aircraft on the ramp. Incorrect ramp servicing and handling procedures can result in costly incidents.

While FBOs do benefit from IS-BAH's SMS program, the standard is not mandatory; therefore many facilities still set their own standards for safety

management. IS-BAH is undoubtedly beneficial to the industry; however it overlooks one key factor, and that is customer service. Nor does it take into account the handling requirements of different aircraft. Handling a Gulfstream, for example, is not the same as handling a Learjet or a Global Express.

Gulfstream, however, has been working hard on improving the handling of its aircraft. In conjunction with Flight Safety, the corporation has developed an excellent online training course covering the ramp servicing of Gulfstream aircraft. This course should be completed by all FBOs that handle Gulfstream aircraft.

Financial benefits of IS-BAH

It is difficult for FBOs to measure the financial benefits of being IS-BAH-registered, mainly because operators do not choose an FBO based on its IS-BAH certification. The certification is just one of a number of reasons for choosing a location to fly to, making it difficult for FBOs to justify the significant time and money invested into the IS-BAH standard. It costs around US\$6,000 to purchase the IS-BAH manual, attend the courses, undertake the audit and register. This is not taking into account the cost of the time required over a period of at least six months in order to be ready for audit.

In addition, the IS-BAH documentation is not always easy to understand and its implementation guide, while being helpful, does not give all the answers. For example, IS-BAH requires that FBO staff have training in load control, yet load control is an activity specific to airlines and is not a service undertaken by FBOs. What are IBAC's intentions where this requirement is concerned and what training can be expected?

In conclusion, I believe that IS-BAH, despite calling itself an International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling, is a basic SMS program, which does not actually lay down a handling standard for specific business aircraft. The business aviation industry needs to work on a mandatory industry-wide aircraft handling standard which would ensure that FBOs around the world meet the same standards. Deciding on the best way to develop this standard is the difficult part. Are FBOs the best people to set the standard or should the aircraft OEMs take responsibility? In the meantime, however, I believe that IBAC should be putting pressure on the OEMs to provide FBOs with clear written and visual information on their requirements. ○



Graham Stephenson is a senior aviation consultant specializing in FBO development and training, and QMS/SMS implementation. He was previously head of Group FBOs at ExecuJet Aviation, and project and business development manager at London City Airport



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Berlin

Your guide to flying to one of Germany's most vibrant cities

Words | Helen Norman

Main airports in Berlin

Berlin Tegel Airport

Operating hours: 6:00am – 11:00pm

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by BAS Berlin Aviation Service and Jet Aviation, including crew and passenger lounges, handling services, slot allocation, PPR arrangement, line services, aircraft refueling, weather and flight planning facilities

Fuel: Jet A-1

Runway length: 08L/26R – 9,918ft; 08R/26L – 7,966ft

Distance from Berlin city center: 7 miles

Berlin Schönefeld Airport

Operating hours: 24 hours

Facilities: Fixed-base operations provided by BAS Berlin Aviation Service, BlueSky Aircraft Services, ExecuJet Aviation Group (operates the General Aviation Terminal), Jet Aviation and Signature Flight Support

Fuel: Jet A-1 and Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 11,881ft

Distance from Berlin city center: 12 miles

Mueritz Airpark Airport

Operating hours: 7:00am – 5:00pm (summer);
8:00am – 4:00pm (winter)

Facilities: General aviation only airport, aircraft hangars and parking, located next to airpark including a flyer village, golf course and marina. Currently constructing more hangar space with a completion date of 2017

Fuel: Avgas 100LL

Runway length: 08/26 – 7,808ft; 14/32 – 6,170ft

Distance from Berlin city center: 80 miles

ExecuJet Berlin

Celebrating a decade of operations in Berlin

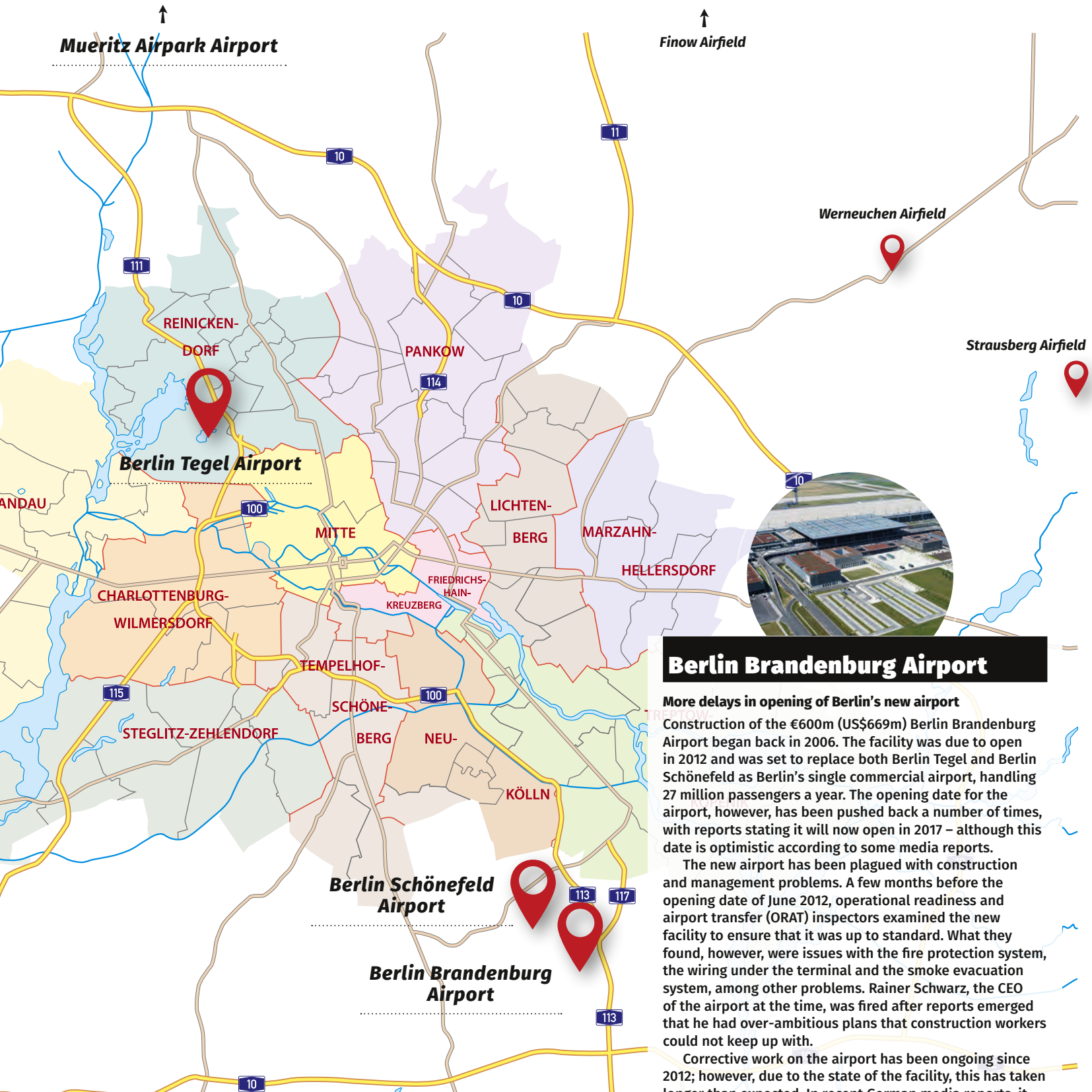
This year ExecuJet celebrated 10 years of operation at Berlin Schönefeld Airport's General Aviation Terminal (GAT). GAT is situated at the south of the airport and is run by ExecuJet on behalf of Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg. GAT is open 24 hours, seven days a week, and offers services including catering, a rest area and a flight planning center.

At the end of 2015, ExecuJet received accreditation from the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) for its FBO in Berlin, becoming the first FBO in Germany to hold this industry-leading certificate. Sigrun Leidel, general manager, ExecuJet Germany, said, "It is becoming increasingly important

for operators to seek verification on the level of proficiency of its business aircraft handling and IS-BAH provides an excellent means of meeting safety management system requirements."

In the same year that ExecuJet celebrated a decade of operations in Berlin, the aviation group also strengthened its presence in Germany. In January, the company announced that it will offer handling and ground support services from its FBO at Munich International Airport following the acquisition of the former European Business Aviation Services facility. ExecuJet's Munich FBO facility is the biggest handling area at Munich's GAT, covering an area of approximately 2,150ft².





Berlin Brandenburg Airport

More delays in opening of Berlin's new airport

Construction of the €600m (US\$669m) Berlin Brandenburg Airport began back in 2006. The facility was due to open in 2012 and was set to replace both Berlin Tegel and Berlin Schönefeld as Berlin's single commercial airport, handling 27 million passengers a year. The opening date for the airport, however, has been pushed back a number of times, with reports stating it will now open in 2017 – although this date is optimistic according to some media reports.

The new airport has been plagued with construction and management problems. A few months before the opening date of June 2012, operational readiness and airport transfer (ORAT) inspectors examined the new facility to ensure that it was up to standard. What they found, however, were issues with the fire protection system, the wiring under the terminal and the smoke evacuation system, among other problems. Rainer Schwarz, the CEO of the airport at the time, was fired after reports emerged that he had over-ambitious plans that construction workers could not keep up with.

Corrective work on the airport has been ongoing since 2012; however, due to the state of the facility, this has taken longer than expected. In recent German media reports, it has been suggested that the airport might not open in the second half of 2017 as Berlin's construction authority has demanded additional changes to the smoke extraction system. The German government has denied these claims.

Currently, the government is spending approximately €16m (US\$18m) per month just to prevent the facility from falling into disrepair.

Small airfields near Berlin

Werneuchen Airfield
Runway length: 4,917ft
MTOW: 5,700kg
Distance from Berlin city center: 20 miles

Finow Airfield
Runway length: 4,855ft
MTOW: 14,000kg
Distance from Berlin city center: 31 miles

Strausberg Airfield
Runway length: 3,937ft
MTOW: 8,000kg
Distance from Berlin city center: 27 miles



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The FAA's Part 23 airworthiness standards are undergoing one of the biggest revisions in their more than 60-year history

Words | **Helen Norman**

T

he rewrite of the FAA's Part 23 airworthiness standards promises to help the general aviation industry improve safety, reduce certification costs for new aircraft and technologies and enable more innovation in small

airplane development. As part of the rewrite, the FAA is proposing to revamp the Part 23 certification process for small aircraft, moving away from prescriptive design requirements to a new system of performance-based airworthiness standards.

Business Airport International speaks to Melvin Johnson, acting manager at the FAA's Small Airplane Directorate – the division responsible for the revisions – to find out why the authority decided to rewrite Part 23 and how it is working with the industry to make sure the revisions reflect the needs of the sector.



“Part 23 today is an evolution of what was introduced in the 1950s. It’s never been amended wholly”

Melvin Johnson, acting manager, FAA Small Airplane Directorate



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What is Part 23 and how is it going to change?

Part 23 contains airworthiness standards required for the issuance and change of type certificates for small airplanes (multi-engine airplanes, 19 or fewer passengers, 19,000 lb or less MTOW). This part has a large number of regulations to ensure airworthiness in areas such as structural loads, airframe, performance, stability, controllability, safety mechanisms, how the seats must be constructed, oxygen and air pressurization systems, fire prevention, escape hatches, flight management procedures, flight control communications, emergency landing procedures and other limitations, as well as the testing of all the aircraft's systems.

Part 23 today is an evolution of what was originally introduced in the 1950s. As we have learned more about small aircraft and safety, through things such as accident investigation and when new technologies are developed, the part has been amended. I believe different aspects of Part 23 have been amended around 60 times during its history, but it's never been amended wholly.

As a result of the constant amendments, the air worthiness requirements have become a bit prescriptive. For example, if a new type of rechargeable battery was developed we would look at the specific issues regarding that and we would amend the part to include prescriptive requirements for that technology. Although this process has served us well over the years and we have improved safety, we have come to the conclusion that the prescriptive process can be costly and time consuming.

To address how Part 23 works we put together an aviation rulemaking committee in 2011. This included participants from other civil aviation authorities around the world and participants from companies based in the USA. The committee came to the conclusion that the air worthiness requirements should be more performance based. This means that the revisions will outline the safety outcome that is required rather than outlining what has to be done to achieve that safety outcome.

Above: **Manufacturers follow Part 23 for airworthiness and safety guidelines**

Above right: **The Part 23 amendments include extra certification standards to help reduce accidents**

“Part 23 is not a retroactive rule. People won’t have to change anything that has already been certified. The benefits are aimed at new design approvals”

How will performance-based standards work?

For example, if we look at an aircraft that has rows of seats, in prescriptive standards we might specify that the distance between the seats in the aisle has to be above a specified figure to enable people to evacuate the airplane quickly in case of emergency. In the future we might look more at describing that the seats must be configured in a certain way that would enable people to evacuate the aircraft quickly if needed. We believe this will allow more flexibility for designers to be creative in how they configure the seats to meet the needs of the passenger.

Part 23 is not a retroactive rule. In other words, people won't have to go back and change anything that has already been certified. The benefits are aimed at new design approvals. When people want to design and certify something in the future we believe that performance-based standards will increase flexibility as the solutions won't have to follow such strict design requirements, but rather they will have to show that they meet the required outcome – in whatever shape or form they have been designed. We believe this will provide an avenue for new technology to come into the system in an easier way.

We have always had administrative ways to provide that flexibility in the past, but sometimes administrative procedures didn't always cover new technologies and solutions. Because of this it could often become costly and time consuming to get things certified. The new flexibility the performance-based standards will provide will make it easier for companies to develop equipment for new and old aircraft. This ease will hopefully mean the cost of access to market will decrease, meaning more new technologies could come on board. The flexibility could also improve safe operations as it gives the opportunity for more safety-enhancing technologies to be developed.

Do you believe the Part 23 rewrite could affect the growth of the business aviation market?

Business aviation is an extremely challenging industry. Cost and time to market is critical, so anything that can be done to help remove barriers while maintaining the same levels of safety will help the industry succeed and compete. By providing products and aircraft at a decreased cost, companies might be able to convince more people to use business aviation.



How do the new revisions compare with other countries' regulations?

It was extremely important for us to be harmonized with other air worthiness authorities around the world. Therefore we have been working on the Part 23 rewrite collaboratively with other countries. We have been working closely with the European Aviation Safety Agency, for example, to harmonize our requirements. This is to ensure that all manufacturers have equal access to the market no matter what country they are based in. It would be extremely counter productive and costly for manufacturers to have to certify something in one country and then have to do something completely different for somewhere else.

What other changes make up the Part 23 rewrite?

The majority of the changes are around making sure that we have performance-based standards in place, however we have looked at a couple of other things. The rewrite also aims to improve general aviation safety by creating additional certification standards to reduce accidents caused by loss of control during flight and to enhance icing certification standards so that they include SLD [super-cooled large drops], mixed phase and ice crystals.

For loss of control, the FAA will require that aircraft should be designed to use new design approaches and technologies to improve airplane stall characteristics and pilot situational awareness. For SLD, these new standards require manufacturers to either specifically demonstrate safe operations in SLD or, if flying in SLD is prohibited, offer a means of detecting it and proving that the airplane can exit such conditions.

What is the next step for the Part 23 rewrite?

The proposed rulemaking for the Part 23 rewrite was published in March 2016. Since then we have received more than 900 comments on the publicly available document. We feel as though we have gathered a great amount of input from the industry.

The comment period has now ended and we are currently working hard to look at all the comments and see what can be incorporated, changed or updated. We are planning to have the final rule published by the end of 2016, and we will include an effective date as part of it, spelling out the compliance times. ○

Above: The new rule applies to aircraft with a maximum seating capacity of 19 passengers and a maximum take-off weight below 19,000 lbs

“The flexibility of the new performance-based standards will make it easier for companies to develop equipment for new and old aircraft”

Safety first

New FAA policy aims to spur owners to install non-required safety enhancing equipment

In July 2016, the FAA introduced a new policy to encourage general aviation aircraft owners to install voluntarily on airplanes and helicopters safety equipment that is not required by the agency's regulations. The aim is to reduce costs and streamline the installation of non-required safety enhancing equipment (NORSEE) into the general aviation fleet. “The NORSEE policy is extremely important as we aim to modernize the general aviation fleet in the USA,” says the FAA's Melvin Johnson.

The policy is the result of industry and government collaboration under the General Aviation Joint Steering Committee and expands the 2014 FAA policy, which simplified the design approval requirements for a cockpit instrument called an angle of attack (AOA) indicator. AOA devices can be added to small planes to supplement airspeed indicators and stall warning systems, alerting pilots of a low airspeed condition before an aerodynamic stall occurs.

Equipment approved as NORSEE increases situational awareness and provides additional information other than the aircraft primary system. It also gives independent warning, cautionary and advisory indications, plus additional occupant safety protection.

The policy has the flexibility to accommodate the installation of new safety enhancements into Part 23, 27 and 29 aircraft that are determined to be a minor change to type design. According to the FAA, the benefits must outweigh the risk.

The policy will reduce equipment costs by allowing the applicants the flexibility to select various industry standards that suit their product, as long as it meets the FAA's minimum design requirements.

“In addition to NORSEE, we are working to find other equipment that can enhance safety in the general aviation industry,” adds Johnson. “For example, there is some equipment being used in the experimental fleet that doesn't comply with the Part 23 airworthiness requirements. We are trying to find out why it doesn't comply and see if there is anything we can do to remove barriers.”





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Cherry picking

How can FBOs and business airports improve their offering to attract more flights? *Business Airport International* speaks with some of the industry's leading charter operators and brokers to find out

Words | **Helen Norman**





Nick van der Meer

chief operating officer at global private business jet charter and aircraft management company VistaJet

According to Van der Meer, VistaJet aircraft fly into around 900 different airports per year. Over its 17-year history, the company has used approximately 1,500 airports in 182 different countries across six continents around the world. “We are one of the only operators in the world with a footprint on all major continents,” he explains. “We have aircraft registered in the USA, Europe and Asia, and have aircraft with traffic rights in Africa.”

With such global operations, it is important that the company keeps track of the locations it flies to. “We constantly review the FBOs we use around the world,” says Van der Meer. “We have a list of the top 200 FBOs in locations that we regularly fly to. This list is checked every year. If a new FBO opens in one of these locations, then we will undertake a desktop audit to see if it meets our expectations. If this FBO then moves into our top 200 list, we will undertake a more thorough audit on-site. For the one-off locations that we fly to, our crew provide instant feedback on the effectiveness and quality of the operation.”

For the regular locations that VistaJet uses, the operator tenders its business every two to three years. The operator considers service levels, quality of facilities, fuel options, previous years’ feedback from crew and passengers, and pricing, to make a decision on what locations to use. Price is an extremely important consideration, according to Van der Meer. “Our business model doesn’t allow us to pass on costs to the customer. We offer our customers a fixed all-in hour rate for our services. Therefore, we are looking for a good balance of the right services at the right price,” he explains. “Lots of FBOs don’t understand this model. Sometimes we receive invoices from FBOs, which include a headline cost and then lots of added extras. The FBOs just assume we pass these costs on to the customer. We avoid the FBOs that do this. We want cost transparency – be open and honest with us about pricing up-front, then we know what to expect.”

For VistaJet, new state-of-the-art facilities do not always impress when selecting a location. “We have a basic list of services that we would like to see (fuel, customs, immigration, security, etc), but things like a pilot/crew



Photo: Alain Leduc

Are industry standards important to operators?

Many FBOs are now investing in industry standards, such as IS-BAH and IS-BAO, to differentiate themselves from their competitors. But is it worth the time and money spent achieving these standards? “For the companies that take them seriously, then yes. Companies can use them as a good foundation to build a great service. As soon as you walk into a facility that has this attitude you can

tell they have spent time and effort on achieving the standards and maintaining the service levels required,” says Van der Meer. “There are some companies, however, that just want the certificate to display on the wall. They do the work to gain the standard and then they sit back and think the job is done. I believe we can tell whether companies are taking the standards seriously or not.”

Above: Van der Meer highlights Jetex Flight Support’s FBO at Paris-Le Bourget Airport as a stand-out facility

lounge is not important to us. We just want to turn our aircraft around as quickly as possible, so handling services and passenger processing solutions are more important,” explains Van der Meer.

What is extremely important to VistaJet, according to Van der Meer, is staff attitude. “It is almost irrelevant how state-of-the-art and modern your facility is; if your staff don’t have the right attitude then we won’t use you,” he comments. “It is important, for us, that the FBOs hire the right people and invest in them. If we visit an FBO and have a bad experience with customer service, then we do try and work with them to give them feedback on how they can improve. However, if there is no will to want to change and do things correctly, then we will avoid using that company again. Service recovery is also important to us. If a passenger forgets their coat, for example, we would expect the FBO to let us know and provide a solution for returning it.”

Van der Meer highlights another big turn-off, which is companies trying to buy business: “One of the big FBO chains recently tried to offer our team gifts to convince them to use their locations. We will never work with that chain again. Money can’t buy our business – service and quality can. It’s that simple,” he adds.

One FBO, which goes above and beyond to meet the needs of its clients, according to Van der Meer, is Jetex Flight Support at Paris-Le Bourget in France. “There are so many FBOs to choose from in Paris, but we work with Jetex because they really go out of their way to make the crew, VistaJet as a company and the passengers feel special,” he says. “They won’t say no to any request – no matter how last-minute it might be.”

“It is almost irrelevant how modern and state-of-the-art your facility is; if your staff don’t have the right attitude then we won’t use you”

Van der Meer says there are a few locations in the world where service levels could be improved – most notably, India and Africa. “India is very difficult to deal with from a ground-handling perspective. We often have crew stuck at passport control for more than an hour. There are a lot of opportunities for improvement in India, especially considering the amount of aircraft flying in and out of the country. There are also some locations in Africa that need to improve. However, there are companies on the continent who are working hard to improve service levels.”

For FBOs looking to attract more business, Van der Meer has one simple piece of advice: “Get the basics right,” he says. “You don’t have to spend millions of dollars on the best facilities or handling solutions; just make sure that the whole process – from when the flight lands at the facility to when the passenger leaves through the exit – is as smooth and quick as possible. It doesn’t take much energy to differentiate yourself from others. I would say that 90% of FBOs out there can improve on service levels,” he concludes.

“The majority of passengers are looking for a fast, unhindered route through the airport. Therefore, we aim for minimal ground time pre-boarding”

According to Turnbull, industry standards can help improve customer service levels. “Wherever our clients travel in the world, we want to ensure that they are treated to the same high-quality service that they have come to expect. Internationally recognized standards can help us better determine the levels of service companies are working toward. However, there are many other factors to consider

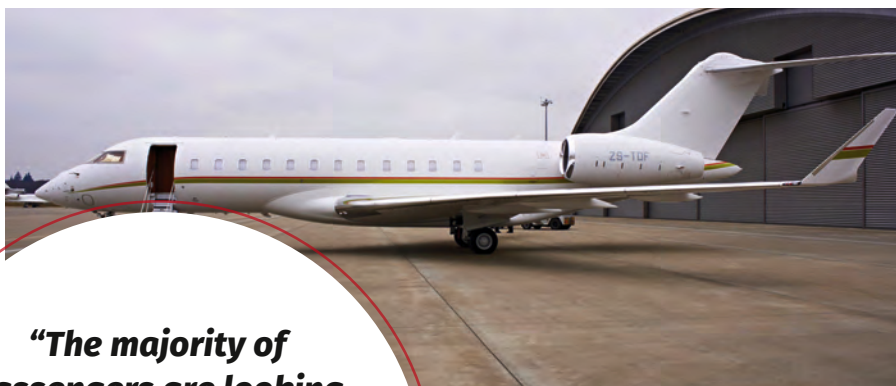
– big brands, for example, can sometimes be faceless, while independents may have more character and knowledge of the local area,” Turnbull adds.

To determine service levels at FBOs and business airports, Vertis Aviation carries out regular visits to as many locations as possible. “We also work with industry partners to get input on providers so we can make informed decisions about who to work with. In addition, we regularly provide feedback to the facilities we use to help them improve services. This has helped us develop strong relationships with partners throughout the whole chain.”

Aside from service levels, Vertis Aviation, which has offices in Switzerland, Dubai and Johannesburg, is looking for an efficient service once landing at an airport. “Our main priority is to exceed our customers’ needs. The majority of passengers are looking for a fast, unhindered route through the airport. Therefore, we aim for minimal ground time pre-boarding. We like them to arrive, board and go. If they have to wait for a short amount of time pre-departure, then we look for good lounge facilities, wi-fi, quality refreshments, and relaxed and happy staff,” Turnbull explains.

He believes that a quick service is one benefit smaller facilities have over larger hubs: “Access to the terminal from the aircraft is usually easier at smaller airports. The time from landing to taxi to terminal is normally quicker as well. Or we can arrange for cars to collect passengers direct from the aircraft. At larger airports, priority over slots, fueling and handling is normally given to the larger aircraft.”

One facility Turnbull highlights as ticking all the boxes is the Fireblade Aviation FBO at OR Tambo International Airport in South Africa. “We love this facility,” comments Turnbull. “It is a fabulous FBO that offers so much to our clients, including VIP suites, meeting room facilities, bistro dining, a relaxation terrace, a spa and gym, shower rooms and secure parking.”



Neil Turnbull

chief operating officer of Vertis Aviation, a privately owned boutique jet charter company specializing in ultra-long-range aircraft

Top: Fireblade Aviation FBO at OR Tambo International Airport in South Africa

When asking Turnbull what attracts Vertis Aviation toward using a particular business aviation destination and what puts the company off certain facilities, the answer is the same: staff. “If I had to give an FBO looking to attract more business one piece of advice, it would be to invest in their employees,” he comments. “We are looking for a fast, simple and efficient service provided by friendly and competent staff. This can really make the difference as to whether we use a facility or not.”



Siegfried Axtmann

CEO of FAI Rent-a-Jet – an operator of 20 aircraft for VIP charter and air ambulance services

A large part of FAI Rent-a-Jet's work is air ambulance charter, so choosing the right facility to fly to is not a process taken lightly. "Air ambulance charter requires great attention to detail, responsiveness and professionalism as everything needs to run smoothly – with no exception. People's lives can literally depend on this," says Axtmann. "We are also looking for great accessibility at the airport. We need an ambulance to be able to easily access an aircraft, so it's important that no barriers or hold-ups are in the way."

With offices in Germany, Dubai and Miami, and line stations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali and Senegal, the company operates in very diverse locations around the world. For VIP charter, location is what matters most to clients, according to Axtmann. "We chose facilities to use based on how close they are to the passenger's final destination. We also like to ensure that the airport has

"Air ambulance charter requires great attention to detail, responsiveness and professionalism, with no exception. People's lives can literally depend on this"

Below: London Biggin Hill Airport is one of Siegfried Axtmann's favorite locations

good connectivity to the local city," he says. "Pricing is also extremely important to us, especially for fuel. FBOs need to make sure that they are competitive in this area and that they are charging realistic prices. Sometimes a decision must be made not to fly into certain airports/FBOs based on the simple fact that fuel prices will kill an operator's business," Axtmann adds.

Aside from location and price, Axtmann says that it's important for FBOs to understand the different needs of passengers: "Business travelers have different needs to leisure travelers," he comments. "It's essential that the FBO has services in place that cater to varying needs. For the majority of our customers, however, they demand discretion, reliability and on-time services. We have a number of agents that work on our behalf to monitor business aviation facilities to ensure that they meet our standards."

Discretion is one thing that can be improved in Africa, according to Axtmann. "At certain airports in Africa there are often crowds of people on the apron waiting to welcome VIP passengers. This is not desirable as people are usually flying by private jet to be discreet. These airports should look at having better access control procedures in place," he says. "Another area that could improve is Asia. Service levels are getting better but it is taking time for them to develop their business aviation services. We are trying to support the development of business aviation in both Africa and Asia."

Providing feedback to FBOs is important for FAI Rent-a-Jet as it can help the FBO develop and build its business. "This also helps us to develop relationships with the FBOs we use on a regular basis. Nobody works in isolation in this industry, so it's extremely important to share knowledge and best practice," Axtmann adds.

For Axtmann, international standards, such as IS-BAO and IS-BAH, although important to improving service levels in the industry, are not one of the main considerations when choosing an FBO. "These international certifications go some way to ensuring service levels are met, but at the end of the day it all depends on the people working at the FBOs. This is what really makes the difference from our perspective – great staff who go out of their way to make our passengers' experiences special."

Two airports that stand out from the crowd for service levels, according to Axtmann, are London Biggin Hill in the UK and Miami-Opa Locka Executive Airport in the USA. "These two airports are extremely easy to pass through and they have all the services we need to undertake an efficient and successful operation," he concludes.





James and Kelly Shotton

co-founders and husband and wife team at Skytime Jets, a luxury private jet hire service

Although Skytime Jets operates as a charter broker and not a charter operator, the company plays an important role in selecting the FBOs and business airports that its clients fly to. “We arrange flights for operators and passengers around the world. Around 80% of our flights are based in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, with around 15% in North America and 5% in the rest of the world,” says James. “Our customers demand a bespoke personal service from the facilities they use, so it’s essential that we recommended facilities that meet these needs. If we have any doubt that an operation may not fulfill the level of service that we require and that the customer deserves, then we pass that information back to the operator and the passenger.”

For Skytime, the geographical location of the passenger’s destination often dictates the airport that is used. “However, when we are given a choice of locations, what we find most important are the facilities on offer and the service levels from staff,” says Kelly. “During departure, we like to make sure that passengers spend the minimum amount of time possible preflight at a facility, so efficient processes are essential. The facility also needs to be modern, comfortable and luxurious – as this is what our customers demand,” she adds.

Other factors that Skytime considers when looking for a location to fly to include secure, private and discreet services, direct ramp access to the aircraft, and onboard passenger and baggage security procedures. “Other benefits include complimentary car parking and first-class amenities. For arriving passengers, friendly airport employees and efficient security procedures are the most important considerations for our passengers. We want the passenger to pass through the facility as quickly and seamlessly as possible,” James adds.

In terms of facilities on offer, Skytime values modern infrastructure. Kelly says, “Some business aviation destinations still use porta cabins as their lounges – this is extremely unprofessional. Passengers shouldn’t have to transition through a porta cabin, therefore it is essential that

“Some business aviation destinations still use porta cabins as their lounges – this is extremely unprofessional. Passengers shouldn’t have to transition through a porta cabin”



Above: James and Kelly Shotton rate highly the customer care provided by Universal Aviation’s services in Barcelona

FBOs and business airports invest in their infrastructure and provide modern facilities. Appearance goes a long way in this industry and these types of facilities are often the first passenger touchpoint with the brand.”

According to James, Skytime regularly provides feedback to FBOs and business airports to help improve service levels. “If something hasn’t worked or hasn’t been to the expected standard, then it’s important that this is recognized so that all parties involved can improve,” he comments. “Similarly if something has been outstanding, then it is important that the appropriate level of thanks is given.”

One business aviation company has really stood out in recent months, according to Kelly: “We recently managed a European music tour, with one leg flying into Barcelona, Spain. We could foresee a potential issue with paparazzi and so specifically chose to utilize Universal Aviation as its general manager, Gonzalo Barona, took the time and care to discuss how to overcome any issues and arranged for specialized aircraft parking,” she concludes. ○

Exit *pro*





procedure

As the UK prepares to leave the European Union, *Business Airport International* asks, what could the business aviation sector look like in a post-Brexit era?

Words | **Dan Smith**

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***“Traffic is up by 2%
for the year to date
compared with the same
period of 2015. In July
alone, we saw growth of
4.8% year-on-year”***

Nick Rose, director of business aviation
at London City Airport

Above: Rendering of what London City Airport will look like once expanded. The airport received planning permission for expansion from the UK government in July 2016. The project includes an extended terminal, seven new aircraft taxi stands and upgraded public transport links

The United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union in June sent shockwaves through business and politics. More than three months after the vote, we are not much closer to knowing what it will mean in the long term. This uncertainty is being heavily felt in the business aviation sector as concerns around the economy and access to the Single Aviation Market intensify. As a result, the lists of questions that need to be answered, and ideas on what should happen next, are growing rapidly.

In the immediate aftermath of the vote, markets plunged and the British pound dived to record lows, remaining at its new level since the initial reaction. Against the euro, the pound is worth around €1.17, down from €1.30 on June 22, a fall of 10%. Against the US dollar, the pound is holding firm at US\$1.30, down from US\$1.47 on June 22, a fall of 12%. The Bank of England base rate has also been cut to a historic low of 0.25% as another precaution.

While the Brexit (the now common term for the UK leaving the EU) vote was decisive (52% voting in favor of leaving), the UK's new Prime Minister, Theresa May, has indicated she will delay triggering Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty until 2017. Once activated, Article 50 will set in train a two-year period of negotiation on exit terms.

All sorts of compromises

What those terms will be is anyone's guess, as Richard Koe, managing director of WINGX, a business aviation market intelligence provider, explains: “Article 50 has never been tested and when it was introduced in 2007 no one expected that it would ever be needed. I believe that it is not properly equipped to handle an exit. Its content is contested, therefore I believe there will be all sorts of compromises.”

Whether Brexit makes the UK a more or less attractive market for business aviation is an opinion that differs greatly around the industry. For Mark Bailey, CEO of the British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA), the UK remains attractive, at least in the short term: “The underlying reasons why people want to come to the UK for business have not changed as yet.”

However, in the medium to long term, there may be hurdles to overcome. “Until the implications of triggering Article 50 are clear, I believe businesses will avoid the UK,” notes Joe McDermott, senior business aviation consultant with Global FBO Consult. “As the government appears to be stalling on Article 50, this period of uncertainty could last quite some time, and this makes people nervous.”

So far, there is little indication that Brexit is having a major effect on business aviation. Nick Rose, director of business aviation at London City Airport, notes that traffic to the capital is unaffected: “Traffic is up by 2% for the year to date compared with the same period of 2015. In July alone, we saw growth of 4.8% year-on-year.”



skylink



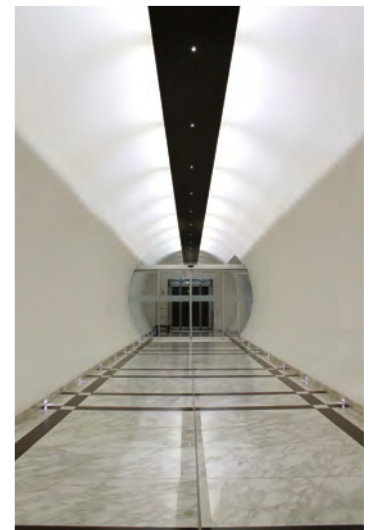
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Terminal was used by Pope Benedict XVI, on 6th June 2010, when he completed a historic official visit to Cyprus. In addition, the Terminal was used for the Heads of State during the second half of 2012 when the Republic of Cyprus was hosting the EU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

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Cabotage emerging as a major issue

Once Brexit becomes a reality, business aviation operators based in the UK may lose some of their unfettered access to the EU's Single Aviation Market. One major concern is what cabotage rights UK-based operators will enjoy.

Under existing arrangements, any operator in Europe is allowed to engage in cabotage in any member state. Once the UK leaves the EU, this arrangement may not apply, as Andrew Charlton, head of consulting firm Aviation Advocacy explains: "Agreeing to preserve the Single Aviation Market will depend on broader issues than just aviation. It's likely to be treated as part of the entire exit package by the EU. Depending on how those discussions unfold, it may become a bargaining chip. That is not likely to lead to a good outcome."

Key questions also remain over the UK's role in the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the EU Common Aviation Area (ECAA) once Brexit is finalized. "The UK will probably end up with the same EASA status as Switzerland," notes Siegfried Axtmann, CEO of executive jet charter company FAI Rent-A-Jet. "That means the UK will have full EASA membership, but with some restrictions on flight operations within the EU. In the meantime, I believe the biggest challenge for UK-based operators is the volatility of the currency exchange rates. Profitability could be limited as the pound fluctuates against the US dollar and euro."

The Norway-Switzerland model

ECAA is a series of bilateral agreements, which ensure that operators have access to the internal EU market



"Agreeing to preserve the Single Aviation Market will depend on broader issues than just aviation. It's likely to be treated as part of the entire exit package by the EU"

Andrew Charlton,
head of consulting firm
Aviation Advocacy

without restrictions on capacity, frequency and pricing. However, signatory countries are required to accept EU aviation laws, and establish a framework of close economic cooperation (for example, an association agreement). Even if the UK is happy to sign such a deal, it can be blocked by any EU member state.

Many point to Norway and Switzerland as models for the UK's future as part of the EU. However, both countries must follow the Union's free movement rules (with some restrictions) as the price of access to the single market. Switzerland's future as part of ECAA is currently under question after a vote there in February 2014 to introduce quotas for EU migration from 2017. If Switzerland does implement quotas, it may lead to the suspension of a range of bilateral agreements, including ECAA.

No cherry-picking of EU benefits

Whether the UK will sign an agreement, which requires them to accept the free movement of people – one of the EU's four core principles – is another matter. Theresa May has indicated that one of the main reasons why British people voted to leave the EU was to ensure a reduction in immigration. But within Europe there is a deep concern that other countries may try to exit if the EU is too gentle on the UK during Brexit negotiations.

With French presidential elections scheduled for April 2017, and a federal election in Germany due the following October, there is sure to be a lot of posturing before things become clearer. As recently as late August, Germany's vice chancellor Sigmar Gabriel warned that the UK could not expect to keep the "nice things" about Europe without taking responsibility. Andrew Charlton believes that the

Brexit survival plan

Although there is still great uncertainty about how Brexit will pan out, there are some things that can and should be done now for business aviation operators to survive in the short term. Industry experts highlight four key points:

1 Keep doing business as usual.

The long-term impact of Brexit is completely unclear at this early stage. One of the best things companies can do is to get on with what they are already doing well. As Nick Rose from London City Airport says: "Britain's vote to leave the EU presents many questions and unknowns for the aviation sector, businesses and passengers. From an operational point of view, however, it does not immediately change the way people travel, so it's important not to panic."

2 Work together to demand what is best for business aviation.

The British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) is urging business aviation companies in the UK to sign up to its organization to help share thoughts and concerns. BBGA already has 140 member companies, including operators and service providers. "By working together and speaking with one voice, UK-based businesses will be better heard in Westminster and Brussels," says BBGA's Marc Bailey. "We are actively working to make our position known to government agencies and ensure that our negotiations are high on the priority list. It's important for us to obtain a clear picture before year end to prevent any unnecessary movement of aircraft, assets or companies to alternate locations."

3 Look for partners with a secure base in Europe.

"We are living in a time of consolidation, and it may be that we see more activity in this area," notes Siegfried Axtmann, CEO of FAI Rent-a-Jet, which is based in Germany and operates in the UK. Axtmann hopes that the company can secure a place in the EU and UK markets by looking for partnerships and mergers, which will ensure it maintains a presence in both markets. This can also help them hedge the effects of currency volatility between the pound and the euro, which many experts believe is likely to be high, especially during the early phases of Brexit. Concern regarding EU citizens living and working in the UK, and vice versa, for companies also needs to be raised.

4 Develop opportunities beyond Europe.

One of the key things UK businesses should be doing is looking for opportunities outside Europe, notes BBGA's Bailey: "Many of our members have already embraced global markets. Expansion in some regions may be easier if we are not fettered by EU trade agreements. The UK has great links through our Commonwealth connections, and they should put us in an ideal position to get to the head of the queue."

Bailey also notes that there may be opportunities for the UK to develop an attractive environment for aircraft operations: "You only need to look at the Isle of Man for a model that integrates government, regulators and industry to see what could be done."

timing of those elections could be critical to the ultimate outcome of the Brexit negotiation process: "A longer negotiating timeframe is likely to harden the EU's position as the elections in France and Germany will be out of the way. A shorter timeframe is likely to see free movement, so the outcome will be close to the status quo."

Depending on how negotiations go, ECAA membership could become another point of contention and may prove to be the most problematic for operators. "Short domestic point-to-point flights are significant activity drivers in business aviation," notes Adam Twidell, CEO of PrivateFly. "With the UK outside of the EU, there could be a commercial impact on both UK and European operators. For example, UK companies operating domestic routes within Europe, and on EU operators who would be prevented from operating domestically inside the UK. Hopefully the UK will negotiate to remain part of ECAA, still keeping this open market. But, like so many other things, this is as yet unknown."

Ideas for the future emerging

Although everything still depends on the final outcome of negotiations, the industry itself is coming up with its own vision of how business aviation in the UK might look in the future. In a recent web-exclusive interview for *Business Airport International*, the new chair of the UK's Regional and Business Airport Group (RABA), Neil Pakey, noted the potential of free trade zones: "Under EU law, British and Irish airports have been unable to replicate the tax-free zones that many global businesses find so attractive. When you consider our need to be globally competitive, this doesn't make sense. We should be able to develop our smaller airports as key trading ports, declaring them as free trade zones with special tax and investment

"Under EU law, British and Irish airports have been unable to replicate the tax-free zones that many global businesses find so attractive. The challenge for the government is to respond quickly and imaginatively, and deliver some of these opportunities"

Neil Pakey, chair of the UK's Regional and Business Airport Group (RABA)



benefits, and modern, hi-tech research, manufacturing and logistics clusters, in every part of the UK. The challenge for the government is to respond quickly and imaginatively, and deliver some of these opportunities."

London City, which in July received approval from the UK government for a £344m (US\$459m) expansion program, remains positive, according to the director of business aviation, Nick Rose: "The expansion will enable us to accommodate around two million more passengers per year by 2025 and operate 32,000 more aircraft movements, expanding to new destinations."

In the very short term, Adam Twidell believes that business aviation users and brokers should be making the most of currency fluctuations: "There is an opportunity for charter brokers given currency volatility. The choice of operator and where they are based can now make a big difference to the price the customer pays."

In late August, Prime Minister May challenged her ministers to come up with "a personal blueprint for Brexit" that will identify areas of opportunity in their portfolios. As Richard Koe notes: "Many of the entrepreneurs who appreciate business aviation are quite sanguine over Brexit. In two years it may turn out that the UK outside of Europe is still the continent's fastest-growing economy. That is, if it really does leave the EU."

Why the four core EU principles matter to business aviation

While the details of Brexit are still to be finalized, the UK is already looking towards a future outside Europe. Some of the key sticking points for the negotiations will be around the four 'free movement' principles, which are at the heart of the EU idea.

These provisions allow for the free movement of goods, services, people and capital between any EU member state. For example, free movement of services allows companies to provide their services in any EU country and has led to the current open-skies policy. Business aviation operators are concerned about the potential loss of cabotage rights if this freedom is lost.

Similarly, the free movement of money has allowed the City of London to flourish as Europe's financial capital. Already some financial institutions are looking to relocate their head offices in Europe, which will allow them to freely trade in the bloc. For London and the UK, this would be a heavy blow.

Although the UK seems intent on trying to maintain access to the provisions relating to trade, the free movement of people remains the major area of contention. Loss of this freedom will make it increasingly difficult for UK-based companies to attract the international talent they require.





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Business plan



Illustration: Ellen Porteus

How can commercial airports successfully integrate business aviation into their operations to increase revenues?

Words | **Mario Pierobon and Helen Norman**

Operators of airports mainly served by scheduled commercial air traffic and with no constraints on capacity may see business aircraft traffic as a potential for increasing revenues. However, it is not just

as simple as opening up slots to business aviation flights. Commercial airports need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of integrating business aviation into their operations. They also need to ensure that both general and commercial aviation are given enough space to operate effectively, taking into consideration things such as slots, parking spaces, ground-handling services and the entire supply chain.

Attracting business aviation

Key prerequisites for business aviation to be attracted to and accommodated at larger airports include a proper infrastructure, a separated area with a sufficient number of aircraft stands, as well as competitive prices. "If runway and airside capacity can be managed without interfering with regular daily operations, it is reasonable to support the development of business aviation," says Elina Prikule, head of communications at Latvia's Riga International

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Airport. Riga International opened a new FBO Riga business aviation center in September 2015 and has since seen the number of business aviation flights at the airport almost double (see *Success in Latvia*, page 50). “A supportive chain of services related to maintenance and repair, hangar facilities, catering and ground handling is just as important to attract business aviation airlines and passengers with high-value requirements.”

Andrew Hughes, principal of business aviation at consultancy Mango Aviation Partners, believes that flexibility is also key if commercial airports want to successfully integrate business aviation flights. He says, “One of the critical factors when making the case for business aviation is that it operates to the client’s schedule and not the airline’s. If a meeting is running late then the client assumes that the aircraft will wait. If the airport cannot accommodate this within its operations, then its business aviation proposition will undoubtedly be weakened.”



Above: **Weston Aviation** opened its business aviation center at Ireland's Cork Airport in October 2015

Top right: **California's Santa Monica Airport**, which is facing closure

Clive Power, head of finance and commercial at Ireland's Cork Airport, suggests that if commercial airports want to increase business aviation flights they need to hire the right employees for the job. “Airports need to employ staff who are dedicated to growing business aviation either in partnership with FBOs or on behalf of the airport,” he says. “These staff need to attend the appropriate trade conferences and seminars to help drive awareness and business. They also need to help the airport understand the requirements of the business aviation passenger compared with the commercial passenger. Business aviation passengers often demand separate and discreet security screening, a separate access point to the airfield, VIP lounges, crew rooms, etc.”

Integration challenges

According to Glyn Jones, chief executive officer of Stobart Aviation, owner of London Southend Airport, the main challenges of handling business aviation traffic airports concern capacity. “The average value of a business flight is far less than that of a commercial flight, so commercial scheduled flights will usually take priority,” he says. “However, some airports find it difficult to sell off-peak capacity to commercial airlines. Business aviation could take advantage of that.”



Airport closure

FBOs handed eviction notice at Santa Monica Airport

Not everyone supports business aviation. The decision to close the general aviation airport of Santa Monica was announced in August 2016, after the city council voted unanimously in favor, with the action to be carried out as soon as is legally permitted. Following the decision, on September 15 the airport's two FBOs – Atlantic Aviation and American Flyers – received eviction notices that required them to leave the airport by October 15.

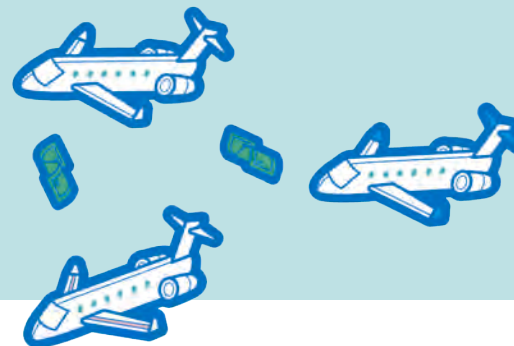
In a statement the council said that its decision to close the airport was based on a number of reasons, including noise, air pollution and safety issues. The council will work toward a closure date of July 1, 2018, and until then will take measures to reduce the airport's adverse impacts, including reducing the runway length by 2,000ft and eliminating the sale of jet fuel and leaded aviation gas, replacing them with unleaded gas and biofuels. The council also announced that the FBOs will be replaced with temporary support services provided by the city.

The council had been debating the closure of the airport – with plans to turn the site into a public park – long before the meeting in August. The leases for the two FBOs expired earlier in the year and had not been renewed, with both operating on a month-to-month basis. The airport's largest flight school, Justice Aviation, closed in May.

Nelson Hernandez, senior advisor to the Santa Monica city manager on airport affairs, says, “The city has owned the land since 1926, and rather than it being

a source of pollution and danger we intend to transform it into a community asset consisting of parks, recreation, and cultural and educational facilities. Santa Monica Airport was never designed to be a jet port and our residents want the noise and air pollution to stop.”

Alex Gertsen, NBAA's director of airports and ground infrastructure, notes that the FAA has reinforced Santa Monica's federal obligations to remain open: “The FAA issued a decision on August 15 that reaffirmed the legal requirement for the city of Santa Monica to operate the airport through to at least 2023. Then, on August 29, the agency wrote to Mayor Vazquez, expressing concern with the council's stated desire to close the airport as soon as it legally can,” he says. “The city needs to stop the mistreatment of the airport, be a good host to its users and tenants, and respect and uphold its federal obligations. There are a number of legal cases going on at the moment, but we believe the airport should remain open and are doing everything we can to support this side of the legal strategy,” adds Gertsen.



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London Southend Airport is currently looking to increase the number of business aircraft flights using its Stobart Executive Handling full-service FBO facility. The airport has the capacity to deal with an increased number of flights – in 2015 Southend handled nearly one million passengers but has the capacity to handle five million. The airport, which is open 24 hours a day, also benefits from no slot restrictions and competitive pricing.

To increase the awareness of the Stobart Executive facilities, in February 2016 the business undertook a time trial to prove that it is a convenient option for business aircraft flying to London. Two executive vehicles were used as test cars and carried out separate journeys from Canary Wharf to London Luton, London Biggin Hill, London Farnborough and London Southend. On-board trip computers proved that the trip to London Southend was just 55 minutes, tying first with London Luton Airport. During the same trial Stobart also proved that it can offer an average of just five minutes from car to airborne.

Cork Airport's Power believes that one of the main challenges for business aviation when being integrated with commercial traffic is the focus of the airport: "Many airports

Above: **Stobart Executive Handling provides a VIP lounge at Southend Airport with complimentary drinks, tea, coffee, computer, printer and wi-fi**

"The airport needs somebody to grow the business with – a specialist in the industry, leveraging their contacts to promote the business"

Clive Power, head of finance and commercial,
Cork Airport

Right: **The business aviation center at Cork Airport is Weston Aviation's first venture outside the UK**



tend to focus on commercial traffic and give little or no attention to business aviation," he comments. "For successful integration it is extremely important that airports have a good working relationship with business aviation professionals to ensure their needs are considered and accommodated. This will help maximize the opportunities for both the airport and its aviation partners."

Hughes stresses that larger commercial airports are configured for large-scale operations, with the infrastructure and organizational culture in place to support that. "Therefore it is difficult for larger airports to provide a sufficient level of flexibility in their operations to support the changing requirements of business aviation compared with scheduled services," he comments. "If the airport cannot do this satisfactorily then business aviation will move to other airfields that can truly deliver the expected benefits."

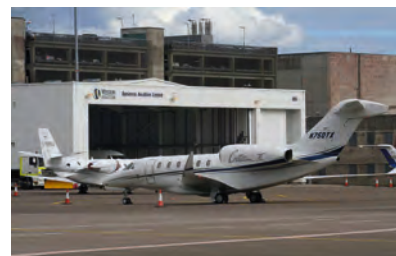
FBO integration

According to Power, to successfully handle business aviation traffic, airports need to have a dedicated terminal and/or an FBO. "The airport needs somebody to grow the business with – a specialist in the industry, leveraging their contacts to promote the business. Large airports can accommodate this by looking at the requirements of a dedicated FBO that will provide them with the tools to grow the business," he says.

In September 2015 Cork Airport teamed up with FBO and ground-handling services provider Weston Aviation, to open a business aviation center at the airport. Weston was brought on board to cater to the specific needs of business aviation customers. It offers a wide range of dedicated services including an executive hangar, private ramp, crew lounge, concierge services, customs clearance, VIP passenger lounge and executive catering. Weston Aviation staff regularly attend industry events in the UK and globally to ensure that they are meeting the industry's needs. This year the company appointed a new commercial director, Eddie Allison, who will be specifically responsible for the growth and development of business aviation.

Riga's Prikule agrees that a separate terminal or FBO for business aviation is needed: "There are three independent business aviation terminals at Riga Airport. Each operates to its own service levels and meets the different needs of business aviation customers. They contribute to the overall increase in flight statistics at Riga."

Hughes adds that such facilities need to offer a minimum set of services to be successful: "Dedicated facilities





Left and below right: FBO Riga was one of the biggest and most ambitious construction projects ever undertaken in Latvia

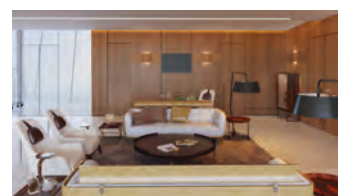
such as security, immigration clearance and passenger relaxation areas are an absolute requirement for a business aviation operation. If an FBO can offer these facilities then there should be no need for an airport to build a dedicated business aviation terminal," he comments. "At some airports organizations may provide FBO services to business aircraft from an office within an existing passenger terminal building. A better tailored service could always be offered to business aviation clients through dedicated facilities. The airport needs to figure out what works best for the business, taking into consideration the number of business aviation flights it wants to handle and the space that it has available to accommodate aircraft on the airfield."

Growing business

Many business aviation companies consider airports with high levels of commercial traffic to be unsuitable for their operations and prefer to fly to smaller aerodromes with less traffic. But with the right facilities, focus and investment, larger airports can tailor their services to meet the needs of business aviation. "To promote business aviation even further at Riga International Airport, which handled over 68,000 flights and more than five million passengers in 2015, we are currently investing in expanding our MRO services for business jets," Prikule explains. "We plan to continue improving and expanding our service offering for business aircraft."

Cork and London Southend airports are similarly focused on expanding their share of business aviation traffic. "London Southend welcomes both business and commercial aviation and the two operate perfectly well together," says Jones. "We plan to develop both segments in tandem, working with specialist partners in business aviation to expand on market share and using dedicated aviation resources to increase the number of flights."

Power concludes: "We are looking to grow business aviation through partnerships with dedicated FBOs by supporting their business plans and helping them to provide first-in-class service to their customers. We take great pride at Cork Airport in the excellent levels of service we provide to passengers and partners alike, and believe that customer service is key to our overall growth." ○



Success in Latvia

The FBO Riga business aviation center goes from strength to strength

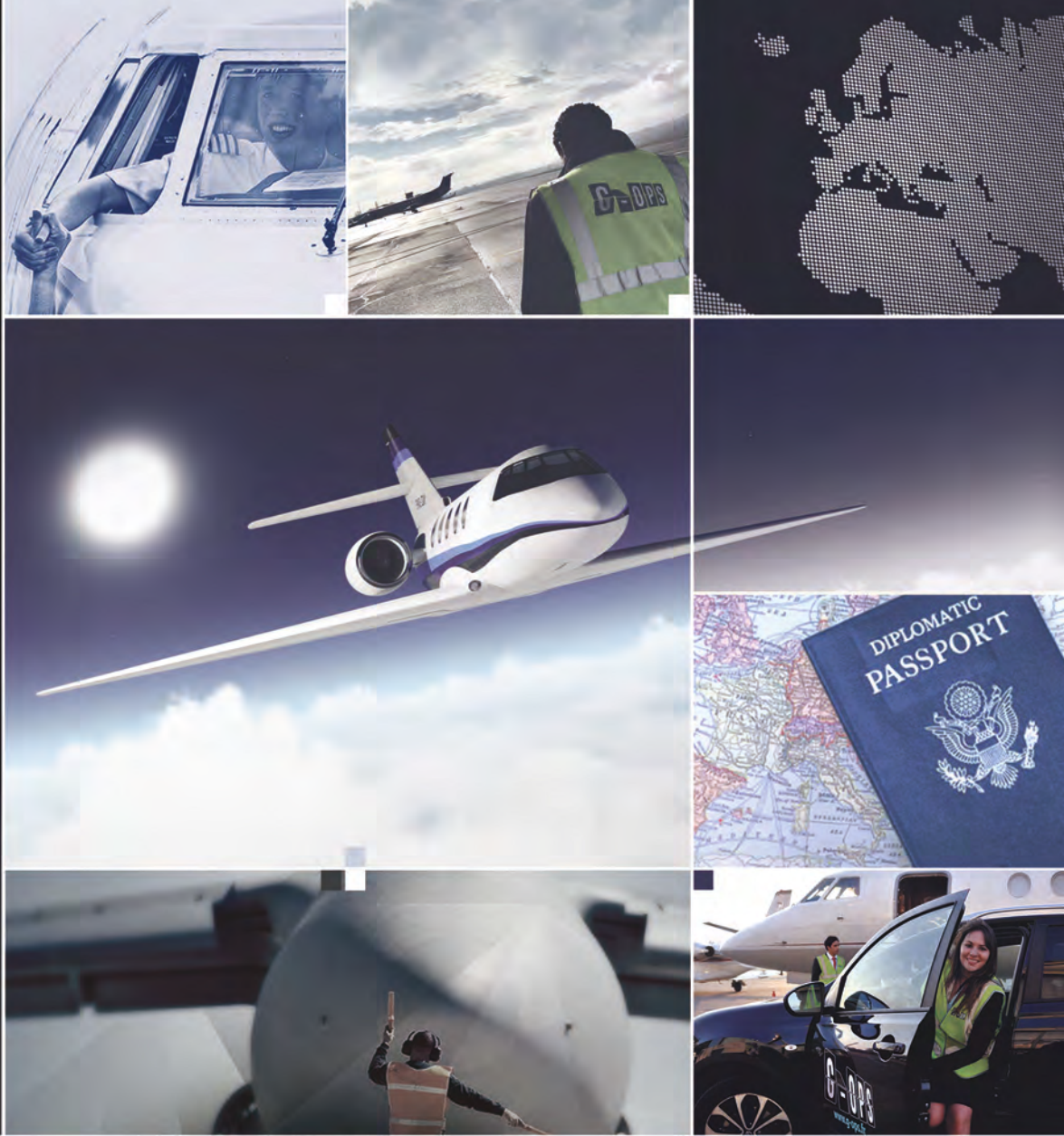
In September 2015 FBO Riga, which has operated at Riga International Airport since 2000, opened its new €12.5m (US\$14m) FBO Riga business aviation center. The center is one of the largest of its kind in the EU and the largest in the Baltics. It includes a 13,000ft² (1,200m²) state-of-the-art business aviation terminal with an adjacent car parking lot, a 90,000ft² (8,400m²) heated hangar, an apron with parking stands for business jets and a helipad. The terminal is used for servicing business aviation passengers and for international meetings, presentations and events. It is equipped

with six boarding areas, two VIP meeting rooms, a bar and an art gallery. Aircraft parking stands and the helipad are within 10m of the exit to the apron. Work and recreation rooms for flights crews are also available in the terminal. FBO Riga is currently working on developing crew accommodation as well. The hangar is specially designed for the storage and technical maintenance of aircraft and can hold up to five Boeing Business Jets or nine Gulfstream 550s.

At the end of May 2016 FBO Riga reported that during the first eight months of operations the facility had handled 35% more flights than in the same eight months the previous year. According to FBO Riga, it is on course to exceed its expectations for traffic for the first 12 months of operation. In October 2015, just one month after the facility opened, the total number of business passengers handled by climbed by 60% over the same period in 2014.

"Today we are continuing negotiations with business operators and jet owners to offer them flexible and beneficial solutions that we develop individually according to the objectives and needs of every single customer," says Roman Starkov, co-owner of FBO Riga.





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A new VIP terminal
at Al Maktoum and the
continuing success of
Al Bateen Executive Airport
underscore a concerted effort
across the UAE and the
wider Middle East to grow
business aviation

Words | **Liz Moscrop**





Ras al Khaimah

Airport: Ras al Khaimah International Airport

Operating hours: 24 hours

Facilities: Preflight and post-flight services from RamJet Aviation support, including overflight permits, landing permits, ground handling, and passenger and cargo charter

Runway length: 12,300ft



Fujairah

Airport: Fujairah International Airport

Operating hours: 24 hours

Facilities: Aurora Aviation FBO, including passenger lounges, crew rest facilities, business center, meeting rooms, passport control and immigration, customs and spa

Runway length: 12,300ft



Sharjah

Airport: Sharjah International Airport

Operating hours: 24 hours

Facilities: Gama Aviation FBO including VIP passenger lounge, crew facilities, line maintenance services, no slot restrictions, dedicated customs and immigration and shower facilities

Runway length: 13,320ft



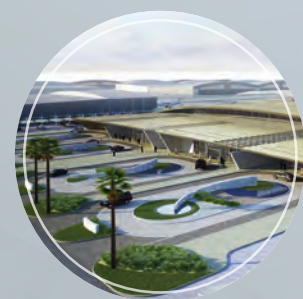
Dubai

Airport: Al Maktoum International Airport

Operating hours: 24 hours

Facilities: Seven-star 60,278ft² VIP terminal with customs and immigration controls, lounge facilities and five FBOs

Runway length: 14,764ft



Abu Dhabi

Airport: Al Bateen Executive Airport

Operating hours: 24 hours

Facilities: Dedicated private jet airport with stand capacity for up to 50 jets, executive terminal, Dhabijet FBO, crew and flight operations center, private and relaxation lounges, flight planning facilities, conference rooms, on-site immigration and customs, and secure car parking

Runway length: 7,218ft





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In May 2016, DC Aviation Al-Futtaim announced the expansion of its operations at its home base at Al Maktoum International

Four of the latest developments taking place in the UAE

XJet Dubai will occupy 8,600ft² at Al Maktoum International, and will include four hangars. It will offer full private jet services, including flight support, ground handling and its 24/7 light-support concierge service, called The Angels. It will also include dedicated facilities for customs, immigration and police.

Al Bateen Executive Airport has made several upgrades to its facilities and lounges to host the Abu Dhabi Air Expo, the Middle East Aviation Career Conference & Exhibition, and the Abu Dhabi Heli Expo. It will open a new VVIP terminal in October and enhance the existing VIP terminal.

Abu Dhabi-based Falcon Aviation Services is now offering FBO services from its new location at Al Maktoum International. The 260,000ft² facility will offer line service, maintenance and hangarage, as well as a wash bay.

DC Aviation Al-Futtaim is expanding its operations at Al Maktoum International following the announcement that its joint-venture partner – Al-Futtaim – will lease an additional 107,640ft² of land from Dubai South. The expansion will more than double the hangar capacity, as well as enable DCAF to add two single-aisle aircraft maintenance bays and provide for enough space for an additional workshop and equipment storage.

On April 6 this year, the first private jet took off from the newly built US\$26m VIP Terminal at Al Maktoum International Airport in the aviation district of Dubai South – a new masterplanned city in Dubai. The flight marked the operational launch of the world's first 7-star private aviation facility.

Jetex handled the flight, an Embraer Legacy aircraft headed to the Maldives. "The flight is an important milestone for Dubai's aviation industry as a whole," comments Khalifa Al Zaffin, executive chairman of Dubai Aviation City Corporation. "It brings into operation a truly beautiful facility that sets new benchmarks in terms of luxurious ambience and excellent service. The stage is now set for robust growth in Dubai's luxury travel sector." Jetex president Adel Mardini adds, "We are confident that the new VIP terminal will bring added value to general aviation, not only in Dubai but across the UAE."

The UAE is a country that likes to offer the best in class in whatever it turns its hand to. The VIP Terminal is no exception. Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the 60,278ft² standalone terminal will cater specifically to private, business and government VIP travelers. It will accommodate a number of FBOs that will each have a dedicated lounge landside, enabling it to extend specialized services to VIP guests.

The development is vital to the long-term evolution of the UAE. As the second-largest economy in the Gulf after Saudi Arabia, it is attractive to business executives, especially those in the oil industry – its main source of income. Dubai is also the world's fifth most popular tourist destination. The seven emirates, Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al Quwain, are highly varied in terms of their airport offerings. Indeed, Ajman and Umm al Quwain have no airports at all.

2009 Global Express XRS

s/n 9306 ■ Reg. TBA



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Fostering growth

According to Ali Alnaqbi, founding chairman of the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) government and industry support is necessary to enable the UAE business aviation industry to grow, with airport support, landing slots and clearances all required to foster growth. “I am pleased to report that the UAE government is listening to our requests,” he comments. “Infrastructure changes and developments do not happen overnight, but the requirement has been identified, and we are working toward a solution that will benefit the entire industry and therefore the economy as a whole.”

Although the region is not as well served with MRO facilities as more mature markets, the large international service providers have collaborated with locals on business offerings that span several parts of the industry, including management, charter, FBO and MRO. General Dynamics subsidiary Jet Aviation, local ground handler turned trip support and FBO provider Jetex, and Germany’s DC Aviation (in a joint venture with local player Al Futtaim), have plenty of work and developmental projects currently being undertaken. Along with US jet card member provider Xjet, they are tenants at Al Maktoum, providing FBO services for private aviation clients.

According to Alnaqbi, business aviation travelers are becoming accustomed to using the new airport, rather than Dubai International, which was their home until May last year. “People always resist change, but Dubai is very accommodating,” he says.

Holger Ostheimer, general manager at DC Aviation Al Futtaim (DCAF), believes the VIP Terminal at Dubai South will spur further growth in the region: “The evolution of Dubai South will inevitably lead to a concentration of private and business jet activity into and out of Al Maktoum International Airport.” DCAF recently announced a strategic cooperation with Lufthansa Technik, and will shortly break ground on a hangar extension project at Al Maktoum, which will add another 80,730ft² of usable hangar space, workshops and landside offices to the facility.

Ostheimer says, “We see more and more aircraft operating into and out of Al Maktoum, demonstrating increasing acceptance of aircraft owners and operators of Dubai South as a hub close to Dubai’s new residential and

Below: **The VIP Terminal at Al Maktoum International features dedicated customs, immigration and police services, as well as a separate drop-off and executive lounge area**

Bottom: **This year’s MEBAA event will be held on December 6-8. It will include a static aircraft exhibition**

business clusters. While nobody can expect the market to grow miraculously, the overall attractiveness of Dubai as an international marketplace is going to help beat the international trend of declining business levels.”

DCAF has demonstrated its confidence in the local market by adding a fifth aircraft to its managed fleet, and is shortly to announce that it will cooperate with Dassault Falcon Jet to provide on-site maintenance services.

Business aviation airlines

The move of VIP jets to Al Maktoum was necessary as the local carriers continue to expand relentlessly, causing congestion with limited landing slots and parking spots, plus lack of available airspace. However, these flourishing airlines are adding dedicated business aviation arms, which bodes well for the industry in the region. Emirates Executive (Emirates), Saudia Private Aviation (Saudi Airlines) and Qatar Executive (Qatar Airways) are all up and running. Local governments are working to support them, particularly in the UAE. There has been a relaxation of permit and overflight requirements, and while MEBAA would like to see even greater progress, Alnaqbi is pleased with progress over the association’s first decade of existence.



“The evolution of Dubai South will inevitably lead to a concentration of private and business jet activity into and out of Al Maktoum International Airport”

Holger Ostheimer, general manager
at DC Aviation Al Futtaim (DCAF)





Above: The MEBA Show is expecting 460 exhibitors at the 2016 event – an almost 10% increase on 2014
Below: Al Bateen Executive Airport has stand capacity for 50 private jets and offers fast turnarounds with no holding patterns and short taxi times

Elsewhere in the Emirates, the region's only dedicated private jet airport, Abu Dhabi's Al Bateen Executive Airport, is going from strength to strength. Opened in 2014, the airport comprises the VIP and Sheikh Zayed terminals and has stand space for up to 90 private jets. It is home to Falcon Aviation Services, a corporate jet and helicopter service provider, and Comlux Aviation. Al Bateen also hosts the Abu Dhabi Air Expo

The UK's Gama Aviation has a facility at Sharjah International Airport comprising a state-of-the-art VIP passenger lounge, crew facilities and line maintenance services. It also offers customs and immigration, and importantly has no slot restrictions.

Local knowledge

Flying into the region requires some local knowledge as customs do differ from the rest of the world. The Universal Weather and Aviation blog points out that there are still "longer than average lead times to consider for the UAE region, varying and stringent visa requirements and, in some cases, unique documentation mandates". Processing of landing and overflight permits for the UAE averages about 48 hours. Other regional destinations need more time; Oman, for example, requires five business days to process landing

The gray market

What preventive measures is the UAE putting in place to prevent illegal flights?

The gray market has been a thorn in the Middle East business aviation sector's side for a long time; however, Ali Alnaqbi is hopeful that there will be a shift in this soon. He founded the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA), which now has approximately 250 members from 23 countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Business aviation is now recognized as a priority in the region's biggest market, Saudi Arabia, which along with other regional governments has changed its rules and no longer allows Part 91 operations. Flights must be

either private or commercial on an AOC. The region has also borrowed heavily from the European Business Aviation Association's work to tackle the issue, in particular its document to members entitled, *Is my flight legal? Ensure the safety and legality of the business aircraft you charter*. It takes the form of an open letter to brokers and customers, asking them to check that their provider is in possession of a valid AOC.

Alnaqbi says, "The message is getting through slowly, with many customers now asking up-front whether their flight is legally compliant."

permits. The process for Saudi Arabia has eased in recent years, and landing permits can now be secured in as little as 24-48 hours (although not at weekends).

Qatar requires operators to have a sponsor prior to landing permits being issued. While Saudi Arabia no longer requires sponsor letters, it does mandate – along with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Yemen and Pakistan – business contact details including an initial permit request.

During the Hajj, Ramadan, and other local events, it may be difficult to book hotel accommodation and preferred local transport options. Prepaid transportation (car with driver) is the recommended option for local transport. During the month of Ramadan – when Muslims do not consume food or drink during daylight hours – it is advisable to provide at least 48-72 hours' advance notification for catering.

All told, the region is of great interest to international aircraft operators, who are bullish about its prospects for expansion. The number of business jets in the MENA region is predicted to grow by more than 80% by 2023, according to the latest Bombardier Business Aircraft Market Forecast. The forecast also predicts that the value of the industry will reach US\$1.2bn by 2020. Indeed, Gama Aviation reckons that the Middle East business aviation market is expected to grow by 7% per year between 2016 and 2024.

This is reflected in the expansion of the Middle East Business Aviation show, which has seen a rise in exhibitors from around the world visiting this year. Business aviation companies from as far afield as China and the USA are traveling to the Al Maktoum International Airshow site on December 6-8 for a share of this burgeoning business aviation sector. ○

"The message is getting through slowly, with many customers now asking up-front whether their flight is legally compliant"

Ali Alnaqbi, founding chairman of the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA)



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What makes a successful business aviation scheduler and dispatcher?

Words | Saul Wordsworth





***“Schedulers and
dispatchers make an
important contribution to the
safety, efficiency and reliability
of aircraft flight operations...
there’s a lot going on”***

Andy Shaw, managing director of trip support
company Flightworx Aviation



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we all need people in our lives upon whom we can depend, people who are there for us and won't let us down. In the dynamic

world of business aviation, those people are the schedulers and dispatchers – highly organized, unflappable, multilingual multitaskers, capable of thinking on their feet.

“Schedulers and dispatchers make an important contribution to the safety, efficiency and reliability of aircraft flight operations,” says Andy Shaw, managing director of trip support company Flightworx Aviation. “As well as constantly monitoring a myriad of alerts, information, regulations, and paying close attention to what’s going on in the world, they must also remain mindful of the different operating and personal requirements of the clients and operators they support. They understand dispatch workflows and possess a good working knowledge of flight planning, aircraft performance, operating minimal, procuring permits, fuel policies, meteorology and safety policies, to name a few. There’s a lot going on.”

Traits and challenges

Dispatch work is complicated and clients can be highly demanding. A typical client calls from any given city on day one, wanting to arrive in another city anywhere in the world at a set time two days later. Dispatchers need to consider everything from the range of aircraft and best flight paths to the permits that will be required and slot availability. They must also factor in crew availability, travel arrangements and visas that they’ll need, while the client often wants an answer within minutes. Coordinating a fleet is another huge task, from small Cessnas and mid-size Gulfstreams and Bombardiers to the Boeing and Airbus range, all of which boast different features, capacities and requirements. Other factors, such as how a solar radiation storm might lead to radio blackout, only add to a complex picture.

“The biggest challenge for a scheduler is the constant, frenetic pace,” says Jim Lara, principal of business aviation consultant Gray Stone Advisors. “They also need to handle multiple, unrelated tasks simultaneously, each with a very high priority. Burnout is a significant risk.”

Because of their stakeholders’ timetables, they often have non-traditional schedules, working variable days and hours, including nights, weekends and holidays.



“The biggest challenge for a scheduler is the constant, frenetic pace. They also need to handle multiple, unrelated tasks simultaneously, each with a very high priority”

Jim Lara, principal of business aviation consultant Gray Stone Advisors

Some clients can be difficult and often will not take ‘no’ for an answer. This requires a sense of diplomacy. The question is always: what is the safest, most efficient and cost-effective way to achieve mission success? Given that most corporate dispatch offices are small, schedulers must be self-reliant self-starters, but with the ability to work closely with others.

“To me, teamwork is the greatest asset we seek,” says Nick Van der Meer, COO of charter operator VistaJet. “Operating into and out of some of the busiest, but also remotest destinations on the planet, we need people with

Flight Service changes

How is the FAA changing its Flight Service procedures?

In an effort to reduce costs and improve efficiency, the FAA is changing its Flight Service operation in accordance with user preferences for a more automated service and a move toward a paperless cockpit. This is in response to pilots’ requests to expand the deployment of more technological enhancements, a trend that is supported by recent data: last year, 77% of flight plans filed through Flight Service systems were done so online.

Over 90% of FAA briefings were similarly conducted. Pilots will now receive weather information on the same

frequencies as flight plans and Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs).

Although Flight Service will mostly continue in its current form, certain services that are currently underused will be phased out over time. Such is the case with the recently discontinued Remote Airport Advisory service and Hazardous Area Reporting. Meanwhile, evaluation of all services will continue in an effort to create efficiency without impacting flight safety.

“None of these changes will affect a pilot’s ability to receive core safety services,” says Steven Villanueva, the FAA’s director of Flight Service in the Air Traffic Organization’s System Operations Services. “We are phasing in the changes to ease the transition for users.”

In 2015, 77% of flight plans filed through Flight Service systems were done so online

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1

“Dispatchers need to have a professional, calm disposition that projects competence and concern for our clients, and the ability to back it up by attending to the smallest details in a timely manner”

Markus Schuler, director of ground operations, EMEA and Asia, Jet Aviation

Charter speak

What do charter operators want from a scheduler and dispatcher? *Business Airport International* asks five experts

the ability to think outside the box, who want to be part of a company that is breaking the mold and excelling. Workload is high, and you must be able to handle that while remaining calm and focused on attention to detail.”

“In terms of character traits, I’d put resilience top of the list,” adds Shaw. “It’s imperative that you are flexible, a good communicator, well-organized and can think on your feet in order to cope with the frequent last-minute changes that will occur. This is aviation, after all. A good dispatcher will often have two or three alternative options for trips they are planning, taking into account emerging security situations, volcanic activity or ATC industrial action, that they can initiate quickly or suggest as a plan B. When it all comes together, it can be very rewarding.”

In-house or third-party?

For some operators, it makes sense to keep their dispatch team in-house, but this requires careful planning and management to ensure the operator delivers on their obligations as an employer. They also need to be aware that staff changes can take their toll on a smaller dispatch team. If someone leaves at short notice, operational gaps need to be covered, and time must be allowed to recruit and train someone new. Outsourcing enables operators to instantly buy-in expertise and keep expenditure low. It also removes the worry about having to bear the time lag and cost impact of recruiting and training new dispatchers.

“It depends on the scope and operations of the company as to whether schedulers and dispatchers are hired in-house or from a third-party provider,” says Jason Tepool, senior manager at Jeppesen Training Solutions. “To be truly in-house, an operator would need to have adequate staffing for 24/7 access for the crew and passengers. Naturally, there is a cost associated with this. Reliable data on current regulations is also needed, so an operator would need to hire very experienced folk who will keep current. There are more complexities to stay on top of in the

Above left: Many companies provide intensive in-house training courses to bring their dispatchers and schedulers up to speed

2

“We operate over 100 flights a day... We need great team players. This is fundamental to ensure that the customer doesn’t feel as if various departments are passing the buck or working against each other”

Nick Van der Meer, COO of VistaJet

3

“One of the principal challenges of the role is being able to manage time and costs. Customers who are willing to spend great sums of money for corporate air services expect to receive results”

Jason Tepool, senior manager, Jeppesen Training Solutions

international arena. Established S&D service providers offer audits on ground service providers, credit at most locations, constant contact for last-minute changes and strong relationships with civil aviation authorities.”

“We have tried the outsourcing avenue in the past, but found the reaction time and quality of external providers did not meet our expectations,” adds Van der Meer. “With a complex operation like ours, having to relay information off-site slows down the process. We found that we can perform better training and quality control by having our teams in-house under one roof. Our company culture is incredibly strong, so having a team of motivated employees sitting together in an operations hub is our key to efficient, fast and industry-leading results.”

Training programs

To encourage learning, the NBAA hosts an annual Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference, which next year is

being held February 7-10 in Fort Worth, Texas. This is not a formal training program, but it keeps employees informed of any key regulation changes and best practices offered by their peers. By attending specific courses, credits can be awarded. Although there are some national aviation authorities that require dispatchers to be licensed – by the FAA, for example – many don't.

"With our in-house training program, VistaJet can take a candidate with no dispatch experience and have them up and running within three to six months, a similar timeframe to fresh candidates starting with a basic FAA dispatch license," says Van der Meer. "Additionally, there are numerous dispatch courses available, such as the FAA/NAA Dispatcher Certification. It is quite FAA-specific, and is not an EU aviation requirement, but forms a good base to start from."

"The FAA license shows interest and commitment," says Markus Schuler, director of ground operations, EMEA and Asia, at business aviation services company Jet Aviation. "But it is not particularly helpful to us, as it is mainly based on airlines and US rules and regulations, and our dispatchers are required to cover those of all our registries (including in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Isle of Man). Our dispatchers often have different backgrounds. Some have worked for other companies providing dispatch services; some are equipped with a bachelor's degree in aviation; some are experienced pilots.

"But they all have one thing in common: a strong aviation background. They must also be able to speak and write fluently in German and English, and all speak one or two additional languages, such as French, Italian or Spanish. Although no specific license or training is required, we also look for special skills such as exceptional knowledge of geography, proficiency in languages, analytical skills, diplomacy, and a technical flair to use all of the various flight-planning tools."

On account of the complexity and number of tasks involved in the role, dispatchers at Jet Aviation receive

4

"General traits of a successful scheduler include being detail oriented, outgoing, a good communicator and a team player, with the ability to make decisions in a fast-paced environment"

Gary Martin, training program manager,
Universal Weather and Aviation

5

"A dispatcher must balance the requirements and expectations of each operator with the reality of the operating environment, particularly when problems or restrictions occur, such as weather delays or aircraft technical issues"

Andy Shaw, managing director,
Flightworx Aviation

a minimum of 18 months of on-the-job, in-house training before they are considered fully qualified, regardless of their background.

New technology

Ever-changing technologies come with a steep learning curve, which has made the dispatcher's role a lot more complex and demanding. Compounded by the ever-increasing volume of air traffic, structural demands on airports, increased competition and government regulation, technology has made the role of the dispatcher more interesting, but also more stressful. The successful execution of these roles is completely dependent upon the latest technological tools and applications. From access to weather, airspace congestion reports, aircraft inflight communications, maintenance status, contracted ground services, diplomatic service and a myriad of other interface points, the latest tech tools are at the heart of the role.

"The first question we often get from aircraft crews about systems we use or information they receive is, 'Is that available through an app?'," says Shaw. "It's the way we all work now and, with the move toward paperless cockpits, it makes sense for as much dispatch activity to be completed and delivered through an IT gadget or system. It brings efficiencies and speeds things up, providing it all works correctly. Just in case, the paper back-up copy will always be available."

"At VistaJet, we have invested heavily in operational automation through technology," adds Van der Meer. "It is allowing for considerably higher volumes of flights to be dispatched, sometimes up to 30% more per day, with what we believe is superior fuel and route planning." ○



Left: A key requirement of schedulers is that they are self-starters, but have the ability to work with others

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Showtime

Your guide to the world's largest business aviation event starts right here

The NBAA's Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (NBAA-BACE) opens its doors on November 1 in Orlando, Florida, featuring more than 1,100 exhibitors displayed

across 1,000,000ft² of floor space. The three-day event also includes two static displays of aircraft and is set to welcome around 27,000 attendees. Running alongside the exhibition, the conference will host more than 50 education sessions covering topics such as drones, emergency response, staffing needs, international handling standards, weather, big data and aircraft transactions. Over the following four pages, *Business Airport International* picks its highlights from the exhibition and conference, which will bring together current and prospective aircraft owners, manufacturers and customers into one meeting place.

What:

NBAA Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition

When:

November 1-3, 2016

Where:

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando Executive Airport, Florida

Key facts

1,100+ exhibitors

1,000,000ft² of floor space

27,000+ attendees expected

50+ education sessions

Local airports:

Orlando Executive Airport

Orlando International

Orlando Sanford

Orlando Apopka Airport

Mid Florida Air Services Airport

Kissimmee Gateway Airport

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**Curaçao
Air Terminal
Services,
Caribbean
Booth 5073**

Exhibitor news

IS-BAH awarded

Curaçao Air Terminal Services (CATS), a provider of business and general aviation handling services in Curaçao and Cuba, is attending NBAA-BACE to showcase the VIP services it offers the general aviation industry.

CATS delivers essential services for all types of clientele, including refueling, VIP support customized to each client's needs, car rental, hotel booking, and assistance with immigration and customs. The company, which has more than 30 years of experience in the industry, prides itself on being able to handle any request from its clients.

Members of the CATS team will be present at NBAA-BACE to provide advice and help on how operators and owners of aircraft can obtain a Cuban overflight permit. General aviation travel to Cuba is becoming more user-friendly, but it is still a highly regulated operating environment, so it is important for operators to be aware of the rules.

CATS team members will also be discussing how the company has recently achieved the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) certification for its operations in Curaçao. This certification has helped the company improve safety and customer service further. CATS will continue to improve its code of practices to deliver a safe, reliable and efficient service to its clients.

At NBAA-BACE, CATS is hoping to meet with pilots, operators, aircraft owners, dispatchers, and anyone interested in flying to Cuba and Curaçao. Also on the CATS booth will be the Curaçao Yacht Agency, who will be able to talk to visitors about taking their private vessels to Curaçao.

Expanded facilities

Fontainebleau Aviation is on the verge of opening its US\$22m expansion project at Miami-Opa

Locka Executive Airport. The project, which includes the construction of two 35,000ft² hangars, 19,000ft² of leasable office space and a 12,000ft² taxi-through canopy, is scheduled to open mid-November 2016.

The company is attending NBAA-BACE to talk to existing customers and potential new clients about the expansion project and the ways it will benefit them, with the increased storage space and upgraded, modern facilities.

Centrally located at Miami-Opa Locka Executive Airport, Fontainebleau can accommodate virtually any type of aircraft, including Boeing Business Jets (BBJ). The company's private aviation facility operates as a full-service FBO, offering services that include fueling, pilots' lounge, aircraft parking, conference rooms, on-site maintenance, concierge service and catering. The Fontainebleau team will be eager to prove that they can cope with any request from their customers.

At NBAA-BACE, Fontainebleau hopes to meet with potential new clients, especially those in the northeast and on the West Coast of the USA. The company's team will be on hand to discuss and share information on its facilities.

**Fontainebleau
Aviation, USA
Booth 4639**



Education sessions

NBAA-BACE will include more than 50 education workshops, courses and conference sessions. *Business Airport International* picks its top eight sessions that aircraft operators and FBOs will not want to miss

Session: *Emergency response planning workshops*

When: October 30-31, 8:00am-5:00pm

Presenter: The VanAllen Group

Every aviation department should have the ability to implement its emergency response plan at a moment's notice. This practical two-day workshop, taking place in the run-up to the main show, helps companies prepare for worst-case scenarios and gives employees the knowledge needed to put together an effective response plan. Participants learn the issues involved in aviation-related disasters, which also can readily be applied in non-aviation events.

Session: *The evolution of UAS: a regulatory and application perspective*

When: November 1, 10:30am-12:00pm

Presenters: Brent Terwilliger, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (moderator); Paul McDuffee, Insitu; Dan Guwein, FAA; Jonathan Rupprecht, Rupprecht Law

This session will review the current state of various national, state and local requirements for the use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in the USA. It will look at how the FAA is working toward better accommodating and integrating UAS into airspace and address the complicated regulatory landscape for operators. The session will also look at the possible outcomes of the Micro UAS Aviation Rulemaking Committee's recommendations about UAS flights over people.

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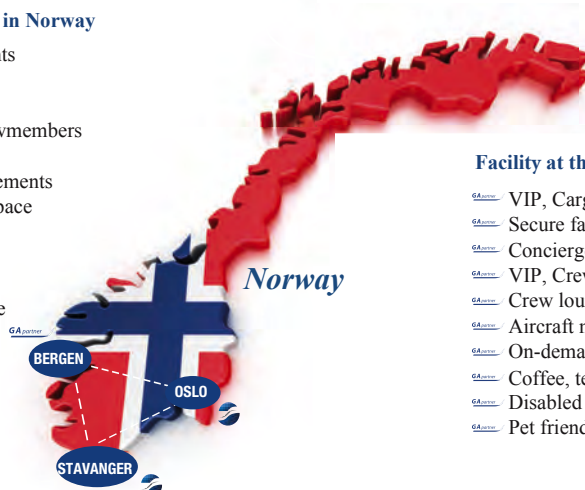
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Facility at the Bergen Airport in Norway

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- GA - Aircraft maintenance support
- GA - On-demand aircraft charter support
- GA - Coffee, tea, water, soft drinks & snacks
- GA - Disabled facilities and wheelchair available
- GA - Pet friendly



McKinney Air Center, USA
Booth 2207

New hangar space

The McKinney Air Center, based at McKinney National Airport in Texas, has recently been voted the number-one US FBO in the Pilots' Choice Awards 2016 by FltPlan. Visitors to NBAA-BACE are encouraged to stop by the McKinney booth to find out why the company has been awarded the top spot.

McKinney Air Center boasts a full range of services, including aircraft fueling, line services, lease hangars and flight crew amenities. For fueling, the center is an AVNET premier FBO dealer, offers Avfuel brand Jet-A and 100LL, competitive contract fuel programs and volume fuel discounts. Line services include aircraft storage, cleaning and detailing, and on-site aircraft maintenance. Crew amenities include catering, conference rooms, rental cars, flight planning services, private crew lounge, sleep room and showers, and US customs on-site.

Members of the team will be on hand to discuss the center's offering and also to provide information on the 18,000ft² hangar that has recently opened at McKinney National Airport to accommodate transient aircraft of all sizes. The US\$1.5m for its construction was donated by the McKinney Community Development Corp, and an additional hangar set for a 2017 opening is in the design phase, with construction bidding to take place in the autumn.

New appointments

ExcelAire is attending NBAA-BACE to showcase its private jet charter and jet management services. The company claims to fly anywhere in the world, including Cuba. ExcelAire has one of the largest heavy-jet fleets on the Eastern US seaboard and has 200,000ft² of hangar space at Long Island MacArthur Airport, New York.

During the exhibition, ExcelAire will announce that it will be adding a new aircraft to its fleet – an Embraer Legacy. The company will also announce that Robert Molsbergen has joined ExcelAire from NetJets as its new president.



ExcelAire, worldwide
Booth 4226

Representatives from the company will be on hand to talk about ExcelAire's services. ExcelAire hopes to meet with existing customers and potential new clients.

The operator will be exhibiting on the Hawthorne Global Aviation booth, ExcelAire's parent company. Visitors are encouraged to attend the booth to find out how the company can provide a personalized private jet charter. The new president, Robert Molsbergen, will be at the booth welcoming visitors.



Corporate Angel Network, worldwide
Booth 3929

Networking event

The Corporate Angel Network (CAN), a US-based non-profit charitable organization whose mission is to arrange free air travel for cancer patients to treatment centers by using empty seats on corporate aircraft flying on routine business, will be hosting a special networking event at NBAA-BACE to raise critical funds. 'An

Evening with Angels', which will be held on Wednesday, November 2 at the Hilton Orlando hotel, will begin with networking, cocktails and a silent auction. The auction will include over 100 items, such as autographed sports memorabilia, new electronics, children's packages and more. There will also be a live auction that will include priceless trips and other experiences available for bidding.

The funds raised will help CAN continue its important work. CAN coordinates more than 225 patient flights a month and has arranged more than 50,000 patient flights since its founding in 1981.

Session: **IBAC International Standards in practice**

When: November 1, 10:30am-12:00pm

Presenters: Terry Yeomans and Bennet Walsh, IBAC; Robert Schick, TAC Air

This session will look at how companies can improve the safety of their workplace and operations. Attendees will learn about how the IBAC International Standards programs, such as the International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO) and the International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH), can enhance an organization's ability to identify and manage safety risks. Aircraft operators, FBOs, business aircraft handling agents and anyone involved in support services procurement or supply will benefit.

Session: **Communicating the value of business aviation**

When: November 1, 2:30-3:30pm

Presenters: Jodie Brown, Summit Solutions; Don Henderson, VanAllen Group

In 2016, a number of long-standing and recognizable flight departments closed. Everyone in this industry recognizes that the use of a business aircraft is more than simply flying from A to B – it needs to provide more value than the expense of the operation. Learning how to effectively identify and communicate the value of business aviation, which varies between companies, is critical for aviation leaders.

Session: **Protecting airport air traffic from errant drones**

When: November 1, 4:30-5:30pm

Presenters: Bob Lamond, NBAA (moderator); Alan Kraft, CACI; Ted Tazewell, Hogan Lovells; Clara Bennett, Boca Raton Airport Authority; Michael O'Donnell, FAA

NBAA members are concerned with growing reports of drones in the airspace around airports. Last fall, the FAA entered into a Pathfinder agreement with CACI International to evaluate how the company's technology can help detect UAS in the vicinity of airports. The FAA expanded the Pathfinder Program in May 2016 to further evaluate procedures and technologies designed to identify unauthorized UAS operations in and around airports. This panel will discuss the technical progress of that program, as well as the legal and policy implications of implementing these technologies.



**Odyssey Aviation,
Bahamas
Booth 4617**

New facilities

Odyssey Aviation is the largest provider of aviation services in the Bahamas, offering general aviation solutions at five airports on four islands. The company has three full-service FBOs at Nassau's Lynden Pindling International Airport, Exuma International Airport and San Salvador International Airport. It also has two handling locations at Governor's Harbor Airport and Rock Sound International.

During NBAA-BACE, Odyssey will showcase the facilities it has on offer and talk to visitors about how the business can meet operators' needs. All Odyssey locations are ports of entry, with customs and immigration services. All three FBO locations are Rubis dealers with Jet-A fuel. The Nassau and Exuma locations also offer AvGas.

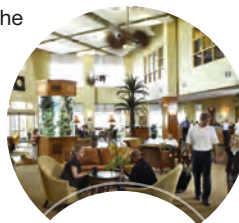
Odyssey Aviation's facilities in Nassau and Exuma are both part of the Paragon Aviation Group, which is an exclusive membership of independent FBOs that provide an elite experience to general aviation travelers in North America. In 2016, Odyssey Aviation Nassau was ranked the number-one FBO in the Bahamas in the Pilots' Choice Awards 2016 by FitPlan.

The Nassau facility has recently been improved with a US\$4m 60,000ft² expansion of its lighted ramp, bringing the total footprint to more than 600,000ft², almost double the size of any other FBO at Lynden Pindling International Airport. The added space will create room to park 20 to 25 more aircraft. The expansion also included a new 20,000ft² hangar for ultra-long-range business jets.

New MRO division

Banyan Air Service is attending NBAA-BACE to showcase its 24-hour full-service FBO at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport in Florida. The company has been serving aircraft owners, charter operators, corporate flight departments, flight schools and governmental agencies since 1979. Banyan offers fuel and ground services, aircraft sales and acquisitions, turbine airframe and engine maintenance, avionics installations and service, Bahamas and Caribbean travel assistance, and aircraft parts solutions.

In August 2016, Banyan Air Service announced that its maintenance and avionics divisions had combined to create a single repair station called Banyan MRO. The FAA awarded the certification to the company to merge Banyan's individual repair station certificates. By combining the repair stations, Banyan's technical division, now known as an MRO, will be more streamlined in customer support. In addition to the US certification, Banyan also has authorizations from EASA, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cayman, Columbia, Paraguay and Venezuela.



**Banyan Air
Service, USA
Booths 2207
& 4750**

ARGUS Platinum rated

Pentastar Aviation, which is headquartered at Oakland County International Airport, is a provider of aircraft management, advisory services, aircraft maintenance, avionics, interior services and private jet charter, operated through Pentastar Aviation Charter. The company also operates the Pentastar Aviation FBO in Waterford, Michigan, which provides executive terminal operations, including luxurious lounges, conference facilities, flight planning, heated hangars, secure ramp access and concierge services.

The company is attending NBAA-BACE to discuss how it can provide operators with a one-stop shop for their flight needs. Pentastar will also be on hand to discuss with visitors its recent news that it has renewed its ARGUS Platinum Rating. Pentastar's operations have been Platinum rated since 2006. The prestigious Platinum Rating is ARGUS's highest safety rating and is awarded only to air charter operators that have demonstrated successful implementation of industry best safety practices relative to their operations and maintenance. In addition to the ARGUS Platinum rating, Pentastar Aviation Charter holds an IS-BAO Stage 2 Registration and Wyvern Wingman designation. ○

**Pentastar
Aviation, USA
Booth 1408**

Session: **Fly to Cuba? It's now legal and possible**

When: November 2, 9:00-10:00am

Presenter: Eric Norber, Cuba Handling

Flying an N-registered aircraft to Cuba has always been difficult. Recent changes now make it possible and legal for Part 91 and Part 135 flights to the island, but the reality is that Cuba is a complicated bureaucracy. This session will answer specific and technical questions about flying to and visiting Cuba and explain the specifics of both the US and Cuban requirements, as well as procedures to fly there safely and legally. Additionally, while aircraft may now be able fly to Cuba, passengers and crew are subject to additional requirements, which this session will clarify.

Session: **Digital transformation through emerging technologies**

When: November 2, 12:30-1:30pm

Presenters: Jimmy Cho, Jeppesen; Drew Costakis, Microsoft

In this session, attendees will learn how digital transformation through emerging technologies will impact current and future operations. The presenters will use scenarios from other industries to show how technological advances may provide opportunities in training, maintenance and other areas affecting corporate operators. Attendees will also learn how cloud technology and augmented reality impacts today's business landscape and what it could mean in the future.

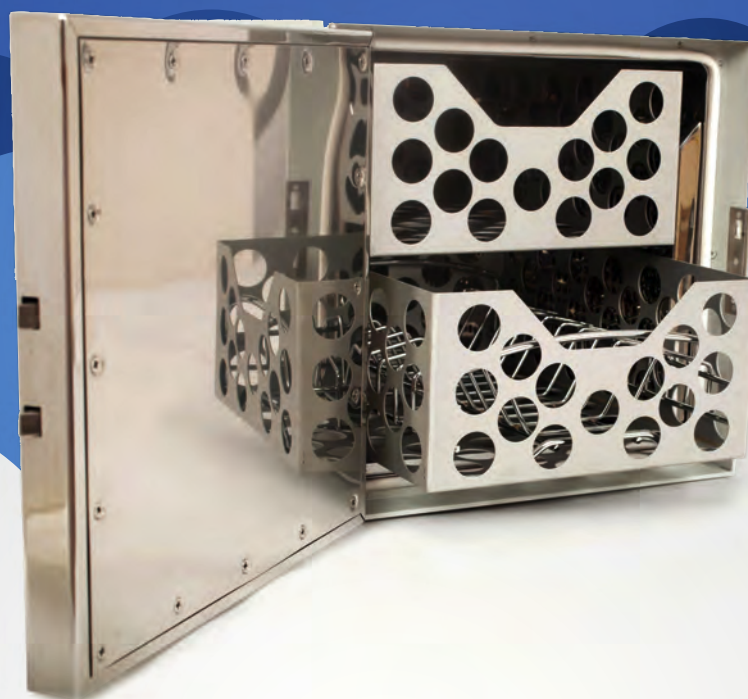
Session: **Part 135 compliance: hot topics and record keeping**

When: November 2, 3:00-4:30pm

Presenters: Kent Jackson and Kali Hague, Jackson & Wade; Lindsey McFarren, McFarren Aviation Consulting

This session will address current Part 135 hot topics and challenges related to regulatory compliance (especially managing flight, duty and rest requirements), discuss the FAA's new approach to compliance and provide guidance on record keeping. Hot topics to be discussed include: Part 135 flight, duty and rest requirements, also Part 135 flight training programs, check airmen and instructors, exclusive use aircraft compliance, the FAA's new compliance philosophy, and maintenance and flight crew records.

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Exceptional growth

Turkish company **Havas** is expanding its remit, offering excellent ground-handling services to airports far and wide

Havas offers complete ground-handling solutions to more than 200 airlines at 32 stations in four countries – namely Turkey, Latvia, Germany and Saudi Arabia. The company serves more than 49 million passengers in its network annually on 360,000 flights, as well as handling 330,000 tons of cargo and 27 million items of baggage.

It is because of its extensive experience in Turkey, where it was founded, that Havas has continued to expand worldwide. Today it offers its ground-handling services in different geographies.

In addition to its subsidiaries, Havas Europe and Havas Saudi Arabia – which provide ground-handling services in Europe and across the Middle East respectively – Havas has an equal partnership with Turkish Airlines in Turkish Ground Services (TGS). Havas also provides passenger transportation services between airports and city centers from 19 different airport locations.

Airlines' cargo, mail and warehouse services can also be handled by Havas, using its warehouses at Istanbul Ataturk, Ankara Esenboga and Izmir Adnan Menderes airports, offering a total area of 9,300m². All services are carried out with a customer-focused and innovative approach, with the warehouses featuring ISO 9001:2000 and OHSAS 18001 certifications, as well as the Havas customer relationship management system.



Havas is Turkey's biggest airport shuttle service provider, and the only airline business partner that can offer a shuttle service between airports and cities across the country.

Download the mobile app

Havas has been investing heavily in mobile and operational technologies with the purpose of enhancing its service offerings. The new Havas mobile app is key among these investments. Since dispatch is an essential process in business jet operations, users can take advantage of the app for their processes. The user-friendly interface enables business jet operators and

Above: **Havas originates from Turkey, but now offers ground handling in a range of countries**

Left: **Handling requests can now be submitted by customers to Havas employees via an app**



Vital statistics

Locations: Turkey, Latvia, Germany, Saudi Arabia

Founded: 1933

Features: 14,800 staff and 32 stations worldwide, annually serving more than 360,000 flights and 330,000 tons of cargo

Services: Passenger and baggage handling, ramp, aircraft cleaning, cargo and flight operations

cockpit crews to submit their handling requests or any enquiries relating to services offered by Havas.

Tailor-made for VIPs and business

Havas has been offering bespoke VIP services for its business jet operator clients across the country. Despite the recent economic challenges that the entire tourism and aviation industries face, Havas maintains an increasing growth trend and strong presence in Turkey's VIP sector. In addition to handling routine and ad-hoc business flights, 2015 and 2016 were strong years for VIP flights for Havas, proving its quality of service in this area.

VIP traffic figures have been on the increase in recent years, with Turkey hosting a number of major events, such as the G20 summit in Antalya and the Islamic Summit Conference and UN World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. Havas played a very important role in all these events, welcoming world leaders and successfully serving dozens of VVIP flights. It also continues to handle flights during the annual Istanbul Airshow. ○

HAVAS

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www.ukipme.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number **101**

Down to business

Manchester Airports Group (MAG) took ownership of London Stansted in 2013, and is now turning it into a major destination for business aviation

Manchester Airports Group (MAG), the UK's largest airport operator, owns and operates four airports across the country – London Stansted, East Midlands and Bournemouth, as well as Manchester. Together these locations handle more than 50 million passengers a year, with dedicated business aviation facilities at each.

Conan Busby, head of business aviation at MAG, says, "All of MAG's airports welcome a huge variety of aircraft every day – from the three daily Emirates A380s at Manchester to the 10,000 private jets and business aircraft that we see annually at our Stansted operation."

Focus on Stansted

London Stansted is an increasingly important airport for the capital, and is also close to Cambridge, a city famous for its university and hi-tech industries. Since MAG acquired the airport in 2013, traffic growth has boomed due to a refreshed commercial offering and other London airports reaching capacity.

At 3,048m, the runway is also long enough to handle some of the largest business aviation jets. As a result, the airport has become increasingly popular with the Middle East markets, where there is a particular trend toward larger business aircraft. Size, however, is incidental, as the sole ambition at Stansted is to deliver an unparalleled service to operators and their passengers.

Away from the runway, Stansted is also home to five world-class FBOs – Fayair, Harrods Aviation, Inflight Jet Centre, Universal Aviation and Xjet. All offer a host of unique and tailored services that can cater effectively to any size aircraft.



"The London market is undoubtedly competitive," comments Busby. "But Stansted has a longer runway than many of the dedicated business aviation airports serving the capital – almost 400m longer than Farnborough, and nearly twice as long as Northolt and City Airport. When you need to land a large aircraft, Stansted is a viable option."

Easy access to London

The list of high-profile customers using the Stansted runway in recent years has extended to US President Barack Obama, who jetted in on Air Force One. Originally thought of as a distant outpost, Stansted has seen London growing toward it, with the capital's business and cultural centers moving eastwards.



Vital statistics

Airports: Manchester, London Stansted, East Midlands and Bournemouth

Founded: 2001

Runways: Manchester – 05L/23R – 10,000ft; 05/23L – 10,007ft; London Stansted – 10,000ft; East Midlands – 9,491ft; Bournemouth – 7,451ft

Above: **Harrods Aviation is one of five FBOs at Stansted**

Below: **Universal Aviation FBO (left) and Inflight Jet Centre (right), both at Stansted**

Stansted is now able to provide easy road access to the financial districts at Canary Wharf, culturally vibrant quarters like Shoreditch and Dalston, as well as the Olympic Park at Stratford and the old City of London. The surrounding area is benefiting from these improvements too, with the Cambridge corridor said to be the fastest growing region in the UK outside London, and home to a number of hi-tech businesses.

"We know that business aviation jets have a huge choice of airports when flying into London," says Busby, "but we think that Stansted's growth can only continue, given the infrastructure and facilities we are able to offer."

This is a more diverse airport than many people realize. Famous as a hub for European low-cost carriers, Stansted also has an unrivalled dedicated long-haul freighter network serving destinations as diverse as Bogota, Accra and Guangzhou. The length of its runway is now helping business aviation take hold more than ever before. ○

MANCHESTER AIRPORTS GROUP (MAG)

To learn more about this advertiser, visit

www.ukipme.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 102

City for all seasons

Sion Airport is located in the Valais Alps in the southwest of Switzerland, offering easy access to mountain ski resorts in winter, or hiking and cycle routes in summer

Vital statistics

Location: Sion, Switzerland

Operating hours: Summer – 7:00am-8:00pm; Winter – 8:00am-twilight (8:00pm with extension)

Runway length: 6,560ft

Fuel: Jet A1, Avgas 100LL and Avgas UL91



Engulfed by the mountains of the Rhone Valley, and with two rocky outcrops rising out of the old city, each with a medieval castle sitting on the top, Sion feels like a location plucked from a fairy tale or even *Lord of the Rings*. Its charm merely evolves with the seasons, with its snow-covered rooftops in winter a reminder of its popularity as a ski hub, while the vineyards on the mountain slopes appear to stretch for miles during the summer months.

Located just 2.5km away is Sion Airport, traditionally used for military aviation as well as civilian flights, serving a number of airlines and private charters. Advantages of using the airport include its amazing comfort, efficient customs procedures and swift transfers, with the most popular ski resorts of the Valais Alps all in close proximity. Just minutes after stepping from their airplane, visitors could be in a limousine or helicopter, being whisked away to Verbier, Crans-Montana, Saas-Fee or Zermatt.

Luxury living

The Valais region is perfect for an unforgettable stay. Visit in winter to experience over 2,400km of ski slopes in 36 different areas. The beautiful mountain scenery is ideal for winter sports – Sion

has on several occasions bid to host the Winter Olympics. Despite having yet to host the event, it has come close.

With the Rhone Valley nearby, the perfect way to round off the day is with a glass of fine wine – particularly when sampled with raclette, a wheel of Swiss cheese flavored by the grass of the Alpine pastures, heated preferably on an open fire, with the warm, melting portion scraped off onto a plate to enjoy.

Visitors have always found the Swiss locals to be friendly and welcoming. There is a choice of historic hotels, such as the Mont Cervin Palace or the Hotel Bella Tola, as well as those pushing refinement to even newer heights, including the Hotel Cervo, LeCrans and the Guarda Golf Hotel. International chains have also found much to like about the region, with the W Hotel brand among those offering facilities, and an unrivaled choice of chalets for those who prefer greater privacy.

The finer things

Some of the world's most talented chefs can also be found here. The respected and influential Michelin and Gault et Millau restaurant guides have accredited around 60 local establishments between them.

Above: **Sion Airport** serves a number of airlines and private charters

Right: **The airport** is close to some of the most luxurious ski resorts in Europe



For a touch of culture, there is much to absorb from the area's artistic heritage, with a number of museums to explore – among them the Fondation Pierre Gianadda in Martigny, built around ancient Roman ruins, and the Fondation Pierre Arnaud in Lens, with its huge collection of art. There are also famous musical events, including the Verbier Festival, Zermatt Unplugged and Caprices Festival in Crans-Montana.

In summer, the region is a favorite with motorsport enthusiasts, who test their skills on the winding mountain roads. Golf also falls under the spotlight in September when the Omega European Masters takes place at the Crans-sur-Sierre club in Crans-Montana on the 18-hole Severiano Ballesteros course – named after the legendary Spanish player who visited to suggest improvements in the mid-1990s. ○

SION AIRPORT

To learn more about this advertiser, visit

www.ukipme.com/info/bai

Reader Inquiry Number 103

Ripe for expansion

With planning permission granted by the UK government for **London City Airport** to expand, there will be huge changes at the airport between now and 2025



London City Airport's Private Jet Centre is the only private jet center in London. It is within five miles of two of London's major business and financial districts, Canary Wharf and the City of London. Time-poor business travelers always appreciate the jet center's speed and efficiency.

The Jet Centre mantra is the 90-second experience. With its own security, immigration and customs, a 90-second transfer from car door to aircraft seat is guaranteed. And now, with a reduced tariff for 2017, customers can enjoy an unparalleled customer experience at a competitive price.

More than 20 business aircraft types are welcomed at London City Airport, with the Global 6000 and Embraer 550 being the most recent additions to the approved model list.

Bigger and better

London City Airport has recently received planning permission from the UK government to expand the airport, which will enable the facility to welcome 6.5 million passengers by 2025 and inject £1.3bn (US\$1.7bn) each year into the economy. In 2015, the airport handled a record-breaking 4.3 million passengers.

The City Airport Development Programme (CADP) is a £344m (US\$460m) privately-funded investment,



Above: **London City Airport** is located near **Canary Wharf** and the **City of London**

Right: **Already well equipped**, the airport is to undergo a major **expansion plan**

which includes plans for seven new aircraft stands, a parallel taxiway and passenger terminal extension. The development will transform the airport – one of East London's largest employers – enabling it to welcome next-generation aircraft and add more capacity.



Vital statistics

Location: The nearest airport to Canary Wharf and the City of London. The Private Jet Centre is a separate building, with its own airport security and immigration

Operating hours: Weekdays 6:30am-9:30pm, Saturday 6:30am-12:30pm, Sunday 12:30pm-9:30pm

Runway length: 09/27, 4,900ft

Fuel: Jet A1

The sky's the limit

The construction phase of development will create 500 jobs, and a further 1,600 people will be employed once the work is completed. Under the plans, by 2025 the airport will add approximately a further 32,000 flights per year. These movements are already permitted. This will help to unlock more air capacity within London's airport system.

The expansion will also open up opportunities at London City Airport for airlines from longer-haul destinations, including the Middle East, Turkey, Russia and the East Coast of the USA, who may have customers flying in for business. ○

LONDON CITY AIRPORT

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Reader Inquiry Number 104

Keep on moving

Mototok is a German company building remote-controlled tugs that fit to the front wheel of an aircraft – making it easier to guide the plane out of the hangar and around the airport

The story of how Mototok came to be began in 2003. Kersten Eckert, a German aviation engineer and avid pilot, wanted an easier way to move his aircraft out of the hangar, especially when it was right at the back. He was fed up with trying to navigate around the other planes, getting others to help guide him out, and wasting valuable time that could be better spent in the air.

Eckert needed an easier solution, and began to sketch a device that would later become the first Mototok – an electric remote-controlled tug that supported the front wheel of the aircraft and could be used to guide it out. Others were impressed by the idea, and Eckert found two friends in the industry to partner with to help develop the product.

Easy to use

A company, Mototok International, was set up near Dusseldorf, building devices capable today of towing aircraft up to 195 tons. Mototoks are used at airports all over the world, including FBOs, MROs, corporate aviation, and also by manufacturers and the military.

The appeal of the Mototok is the simplicity of its use. Training takes just a few hours, and only one person is needed to operate it. It works with all kinds of aircraft and helicopters, moving them around the airport with ease.

A very clever feature is the creeper snail mode on the remote control, where the operator can slowly inch the aircraft into position, with its nose, tail section or wing just millimeters away from the nearest wall, or another plane, getting the best possible use from the hangar space.

These could lead to airports maximizing their potential revenues, with cost-savings made in other ways, as all



Above right : **All Mototok devices are very easy to operate**

Right: **Using Mototok (left) could mean squeezing more aircraft into a hangar than before (right)**



Vital statistics

Established: 2003

Location: Dusseldorf, Germany

Products: Remote-controlled helicopter and aircraft tugs, extremely compact, different models available to suit a range of vehicle types and weights

Customers: FBOs, MROs, aircraft manufacturers and military organizations

Mototok devices experience very few maintenance issues. They are also a far more reliable solution than a conventional diesel tow tractor.

Better use of hangar space

Using a Mototok, aircraft can be arranged in positions that make the best use of the hangar space. In many cases it has even allowed operators to squeeze more planes in, due to the floor savings made, which some rate as high as 40%.

Alternatively, it may even be possible for operators to consider handling larger aircraft. In this case, upgrade the Mototok to a more powerful model, like a Twin.

Years of success

Mototok now caters to aircraft of all shapes and sizes. There are Mototok models for light jets and turboprops weighing just 15 tons, with a number of Twin releases for aircraft of 39, 50 and 75 tons. The final step up is the Spacer line, which is designed for the largest jets – a Spacer 195, for example, will handle aircraft weighing up to 195 tons. ○

MOTOTOK

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Reader Inquiry Number **105**



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New horizons

Staff at **SouthAir** have been kept busy this year, helping to transform an old airport building into the Icelandic operator's new state-of-the-art FBO terminal

It's been a busy year for SouthAir at Keflavik International Airport in Iceland. The country has seen a surge in tourism over the past few years, and there are no signs of it slowing down in the foreseeable future. Also, the fact that more aircraft operators see Iceland as the ideal stop for their transatlantic flights means that traffic has greatly increased at all airports in the country this year.

With that in mind, SouthAir has been looking at how to expand its operations at Keflavik to better meet the demands of an ever-growing customer base. After weighing up the options, the company decided to move its facilities to a new location within the airport – some 200m further up the ramp to a larger building, with some exciting new facilities.

In early March 2016, SouthAir received the keys to the new facility – a building that used to be a terminal for the US Navy, back when the eastern ramp at Keflavik was under military control. Much work had to be done, and after some preliminary repairs this was able to start. Renovations began in the beginning of April, with a proposed deadline of July 1.

SouthAir staff were not afraid to put in extra hours, working on the new building, stripping it right back



and rebuilding it from the bottom up. Woodwork, electricity, plumbing – all had to be replaced. With a little Icelandic determination and optimism, the work was easily undertaken and the deadline met, with the team moving in when planned. Having a hand in the renovations and changes themselves spurred the staff on to completion.

Above: **SouthAir** has transformed an old airport terminal into its latest facility

Below: **Modern spaces** for refreshment and relaxation can be found inside

Next steps

What happens now for SouthAir? The business has a larger terminal to make use of, with greater possibilities for future expansion, as the surrounding area offers more land to build upon, which was severely limited in the previous building. One of the most exciting changes is the plan for a security gate on the GA side of the airfield (eastern ramp), to be stationed in one part of the facility, making this the only landside/airside GA terminal in the airport. This means that the SouthAir building will see a lot more traffic than before, but will still be big enough to be able to offer the comfort and relaxing atmosphere the company is known for.

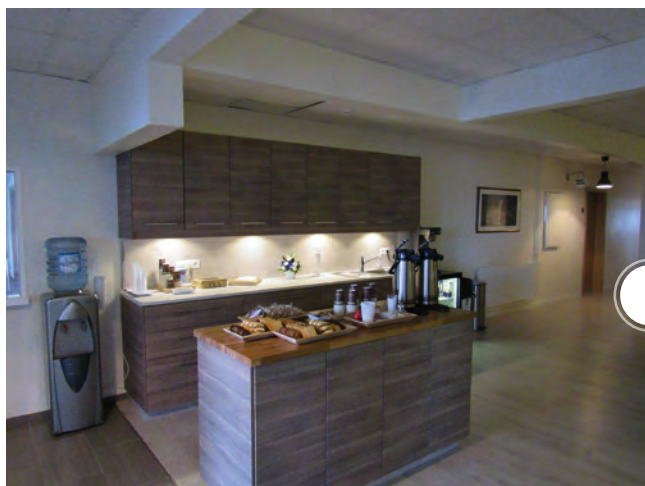
The new FBO is spacious, with multiple rooms for relaxation, conference and VIP lounges, as well as a refreshments area. The first floor alone is nearly double the size of the previous FBO. On the second floor, spaces will be rented out to flight-related activities, such as the airport's resident flight school. Work here will commence soon, to be finished by the end of the year. ○

SOUTHAIR

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Reader Inquiry Number 106



The high life

When flying to Mauritius or the Caribbean, the luxury private terminals offered by **YU Lounge** will add comfort, fine dining and generous hangar space to the experience



Vital statistics

Location: St Kitts and Nevis, Mauritius

Operating hours: 6:00am-10:00pm, with extensions available on request

Runway length: St Kitts and Nevis – 7,618ft, Mauritius – 11,056ft

Fuel: Jet A

YU Lounge is an exclusive private airport facility that operates on the islands of St Kitts and Nevis, in the Caribbean, and Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. It offers a range of aircraft care services and luxury lounges, catering to the discerning passenger traveling on commercial airliners and private jets. YU Lounge is a 'one of a kind' concept that epitomizes the quintessential travel experience. It combines the finest in hospitality and travel services, from the moment passengers step off the aircraft.

Upon arrival, guests are met by a YU Lounge concierge. The concierge greets the passengers and leads them to a Porsche Cayenne, which will drive them to the plush lounge at the edge of the airfield. They are then invited to relax, enjoying complimentary gourmet snacks and drinks in a comfortable and calming ambiance.

The YU menu reflects today's contemporary sensibilities, with a focus on deep flavors and enticing presentation. As guests indulge with the YU Lounge's finest champagne and canapés, the concierge takes care of the airport formalities and luggage. For departure, the concierge will handle the transfer from the lounge to the aircraft.

Both YU Lounges are equipped with the latest technologies and services, such

as iMac workstations, plasma screens and free wi-fi. Both also have a kids' corner, where children can play under the supervision of a staff member, with a fully equipped meeting room offering secretarial services for business travelers.

Catering to aircraft and crew

The YU Lounge team has the expertise to look after a range of aircraft types and sizes. The team offers a smooth and efficient aircraft handling service for all

Above: **The YU Lounge facility in St Kitts and Nevis, located in the Caribbean**

Below: **The hangar in Mauritius is big enough for four Falcon 900 or two Global Express jets**

non-scheduled business, private and general aviation aircraft. Whether the customer arrives in a private jet or has an executive aircraft, staff will be on hand to look after the specific needs of the client.

The aircraft hangar facilities at the YU Lounge Mauritius can accommodate four Falcon 900 or two Global Express jets. For flight crew members, the terminal features a dedicated lounge equipped with modern features including free wi-fi, complimentary beverages, iMac workstations, comfortable rest areas and shower facilities, with all the expected amenities that will enable crew members to freshen up and be ready for the next stage of their journey.

An exceptional service

YU Lounge has a reputation for exceptional service. The company ethos is always to go above and beyond, to give guests either a unique first impression or a memorable final touch to their stay. Additional services such as flower delivery, the purchase of duty-free items, and hotel and restaurant reservations, can be arranged by the YU team. ○

YU LOUNGE

To learn more about this advertiser, visit

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Reader Inquiry Number **107**



Caribbean support

Curaçao Air Terminal Services (CATS) serves the islands of Curaçao and Cuba in the Caribbean, and recently received its IS-BAH certification

Founded in 1983, Curaçao Air Terminal Services (CATS) is a business and general aviation handler serving Curaçao and Cuba. The company offers a tailored service to each of its clients, with a concierge service, catering arrangements and hotel bookings available. CATS is also an expert in test flight support for small to large aircraft, and its team promises a fast turnaround time of under 30 minutes. The company is continually promoting its brand and Curaçao as a prime fuel-stop location in the Caribbean and the perfect tourist destination.

The CATS team is trained to be as efficient as possible and to care about every customer. Leading by example, company CEO and co-owner Sunny Oedjaghir has been known to marshal customers at the company's Curaçao branch. This also shows clients that they are arriving at a place with short lines of communication, with the company management always in tune with customers' needs. A similar approach can be found at the Cuba branch, which, according to the company, provides an excellent aircraft ground handling service.

CATS handled 3,800 flights in 2015 and welcomes a wide variety of customers, including business professionals, families, government officials and aviation enthusiasts. The Cuba branch offers a private terminal with its own customs and immigration, waiting area, and easy transition from airside to landside and vice versa. The Curaçao site is a fully equipped FBO with a VIP area, meeting room, pilots' lounge and bar. It also has immigration and customs on-site.

Self improvement

In August 2016 CATS was awarded IS-BAH accreditation, which demonstrates the commitment of the team to providing a safe, high-quality service. Each department was able to participate in the accreditation scheme, while Vishal Oedjaghir, company co-owner and project manager for the IS-BAH process, held daily strategy meetings with department managers to keep everything on track.



Above: A warm welcome awaits customers in Cuba and Curaçao



Left: CATS CEO and co-owner Sunny Oedjaghir (second from right) welcomes crew and passengers in Curaçao

IS-BAH is further confirmation that CATS customers can rely on an advanced safety management system to facilitate an efficient and highly ethical service. Not only does the team implement the system in daily procedures, but they are also available to advise clients on safety issues and standards.

But the improvements don't stop there, as CATS has been investing heavily in the knowledge and experience of its team. It takes advantage of the many aviation training programs available, with focus

on safety, customer service and quality. CATS is in the process of obtaining ISO international standards.

Brand expansion

CATS is also working on expanding its brand internationally. With branches in Curaçao and Cuba, and by joining forces with multiple FBOs in Venezuela, its goal is to implement the highest safety and quality standards at its locations.

But it continues to cement its presence closer to home. Recently CATS joined forces with Baoase Luxury Resort to create the Luxury Task Force. The task force includes luxury stakeholders who offer services such as yachting, helicopter transportation and golfing. The members are working together to promote Curaçao as luxury destination. ○

Vital statistics

Location: Curaçao and Cuba, Caribbean

Operating hours: 24 hours

Runway length: Curaçao – 11,188ft; Cuba – 13,123ft

Fuel: Jet A1 and Avgas

CATS

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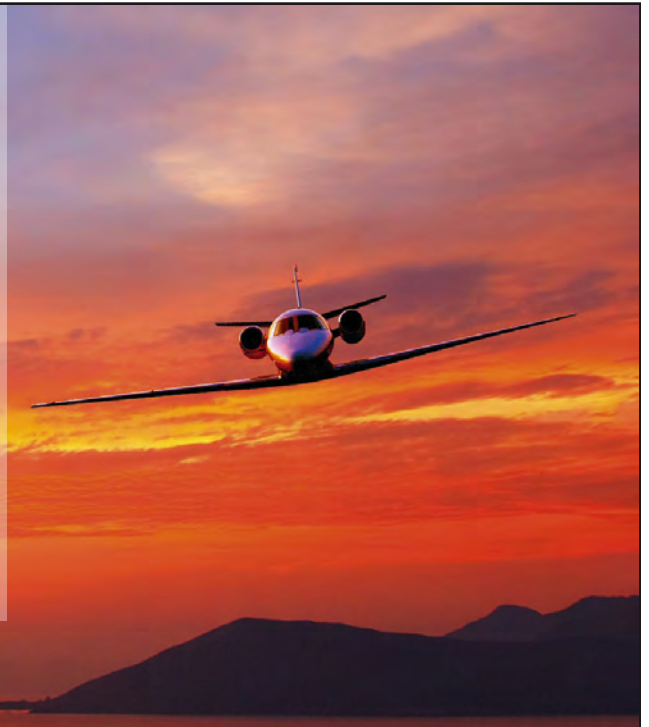
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ARE INTERNATIONAL HANDLING AND OPERATIONS STANDARDS WORTH THE INVESTMENT?

Many business aviation companies around the world are investing a lot of time and money in international industry standards that acknowledge best practice and high levels of safety. Two of the best-known standards, IS-BAH and IS-BAO, were developed by IBAC to improve handling and operations respectively.

IS-BAH, which was launched in 2014, has become a popular standard for FBOs and ground handlers as they strive to outperform the competition. In early August, *Business Airport International* reported on IBAC awarding IS-BAH certifications to the Swissport Executive Aviation FBO at Nice Côte d'Azur Airport in France and to Curaçao Air Terminal Services (CATS),

a ground handler in the southern Caribbean. IS-BAH involves a complete audit of safety management systems, emergency procedures, administrative elements, security procedures, training protocols and more – a process that requires dedication from the company and its employees to ensure that the required standards are met.

Are these standards important in the business aviation industry? Do you think they are worth the investment? Can a better approach be taken to improving safety and best practice? Will aircraft owners and operators choose to use a certain facility or service based on its IS-BAH or IS-BAO certification? *Business Airport International* asked its readers what they think. ○

Your views



Nick van der Meer, chief operating officer, VistaJet, commented, "There are lots of FBOs in the industry that take these standards seriously and use them to help move their business forward. For these companies, the certifications really improve the service offering. However, it's essential that everyone in the company take the standards seriously so that service levels are the same across the board. Some people put in the hard work to achieve the standard and then think the job is done. Working for IS-BAH and IS-BAO accreditation is an ongoing process – it doesn't stop when IBAC hands you the certificate."



Graham Stephenson, senior business aviation consultant, said, "I believe that IS-BAH in particular is only a standard by which to develop a safety management system and does not take into account the overall challenges of handling business aircraft. For example, it doesn't cover things like the correct procedure for meeting an aircraft, and whether you need someone in the cockpit controlling the brakes when you move an aircraft. There are many other safety points that should be considered and included in the IS-BAH standard. FBOs should not be left to set their own procedures for these things."



James Shotton, CEO and co-founder of Skytime Jets, said, "They are important to the industry and do help improve the quality of service provided by business aviation companies. However, I believe that when choosing an FBO to use, standards come secondary to the facilities on offer. It is more important that customers have the facilities they need to carry out their business."



Siegfried Axtmann, CEO of FAI Rent-a-jet, commented, "International qualifications, such as IS-BAH and IS-BAO go somewhat toward ensuring that expected levels of customer service are met, but when that's all said and done, good customer service all depends on the people operating in the FBOs – that is what really makes the difference from my perspective."

Your comments



What do you think? Should business aviation companies be investing in international standards or should they be focusing their efforts elsewhere? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this or any other topic affecting the business aviation industry, so visit www.linkedin.com and search *Business Airport International* to join in with the debate.

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