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Nexus grows its global footprint

Abdullah Al-Sayed, President and CEO, Nexus

Individual Profile: Mark Weingard, hotelier and philanthropist • Randall Reed, President and CEO, World Class Automotive Group and Starbase Jet

Company Profiles: Robert Molsbergen, President, EJM • Ali Al Naqbi, Chairman of MEBA • Art Dawley, CEO Wyvern
Brad Mottier, VP and general manager, GE Business and General Aviation • Miguel Moreno, Global General Manager AirBP • Viasat

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MEBA looks to growth in 2015

This issue we celebrate MEBA 2014 in Dubai with an exclusive interview with MEBA Chairman and founder Ali Al Naqbi. As the MEBA Chairman points out, current predictions are for the region to have some 2150 business jets based the Middle East and North Africa by 2030. The number could be still higher if light jets start to take off. Al Naqbi talks about the unique challenges involved in moving all the countries in the region towards a common set of rules and standards for business aviation, as distinct from commercial airline travel.

On the theme of light jets, we have an interview with Nextant President and CEO Sean McGeough about Nextant's global ambitions. Nextant has already delivered remanufactured Nextant 400XTi's to 12 countries and recently announced a new partnership in China in preparation for the first delivery of a 400XTi to a Chinese customer. At present, as Nexus President and CEO, Abdullah Al-Sayed, who features on our MEBA issue cover, observes, private jets in the region run largely to the long range, heavy metal part of the spectrum. However, as intra-regional trade and travel become ever more important, light and mid-size jets can be expected to feature more and more, extending the base of private jet usage out across the region. Al-Sayed talks about Nexus's expansion into India and Africa, and about the recent purchase of the safety audit specialist Wyvern.

This issue we are pleased to feature interviews with two high net worth individuals. Margie Goldsmith profiles Mark Weingard, the derivatives trader turned hotelier and philanthropist - a tale that would have had a premature ending had Weingard not been late for work on the day of the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Plus we feature Randall Reed, President and CEO, World Class Automotive Group and Starbase Jet. Reed is recognised as a member of the 100 mega auto dealers in the US and has seen his aviation company grow from eight owned and managed aircraft to 28 over the last four years.

Continuing the theme of aircraft management, EVA profiles Robert Molsbergen, president and chief operating officer at the NetJets Inc subsidiary EJM (Executive Jet Management), which, with over 200 aircraft under management, is the biggest aircraft management company in the world. Molsbergen talks about how EJM is expanding out from its US-base and is now en route to being a truly global aircraft management operation. EVA also interviews Meridian's head of aircraft management, Mike Moore, about the complexities involved in ensuring the client gets what they expect from the relationship, including the level of chartering they find acceptable.

Positioned as it is in the last month of the year, MEBA provides the ideal opportunity for the business aviation sector to showcase what has been achieved through the year and to talk about what lies ahead for 2015. EVA wishes all our readers the very best in their efforts to take this industry to new heights, no pun intended, in the year ahead.

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COVER IMAGE:
 Abdullah Al-Sayed, President
 and CEO of NEXUS
 See cover story, page 4

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Trader turned hotelier and philanthropist Mark Weingard's Foundation, Inspirasia, focuses on education and disability projects in Indonesia, Thailand and India and has so far donated more than \$10 million to educational and health programmes there. Weingard says he doesn't do anything "purely for monetary reasons: I do things to create change!"

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Think global,



There is no smarter way to go into a new market other than by working with and through experienced and trustworthy local partners. When NEXUS expanded its operations into India and Africa, this was the approach. The results have been excellent, as NEXUS President & CEO Abdullah Al-Sayed explains.

Q: What were the reasons for setting up an office in Africa in general, and Rwanda in particular?

A: We prepared for our launch into Africa for over a year before we commenced operations in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. Africa was exciting to us because it has such huge potential for business aviation and the continent's economies have been averaging around 5% GDP growth year on year. What is particularly attractive about Rwanda is the order, neatness, enthusiasm and discipline that one sees throughout the country. The government of Rwanda under President Paul Kagame, who has been leading the country since 2000, has a bold vision to make Rwanda the premier focal hub at the high-end segment of the African aviation industry. In fact Kagame's vision, and the way he has been

to the smaller African airlines to offer them world class flight support and flight support systems that would be well beyond their means to establish internally, and to do so at a price that would make economic sense to them.

The point here is that we are not just bringing NEXUS's proven expertise in flight operations support, but also state of the art IT systems. One of our clients, an African commercial airline today runs off the same type of system used by the largest commercial airline in the world, a fleet many times the size of a low cost carrier. Usually a system like that would only be affordable by the largest commercial carriers but we were able to get them established on it and to provide them with a complete outsourced flight support service, including crew scheduling, safety and flight planning, particularly when they are either chartering an aircraft to a destination with which they are not flying regularly to or if an aircraft is diverted to an unfamiliar airport.

Q: The general view is that business aviation services across Africa are still very much in the developmental stage. How do you cope with the absence of FBOs at many major airports including Kigali Airport?

Q: A number of large multinationals have come unstuck working with and through local partners, who have used the newcomer's expertise then gone off and launched their own competing operation. How do you counter this?

A: It is very true and we have seen it again and again in the Middle East and in Asia as well as Africa, where the local partner will tell the multinational, thanks very much, you've done a great job but we're fine now and you can take the next plane out. We have also seen the opposite approach, where big name players come in from Europe and the US and think that they can do it all on their own, only to fail dismally because they do not understand the local regulations, culture and the different local nuances in the approach to doing business. Our strategy outside the Middle East is very definitely to work with local partners, but we are not trying to do this in a small way. Our strategy is to go in and establish relationships with a local partner with a proven track record in fields other than business aviation. We deliberately do not want to partner with a company that thinks it knows business aviation. The last thing we want is someone who has an established way of doing things and will turn round and say, thanks

act local...

Abdullah Al-Sayed, President and CEO of NEXUS talks about Africa, India and the Wyvern takeover

running the country, looks much like the model established by Dubai, drawing on Rwanda's excellent geographic location and political stability to drive above average economic growth for Rwanda and the surrounding region.

In fact Rwanda is playing a leading role in a very encouraging move that will see seven or eight countries coming together in something akin to the model provided by the Gulf States, where a business and trade friendly environment encourages and stimulated economic growth across borders. This will have very exciting implications for business aviation in Africa and it was clearly important for NEXUS to establish an early presence. We also saw a clear opportunity in Rwanda to reach out

A: First, it must be said that although Rwanda's major airport at Kigali does not have an FBO, it is going through a very large expansion over the next few years. We are in discussions with the Rwandan civil aviation authorities about the need to establish an FBO there and we are getting a very favourable hearing from them. This is not something we would do ourselves but we would look to find a very good, proven partner. I must say that I was very impressed with the number of private jets coming in to Rwanda, both government VIP jets and private jets. My goal is to make Rwanda the perfect stopover for business aircraft flying either way from North to South. Rwanda's location and its general prosperity make this a great place for aircraft to refuel.

but I'd rather do things my way! We choose a partner with no business aviation experience but that believes in our products. We have our own proven approach to flight operations support and we do a great deal to bring our chosen partner up to speed in our philosophy, processes and approach. What is equally important is that we always ensure that we take a majority shareholding in the new business so that we control the operation. We, as NEXUS, are not a strategic alliance for the new partner, we are majority shareholders in their business.

The clearest expression of the value of this local approach came from a customer of mine in India. He told me, "The reason I love your company is that you brought a very high international

standard into my country and trained local people to implement it. Plus you established your operations in my time zone so I do not need to wait until America or Europe wakes up if I have an issue. I can go straight to your office and get help or talk it through immediately." That is exactly what we are seeking to achieve.

Q: How is the India operation faring?

A: India is going very well indeed. We started thinking about opening up operations in India several years ago and we started looking in earnest in early 2012. India is the ninth largest civil aviation market in the world, with 136 airports. Its domestic air traffic has quadrupled over the last ten years, putting India in fourth position world-wide in terms of passenger volume. By 2025 India is poised to become the third largest aviation market, just behind the US and China. We selected the Sovika Group as our partner for the Indian venture. They are the leaders in ground support services in a number of major international airports. Through them we have been able to expand our services across the whole of India and into many neighbouring regions and we are seeing incremental growth, quarter on quarter. Services provided include trip planning, flight dispatch services, crew and aircraft scheduling, security services, aircraft maintenance management and world-wide concierge services – all provided at a level never seen before in this market.

Q: Obviously you put a great deal of emphasis on the quality of the training given to your staff around the world to achieve a consistently high level of customer service, but how do you prevent local habits, as it were, taking over and standards softening?

A: The level of service experienced by business aviation customers in India, before NEXUS arrived was for the most part less than satisfactory. If you phoned up to see if a fuel truck would be there when the plane landed you would be told, "Yes, certainly," and the client could still spend two hours on the ground waiting for the fuel to arrive. Our focus in India has been very much on the VIP market. There is little equivalent niche opportunity there, as there is in Africa, to add smaller low cost carriers to our client list. But as far as the VIP market is concerned for business aviation, NEXUS has a tremendous edge there. We are in a unique position in India, where we are the only operator available in every single major airport in India with our

own staff on hand to meet and greet business aviation travellers. Our local staff member will make sure, for example that all the fees are paid on behalf of the customer, that fuel suppliers are on time, as are the catering and cleaning services. They take care of all the transportation requirements for the passengers and crew, so that no one is left waiting. We call our local airport staff VIP Representatives, and we have them in every region, including Africa and India.

Q: That must add substantially to your global payroll bill?

A: It is a hit on payroll, certainly. But it is also very flexible. If we are not generating enough movements to a particular airport we can always move that representative to a more fruitful location. Plus, as I said, it gives us an unmatched capability to be able to have a high confidence that we are delivering services to the highest standards, which, of course, goes directly to sustaining our reputation around the world. Our people literally are the key to our success.

Q: How do you choose which airports you need to have permanently staffed?

A: We are constantly looking to identify the destinations that are important to business aviation travellers from a variety of regions, such as the Middle East, China, Africa and Europe. One of our biggest sources of information on this is our customer base. They come to us and say we plan to travel more regularly to this or that place and we have difficulties when we go there, can you help us? That gives us a tremendous wealth of data to see where the major airports are that we need to position our own VIP reps.

Q: What was NEXUS's interest in acquiring Wyvern?

A: As a safety audit specialist company, Wyvern serves a huge need in the business aviation sector. There is just not enough manpower resource in the various national civil aviation and regulatory bodies to do all the safety audits on aircraft that customers need. If you are flying charter, how do you know that the operator is in compliance with all the safety regulations and that the aircraft is properly maintained? A third party, independent audit gives you this surely. This is Wyvern's importance, in a nutshell. As an organisation NEXUS places the highest emphasis and

importance on ensuring all aspects of safety. Our ambition is always to develop a proactive and positive safety culture with a strong focus on all the safety issues affecting our business. So we have much in common with Wyvern's approach and in joining our stable of globally recognised aviation firms, Wyvern further strengthens our commitment to putting safety at the heart of our operations, as well as strengthening our ability to provide essential, cutting edge services to our clients.

Safety audits have become even more important post the 2008 crisis. What happened through the crisis and its aftermath was that companies across the industry came under significant pressure to cut costs and one of the areas that people were tempted to cut was maintenance and upkeep on aircraft. The statistics since the 2008 financial crash show that there has been an increase in incidents, which is what you would expect if people are cutting back on maintenance. So again, a thorough safety audit, that is uncompromising and where the client cannot come to a cosy agreement with the auditor to skirt round a difficult issue, is of great value to both the industry and to customers. What we saw with Wyvern was the opportunity to help strengthen it substantially by putting in place a world-class management team to advise the company and to ensure that its reputation for the highest standards of professionalism in carrying out audits, is undimmed. NEXUS was able to help Wyvern attract world class management talent to its new Board. Vincent Santulli, former Chairman and CEO of NetJets Europe and Netjets Middle East, Shawn Vick has held leadership positions at OEMs such as British Aerospace, Gulfstream and Hawker Beechcraft while Nicholas Sabatini was formerly at the highest leadership level at the FAA and understands the regulator's perspective from the inside. These three gentlemen bring a huge depth of experience to Wyvern that will stand it in very good stead.

Our aim is to take Wyvern from being a US centric company and turn it into a global business, while retaining its headquarters in Pennsylvania. As NEXUS with a world-wide operation, we can open up a lot of opportunities for Wyvern around the world and at the same time, we are benefitting emerging market communities by bringing such a tremendous brand from the US to raise local standards of safety and operational excellence. ■



We are constantly looking to identify the destinations that are important to business aviation travellers from a variety of regions, such as the Middle East, China, Africa and Europe



Laying the foundations for the future

A conversation with Ali Al Naqbi, Chairman of the
Middle East and North Africa Business Aviation Association, MEBAA

Ali Al Naqbi, Chairman of the Middle East and North Africa Business Aviation Association, MEBAA, has a visual presentation that shows, in four pictures, just how enormously business aviation has grown in the region in recent decades, from barren airstrips in the desert in the 1960s, to today's modern international airports and gleaming FBOs. By 2030, now just 16 years away, current predictions are for the region to be home to some 2150 business jets, with around 850 of these being in place by 2020. Growth, however, does not just happen, or if it does, it happens much more slowly when the regulatory environment is not business aviation friendly.

It is a touch ironic that the great success enjoyed by a handful of the commercial airlines in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has made the going tougher for business



aviation by making it more difficult for local governments to look beyond the successes of commercial airline travel and to take seriously the rather different requirements of private jet travel. As Al Naqbi has pointed out on numerous occasions and at a variety of forums, it is

taking a sustained campaigning effort by MEBAA and its member companies with strong connections to governments in the region to get the politicians and statesmen to look beyond the amazing strides being made by the major commercial airlines in the region, and to focus on the needs of the business aviation sector.

This, of course, is at the heart of MEBAA's raison d'être. The organisation itself is a model of the growth, commitment and professionalism of the sector. Al Naqbi's history with business aviation goes back to before the founding of Royal Jet in 2003. "During those initial two years in 2002 and 2003 I and some colleagues were in the process of trying to set up one of the first VIP charter operations in Abu Dhabi. It was something of an uphill struggle because the civil aviation committee in the country did not really understand what business aviation was all about. However, with the support of the



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Government we were able to set up Royal Jet. The difficulties involved in that process though, were a wake-up call to me, highlighting the amount of effort that would be required to raise the general level of awareness of business aviation in the aviation committee in the United Arab Emirates, and indeed, in all the surrounding countries across the Middle East and North Africa," he recalls.

Al Naqbi says conversations with friends threw up the idea of forming an association for the region modelled on the NBAA in the US. "I thought it was a great idea and one that could play a vital role in the development of business aviation here," he recalls. With characteristic energy, Al Naqbi set about the task of bringing MEBA into existence. He spoke with advisors and consultants and appointed the consultancy, SH&E, based in New York, to assist in the process. "They have done an impressive amount of work in business aviation and they proved their worth by helping me to write the by-laws of the association," he notes.

In 2005 the Association started to come together in earnest. It was formally founded in June 2006 after Al Naqbi made a stirring appeal to delegates during a presentation at one of the MEBA Conferences in 2005. "At the conference I wanted to really test the water, to see the strength of the reaction from the community and the industry. We had a very good response and when we launched we had six of the major companies in the region, including Airbus and Gulfstream, and some handlers such as JetEx and Jet Aviation with its completions centre for green business jets, as members."

The newly formed MEBA then applied to become part of the international community

through IBAC, the International Business Aviation Council. Within six months MEBA won recognition from IBAC and a seat on the board followed shortly thereafter. "We were very pleased with that since it showed that the Association was properly grounded and thoroughly accepted by the international community. From that moment it was clear to all that MEBA was the official representative of business aviation in the Middle East and North Africa.



MENA is a very big region, with 23 countries and many different languages and processes, so it has not been an easy ride

From those initial six founding members, the Association has now grown to 230 members, but as Al Naqbi says, there are still plenty of companies out there that the Association needs to recruit as members. "We have so far captured somewhere between forty and fifty percent of the market as our members, but that still leaves a lot of companies out there that we need to reach and persuade to join." At one point Al Naqbi thought that it would take a year for a strong marketing campaign to get MEBA close to the 50% membership level. In fact it has been tougher than he anticipated and has taken four years. "MENA is a very big region, with 23 countries and many different languages and processes, so it has not been an easy ride," he comments.

MEBA adopted Arabic as its main language but is sensitive to the fact that North Africa has strong affinities in some countries to the French language. "It is not easy talking across borders,

particularly where what you are dealing with is a collection of sovereign states with no equivalent to the European Union's treaties and Commission. However, we tackled the task and while there are and have been challenges, we are making steady progress," he comments.

Having launched in 2006, the Association held the first MEBA Show in Dubai a year later. "Dubai has a wonderful venue for shows. The Dubai Air Show has been a very successful event year on year so that was a natural choice for us," he recalls. The first show saw MEBA attracting 89 exhibitors, 2500 visitors and some 27 or so aircraft on show at the static display. "This was a very satisfactory turnout for our first show and these were all serious attendees. It got the attention of the business aviation community and in 2012 we had some 8000 visitors and 383 exhibitors, with tremendous representation from across the whole industry. We had a lot of operators, some luxury products, helicopter and fixed wing OEMs, airports, completions centres and various suppliers to the industry supported the show, which goes from strength to strength every year," he comments. Al Naqbi expects the number of delegates and aircraft on display in MEBA 2014 to be up by some 20%.

"Our message now goes around the world. We have a series of MEBA Conferences that we rotate from place to place in the region, the most recent being in Morocco and in Amman. Despite the political turbulence in some areas, growth is continuing," he notes.

So what effect is MEBA having? Al Naqbi reckons that it has been a tremendous catalyst for putting business aviation on the map across MENA. "If you look back six years, there were no dedicated business aviation airports in the

region. We worked with government and we opened up the first dedicated business aviation airport here. We have some real challenges of course. The outstanding success on the global stage of some of the commercial airlines in the region has put tremendous pressures on the main international airports. With them being so busy, access is a big issue, but there is tremendous infrastructure for these airports planned across the region. We are in discussion with governments in MENA wherever possible, and we work to convince politicians to include business aviation in their transport and air traffic plans. We are getting a very fair hearing and I am grateful and happy for that. In essence we are looking to replicate our relationship with the United Arab Emirates government across the region. The United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the biggest markets for business aviation and we are working hard to take the rules and regulations we are



developing with these states to the civil aviation authorities in all of MENA. I recently recommended to the government of Morocco that they dedicate one airport to business aviation and they have done so. They are now inviting companies to invest in the airport and to use it as a dedicated business aviation airport, so things are moving forward."

This is all about building MEBA's influence and bringing the attention of govern-

ments and civil aviation authorities to problems, as and when they emerge. "People see what is happening in the United Arab Emirates and the growth that business aviation is enjoying here and they want to replicate that model in their country. Other countries realise that they can gain substantially by following U.A.E.'s example," he says.

"Already we have very stable rules for commercial and business aviation in MENA and a very easy and transparent flight approval system. The investment in this transparency is very clear, so foreign operators can come to the region and get their approvals to operate in a lot of countries in the region. We have a number of world class airports and FBOs and a lot of facilities in the region. In Morocco alone there are 24 airports, 15 of which are international and 9 for national flights. We have many repair and MRO facilities in the region which can maintain business jets, so the future looks bright", he concludes. ■

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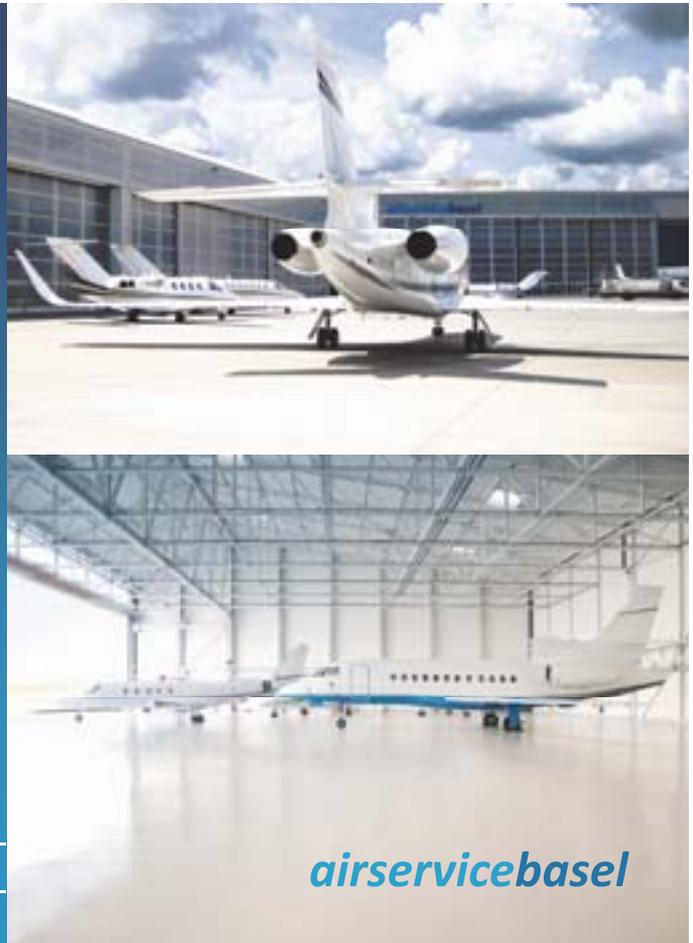
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Playing the China card

A conversation with Robert Molsbergen, President EJM and COO NetJets Global Aircraft Management

With over 200 aircraft under management, mostly wide-body jets, the wholly owned NetJets Inc. subsidiary EJM (Executive Jet Management) has been a leader in providing jet management services to owners since it was launched back in 1977. As EJM President and NetJets COO Global Aircraft Management, Robert Molsbergen explains, the company is now well down the track with its strategy of building out from its US operation.

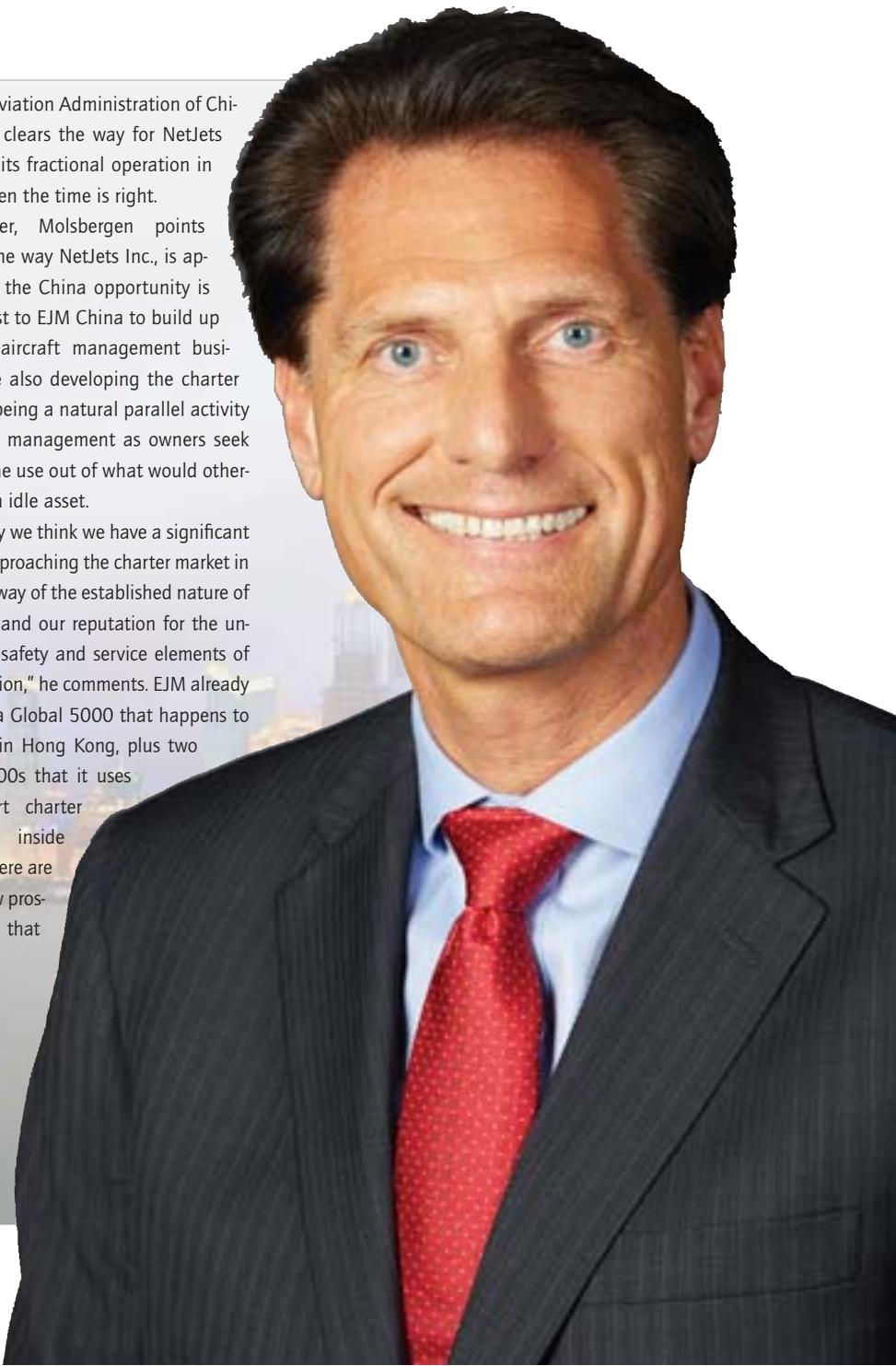
"The US subsidiary is by far the largest, but we now have our European AOC for EJM Europe and we manage eight aircraft in Europe, with the aim of growing this to 12 before the end of 2014. By the end of 2015 we are looking to increase that to 20 aircraft under management, which will make us a significant player in Europe," he comments.

The third division is NetJets China. On 23 September this year, NetJets Business Aviation announced that it had obtained its CCAR-135 operator's certificate from

the Civil Aviation Administration of China, which clears the way for NetJets to launch its fractional operation in China, when the time is right.

However, Molsbergen points out that the way NetJets Inc. is approaching the China opportunity is to look first to EJM China to build up a strong aircraft management business while also developing the charter side, this being a natural parallel activity to aircraft management as owners seek to get some use out of what would otherwise be an idle asset.

"Clearly we think we have a significant edge in approaching the charter market in China, by way of the established nature of our name and our reputation for the unsurpassed safety and service elements of our operation," he comments. EJM already manages a Global 5000 that happens to be based in Hong Kong, plus two Hawker 800s that it uses to support charter services inside China. "There are quite a few prospects in that



Things change as you go along, as they always do. This is not a process for the faint hearted. But we are in China for the long game



Phenom 300

part of the world that are already well familiar with the NetJets fractional offering in the US or Europe, and who now want to fly in-country in China. We also have multinationals and individuals inside China that are already familiar with our North American service," he comments.

When the announcement was made, back in September NetJets Inc. chairman and CEO Jordan Hansell said that NetJets had been working with the Chinese authorities since 2012 to secure the operating certificate. The joint venture, NetJets Business Aviation Ltd, was set up in China in partnership with Hony Jinsi Investment Management Ltd., and Fung Investments and announced at ABACE in November 2012. At the same time, at the Zhuhai Airshow, NetJets unveiled its Private Jet Travel Card, making it possible for Chinese-based travellers to access the NetJets network in the US, the EU and Switzerland. NetJets then set up its China headquarters at Zhuhai Jinwan Airport, in Zhuhai Guangdong Province. At ABACE 2014 NetJets announced that it has hired key employees for its Zhuhai operation, and had partnered with vendors. It added that it had positioned two aircraft in China in preparation for the launch.

Commenting on progress to date, NetJets China Vice Chairman Eric Wong said that the company now had in place the necessary internal structures and processes for safe flight operations and had good working relationships with key vendors.

"People in the industry tend to be very familiar with the NetJets story, but the EJM component is much less familiar territory. The way I try to characterise it is that Netjets and EJM are both the biggest in the world in their specific categories. EJM is the biggest managed aircraft company in the world, with well over 200 aircraft under management, excluding the NetJets fleet (which would take the total to over 700 aircraft)," Molsbergen explains. Another key fact he quotes is that EJM has one of its managed aircraft taking off somewhere in the world every eight seconds, on average.

"EJM has been around for over 35 years, and we have the bulk of our 1000 employees in Cin-

ninnati, where we oversee and manage in excess of 40,000 flights across the US and to another 130 countries, on average, each year," he adds.

The EJM managed fleet is not only the largest, but also one of the most diverse fleets in the world. Jets in the fleet average some 30 million miles and over 63,000 flight hours per year. Although the China operation will be run as NetJets Business Aviation Ltd., the model that is being rolled out is very much the EJM model. This will involve some charter, but it will not be the NetJets flexible ownership approach but conventional charter operations as run by aircraft management companies everywhere.

Molsbergen points out that the China operation has its own 145 certification, which allows the company to do whatever maintenance is required on its own fleet to keep it running. This facility is run out of Zhuhai and Hong Kong. "As of November 2014 we have close to 60 people



Gulfstream G200 interior

in mainland China and eight in Hong Kong," he notes.

So how difficult was it for NetJets to get its operator's certificate in China? "It took about two years in all. Things change as you go along, as they always do. This is not a process for the faint hearted. But we are in China for the long game. We always knew it was going to be a longer process to get certified in China than it would be in Europe or the US, but we are prepared to build solid foundations for the business out there and to let it develop at its own pace," he says.

There is plenty of reason to dampen down or set aside any expectations that business

aviation will surge any time soon in China. As Molsbergen notes, the environment lately has become a lot more challenging as the Government's anti corruption campaign has gathered momentum. Important as business aviation is to business in China there is a reluctance at present to be seen to be doing anything that smacks of conspicuous consumption! "Some 50% of the charter flying in China in recent years has been related directly or indirectly to government, and that market has now shrunk significantly, for obvious reasons. We see the education of politicians and government officials about the value of business aviation as being very much something that we and the industry will need to work on in the years ahead. However, we have seen a pick up in the number of charter hours being flown since we obtained our certificate," he notes.

A lot of the current charter customers are customers of NetJets and EJM world wide and are either not Chinese nationals, but executives flying into and out of China, or are Chinese nationals who are based in Europe or the US, and are flying on NetJets programmes.

Molsbergen says that he is sensibly optimistic about the future of the China division. "This is not going to happen overnight. There are real challenges as far as infrastructure and attitudes are concerned, but our division there will grow in parallel with the development of infrastructure and a more business aviation friendly regulatory environment. Looking at this market, we bring a certain level of operational excellence, service and safety into the market, and that might help to accelerate some of the market dynamics. The CAAC, in issuing our operating certificate, were kind enough to say that NetJets is now the gold standard in China, which is a very telling comment," he notes. ■



From cars to planes, the game's the same: customer satisfaction!

Anthony Harrington talks to Randall Reed, President and CEO,
World Class Automotive Group and Starbase Jet



Randall Reed began his career as an automobile technician and now runs one of the largest independently owned Ford and Volkswagen dealership groups in Texas. His aviation business, Starbase Jet soars from strength to strength. Starbase has built a booming aircraft brokerage and charter business and continues to add to its fleet of aircraft under management. This growth has been thanks in no small part to its ability to deliver above average charter hours to aircraft owners. Reed's sales and marketing skills plus an unwavering commitment to transparency and ensuring customer satisfaction in all aspects of his business life, as well as a deep commitment to serving local communities, lie at the heart of a business that continues to grow at an enviable pace.

Q: It is always amazing – and very satisfying – to find someone who epitomises the dream of working one's way up from the first rung of the ladder, as it were. How did it all begin for you?

A: I started my entrepreneurial life early, in that at the age of twelve I had three jobs. Through high school I decided that I wanted to be a technician rather than follow an academic path, so I went to school after hours to study for a mechanic's qualification. I then secured a job with an auto dealership as a technician, retooling engines for automobiles. After doing that

for some time, it became repetitive and I decided I didn't want to spend the rest of my life doing this, so I started to apply to colleges with the aim of studying for a chemical engineering degree. While I was waiting for the replies, I got a job as a Mustang restoration specialist, which is where I first came into contact with Ford, and established a lifelong affinity to Mustangs.

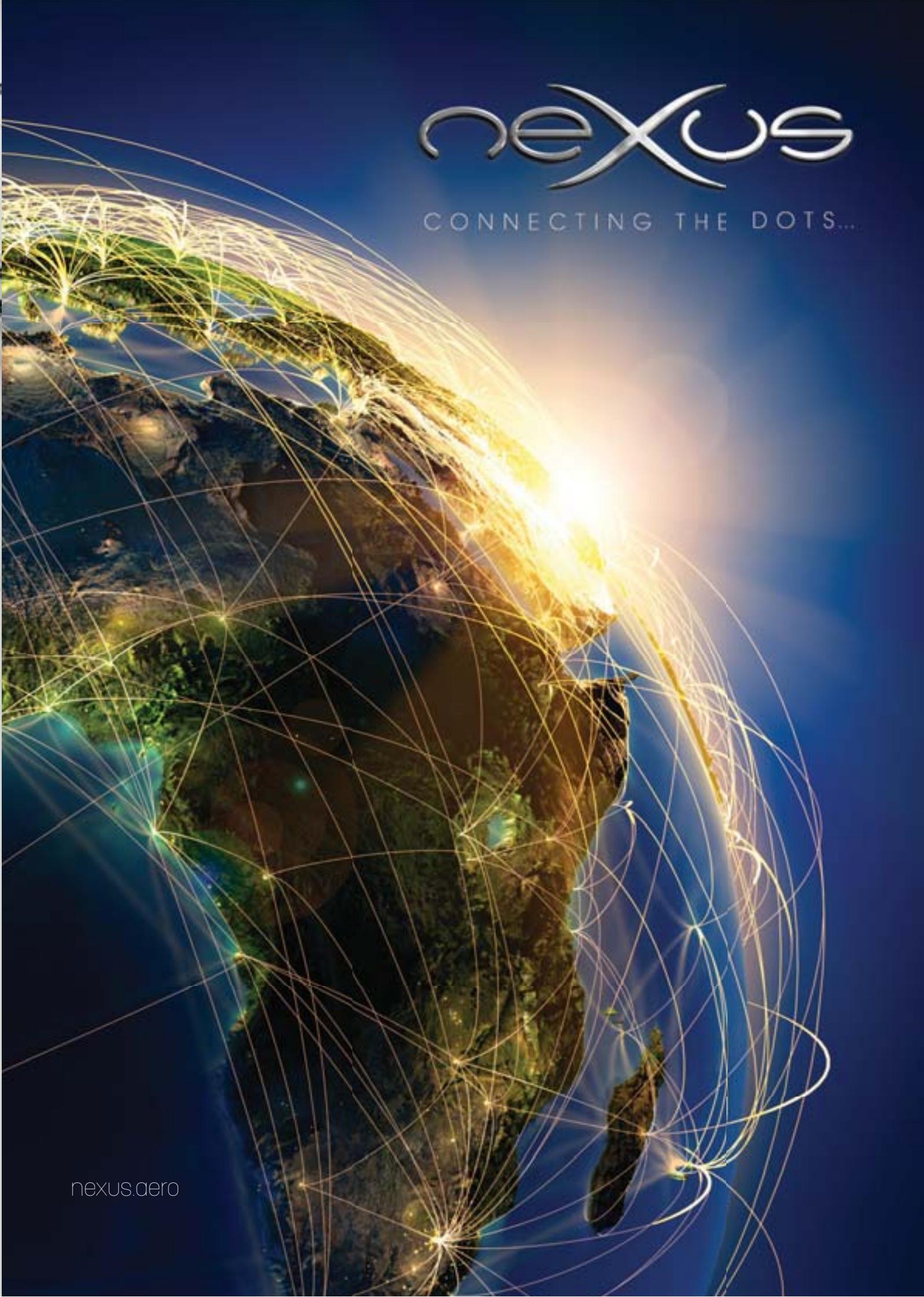
Anyway, I quit the technician's role and did the first semester of the chemical engineering coursework. My mother passed away and in May 1981 I returned home to take care of the estate during the college break. I saw an advertisement for a salesman at Courtesy Ford in Littleton, Colorado. I applied and was granted a position. That was an education in itself. You were pitched right in to the sharp end of selling with no hint of a career path. It was pretty Darwinian. Only the strong survived. You either sold

You were pitched right in to the sharp end of selling with no hint of a career path. It was pretty Darwinian. Only the strong survived

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or delivered the numbers or you hit the road. I found that I thrived on it. I really took it to heart and did very well. In my first few months I was in the running for salesman of the month.

Then, the time came for me to quit the job to go back to college. The owner of the dealership, with whom I had almost no contact with up to that point, came to me and said "Randall, it is very rare for us to find a salesman who can do what you've just done. I'd like to suggest that you skip this semester and let us put you on a management fast track, with proper mentoring. If you don't like it, I'll personally pay for your next year at college." I thought that was an offer I couldn't refuse. They took me under their corporate wing and I found a tremendous mentor in Ron Boyer, who also became a lifelong friend. He was the golden boy of the dealership at the time and taught me a huge amount about what was involved in being a proper, professional manager. I had a natural flair for sales and marketing, and by adding management skills I upped my game to a winning combination. He taught me everything about customer service and relationship management plus the entire protocol of being a successful manager in the car industry.

By 1985, at the age of 25, I was promoted to the position of General Sales Manager running the entire sales operation for the dealership. By 26, I was promoted again to the position of General Manager, running one of the biggest automotive stores in the country. Then, when a store became available, the two partners of Courtesy Ford, Mr. Bill Beck and

We were on an unstoppable successful path with the pinnacle coming in 1997 with the addition of the #1 Ford dealerships

Terry Dixon, offered me a 2.5% stake in the store to become the Operating Partner and Dealer Manager for that store, with a contract that stated that I was to be paid on the profits of what the store sold. Again, I found myself in the position of survival of the fittest, you basically sank or swam, in other words. The store was located in Dallas, Texas. In 1988, with my wife six months pregnant, we packed all of our belongings and set out for our new adventure.

We named that store Prestige Ford and today we still have it in our portfolio of dealerships. At the time I took possession, the store was up for sale because of its terrible performance. It was literally the worst store in the entire Ford U.S. operation, bottom out of 4,400 stores with the worst customer satisfaction scores.

I was 29, young, fearless and with nothing to lose, so I figured I would go for broke. I took all the processes I had learned in Littleton, Colorado and put a unique proposition together. The store turned around and flourished. We were selling around 40 units a month when I took over, and within a short time we were one of the top two Ford dealerships in Dallas and in the top 50 nationwide. We built the business on delivering total customer satisfaction and on encouraging happy employees, working to consistent principles - everything you would want to see in a successful business.

Because we did so well with Prestige Ford, that when another underperforming store became available, Ford called and said "Go take a look at it". Which I did, and shortly thereafter in 1992, Park Cites Ford was born. Again, we took the dealership over and turned it



around so that in 1993 we repeated the same thing with Planet Ford in Humble, Texas. And then again with Bill Fick Ford in 1995. We were on an unstoppable successful path with the pinnacle coming in 1997 with the addition of the #1, for 13 consecutive years, Ford dealerships, Planet Ford in Spring, Texas. Our dealership chain really began to grow in scale. We added our last dealership in 2013, with the addition of Randall Reed Volkswagen in McKinney, Texas. We took on a lot of debt to buy the stores, but the financial risk turned out to be well worth taking.

Q: How and why did you find time to get a pilot's license while all this was happening?

A: When our third child arrived, my wife and I decided that we would much rather raise the children in a small town environment than in a big city like Dallas. So, in 2000 we found a beautiful home in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The only problem was that it was an 800 mile commute to the dealerships. Plus, I was spending a lot of time on the road driving between dealerships. I tried to commute via scheduled airlines, but that was a total fiasco.

I looked at jet cards, but they

were too expensive. So I decided to fly myself. The obvious solution was to get my pilot's license and buy a small aircraft. The first plane I bought was a Bonanza A36 which I used to commute between Steamboat Springs and the Texas dealerships. Then I upgraded to a Beechcraft Baron, and then I bought a King Air C90, and finally a new King Air B200.



My wife would travel with me when we went to do commercials for the dealerships, and then we started using the aircraft as a tool to help executives and sales management from the dealerships travel more efficiently. We made a practice of visiting other dealerships outside the Dallas area that had good reputations.

We wanted to ensure that we learned

'best practices' wherever we could and this involved a fair bit of flying.

With this amount of traveling, I decided to buy a jet and bought a Cessna Citation V. I tried riding in the back instead of piloting and found it really boring, so went back to the King Air. But this left me with the Citation V as a spare aircraft. I had a friend, Joel Brookshire, who was also a pilot. The two of us went to our mutual friend with the FAA that had given me check rides for all my pilot certificates and asked him what it would take to start a Part-135 operation with a strategy to charter the Citation V out and make it work for its keep. He gave Joel and myself the advice and actually ended up assisting in our newfound venture. Joel became a minority partner in this new aviation business. In 2001, we received our Part-135 and Starbase Aviation came into being.

We were using the Citation V quite heavily and selling charter seats pretty well, so we decided to lease two late model Lear 60s and purchase another to start the charter business properly. Over the last three years Starbase Jet has grown exponentially. We went from four aircraft that we wholly owned, to eight, where we stayed for several years. Then over the past four years we have gone from eight aircraft to 28 owned and managed aircraft. I now fly a brand new Citation CJ2+.



Q: What is the key to a successful aircraft sales business?

A: The key is continually looking for ways to improve our product, delivery and service. Undoubtedly for us a huge draw card is the fact that we have built up a very strong charter market here in Texas. It allows us to guarantee an above average number of charter hours a year for our managed aircraft owners and potential owners. We feel very comfortable offering that guarantee precisely because the charter business is so solid; and it has been very successful. We just sold an XLS+ for example and we have a number of potential sales in the pipeline that we are pursuing.

Aircraft sales to private individuals and companies are all about networking and communications. The more we grow, the more chances we get to make further sales. We sell many of the aircraft to our existing owner base as they look to upgrade, and when they tell their friends we are

then able to sell to them as well. We have always specialized in the mid-to large-cabin end of the market and apart from one King Air we have not ventured into the turboprop market. We have a few light jets on the certificate, but very few.

Q: Which OEMs do you like, apart from Textron?

A: I like Bombardier and Embraer. We have built and are building up very solid relationships with both as well as with Textron. We make a practice of holding a number of major marketing events throughout the year which helps to promote and build our network of high net worth individuals. This opens up opportunities for our OEM clients. For example, at the end of July we hosted a spectacular display of Embraer business jets at an evening event at Starbase Jet's Addison private hangar facility. An audience of 400 were able to take turns viewing an Embraer Legacy 650 and an Embraer Phenom 100, plus we had Ferrari and Maserati dealerships showing four beautiful Ferrari models - the Ferrari 458 Speciale, the Ferrari California and the Ferrari FF - and three top Maserati models, the GHILBLI Q4, the Maserati Granturismo MC and the Quattroporte GTS. The Ferrari 458 Speciale is the top performing Ferrari ever built, with a top speed in excess of 200 mph and the ability to go from zero to 60 mph in under three seconds.

Q: The top end of the Ford and Lincoln range doubtless brings new high net worth individuals into your circle on a regular basis?

A: The top end models certainly do. But we actively target market segments such as the oil and gas sector and the top auto dealers as well. Marketing and sales require you to commit to a continuing and sustained effort. You must have extremely good propositions that differentiate you from the competition. Our guaranteed charter hour proposition, for example, is one that very few other operators can hope to replicate.

Q: Where next for Starbase?

A: We are actively looking to grow into more of a full spectrum aviation company. We just recently bought a company that specializes in MRO and is a Part-145 shop. Right now we are using that capability to support our owned and managed fleet. However, we are looking at developing the old Braniff Airline Headquarters at Dallas Love Field to turn it into a very large 145 repair station capable of handling a number of OEM models. We are looking at incorporating a potential joint venture with our Chinese strategic alliance partners, Deer Jet. We are always on the lookout for talent to grow our aviation business and we constantly look for new opportunities for expansion. We are interested, for example, in providing jets to a new proposition that involves introducing a consumer/commuter style charter service between well travelled city pairs based on the King Air 350. The example here is the venture that Nick Kennedy is launching between Dallas and Houston, where his company, Rise, is offering unlimited travel between the two cities for a flat monthly membership fee. The trip takes around 54 minutes and Kennedy expects to schedule about 16 flights a day. The starter monthly fee is reported to be \$1650 and there are three levels, with the Executive fee set at \$2,150 and the Chairman fee at \$2650. The standard package will allow a person to book two seats at a time, the other two will allow you to book four and six seats respectively. I think Kennedy's idea is great and I believe that it will really broaden the base of people looking to use private air travel. We won't be involved in this first venture, which already has backers, but we are communicating with him about supplying the aircraft for other city pairs.

We are also seeing a real pick up in aircraft sales. Until recently we have largely been simply organizing purchases for our own clients on the aircraft management side when they wanted to upgrade to a newer model. However, we have just closed five jet sales, four of which were new jets and one pre-owned, and we have another two possible sales in progress which should close before the end of December. On top of these successes for Starbase, our auto dealerships are doing extremely well. Now is a great time to be selling Fords, Lincolns and jets in America! ■



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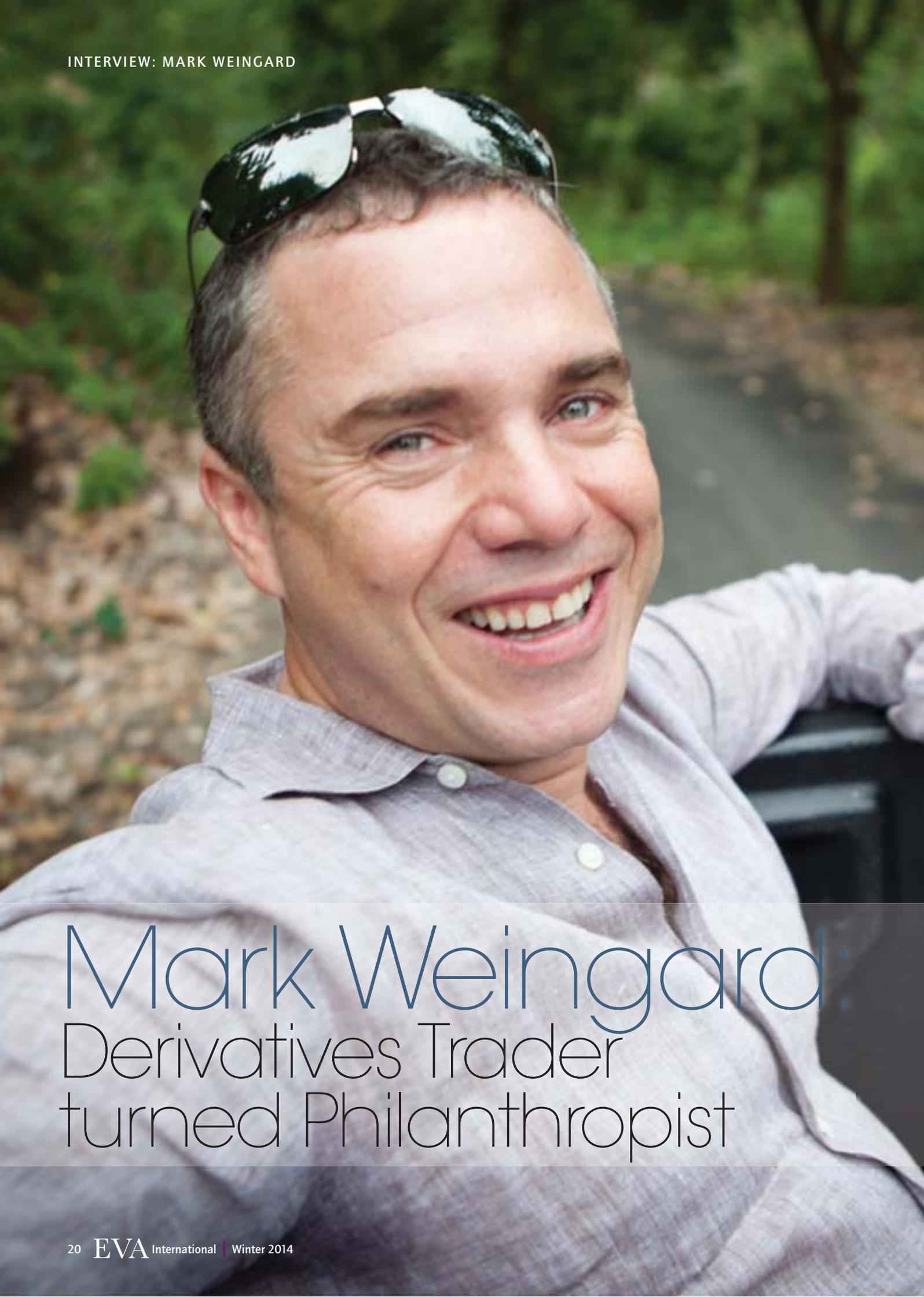


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Mark Weingard: Derivatives Trader turned Philanthropist



Interview by Margie Goldsmith

It's easy to compare 48-year-old Mark Weingard, a former derivatives trader to a cat with many lives because so far, Weingard has narrowly escaped death three times. Weingard grew up in Manchester, moved to London when he was 19, and went to University of London. He soon dropped out to pursue his passion of hotel management, starting as a waiter and working the bar. "I had no clue what I was doing," says Weingard, "and wasn't particularly well suited for the job." He returned to University, then dropped out to start a career in banking before going back part time to the University of London where he received a 1st Class Honours degree in Economics.

Convinced he could make it as a trader because he had an aptitude for numbers ("I thought trading would be like playing a computer game," he says), Weingard entered the world of finance. His first jobs were in the administration departments of several banks. At the age of 24, he landed his dream job as a trader in the London office of J.P. Morgan, and by his early 30s, he was earning a million dollars a year. But money was not his initial driver; his original goal was to find a nice house and live a good life. "I never thought I was going to be an entrepreneur and have my own businesses," says Weingard.

On 9/11/2001, Mark Weingard was due at his offices next to the twin towers of the World Trade Center, but he was running late. He phoned the office and was told a plane had crashed into the tower and not to come downtown. That was his first escape from death. The following year, Weingard, split up with his girlfriend, Annika Linden, whom he had been with for seven years. The next month Annika went with her friends to Bali and was tragically killed in the nightclub bombings.

As if enough tragedy hadn't struck, two years later, Mark Weingard was at home in Phuket when the 2004 tsunami struck. Miraculously, there was a reef in front of his house which stopped the water from engulfing his entire home. Weingard and his friends took sanctuary on the roof of the property.

I'm most proud of the fact that the organizations are run by people with disabilities, we really focus on helping people get jobs and helping them find a reason to live



“My mother is a very wonderful woman and always gives me advice whether I want it or not. My grandfather, my father’s father, was a very big influence to my life”



To commemorate his fiancée’s death, and perhaps because he had survived three tragedies, Mark Weingard became a philanthropist and created the Annika Linden Foundation. On the 10th anniversary of the bombing, 2012, Weingard opened the Annika Linden Centre as a permanent memorial and changed the name to the Inspirasia Foundation.

Inspirasia focuses on education and disability projects in Indonesia, Thailand and India, and funds several NGO’s including Puspadi (which makes prostheses and distributes wheelchairs). Eight-five percent of the staff at Puspadi are disabled. Inspirasia also includes YPK that has a stroke-victim centre and runs a school for children with cerebral palsy. The Foundation has donated more than \$10 million to 13 educational health and rehabilitation programs in three countries. “The core of the foundation is to create light from darkness,” says Weingard.

Two years ago Mark Weingard moved to Valletta, Malta, where he hopes to start some new projects, and where we caught up with him by phone:

Q: Did your parents give you any advice?

A: My father died when I was 10 so it’s hard to remember his advice. My mother is a very wonderful woman and always gives me advice whether I want it or not. My grandfather, my father’s father, was a very big influence to my life. He told me to always be honest and help other people. I didn’t really come from an academic and intellectual background but I grew up with good friends. I think you are the sum of the people who surround you and I was lucky to be surrounded by very good people.

Q: Your father, a taxi-cab driver, died in a car crash right before his 36th birthday. Your father’s sister, your grandfather’s first wife and two of his children died young – how did that affect you?

A: I think I was very conscious that I wouldn’t live forever and decided I didn’t want to remain a banker even though I was earning a lot of money with a lot of job security. I decided to give that all up. I’ve always felt that life isn’t going to last forever so you’ve got to do as

much with it as you can. My first post-banking business was Worldmine, intended to be the first global ranking system for hotels based on “mystery shopping reports”. It was a good business idea, but unfortunately I decided to take on Lonely Planet and create city guides as well. This was 1999, the year the Nasdaq tech Bubble burst. My business didn’t survive. I learned a lot from this however.

Q: You’ve had so many tragedies in your life but also some very strange experiences. Tell us what happened when you learned about the Bali bombing?

A: As soon as I heard about the bombing I knew something was wrong. I got on the flight the next morning and went to look for her. When I arrived in Bali I had to go from place to place viewing bodies on ice slabs. Luckily I had two close friends with me who happened to be in Bali at the time, and they shielded me from much of the horror.

When I realized I wouldn’t find her alive I went back to my hotel room. I took a shower



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and wrapped a towel around me, then sat and wrote. I wanted to try to think what she would think. As I did this the bedroom door slammed open.

I went to see who opened it and as I stepped into the corridor, the door slammed shut. Anika had played her last practical joke on me. I just laughed as I went to the receptionist and had to explain that I had locked myself semi-naked out of my room. I felt like she was telling me to be positive and not think of the negative. I went back to my room and decided there and then to set up a foundation in her name to mark this negative event with a positive so the terrorists would not win.

Q: What are you most proud of in your philanthropic work?

A: I suppose I'm most proud of the fact that the organizations are run by people with disabilities, we really focus on helping people get jobs and helping them find a reason to live.

Q: In 2004, you survived the tsunami in Phuket, your third devastating tragedy in three years. What did that feel like?

A: As I sat on top of the roof, I just looked up to the sky and wondered, "Now what am I supposed to do?" I decided to take



My aim is that Iniala will account for US\$ 5,000,000 annually in charitable giving by 2024

a month off and work on the relief efforts in Phuket and dedicate even more of my time to my charitable work.

Q: You've just opened Iniala, an incredible beachfront resort in Phuket. You have stated that it is trying to redefine the ultimate levels



of hospitality and focus on Design, Art and Gastronomy. But does it have a philanthropic focus?

A: In its first year Iniala Beach house will have donated US\$ 200,000 to charity (10% of net room revenues and 5% of other revenues); next year that number will hopefully double. My aim is that Iniala will account for US\$ 5,000,000 annually in charitable giving by 2024.

Q: Why Design, Art and Gastronomy?

A: We have employed 10 leading designers and 20 recognized artists to create individual spaces that are all "out of the ordinary." We are also lucky to have at the helm of our restaurant, Eneko Atxa, a 3 Michelin star chef rated number 26 in the world.

Q: How much does it cost to stay at this resort?

A: The magnificent 450 square meter penthouse, with an enormous private pool ranges from US \$2,000 to \$3,500 a night and the individual villas range from US\$ 3000 to US\$ 7500 a night depending on the season. The best deal though is if you want to take over all 10 rooms and have exclusive use of the resort. The rates start at US\$10,000 nightly in low season to US\$25,000 nightly at the New Year. For this, you get exclusive use of one of the world's great resorts.





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We want to thank Boise Cascade Corporation for being the initial customer to take that leap of faith to enroll on a JSSI program. It required foresight, an open mind and the willingness to take a chance on a new concept and a young company. We thank you, our loyal customers, who have entrusted us with your aircraft over the years. Thank you to the OEMs, who have worked hand-in-hand with us as we developed innovative programs like Tip-To-Tail®, the industry's only single-source maintenance plan. And thank you to all of the maintenance providers that have worked alongside our technical advisors to deliver outstanding service.

All of this begs the question, "Where do we go from here?" Stay with us throughout this, our 25th anniversary year, and we'll share some of our future plans. Because, thanks to you, even after 25 years, we're just getting started.

Neil W. Book,
President & CEO, JSSI

Q: Last year you went to Java to buy art for Iniala and met a woman in a wheelchair who told you how a converted motorbike had allowed her to get a job and get back into life again. How did that inspire you?

A: Sri Iestari is a very inspiring woman. This year we sponsored her trip through Sumatra and Java by motorcycle. Every day she met many disabled people and inspired them to have normal and productive lives. At the end of the trip, she was met the president of Indonesia. I am very proud of what she is doing there and we now have a new initiative called Dnetwork where we try to directly encourage people to employ those with disabilities. We plan to do something similar in Thailand, Spain and Malta. This is a project we want to push and go global because it can really help change lives for many people.

Q: Why do you choose to create hotels to raise money?

A: I don't do anything purely for monetary reasons; I do things to create change. At the Beach house we have introduced many new standards: each villa has its own spa and therapist, a personal chef and housekeeper, a personal driver and villa manager. If you go out on a trip, you take our masseur and chefs with you.

Q: You have said that Iniala will be one of many resorts. In 2016, you're opening a new resort in Malta (where you live), which will raise even more funds for Inspirasia. Can you tell us about that?

A: We're set up to open in beginning of 2016. Barbara Bastions is the most beautiful and peaceful street overlooking the grand harbor of Valletta. I have purchased two beautiful townhouses there and I am currently converting them into a 16-room luxury resort. Once again, we will focus on Design and Art, but here we will reference Maltese and European designers.

Q: Why Malta?

A: The place has amazing people, amazing architecture, and a fantastic culture. There is nothing special in terms of the palatial hotels that you can find today in Italy or France, and we want to try something that is really special, a benchmark for the level of hospitality in the country.



I still think it will be quite fun to fly but normally I don't have time to tie my own shoe laces

Q: Does Malta have a market for high net worth individuals?

A: The government today is firmly targeting HNWI and wants to attract them to come and live in Malta. With its fantastic climate and good taxation it is a great place for people to settle. We firmly believe that the "Jet Set" is coming and Iniala is at the forefront of creating high end hotels and residences for. We want to be an integral part of the enrichment of the country.

Q: I understand Malta International Airport has just built a new VIP terminal.

A: Yes, it compliments the Ministerial Lounge, previously used exclusively by senior government officials. The €450,000 invest-

ment will help position Malta as an aviation industry player and enhances the island's commercial aviation product, giving the quickest access and the shortest possible distance between a passenger and their arriving or departing flight. Regular passengers can spend 90 minutes in the waiting area, but the process for VIP passengers is 10 minutes flat.

Q: Have any VIPs used it yet?

A: The first guest was Prince William, and Angelina Jolie used it recently.

Q: What does Malta do about the catering needs of private jets? What kind of catering do they offer?

A: There are a number of licensed aircraft handling and flight operations support companies on the island. DC Aviation Ltd, Mediterranean Aviation Co. Ltd (Medavia) and Executive Aviation Malta are the main caterers for private jets.

Q: Will the new range of jets currently being prepped, eg Dassault's FX5, Bombardier's Global 7000 and 8000; Cessna's Longitude, Gulfstream 280 be able to land there?

A: The airfield's main runway; RWY 13-31 is 3.5km long and can handle those and most wide-body aircraft.

Q: You've flown on the Mustang and the Citation. Have you ever thought about buying your own jet?

A: Yes, a few years ago I really thought about doing it and I thought it would be fun to fly. I still think it will be quite fun to fly but normally I don't have time to tie my own shoe laces.

Q: Where would you go with it?

A: I would travel to Barcelona to go see my kids. That is the one thing I would really consider doing.

Q: My last question: almost 2 years ago you moved to Malta, and you plan to invest in Valletta. Why?

A: I want to be part of the city's future and create something special for Valletta by creating momentum. Work is my mistress. ■

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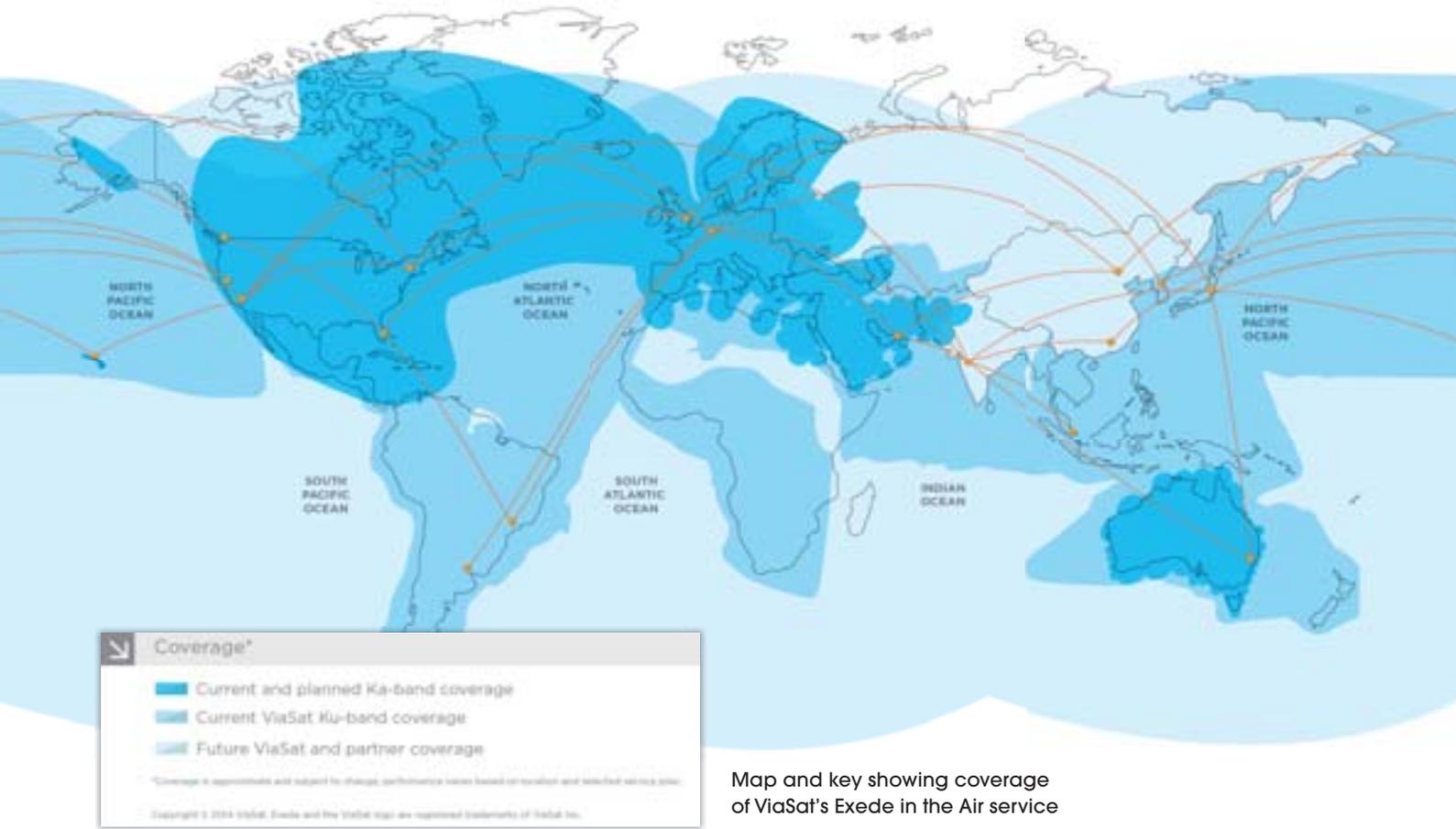
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ViaSat



Bandwidth for all: ViaSat future-proofs delivery

With its second satellite, ViaSat-2 under construction and due to launch in 2016, ViaSat already has the fastest broadband offering for both commercial airlines and private jets. ViaSat's James Person, Director of Global Business Development, General Aviation Mobility, and Steve Sivitz, Business Development Lead, Global Satcom Systems, point out that the company's Yonder global network already offers 4Mb connectivity to the cabin with a 1Mb upload speed.

Moreover the company can do better than that if, say, a government jet requires greater connectivity or a VIP likes to do high-quality video conferencing when on board. "We can provision the satellite to deliver a higher bandwidth to a particular subscriber, though it would entail a special arrangement and a special fee structure," he points out. So far, since entertainment technology is still at the dawn of ultra

high definition TV or high definition video conferencing, most customers find that everything they want to do over the Internet fits inside the 4Mb ceiling very comfortably.

"We've so far not been asked for higher speeds, but we are seeing the start of high definition video conferencing so last month we introduced our Exede In The Air brand for general aviation," Person explains. The Exede service is based on the same ViaSat broadband technology as its Exede Internet service, which now goes out to over 657,000 households in the US. Sivitz points out that the reliability of the Exede service was amply demonstrated recently when a report from the FCC in September 2014 put

We've so far not been asked for higher speeds, but we are seeing the start of high definition video conferencing
Steve Sivitz

Exede Internet ahead of 14 other internet services in terms of delivering against advertised speeds. This was the second consecutive year that ViaSat's Exede service has led the field. Exede In The Air also recently won the Avion Award for Best Achievement in Technology at the Airline Passenger Experience Expo.

"While most travellers flying private jets today will find that the applications they are using in-flight fit very comfortably inside 4Mb connectivity, there is no doubt that with high definition video conferencing and 4th Generation large screen ultra high definition TV sets starting to appear, more bandwidth is definitely going to be needed soon," Sivitz says. Exede In The Air provides the additional speed that some users are going to need.

Person and Sivitz point out that the service has already performed spectacularly well in high density commercial airlines, with both JetBlue and United Airlines offering in-flight broadband connectivity to 150 or more pas-

sengers at a time. "What we are seeing with these commercial airlines flying with Exede, is that a full cabin with many individuals connecting simultaneously via a variety of devices, the data rates to individual devices are up at the five to 10Mb level with our Exede In The Air service," Sivitz says. Moreover, the service has proved that it can cope with multiple aircraft passing through the footprint of the satellite at the same time, while delivering fast data rates to all of them.

He points out that while there are several high performance satellite networks coming on-stream or already available, once the aircraft moves outside Europe or the region targeted by the high throughput service, connectivity drops down to normal speeds. To date most in-flight connectivity usage has been in the US and Europe, but other regions such as the Middle East are increasingly demanding high bandwidth in the cabin.

"As well as being configured as grand, flying apartments in the sky, many of today's large cabin aircraft are flying offices and their owners expect to use them as such. They want to do true video teleconferencing or they want to hold a video conference that brings together multiple sites. Today that is too demanding for a typical 2Mb connection. It takes an awful lot of performance capability to accomplish true multi-site video conferencing. Moreover, on the BBJs or ACJs, the designers want to put in huge displays, where you simply have to have high definition throughput capabilities in the cabin or the picture will be unacceptable," Person notes.

Another area of demand is that some of the VVIP aircraft, particularly with ageing owners, or where the aircraft is configured for medevac, want to have the ability to have real time telemedicine capabilities, so that there is high bandwidth real time data going to and from the aircraft. Still another area, Sivitz says, is the demand created by several users in a business jet all wanting to download or upload large files simultaneously. "Time in the air is now regarded as productive time rather than being simply written off as travel time. So people want to upload or download large financial models, or massive Powerpoint presentations. All of this is pushing the demand for

bandwidth ever higher," he notes.

On top of all this, although we may not be able to predict the nature of new, bandwidth-hungry applications that are going to be around in, say, five years, it is virtually certain that there will be something entirely new. "I was speaking to a very large customer of ViaSat's recently and he pointed out that ten years ago the most important thing on an aircraft,



The service has already performed spectacularly well in high density commercial airlines

from the passenger's perspective, was the quality of the wine. Today it is all about how fast your connectivity is in the cabin," Sivitz notes.

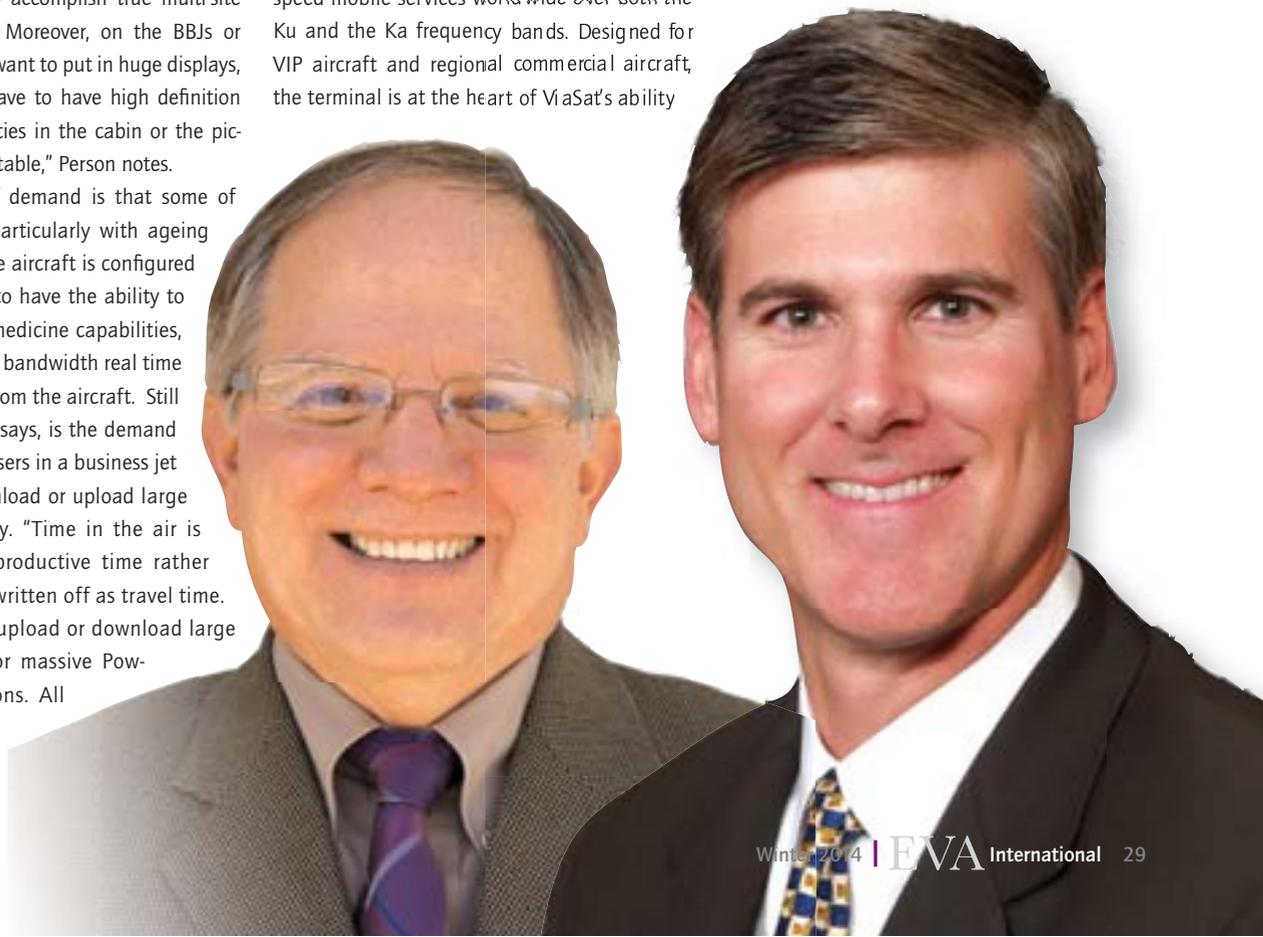
Where Inmarsat has had to strike a deal with Honeywell to provide the aircraft antennae and terminals to link up to its Global Xpress internet service, ViaSat is vertically integrated and has the ability to produce its own in-aircraft terminals to link up to ViaSat-1 and ViaSat-2 when it launches in 2016. Its new terminals have been designed as a hybrid system to deliver high speed mobile services world-wide over both the Ku and the Ka frequency bands. Designed for VIP aircraft and regional commercial aircraft, the terminal is at the heart of ViaSat's ability

to deliver high speed broadband to every device on the aircraft simultaneously.

Sivitz points out that ViaSat carried out two comprehensive airborne trials of its ViaSat Global Aero Terminal-5320 using a Boeing 757. During the flights, which took several hours, the terminal connected to three different satellite networks, connecting in all with 4 Ka- and 2 Ku-band satellites. The on-board testing showed that users could connect multiple wireless devices simultaneously to high-bandwidth applications, including multi-site video conferencing, social media, corporate VPN, and the live streaming of HD TV and movies.

"What business jet customers need to know is that the broadband and entertainment systems they are putting into their aircraft are future proofed. If they are putting a BBJ into a completions centre for a year, when it comes out they do not want to find that the technology has all been left in the dust by new advances. What we do makes it much easier to ensure that the communications capacity in the aircraft meets people's evolving needs," Sivitz comments. ■

ViaSat's Steve Sivitz (left) and James Person



Stand to attention



James Dillon-Godfray,
Vice President, Business
Development,
Marshall Aviation Services

When the time comes round for major repairs Middle East owners have something of a fondness for having their aircraft flown back to the factory that built them, particularly where Hawker jets are concerned. As James Dillon-Godfray, Vice President of Business Development for Marshall Aviation Services, the business aviation part of Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group, notes, this has meant that since Marshall acquired the former Beechcraft Hawker manufacturing site at Broughton, Chester, Marshall's ties with Middle East clients have grown significantly.

This, he says, is one of the major reasons why Marshall is making its debut at this year's MEBA Conference and Exhibition. "We have a number of Middle East based Hawkers that routinely come back to where they were built. There is significant population of Hawker 125s in Saudi Arabia, for example, that come to Marshall for deep refurbishment, or for painting and upgrades because of our expert knowledge, experience and performance" he adds.

Marshall has proven capabilities in outfitting aircraft for special missions in the Middle East. "We have a number of King Airs that are used in a variety of special roles, from Medevac to surveillance. As the exclusive Beechcraft King Air distributorship for the UK, Ireland and Scandinavia - Marshall also sells new King Airs."

"The breadth and depth of our capabilities is impressive and our ability to deliver has come from over eight decades of experience - this is why so many of our customers trust us," Godfray comments. "We have a proven track record of meeting our customers' requirements and our award winning teams are dedicated in delivering what we promise."

Marshall is also fortunate in that its location at Cambridge, UK puts it close to the heart of the unofficial racehorse training capital of the world at Newmarket. Breeding thoroughbred racehorses is a passion among a number of Marshall's Middle East clients and as Godfray points out, Marshall has a number of horse transport flights coming to its FBO (owned by Marshall's and operated by ExecuJet) from the Middle East. "We have flights coming in and out from the region every week, bringing horses for training to the stables at Newmarket, or taking horses to races elsewhere in Europe or around the world, so equestrian activities are a very good source of business and of developing relationships with high net worth clients," he comments.

With all this going on, taking its first ever stand at MEBA in 2014 seems a very logical move.

"There is no doubt that the MEBA market is very important for us - there is a clear demand that favours business aviation and with our experience in the conversion, modification, maintenance and support of both narrow and wide body aircraft. The Middle East is clearly one of the largest markets in the world and we will ensure that Marshall continues to play a key part" he notes. ■





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Ready to launch

Engine companies have certification in their sights, by Anthony Harrington

Eric Portejoie



With launch and follow-on customers already signed up, the new director of Snecma's Silvercrest engine programme, Eric Portejoie, has taken over the reins from former Silvercrest director Laurence Finet at a very advantageous moment. Snecma's business jet engine programme is currently progressing steadily towards the halfway point in its pre-certification testing regime, with ice and hail tests already successfully behind it. Ahead lies endurance testing and, ultimately, flight testing.

Since finding a launch customer is undoubtedly one of the more stressful things about developing a new engine, Snecma was fortunate in having Cessna come on board so rapidly. The whole Silvercrest programme, which targeted creating a brand-new business jet engine in the 11,000lb thrust class, first hit the drawing boards back in 2006 as a concept design. By May 2012 the company had a good

enough story to get Cessna signed up as the initial launch customer. This was for the Longitude, Textron's first business jet in the 7,000 kilometre range class.

With Cessa and the Longitude in the bank, as it were, by May 2013 Snecma and Silvercrest were able to roll up another mainstream business jet manufacturer. Dassault announced that it was adopting Silvercrest for its new Falcon 5x, which it intends to bring to market sometime in 2017, the same year Cessna plans to debut the Longitude. According to Portejoie, discussions are continuing with a number of OEMs. The sweet spot for Silvercrest, he says, is in the 9,000 to 12,000lb thrust range. As for distance, that is the airframe manufacturer's call, since distance depends on a combination of factors – a lean burning engine is just one of a number of variables. Others include the weight of the aircraft and how much fuel it carries, which is often down to the kinds of compromises the airframe OEM favours in the design process. Where the engine does come



into play very significantly is in short field performance. Dassault in particular has favoured leaning towards short field performance in its designs since that opens up far more airports for its customers.

However, the Falcon 5X is quintessentially a long-range aircraft, capable of 9,600 kilometre flights, linking Johannesburg with Geneva, or Los Angeles with London, for example. So what is important here is Silvercrest's lean burning capabilities, giving it better fuel performance than rival engines in its thrust range. Much the same is true of the Citation Longitude, which is planned to have a slightly shorter range, at 4,000 nautical miles - but again, it is the fuel efficiency of the engine that translates directly into a greater reach when it comes to trip planning.

"What we have set out to do with Silvercrest is to introduce into the mid-range business jet market all the gains that we have made from building engines for mainstream commercial airlines. Our goal is to bring to business aviation the best from the commercial markets, where there has been decades of work on making engines highly reliable and able to fly for two thousand or more hours a year. The average business jet will probably fly somewhere between 300 and 600 hours a year which is much less demanding, but reliability is very much a critical factor. We are aware of the fact that the business jet operator probably has much less engineering capability within their operation than you would find with a commercial airline. So for them reliability, coupled with long intervals between scheduled maintenance periods, is very important," Portejoie notes.

Snecma intends to make sure that when Silvercrest engines start to be used in earnest, once Dassault and Cessna launch their new models, there will be a substantial global support network for the new engine. "We will have support capacity for repairs and line

maintenance on all continents," Portejoie notes. "We are looking at where the airframe OEM support hubs are around the world, and we will take that into account as we plan our MRO support structures for Silvercrest."

Pratt & Whitney's PW800

At NBAA Pratt & Whitney unveiled the PurePower PW800 engine family, which, in Pratt & Whitney Canada's (P&WC) words, it intends

as "a game changer that sets new standards in aircraft performance, dependability and fuel efficiency in the ultra-long range business jet market." The PW800 is pitched at a significantly higher thrust range than Snecma's Silvercrest, at 16,000lb of thrust versus 12,000 maximum for Silvercrest. Where the latter targets the mid-range market, P&WC's PW800 is very definitely aimed at the heavy jet segment and has already achieved two huge wins, having been chosen by Gulfstream to power its new G500 and G600 large-cabin business jets.

For the PW800, P&WC has taken the same engine core technology used in its PurePower

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Among the many unique design elements incorporated in the PW800 are several that are designed to enhance ease of maintenance

Mike Perodeau



family of geared turbofan commercial engines but melded it with a direct drive rather than the geared approach used by P&WC's commercial airline PurePower engines. The engine also includes a high-pressure compressor developed jointly by P&WC and P&W. P&WC's Mike Perodeau, VP of corporate aviation and military engines, reckons that P&WC has nine PW800 engines already doing test runs in the development programme. By NBAA this year, the PW800 engine on P&WC's Boeing 747 test aircraft had already put in some 250 flight hours, amassed in 35 flights since April.

According to Perodeau, among the many unique design elements incorporated in the PW800 are several that are designed to enhance ease of maintenance. For example, there are steps incorporated into the nacelle cowl doors and large access panels in the engine bypass ducts, allowing mechanics to access the engine's core quickly and efficiently. In addition, the accessory suite has been carefully designed so that most accessories can be replaced in under 30 minutes. The team conducted benchmarking initiatives to optimise the design of the PW800 accessories. Virtual mannequin studies were

conducted to ensure access for the mechanic. "From a maintenance perspective, the PW800 engine and nacelle system have set out to be the new industry standard. The engine requires 40% less scheduled maintenance and 20% fewer inspections than other engines in its class," Perodeau says.

There are a host of technical features that improve the efficiency of the engine, starting with a high, optimised bypass ratio and the latest full authority digital engine control

(FADEC) system, which helps to achieve optimised fuel burn. The engine also has highly durable ceramic ball bearings and a high efficiency oil system that requires less cooling and oil than comparable engine systems. On the green front, Perodeau says that the PW800 is inside the anticipated CAEP/8 environmental protection regulations by a double-digit margin and is able to deliver ultra-low levels of unburned hydrocarbons and smoke thanks to its unique TALON X combustor. The design process throughout has sought to minimise the use of materials that cause environmental concern and to maximise the use of sustainable materials.

The engine has been designed to ensure best-in-class availability, and will meet its target of 99.99% dispatch reliability. Perodeau points out that no other engine in the business aviation market offers that level of reliability today. ■





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GE Aviation prepares for the Challenger 650

The second half of 2014 has seen good things happening for GE Aviation. Undoubtedly one of the biggest pluses for the company was the announcement that Bombardier's new Challenger 650 will launch with an advanced version of GE's CF34 engine, to be known as the CF34-3B MTO. As Brad Mottier, Vice President and General Manager of GE's Business & General Aviation and Integrated Systems Organisation, explains, the MTO stands for 'Max Take Off'. "What we have done is to respond to the huge demand out there in the market for the Challenger 650 and others like it to be able to use shorter airfields, enabling executives to connect to many more city pairs. The CF34-3B MTO provides added thrust to enable take-offs that are up to 200 feet shorter by comparison with the current, in-service CF34 engines," Mottier comments.

The extra thrust also ensures that the Challenger 650 will have a greater payload capacity and greater range capabilities out of challenging airports. With a true 4000nm (7,408km) range capability, passengers can fly direct between London and New York, London and Dubai, or São Paulo and Miami. NetJets has already announced that it is to be the launch customer for the Challenger 650. Commenting on the decision NetJets Senior Vice President of Global Asset Management, Chuck Suma said: "This new aircraft, with its enhanced performance capabilities, cutting-edge interior design and the lowest direct operating costs in its class, will be a great addition to our fleet."

While GE did not get the nod from Gulfstream to provide the engines for the new G500 and

G600 aircraft announced at NBAA in October (the engines order went to Pratt & Whitney), it has won a significant piece of the pie. Mottier points out that GE will be supplying the data concentration and network, plus the advanced power management system and the advanced health management system for both aircraft. "We're thrilled to be launching some of the most advanced electrical power and avionics technologies with Gulfstream. The power management system for the G500/G600 will build on the G650 secondary power system including GE's modular power tile technology, while adding primary power distribution, reducing wiring and utility function controllers. The integration of the power system provides a flexible composition and significantly reduces integration risk," Mottier said.

At GE Aviation, we have 44,000 employees and produce 2,600 new engines per year. By 2020 that number will grow to 3,300 engines a year – that's a big ramp!

"We're thrilled to be launching some of the most advanced electrical power and avionics technologies with Gulfstream. The power management system for the G500/G600 will build on the G650 secondary power system including GE's modular power tile technology, while adding primary power distribution, reducing wiring and utility function controllers. The integration of the power system provides a flexible composition and significantly reduces integration risk.

"The G500/600 is a beautiful airplane. I was at the rollout a few weeks ago. This is the first business jet application of an integrated data network incorporating multiple aircraft systems and we are very pleased to be a part of what will undoubtedly be a very popular aircraft," he added.

Mottier pointed out that GE has had a very good year too, on its H Series engines. "We've done three first flights in 2014, all involving new applications of the H Series. So far we have produced more than 180 engines, which is excellent from a standing start of zero deliveries two years ago. So we're now very much in the ramping up phase," he commented. The H85 engine powered the first flight of CAIGA's AG300 business aircraft during the summer. In May, the H75 powered the first flight of AIR-TEC's L 410 STC upgrade, replacing GE's M601 engines currently powering AIR-TEC's L 410 fleet. The H80-powered Technoavia Rysachok aircraft – a twin-engine, 10-seat general aviation aircraft, had its maiden flight with the engine on 27 March in Russia. In addition, Nextant's remanufactured G90XT (with H75 engines) is scheduled to have its first flight before the end of 2014.

"For the H Series, we announced a few weeks ago in a show in Brazil that we're certified to run on diesel fuel. That's important for agricultural operators, who are flying Thrush 510Gs. Because biodiesel fuel is less expensive, this amounts to a \$200,000 cost saving between engine overhauls, a very significant reduction in operating costs," Mottier noted.

In an exciting development for GE, its collaboration with Honda as its engines partner on the HondaJet is starting to pay off handsomely.

What we are doing with these engine upgrades is taking off the Williams engine and replacing it with the HF120. This is our second application for the HF120, following the Honda Jet, which is particularly pleasing

The Honda HF120 is now being retrofitted on Citation Jets, with an impressive transformation in overall performance. "What we are doing with these engine upgrades is taking off the Williams engine and replacing it with the HF120. This is our second application for the HF120, following the Honda Jet, which is particularly pleasing," Mottier commented. Equally exciting is the fact that GE will be seeing the Honda Jet being delivered to customers in 2015, at which point it can expect pilots to be giving their verdict on just how smoothly the HF120 performs.

Mottier adds that GE's flagship Passport engine is moving forward according to plan. "We'll do 4,000 hours and 8,000 cycles before service entry. We've accumulated 680+ hours thus far, with more than 250 cycles on six individual engines. We began Passport testing in June 2013 with a successful FETT; everything has been smooth since then. We've completed icing tests, including ice slab testing as well. We did altitude testing on the first engine to test. That started at 51,000 feet and we worked down from there. The Passport engine will be certified in 2015 and the first flight will be in early 2015," he comments.

No OEM engines programme is complete without a comprehensive support and maintenance infrastructure. Mottier says that GE has brought on six new authorised service centres for H80s and CF34s, and now has authorised service centres in 15 countries.

To the delight of its partner, Honda, GE has signed a contract to purchase two HondaJets for its own use. Mottier explains that these two aircraft will be very much for its service support people rather than for senior executives, and will help GE cope with its widespread US campus.

"At GE Aviation, we have 44,000 employees and produce 2,600 new engines per year. By 2020 that number will grow to 3,300 engines a year - that's a big ramp! Those engines have new technologies, like CMCs and additive manufacturing. We at GE have been gearing up for the past seven years to have a supply chain capable of producing all that hardware, and feeding our assembly lines. Today in the US, we have 42 sites. There's a lot of logistics and travel required between those sites. Moreover, in the last seven years, we've added seven new manufacturing facilities, with a total of some 1.5 million square feet. We're adding an eighth this year. From 2012 to 2017, we'll have spent \$3.5 billion on these new manufacturing facilities and equipment. The HondaJet, with its super-fast performance and super-efficient engines, is an ideal commuter tool for us! A lot of our sites are not in large metro areas and travel between sites can pose some tough problems with a lot of time wasting if you try to solve this with scheduled airline travel supplemented by road trips. Accordingly we really analysed the problem and the solution was to buy and dedicate a couple of HondaJets to our supply chain," he comments. ■

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Aircraft management: a long term relationship

EVA talks to Mike Moore, head of Aircraft Management at Meridian

Very few business jet owners want the hassle of managing their own aircraft. The complexities involved are such that simply leaving it to the pilot is not going to get you very far. Moreover, many owners, but by no means all, feel that this new, expensive asset of theirs needs to be made to do at least a bit to earn its keep, which means that the owner has to decide how little or how hard they want to work their jet as far as the charter market is concerned. If they are going to do any charter at all, then the only realistic option is to put the aircraft into the hands of an experienced aircraft management operation that also has a strong pedigree as a charter operator.

Mike Moore, VP of Aircraft Management at Meridian points out that owners differ enormously in their preferences and expectations when it comes to deciding whether to charter and how much charter business they want. There is an additional wrinkle in the decision process because some US states do not require sales tax on business jets if they are going to be run on a Part 135 certificate. So Moore is accustomed to having new owners wanting to put their aircraft on Meridian's Part 135 certificate from the moment of purchase, even if they do not want to charter the aircraft commercially. They may well decide to only charter the aircraft occasionally to people they either know well themselves, or who come highly recommended by friends and acquaintances.

"We find that more and more of our clients are putting their aircraft on our Part 135, but are not doing any retail, or 'third party', chartering at all. They want the Part 135 certification purely for tax purposes," he notes. When owners want to go this route rather than certifying the aircraft under Part 91, they need to be aware that the regulations governing the operation of aircraft under Part 135 are considerably stricter than under Part 91. There are stricter regulations on pilot rest periods for example, and on landing field clearance distances. "Flying under Part 135 you have to be able to land within 60% of the available runway, plus adhere to a number of other rules that do not apply to Part 91. However, not paying sales tax on a \$23 million jet creates a good deal of incentive," Moore says.

Because of the complexities involved, prospective owners need to take detailed tax advice before making their decision as to which certification process they are going to go for. Meridian can play an important role in this process by setting out in a highly transparent way what the fixed and direct operating costs will be under either approach. In fact one of the keys to building an enduring, long term relationship with owners, Moore says, is transparency. "For many clients to charter or not to charter is a difficult decision. Some will say if you fly my aircraft for 200 charter hours a year, that will only make me a couple of hundred thousand dollars and will be bound to generate some inconvenience, so why do it? Others want to work the plane at least hard

enough to pay the salary of one of the pilots and something of the hangarage costs," he notes.

Owners also vary widely in their attitude to the jet they have just purchased. "We see both ends of the spectrum and everything in between. At the one end you have the guy who is hugely excited, can't wait to take delivery and is tremendously proud of their aircraft. At the other is the person who buys a \$40 million aircraft and walks right past it without a flicker of interest. For them the aircraft is a pure business tool, a convenient and fast way of getting from A to B, and that's the whole story. As an aircraft it doesn't attract or interest them much, if at all," he observes.

Aircraft management is a highly demanding business and the quality of the management company that a new owner chooses can have a massive impact on the ownership experience "In our world there are top tier management companies who really can manage aircraft to the highest standards. I would put Meridian forward as one such, along with the likes of Jet Aviation and the NetJets company, EJM. But we also have the middle tier companies, who do not manage enough aircraft to get any economies of scale going on fuel and suchlike, and who have no depth of experience in the organisation. We have been going since 1946, so we have a great deal of talent in the company," he comments.

Maintenance is a vital part of aircraft management and it is an area where the management company can really save the owner significant sums. "I still hear people say that all

I still hear people say that all management companies are the same and the only differentiator is price. That is a staggering proposition when you think that what they are contemplating is turning over a \$20 million asset to the lowest bidder





management companies are the same and the only differentiator is price. That is a staggering proposition when you think that what they are contemplating is turning over a \$20 million asset to the lowest bidder. You have to look at the company before you look at the price. You need to do your due diligence. Ask for recommendations from people who really know the industry, and follow up references. You want to say to the prospective management company: "Give me the names of five of your clients that I can go and talk to," Moore advises. If you find that one of the companies bidding for your business is on a cash only basis with their fuel supplier, walk away. Above all, go and inspect the facilities and see if the buildings are in good state or look run down or dilapidated. Look at staff turnover. "Our average staff tenure here at Meridian is between ten and twenty years," Moore says.

Owners also need to be very clear what exactly it is that they are getting for their management fee. There are a huge number of variables with every purchase, particularly with a pre-owned aircraft, and the figures change depending on the number of hours the aircraft is going to be flown. "What I tell prospective clients is: I can give you a general budget for a particular aircraft model, but once you identify the precise aircraft you want to buy, we will look at specific factors, such as where that aircraft sits in its life cycle, what the state of the engines are, what maintenance schedule it is on, which inspections are coming up and so on. If the aircraft is coming up to a \$250,000 service, that is going to impact dramatically on the cost per hour, and can push your direct operating costs from \$3,000 an hour

to \$6,000 an hour. I can tell an owner what a captain is going to cost in today's market, but landing fees, crew overnight fees, and fuel prices are variables that change depending on where you are flying to," he notes.

"The hardest thing to unravel in this industry is the lies that get told to owners and prospective owners. I take phone calls from owners who say that they have been talking to an aircraft management company who tell them that they can fly their Gulfstream GIV for 600 charter hours with two pilots. I have to tell them, no, you can't. If you are going to do 600 hours you need at least three pilots and possibly four, depending on your schedule. That's the way the regulations work. By the time you hire a third pilot you are not breaking even, so why are you doing it? Moreover, if you come to me with an Embraer Legacy 600 and two pilots and you want a large number of charter hours, your pilots are going to quit because you are working them too hard. Pilots' salaries in 2014 have increased 12% over 2013, and that is going to add to the strain for any owner who doesn't really have the depth of finances to run the jet without pushing for an unrealistically large charter quota," he notes.

Every aircraft has a different cash flow profile. Moore says that Meridian had no problems getting 700 charter hours out of a Challenger 601. "The owner did better than break even on the fixed and direct operating costs. But is that going to happen on every aircraft? No, absolutely not. You

have a better shot at it with a super mid-size aircraft, but a smaller aircraft is not going to do it," he warns.

As Moore says, maintenance repair and inspections are where Meridian looks to make a real difference. "Our mechanics do work on virtually every aircraft type on the market and they are experts at trouble shooting and diagnosing problems. Any licensed mechanic who can really trouble shoot an aircraft issue is going to save you significant sums. Experience really does count in this market," he comments.

Meridian's aircraft management business recently added four more aircraft to its managed fleet, which now stands at 25 aircraft, and according to Moore, discussions are underway with four more people who are about to buy aircraft. To support this increase in sales, Meridian has been growing its staff numbers in its aircraft management and charter side and in a major new development for the company, it is in the process of building a West Coast presence. "We have a lease at Hayward Executive Airport, near San Francisco, and we are building a new FBO at Hayward which will give us a coast to coast presence. The plans are going through the approvals process right now and we expect to be breaking ground on the FBO project in the Spring of 2015," Moore notes. ■



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Squaring up to the big events

by Anthony Harrington

In our EBACE FBO Special Report we featured the preparations for the Brazilian Football World Cup. At the time there was only a few weeks to go to the games and the Brazilian authorities had yet to declare how many slots they were going to make available to business aircraft, causing some trepidation in the industry.

However, the Brazilian operator Lider, profiled in that report, assured EVA that the Brazilian FBOs and the Brazilian authorities would have everything sorted out by the time the games started on 12 June and that the 2014 Football World Cup would turn out to be an excellent event. Cynthia de Oliveira, Operations Director at Lider Aviação, the largest FBO operator in Brazil with an FBO at every one of the 12 host city airports, pointed out at the time that Brazil had already benefitted from two "dress rehearsals" prior to the World Cup in the shape of the Confederation Cup, the traditional pre-cursor to the World Cup, held in the host country a year before the main event, and the big sustainability conference, Rio +20, held in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June 2012. Both of those went well and created a substantial influx of private jet traffic, so that experience, plus intensive preparations by Lider and others on the ground underpinned her confidence that the World Cup would go smoothly as far as business aviation was concerned.

In fact, as Flavia Ribas, Vice President of Operations for Colt International's São Paulo office in Brazil, notes, everything really was "all right on the night"! "What we saw from our trip handling and trip support people was that the Football World Cup actually went incredibly well. We had great flight movements from here in the US and the arrivals in Brazil and movements in country between the games venues all went smoothly, considering the intensity of the event. Clearing

customs and getting the documentation sorted out for international flights to Brazil took longer than usual because of the demand pressure in the run up to the event, but we had no major problems. All our customers got to the games and to the cities that they planned to reach."

Jeff Briand, Senior VP of International Trip Support at Colt's Houston headquarters adds: "We were able to get slots for our customers very close to the times that they wanted. Maybe we didn't get exactly the time slot that every customer wanted, but people understood the pressure the Brazilian authorities were under and we had no big delays or major complaints. There was noticeably more pressure for the World Cup final, but even there we had no major issues. Minor delays at such a major event are to be expected and the key in these matters is to manage the client's expectations so that they know what is likely to happen and that any

delays will be temporary," he says.

Briand points out that to conclude a major event on this scale successfully takes sustained preparation and planning. "We had a full team involved in planning for the Football World Cup for more than a year before the games started. We had meetings with the authorities and we ran a series of training programs for our own staff. We put agents in place to travel to the smaller airports in Brazil where they do not have much local support, so that our clients could stay in touch and get the help they require," he comments.

Ribas adds that where there were some complaints, these tended to come from regular customers who were flying to Brazil anyway on business, and who suddenly found themselves in a slot regulated world, competing for landing and take-off slots with private jets bringing in people to watch the matches. "A few people, despite all our briefings and all the advanced warning we sent out and also placed on our web site, still thought it would be business as usual in Brazil during the World Cup, and if you thought that, some disappointment was perhaps inevitable," she comments.

All the information people needed prior to attending this major event was available for free from Colt's special purpose World Cup web site built specifically for the event, and the site attracted plenty of traffic. "We design special purpose information sites for major events. In all we probably saw twice as many people using our special event web site on this occasion, which was gratifying," Briand adds.

He points out that Colt used Tam as its FBO provider in Brazil and they proved to be very helpful. One of the pleasant surprises of the whole Brazilian World Cup experience was that there was no real signs of the violent protests that had rocked the country prior to the World Cup. "We were a little concerned about security.



Teterboro is normally a slot free airport but during Superbowl the airport authorities decided to impose reservation system
Betsy Wines

However, we were delighted to be able to report that there wasn't a single security incident that we were aware of or that impacted our customers," Briand notes.

While the Football World Cup is big news around the world, Superbowl is the event that gets many American hearts beating faster. This year's Superbowl, which saw the Denver Broncos getting crushed by the Seattle Seahawks, was held in the MetLife stadium in New Jersey. The event had private jets flying in to New York area FBOs from all over the US. However, US trip planners and the FBOs at Teterboro are well accustomed to handling big occasions and things generally go well, be the event a presidential inauguration, a NASCAR meet or, indeed, Superbowl.

Betsy Wines, VP Customer Service and Human Resources at Meridian, the award winning full-service private aviation company based at Teterboro Airport, the closest business aviation airport to New York City, points out that ironically, dealing with Superbowl in particular this year actually turned out to be easier for her and her team than dealing with ordinary peak business periods such as the post-Labor Day weeks when the U.S. Open and Fashion Week are occurring.

"Things were tremendously well organised during Superbowl. Teterboro is normally a slot free airport but during Superbowl the airport authorities decided to impose a reservation system, fearing that the airport could be swamped by private jets. This actually made things a great deal easier for us. During any busy period outside of a special event like Superbowl, Meridian will handle 100 or more arrivals and departures, and while probably 80% of our clients give us some indication when they will be landing, some you only find out about when their aircraft is taxiing to our FBO ramp," Wines comments.

A reservation system at least has the merit of allowing staff to solve all the usual limousine or taxi transfers to hotels or into the city, plus room bookings for clients. The downside is that clients who were travelling to Teterboro Airport on normal business during Superbowl may have been disconcerted to find that they are suddenly faced with a slot system when they are used to coming and going at will.

"The reservation system during Superbowl had another major plus," Wines says. "Most people elected to stay over that night thinking it would be simpler to get away the next day, but that Monday we had a snowstorm. However, because everyone had an assigned departure slot we were able to schedule the de-icing to coincide with aircraft departures, which is a very effective way of doing things. Normally we can only start de-icing when the CEO or high net worth client actually arrives at the FBO. Because of the system, far from stressing us out, Superbowl was almost a non-event for us despite the

large volume in traffic," Wines notes.

"As a policy our daily staffing levels at our FBO are designed to cope with peak workloads so while we feel the increased pressure on a really busy day, we can still deliver the high quality of service that the customer expects. We have a great relationship with the airport authorities and if things get too congested on our ramp with aircraft departures, for example, the tower will go out of its way to move the aircraft off the ramp to designated holding areas. We handle high volumes very well here at Teterboro," she concludes. ■

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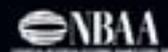
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Keep it in the family

Profile of Hadley Executive Chauffeur Service

Keith Norris, Founder and Managing Director of Hadley Executive Chauffeur Service, is passionate about building long-term client relationships. Having his wife and two daughters in the company helps enormously in creating the caring, family-run, service-orientated culture that characterises his firm. In this issue EVA profiles Zoe Norris, Keith's eldest daughter.

Zoe Norris had always been involved with the family business on a small level, but in 2003, she left her job as a PA for an art director in a hair company to work full-time with her father.

"I was a little apprehensive about working for my Dad as both of us are very similar and passionate about what we do, and it was quite a big change in my career. I wanted to be taken seriously and not just be seen as the boss's daughter," she says.

"I think as much as my dad respected my work it was hard for him not to look over my shoulder and check up on what I was doing! I think that being related to most of the company means you have

to work much harder and also remember to leave work at work, which is sometimes hard as Hadley is a 24/7 company. The other disadvantage is I can never really take a sick day!

"I started my work at Hadley by getting to know all the clients. My role was in the sales area, which involved client bookings. Now that area has grown and I look after booking management, client liaison, FBO liaison and itinerary planning, along with new client introductions, marketing and PR. All industry changes at such a fast rate, so another part of my role is to keep up to date with new businesses that our service would complement.

"Having always dealt with clients in my previous job I found it really easy to relate to Hadley's clients. One thing I really wanted to do was to introduce new ideas to my Dad for the business, such as understanding how social media plays such a massive part in all our lives. I pushed for Hadley to use Facebook and Twitter.

"Coming from an image-led background, I took over the project of updating all our brochures, with new photo shoots and designs which led

to updating all our web pages. I made sure that we had a new design for our stands for our exhibitions and it was very important to attend as many as possible so clients got to know me, as I think it's always important to put a face to a name.

"I think because my Dad has grown the business from a three-vehicle fleet to the success it is today has made it a challenge for him to allow me to take some of the reins, but now I feel confident in putting new ideas forward and being able to run with them.

"I have built great relationships with our clients, and really enjoy working in the busy office. No two days are ever the same as being in this industry things change by the hour, and clients' trips don't just start as they get in the vehicle. It's our job to help their trip run smoothly from the start of planning their journey.

"I am really glad that I came to work with my Dad; we have a very close family and humour plays a big part in making working life work.

"It is really nice to think that Hadley is progressing within our family throughout its generations. Even my 11-year-old son says when he grows up he is going to work with Granddad... or be a professional footballer!

"Hadley Executive Chauffeur Service has always prided itself on being a friendly, professional, family-run company, and I am really pleased that I have played a part in its growth.

"I may have to ask for an increase in salary over Christmas dinner!" ■



There is already a very strong remanufacturing market in aerospace. Many airlines remanufacture their own components to a higher standard than their original condition



Nextant prepares its China hand

Having taken up the torch for the time honoured art of remanufacturing, with a seat on the Board of the Remanufacturing Industries Council, Nextant Aerospace has increased its global reach with a new China partnership. As Nextant President and CEO Sean McGeough explains, the company has just signed a deal with STAECO (Beijing) Business Jet Maintenance that will see STAECO become Nextant's first authorised service centre in the Greater China region.

A ceremony marking the agreement between Nextant and STAECO was held at Airshow China, which took place from 11-16 November in Zhuhai, Guangdong. STAECO BJ will be providing line maintenance and AOG support from its base at Beijing Capital International Airport. "It looks like we are truly global as far as sales of the Nextant 400XT are concerned. We are now certified in



10 countries that we have delivered aircraft to, including the US, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore as well as several European countries, including the UK, Switzerland and Estonia," McGeough told EVA.

The maintenance deal with STAECO complements the appointment of AVIC International Aero-Development Corporation, back in April this year, as Nextant's exclusive sales representative for China. "We are very pleased to have AVIC on board. They are a multi-conglomerate company, with interests in training, manufacturing, chartering and FBOs. AVIC ADE is a subsidiary of AVIC (the Aviation Industry Corporation of China) which is China's largest aviation company and is one of the main channels for the import and export of civil aviation products in China. It is a tremendous endorsement for Nextant and for our remanufacturing focus, to have AVIC come on board," McGeough comments.





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As part of the agreement, AVIC ADE expects to take delivery of its first 400XTi in the first quarter of 2015.

McGeough points out that while Nextant might be trail blazers in applying remanufacturing to light jets, aerospace remanufacturing is a \$15 billion per year industry. "There is already a very strong market in aerospace. Many airlines including Lufthansa and KLM, remanufacture their own components to a higher standard than their original condition; they do this to keep costs down, enhance reliability and comply with various safety regulations. In heavy plant, Caterpillar initially resisted the idea of remanufacturing, then trialled it and remanufacturing is now big business for them.

Nextant's second remanufacturing project, based on remanufacturing Beechcraft C90 turboprop aircraft, is now getting underway. Part of the remanufacturing will see Nextant replacing the C90-series Pratt & Whitney PT6 turboprop engines with the GE H75 series engine, a modernised version of the venerable Walter M601. (We have a separate interview with GE's Brad Mottier in this issue, with more detail on the GE H-series, see page: 36). At the time of going to press, the remanufactured aircraft, known as the G90XT was scheduled to take its first flight with the GE H75-100 engine within weeks.

Nextant acquired an existing STC from GE for this project and is updating the STC to incorporate new avionics from Garmin for the aircraft. It is also in the process of making some adjustments to the cowling that McGeough reckons will make it a much better aircraft. On the replacement of the venerable PT6, he points out that there are a number of features about the H75-100 that make it a much more desira-



The G90XT was developed with the pilot in mind. The cockpit was ergonomically designed for single pilot operations

ble and pilot friendly engine. "The PT6 is a tried and trusted workhorse, but the fact that the H75-100 has a single power lever that syncs the propeller to the engine is a huge plus. On top of this, because there are no fuel injectors since the H75-100 uses a spray hose at the top of the chamber that distributes fuel evenly through the chamber, there are no hot spots that need to be monitored from a maintenance standpoint.

The G90XT was developed with the pilot in mind. The cockpit was ergonomically designed for single pilot operations. A new fuel gauge in-

tegrates with the Garmin G1000 flight deck and the fuel transfer gauges were moved to the center console to be within the pilot's field of vision. The turboprop comes with autostart as standard, and a limiting unit for ground operations, along with linear throttle response. "The whole package makes this a much more pilot friendly engine and aircraft," McGeough says. The maintenance interval is 4000 hours, and there is no danger of over-tempering the engine since there is an automatic overtemp shut down, he notes. "These are some of many examples of safety and workload improvements suggested by pilots and customers and incorporated into the Nextant G90XT."

With over 50 Nextant 400XTi's due for delivery by the end of 2014 the light jets segment is proving very lively for Nextant. "We have deliberately focused on entry level business aircraft. We could have selected a larger platform as our next model, but we believe that it is important for the industry to grow the light jet segment as the recovery sets in. Nextant's value proposition is ideal for customers buying their first business aircraft. Our aim is to build a solid base of customers who love the 400XTi and the G90XT and they will be great candidates to migrate to bigger aircraft when we decide to bring a larger remanufactured aircraft to market down the road," he comments. ■





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Gama bets on Sharjah FBO

On 1 July this year Gama Aviation's new, purpose built FBO at Sharjah International Airport, opened its doors, creating a full service private aviation hub targeting Sharjah, Dubai and the Northern Emirates. Gama's financial backers for the venture include Crescent Enterprises, Growthgate Capital and Sharjah's Department of Civil Aviation. The FBO was inaugurated by H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Mohammed Al Thani. As a group Gama received a tremendous boost recently when Kenny Dichter's low cost fractional operation, Wheels Up appointed Gama as the operator in charge of its fleet of 25 King Air 350 turboprop aircraft. Apart from this single, extra-ordinary deal, Gama generally looks to add between 10 to 15 aircraft a year to its managed fleet around the world. Its Middle East operation currently manages eight aircraft while the bulk of the group's 93 aircraft under management are to be found in the US and Europe.

**EVA talks to Gama Aviation
MENA, General Manager
Richard Lineveldt**



Gama's growing interest in the Middle East, which this year sees them exhibiting at MEBA for the third time, dates back to mid 2007, when the group received funding from the Bahrain-based private equity house, Growthgate Capital. As Richard Lineveldt, the general manager of Gama explains, that relationship naturally enough put the spotlight on the Middle East for Gama, which opened up services in Dubai International Airport. "At the time we were offering services that included aircraft management and chartering. However, it was clear to us that Dubai International was becoming challenging to operate out of because of the airport's tremendous commercial growth. This was a particular problem because at the same time it was also clear that the region around the United Arab Emirates and Dubai was growing significantly," he recalls. Additional growth was bound to lead to additional traffic, making an already congested scene even worse. Gama wanted the growth, of course, but it certainly did not need the crunch that

When I first got here ten years ago, Sharjah seemed a very long way from Dubai, but there is now a six lane freeway between Sharjah and Dubai and the commute is down to 15 minutes

It was clear to us that Dubai International was becoming challenging to operate out of because of the airport's tremendous commercial growth

Dubai airport virtually guaranteed.

With Dubai International increasingly seeming a losing proposition as far as business aviation was concerned, Gama began looking around for an alternative home in the region. "We had a client with an aircraft based at Sharjah and through that relationship we learned a great deal about the airport there. We identified that Sharjah could be a really nice market for us. When I first got here ten years ago, Sharjah seemed a very long way from Dubai, but there is now a six lane freeway between Sharjah and Dubai and the commute is down to 15 minutes. That is a small price to pay to avoid the difficulties of operating out of Dubai International with its tremendous pressure on slots and on available parking space," Lineveltdt says.

After six or seven years at Dubai International, Gama migrated its services across to Sharjah, setting up an FBO in temporary offices and making use of whatever was available at Sharjah airport in terms of ground sup-

port and space in the passenger terminal. It was far from ideal, but it gave Gama a base to start work with the airport authorities on its mid-term plan to construct a purpose built FBO at Sharjah. "Our goal with the FBO was to ensure that we could provide a really fast service in both directions, from the car park to the ramp and from the aircraft to the car park. The FBO building itself is a good looking FBO, pitched at the quality level that discerning clients expect, and it is the first to feature our new brand. But what we identified was that the client really wants a clean flow line through the building. We have dedicated customs and immigration facilities in the FBO to get the traveller through as fast as possible," Lineveltdt explains.

Gama went through a major rebranding exercise in 2013 and the Sharjah FBO is the first new building to feature all those brand ideas, he notes. "We have well trained staff and we ensure that the level of customer service is consistently high. We have dedicated crew fa-

cilities and a relaxation area plus shower facilities. We felt that these were really important given the heat and the long trips that some crews will have made to get here," he adds. There was no necessity to include accommodation suites in the FBO since there is a good hotel at Sharjah airport.

The region has its difficulties at the moment and this shows up particularly when it comes to trip planning. "There are restrictions that affect us. We have imposed a no-overflight rule as far as Syria and Iraq are concerned, and we do not fly to those countries. The difficulty for anyone operating the region right now is that there is a lot of flying around rather than through dangerous airspaces. "At a time when people are very conscious of operating costs these local difficulties are a problem," he says.

Gama plans a further expansion of its Sharjah FBO. "We are just finalising plans now to build a new, large hanger at Sharjah for maintenance and storage. Things are going well," Lineveltdt says. ■

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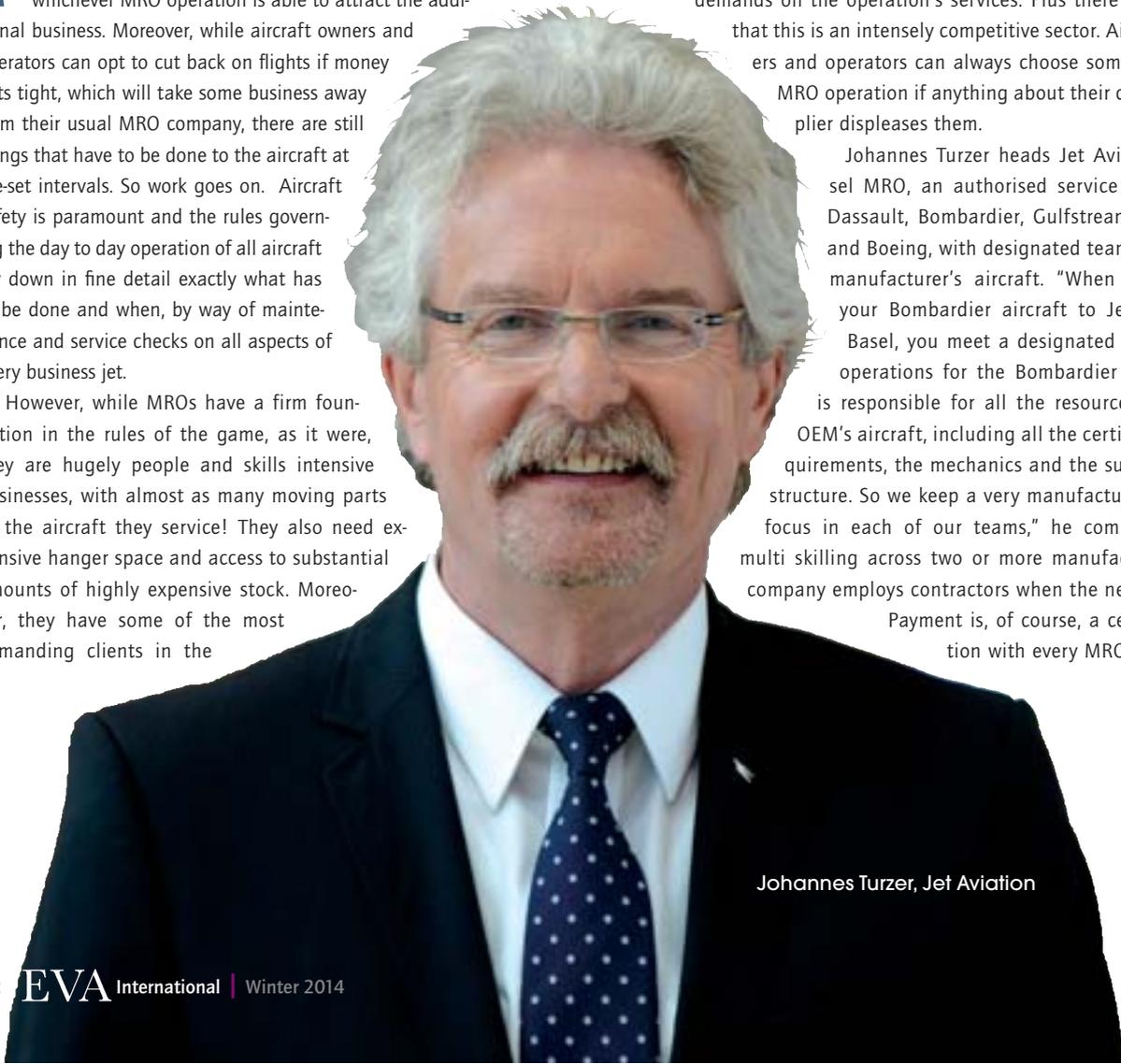
In many ways Maintenance and Repair Operations (MRO) look to have a built in buffer against the worst excesses of any down cycle in the global economy, while at the same time they stand to gain from any increase in activity. Clearly, if jet sales increase, that is good news for whichever MRO operation is able to attract the additional business. Moreover, while aircraft owners and operators can opt to cut back on flights if money gets tight, which will take some business away from their usual MRO company, there are still things that have to be done to the aircraft at pre-set intervals. So work goes on. Aircraft safety is paramount and the rules governing the day to day operation of all aircraft lay down in fine detail exactly what has to be done and when, by way of maintenance and service checks on all aspects of every business jet.

However, while MROs have a firm foundation in the rules of the game, as it were, they are hugely people and skills intensive businesses, with almost as many moving parts as the aircraft they service! They also need expensive hanger space and access to substantial amounts of highly expensive stock. Moreover, they have some of the most demanding clients in the

world and the standards they work to are exacting and very unforgiving of mistakes. The whole sector is a continuous management and logistical challenge and when your MRO shop is purring along at very close to maximum efficiency there is always the challenge that comes from unscheduled demands on the operation's services. Plus there is the fact that this is an intensely competitive sector. Aircraft owners and operators can always choose someone else's MRO operation if anything about their current supplier displeases them.

Johannes Turzer heads Jet Aviation's Basel MRO, an authorised service centre for Dassault, Bombardier, Gulfstream, Embraer and Boeing, with designated teams for each manufacturer's aircraft. "When you bring your Bombardier aircraft to Jet Aviation Basel, you meet a designated director of operations for the Bombardier team who is responsible for all the resources for that OEM's aircraft, including all the certification requirements, the mechanics and the supply chain structure. So we keep a very manufacturer-specific focus in each of our teams," he comments. For multi skilling across two or more manufacturers the company employs contractors when the need arises.

Payment is, of course, a central function with every MRO operation



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CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN - JAHID FAZAL KARIM, CO-OWNER AND BOARD MEMBER, JETCRAFT

WINGX is delighted to be moderator for the two day's panel discussions at the 2015 Future of Business Aviation conference. The panels will feature leading lights from across the industry, covering such diverse topics as the phenomenal growth of business aviation in Africa, the unexpected rebound in light aircraft activity, the way in which new fuels will change the business' economics, revolutions in cabin interior design, the impact of newcomers in the world of FBOs, the ways in which Asia is set to become the largest market for business aviation in the world, and much more besides. Expect a diverse mix of senior level delegates and speakers, excellent content and great networking

CONFERENCE MODERATOR - RICHARD KOE, CO-MANAGING DIRECTOR, WINGX ADVANCE

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We are very conscious that OEMs right now are very keen to keep aircraft flying as long as possible before base maintenance and we work hard to accommodate them

Dave Jackson

and the whole process of billing has to be very closely and carefully managed. "On the payment front, what we do normally is come up with a work scope for the client that we then price and turn into a quote. We negotiate the terms of payment, which are always unique to the particular client, but which generally works as a two-fold story, a fixed rate for the inspection work and then a price that

have arrived, or almost arrived, Jet Aviation Basel is looking to grow in a number of areas. "We are just gearing up some of our specialty shops to cater for what we anticipate by way of future demand. There is no time to relax in this business. We are now beefing up for the next three year stint," he comments.

Dave Jackson is the CEO of JETS, a 328 Group specialist MRO subsidiary. "We have

at Oberpfaffenhofen.

"We have the full heavy base of MRO covered, with some 35 to 40 staff at Bournemouth and we have now taken over Jet Aviation's former MRO at Biggin Hill, together with the FBO which has subsequently been sold to BBA's Signature Aviation. We are a Dassault service centre and we received formal approval as such in 2013 for the Falcon 900 and 2000 series," Jackson comments. On taking over Biggin Hill JETS had to go through an intensive re-audit by Dassault, confirming its capabilities and the expertise of its staff. Inevitably, with the switch over of providers there was some uncertainty and confusion in the customer base, and Barnes and his team have been pulling out all the stops to reassure clients that all the capabilities and the service quality that they are accustomed to is still very much there for them.

In addition to the Dassault programme, the JETS Biggin Hill MRO also looks after Challenger 400 and Challenger 600 aircraft, and there are four of the former under base contracts. "We are very conscious that OEMs right now are very keen to keep aircraft flying as long as possible before base maintenance and we work hard to accommodate them. We also have fairly regular maintenance visits from some of the older types, including Citation 550s and 600s. In fact we are now seeing owners and operators prepared to spend again to bring aircraft back into pristine condition. There is a noticeable willingness to invest from operators of many different types of aircraft, which is a very healthy sign," he comments.

JETS fosters a multi skilled approach in its engineers, with a number of them qualified to work across multiple aircraft types. "Our staff pretty much are our business and you



depends on what the inspection turns up," he comments.

"Our portfolio goes from a Lear jet all the way to an A340. We see 747s and 767s, BBJs and ACJs, and the whole portfolio of jets from the major OEMs," he comments. According to Turzer, the Basel MRO's work schedules stayed pretty steady through the downturn, largely because its workload is predominantly the larger jets. "MROs who specialise in light and very light jets, however, probably had a pretty bleak experience," he comments. Now that the upturn seems to

two facilities, one at Biggin Hill, and the second at Bournemouth on the South Coast," he explains. the Bournemouth location is a center of excellence for Hawker jets, from the early models through to the Hawker 1000 series. "We have a vast customer base, primarily in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East and Africa) but with some US custom. We also have the Challenger 600 and 605 covered at Bournemouth," he notes. The 328 Group has its base at Oberpfaffenhofen and Bournemouth also has Dornier 328 expertise and can handle any overspill in the workload

get happy staff when they get real diversity and new challenges in their work. We have a very versatile and dynamic team here who are committed for the long term, which gives us a tremendous advantage," he comments.

AMAC Aerospace was founded in Basel in 2008 and has a range of MRO "firsts" to its name. These include carrying out Europe's first 16 year/192 month inspection on a Gulfstream V and the successful maintenance return of an Airbus A340 for C8 maintenance checks. Waleed Muhiddin, Vice President, Strategic Operations and Business Development comments: "AMAC strives to be a market leader in everything it does. We have dedicated and well experienced personnel and we train and engage with them, trouble shoot with them and more. Our aircraft engineers and specialist teams work around the clock to make sure that every project that comes through our doors departs on time and with a sense of confidence in clients' minds. Relationships are continuously being built, which

in turn leads to trust, which leads to a successful day at the office."

Repeat business is one of the keys to a successful MRO operation and provides both management and staff with a tangible sign that things are going well. "There is no magic formula, but we work hard to be who we are," he says. Muhiddin points out that to achieve the necessary quality assurance levels an MRO and/or completions centre has to go through a continual and rigorous audit process with EASA or other relevant aviation authorities. "Quality assurance comes through having good working practices and processes. AMAC Aerospace has libraries of information that help guide the specific work activities that go to make up a maintenance project. Through previous experience we understand these tasks in fine detail and can recognise and solve any problems or challenges that arise, quickly and efficiently, without wasting valuable time. This keeps projects on track and on budget. Our quality inspectors closely

monitor work that is being performed and have their own dedicated procedures in all our workshops," he comments.

Muhiddin points out that the various contractual maintenance programmes, such as Power-by-the-hour, and other OEM maintenance service plans are extensive and complex. "Commercial airlines tend to have more exposure to Power-by-the-hour programs than a VIP aircraft would have, but again, it depends on how heavily the aircraft is used. A commercial airline would probably have between 300 and 400 hours per month of useage, but a VIP aircraft might fly less than that in a whole year. The economies of scale offered by various plans are thus vastly different. Where the aircraft is generally based is also a factor. The impact of weather on the aircraft, for example, will be very different for an aircraft based in Europe to one based in the Middle East. We encourage our customers to contact us if they would like further details on the kinds of deals and pricing that are available," he notes. ■



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Waleed Muhiddin, AMAC Aerospace

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Air BP expands its Middle East team

Air BP has been growing its global business aviation team as it continues to strengthen its focus on serving the business aviation community. Of particular relevance to this MEBA edition, as Air BP Global General Aviation Manager Miguel Moreno notes, the company has been putting considerable resources into developing its presence in the Middle East. "We now have a new General Aviation manager in the Middle East and we are increasing our account management capabilities there. We have hired a new account manager, who started a couple of months ago, and our Dubai office now provides 24x7 support globally to any customer who has an out of hours query or request," Moreno explains.

The staff work in shifts of four to provide round the clock coverage. Dubai was chosen, Moreno says, because of its great business atmosphere and its central location. "The staff in Dubai get calls from customers around the

What we are finding is that customers are really starting to use this team and it is adding value to our entire operation



Miguel Moreno

world looking for directions on where their nearest BP refuelling location is. What we are finding is that customers are really starting to use this team and it is adding value to our entire operation," he comments.

The Middle East has been a very interesting market for Air BP for some time and is now viewed as a critically important market. "The region is growing and aircraft movements across the region are growing as well. Of course, as a fuel provider, the fact that the Sheiks and the VVIPs, plus the Royal Families in the region use very large aircraft is great for us. We have to ensure that we have very specific services at airports to cater for VVIP customers when they travel outside the region. We have a dedicated ramp with its own services at Gatwick, for example, with specific business aviation refuelling capabilities and facilities, so VVIP travellers can have their jets refuelled off the main ramp and far faster than would otherwise be the case. This is very well appreciated by our VIP business aviation customers," Moreno says. This model



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will be extended to other major airports and hubs, over time.

"We have a specific technical offering for airports and FBOs, called OMEGA, which sets out the safety processes and standards that we operate to, and enables them to feel confident that we can support their operations with world class safety conscious procedures," Moreno says. At Heli Dubai Festival City, for example, Air BP has put in place a very carefully constructed set of installations and procedures to make fuel delivery adhere to the highest standards from a Health & Safety standpoint.

Relationships with FBOs around the world are, of course, critical. "We have many partner deals with a whole range of FBOs, where we try to combine our efforts with those of the FBO to maximise the service to the business aviation customer. In these instances, we would look to the refuelling of the aircraft while the FBO provides a range of other services. We are constantly looking to develop these relationships with additional FBOs. Our relationship with Gama in Sharja (see the interview with Richard Lineveldt, general manager of Gama Aviation, Sharja elsewhere in this issue) is a great example of this kind of partnering deal and ensures that customers have their aircraft refuelled as rapidly as possible and within the agreed service levels and time frames," Moreno says.

We have a specific technical offering for airports and FBOs, called OMEGA, which sets out the safety processes and standards that we operate to

To assist pilots and operators, Air BP has its own fuel card, known as the Sterling Card. "This is a part of our business that we are really pushing hard and we have dedicated teams within Air BP working on developing this offering," Moreno notes. In the Middle East, most of Air BP's customers use the Sterling Card, since it means that they do not have to have pre-agreed fuel releases with Air BP. They can simply arrive at the airport of their choice and use the card to gain ready access to Air BP's refuelling services. Along with

the card, Air BP offers a loyalty cash-back service. "What this means, as with all cash-back services is that when customers use the card in airports that we have fuel services, they get a percentage of the fuel costs refunded to their card as cash back, and this is very well appreciated," he comments.

In order to help customers keep track of their fuel costs as the aircraft flies between regions or continents, Air BP has a software tool called eNabler that allows the customer to log in to their account at Air BP's site over the Internet and check all the deliveries made to their aircraft. They can view all the fuel invoices online, along with the prices at each airport. Flight departments and operators with multiple aircraft who are volume buyers of fuel, and who can forecast roughly what their fuel usage over a period of time is likely to be can contract directly with Air BP and agree a bespoke set of prices that reflect the fact that they are bringing volume business to Air BP. The agreement reached would specify the service level agreements, in terms of which Air BP might, for example, agree a half hour delivery window at a particular airport, or the agreement might be to refuel the customer's jet within one hour of it arriving on the ramp. "When we have that kind of service level agreement with a customer for a specific airport, we will put the resources in place at that airport to make it happen. For their part, the customer will be told how we intend to resource the contract and ensure that we are in a position to meet the service levels agreed in the contract," Moreno explains.

Turning to the state of play in Europe, Moreno says that there are clear signs now that the business aviation market is recovering. "The market has been difficult since the 2008 crash, but we are happy to see customers looking more optimistic. We are very pleased, as Air BP, that we have managed to grow the business and extend our network through the difficult years. Recently, for example, we have added fuel operations in the South of France, at Cannes and Biarritz and a number of other new airports. It is very positive to see that our efforts are now bearing fruit and that customers are appreciative of the service levels that we can offer them," he concludes. ■



Joel is the managing director of AeroEx an aviation consulting company based in Switzerland, offering a wide range of services to both commercial and non-commercial aviation organizations. He is a member of the EASA Rulemaking Group OPS.001 and chairs the EASA OPS Review Group 02. He is on the IBAC Safety Management System Working Group and is a safety management system workshop lecturer for EBAA.

Industry Standards for the Business Aviation Community Implementing Management Systems in the aviation industry is a great challenge. For many years as an industry we were obliged to implement prescriptive rules and we spent considerable resources in trying to establish compliance with those regulations. State regulations are not always at the same level and as advanced as the standards currently prevailing in the industry. The development of state rules has to follow long and complex procedures and consultation before being implemented, therefore Industry Standards are usually more up to date and are much more targeted and meaningful to a particular sector.

Industry Standards are guidance material developed by independent and experienced industry bodies for a particular sector of the aviation industry. Using these standards can offer powerful tools for organizations of all size to manage risks and to operate in a more efficient and sustainable way.

Particular standards that have been developed for the business aviation community are the International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO) and the recently launched International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH).

Developed by the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) and its member associations, IS-BAO is a recommended code of best practice, based on the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS). It is designed to help flight departments worldwide to achieve high levels of safety and professionalism.

The International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH) is a set of global industry best practices for business aviation ground handlers, which features at its core a safety management system (SMS). IS-BAH follows the long established structure of the IS-BAO program. As one global industry code of best practices, IS-BAH will provide standardization to handlers and operators around the world to meet the coming SMS requirements.

Joel Hencks | www.aeroex.eu

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Wyvern gains stature after Nexus acquisition

Beefing up the board



Our aim is to extend our reach as a global company by taking advantage of Nexus' offices already in place while retaining the Wyvern headquarters in Pennsylvania

When Avinode, the online portal provider to the charter market, bought out its US rival, CharterX, in 2010, it acquired the aircraft operator safety audit specialist Wyvern as part of the deal, since CharterX was Wyvern's parent company. There were clearly some advantages for Avinode in having Wyvern under its umbrella, since a recent safety audit provides a level of comfort to anyone buying a charter or trying to choose among charter operators. However, the rationale for Avinode to continue to own Wyvern was less than clear.

The reason is simple. While safety audit information will always be an important dimension for Avinode to monitor and display, there is no logical necessity for Avinode to own its own safety audit company, any more than it needs to own charter operators to display charter information. From that standpoint it was not a surprise when Avinode announced in October at NBAA that it was selling Wyvern to Nexus Services America for an undisclosed sum. As Avinode CEO Niklas Berg said at the time, "Through the sale of Wyvern we are better able to focus our energies and investment upon further enhancements to the Avinode Marketplace technology." In other words, Wyvern, which Avinode managed for two years as a stand alone business, having nothing to do with the Avinode marketplace technology except as

an input feed for safety data, was by definition non-core, and something of a distraction for the tightly knit Avinode management team.

For Nexus, on the other hand, as a flight operations and trip support specialist, safety is of necessity a fundamental operational factor, so having a safety audit company as part of its portfolio, makes sense and provides it with yet another service to sell to clients. Not only is the additional emphasis on safety brand-enhancing for Nexus, the new owners also benefit directly from having access to Wyvern's extensive operator client base. Moreover, as we see elsewhere in this issue, in the profile of Nexus CEO Abdullah Al Sayed (featured on the front cover), the acquisition has been extremely positive for Wyvern as well, not least because of Nexus's willingness to add considerable fresh momentum to Wyvern's bid to become the global kite mark for charter operator safety.

The clearest mark of this is the speed with which Abdullah Al Sayed, the owner of Nexus, put together an extremely powerful board of directors for Wyvern. Art Dawley, who took over as Wyvern CEO in May 2013 is joined by Vincent Santulli, former CEO of NetJets Europe and NetJets Middle East, Shawn Vick, who has held leadership positions with OEMs, including Gulfstream, Bombardier and British Aerospace, and Nicholas Sabatini an experienced regulator and former No. 2 at the FAA. "While Wyvern maintained the status quo, as it were, under Avinode,

Nexus has the vision to really add a dimension to Wyvern," Dawley says. At the same time, as a globally recognised brand, Wyvern adds to Nexus's own global ambitions.

"Our aim is to extend our reach as a global company by taking advantage of Nexus' offices already in place while retaining the Wyvern headquarters in Pennsylvania. As part of the Nexus Group, with a world-wide operation, we can open up a lot of additional opportunities for Wyvern, particularly in emerging markets. Nexus has been in India since 2012 and is now established in Rwanda, and both India and Africa are of great interest to us. I feel that Wyvern can really help business aviation and charter services in emerging markets as they look to implement world-class safety standards," Dawley comments.

Wyvern has a long history in the safety audit business. As Dawley explains, the company's origins go back 1991 when the chief pilot of a major insurance company was asked by the company to set up some procedures for checking the quality of charter operators who were providing flight services to its executives. "Gradually those standards were embraced by the charter purchasing community as other large companies heard about the initiative. These processes evolved into the Wyvern standards and they have become one of the really well known standards in the industry, providing a benchmark over and above the minimum standards set by formal regulatory requirements," Dawley explains.

To obtain a Wyvern Wingman certification, an operator undergoes a two day audit by two Wyvern auditors, one focused on the operational side of the business, the other on the state of the aircraft and its maintenance history. The audit takes place at the operator's main base but can also include visits to subsidiary bases, and the auditors work with both the operator's safety manager and representatives from operations and maintenance. Pilot interviews are also part of the process. The audit is demanding and detailed and includes comprehensive checks on documentation in addition to the onsite inspections. Any issues of non-compliance are raised with the operator and have to be addressed before the final report is written. Once full compliance is achieved a final written report is posted on the Wingman Report and the operator becomes a Wingman Operator.

As Dawley points out, advances in avionics and the cockpit environment, along with new approaches to managing safety and risk, mean that the whole safety and audit process has to constantly evolve to take account of new dimensions in flight safety. "The rapid evolution of technology in the aviation sector, particularly over the last five years, requires a continual re-examination of approaches to risk management," Dawley notes. To stay abreast of these evolving trends, Wyvern is actively involved with industry working groups and safety organisations as well as the OEMs.

"There is no doubt that it is much more difficult to become part of a Wyvern Wingman program than to get a safety audit elsewhere. However, what we have found over time is that the Fortune 500 companies in particular place a high value on our audit precisely because it is thorough and far reaching," he comments. "As part of Nexus we continue to have our main revenue streams, which are all about selling safety intelligence data to the top corporate customers, and we intend to grow this by vetting as many charter operators in emerging markets as we can reach, including Latin America, China, India, Africa and the Middle East, which is a very important market for us. So as challenging as it is, our safety data becomes ever more valuable as we seek out and add those emerging market operators to our reporting structures and online products."

One of the most exciting new developments for Wyvern is the unmanned aerial systems market – drones to you and I. "This is a new and developing market with embryonic regulation of operating procedures and safety rules and few regulatory guidelines. We see this market as containing huge potential to provide a benchmark for measuring risk.

On another front, Dawley says that Wyvern's biggest new opportunity at present lies in the further development of the long term strategic relationship it has struck up with the American insurance giant, AIG, which is the largest aviation insurer in the world. "Through AirGuard, we will be providing safety and risk management products to AIG's customers. AIG describes AirGuard as "a suite of best-in-class loss control and safety services expressly designed to address the complex risks, safety and regulatory challenges of corporate flight departments, commercial air carriers, airports and various aviation service providers and support groups".

"This is a huge opportunity for us, and one that we are very excited about," Dawley concludes. ■

As part of Nexus we continue to have our main revenue streams, which are all about selling safety intelligence data to the top corporate customers



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