

A Global Brand

Leaders In Private Aviation A Flexible Fleet

An Interview with Adam Johnson,
Senior Vice President Global Sales, Marketing and Service, NetJets Inc.

An Interview with Chuck Suma,
Senior Vice President of Global Asset Management, Global Procurement, and Global Process Improvement, NetJets Inc.



Adam Johnson

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to his current role, Adam Johnson presided as the Senior Vice President of NetJets' Administrative Services business unit, overseeing NetJets' global responsibilities for Information Technology, Government Affairs, Human Resources, Corporate Real Estate, Security, and Corporate Communications. His experience includes over 20 years on the operations side of the business as a Senior Vice President of Logistics, Executive Director of the NetJets Aviation Flight Center, Director of International Trip Planning, Manager of NetJets Europe's Flight Center in Lisbon, Portugal, and prior experience at Southern Air Transport. Johnson received his bachelor's degree in business management from The Ohio State University and is also a licensed pilot.



Chuck Suma

EDITORS' NOTE Chuck Suma joined NetJets in 2010 with more than 35 years of aviation experience in the manufacturing, sale, and support of general aviation aircraft. Prior to joining NetJets, he was President and Chief Executive Officer of Piper Aircraft, where he was responsible for overseeing the development of 11 new model aircraft from product concept through FAA certification and customer delivery, while building a worldwide sales and support network.

What makes NetJets a consistent industry leader?

In 2014, we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of our company. Through my nearly 20 years with NetJets, the constant has been our team members' relentless focus on safety and service. We are blessed to have many team members who have been with the company for more than 25, 35, and even 45+ years; they are in many ways the glue of our amazing history and culture.

Within our operation itself, there are numerous differentiators, such as the scale of our operation. This allows us to provide industry leading response times on a global basis. We are a global brand with operations in the U.S. and Europe, and currently fly to and from more than 170 countries throughout the world.

Additionally, we are extremely fortunate to have the financial backing of Berkshire Hathaway. This year, more than any other year that I can recall, the financial stability and long-term prognosis of other competitors has been in question, evidenced by multiple providers either exiting the business, merging or falling under private equity ownership. Mr. Buffett has said to us, "Spend whatever it takes to be the safest and most secure...then spend whatever it takes to stay that way." This is a privilege he has provided us that we never take for granted. We will never be the least expensive provider, and there are many good reasons for this, starting with the safest and most secure flight experience for every one of our customers, or as we call them, our owners. We have never, and will never, compromise on this point.

Is it tough to maintain a sense of calm within this business?

At our Flight Service Center, it is easy to witness firsthand how highly complicated our world-class private aviation operation can be. However, there is also an amazing calm. The busiest day of the year is the Sunday after Thanksgiving. We fly well over 1,000 flights on that day, but it's as focused and calm as a Saturday in September, a typically slower day. This is due to the many professionals we have working throughout the organization.

What is the secret behind the chemistry that makes this work so well?

There is a strength that transcends any individual or department within the organization. We are all motivated by personalizing and simplifying the owners experience with our company. This focus and common goal, combined with our 50-year service and safety history, creates chemistry within our workforce that cannot be replicated by any other private aviation company on the planet. ●

How do you differentiate your fleet in this market?

We segment the airplane into areas: a crew area and a cabin area.

On the crew side, we look at all the operational requirements: where we're going to be flying the planes, what capabilities we'll need, and what regulatory environment those operations require now, and will require in the future.

In the galley area, which is designed to be ergonomically optimized based on what flight attendants need to support the flight requirements of our owners, we make sure that we have everything to support the service that is expected.

On certain airplanes, you can have up to 13 people onboard. So for a 2,000 to 6,000 nautical mile trip, you have to prepare for food service.

Working with the original equipment manufacturer (OEM), we specify exactly what we would like onboard in terms of equipment, and we source from other providers a selection of silverware, dishware, and linens.

We also invest time on detail work in the cabin and through owner surveys to determine what systems and services they most desire.

Connectivity is very important, for instance. One of our capabilities is inflight WiFi, including satellite WiFi on our Global 5000/6000 aircraft.

Our Signature Series, for instance, is defined by the way we have configured the airplane with Signature Series hand-selected, high-end finishes.

There are Signature Series amenities we add after we buy the aircraft from an OEM, such as humidity control equipment, acoustics to reduce the cabin noise levels, and ergonomically advanced seats, all to enhance the owners experience on the flight.

What changes are you making to the light cabin aircraft, and how is that category evolving?

In 2010, our fleet included 24 different models of airplanes; our goal is to have seven by 2022. Our aircraft purchase agreements focus on the goal to create a more efficient fleet.

The very high end of the light-cabin class is where the Signature Series Phenom 300 fits.

We chose the Phenom because of its style, capability, and reliability – this newly designed airplane has the latest innovations in technology. ●