

Meals Up

An Interview with Kenny Dichter, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Wheels Up

EDITORS' NOTE Kenny Dichter is the Founder, CEO and Chairman of Wheels Up. He has long been recognized as an entrepreneur with expertise in branding, marketing, public relations and advertising. Under Dichter's leadership, Wheels Up is disrupting and digitizing the private aviation industry. Prior to Wheels Up, he founded Marquis Jet and pioneered the first-ever fractional jet card program. Dichter successfully led Marquis Jet to be sold to Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway's NetJets in 2010. Among his other found-



Kenny Dichter

ing credits, in 2010 he co-founded Tequila Avion, an ultra-premium tequila brand which was acquired by Pernod Ricard in 2014. He is also a founding investor in Juice Press, an organic food and juice company with 86 locations in the U.S. Earlier in his career, he co-founded Alphabet City, a sports-marketing and music company. Dichter is very involved in philanthropic initiatives and in 2020 launched Meals Up with Wheels Up partners and Ambassadors to fight hunger, using the Wheels Up Cares platform to support the efforts of the organization Feeding America. Dichter is a major supporter of his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2019, he partnered with the Office of Admissions and Recruitment in Madison to launch the Fly High Fund which will support digital outreach to students with diverse backgrounds to encourage them to apply.

COMPANY BRIEF Wheels Up (wheelsup.com) is the only company in the industry to offer a total private aviation solution that includes world-class safety, service, and flexibility through on-demand flights, membership programs, corporate solutions, aircraft management, whole aircraft sales, and commercial travel benefits through a strategic partnership with Delta Air Lines. Wheels Up offers its Customers and Members access to over 1,500 safety-vetted and verified aircraft. Through the Wheels Up App anyone can search, book, and fly. Wheels Up Connect, Core and Business memberships provide enhancements such as flight sharing, empty-leg Hot Flights, Shuttle Flights, Shared Flights, signature Wheels Down events, and exclusive member benefits from preeminent lifestyle brands. The company's ongoing Wheels Up Cares program aligns with philanthropic organizations and initiatives that affect and matter to the company and its customers, members, stakeholders, families and friends. The Wheels Up Cares fleet is comprised of five custom painted Beechcraft King Air 350i aircraft – each plane serves as a flying symbol for a specific cause.

What was the vision for creating Wheels Up Cares and how is Wheels Up Cares ingrained in the company's culture?

Wheels Up has always had a culture that cares and wants to give back. It's in our DNA and we created the official Wheels Up Cares program with that same vision and mantra – we want to use our platform to do good in the world and make an impact. We identify causes to rally around and lend our support in creative ways that make sense for our brand to serve the communities we fly in and

out of every day.

Since our founding, we have painted the livery of five Beechcraft King Air 350i planes which became a permanent part of our fleet as flying symbols of awareness for each cause we represent. The presence of the Wheels Up Cares fleet serves as a constant reminder of our pledge and brings tremendous pride for everyone in our company. Our social media channels also change from our brand blue color to match the color of each Wheels Up Cares aircraft throughout the year during the months when they are recognized and a few of the planes have even been featured in television commercials. They also provide special experiences for our Members and Customers when

they are surprised and delighted to learn they will be flying in one of the Wheels Up Cares planes.

The Wheels Up Cares fleet represents many different colored Beechcraft King Air 350i aircraft. Will you highlight these different planes and the causes they support?

Our most recent launch was the Orange Plane, which we painted with our partners at Textron and unveiled in September 2020 in honor of Feeding America's Hunger Action Month and in conjunction with our Meals Up initiative, to help support the growing levels of food insecurity during the COVID-19 crisis. As part of this effort, we also illuminated pylons at airports across the country such as LAX and LGA to raise further awareness for Feeding America's mission.

The Wheels Up Cares fleet includes the Camouflage Plane for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), the Red Plane for the American Heart Association and Simon's Heart, the Teal Plane for Ovarian Cancer Awareness, and the Pink Plane for Breast Cancer Awareness and the Dubin Breast Center of the Tisch Cancer Institute at Mount Sinai.

In the future, we will continue to add to the fleet as we identify and align with philanthropic organizations and initiatives that affect and matter to our Wheels Up members, customers, families and friends.



Wheels Up Cares Orange Plane in honor of Feeding America's Hunger Action Month



Wheels Up Cares Camouflage Plane for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

How critical has it been to engage the Wheels Up team in these efforts and to provide opportunities for your workforce to support their communities?

Our team is the driving force behind Wheels Up Cares, and to be honest it is easy for everyone to get excited about these special aircraft and what they represent. The program inspires passion from everyone in the organization since the charities we select have directly impacted people within our company and those we fly. There is a sense of pride and everyone is eager to help champion these causes and support on the ground activities such as a day of service.

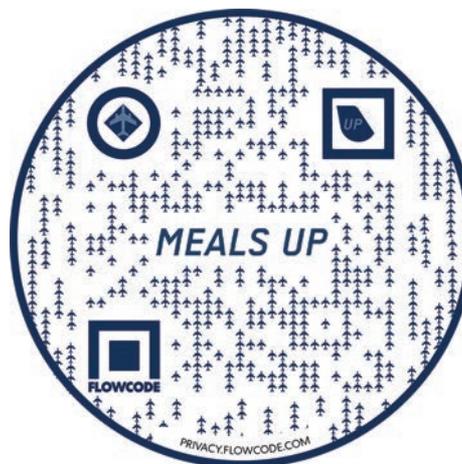
Wheels Up and its partners joined forces on a new initiative called Meals Up. How did this initiative develop and how is it addressing the issue of food insecurity during COVID-19?

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last March, we knew that we had an opportunity to do good, help others, and make an impact. Personally, I was inspired by my friends and Wheels Up Ambassadors Russell Wilson, Ciara, and J.J. Watt for their work with Feeding America and knew that the organization was one of the most effective at getting food into the hands of people who need it most. Russell and I partnered to appear on CNBC to launch Meals Up and announce our pledge of 10 million meals while encouraging others to donate as well. The program was so well received that, to date, we've raised and inspired over 50 million meals.

We are grateful to be in a position to give back when people needed it most and appreciate our partners at Feeding America (feedingamerica.org/mealsup) led by CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot for their tireless work as the country continues to face hunger as a result of the crisis. We were so moved when Claire shared the statistics of hunger in America during this time, with 50 million food insecure as a result of the pandemic and 60 percent more people turning to food banks for help. We sprang into action as quickly as we could to help.

How is Wheels Up working to engage its membership and well-known personalities it works with on this effort in order to make the biggest impact?

Since the launch of Meals Up, our Wheels Up Ambassadors and friends Tom Brady, Serena Williams, J.J. Watt, Joey Logano, Alex Rodriguez and Jennifer Lopez have supported the initiative and have used their platforms to generate awareness and inspire donations throughout the year to continue supporting Meals Up. Their efforts



led to billions of impressions across social and digital media and were instrumental in launching the initiative. To further amplify the Meals Up and Orange Plane missions, we ran 30 second commercials during the much-hyped Turner Sports' "The Match: Champions for Charity" and "The Match: Champions for Change." The spots featured Feeding America and Alex Rodriguez and Russell Wilson spoke about the initiative on air throughout the event.

My good friends and partners Tim Armstrong, Joe Poulin and our lead Wheels Up director, David Adelman, have also been helping us continue supporting with donations. Tim's company DTX created a custom flow code which ran in our marketing efforts making it simple and quick for anyone to donate.

What do you see as the responsibility that leading companies have to address societal need and be a force for good in society?

It is imperative that we leverage our resources to help those in need. Last year, we put the power of our marketing and brand behind Meals Up, generating millions of meals and getting food in the hands of those facing hunger during the pandemic. That's powerful. As a business leader, if you have the opportunity to do good and give back through your organization, I believe there is a moral obligation for companies to help make a difference.

Do leading companies today have to be good corporate citizens and engaged in the communities they serve in order to attract and retain top talent?

Our team is made up of some of the most inspired corporate citizens I've ever met. We push each other every day to find new ways to use our platform and relationships to promote causes that will impact change, and that is a very important part of our culture. I believe every organization needs to identify their own philanthropic values and make sure it's an organic part of the work they do every day. ●



Wheels Up Cares Red Plane in honor of the American Heart Association and Simon's Heart (above); Tim Armstrong's company DTX created a custom flow code for Meals Up (center)