

The Phoenix Rising

Sometimes we get so overwhelmed in the moment that we, as a collective industry, miss the sheer determination and survivability of our industry. As I was thinking about this article I wanted to write a piece this month about how out of turmoil and damaged business always comes a new opportunity. This downturn is no different, in fact the deeper the downturn, often the greater the upside for those that can look up.

"A mythical bird that never dies, the Phoenix flies far ahead to the front, always scanning the landscape and distant space. It represents our capacity for vision, for collecting sensory information about our environment and the events unfolding within it. The Phoenix, with its great beauty, creates intense excitement and deathless inspiration." (The Feng Shui Handbook, feng shui Master Lam Kam Chuen).

So what is all this talk about the Phoenix? I see opportunities for many segments of our market today as it shakes off this downturn. I feel it is fair to say that most indicators are pointing to flat or slightly higher levels of activity and sales. This is a positive difference to the very recent decline we had been experiencing in almost every sector of our industry. So where are the new niches and growth areas?

The first area of growth opportunity that I see would be in the aircraft lending sector. With most current lenders the idea of financing 20-year-old (or older) aircraft is all but gone. It seems to me a new player who does not have to look beyond the recent past could come in and build a booming business even in a flat market. In fact, if this segment could be serviced with loan opportunities it would not take long to call this sales segment rising. I absolutely believe in discretion being used by the lender for both the specific aircraft being considered as well as the borrower's ability to service the loan.

So now let's say we get this sector pumped up. The next set of opportunities will come to those vendor companies who had either begun to install or want to make R&D investments on performance modifications and avionics upgrades to these older planes. In late 2008 we as an industry were just coming

out of a period when we were starting to label older aircraft as "aging aircraft", and thus began to create the stigma ourselves. It seemed everyone was focusing on new or like-new planes, and the focus was being taken away from the older aircraft.

As we rebound out of this downturn, we are sure to see a new awareness and revitalized interest in these older aircraft. What could be a better value than a Challenger 601/3A for under five million dollars, or a Falcon 2000 for under 10 million dollars? These price levels were unheard of in the pre-downturn era, yet they are the norm for today. That's not to say all Challengers are sub-five, or all Falcon 2000s are sub-10. It does mean the spectrum has widened.

So now if we start to think of all the products and services that could extend the life of adult planes, plus create broader operational platforms, we have the Phoenix rising!

Also, it seems that with every recovery come new faces in our industry: People who have often been displaced from their recent past industry are taking this time to fulfill long-standing desires to move to a new industry or to move to a new area within their current industry. Sometimes pilots will move into management or technical oversight. People who once successfully dealt in Commercial real estate move to aircraft sales. People who had successful careers in banking move their well-honed skills into our industry.

I am probably getting ten emails a week from people who want to know what it means to sell aircraft. Some of course think it is quick success, with big commissions. I quickly dispel those expectations. There are no short cuts to success! But there may be

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opportunities for those - who like many of you reading this article were willing to dedicate themselves for the long-haul - to create careers in business aviation that will be fulfilling and rewarding.

The aviation universities are rich with near-term graduates ready to bring new ideas and new life to this industry. We should try as a community of professionals to take the calls or reply to the emails from those who genuinely seem interested in coming into our world. After all if we do not shine a positive light on our industry no one else will. We need to be beacons for those who in any capacity - be it maintenance, piloting, sales or technical - want to join us. New passion and dedication is what the rising Phoenix is all about!

So speaking of new faces and new vitality coming in to our industry, I am proud to announce to you all that I received a call recently that I acted on. I had a call from Josh's brother, our son, Adam Mesinger. He and his wife Ayeisha will be moving from Los Angeles and Adam will be joining our family business. As a Dad and owner of a family business I am not sure what could make me happier. I know that Adam will make a great addition not only to our business but to our industry. Welcome Adam. I love that you will be a part of our business as our company continues to cultivate new growth opportunities worldwide.

› Jay Mesinger is the CEO and Founder of J. Mesinger Corporate Jet Sales, Inc. He is on the NBAA Board of Directors and is the Chairman of AMAC. Additionally, Jay served on the Duncan Aviation Customer Advisory Board for two terms, is a member of EBAA and a member of the Colorado Airport Business Association (CABA). If you would like to join in on conversations relating to topics like this, and other trends in the business aviation market, join Jay on the cutting-edge of business aviation by sharing your comments on these various social networking platforms - Jay's Blog, Twitter and LinkedIn - www.jetsales.com/blog. For more information visit www.jetsales.com ■

