

Things Will Be Great In 2008

Recently, I was on the phone with an old friend in the industry, Jim Markel, who owns a very well respected aircraft sales company, Jim Markel and Associates/Apex Aviation, and has been a vital part of our industry for years. Of course we discussed our inventory and the aircraft we were seeking for clients, but also we discussed our experiences in 2007 and our thoughts about 2008.

During the discussion, he shared with me his theme for this year - 'Things will be great in 2008'. I, of course, concurred. After I hung up the phone, his theme continued to resonate with me throughout the day. In fact, it was so impactful that I decided to dedicate this month's article to it.

I mentioned to Jim during our conversation that 2007 was my company's best year by almost twice, and I told him that we were looking forward to a great 2008. In fact, I mentioned that even given what might be a turbulent economic year, we were committed to growth, not just sustaining.

I realize these are all very lofty thoughts in light of what really could be a changing landscape due to the uncertainty of the economy, but there is no one more optimistic than me in almost the worst of circumstances. I always seem to be looking at the remaining liquid in the glass rather than what is not there, and would like to share with you my thoughts on 2008.

Recently, my son Josh and I were having dinner discussing why 2008 will be great. I reminded Josh that no matter how much success we had in 2007, we had to remember the basics of our growth and to work those basics daily this coming year. One basic is to pick up the phone. Don't let an email take the place of a conversation. (In fact, that is why I was talking to Jim in the first place).

The next day after our dinner, Josh and I each made a list of our favorite, most trusted aircraft sales professionals and then spent the next day calling and saying hello, rather than just sending the occasional email. We each called about 25 people and we used this opportunity not only to wish them a Happy New Year, but also let them know what we

were up to in terms of what inventory we had to sell and what planes we needed for clients. Basically, we had a chance to re-engage with friends.

This back-to-basics tactic is what took me to Washington, D.C. and New York a few weeks ago. It's the same premise. Why call or email when, with a visit, you can demonstrate a much more dedicated desire to build on or develop a new relationship? So I packed up and went on a trip to sit in front of old and new clients. I went back-to-basics.

It is this focus on communication and dedication to our own growth, and that of our clients and fellow aircraft sales professionals that will make it "Great in 2008." It's the very same thing that has made every year before this one great. In good times and in bad, if we stay focused on the basics, we will not fail. Out perform, out service and stay focused. So often, especially in times of plenty, it is easy to get distracted, yet that very distraction is the key to failure. In every transaction or client interaction, stay focused on the basics.

Marketing and branding are another expense and basic that sometimes elude people in the best and busy times. After all, who needs to advertise when the phone is ringing off the hook? The answer is simple: We all do! Once the phone stops ringing or slows down, it is too late to play catch-up with branding, advertising and getting back-to-basics. I am well aware of the difficulty, especially for the smaller companies who can't dedicate full-time staff to marketing to think about this discipline when they can hardly come up for air while selling. The good news is that many of the publications that are dedicated to our industry - this one in particular - have staff capable of being that support by helping to build the ads and suggesting size and placement. Take advantage of them.

The team at *World Aircraft Sales Magazine* is dedicated not only to its publication, but also to the success of its clients and the success of the aviation industry.

So back to the fruitful conversation Jim Markel and I had. 2008 *should* be a great year, and *will* be a great year, but it will not happen by accident. It will happen for each

of us because we stay focused, remember to work the basics, make the calls, go out of our office and sit in front of our prospects and clients, and invest in our future.

Additionally, many of our clients and prospects may have new priorities this year, which may not include buying a bigger plane. They may need help, however, in understanding their current assets and how to maximize efficiency and get through the tougher economic times they may be facing in their own business.

Be there for them with thoughtful, accurate answers. I assure you that if you are there for them, they will be there for you when it's time for their next aviation transaction. It is great in 2008. Thanks Jim!

> Jay Mesinger is the CEO of J. Mesinger Corporate Jet Sales, Inc. He is on the NBAA Board of Directors and is Vice Chairman of AMAC. Additionally, he is on the Duncan Aviation Customer Advisory Board. He also hosts the Aviation Leadership Roundtable found at www.jetsales.com ■



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