

Jobs, Jobs And More Jobs

It seems as if we all come into work every day, and rather than build and service planes, provide customer service at FBOs, sell fuel, sell planes, or help clients develop mission strategies, we just try to justify Business Aviation. We find ourselves after five decades trying to find words to re-brand the value proposition of Business Aviation.

There is no need to re-brand the relevant value of our industry. The brand – ‘Business Aviation, It’s working for America’ – remains as relevant and vital today as it was when originally branded over 50 years ago.

- Business Aviation puts you in front of your customers and ahead of your competition.
- It allows you to operate businesses in small and rural communities where there is no commercial access.
- It allows people doing business to have three meetings in one day rather than one meeting in three days.
- It turns travel time into work time.
- It allows towns to actually survive by providing a lifeline to small towns and communities.

Over the past year, thirty communities alone have lost all commercial airline service. Think of how these communities have been affected, as well as the hundreds of other small towns and communities that have been built up around a home town company for 50 or 100 years. Maybe they employ 100 people, maybe 1,000 people. Generations of families may have worked for this company. However, if the company could not own a plane and had no commercial airline access, this company would have to move to another city and these people would be out of work the same day!

This small to mid-size business probably does not own a large cabin plane, it probably owns a turboprop or small jet. Nothing flashy, and no “Fat Cats” flying around as they have been accused of day after day on TV or in print media. The reality is that they are just people doing business, earning a living and employing people.

Not only is Business Aviation a lifeline for

small communities, it is a lifeline for people in life or death situations. Did you know that there are over 15,000 humanitarian flights flown every year for organizations like Angel Network, as well as those flown for disaster relief efforts? These real life examples of how Business Aviation makes a difference in the lives of people goes on and on. We as an industry must work to change the perception that is currently being drilled into the general public and policy makers by the media. The assault on our industry is daily and we must all fight this battle daily to win.

To me everything is about responsibility. If you cannot afford to have an airplane, don’t own one. If it is a drain on your bottom line, get rid of it. I assure you, the automobile and banking industries are not where they are today because they own or operate business aircraft. The fact is, doing business around the world by selling, manufacturing or distributing products and being able to best service those segments are responsible business reasons to own an aircraft.

It is not reasonable to assume, however, that the big three automakers or the major banks who own aircraft would be on wonderful financial ground had they just not owned a Gulfstream. This line of thinking is just ridiculous. It is scary to think that our industry is viewed as being so powerful as to be able to single-handedly bring down the automobile and banking industries. If anything, our industry has helped to grow and spread the American Dream – the freedom that allows all U.S. citizens to pursue their goals in life through hard work and free choice - and to do it globally.

Now, let’s talk about changing the misperceptions that our industry is currently undergoing. Let’s talk about how to proudly wear our industry brand by talking about our global relevance and how we help people and provide jobs!

Our vibrant industry generates over 1.2 million service and manufacturing jobs in the U.S. alone. At this time in history, when every lifeline we can collectively think of is being thrown to people to help them and to create jobs, let’s not work so blindly as a nation to shed valuable aviation industry jobs. The

media must begin to tell the whole story by discussing the real issues instead of propagating stories that seem sexy and dramatic.

Our leaders in Congress must begin to understand the impact their proposed legislation is having on our industry. The negative one-sided press that is engulfing us everyday must stop. Each of us who wakes up every day and goes to work in the aviation sector to feed our families, and the families of our employees must stand up and take grass roots action that can make a difference.

Start today by logging onto www.nbaa.org and selecting the contact Congress button. This will take you directly to a section of pre-written letters that will automatically be sent to the legislators in your districts. Doing this is a great start, but more still needs to be done. Call or write to your associations to see how you can help. The aviation trade associations are working daily on our behalf to fight for our jobs and our industry’s relevance, but they need all of our help.

AOPA, NBAA and NATA need your membership and your financial support. If you have a membership bill that has been sitting on your desk, pay it. If you or your employer has a relationship with a member of Congress, make an appointment and go see them when they are in their respective home towns. Tell them Business Aviation works for America. Tell them it is about jobs. Tell them about your job and its relevance to others. We cannot and will not lose this perception battle if we all work together.

› 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 the AMAC. Additionally, he served on the Duncan Aviation Customer Advisory Board for two terms, is a member of MEBAA, EBAA & is associated with IBAC. More information visit www.jetsales.com ■

