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WORK EXPERIENCE EDWIN BRENNINKMEYER

Lightening the load for aviators

Edwin Brenninkmeyer is chief executive and founder of Oriens Advisors, an aviation business advisory company that focuses on supporting business development across all areas of the light jet sector

How did you get where you are in aviation?

In my previous retail-focused career, the frustration of business travel and the inability to visit out-of-the-way locations, coupled with the fall in the manufacturing and operating costs of business aircraft, led me to explore this market. I did this via a venture fund in which my speciality was the emerging very light jet air-taxi market. Although we were a European fund, we decided to invest in a US company.

After reviewing some 30 plans and being asked for advice as how to improve the business plans we rejected, I set up Oriens Advisors. In my spare time, I am a passionate pilot and regularly fly all over Europe in my Cessna Turbo 210. This gives me first-hand experiences of the challenges of operating small business aircraft in Europe. I am also part of a vintage biplane formation team.

Why are you so interested in the light jet market?

When in retail I learnt how frustrated my colleagues were with airline travel and regional turbo-props. While the executive board would fly happily into Vienna, the smaller, out-of-the-way stores would be ignored because the only way to reach them was a 4h drive. It struck me that an efficient, well-served network of light jets operating in this region would really add value to the business aviation landscape.



Brenninkmeyer: private aviation is not just for the luxury travel market

There are many former military bases that can be used for business aviation, with minimal additional investment. We need to change the perception that private aviation is for the luxury travel market only and demonstrate its worth as a business tool.

Describe an average week

There is no average week for me. I may be at a board meeting one day acting as a non-executive director; or with an entrepreneur who needs support in writing his business plan; working as an interim manager at an airport; speaking at an aviation conference; or on the road with a technology company looking for ways to do business together.

Our clients are based all around Europe so I fly frequently and am living proof of why this

"I am a passionate pilot and regularly fly all over Europe in my Cessna Turbo 210"

market is so important – a recent trip involved flying with colleagues from Prague to Linz to Barcelona to Paris to London in the space of two days. The diversity of the work means we can rarely predict what our next client may need.

The greatest challenges?

The success of the light jet sector is scalability, which can only be achieved through customer education and acquisition. As with the early days of low-cost carriers, this is key and the sector needs to

establish pan-European alliances to create a market together. Lobbying government is an essential part of what we are doing.

And your key highlights so far?

Oriens prides itself in building alliances with credible partners that complement our own abilities and provide a comprehensive range of services for our clients. We were thrilled about our partnership with Miami-based InterFlight Global, which has extensive experience in the business. We were equally pleased to form an alliance with Gates Aviation whose team features senior industry experts. I am very proud of my voluntary role as a trustee and fund raiser for the charity Flying Scholarships for the Disabled (www.toreachforthesky.org.uk). Sharing in the flying successes of the scholars is a rewarding and humbling experience.

Where are you based?

We recently moved to Biggin Hill where we have offices and hangar space we can offer to clients. We chose Biggin for its importance within the European business aviation market. ■

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