

MAKING FINDING AN AIRCRAFT SIMPLE - TEXTRON AVIATION – INTERVIEW EBACE 2023

News / Business aviation, Manufacturer



The day after newcomer Cessna Citation Ascend was announced, we celebrated the 100th Citation Longitude production units, as well as enjoyed every single aircraft on Textron EBACE 2023 static display. Before the doors opened to visitors, we had a fascinating and very interesting chat with Duncan Van De Velde, RVP Sales of Textron aviation. Here is the essential of our discussion:

Q. On Media Day there were some announcements by Textron, any surprises yet to come?

D.V.D.V. In next few days? I think what we did yesterday – we announced Cessna Citation Ascend – that was huge. Because it is an amazing aircraft. I am so excited that finally I can talk about it. I took the job in October last year. When I did my on board in Wichita, they told me shortly what they are working on. I had the honor to see the first mockup and I was bloomed away. This is really exciting. So, we have now Citation Ascend, which is 560 series, with the flat floor. We do have also options for the aisles, new avionics, Gamin 5000, and very new design interior. We have new improved engine. The performance, economics, situation in the cabin and in cockpit – it is amazing. Huge windows – it is like 15% larger, so you get light from all over. It is amazing.

Q. My next question is obvious – we all are more than focused on sustainable aviation. Everyone does the best. What is the goal for Textron in this matter

D.V.D.V. Our goal is like the industry is committed to – to be climate neutral in 2050. And it is our goal. So as a company, we did a lot of things already and of course we don't want to stop and we won't stop. WE are constantly innovating. And this is something you can see in the Citation Ascend – New engines, less fuel burn. If you look at our interiors – our interiors are all made of eco friendly materials. Our manufacturing sites are powered by the wind energy. So, we're taking the approach by all angles. Besides that, we took over the Pipistrel and we have the only one certified electric engine, electric aircraft. Which is great for that segment. For me it shows the innovation, the drive for us to be climate neutral. You will see it in all our products. Not to even mention the SAF – sustainable aviation fuel. Every aircraft e deliver has the option for clients to fly on SAF. These aircraft came to Europe on SAF. If you look at our aircraft here – you see that we took the opportunity to work with our customers in Europe. To bring their aircraft here, because it is closer by. So, we do always this small and big, to be sure that we reach that big goal.

Q. My next question is a little bit more about the future of aviation, do you think we need to educate and communicate more to have future generation of aviators? Do we need as an industry to talk more to prepare this new generation?

D.V.D.V. Yes, we do. On my personal side, my son is 16 and my daughter is 12 and I want them to be connected in what we do. I educate them on what we do as a company but also as an industry. I do very often meet with students. I explain them, so do what we do? And what is that you can do. How we can work together on the future of aviation and business aviation. I am very keen in explaining what business aviation all is about. Business aviation for me is a time sheet. It will help you to run a business on a global scale. To be very efficient and effective. But also, to make a combination with your personal life. For example, I just did the European tour with our Senior Vice-President. For this we used the M2 and also King Air 250. We did a tour of 4 days. We did a lot of meetings in 9 destinations. I was back on time for the weekend to spend time with my family. And this is what business aviation is about. What we have we offer it all – from the Citation M2 to the Citation Longitude. We can adapt to every need customer might have for aircraft. And I want the younger generations to understand what business aviation is all about. What it takes to design an aircraft, to engineer it, to produce it and to bring it to market. What is my role. And that is the part before you start operating. What do you do afterwards? If you bring an aircraft to the market – it is great. You have also to support it. Again, I think we're doing a great job about. We have all these service centers across Europe. In Dusseldorf, in Zurich, in Valencia, in Paris, in Prague. We have a huge warehouse in Dusseldorf. And all this cycle is very important to us. Buying aircraft is one, but we want to be sure you can rely on that. Rely on us to support it, so you could continue to fly, efficient and effective.

Q. You are more than well knows for aftersales services!

D.V.D.V. I had the honor to be responsible for aftersales market side for a few years. I really enjoyed it. I have a technical background, coming from the operational side. When I took my new role in Cessna, I had no doubt – this is what I want to do. I worked with several OEMs. The way we are structured, this organization and the support that comes with it – it is immense. We putt all our efforts to make it happen. I feel very fortunate to be a part of this family.



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