



PRIVATEFLY PREDICTS MORE CHANGE FOR CHARTER MARKET IN 2017

News / Business aviation



Against a backdrop of myriad political and economic uncertainty, charter flight booking platform PrivateFly is predicting further expansion of the marketplace for 2017. Growth in demand for longer-range flights tops its five predictions for the new year, with aircraft such as Gulfstream G650ER and the Dassault Falcon 8X set to have a growing role in the charter.

PrivateFly also sees the profile of charter customers expanding beyond core markets such as the financial and entertainment industries, to include more technology executives and families. The company predicts that the anticipated European approval of commercial IFR operations by single-engine aircraft will expand the customer base by lowering entry-point pricing for charters.

According to founder Adam Twidell, geopolitical uncertainty in 2017 will compel business aviation service providers and their customers to be more agile. He also issued a caution about new private aviation business models that he feels blur the lines by offering shared-use, scheduled shuttle services on fixed routes based on annual membership fees. "It's great to see innovation taking place, but a blurring of private jet and airline models can be confusing to customers," he

commented. “A private jet comes with a set of customer expectations about service levels and delivery that some of the newer membership models can struggle to meet. In 2017 we’ll see customers demanding more clarity on what they’re getting.”

PrivateFly, which was founded in 2008, expects to have logged more than one million flight searches at its website over the course of 2016. The company, which says its platform can generate proposed flights in between 20 seconds and a few minutes, offers charter capacity from some 2,700 operators with a combined fleet of some 7,000 aircraft.

This year has seen the UK-based group expand in the U.S. market with a new office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. “The U.S. represents 25 percent of our business now and we see this proportion rising to 40 percent by mid-2017,” Twidell told AIN. In his view one of the main differences between the European and American markets is that in the latter demand is less seasonal since more than 50 percent of clients are traveling for business, while in Europe about 80 percent of demand is for leisure, with a high concentration of flights in the summer months. The company plans to open a U.S. West coast office.

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