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FALL 2005

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Aviation Business Leaders Meet with Washington Policy Experts

10

The National Air Transportation Association held its second annual Aviation Business Roundtable in October, featuring visits with some of the most influential decision makers in Washington. Leaders from across the aviation industry met with key federal and congressional officials to discuss a number of critical issues affecting the industry.

After the Perfect Storm

14

By David W. Almy

After back-to-back Gulf Coast hurricanes cut domestic refining capacity, sparking spot shortages and higher prices, Avfuel's Craig Sincock sees a return to some stability in the aviation fuel market—with a few caveats. Our cover story discusses those caveats and provides further insights from the president and CEO of Avfuel, the largest independent aviation fuel supplier in the U.S.

Community Lobbying: Thinking Outside the Fence

19

By Robert P. Mark

An airport and its supporters must be proactive in the community, not simply reactive to it when issues arise. Community lobbying begins with a little outside-the-fence thinking about the people who can most influence an airport's success and how to best reach them with your message.

WWW: The Why, What, and Who of Business Websites

23

By Dan Kidder

Anyone who owns or runs a business has undoubtedly spent much time pondering the company's online presence. This article discusses why you need a company website, what it should contain, and who can help you make it as effective as possible.

Departments

President's Message | *By James K. Coyne*

7

Inside Washington | *By Eric R. Byer*

9

Safety Watch | *By Stephanie Toomey*

29

Marketing Watch | *By Kelly Creamer*

33

NBAA Showcase

37

NATA Member News

42

Advertiser Index

42

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Marketing: The Most Important Thing Most of Us Don't Do

By James K. Coyne, President

Most successful businesses are like a three-legged stool: they need good financial, operational, and marketing management. If you're weak in any one area, your growth is likely to be a bit wobbly. For many aviation service businesses, unfortunately, marketing comes up short. As our industry enters what promises to be an era of rapid change and development, it is more important than ever that you learn how to create a first-rate marketing program for your company.

Thirty years ago I taught Marketing 101 at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Business School, and over the years I've tried to follow the profession closely. It is not an exaggeration to say that the 21st century will be a century of uninterrupted marketing, totally unprecedented in size and scope. Each of us is awash in marketing from the moment we get up until we drift off into dreamland—where even marketers may lurk. Don't let this glut of advertising confuse you: marketing isn't just about mass markets and million dollar ad campaigns. It can be targeted, economical, and effective, even for an aviation business like yours.

The first step in building a good marketing management program for your firm is to have someone at the top (could be you) who takes marketing seriously. Unless you see your business growing simply by "being there" when your customers drop by, you will profit from top management attention to marketing every day. Part of the problem, of course, is the vast scope of marketing alternatives: how can you figure out which kind of marketing is right and works for you?

In the classical terms of Marketing 101, this is a question about the "marketing mix" or what students learned as the 4 Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Every marketing manager tries to unravel this puzzle of how to allocate resources in each of these areas. Is it best to improve the product (a new terminal, bigger plane, or better staff), change the price (up or down, or the terms), expand distribution (new branches or go online), or alter promotion (more advertising and PR)? But you can't answer these questions without knowing as much as possible about the marketplace in

which you compete, and then learning how to tell prospects about what you've decided to produce or provide.

A good place to start is by learning as much as you can about your customers. You probably already have a computerized database of your existing clientele and a way of identifying

and collecting data about your best prospects. If you are creative, it is amazing how many different strategies can help you find names of potential patrons. Some marketing programs also develop lists of influential leaders and opinion makers in their community to build alliances to promote the region, the airport, or even specific events that might increase local activity.

The next step is to create fields in these databases that allow you to differentiate these people and target them with relevant messages and information. The problem with databases is that we get overwhelmed by them: endless lists of names and addresses, often error-ridden, that seem too anonymous for us to know how to use them. Good software makes all the difference. With a bit of careful attention to the data-input process, you will, over time, find that your client and prospect databases are the most important assets you own.

Then comes the creative part of marketing: what to say, and when and how to say it. Here, the choices are endless, from staid invitations and announcements to innovative programs, flashy ads, telemarketing, and blockbuster events. My advice here is to keep an open mind about what works best for you, and keep trying to find better marketing messages and media. One successful strategy is to always have four or five ongoing marketing "campaigns" or "individual programs" under way at a time, carefully tracking the cost



Continued on page 8

President's Message

Continued from page 7

and effectiveness of each. Then, over time, you can weed out the less successful ideas or campaigns, hopefully replacing them with new ideas that seem promising.

CORRECTION

In the last issue of *Aviation Business Journal*, our article on fuel co-op programs failed to mention Avfuel, the largest independent supplier of aviation fuels and services in the United States. Whether you look at number of FBOs or gallons, Avfuel has more dealers than any other fuel supplier. Our oversight is inexcusable, and we apologize to our friends at Avfuel and to all of our readers.

The folks at Avfuel see their job as helping market their customers' facilities and services in as many different and creative ways that they can. Their highly successful co-op allowance program utilizes their national name recognition to promote customers' FBOs.

Funds accumulated through retail fuel purchases from Avfuel are set aside for use under the following guidelines:

- Co-op funds accumulate for the calendar year from January through December.
- Must be a current Avfuel customer upon presentation of request.
- Each location is eligible for reimbursement in the unit amount of \$0.005 per gallon, multiplied by the total amount of retail gallons purchased from Avfuel.
- Uniforms or other general apparel that contain the Avfuel logo are reimbursable.

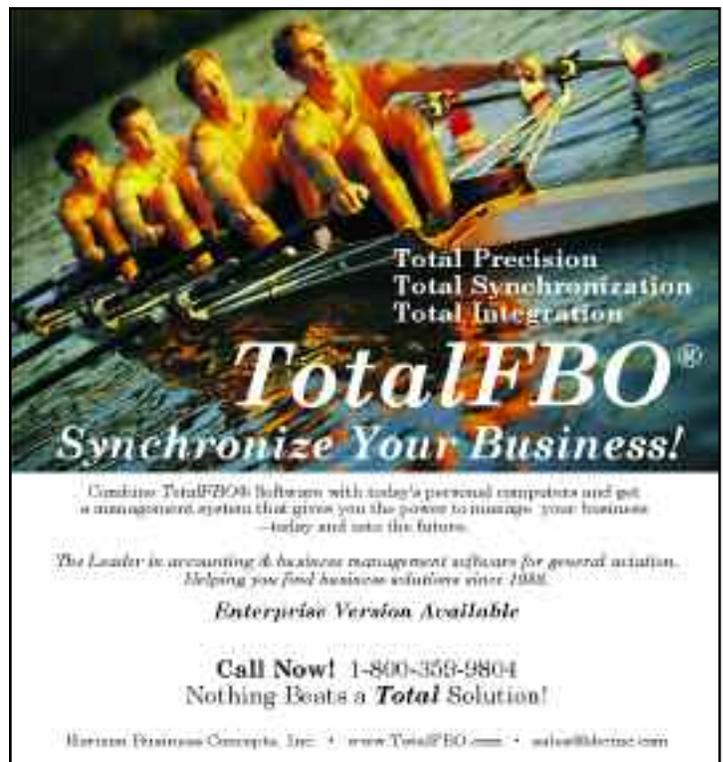
Avfuel will set aside \$.005 per gallon in a co-op advertising fund for every general aviation gallon purchased from Avfuel each calendar year. This program is designed with up to 50 percent participation from Avfuel on approved advertising, based on available co-op funds. Funds can be used for virtually any advertising medium as well as line service uniforms. Avfuel remains flexible and works with customers to determine how to utilize the program to assist customers in increasing fuel sales.

For more information on Avfuel, go to www.avfuel.com or call 800/521-4106.

Don't be intimidated by the terms "campaign" or "program." These marketing activities needn't be complicated or expensive. One might be a monthly barbeque for local tenants, another an email blast to N-numbers that landed at your airport but didn't buy from you, another a regular 6-month follow-up letter to past customers, or even something as simple as a dinner organized for your best clients at a national trade show.

Also, try tweaking individual ideas, rather than discarding them, if they don't perform well at first. Make small alterations, i.e. change the timing, shorten the message, or follow up with a phone call to see if you can get a better response. But always remember that your marketing campaign does not exist in a vacuum. Your customers are constantly comparing your offerings with those from your competitors. Therefore, it's essential that you research your marketplace, know how you compare, and try to stay ahead of the pack.

Of course, NATA members vary in size and scope so much that their marketing strategies are as different as a small Mom-and-Pop pancake fly-in is to a vast national advertising campaign. Some of you have big marketing departments with dedicated sales staff; others only get to wear your marketing hat when you're not worrying about some other facet of your business. Still, no matter who you are, marketing will be more and more a part of your future. The better your marketing, the better your future will be.



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Lobbying 101: It's All About the Relationship

By Eric R. Byer, Vice President, Government and Industry Affairs

Lobbying is certainly one occupation that solicits a variety of opinions. To some, lobbying is a glorified profession because lobbyists interact with those working in the U.S. Congress or elsewhere in the federal government. Others vilify the profession because to them lobbying represents special interests and deceitful politicians. Either way, lobbying is something done in all walks of life, including aviation.

Boiled down to its most basic definition, lobbying is developing and fostering relationships with certain entities and educating them on issues important to you. Lobbying in the aviation industry takes many forms. NATA continually stresses the importance of lobbying your airport officials and how doing so only makes your business stronger. Every year, NATA conducts its Day on the Hill event, encouraging members to visit Washington, D.C., meet with their congressional representatives and staff, and solicit support for local and national aviation business issues. And every day, NATA-member companies work with a host of local, state, and national governmental entities and business interests in an effort to improve their businesses, work safer, and generate more revenue.

Relationships are vital to any successful lobbying effort. There are 535 members of Congress and several federal agencies encompassing thousands of staff members that have some type of jurisdiction over the aviation pie. Every year, NATA encourages its members to invite their congressional representatives to tour their facilities and/or airports. This is a great way to start relationships with members of Congress and their staffs, as they do not usually know what an FBO does or understand the rather complex makeup of general aviation.

This type of visit can open a legislator's eyes to what general aviation means to his or her district, and it can also make that NATA member a key contact point for that legislator when it comes to aviation issues. I have heard time and time again from NATA-member companies who have hosted tours and then received follow-up calls from the lawmaker's staff inquiring about a broader aviation matter. Whether the issue relates to air quality within the cabins of airliners or labor agreements between air traffic controllers and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the mem-

ber company that sponsored the tour has become a conduit to help answer aviation questions. And when that Capitol Hill staffer comes calling on user fees or wants an NATA member's thoughts on an FAA reauthorization bill, that is when developing the relationship with that Congressional office can really pay off, not only for your company but for the industry as a whole.

For the last six months, the FAA and industry have been laying the groundwork for the pending legislative battle that will take place in 2006-2007 over the FAA's continued budgetary woes and the concept of initiating some type of user fee on the general aviation industry to solve the agency's fiscal shortfalls. The FAA plans to release its proposal next spring, which should kick off months of intense lobbying from all aviation interests, including the FAA itself, to attempt to sway Congress. We have all read much in the press about who is not paying their fair share and who should be paying more. While the finger-pointing will continue, one thing is for certain: whatever decision is made on user fees and the FAA's "financial crisis," it will be made on Capitol Hill. That is when your relationship with your members of Congress could play an important role in the decision-making process, and that is when you must make sure that your voice is heard. 



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Aviation Business Leaders Meet with Washington Policy Experts

The National Air Transportation Association (NATA) successfully conducted its second leadership conference, October 17-18, which featured visits with some of the most influential decision makers and policy experts in Washington, D.C.

The 2nd Annual Aviation Business Roundtable assembled 65 leaders from across the aviation industry to meet with key federal and congressional officials to discuss a number of critical issues affecting the industry, including user fees, fuel pricing, and airspace and airport access for charter and general aviation operations.

The roundtable was highlighted by a personal message from former President George H.W. Bush and presentations by former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich and Frances Fragos Townsend, one of President Bush's closet policy advisors. Attendees also visited with

- Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.), Senate Minority Whip,
- Daniel Yergin, Pulitzer Prize-

winning author, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*,

- Steven R. Weisman, Chief Diplomatic Correspondent, *The New York Times*,
- Edmund S. "Kip" Hawley, Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration,
- Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works,
- Robert A. Sturgell, FAA Deputy Administrator,
- Russell G. Chew, FAA Chief Operating Officer,
- Margaret Gilligan, FAA Deputy Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety,
- James J. Ballough, FAA

Director, Flight Standards Service,

- David L. Bennett, FAA Director, Office of Airport Safety and Standards, and
- Dayton Lehman, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings, U.S. Department of Transportation.

“Assembling the aviation industry’s best and brightest to meet with the federal government’s top brass is an invaluable opportunity for both sides to exchange ideas, foster relationships, and tackle real issues that affect this country’s national air transportation system and the American economy,” NATA President James K. Coyne said. “I am very pleased with the level of participation we had at this meeting, and I am confident that we will enjoy a much greater spirit of cooperation from our government leaders as a result of this roundtable.”

Sens. Durbin and Inhofe discussed important issues affecting aviation businesses on the first evening of the roundtable at a private reception and dinner in the U.S. Capitol.

The following morning, activities started dark and early as Coyne flew into Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in a Hawker 1000 to celebrate the reopening of DCA to general aviation (GA) flights. The airport has restricted private planes from the capital airport since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Speaking in front of gathered dignitaries and the press, including live coverage by CNN, Coyne talked about the long campaign NATA has waged to bring general aviation back to DCA. Coyne joined Reps. Tom Davis (R-Va.), James Moran (D-Va.), Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), Signature CEO Beth Haskins, and others to celebrate this historic day.

Since GA flights were restricted, Signature Flight Support has lost some \$20 million and was



Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) discussed the recent fuel price spikes caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.) also spoke to the group assembled in the Mansfield Room of the U.S. Senate.

forced to lay off the majority of its DCA-based staff. The economic impact to the Washington, D.C., region was estimated at nearly \$300 million.

Following the press conference, Coyne rejoined representatives of the leading aviation businesses in the nation at the Ritz-Carlton

Continued on page 12

Live national news coverage—and twin water salutes—greeted the first non-waiver general aviation flight back into Washington’s Reagan National Airport, more than four years after 9/11. Onboard and first to disembark was NATA President James K. Coyne.





Author Daniel Yergin (left) and *New York Times* correspondent Steven Weisman (center) discussed the role of the global economy and geopolitics in determining the price and availability of fuel. NATA President Jim Coyne moderated the discussion.

Aviation Business Roundtable

Continued from page 11

in Georgetown for a day filled with meetings with leading aviation policy experts from the Bush administration and federal agencies.

Getting the ball rolling was a heady panel discussion with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Daniel Yergin and *New York Times* columnist Steven Weisman on the role of the global economy and geopolitics on the price of finished petroleum products. The panelists discussed the effects of limited refining capability, an upsurge in demand, lack of a

global energy policy, and many other factors that have contributed to the current rise in fuel prices.

Following breakfast, Transportation Security Administrator Edmund "Kip" Hawley spoke on the restructuring of TSA and the future threats facing the nation. He discussed at length the role the national air transportation system plays in recognizing and identifying terrorist activities and the future of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, which was funded in the Homeland Security Appropriations Act.

At the conclusion of Hawley's remarks, the business leaders peppered him with questions on issues including temporary flight

restrictions, privacy concerns, and the use of the security watch lists to monitor charter passengers.

Following Hawley, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Frances Fragos Townsend impressed the audience with her intimate knowledge of aviation issues. She discussed her involvement with preventing an outbreak of avian flu in the United States and the important role air transportation providers will play in minimizing a major epidemic.

Townsend, who regaled the audience with her tale of jumping out of a plane with the U.S. Navy parachute team, demonstrated a strong understanding of the business concerns of aviation service



Transportation Security Administration head Edmund "Kip" Hawley talked about the reopening of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and the continuing security threat facing all sectors of aviation.



Fran Townsend, assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism, stressed the critical role aviation plays in the nation's economic life.

providers and the harsh economic realities of restricting businesses to respond to a security crisis.

Following lunch, attendees were transported to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for a frank discussion of a variety of topics with leading experts from the FAA. A major topic of discussion was the need for the FAA to reexamine its current financial situation and examine ways to cut costs and increase revenue. One hotly debated topic was whether charging user fees to general aviation businesses was an acceptable way to increase revenue for the agency. Attendees expressed concern that FAA has not wisely spent funds in the past and feelings that general aviation businesses already contribute a fair share to the Aviation Trust Fund through the collection of fuel fees.

While at the FAA, aviation leaders discussed recent changes involving the role of charter brokers and operational control with Dayton Lehman, general counsel for the office of Aviation Enforcement Proceedings at the Department of Transportation.

Back at the Ritz, attendees



Roundtable attendees meet with senior FAA officials in the McCracken "Round Room" on the 10th floor of FAA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

were informed and entertained by former Speaker Gingrich. Gingrich, who demonstrated his ready grasp of history, discussed the need for government reform to make the American economy viable for the 21st century.

The evening concluded with a personal videotaped message from former President Bush on the importance of the industry's pursuit of safety and his appreciation for NATA's work to create a charter safety management system.

"The Navy taught me long ago that the three

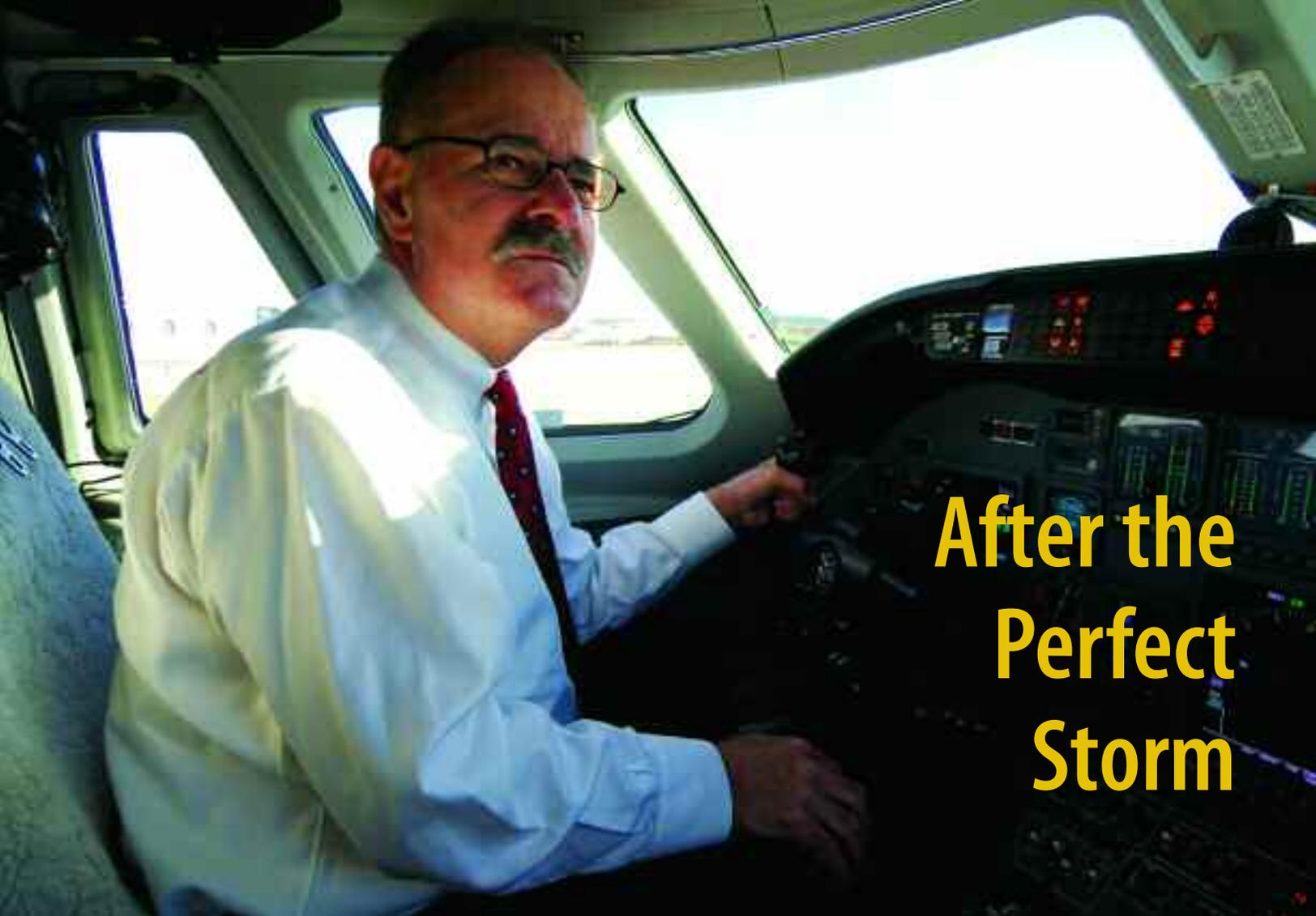
most important things in aviation are safety, safety, and safety," said Bush, who served as a fighter pilot during World War II. "And systematic programs like your Safety 1st campaign that include computer-based training, audits, and the creation of a safety culture in each individual company are the best way to raise the bar." 

Compiled from ABJ staff reports.

Dayton Lehman, an attorney representing the U.S. Department of Transportation, discussed charter brokering and operational control issues.



Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said, "Real change requires real change," and made his case for government reform.



After the Perfect Storm

After back-to-back Gulf Coast hurricanes cut domestic refining capacity, sparking spot shortages and higher prices, Avfuel's Craig Sincock sees a return to some stability in the aviation fuel market—with a few caveats.

You might think that in the more than 20 years that Craig Sincock has been the president and CEO of the largest independent aviation fuel supplier in the U.S., he had seen it all. Then, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit in the space of a few weeks, and the phones rang off the hook.

"It got a little interesting around here," Sincock said with a grin.

"We're very much in a global market, with tight domestic supplies and strong economic demand driving up the world's oil prices. It is remarkable how directly interconnected all these markets are," he said. "Add Katrina and Rita to the mix in the U.S., and the market reacts."

Hurricane recovery in the Gulf Coast region is underway, but according to officials at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), a complete recovery will still take

many months. As of October 11, three refineries are still shut down from Hurricane Katrina and four from Hurricane Rita, amounting for a total of about 1.9 million barrels per day of refining capacity that is off-line (11 percent of U.S. refinery capacity) due to hurricane-related outages.

In the aviation fuel market, price spikes and spot shortages, most quickly alleviated, made for some jittery days last September for some general aviation flight operations. Rumors seemed to be in greatest supply. "Once the hurricanes were behind us, we were able to get the word out and manage our available supplies. We're typically pretty quick on our feet, but September was unusual, to say the least," Sincock said.

According to oil industry experts, global demand is expected to grow nearly two million

barrels a day this year—from 82.5 million barrels a day last year—but the world’s capacity to refine and process oil is expected to grow by less than half that. “Global economic growth, the main driver of oil demand growth, is expected to be 3.1 percent per year. China and India are expecting to achieve the highest rates of economic growth, averaging 6.2 and 5.2 percent respectively between 2001 and 2025,” said Dr. Aloulou Fawzi, an Energy Information Administration economist, as reported by the *Wall Street Journal Online* in May.

If anyone harbors any doubt, Sincoc said that the era of “cheap” oil is over. “The global economy, which is immense and strong, has long since ended the U.S.’s role as *the* market for oil,” he said. “It’s a new day.”

Perhaps more importantly, the gap in the U.S. between the production of crude oil and the consumption of all the products made from it has been widening steadily since the 1970s. As a result, the U.S. imports crude from dozens of countries, Saudi Arabia first among them. And the U.S. will likely become more dependent on Middle East supplies in the future.

The recent spike in oil prices has been caused by several factors, according to Sincoc, among them

- Strong growth in the demand for oil worldwide, particularly in China and other developing countries,
- A tight supply situation that has shown only limited response to higher prices,
- Changing views on the economics of oil production,
- Concerns about economic and political situations in the Middle East, Venezuela, Nigeria, and the former Soviet Union, and
- Supply disruptions caused by weather events, such as hurricanes.

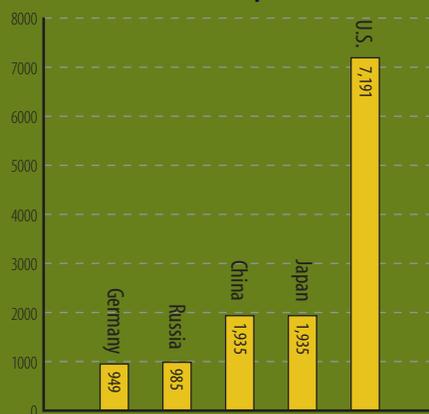
It’s this last event that has received the most attention of late, but it is not the only factor. “Let’s look at the Capline pipeline as an example,” Sincoc said. “It’s a 667-mile-long pipe that usually delivers up to 1.2 million barrels of crude oil from the Gulf of Mexico to mid-continent states. It receives most of that oil via the LOOP (the Louisiana Offshore Oil Platform), which is located 18 miles south of Grand Isle, La., out in the Gulf. This facility has the capacity to off-load one large tanker per day, pumping crude to its onshore storage facilities located 24 miles inland in underground caverns. The crude is pumped from the underground storage to Gulf Coast refineries and the Capline Pipeline, connecting it to more than half of the refineries in the U.S.”

As Hurricane Katrina approached, that all changed. On August 28, the LOOP halted marine operations and crude oil delivery due to the approaching storm. It wasn’t until four days later, September 1, that the LOOP resumed off-loading crude, but at reduced rates. The next day, September 2, four tankers were waiting to off-load at the LOOP, which was operating at only 75 percent capacity, where it stayed for another 11 days.

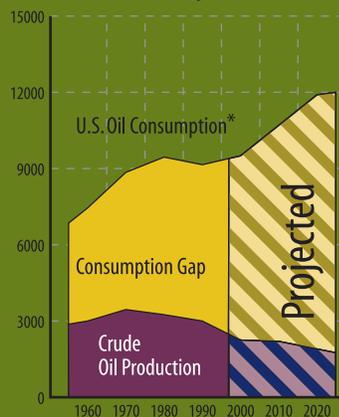
The ripple effect from this loss of crude was quickly felt. On August 29, refineries all over the U.S. supplied by the LOOP were in the process of shutting down or cutting back on crude oil refining as they anticipated the interruption in supply.

Refineries along the Gulf Coast were also slowed or shut down, not only because of the lack of crude supply, but because of the direct effects of the hurricanes themselves. In total, about a dozen Gulf Coast refineries representing nearly two million barrels per day of refining capacity went offline due to Hurricane

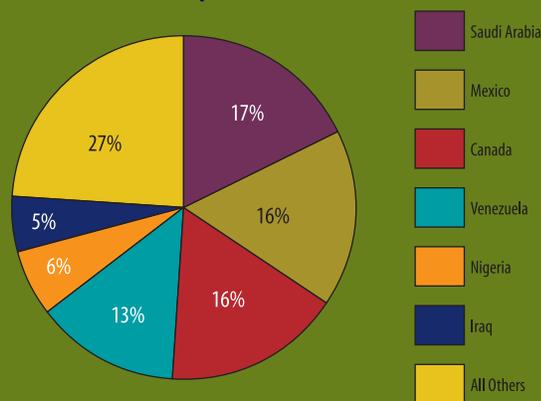
2002 Crude Oil Consumption



Historical and Projected Consumption Gap



2002 Crude Oil Imports



All data in millions of barrels annually.

* Includes refined products

Continued on page 16

After the Perfect Storm

Continued from page 15

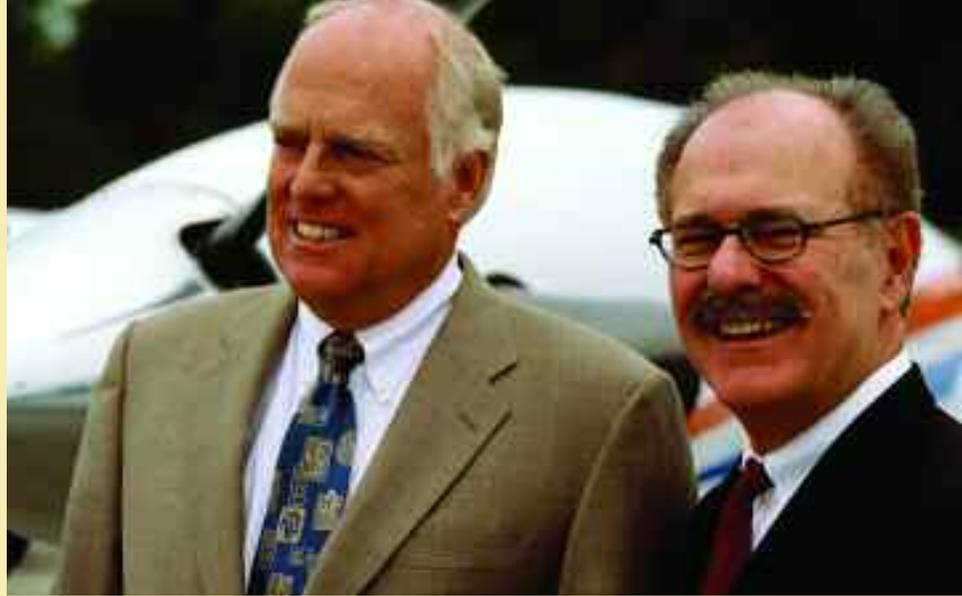
Katrina. Additional refineries in the Midwest also slowed their production due to a lack of crude.

Hurricane Rita, which hit the Texas and Louisiana coasts a few weeks later, did not help matters. "What did help," Sincock said, "was the decision to open the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to help overcome crude oil shortages. Regulatory relief allowed us to move JetA by water, some product specifications were changed to increase refinery output, the airlines tankered fuel to help offset local imbalances, the Europeans released some of their strategic petroleum stocks of JetA, and refineries in unaffected areas increased jet fuel production."

Fuel Delivery Gets Complicated

Sincock noted that the effects of the hurricanes also complicated fuel deliveries. The loss of electricity temporarily shut down two major oil pipelines. In one case, Avfuel had been working to get a fuel barge delayed by Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi River to Florida. "My customers didn't realize that fuel due for delivery in Florida could be dependent upon a barge coming down the Mississippi. Eventually, we got it through," he said.

"The free market rapidly and flexibly responded," Sincock said. "When the hurricanes hit and our prices went up, all these factors suddenly were at play, fuel started flowing to the U.S. from abroad—



NATA President Jim Coyne (left, above) and Avfuel President and CEO Craig Sincock (right, above and below) joined together to speak at two NATA Town Hall Meetings earlier this fall. One, hosted by Executive Jet Management, was held at Cincinnati's Lunken Airport, and the other, hosted by Priester Aviation, took place at Palwaukee Municipal Airport in Wheeling, Ill. The two speakers covered many issues facing the charter and FBO communities, including the availability and volatile price of aviation fuels.

following the money—and the shortages quickly vanished."

The capacity of the industry's infrastructure, high demand, the hurricanes, price (higher = greater industry incentive to produce), and crude supply all play a role in the price and availability at your local FBO.

As for the future, Sincock said that that crude supplies were tight before the hurricanes, and the damage to the oil industry in the Gulf Coast was significant. Long term, the disruption to Gulf Coast production facilities may keep oil prices high. U.S. refinery capacity was operating at 98 percent *before* the hurricanes. Lower heating oil and natural gas inventories heading into the winter may lead to severe upward pressure on prices, as has been recently and widely reported.

"If the government minimizes its involvement in the free market, the free market will respond. As I like

to point out, the best cure for high prices is high prices," Sincock said.

DOE's Murky Forecast

According to the DOE, the extent of Katrina and Rita's damage makes it difficult to provide a reliable forecast for the upcoming months, but the impact of the hurricanes on oil refining and pipeline systems have certainly further strained already-tight petroleum product markets. DOE predicts that prices for petroleum products will remain high due to tight international supplies of crude and hurricane-induced supply losses. Prices for energy are still expected to rise slightly in 2006, as had been expected prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Complete recovery of energy infrastructure from hurricane damage will take many months, but considerable recovery should occur by the end of the year. In the last several weeks, the restart of two major refineries in western Louisiana and another in Pascagoula, Miss., is fueling optimism. Perhaps ironically, total U.S. energy demand is projected to decline temporarily due to hurricane-related destruction and higher energy prices. DOE projects that demand growth will rebound in 2006.



For the near term, Sincock said that the market for crude oil and refined products, including jet fuel, will continue to be a reflection of the world market. While Katrina and Rita have damaged the infrastructure of refineries, pipelines, and ports, some limited return to normalcy is predicted by year-end. Barring further interruptions to U.S. production due to natural disaster or other events, supply should not be a problem and prices should stabilize at current levels, with the DOE predicting a slight upward trend in 2006, exclusive of home heating costs that are predicted to rise dramatically.

As for the long term, Sincock said that China, India, and other developing nations will more aggressively compete with the U.S. for global petroleum reserves in the coming years.

If over the next several years there are no major natural disasters in the U.S. and if there are no significant crude production-limiting events—natural or man-made, anywhere in the world—to inhibit the supply lines, aviation fuel supplies in the U.S. are likely to be stable while prices continue their inexorable (but hopefully slow) rise.

Those are very large “ifs,” Sincock knows, but with global demand and supply at close parity, there is little excess capacity in the world to easily take up the slack when something goes wrong.

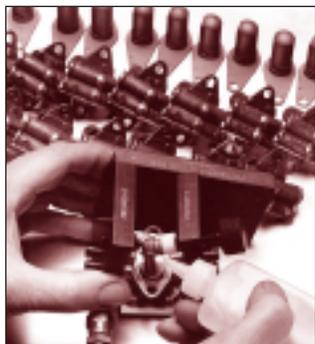
“That’s life in today’s global economy,” Sincock concluded. “That’s why, today, we have to be very aware that what’s happening globally will affect us here tomorrow. It’s remarkable, but it’s also reality.”

If the government minimizes its involvement in the free market, the free market will respond. As I like to point out, the best cure for high prices is high prices.

— Craig Sincock
Avfuel President and CEO

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Thinking Outside the Fence

“All politics is local.”

—Tip O’Neal, Former Speaker of the U.S. House

Putting a little something away for a rainy day is a time-honored tradition in most cultures. This simple concept—paying a little now to be ready just in case—also translates into a good business strategy, not to mention fairly decent common sense. For instance, few airport or FBO managers would operate without having paid up their liability or property damage insurance, even if they could. It’s simply beyond comprehension. Those consequences are rather easy to recognize: if there’s a fire and you’re not paid up, you’re out of business.

By Robert P. Mark

Being ready for the unknown, however, is not simply about cash. When a community is up in arms about its airport, the issues may be less recognizable and much less easy to address. This is not surprising. Few aviation managers are trained to deal with these kinds of emotional, politically charged issues. An airport and its supporters must be proactive in the community, not simply reactive to it, and that is where the beginnings of the solutions will be found. It begins with a little outside-the-fence thinking about the people who can most influence an airport’s success. This might include local residents, users, media, and legislators, local, state and federal.

What is Airport Marketing?

Marketing an airport is not about selling, at least not initially. Before the sales-like part of the marketing process begins, the most

important element of any marketing program is intelligence gathering. That means learning the identities and characteristics of the people who can keep your airport sailing along smoothly and also learning more about the potential opportunities or obstacles, locally or nationally, that these people or groups represent.

The consulting world’s result of saving for a rainy day is called social capital. That’s a \$2 phrase for improving relationships with people both on and off the airport who can affect the success of your airport. So why should anyone care? Because when some well-meaning group of citizens comes banging on the front gate trying to turn your airport into a Wal-Mart, or at very least attempts to restrict airport use with a curfew or some kind of arbitrary weight limit, you’re going to need a few friends.

Continued on page 20

Thinking Outside the Fence

Continued from page 19

Building social capital means building as many wide bridges as you can between the airport and the people and organizations that can most influence success.

First, a reality check. Community relations issues, like airport noise, safety, or expansion-related rebukes from crowds of potentially angry citizens, are something few of us have ever been trained to respond to without being intimidated or becoming angry or both. Too often, airport users see a potential political tumble as something to be avoided at all costs and something better left to the other folks. Saving an airport requires being a little uncomfortable, but airport users are just the people an airport needs to bolster support. This means getting involved, perhaps even a bit beyond your standard comfort zone. This is where putting away a little something for the future begins.

Another reason every airport needs more regular support is that the most fertile ground for community revolts often appears

where airport users have become much too comfortable about their status, assuming that everyone around the field already knows and understands the facility's value. The simple fact is that aviation professionals care much more about an airport than any community will.

Anti-Airport Groups

Four airports are shut down every month in this country, so your airport needs all the friends it can find. This also means realizing that practically every airport is in danger. And despite the fact that passionate anti-airport groups are typically small in number, they are very vocal and sometimes very, very well organized. If your airport does not get out into the community to regularly talk about and market the value of your airport to the media, residents, legislators, and other airport users, your airfield is already in trouble. You just might not see the symptoms yet.

A South Florida airport recently learned not to underestimate the local residents' ability to mount opposition to the airport. Local citizens not only expressed displeasure with the airport and local government at what they saw as an illegal runway extension, but they formed a solidly built, well-organized, and finely tuned opposition group. And while the group has not successfully closed the airport, it has certainly made life difficult for the airport manager. This huge distraction means there are many more important issues he doesn't have the time to address.

Think You're Can't Be Next? Remember, Four Per Month

An airport's future solidifies when the people who have a stake in the success of the field essentially become a part of the community, not simply people

reacting to it. That means putting a little good community relations capital in that airport's savings account for the future.

Chicago Palwaukee Municipal Airport, just north of O'Hare, is land-locked by homes and businesses. Often pelted with noise complaints from late-night and Stage 2 aircraft, the airport manager decided to take action—not just fight back, but engage the community and tell the good stories managers often say no one ever hears. That manager, Dennis Rouleau, helped organize a group of local airport supporters and users into a pro-airport issue organization, the Palwaukee Municipal Airport Community Engagement Council (PACE). Over the past three years, PACE members helped initiate an airport noise program that not only reduced local tensions about noisy aircraft, but also gave community members an opportunity to speak directly with a management representative about their concerns. Last year, PACE distributed a brochure to the community that highlighted the tax dollars brought into the community through leases and property taxes, as well as the number of jobs at the airport. The brochure also showed how little local real estate values appeared to have been influenced by the airport, contrary to an anti-airport group's opinion.

It's Not Rocket Science

Community relations and community issues management are not smoke and mirrors, nor are they rocket science. They're part of a marketing process that unmask an airport's value to a community and speaks to the positive events that may go unnoticed. And despite the complexity of some of these issues, they can be solved locally if people take the time to listen and act.



Want a few more reasons to market your airport? First, without being involved in the community, you might miss out on opportunities you wouldn't have heard about except for those outreach efforts. Also, being involved in the local, state, and national aviation community and regularly taking the temperature of your community through regular involvement in social and political affairs will keep you from being blindsided someday. All politicians tend to listen when they have issues in front of them, and an airport representative must be in constant contact because the opposition groups are probably way ahead on this. The success of your business and your airport depend on making the effort.

Thinking It Through

Some big questions pop up when engaging the airport community. Who do you talk to first? What do you say? Do you start by yourself? What if no one wants to help? Author and renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead cautioned us never to forget that it takes only one person to stand up and say "Enough." Can you win the community relations game? Believe it or not, the goal isn't to beat the opposition. The goal, at a minimum, is to contribute to the balance of issues to keep the anti-airport groups at bay.

Meeting people off-airport who don't think the way you do is most likely going to be a little uncomfortable. But this discomfort about how others see your airport can help you begin to understand their perspective. When you understand not only how they feel but also why, you have a better chance of figuring out how to neutralize some bad feeling and some potentially bad press.

As difficult as finding the time might be, sitting down, closing your door, and writing (not simply thinking about) the answers to these questions is absolutely required. Ask yourself what people outside the fence know about the airport. Do they even know there's an airport there? What value do you believe the airport offers the community? Does anyone else understand that perspective? What local, state, or federal legislators could you call on right now for support if an angry mob showed up at the front gate with noise or airport-expansion complaints? Who are the local radio, TV, and newspaper reporters who might have even a passing interest in this airport? Again, the key to success at your airport is not just thinking about what makes your company work, but also considering the opinions of the people who most influence your airport.

Where else can an airport find allies before they are needed? Consider the media. You don't need a media relations specialist to get a reporter interested in what's happening on your airport. You simply need news. The best way to learn for certain what makes a reporter tick is to ask. If you don't know the local media folks, call the chamber of commerce or look on the web. You can easily email reporters and ask for a minute of their time to learn the kinds of stories they find interesting and see where the fit might be for your airport. Ask reporters over for a tour. Buy them lunch. Get them up for a demonstration flying lesson. This is marketing. The point is to stir their curiosity. It won't work every time, but when a tough airport issue surfaces, you'll find the reporter much more receptive to your perspective than if you meet them the first time when the sky is falling.

Community relations and community issues management are not smoke and mirrors, nor are they rocket science. They're part of a marketing process that unmask an airport's value to a community and speaks to the positive events that may go unnoticed.

How about a newsletter? Anyone with a computer can easily produce even a one-page newsletter every other month. Ask airport tenants to keep you in the loop on their own businesses and for pictures. Think you can't write well enough? Visit your local community college and find some budding journalists who would jump at the chance to help tell the airport story. And when that newsletter goes out, put it up on your website as well. Don't forget to send copies of all your newsletters and news releases to the local government organizations, from the mayor to the city councilors to the state and federal legislators because these are the folks that can help find the cash when it is needed for capital improvements. Don't wait until you need them to begin making friends.

The possibilities for a good marketing-focused community relations plan are almost endless. The key to a successful airport is thinking outside the fence. In fact, thinking about how the people who live near your airport or who have the power to make your field successful is the only way to be successful. But you must begin putting a little something away for the future. With the U.S. losing four airports per month, the threat to your airport might be right around the corner. 



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If you own or run a business, chances are that you have spent several hours discussing your online presence. Whether or not your company has a website and whether it is effective or as robust as it needs to be, two things are certain: the subject of your web presence never seems to be settled and you never seem to have a definitive answer. These may seem like one and the same thing, but as we'll discuss later, they are very different issues.

Why Do I Need a Website?

Usually the five Ws begin with Who, but for the sake of clarity, beginning for this discussion with the Why and working our way back to the Who makes more sense.

The first question is whether you really need a website, and the simple answer is a definitive

and resounding yes. But the questioning shouldn't stop there. To have an effective website, the first step is to go through the exercise of determining why you need it.

"Business people should think of their online presence in terms of their overall business strategy and make sure that it aligns with it," said Scott Woodward of Athenix Solutions, a technology solutions company based in Lawrence, Kans. "It should not just be an afterthought. I cannot emphasize enough that the website must be considered a business tool."

Far from being an academic or philosophical discussion, asking the Why question and spending quality time examining the answers helps lay the foundation for creating a website that works for your business. The answers you come up with direct you in crafting a quality product that effectively markets your business.

"From my perspective, having the business case solved—possibly as far as developing a business plan just for the site—will have the biggest impact," Woodward said.

Let's look at some typical answers to the Why question.

1. To provide information about my company 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Unless you are willing to staff 24/7 receptionists, train them in the latest customer service skills, provide them with every answer to every conceivable question, and prepare them to answer the inconceivable questions that will invariably arise at any hour of any day, you need an alternate means to provide answers when customers and potential customers want them. You obviously cannot afford the 24/7 receptionist option,

Continued on page 24

Business Websites

Continued from page 23

and you would be crazy try.

But in today's marketplace, your customers are surely going to be shopping on their time, not yours. Whether they get dressed up and go out or sit in their pajamas and surf the net, customers have come to expect what they want when they want it. If you are not offering them that level of convenience, they will go someplace else, likely to your competitor.

2. Numbers don't lie.

Current estimates put more than 200 million users on the Internet. Each year governments throw more money into educating more people to use the web. You hear terms like digital divide and e-competency improvements. The number of online customers isn't going to dwindle in any of our lifetimes; it will only expand. Of those 200 million users, how many might be interested in your products and services? If even one tenth of one percent visited your website in a year, your business would make 200,000 impressions on potential customers. Even better, those viewing your website would be mainly pre-qualified potential customers, in that they came looking for your products and services.

According to surveys of web users (and there are tons of them) most are more highly educated, have higher annual incomes than non-users, and consider themselves to be very busy (perfect charter customers). In other words, these are the people most likely to buy your stuff.

3. Making changes to content is cheap and easy.

How many times has your business spent thousands of dollars to advertise in a directory or print brochures, only to discover a mistake or a necessary content change shortly afterward? With a directory listing, you are stuck with the information you provided until next year. With a brochure, you either cross out the error and write in the new info with a pen (shudder), or you redo the print run and incur further costs. With a website, you make a few keystrokes, and your new information is up for the world to see.

4. Because of who else is online.

Are your competitors online? Do they do a better job of marketing themselves online than you do? I am always amazed that companies will spend beaucoup bucks to create beautiful brochures, elaborate terminal spaces, fabulous fueling services, and out-of-this-world safety programs and then hire a high school kid with no graphics experience to design

their website. Your website is as important as, if not more important than, any other marketing materials you will ever create. If your competitors are getting more business and have great looking websites, they already understand this. More often than not, your website is a potential customer's first impression of your company

5. To reach a global audience.

Okay, you are a fixed base operator who specializes in pumping fuel to local sport pilots. Ask yourself two questions:

- a. Is that your specialty because you want it to be, or did you fall into that market because those are the only people who know about your business?
- b. If a number of out-of-town travelers started coming to you for fuel or repairs, would you turn them away?

Let's be real: nobody wants less business. So if you want to let people who might be coming into your airport know you are there and what services you offer, a website is the best and most cost effective way to do it. Potential customers probably don't have access to your local phone book. They aren't reading your local newspaper or listening to your local radio stations. So your choices are direct mail, national publications like this one, or an online presence. Better yet, why not a combination of all three? We already know from Business 101 that running an ad in the newspaper is not marketing; it is just running an ad in the newspaper.

What Should My Website Be?

Java, SQL, Cobalt, HTML, Flash, Oracle, XML, yadda, yadda, yadda. There are so many options, so many choices, that sometimes

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you just might want to forget the whole thing. But there is some good news: I just saved a bunch of money by switching my car insurance to Geico. Oh yeah, and none of these things really matter.

As I told you before, the lack of definitive answers and the subject of your web presence never being settled are two very different things. Here's why. Which web-based applications and systems are best depends on which web designers you ask. Whatever languages they design in are the ones they say are best. The key is finding a web design firm that you trust and that is willing to work with you to accomplish your goals. Notice I said firm and not a kid in a web design class or some off-the-shelf design-it-yourself web program. For a professional looking and behaving website, you need a professional, preferably several professionals, designing your site. Do you let amateurs work on your company's \$20 million Falcon? Why trust them with the image of your whole company?

"You can have the best content in the world, but without the good first impression people will not stay long enough to find out," Athenix's Woodward said. "Conversely, if the site looks good but is essentially empty, then you annoy the user, as their time will have been wasted."

Several options are available for creating your website. All of them are merely a means to get to the ends of having customers open their browser and see your information as it is intended to be seen. Some are very expensive, and some are not so much.

The more complex you want your site to be, the more you should expect to pay. You must also consider that the more complex your site, the greater the chance that some users will not be able to use all its functions.

I am always amazed that companies will spend beaucoup bucks to create beautiful brochures, elaborate terminal spaces, fabulous fueling services, and out-of-this-world safety programs and then hire a high school kid with no graphics experience to design their website. Your website is as important as, if not more important than, any other marketing materials you will ever create.

There are as many computer configurations as there are computer users. With all the variables available, each computer is a unique system. The best way to avoid spending a plane-load of money only to have a site that can't be viewed is to use industry best practices.

Just like your safety program, the Internet has a group that monitors emerging technologies and sets standard practices for using them. This group is a non-profit coalition of technology providers based in Japan, France, and the United States (at MIT) called the W3C

(World Wide Web Consortium). The W3C gets together with technology businesses to make sure that all the pieces work together so when you type in www.nata.aero, the Internet will know to show you the National Air Transportation Association's website.

Any good design firm will offer suggestions that are universally viewable, based upon surveys of current and potential users of your services

and products. They will make sure that your site will look lovely no matter if it is viewed by a user on a Pentium II with 68 Mb of RAM running America Online with a 9.88k modem or by a blazing fast user of Firefox on an Apple G5 dual 586 processors with a T1 dedicated line and a gig of RAM.

Your design firm should be well versed in W3C best practices and use them. Ask to see the sites they have designed and discuss the process they used to

Continued on page 26



What Do These Have in Common?

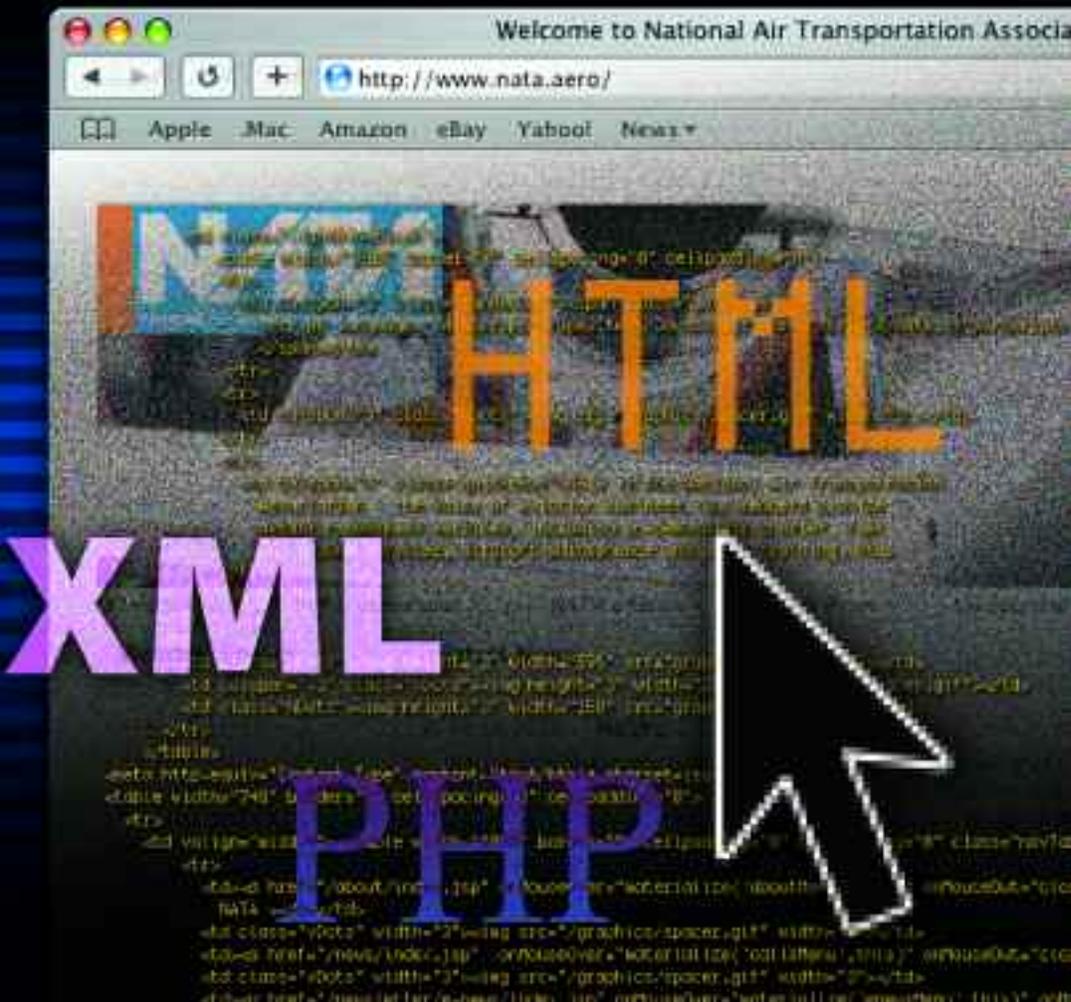
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Business Websites

Continued from page 25

arrive at the final design.

The firm should have a design process in place that asks the pertinent questions discussed in this article, probes your technical expertise, looks for clues on what colors and design elements you like, and more. The firm should also provide domain registration and hosting options, have reliable back-up systems, and offer content consultation.

Enough Geek-Speak Already; What Should My Site Contain?

Your website is your home in cyberspace. Given the growing number of businesses on the web and the number of web users, your website will likely be the first place where customers learn about your business. Websites have become so prevalent that churches, barbershops, delis, dog

groomers, dentists, and many more businesses and organizations are using the web to tell the world about themselves. And customers depend on these websites to have the information they want.

Think about your own surfing experiences. What are your thoughts when you land on a web page with grainy graphics, cheesy music, silly cursor things, and bad content? Do you stay around to look at all of their offerings, or do you move on to the next site that has a clean and professional look?

There are several different kinds of websites, and your business should select the kind that best fits your market and your competencies.

- **Brochure Sites.** A brochure website offers a brief glimpse of your services, a little information about your company, methods of obtaining more information,

and maybe a few images. It may also include biographies of key staff, press releases, and informative articles. In the case of FBOs, airport information is also a great offering. Typically, these sites are created in Flash, a sophisticated animated interface, or Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), the basic building language of websites.

- **Dynamic or Interactive Sites.** On an interactive website, surfers can either request information, leave comments, or download information, software, or graphics. Other forms of interactivity, such as chat rooms and message boards, are also very popular but more technical. This type of site is becoming more popular as technology is more widely available and less expensive. These sites are excellent for generating leads and collecting customer data for later follow-up.
- **E-Commerce Sites.** These are sites where businesses sell a product, deliverable online or offline, and conduct the entire transaction over the Internet.

Both dynamic and e-commerce sites require a back-end (not visible to the user) relational database that stores the information the site needs to function. The two most commonly used commercial databases are Oracle and MS SQL Server, and either will offer similar functionality. Because it is not relational, do not use Microsoft Access as your web database.

In addition to using the site for marketing your business, good designers can create administrative features that allow you to easily update the content on your site. They can also create mini-applications, called applets, that allow you to manage your customer relationships, track parts and purchases, handle payroll, create online forms for sick

and vacation leave and expense reports, and much more. These applets allow your site to become a business management tool. Any paperwork process you undertake manually can be custom created to be done on your website.

Where Do I Start?

One exercise to get you started is to gather all your existing materials and lay them out on a large table. These materials will naturally lend themselves toward being grouped together. Once you have placed all the items into groups that make the most sense, you can create overarching descriptions for each group. This helps make site navigation clearer and allows you to easily see what information you are missing and need to create.

When deciding what content to put on your website and how to prioritize it, you should ask some basic questions. This is not a definitive list of questions, but just a warmup to get the juices flowing.

- Who are our customers?
- Who do we want our customers to be?
- How do we reach out to our customers?
- Are we achieving return on investment with our current marketing strategies?
- What do we want to say about ourselves?
- How do we differentiate ourselves from our competitors?
- What is great about us that customers may not know?
- What services do we offer?
- How can customers buy from us?

Once you have an idea about the content you want, the type of site you want, a budget for the site (don't be stingy or it will cost you later), and a good feel for how visitors can find what they

are looking for, you can begin searching for a web design firm.

Local Vs. Distant

The first place to look for a good design firm is, you guessed it, online. A good design firm will have a great website of their own. The site should tell you about the company and their experience, provide advice about how you should proceed, offer a means to communicate with them, and most importantly, have links to sites they have designed so you can test drive their services.

Given that we live in a global age, there is no reason to be confined to just the designers in your local area. Most information can be transmitted via e-mail, options can be viewed online, questions can be answered on the telephone, and the entire project can be completed without ever meeting the designers face to face.

However, if you are like me and prefer to deal with local businesses whenever possible, try networking with other successful businesses in your area at events with the chamber of commerce or a local technology association. If you have a friend in the plumbing business and he has a knockout site, chances are that he will be more than happy to point you toward the designer. But don't ask your competitor.

The benefit of a local design firm is that you can sit down with the designers and have their undivided attention while you describe your business needs.

They will also have an understanding of the local economy, local networking opportunities to market your new website, and sometimes, but not always, offer better customer service than someone far from town.

Remember, they have to keep doing business there and the last thing they want is a local business ripping on them around town.

Another possibility is working with an advertising agency. This can be especially useful if your current marketing materials aren't that hot. An agency can craft a sell for your business and create the content in a way that makes sense with the design and the navigation. An agency can also help you get better results by suggesting ways to tell the world about your new site. Also, make sure to include a care-and-

Continued on page 44

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Make the NATA Safety 1st Management System Your Marketing Advantage

In business aviation, safety is important to consumers, and participation in the NATA Safety 1st Management System, a proven cutting-edge management program, can give organizations a marketing advantage and help them build their customer base and bottom line.

It happens every single day: two businesses with similar marketing budgets conduct well-planned direct-mail campaigns, and while one company realizes less than a 1 percent increase in sales, the other somehow manages a 20 percent increase and then turns each of those newly acquired accounts into a loyal repeat customer.

Why do some companies succeed brilliantly in their marketing efforts while others fail? Many companies have access to the same tools and resources, but the ones who succeed know how to pull them all together to make their marketing work. And more importantly, successful businesses know what is important to their customers and how to communicate it effectively.

In business aviation, safety is important to consumers, and participation in the NATA Safety 1st Management System (SMS), a proven cutting-edge management program, can give organizations a marketing advantage and help them build their customer base and bottom line.

Let's look at nine elements at the heart of true marketing success.

1. Leadership. To be successful, the marketing programs your staff or agency create must support your vision of your company's future.

By Stephanie Toomey,
Director – Marketing,
SH&E

Management, at the very top of an organization, must set the tone and clearly define the goals. Safety must never be the sole responsibility of the safety coordinator. Management must lead the way and communicate the importance of safety throughout the organization. Safety can be a powerful marketing position if it is truly your company's vision.

2. Customer Service. The Golden Rule (“Do unto others as you would have then do unto you”) guides many people in the conduct of their personal lives, yet this axiom is also assuming new importance as a guiding principle in the business world. The climate of solely budget-driven decisions, when customers blithely traded away high-quality standards and service in exchange for price reductions or convenience, is no more. Instead, customers are demanding higher standards and service again. And companies of all sizes are realizing that their strongest selling point can sometimes boil down to treating customers as they would like to be treated—or better.

The growing significance of meeting or exceeding customers' demands for quality service has special implications for small businesses. In this arena, small companies can set themselves apart from the competition in the least expensive way. In fact, according to the National Federation of Independent Business, a recent three-year study showed that

small businesses that put heavy emphasis on customer service and the quality of the customer experience were more likely to survive and succeed than competitors who emphasized such advantages as lower prices or product type. Making the NATA SMS a cornerstone of your high-standard customer experience can have such an effect on your business.

3. Teamwork. Effective marketing doesn't begin and end with you and your marketing people. Everyone in the organization, from receptionist to line service employees to customer representatives, can produce referrals, positive PR, and even sales. The key is to “enroll” your entire staff in the importance of your organization's SMS participation. Solicit their ideas, share your plans for each new marketing effort, and keep your team up-to-date on the creation and implementation of the SMS program.

A wise marketing executive once said, “Everything you do says something to someone.” If SMS participation and safety are your competitive marketing position, everyone in your organization must be on board because, make no mistake, your customers are watching and everything your team does says something to them.

4. Coordination. The best marketing programs cannot succeed if there

Continued on page 30

Safety Watch

Continued from page 29

are barriers to sales. If your marketing positioning and competitive advantage are based on safety, you must have open communication between all departments and individuals. This ensures that everyone is fully aware of the safety standards and able to execute them. Customers notice when an organization is not well coordinated, and that can affect repeat business.

5. Focus. Trying to be everything to everyone will result in a muddy message and customers not knowing what you stand for. Keep your message simple, clear, and focused, and your marketing dollars will work more effectively. If high safety standards are your position and message, don't dilute them by giving other positions equal consideration. Too many different marketing messages can diffuse your efforts, reducing the time and budget available to effectively deliver each one and sabotaging your results.

6. Accountability. Just as the Great Pyramids were constructed one stone on top of the next, one successful marketing program builds on another. Success hinges on

tracking and measuring your marketing results. Start setting quantifiable goals for every program and tactic, such as producing three new accounts in 60 days. Test and examine each marketing approach and message, build on what works, and reexamine and possibly discard what doesn't.

7. Flexibility. Successful businesses respond well to changes in the marketplace, customer preferences, and new opportunities. As you roll out your marketing messages and media, you will learn which marketing tactics resonate with your customers and which don't. Just as the SMS is designed to be customized to the specific needs and demands of an organization, your marketing program should be designed so that it can be flexible as well.

8. Continuity. Consistent presentation of a brand name and brand position are essential to long-term marketing success. While strategies and tactics may change and evolve, the position you choose to associate with your brand should not change month to month. Customers won't believe the positioning if it is not consistently communicated or if it goes away, only to be resurrected when the industry experiences high-profile accidents or incidents.

9. Insight. Some business people always seem to have the inside track. They evaluate the competition and forecast future trends, products, and technologies instead of just responding to today's ups and downs. Being a successful marketer means staying ahead of the pack. You don't really need a crystal ball; it should just look like you use one.

By participating in the NATA SMS, you gain immediate access to the latest trends in safety

management. The program is dynamic and always giving you new information and tools that you can incorporate into your marketing message. Your customers will see an organization that not only takes safety seriously, but also has access to the most cutting-edge safety management standards and practices.

How SMS Helps You Win Referrals

Referrals—everyone wants them, yet few people really understand how to win them. Sometimes it may seem as if all your competitors are benefiting from strong referrals and word-of-mouth, and you wonder how they manage to get so lucky. The truth is that luck is rarely involved. Getting referrals hinges on making the right connections with “influencers” and “influentials.”

Influencers are generally business professionals who work with your top prospects. They have the ability to make recommendations that can result in almost immediate referrals and sales. For example, insurance adjusters are important influencers when it comes to sending business to maintenance companies and aviation mechanics.

Influentials may be members of the press or consumers who are viewed as having the highest standards or being on the cutting edge in a particular area. Think about it, and you'll recognize that we all look to certain friends or family members for the latest information.

You can develop a marketing campaign to win referrals for your business by marketing to both influencers and influentials. However you should employ different tactics to be most effective. You will find that the following strategies can be successful on a limited budget and have a powerful impact on your referral numbers.

As you roll out your marketing messages and media, you will learn which marketing tactics resonate with your customers and which don't. Just as the SMS is designed to be customized to the specific needs and demands of an organization, your marketing program should be designed so that it can be flexible as well.

To win referrals from influentials, try these tactics:

- **Use media relations.** Make a list of the editors or journalists at the print publications, websites, newsletters, and blogs that have the greatest influence over your customer base. Then feed them press releases, story ideas, and articles for publication on your SMS program. You can break down the story ideas on specific elements of your business just as the SMS manual does. You can also use the SMS e-toolkit to generate story ideas for your targeted media and discuss how you are addressing specific safety challenges through your SMS program.
- **Add a web forum.** Depending on the size of your business, you may want to create your own company web forum or bulletin board or participate in an aviation business forum. This is a great way to reach influentials who have a specific interest in business aviation trends. You can post safety standards and procedures that are working successfully for your own organization. If your forum is a hit, it will attract the kind of visitors who enjoy sharing their opinions and influencing others.

How to Reach Influencers

For a successful campaign to reach influencers, consider these strategies:

- **Build relationships.** Before an influencer will send referrals your way, he or she must feel confident that you will handle them well. This requires a foundation based on trust. You need a campaign with messages on the benefits of your organization's SMS program, and you should frequently touch your referral prospects with these messages.
- **Initiate contacts.** Make a list of individuals who come in direct

As media pick up on the improved safety records of SMS participants, those who fly will better understand the importance of doing business with Safety 1st participants.

contact with your best prospects and determine the most effective way to let them know that you are participating in the NATA SMS program. This can be done informally through telephone calls or casual meetings or more formally with emails and direct mailings. Make sure that the contact person can repeat the benefits of the SMS in simple language to your best prospects.

- **Supply helpful tools.** In some instances, creating information tools (e.g., brochures, newsletters, press releases) for your influencers to use with prospects may be helpful. These tools should contain the key benefits and competitive advantages of doing business with an organization that participates in the SMS program. In addition to being helpful, handy tools, these pieces should contain your company name, logo, and contact information. As you develop relationships with your influencers, be sure to get their input on how you can create tools that will work best for them.

Strength in Numbers

Even the smallest company can capitalize on its affiliation with something larger than itself, and even the largest company can expand by joining together with other like-minded organizations. One of the strongest arguments going for NATA's SMS is that the

whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

NATA works hard to promote Safety 1st as the first truly effective initiative to make the entire industry safer. These efforts create greater awareness among the entire universe of the flying public.

Organizations who qualify to display the Safety 1st logo in their marketing materials add NATA's marketing efforts to their own. As media pick up on the improved safety records of SMS participants, those who fly will better understand the importance of doing business with Safety 1st participants. In addition, several SMS participants offer preferred status to vendors who also participate in the program.

"Being able to use the Safety 1st logo will provide our eligible participants with greater exposure to a wider base of customers who are telling us that safety matters to them," said NATA Safety 1st's Amy Koranda. "As NATA continues to promote the program, participating in Safety 1st will mean significantly more customers for participants, as customers will know that these are businesses who are working to run safer operations. What customer wouldn't want to conduct business with the safest operation they can? What business wouldn't want to advertise that they are participating in the leading industry initiative to be safer? The best marketing result for participants is simply that they participate and tell their customers about it."





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What's New in Marketing?

Email Tools that Help You Succeed

There are many software programs and products available to help companies better reach their clients and provide a more consistent image in every email or newsletter that is sent. Following are a few of the options in the marketplace.

Success in marketing means keeping your name in front of current and potential customers and efficiently and effectively delivering your message to them. To help you better reach your customers, *Aviation Business Journal* has reviewed three email tools that can provide you with big-company marketing results on a small-company budget.

Lyris ListManager Version 8.9

Lyris ListManager Version 8.9, a new product from Lyris Technologies of Berkeley, Calif., eases email list management and facilitates e-newsletters, discussion groups, and promotional campaigns.

"Lyris ListManager Version 8.9 is a high-power email marketing delivery solution that makes it possible to manage and deliver in-house email lists," said Dave Dabbah, director of marketing at Lyris. "Most of our clients send out newsletters, have discussion groups, and use the application for advanced campaigns."



By Kelly Creamer

The ListManager helps companies with beginner to advanced levels of experience with email marketing. It can help users create content, produce text- or web-based messages, and make web-based templates for continued use. The software helps a company develop its campaign by sorting demographic data, building queries, and setting frequency limits to prevent list fatigue. ListManager also tracks activity, provides statistics on the most recent mailings, analyzes web traffic, and shows exactly how many people are visiting a company's web page. It can also offer recipients the ability to unsubscribe via email or the website.

The ListManager is available in three different forms: Standard, Pro, and Enterprise. The Standard version is for email newsletter publishers and discussion list owners, the Pro version is primarily for beginning to experienced email marketers, and the Enterprise is chiefly for highly advanced companies.

"The beauty of the solution is that it is designed for companies of all sizes," Dabbah said. "We work with small companies to enterprise corporations. We have 5,000 companies worldwide. A large percentage of our customer base is 50 employees and below.

The application is really easy to use and has an outstanding reputation in the market."

ListManager Version 8.9

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Continued on page 34

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Marketing Watch

Continued from page 33



IntelliContact

IntelliContact, from the Broadwick Corporation, Durham, N.C., allows all subscribing companies to easily produce, send, and track permission-based email cam-

paigns. Standard and advanced features include message scheduling, forward-to-a-friend, open and click-through tracking, multiple message auto-responder, and event management.

IntelliContact is web-based, allowing customers to sign up for an account and be running with the program in a relatively short time. It also offers the ability to log on to the account from any computer with an Internet connection.

"IntelliContact is perfectly suitable for companies of all sizes. Our customers range from individual users to Fortune 500 companies," said Brandon Milford, Broadwick's director of marketing. "We realize the importance of carefully measuring the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. With our full reporting,

you can see exactly who opened your mail, who clicked each link within the email, who forwarded the message to a friend, and many other detailed metrics."

One unique factor with IntelliContact is that Broadwick charges by subscribers instead of by the amount of messages sent out over a given time period.

Companies can send up to six messages a month to their subscriber list without paying additional charges.

"With such a captive audience, it's easy to see why you'll receive higher rates of retention and conversion with permission-based email marketing than through other means of reaching current and potential clients," Milford said.

For companies unsure about signing up for an IntelliContact account, Broadwick offers a free,



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Arial Software, headquartered in Cody, Wyo., produces two software products that can help your company better reach its clients: Campaign Enterprise 9 and Email Marketing Director.

Campaign Enterprise 9, the advanced affiliate to the Email Marketing Director software, is intended for a higher volume of email sent at a given time, and yet it is still easy to use for less tech-savvy companies. Campaign Enterprise 9 does not incur any monthly fees, will work with virtually any database, and can hold an unlimited number of personalized emails, email lists, and subscribers.

"Campaign Enterprise 9 is our flagship product, which has evolved over the past eleven years into a powerful permission email marketing tool," said Jim Kinkade, director of customer service at Arial Software. "It allows marketers to track opened emails, click through rates, and manage remove requests by integrating directly with the customer database, regardless of the database type."

Email Marketing Director provides users with an unlimited number of lists so that companies can make all of the interest group lists they want. Users can obtain built-in newsletter templates, and automatic bounce-back and un-subscribing management helps filter databases and ensure that interested clients get every email that is sent.

"Email Marketing Director was introduced in 2005 to tap into the

small business market that cannot find a satisfactory solution between paying the high price of per-email sending and hiring technical staff to set up enterprise-level software," Kinkade said. "Email Marketing Director takes much of what we have learned developing Campaign Enterprise and puts it into an easy-to-use package primarily targeted toward companies just starting with email marketing, bringing the cost to under \$500. It is still a powerful, permission email marketing tool ideal for those who are just beginning to realize the potential that email contacts bring to their business."

Email Marketing Director and Campaign Enterprise 9

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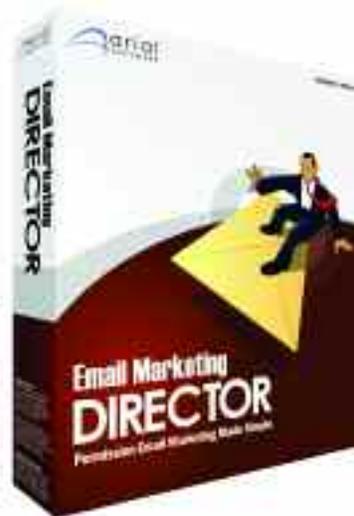
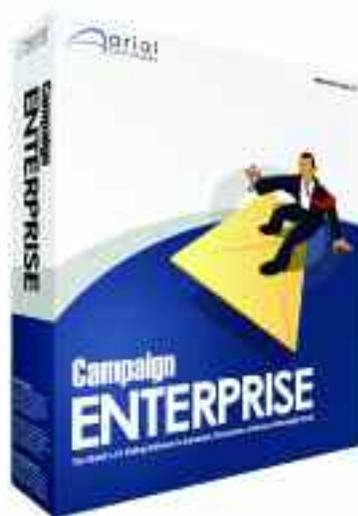
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There are many software programs and products available to help companies better

reach their clients and provide a more consistent image in every email or newsletter that is sent. Emails from your company can be sent more easily and have less chance of bouncing back, and the programs allow you to maintain a more organized subscriber list. 



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The National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) is holding its 58th Annual Meeting & Convention from November 9 to 11 in Orlando, Fla. Among the more than 30,000 attendees and exhibitors expected at the show will be hundreds of NATA members. Following is a preview of what some NATA members will be promoting in Orlando.

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Corridor Aviation Service Software Booth 3673

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Elliott Aviation, Inc. Booth 4531, Static Display

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ExxonMobil Aviation Booth 2100

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Continued from page 37

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Jet Source is nestled in the heart of San Diego's North County Coastal area and is the only full-service business aviation facility in the entire state of California. With more than 120,000 square feet of hangar space, the company's executive FBO provides aircraft charter, management, maintenance, avionics, ramp services, fuel sales, and aircraft sales/acquisition.

Midcoast Aviation Booth 4252

Midcoast Aviation is a full-service provider of aircraft maintenance, modification, completion and structural repair. For more than 30 years, Midcoast's highly skilled technicians have flawlessly maintained and modified thousands of airplanes. Midcoast's reputation for experience, dedication and commitment to customer satisfaction ensures that jobs are performed only to the highest standards.

MillionAir Booth 4847

MillionAir is a worldwide network of fixed base operators providing upscale services to both corporate and private aircraft. Million Air's strength lies in its selection of extraordinary people, who are dedicated to creating the ultimate VIP experience.

Continued on page 40

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NATA/NBAA Showcase

Continued from page 38

Multi Service Corporation Booth 400

Whatever you fly, wherever you go, the Multi Service Aviation Card can be used for all aviation-related needs at more than 7,000 merchant locations in more than 190 countries worldwide. Services include online billing, worldwide directories, personal regional managers, and more.

See our ad on page 32.



NationAir Insurance, Inc. Booth 2806

NationAir Insurance Agencies is dedicated to providing custom insurance coverage for all segments of the aviation industry. NationAir is headquartered in Chicago, Ill., with additional branch offices in St. Louis, Mo.; Lincoln, Nebr.; Melbourne, Fla.; Atlanta, Ga.; Nashua, N.H.; Dallas, Tex.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Seattle, Wash.

Palwaukee Municipal Airport Booth 1220

Founded in 1925 as Gauthier's Flying Field, Palwaukee Municipal Airport has grown over the past 70 years from a 40-acre grassy open area with dirt runways to a general aviation airport servicing the metropolitan Chicago area as one of the nation's busiest reliever airports.

Prime Turbines, Inc. Booth 1549

Prime Turbines, established 1984, is a FAA-certified repair station UE5R246N, EASA.145.4786 approved, specializing in the PWC PT6 engine. Services include hot section recertification, power section and gas



generator repair, fuel nozzle and bleed valve overhaul/exchange, as well as engine and component sales.

See our ad on page 17.

Professional Insurance Management Booth 1552

Business aviation insurance specialists for 30 years, working with corporate flight departments, managed and fractional fleets, owner-flown, single-pilot, FBO, products, airline, and support businesses.

See our ad on page 42.



Signature Flight Support Booth 2600

Signature Flight Support, a BBA Aviation Services Group company, is the world's largest fixed base operation and distribution network for business aviation services. Signature services include fueling, hangar and office rentals, ground handling, and a wide-range of crew and passenger amenities at strategic domestic and international locations. Headquartered in Orlando, Fla., Signature currently operates at more than 70 locations throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and Asia.

Stevens Aviation, Inc. Booth 1400

Founded as a corporate flight department in 1950, Stevens Aviation has been dedicated to supporting corporate success through aviation ever since. With sites in Colorado, Ohio, Tennessee, and South Carolina, Stevens enjoys a reputation for providing aircraft owners and operators outstanding value by understanding their needs and providing flexible solutions to achieve their goals. Stevens proudly supports Beechcraft,

Bombardier Learjet, Cessna Citation, Piaggio, and Raytheon Hawker aircraft.

TAG Aviation Booth 1847

TAG Aviation is a major global provider of personalized air travel services. TAG arranges charter, manages aircraft operations, maintenance, and finances, and provides aircraft acquisition and sales brokerage. TAG supports owners based at more than 50 locations across the U.S. and serves the world's most sophisticated travelers and aircraft owners. Call TAG for solutions.

See our ad on page 28.



UVair Booth 5784

UVair, a division of Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc., provides worldwide fueling support for business aircraft through a network of suppliers, handling agents, and FBOs. The UVair Fueling Card is accepted at more than 1,750 locations worldwide and is carried by more than 14,000 cardholders. Benefits of the UVair Fueling Card include guaranteed payment, marketing assistance, sales support, and an easier way to conduct business. UVair invites attendees to visit the Universal exhibit #5784 at NBAA to learn more about the advantages of accepting the card. Universal has been facilitating successful trips for business aviation operators since 1959.

See our ad on page 18.



Our Business Is Your Business.

In 1986 *The Air Charter Guide*™ introduced the air taxi industry to itself and renamed it in the process. Since then it has been the worldwide marketing source for the industry and the first choice for charter customers who need to find a solution to their air travel needs.

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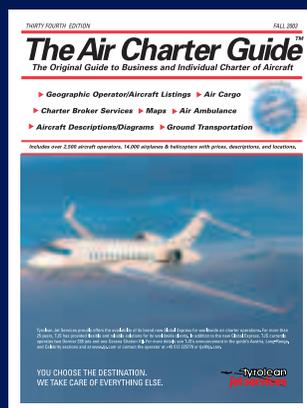
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Velcon Completes Qualification Tests

Velcon Filters, Inc. announced in September that it has successfully completed qualification tests to the "API/IP 1583 Specifications and Laboratory Tests for Aviation Fuel Filter Monitors with Absorbent Type Elements." These tests qualify Velcon's new "CDF-2xxN" series water absorbing monitors to the latest edition of the specification (Fourth Edition).



The following optional tests were also completed successfully:

1. ³/₄ percent sodium chloride full flow slug test, and
2. ³/₄ percent sodium chloride 50 ppm test.

The company's new cartridge series CDF-2xxN also incorporates features to reduce static charge. These new cartridges will eventually replace the current CDF-2xxK series.

Shell Launches Scholarship for Canadian Aviation Industry

Shell Canada Products recently announced that its aviation business will fund an innovative new scholarship program in 2006 and beyond for Canadian schedulers and dispatchers, aptly named the Canadian Schedulers and Dispatchers Scholarship.

Beginning October 1, prospective schedulers and dispatchers from across Canada began applying to receive a \$5,000 bursary toward education and training.

"This \$5,000 Canadian Schedulers and Dispatchers Scholarship is the first of its kind for the business aviation sector in Canada and underscores Shell's ongoing commitment to educational initiatives, from Aboriginal programs to post-secondary projects to scholarships and research activities," said Craig Andries, manager, aviation, Shell Canada Products.

Scholarship recipients will be announced in January at the 2006 Schedulers and Dispatchers Conference in San Antonio, Tex.

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ADVERTISER INDEX	
Aero-Mach Labs	27
AirBP	Back Cover
Air Charter Guide	41
AirSure Limited	Inside Front Cover, 36
Aviation Industry Expo	34
Avfuel Corporation	3
ChevronTexaco Global Aviation	Inside Back Cover
Christiansen Aviation	38
Corridor	43
ExxonMobil	4
Fuel Tech, Inc.	17
Hartzell Service Center	35
Horizon Business Concepts	8
Intersearch, Inc.	9
Multi Service Corporation	32
Phillips 66 Aviation	6
Prime Turbines	17
Professional Insurance	42
R. Dixon Speas	33
Simple Green	22
TAG Aviation	28
UVair	18
Velcon Filters	25

Jet Source Expands into Scottsdale with Addition of a Challenger 604

Jet Source Charter is proud to announce its expansion into Arizona where it will offer a Challenger 604 for charter. The 2003 model Challenger 604, first placed in service in early 2004, is based in Scottsdale and was available for charter in early August. This is the first Jet Source aircraft to be based outside of its corporate headquarters in Carlsbad, Calif.



The Challenger 604 offers a generous range of 4200 statute miles and the widest cabin in its class. This like-new Challenger can accommodate up to nine passengers in six oversized chairs and a three-place divan that easily converts into a bed. The cockpit is equipped with the latest Collins Pro Line Avionics suite, is RVSM certified, and includes TCAS II, TAWS, and SATCOM.

BizJet Selected as Preferred Vendor by JSSI

BizJet recently announced that it has reached maintenance agreement with JSSI. BizJet International is an authorized service center for JSSI events, performing hot sections, overhauls, airframe maintenance, paint, avionics, and interiors at its one-stop shop facility in Tulsa, Okla.



Based in Tulsa, Okla., and with more than 19 years of experience in aviation, BizJet offers a comprehensive array of services and capabilities to the business jet industry.

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Business Webistes

Continued from page 27

feeding provision in the contract so that you don't pay too much every time you want to make a change to the site. And make sure you are buying a suit of clothes you can grow into. Make provisions to add functions to the site and expand features as you see success.

So Who Is the Who?

So now we come back to the Who question, and you wonder who the Who is. The Who is you, your customers, the design firm, your employees, and anyone who can or will use your website, all meeting together in cyberspace to learn about your business.

Keep in mind that the Who will differ with every login. You aren't using your website to reach thou-

sands of people; you are using it to reach one person thousands of times. Each visitor will be an individual with a unique question, a unique computer, and a unique personality. Make sure that your site is universally accessible, has options for those with slower computers, isn't too graphics intensive, and is easy to navigate.

Unlike a brochure, a website is a living thing. It is never fin-

ished, and it is always growing. Make sure that you consider your website and how it can be used in every aspect of your marketing. Putting your brochures online for customers to download and print out is one way to maximize your brochure distribution. Posting press releases rather than only sending them to the press, tells a larger chunk of the world what you have been up to. Be creative in how you use your site. Remember, electrons are cheap and you can always change it later.

"The website must be an active part of their business and not exist in isolation," Woodward said. "People won't come because it is there. There has to be a reason. The specific tactics for getting people to the site will depend upon the business strategy."

For more on this subject, NATA will hold a two-hour seminar during its 2006 Annual Convention in Las Vegas, Nev., March 28-30, with Athenix Solutions and Sullivan Higdon and Sink Advertising, the designers of NATA's website. Visit www.nata.aero for more details as the date approaches.

Websites of Interest

Athenix Solutions
www.athenix.com
Sullivan Higdon and Sink
www.wehatesheep.com
National Air Transportation
Association www.nata.aero

In addition to being editor of Aviation Business Journal and manager of communications for NATA, Dan Kidder has designed hundreds of sites for political candidates and small businesses. He is also the architect and administrator of NATA's website, www.nata.aero.

NATA Member Benefits

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Since 1975, USAIG has provided workers comp coverage that has earned NATA members more than \$33 million in dividends. Phoenix Aviation Managers also offers members a premium discount program. Call Anne at 321/751-3197.

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for more information or call our supplier/partners listed above.

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For more information on NATA advertising opportunities, contact Cheryl Stratos or Victoria Geis at the NATA Advertising Sales Department, (703) 212-4967 or cstratos@ias-online.net.





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For more information on Air BP Ramp Security Training and other QC Training Seminars, contact Walter Chartrand at 281-386-8512.



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