

# Wings

CANADA'S NATIONAL AVIATION MAGAZINE

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a cost-effective solution



# McCarthy

DREW MCCARTHY is the editor of Wings.



**You're so vain  
You probably think  
this ad is about you.**

Back in the 1970s, when Carly Simon sang, "Then you flew your Learjet up to Nova Scotia to see the total eclipse of the sun," everyone wanted to know if the song was about Warren Beatty. What no one questioned was the idea that this kind of self-indulgence "is what flying a private jet is all about."

Almost 40 year later, the stereotypical image of private aircraft ownership has barely changed. The impact of that stereotype plays out in numerous negative ways, often in terms of unnecessary government regulation, fees, taxes and most recently, criticism over environmental impact. Setting the record straight has been an industry goal for decades.

At the beginning of May, Flexjet (By Bombardier), based in Richardson, TX, launched a multi-million-dollar, consumer-focused advertising campaign that does service to both them and the entire business aviation industry.

Tackling the stereotype head on, Flexjet is running print and online ads in publications such as Fortune, Fast Company, Departures, Worth, Harvard Business Review, Barron's, Forbes and the Wall Street Journal, presenting the private aircraft as a business tool.

Gone are the images of impeccable people, standing in front of beautiful aircraft, with exotic background locations. Instead, the campaign uses sophisticated graphical images coupled with some straight-talking text.

The ads focus on efficiency, saving time, work ethic, productivity, and middle-class values, all the while stressing the company's aviation credentials. The campaign, in the words of Flexjet's VP of marketing and administration, Sylvain Levesque, "speaks candidly about private jet travel and leverages Flexjet's unique aviation expertise with 'straight talk from plane people.'"

"Over the past 12 months," says Levesque, "we conducted a series of in-depth studies of our target audience and the research confirmed what we've known instinctively all along: for the majority of our customers, private jet travel isn't a glamorous perk, it's an essential tool. It's an investment in productivity and their most valuable asset: time."

In the past, companies and organizations have had their challenges presenting the business case to those outside the industry. This broader-based consumer approach helps address those challenges.

To be sure, Flexjet's goal is to increase its market share in the fractional, whole ownership and management segments, but it is also intent on growing the category. The positive message of the campaign has the potential to do so, and Flexjet has shown some very creative leadership in bringing this message to a wider audience. ✈



## WINGS MAGAZINE

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