



Flexjet to Launch European Charter Business

[ShowNews](#)

[John Morris](#)

Mon, 2016-05-23 01:11

U.S.-based Flexjet will launch into Europe as a private jet travel and charter operator later this year, the fractional jet ownership company announced at EBACE.

With so many of its clients flying to Europe and needing transportation there, Flexjet has given the go-ahead to set up an operation on this side of the Atlantic. It has signed a letter of intent to acquire an undisclosed company that already owns an Air Operator Certificate, and will open with an initial eight Nextant 400XTi aircraft, with two based in London, two in Paris, and the remaining four wherever needed.

Leading the European business will be Ray Jones, managing director, international, for Flexjet, who will be based in London. He is a 12-year veteran of the private aviation industry, and was previously SVP for sales at [Bombardier](#).

The European fleet will be dedicated to charter, primarily for Flexjet members, with excess capacity brokered out, says Jones. “A fair number already want to fly here, and we see quite a bit of opportunity,” he notes.

Beyond taking a “cautiously aggressive” approach, Flexjet has not yet determined just how it will grow in Europe. First and foremost, it aims to keep existing members in the Flexjet family; beyond that it will see what the market demands.

“We believe that a high-quality on-demand charter service will attract clients; that’s the answer for the future.”

Jones notes that successful charter operators in Europe take many forms, from high-end companies such as VistaJet to those using disruptive technologies and the Internet to attract business. “We can see the strengths in everybody’s business; there’s something in everything,” he says, and Flexjet will be watching carefully as it crafts long-term strategies in what Jones admits “is a difficult market.”

Jones says Flexjet selected the Nextant 400XTi as it provides point-to-point range across Europe necessary to join the most-traveled city pairs, and has “exceptionally low operating costs” and “arguably the most comfortable cabin in the light jet market.” With its 2,003-nm range, the 400XTi can make trips from London to Moscow, Moscow to Nice, and Nice to London again.

Flexjet last year celebrated its 20th anniversary as a fractional ownership jet company, and planned to have 180 shared aircraft in its North American fleet by the end of 2016. It was owned by Bombardier with an all-Bombardier fleet until 2013, when it was acquired by Directional Aviation Capital, which also owns Flight Options and Nextant Aerospace, manufacturer of the Nextant 400 XTi.

Source URL: <http://aviationweek.com/ebace-2016/flexjet-launch-european-charter-business>