

# EMPIRE AVIATION GROUP

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CORPORATE BROCHURE





# Flying nigh

Steve Hartley, executive director of private aviation specialist Empire Aviation Group, talks to Jayne Alverca about the company's approach to maximizing asset value and the flight experience in the Middle East and beyond



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ased in Dubai, Empire Aviation Group stands apart as the operator and manager of the Middle East's largest fleet of corporate and private jets. As well as aircraft sales, the company provides aircraft charter and management services with a focus on high quality luxury and corporate travel throughout the Middle East and the rest of the world.

Executive director Steve Hartley is very clear about the company's mission. "The purchase of an aircraft, whether for private or corporate purposes, represents a very significant investment. Our entire operation is geared towards managing and maximizing the value of that asset on behalf of our clients in the most professional and efficient way possible," he states.

Managing the aircraft asset properly ensures that its value is protected, leveraged and maintained during the years of ownership. "Historically, aircraft have either maintained their original purchase price or in some cases even appreciated in value but without the effective management we provide, this would not be the case. We can also help customers to charter their aircraft and so offset some of the costs of ownership," he explains.



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RUAG Business Aviation is official OEM Partner and Authorized Service Center for Bombardier, Cessna, Dassault, Embraer, Hawker Beechcraft, Piaggio and Pilatus.

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## RUAG Aviation

RUAG Aviation's headquarters are located in Switzerland; it operates with 2,000 dedicated employees from 14 facilities in Switzerland, Germany and the USA. RUAG Aviation is one of the five divisions of the RUAG Technology Group. It is a centre of excellence for business jets and military aircraft focusing on life cycle support. Its strategic focus on selected aircraft, products and markets produces economies of scale (affordability) and its investment policy in innovative technologies assures ever increasing quality (availability and reliability) for customers. RUAG Business Aviation, the centre of excellence for business customers, provides life cycle support including pre-purchase consulting, maintenance, repair & overhaul (MRO), cockpit upgrades, cabin refurbishment and redesign,

customized paintwork as well as remarketing services of complete aircraft and components. RUAG Business Aviation distinguishes itself through a zero-error culture and customer orientation. The results are fast turnaround times, transparent project management, first time right reliability, and satisfied customers. RUAG Business Aviation's value proposition and reputation for quality convinced Empire Aviation Group to send its Embraer Legacy and Bombardier Challenger jets for heavy maintenance work to RUAG's centre of excellence at the Munich Executive Airport in Germany. We wish to express our sincerest thanks to the management of EAG for the trust shown to RUAG.

**RUAG Aviation—committed to excellence.**

For this reason, he is clear that despite Empire Aviation's wealth of experience, owning as opposed to operating and managing a fleet could never be an option. "If we had our own aircraft we would inevitably be competing with our customers as charter requests would naturally be directed to our own aircraft first," he adds.

"For similar reasons we do not offer a direct maintenance service, although we do have an extremely skilled division of maintenance engineers who measure cost against quality control and oversee all maintenance contracts. If we were to offer that service directly, customers could never be certain that they were getting value for money whereas with our third party arrangement, they know we will search out the best supplier. As it stands we can use our expertise to save our customers a great deal of money. For example, Jet Aviation is a preferred supplier, but for the benefit of owners, we also work with a number of other maintenance

providers and we regularly put maintenance contracts out to tender."

Hartley sees the company's reputation for fairness and sound business ethics as the cornerstone of its success. "Something that sets us apart in this business is that we operate a completely transparent cost structure. Of course, we exist to make a profit, but it has to be a fair profit and we are very happy for all our customers to have access to this information. Transparency is critical to us. Our aim is to create a win-win situation for everyone, but it is imperative that our customers understand we will always treat them fairly."

All aircraft meet the extensive safety, training, and inspection requirements required by the General Civil Aviation Authority of the United Arab Emirates, but this is merely a starting point. The Empire Aviation business model stresses providing



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## Abu Dhabi Aviation

Abu Dhabi Aviation (ADA) provides aviation offshore oil support services for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi's oil production companies, VVIP passenger transportation services, search & rescue for the United Arab Emirates (UAE), crop spraying, aerial construction, seismic support and fire fighting in Europe.

ADA is the largest commercial helicopter operator in the Middle East and currently owns 54 and operates and maintains a fleet of 58 helicopters comprising AgustaWestland AW139, Bell 412, Bell 212 and Bell 206 models. The company also operates six Bombardier DASH 8 series turboprop transport aircraft. ADA employs a staff of over 800, including over 150 pilots and 150 engineers for operations. ADA continues to expand its reputation as a specialist aircraft maintenance company servicing

both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft—both in-house and as a significant provider of third party maintenance services. The company has fixed and rotary wing contracts for heavy maintenance and the modification of some of regions major petroleum companies aircraft fleets, as well as a number of maintenance support contracts with the UAE Armed Forces.

As well as its important maintenance work, ADA continues to provide a number of humanitarian and support services on a year-round basis. These include aerial application missions, aid relief support in disaster areas and medical evacuation when required.

ADA also supports on and offshore oil production and exploration in Ethiopia, India, Pakistan and Yemen.

customers with an unsurpassed travel experience, whether it be in terms of security, comfort, flight personnel or catering.

Pilots and crew undergo a rigorous recruitment process—all training is directly supervised by Empire Aviation—and no detail is spared in the search for an incomparable service proposition. For example, an agreement has just been signed to become the first operator in the Middle East of the Vigiplane security system—a completely new concept in aircraft security. The system comprises five day and night cameras in a special composite sealed container which provides high quality pictures and infrared projectors. It is unique, because it is completely independent from the aircraft's own systems and thus requires no special aircraft certification.

Another agreement that breaks new ground has been reached with global catering services provider Private Flight Global to restructure the catering management operations for the entire fleet.

A specially customized version of Private Flight's online system enables flight personnel to offer the highest level of personalized service with the flexibility to create tailored menus, track customer preferences and ensure a faster response to VIP requests. As well as enhancing the customer experience, the partnership will give Empire Aviation better oversight and control of the catering function, greater cost efficiency and more streamlined administration.

For customers whose requirements centre predominantly on pleasure, the luxury travel division of the company takes the service proposition even further. Empire Aviation has now joined forces with Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces, one of Asia's most exclusive luxury hotel groups, to create a special portfolio of travel packages, all of which include a private jet.

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So far, the business model has worked extremely well in Dubai. Hartley points out that since its inception, the company has typically grown its revenues by a heady 100 per cent per annum. “We are very proud of our achievements to date. Even last year which was one of the worst in aviation history, we still managed to increase turnover by 25 per cent,” he adds.

Empire Aviation is now in readiness to replicate its model further afield. “We are already working with Indian customers operating out of Dubai, so it is a logical extension of those relationships to establish a direct presence in India. In August 2011 we will open our first branch in Mumbai. There is tremendous growth potential in India and Asia generally, but no professional management companies,” he says. Empire Aviation is also considering other

geographical options in the Far East but he is reluctant to be drawn on details, as these plans are still at an early stage.

While Hartley sees the composition of the fleet evolving in line with the growing acceptance of aircraft ownership as a business tool, he is adamant that the basic formula with its focus on transparent financial procedures will not change. “There is an old adage that stresses: stick to what you know you do well. We want to preserve all the benefits to customers that we can offer as a wholly independent management company with no possible conflicts of interest. Our model is well received and respected and we have nothing to gain from competing with our customers.” [www.empire.aero](http://www.empire.aero) ■



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