

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

VistaJet valuation tops \$2.5B as private aviation soars

August 28, 2017



VistaJet is helping bolster the lucrative Chinese traveler demographic with a new digital platform aimed at them. Image credit: VistaJet

By STAFF REPORTS

Private aviator VistaJet has received a \$150 million cash investment from Rhone Capital, helping to raise the company's equity.

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On a post-money basis, VistaJet is now valued at more than \$2.5 billion. VistaJet is among the private aviation firms that has seen solid growth, with its EBITDA for the first half of the year climbing 32 percent over 2016's figures.

Climbing business

In the second quarter of 2017, VistaJet's program membership made up 63 percent of its total revenue, up from 55 percent in the first quarter. The same quarter, its subscription program hours sales grew by 51 percent over the prior year.

Along with growing, VistaJet is retaining customers, with 91 percent remaining clients in the first half of the year.

The company attributes its growth partly to its focus on technology. Earlier this year, it launched VistaJet Direct on its Web site and mobile application to sell one-way empty leg flights to its members.



Inside a VistaJet plane. Image credit: VistaJet

VistaJet also looked to usher in bookings from China's digitally savvy consumers through a conversational commerce endeavor with a potential to tap a large audience.

WeChat, Chinese consumers' predominant platform in communicating with brands and retailers, will house VistaJet's newest sales platform. The aviation firm is hoping to increase bookings with convenience by tapping into an already established user behavior ([see story](#)).

"Thanks to the hard work we have done over the past decade, we believe that VistaJet delivers the best service levels in the sector and in the most efficient manner," said Thomas Flohr, founder and chairman of VistaJet. "The integrated technology platform we have built fueled by data, algorithms and digital channels is, we believe, unique in the industry."

VistaJet, which has a fleet of 70 aircraft, operates out of its headquarters in Malta, with sales offices in affluent hubs such as New York, London, Dubai, Los Angeles, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Beijing.

With its latest investment, announced on Aug. 22, Rhone Capital's total stake in VistaJet is now at \$200 million.

While an increasingly crowded space, services that offer private flying without ownership are taking off.

In 2016, Wheels Up grew its membership by 95 percent, per Forbes, while NetJets saw its pre-tax earnings grow 19 percent for the same year.

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