

Q&A

## Flexjet exec: Luxury brands are defined by the customer experience

March 18, 2013



---

By TRICIA CARR

Flexjet is shifting its business model to tailor each customer journey and has added a new position to the company's roster to address the need for personalization.



Luxury marketers are no longer singularly defined by the products or services they offer, but high-net-worth consumers are also seeking brands that can provide them with a tailored customer experience. Flexjet's owner experience officer was appointed to drive growth and business performance by developing personalized, end-to-end experiences for its owners, according to the private aviation company.

"When working with ultra-high net worth individuals, it is important to remember that, for the vast majority of this audience, the customer experience is identified as the defining quality of a high-end product," said Lori Carr, owner experience officer at **Flexjet**, Dallas, TX.

"With this in mind, delivering a brand promise that is anchored by exceptional service experiences allows you to build that important emotional connection with customers to enhance their overall experience," she said.

Ms. Carr has worked in client experience for 26 years. She previously served as president

of her consulting firm, Lori Carr & Associates.

In this Q&A, Ms. Carr discusses guidelines for the new affluent customer experience and Flexjet's updated business model. Here is the dialogue:

Why was this position created at this time?

Flexjet was simply ready to further elevate our customer experience. We are passionate about providing the ultimate owner experience and want to continue to lead the way for the private jet travel industry.

The importance of service continues to grow among our core audience and this is the aspect of our business that we ultimately want to be recognized for.

What trends in the luxury transportation industry support your appointment?

While there will always be a need for private aviation, in a recovering economy that need alone is no longer enough.

Customers today are looking for intangible qualities, such as sublime customer service and a unique and rewarding experience, both in-flight and on the ground.

Flexjet is dedicated to providing a flawless travel experience that is nothing short of extraordinary each and every time its owners fly, because we know at the end of the day, it is the small touches travelers truly remember.

What advice do you have for luxury marketers to boost the customer experience?

When working with ultra-high-net-worth individuals, it is important to remember that, for the vast majority of this audience, the customer experience is identified as the defining quality of a high-end product.

With this in mind, delivering a brand promise that is anchored by exceptional service experiences allows you to build that important emotional connection with customers to enhance their overall experience.

Create strong personal relationships with customers to better understand their unique needs and preferences.

Inspire your team to become passionate about creating memorable moments, whether it is a surprise birthday cake in their favorite flavor or a special bottle of Champagne to celebrate an anniversary.

Using personalized information, you can develop a level of customer intimacy that enables you to provide service that has a high-perceived value because of its distinctive and personalized nature.

Equally important is the disruption of chronic service issues that may exist throughout the service chain and to fix them at the root cause. Nothing is more frustrating to customers than an unfulfilled expectation or an inefficient service experience.

Ultimately, each client is unique and deserves that extra, customized experience that they

simply cannot find elsewhere.

What outside factors are shaping the way that Flexjet approaches the customer experience?

Our owners are incredibly busy individuals and it is our responsibility to ensure that time spent with us is time well spent. That is why we approach every owner interaction with a servant's heart and a passion for providing delight via exceptional travel experiences.

We recognize that the ultra-high-net-worth audience is made up of some of the most discerning people in the world and the economic conditions of the past few years have only made them more diligent about their purchase decisions.

As a result, their expectations continue to evolve. We are driven to continually re-imagine our service approach and provide experiences that are unparalleled in the industry.

We benchmark ourselves relative to other leading companies who are known for viewing their businesses through a service-oriented lens, regardless of industry.

Learning from the approaches of these companies helps us to create additional worth within our program and further distinguishes us from competitors.

Why is personalization a key part of Flexjet's business model?

Flexjet's exceptional personal service is highly regarded as the standard by which others in the private jet industry are measured, which is what first attracted me to the position.

Traveling on a private jet is an experience like none other and at Flexjet that experience begins before the wheels ever leave the ground.

Traditionally, private jet companies have account managers that respond to customer requests for flights and proceed to the next request without further engagement. Flexjet decided this industry standard was not in the best interest of its owners, so a couple of years ago they made a significant investment to create the innovative customer account management program.

Under this new system, Flexjet consolidated all of its client interaction departments, so customers now talk to a single person throughout their trip-planning process.

After each trip, the CAM's [customer account manager's] job is to follow-up to ensure the entire voyage was flawless and executed on every single level.

Simply put, personalization is at the heart of everything we do at Flexjet.

What is your outlook on the private aviation industry for 2013?

In 2013 we're anticipating modest growth without any further decline in the private aviation industry.

That said, 2013 is going to be a very exciting year for Flexjet as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Learjet and the 10th year of flight with the Challenger 300 aircraft.

---

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.