



HOW THIS ENTREPRENEUR BUILT A \$16,000-AN-HOUR PRIVATE JET BUSINESS

News / Business aviation, Personalities



Thomas Flohr spends about 800 hours in the air each year. It's not unusual for him to start the week in Los Angeles, meet with clients in New York, pop over to Dubai and end the week in Hong Kong.

In his mind, distance is irrelevant; time is the ultimate luxury. So he built VistaJet a global private jet luxury brand, on this single premise. His target demographic? Ultra-wealthy executives and entrepreneurs like him.

For \$11,000 to \$16,000 an hour – yes, you read that right – VistaJet will fly you almost anywhere in the world with just 24 hours' notice. The onboard service is bespoke; the company launched an app this month that allows clients to pre-select anything from entertainment to catering. This means fliers can enjoy sashimi from Nobu while watching Spotlight and have a private car or helicopter meet them when they land.

Crazy as it sounds, the concept appears to be working. Founded in Europe in 2004, VistaJet claims to be the fastest-growing private jet company, boasting 20 percent year-over-year revenue growth. Flohr chalks this up to the company's ability to provide a consistent, high-quality experience across the globe.

"If wealthy people have one thing in common, it's that they're brand-affiliated," says Flohr, who

resides in a massive James Bond-inspired home in his native Switzerland. “They just want to have a guaranteed experience. Whether you stay at The Peninsula Hotel or you buy an Hermès handbag, you know for sure you’ll get a satisfying experience.”

Unlike private aviation companies that offer fractional ownership, where each aircraft is owned or leased by multiple people, Flohr owns 100 percent of his company and its fleet of 60 silver-and-red jets. Customers buy a certain number of hours per year and are able to fly at a set hourly rate. VistaJet will fly anywhere with an adequate runway, making it an attractive option for companies which have traditionally relied on small-scale charter services to shuffle employees from locale to locale, says Flohr.

“These hundreds of small mom-and-pop shops who operate airplanes and occasionally charter them out are not an alternative to a globally trusted brand,” he says. “If you’re a CEO of a company, would you send your executives on a random airplane from Johannesburg to Nairobi? Hopefully the answer is no.”

The company has logged 65,000 flights and carried 190,000 passengers to date.



Customers can pre-select the catering and entertainment using the VistaJet app before they even step on the plane.

Courtesy VistaJet

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