

Press release



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Air charter brokers and operators seek closer understanding

Both air charter brokers and aircraft operators would benefit from a greater understanding of each other's roles, delegates to the BACA forum at the BAE (British Aviation Europe) 2013 conference were told.

Two of the broker panellists, Mark Green, Director at Oxygen Aviation and Neil Harvey, Director –Executive Aviation at Hunt & Palmer, have backgrounds in the operator business, but many brokers do not.

“We need brokers and operators to work closely together and I think this is improving, there is no longer a ‘them and us’ mentality,” Mr Green said. “But the best brokers are those who really understand the challenges the operators face so they can offer better services to their customers.”

The third panelist Glen Heavens, Managing Director of operator Synergy Aviation, agreed that working closely with brokers is essential. He explained that Synergy regularly hosts brokers at its offices for a day to better understand the way an operations team works. “This not only spreads knowledge but also trust,” he added.

Tony Coe, Chairman of BACA (Baltic Air Charter Association), who chaired the panel, said the industry faces new regulations and challenges all the time, so on-going training and education is vital. “And this raises the question of whether customers – and operators – would welcome an official accreditation.”

The panellists agreed that this would provide a good benchmark, especially for new brokers who have not yet developed the network of contacts and built up the personal trust on which much of the industry has always worked.

Mr Harvey said: "An accreditation scheme would be very valuable and it is good that BACA is looking into this. It would help both operators and customers to know that they are dealing with a bona fide charter broker. This could also help bring new clients into the industry."

Other topics included the use of social media and online booking and whether brokers would go the way of the high street travel agents. The general agreement was that maybe simple one leg journeys could be booked online, but anything else required the skill of a broker to ensure all the pieces of the journey came together at the right time in the right place.

Everyone also agreed that it was important to sell the actual concept of private air charter to companies and individuals. As Mr Coe said: "It is not a luxury for many corporations when they look at the time they save, the working environment the flight provides and the hassle-free convenience of going through Business Airport FBO's. Door to door times can sometimes be halved using business aircraft."

BAE 2013 was held at Biggin Hill Airport on Sept 11- 12.

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