



JETEX

# EASY MILES

## SMOOTHING OUT THE COMPLEXITIES IN PRIVATE AVIATION

**WHAT MAKES A PLEASANT JOURNEY?** Behind every flawless private flight is a switched-on support team to handle every potentially disruptive aspect of a flight promptly — from permit applications to landing fees and ground arrangements. *Jetgala* speaks to Adel Mardini, president and CEO of Dubai-based Jetex, about the challenges and opportunities of reaching a global market as a provider of flight support services for business travellers and private charter operators.

**Q: Jetex has grown exponentially, especially since 2005. What are the top three factors you attribute to this growth over the past decade?**

The core factor has been our staff experience; secondly, customer satisfaction; and thirdly, our brand, which grows from strength to strength.

**Q: What are the countries in which Jetex would like to see greater market penetration in 2013 and why?**

Most definitely the Far East region, with special focus on China. I believe that having more access to China and the Far East market would mean giving a better opportunity to investors.

ABOVE  
In 2009, Jetex's first FBO  
opened at Le Bourget  
Airport in Paris



**Q: In what ways has the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA) helped to improve the private aviation industry in the Middle East? As a board member of the association, what else do you think has room for improvement?**

MEBAA was the entity that started communication between the operators and the authorities. It helped develop the regulations in the area to meet international standards. It would be great if it could promote the region in such a way as to open up business opportunities in South America and China.

**Q: What is the main profile of Jetex's clients?**

Our clients are from various parts of the world — mainly from Europe, the US and China — who are corporate and management-level business travellers.

**Q: How important are large-scale events like the Olympics to Jetex's initiatives? What large-scale events will you be participating in in 2013?**

Undoubtedly, they are highly important and we notice a significant rise in aviation operations during large-scale events of global significance. During the recent UEFA [Union of European Football Associations] cup, we noticed increased air traffic to Ukraine and Poland. We expect the same for all the shows in 2013, such as the Dubai World Cup, the Ice Hockey World Championships, the Monaco Yacht Show, Paris Fashion Week and many other global events.

**Q: How do Asian, Middle Eastern and Western clients differ in their private aviation needs and how do you tailor your services to different demands?**

They definitely differ in their requirements. For example, clients from the Far East are very demanding and know what they want; hence, they question a lot of choices. Middle Eastern clients may demand customisation to their regional requirements. Our Western clients have various private aviation needs, which we meet, and they consider our services of high standard. We provide bespoke services and our dedicated, locally based staff can accommodate culture-specific requirements.

**Q: What are the top two challenges currently faced by the Middle Eastern private aviation industry? How is Jetex coping with these challenges?**

The first and biggest challenge is the development of regulations. There is a limitation to handlers on the ground. Some countries in the Middle East, for instance, have only one handler on the ground. Due to monopoly, we don't have a choice in coping with this other than by using these handlers. Secondly, the Middle East cannot be classified as an open sky; therefore we face problems with private flights. The solution here would be to convince them [the authorities] that once we have open skies, traffic in the Middle East would increase similarly to that of Europe. >>

“IT WOULD BE GREAT TO PROMOTE THE MIDDLE EAST IN SUCH A WAY AS TO OPEN UP BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA AND CHINA”

ABOVE  
Jetex's FBO features two VIP lounges and provides private catering services

“I BELIEVE THAT HAVING MORE ACCESS TO CHINA AND THE FAR EAST MARKET WOULD MEAN GIVING A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTORS”

**Q: How have flight support services from the Middle East and Africa changed over the last decade? How does Jetex position itself in this changing landscape?**

Flight support services have been on a considerable increase, which leads to burgeoning service levels. There is significant competition in the region now, and this benefits the client.

**Q: Tell us more about the new VAT exemption programme by Jetex. Why did Jetex decide to launch this programme and how has response been so far?**

We introduced the VAT exemption programme a few months back based solely on client demand. The result has been an increase in fuel sales in the eight countries that are part of the VAT exemption programme. We have received a lot of positive feedback and we can only top that off with a 20 per cent increase in fuel sales in the European Union itself.

**Q: You once spoke about the global push to reduce greenhouse emissions. How is Jetex contributing to this movement?**

We have started an internal ‘Go Green’ campaign and once this is in order, we plan to help out internally, but also aid companies who support the reduction of greenhouse gases. We have made some environmentally friendly changes in the office. Our operations team has a new ‘paperless’ way of working, whereas up ‘til a few months ago we worked on both paper and screen. This has made a significant change to the amount of paper used in our headquarters. We also plan on eradicating internal paper documents and working completely on an internal computerised system, where possible. We are also looking into establishing a carbon offset programme.

**Q: You are planning to expand into Asia. What are your top three target markets in the continent, and why?**

Our top three markets are China, the Philippines and Macau. We are looking to expand our FBO network in Manila and Macau, as well as in one of the major entry airports in Great China. The need for high-quality services in China is increasing, yet there is no international brand on the ground. Macau and the Philippines, in particular Manila, are renowned for leisure, recreation and nightlife, and those are where our expansion target is directed. 



## UP CLOSE

**What is your pet peeve about flying/travel?**

Most definitely waiting at the airport.

**Name someone you admire as a hero.**

Nelson Mandela is someone I look up to and I had the personal pleasure of meeting him in 2002 whilst operating one of his flights. We had a good chat.

**What surprises people most about you?**

I am full of interesting stories. For example, my first job was as a bus driver.

**How did you earn your first dirham/dollar?**

As a bus driver, age 19.

**What is your favourite place in the world?**

I have a soft spot for Geneva.

**What do you love most about flying?**

The freedom.

**What dream are you aiming for now?**

I want the world to live in peace, at least in our area.

**Words to live by — what are yours?**

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.

President and CEO of Jetex Adel Mardini is one of the founding members of the Middle East Business Aviation Association