

Don Davis Aviation improves pilot and passenger experience with inflight connectivity

CHALLENGE

Don Davis Aviation, founded in 1957, provides a wide range of aviation services from its headquarters in Henderson, Kentucky. From FBO to charter services to flight training to aircraft maintenance, management and sales, the family-owned organization continues to fulfill Don Davis's vision from 60 years ago: give wings to those who dream of flying.

These days, executing on that vision means keeping up with the latest in onboard offerings and technology. In 2016, Don Davis Aviation added a new Phenom 300 to its fleet, which came off the line with a Gogo ATG 5000 installed. They knew that inflight connectivity would add significant value to both pilots and passengers.

SOLUTION

While the benefits of inflight connectivity to passengers may be obvious, Becker and his fellow pilots quickly discovered the value of inflight Wi-Fi to the work that they do. They use it to communicate with passengers, talk to dispatch, make changes to itineraries and check the weather in real time. Becker recounts his surprise when he looked at his phone mid-flight and a passenger had texted him saying, "It's a little cool back here."

Wi-Fi also makes a difference during inclement weather situations.

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– Jon Becker, chief pilot and director of operations at Don Davis Aviation

arrangements until we were on the ground,” Becker explains. “With Wi-Fi, we’re in constant communication with dispatch. We’re calling them using our own smartphones, they’re texting us, passengers are emailing dispatch – it’s seamless.”

On a recent flight to Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, Becker shares that he and his crew had to make a decision to divert due to weather. “We had dispatch on the line through the whole process – we shared with them what we were thinking and they were able to provide input. Once we decided to divert to Morristown (NJ), dispatch had cars, drivers, and hotel reservations for everyone, passengers and crew. It was fantastic.”

CONCLUSION

Becker admits that before activating the Gogo ATG 5000 system, he was concerned about uptime and unconvinced that inflight connectivity would work as well as on-the-ground Wi-Fi. After almost a year, however, those worries are gone. “I wasn’t sure how often it would work, or more importantly, how often it wouldn’t work,” Becker says. “But we’ve never had an issue – it has never not worked.”

Is Wi-Fi worth it for smaller aviation organizations and charter services? According to Becker, “Absolutely. Once you have it, as a passenger or a pilot, you’ll wonder how you ever lived without it.”

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KEY BENEFITS

- Greater efficiency and time savings for passengers and crew during inclement weather or itinerary changes
- Improved communication between the cockpit, passengers, and dispatch
- Increased charter revenue that outpaces monthly Wi-Fi service costs for positive ROI
- Provides a competitive advantage when compared to aircraft without Wi-Fi
- Fast, reliable service that meets (or exceeds) crew and customers’ expectations for high-speed, inflight Wi-Fi