



Sol Aviation set for global success

Sol Aviation Services Limited



Sol Aviation Services Limited today stands at the heart of the regional air travel industry, pumping a reliable supply of quality fuel and maintaining viability for major regional and international carriers flying a network of vital air travel routes.

The rise of Sol Aviation from relative obscurity to becoming, in just over three years, a recognisable face in international aviation and a leader in the regional industry has been nothing short of astounding; but also timely as the regional industry faced challenging times that required strong and focused leadership in aviation.

Since acquiring the interest of Shell Aviation's Caribbean operations, Sol has emerged as a strong pillar for the industry by focusing on improving its core strengths in key areas such as: safety, dependability, product quality, service delivery, storage capacity, and human resource management.

The result has been that at a time when most needed, Sol has been there helping to ensure continuity of critical regional and international air travel, which for tourism and business is central to the economic survival of the Caribbean region and its people. In challenging and competitive economic times, Sol Aviation's efforts to maintain a competitive cost structure have also redounded to the benefit of customers and the aviation industry in general. The company is well aware of the contribution to the regional economy of airlift capacity from tourism markets and the need to help protect the viability of airlines.

A major threat to sustainability facing the Caribbean aviation industry in recent years however, has been the reduction in



regional refinery capacity. The region in a few short years has been transformed from a net exporter of jet fuel into a net importer, as several regional refineries closed. This left only Trinidad's Petrotrin refinery to service regional needs, and posed a clear supply challenge for Sol Aviation.

Facing a reliance almost exclusively on fuel from extra-regional sources, Sol rose to the challenge through its own timely investment in strategic storage facilities, designed to adjust its supply and demand profile and create longer lead times on aviation fuel delivery. This process required storage upgrades in a number of key markets including the completion by November 2012, of a 34 000 barrel jet fuel tank in St. Maarten.

The results have been pleasing to both Sol and its customers. As a regional industry

leader, Sol Aviation is itself fuelled by key objectives, most notable being ensuring reliability of supply and maintenance of high levels of customer satisfaction. In addition to increasing main storage capacity such as at St. Maarten, Sol initiatives have also included additional transshipment storage as was the case in Antigua. Ensuring less reliance on any single supplier, aligning its jet fuel specification with accessible resource markets, and actively participating in airport infrastructural upgrades have all also contributed to securing supply.

Additionally, Sol Aviation over the past three years has improved its operations in areas including human resource deployment and customer service at the airports where the company operates. The company instituted a centralised approach to the management of its customer relationships and this has paid



dividends. Sol Aviation's entire Caribbean operation is managed out of Barbados giving customers a focal point of contact as opposed to having customers deal with multiple airport contacts throughout the region.

Relationship management extends beyond Caribbean shores, and over the years Sol Aviation has attended and delivered presentations to annual International Air Transport Association (IATA) conferences. The international airline community has been kept abreast of the company's development, and many can now attest to the fact that Sol has delivered on its promise by successfully implementing and investing in planned strategies for enhanced service delivery.

Technological improvements affecting areas such as customer invoicing and sales activity, and a policy of operating on a daily extended hour basis to meet customer needs have all contributed to enhancing service levels. This focus on improving customer service and relations is a trend that will continue in the near term as the company invests even more over the next three years in staff training.

Along with other members of The Sol Group, Sol Aviation's journey to where no regional petroleum company has gone before has only just begun. For Sol Aviation in particular, there will be further strategic expansion in the short term probably within the next five years, as the company continues on its the way to becoming

a global presence. Sol Aviation has fully embraced the international vision of growth for The Sol Group and is driven by the greatest tenacity to become a global player.

Aviation is after all, a global business, and Sol Aviation sees a role for itself within the Group as pioneers in terms of pushing the Sol brand outside of the region. The company has quickly demonstrated its ability to improve and add value to investment opportunities and this philosophy will continue to fuel its vision for expansion which is driven as much by customer needs as by the globally competitive nature of business. Satisfied customers have already communicated their desire to work with Sol Aviation at international airports in other jurisdictions and the company, as usual, is keen to meet and exceed customer expectations.

Far from resting on its current accomplishments, Sol Aviation is focused on building and enhancing a reputation within the airline industry that requires focused development in a number of areas paramount among which is safety. With this in mind, Sol Aviation holds memberships in IATA and the Joint Inspection Group (JIG), and maintains a Technical Services Agreement with Shell.

This network facilitates an important sharing of information allowing Sol officials to benefit from a number of conferences on safety and to receive timely updates in relation to procedural and equipment developments in the aviation

industry. Sol Aviation is also subject to frequent safety audits and inspections, administered both internally, and externally through Shell, and major airlines which the company serves.

Sol's international profile is also of tremendous benefit to the Caribbean region and every success for the company can be seen as a success for this region. Already the company is well recognised by nearly every global carrier flying in the region, while maintaining strategic alliances and partnerships with key industry players, and membership of major international fuel related bodies.

Beyond the next horizon, a challenging and exciting future beckons and based on its performance thus far, Sol Aviation and its dedicated staff are well prepared for global success. ✈



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