

PROFESSIONAL PILOT



SEPTEMBER 2023



(Front) AXIS Aviation Accountable Mgr & Director, Switzerland Kerstin Mumenthaler and Exec Chairman Niall Olver with (back, L-R) Lead Cabin Management Arianna Carcano, Business Management and Administration Florentina Dina, and Captains Leonardo Sartori and Daniel Saglini with a Dassault Falcon 2000S at ZRH (Zürich, Switzerland).

OPERATOR PROFILE

AXIS Aviation

Swiss aircraft management and charter provider serves customers worldwide with fleet of Bombardier, Dassault, Gulfstream, and Pilatus aircraft.



(Front) AXIS Aviation Exec Chairman Niall Olver and Accountable Mgr & Director, Switzerland Kerstin Mumenthaler. (Rear L-R) Captains Leonardo Sartori and Daniel Saglini, Business Management and Administration Florentina Dina. Lead Cabin Management Arianna Carcano is on the steps of the company's Falcon 2000S.

By Rafael Henríquez Managing Editor

Headquartered in Switzerland, AXIS Aviation facilitates business aircraft ownership and management through a proprietary data platform that keeps users informed, enabling them to decide which aircraft type better suits their travel needs. In addition, all aircraft data is available in real time for aircraft owners, managers, and flight-crew members through the AXIS Aviation app, including flight plans, scheduling, costs, maintenance intervals, charter proposals, and aircraft availability.

With these personalized services, the company assists aircraft owners

and managers in getting the most out of their aircraft investment, with attention to detail and guidance in all matters around the aircraft and its life cycle.

AXIS Aviation is part of the AXIS Group, a holding company that also includes AXIS Flight Simulation, which develops and manufactures Level D simulators for business jets and regional airliners.

Foundation

AXIS Executive Chairman Niall Olver was the founding CEO of ExecJet Aviation Group, which was sold to charter provider Luxaviation in 2015. Meanwhile, Cédric Gitchenko, now director of AXIS, founded

Boutique Aviation in Switzerland. "We started Boutique about 2 years ago," relates Gitchenko. "There was a big merger between Luxaviation and Jet Aviation. But some clients who were previously with Jet Aviation didn't want to go back, so we thought we could offer them a different option. That's why we founded Boutique Aviation."

After being out of the industry for a few years, Olver returned to the scene and founded the holding company that eventually acquired Boutique in April 2023, renaming it AXIS Aviation. In addition to its headquarters in Switzerland, AXIS Aviation has bases in Austria and Dubai. "We do aircraft management and operations in all 3 subsidiaries," explains Olver.



Executive Chairman Niall Olver led many successful aircraft management and charter companies before co-founding AXIS Aviation.



(Above) First Officer Peter Recrosio (L) and Business Development Director Cédric Gitchenko with the company's Gulfstream G650 at IAD (Dulles, Washington DC). Pictured at left are both pilots in the G650 cockpit.



Photos by José Vázquez

In order to differentiate itself in the market, the AXIS Group is developing a software platform on which the 3 subsidiaries will operate. "We want to stand out by virtue of doing more of an asset management or family-office type of approach toward aircraft management," Olver adds. "We'll be deploying this software over this year, and our 3 subsidiaries will be included."

With this software, AXIS Aviation aims to make aircraft management more efficient through automation, so the crew can be a lot more empowered in terms of what they do, reducing the typical errors found in regular bizjet operations that may result from manual processes.

Flight operations

All 3 AXIS Aviation bases do aircraft management. In addition, the company has charter certificates for its Switzerland and Austria operations.

"We have some 10 aircraft in Switzerland," says Olver. "We started our operation in Austria a few months ago. We already have 2 aircraft there, but we have more coming soon. And we just formed the company in Dubai, so we're in the

process of adding aircraft to that operation, too." The goal is to have 20 aircraft by the end of the year, focusing on large-cabin business jets.

At the moment, the AXIS fleet includes Bombardier Global 7500/XRS and Challenger 601, Dassault Falcon 2000S, Gulfstream G650/G550/G450, and Cessna Citation CJ1 jets, plus Pilatus PC-12 NG turboprops. "In essence, we manage planes for private owners. Some of them are corporate flight departments," notes



AXIS Flight Simulation recently took an order from Aviation Academy Austria for mainland Europe's first Level D Bombardier Challenger 350 simulator. Pictured are (L-R) AAA Joint CEO Michael Holy, AAA Joint CEO Claus Rhombert, and AXIS Flight Simulation's Niall Olver.

Photos courtesy Axis Aviation



Captains Leonardo Sartori (L) and Daniel Saglin in the Dassault Falcon 2000S cabin.



(L-R) Accountable Mgr Business Management and Administration Florentina Dina, Lead Cabin Management Arianna Carcano, and Accountable Mgr & Director, Switzerland Kerstin Mumenthaler.

Olver. “We offer the classic aircraft management model, where we provide the flight crew. And if they want to put their aircraft on our charter certificate, we can manage that, too.”

The company also has aircraft based at popular destinations, including the US and Bahamas. The fleet operates worldwide and logs more than 3800 flight hours per year.

Aircraft maintenance

To guarantee its aircraft are in top condition and ready to fly, AXIS Aviation uses the continued airworthiness maintenance organization, through which it does maintenance management and planning, operated from the company’s Austria and Switzerland bases. “We manage maintenance, and our partner companies execute it,” explains Olver.

Gitchenko adds, “Since we operate newer aircraft, we work closely with the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), because the planes are under

warranty. We still take care of quotes for maintenance work, but Bombardier, Dassault, Gulfstream, and Pilatus take care of our planes through their respective service centers.”

AXIS Aviation has dedicated EASA B1 and B2 licensed mechanics who oversee each aircraft and coordinate directly all maintenance work with the OEM, from annual inspections to scheduled and non-scheduled maintenance. The in-house technicians know the history of the plane and are also present when the aircraft go to the manufacturer’s shop, making sure that quotes for parts and labor hours are accurate. Gitchenko continues, “Let’s say the plane goes to a factory-owned service center to have the tires replaced. The manufacturer may say it’s a 40-hour job, but our mechanic will be there to correct this quote because it shouldn’t take more than 25 hours to complete such a job. So he makes the necessary corrections, writes a proposal, and checks when the job is done at the MRO.”

AXIS pilots

AXIS Aviation employs 70 pilots. Flight crew scheduling is managed through Web-based aviation software Leon. Current regulations mean that pilots know their schedules well in advance. For instance, G650 pilots work on a 3-weeks-on, 3-weeks-off basis, and they know this a year in advance – although there’s some flexibility should non-scheduled maintenance be necessary. Scheduling starts with the lead pilot, who collects all the information for the crew, and enters it in the software. Then each crew can either accept, reject, or make changes to the proposed schedule.

Most of the pilots have either military or airline background. The hiring process is simple, as it’s based on mandates also given by regulators. Gitchenko adds, “In order to prevent accidents, there are alcohol, drug, and cycle assessment tests, in addition to regular interviews. So the



Charter Sales Agent Larissa Muggli (L) and Charter Sales Director Marcel Wepfer work on proposals for prospective customers.



Lead Cabin Mgmt Arianna Carcano gets the company’s Falcon 2000S ready to receive passengers.