

business



Micheal Napoliello and Jason Moskowitz

TRULY FRIENDLIER SKYS

Two weary business travelers shake up the charter jet market

A LITTLE EXTRA FOOT ROOM, A SHORTER DRIVE TO THE AIRPORT, AND A “NO strings” attached program are just a few ways Skybridge Private Air is striving to make the skies that much friendlier. The frustration of business partners Micheal Napoliello and Jason Moskowitz when they missed a flight, led them to draft an initial business plan for their private jet company on a coffee napkin while sitting in an airport terminal. Like many entrepreneurs, Napoliello and Moskowitz spent more time in airports than at home.

The two had missed a domestic flight and were in a desperate situation, forcing them to charter a private jet. On that day, they were thrust into the world of local charter companies with limited routes and jet choices, or larger private jet companies

more interested in enrolling them into an expensive ownership program rather than getting them from point A to point B.

“On our first private jet flight, a salesman from the jet company actually came on board to try to sell us a fractional share

of the plane right there on the spot. Beside the intrusion, the high cost and ownership fees just did not make sense," Napoliello says. "Right away we thought that we should do this differently."

Skybridge Private Air provides charter-broker services through a unique outsourcing operation, and is neither a charter service nor owner of a fleet of high-maintenance planes.

This business model allows Skybridge Private Air to offer customers a plethora of services with reputable jet companies without the need to strong-arm fliers into buying an expensive plane. The freedom and flexibility doesn't cost customers anymore; in fact Skybridge private flights are among the most competitive in the industry.

"Most charter and fractional ownership companies require large prepayments or charge membership and costly maintenance fees, which does not include actual flight time," Napoliello says.

Skybridge offers private travel managers that serve as liaisons between clients and airports by setting up flight arrangements on one of the various available jets.

The company caters to everyone from the lone businessman making a quick trip and couples on romantic getaways to business groups and families, with a special travel package to reflect each situation. The "Family Fantasy" includes entertainment options, the "Executive Express" features onboard internet access and a secretary, and the "Sweet Dreams" package is an overnight trip complete with master bedroom, butler and gourmet breakfast.

When Napoliello and Moskowitz were in high school together, they used to daydream of creating a business empire and experiencing the excitement of world travel. They got the first part right, but the travel left a lot to be desired.

"I just don't see the romance in running through a crowded airport to make a flight, just to be told by an uncaring gate attendant that there would be a two-hour delay," Moskowitz says.



Jet interior and Skybridge terminal

Doing things differently has served this business duo well during their 20-year partnership. When most companies were spilling millions into TV advertising, they founded U.S. Marketing & Promotions (one of the first promotional marketing companies) which went on to shake up the marketing industry. Starting their company on the Jersey shore before landing in Southern California, the pair eventually sold their company to advertising and marketing giant Omnicom Group, Inc. Skybridge is just their latest business venture. **B**

—Dawnya Pring

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