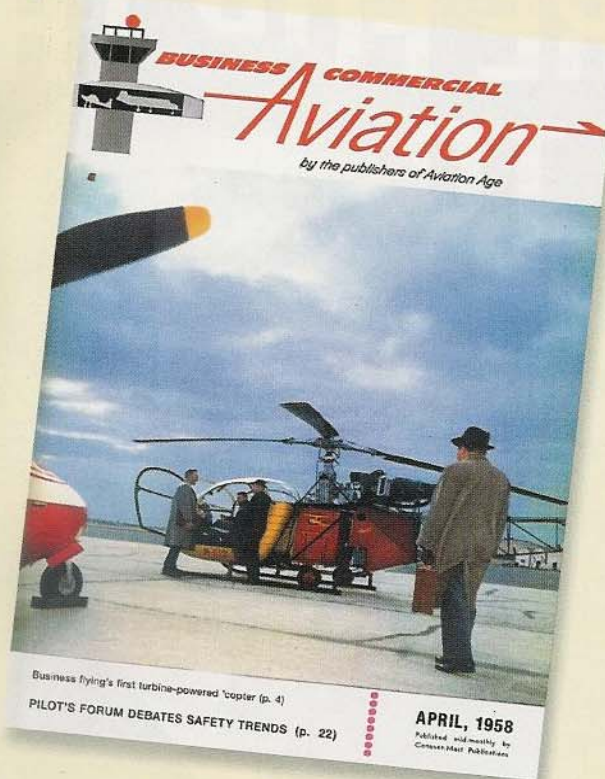


April 1958: The Business Aircraft Champion



A prescient feature in the April 1958 issue titled "How to Convince Stockholders that Business Planes Pay" focused on the actions of a president of Upressit Metal Cap, a small manufacturing outfit in Connecticut. When he took over a decade earlier, the story said the company had been "losing customers because of rapidly changing trends in the market for its metal container caps, and because the company lacked aggressive selling."

A wartime U.S. Navy pilot, he started changing the status quo in part by buying an airplane, a Swift — appropriately nicknamed "Sealing Unlimited" — which gave way to a Tri-Pacer, then a Navion and finally a Bonanza. These he used on selling trips, to meet with suppliers and to help quick-fix production or delivery snafus.

As he did, the company's fortunes began to reverse and then grow. All seemed well until a stockholder accused the executive of simply using the aircraft for personal pleasure at company expense. Rather than dismiss the charge, the CEO put together a 16-page presentation that detailed the company's operations and performance in general and then the aircraft's true use, expense and benefits to the company.

It gave dollars-and-cents accountings of representative trips — one multi-stopper went all the way to Cuba — including the people seen, the business won and the time saved. It also described

the ancillary benefits of delivering rush orders, visiting rarely seen customers at their own facilities and the impression that made upon them. It compared the time and expense of Bonanza trips with the airline alternative, described business aviation's growth and the reasons for that, and the aircraft's ability to extend sales reach and frequency, which was especially important to small, thinly manned companies like Upressit.

He then presented a copy of the document to each board member and won them over because when the issue was put to a shareholder vote, the naysayers managed just 50 votes against 429,000.

The executive behind this stunning defense of a business aircraft was one James B. Taylor III. He would presently leave the bottle cap business for what was his true career calling — selling business jets to the world. This he did with special passion and inventiveness that helped ignite a burgeoning industry; the results were nothing short of extraordinary.

When Pan Am founder and Chairman Juan Trippe decided to become involved in the then new business of business jets, he turned to Taylor to help make it a success. The carrier selected — famously with the help of Charles Lindbergh — the Dassault Mystere 20 as the one to sell. While impressed with the aircraft itself, Taylor made it clear that no American companies would operate an aircraft with such a name. One day after much back-and-forthing, Trippe stuck his head into Taylor's office and said, "I've decided we should call it a Falcon." Taylor thought the name acceptable, but then inquired, "You just had lunch with Henry Ford and he suggested it, didn't he?" Trippe nodded, and left.

Regardless of the origin, Taylor helped to sell a lot of Falcons, a fact noted in Wichita where Dwane Wallace was taking a huge gamble on a Cessna jet he called the Fanjet 500. Hired to help market it, Taylor did that and more — not all of it welcome initially.

Unimpressed with Wallace's name choice, he preferred Citation, a Triple Crown thoroughbred, and despite his boss's distaste, won the support for it from Cessna's board. Again, over the objections of Cessna's longtime and jet-hungry dealers, he convinced management to sell jets direct, and to support them with a company-owned network of service centers, moves that helped Citation achieve singular success.

And having ridden Citation to another crown, he took charge of marketing another upstart north of the border. By the time the Canadair Challenger — its name a gauntlet to Gulfstream — took flight, Taylor and his team of marketing lions had sold more than 100. Having met the challenge of Challenger, he then took the reins at Gates Learjet to save it from failure. And did.

But the first inkling of the storied career that was to come appeared in the April 1958 issue when a little-known bottle cap executive said, "The company-owned plane helps build prestige and stature because it's a symbol of speed and efficiency. It helps create in the customer's mind an image of a progressive operation."

That imagery and that man would help convince a world about the value of the business jets that populate our industry today.

