

WORK EXPERIENCE DAVID SKELDON

Clinching sales across the globe

David Skeldon is a director at Airstream International, where he is responsible for remarketing aircraft to airlines from around the world. This, he says, calls for an in-depth knowledge of the aviation industry, tact and diplomacy

What does Airstream International do?

Airstream is an independent aircraft remarketing agent selling or placing aircraft on dry or wet (aircraft, crew maintenance and insurance) lease on behalf of clients worldwide. Formed in 1989, the company has completed transactions involving over 500 aircraft. Our customers include airlines, lessors, banks and aircraft investors and we have placed aircraft with airlines all over the world. Airstream's business is similar to that of an estate/real estate agent except that we deal with aircraft. We typically secure a mandate from a client interested in selling or leasing an aircraft and then promote it to interested parties, be they airlines, lessors or investors.

What is your role and what would a typical week be?

No day in this job is the same. My work includes working on specifications and proposals, discussing contract and commercial terms with clients and advisors, speaking with airlines about their fleet requirements and arranging aircraft inspections. A significant amount of my day will be spent on the telephone; usually involving operators/customers in Asia/Australasia in the morning and the Americas in the afternoon.

Selling aircraft is a complex business and requires an in-depth knowledge and understanding of many aspects of aviation. At the



Qualified pilot and instructor Skeldon gets his flying fix in Oxford, UK

outset, potential buyers/lessees need to be provided with information to allow them to undertake an initial evaluation of the aircraft. I work with technical advisors to put together data about the aircraft including the status of major components, the interior configuration and the avionics installed. Prospective buyers typically use this information to ascertain the likely maintenance and overhaul costs they may need to incur on the aircraft when integrated in their fleets as well as evaluating commonality with similar aircraft in their fleets.

Buyers typically undertake detailed technical inspections to verify the condition of the aircraft. Negotiating the delivery condition of the aircraft is a key element of any sale or lease. As transactions are usually cross-border, aircraft may need to be

modified to permit registration in different jurisdictions. The sales process can often last several months. It is our job to manage the entire process from start to finish and to make sure that the interests of the client are protected.

What is your career background?

I went to school in Newcastle and from an early age, wanted to have a career in aviation. My original intention was to pursue a flying career. I completed an airline transport pilot licence at Oxford Aviation both at Kidlington and in Phoenix, Arizona. Following graduation, I found it difficult to secure a flying position with an airline so completed my instructor's rating. I then worked weekends at a flying school and had a sales job in a travel company during the week.

Since joining Airstream, I quickly found that this was the

career for me. I find the international dimension of the business particularly enjoyable and the successful completion of a transaction very rewarding.

What is the growth potential for Airstream?

Airstream has established a strong track record in its chosen markets. In the relatively short time I have been with the company, it has become very evident to me that the involvement of a professional and experienced organisation such as Airstream is vital to ensure the success of a complex transaction such as an aircraft sale or lease. Airstream is well placed to benefit from the general upturn in aircraft trading activity as well as the influx of investor money now coming into the sector.

What do you do to relax outside the job?

I continue to get my flying "fix" instructing weekends at Pilot Flight Training, Oxford. When time permits, I play the occasional round of golf. I am looking forward to getting married next year. ■



For more employee work experiences, pay a visit to flightglobal.com/workingweek

If you would like to feature in Working Week, or you know someone who does, email your pitch to kate.sarsfield@flightglobal.com



CHALLENGING PERSPECTIVES

Opportunities in Cyber Security

www.jobs.eads.com



AIRBUS



ASTRIUM



CASSIDIAN



EUROCOPTER

EADS