The Question Game

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There is a gap in our market...we see it and you see it.

It's 3 a.m. A company aircraft carrying the CEO just diverted to an airport 45 miles away from the originally scheduled destination, and you know how much the boss loves to wait. Your first awareness comes just as you enter REM; you're awakened by an inbound call from the limo driver inquiring about the location of his now overdue client. In this moment, with a lack of contextual data, there is no difference between what may be a routine aircraft diversion or a full-scale emergency involving your CEO. Either way, you must respond in preparation for the latter.

As technological capabilities increase the availability of data, metrics, and intelligent analysis for aircraft in flight, the gaps and grey areas in the industry have become more and more apparent. It's these flight-monitoring gaps in which the aforementioned scenario can quickly become extremely stressful and problematic for your organization. This revelation has led to a fundamental shift in the aviation emergency awareness and response space. Our industry is demanding we fill the gaps and illuminate these grey areas; simply providing support, as we do now, is no longer sufficient. More thorough activities and bespoke tools on the front-end are required to enable proactive support to ensure sufficient measures are being taken to secure the best possible outcome.

I am a bit of a yielding rebel. I like to walk the edge just before resistance is reached, and I enjoy the subtle discomfort it brings, so I encourage us to ask questions. For instance:

- Why should the CEO of a Fortune-recognized company, or similar, be monitored within the back of their business jet to a lesser standard than that of any commercial air traveler?
- Do you really know the difference between the types of data available via ADS-B vs. traditional ASR-11 data and how that affects your organization operationally?
- What good is all this magnificent data if the end-user doesn't know what it means and how it applies?

- Do aircraft operators know that the dot on their flight-tracking screen may not represent actual data?
- If a tree falls in the forest...okay, you get the point.

Internally, we also ask questions of ourselves: Isn't 24/7/365 a lot of time to be watching for an emergency event that rarely happens? How else can we solve the riddle to the question: What keeps you up at night? Why shouldn't we use our expertise to close some of these gaps; doesn't that just make sense? Don't we think this is the best industry in the world, and we all have a responsibility to ensure it operates responsibly and with the highest possible level of service?

These questions and the search for real answers to them have led to the realization that we are on the brink of reaching a whole new level of Situational Awareness as an industry. We should be extremely excited to be a part of this time period in business aviation--a new wave of intelligent data analysis is on the brink of coming into being. Leading data providers are doing their job, providing scores of data for us, but do we know what most of it even means and the true operational value of it? We must take the ball and make it more useful, not just in the realm of Emergency Response, but deep into the realms of the concerns that keep us all up at night--daily "work stuff." It reminds me of the time before Google when the Internet was useful in general, but, really, how useful was it for you? Data wasn't the variable. How we accessed it and what we did as a result of the data transformed our world.

We must all continue to ask authentic questions of ourselves, to our service providers, and to the industry as a whole. The first two: Do you know where your airborne aircraft is right now? Are you sure?

Fireside Partners Inc.
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