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# GLOBAL AVIATION

**A glorious journey that embodies ethics and innovation**

Global Aviation Services completes 47 years of operation, all these years they have been committed to delivering extensively superlative service in the field of aviation. H. K. Vithalani, Founder- Chairman of the Global Group, a man behind the success of Global Aviation Services shares the journey so far.

**- Sudipta Saha**







H. K. Vithalani

***As Global Aviation is entering its 47th year of GSA (Representation), how has the journey been so far?***

For Global Aviation Services the journey commenced in the mid-70s. I must say here that it has been very satisfying from a business creativity point of view. Not only did Global enhance business prospects and scope for its airline customers, but it was also successful in supporting Indian entrepreneurs in building a bridge with the international community. I have always been saying that it is a relationship business. I have made friends all over the globe, friends who were business partners and now in the aftermath of their aviation career, very personal friends. My team which comprises trade veterans and new entrants means a lot to me and my family. Over the years we have developed an inseparable bond. My colleagues have taken it forward in building new relationships. Ask any businessman, the purpose for doing business. Part of the answer is "to make money". To Global and its shareholders, management and teams, creating business which is deliverable and standing tall in fulfilling commitments, means a lot.

***What are the challenges have you encountered over the years?***

If you expect me to say

'competition', I may disappoint you. Competition is here to stay. Competition drives you to excel. At times it is the changing business environment, regulatory mandates, bureaucratic demands and at the time no clarity with rules and regulations. One has to find the way eyes closed and hands tied. But we all know the score and have agreed to face it when we launched our businesses. I do not look at other changes as challenges but as opportunities to fine-tune or speed up the process.

***Over the years, what kind of evolution have you noticed in the aviation industry?***

Coming to basics, in the 70's and the '80s, we relied more on hearsay and gut feeling. The forecasting business was at a very nascent stage. Technique and numbers were lacking but we still arrived at realistic results. Perhaps, we drove the bus on the only route available. This I look back on fondly. Now we have statistics, trends, growth models, and cost/benefit algorithms – a team cooped up just hitting the buttons. I have always been satiating about technology. We, like others, embraced it. Processes at the workplace, be it the cargo warehouse, the passenger terminal, the ramp or the sales office and finance centre, have ramped up at lightning speed. Another thing is

people have changed, for the better. Team building, team effort, and team gameplay are all everyday words and jargon. My experience is that it is an essential part of your commitment to your customer.

***What are the current demands that you are seeing in the market?***

It is very refreshing to note that the customer has upgraded itself to understand deliverables and thus positions his expectations. That said, it prepares you to focus on key growth areas, whether in service levels, output, value or mutual financial gain. We are one of few who have learnt to say "no". Rather than bend over backwards and try to roll out the undeliverable – which is a waste to all concerned. Of course, sometimes stretching oneself to snapping levels may give some magic results, hitherto unknown. What a dream! Aviation wouldn't have evolved if some fellas, that two brothers, had stopped dreaming.

***What has been your growth plan and what strategy have you adopted to maximise profit?***

Making money is no crime. Let me rephrase that – "making money the right way is no crime". We all learned that a penny saved is a penny earned. So, if you help the airline customer and the end customer, and save some bucks, you too will end up with some profits. The key word here is being "reasonable". Covid has taught us the crucial lesson of essential costs and non-essential costs. Multitasking and cross-utilization are other ways to optimize resources for a project. We need to benchmark our service levels and ensure that there is no drop below our standards while tweaking costs. Apart from cost control, we need to optimize revenues within the parameters of the product. Customer satisfaction is essential in maximising revenues. During the 18 – 20 months of Covid restrictions on travel, airlines have accumulated high losses. Aircraft are parked in dessert packed in cellophane, personnel are laid off.

Now that travel demands have risen, airlines are unable to operate flights as no trained staff is available. About the time the airlines and all stakeholders start recovering some losses.

***What is that one thing about aviation that excites you?***

Have you seen a bunch of boys standing around and looking up to the skies when an aeroplane soars high? That's excitement. Have you been one of them? If not, you have missed something. My excitement comes from the fact that the world has become smaller with the advent of larger, faster, efficient and environment-friendly airplanes. We need to preserve the environment for future generations. Airlines have been very active and diligent in cutting down emissions and becoming Green. I think all passengers, travellers, and cargo carriers should be aware of the emission issue and make the right choices.

***What do you think the global aviation industry will look like in five years?***

Aviation is on the verge of a high-tech boom. AI, robotics, biometrics, alternative fuel, and electric-powered equipment all will rush in one form or another. The key is sustainability. On the reverse side, there could be an alternate mode of transportation as opposed to air travel. Will this hamper the growth of aviation? No, never. High-speed alternatives will help cater to growing demands in transportation. Be it passengers or goods. Sectors that will benefit are healthcare, education, and corporate governance, to name a few. The ultra-long haul will get popular. Demand will soar despite communication at the speed of light.