

MAXIMIZING UNDERSTANDING OF SPANISH FBO OPERATIONS - GENERAL AVIATION SERVICE

News / Business aviation



Sometimes people realize they need much more explanation on the subject, even if they have a basic understanding. With FBO services in Spain, this is quite frequently the case. During my first trip to Spain this summer, I witnessed this situation personally. Reaching out to those who are working on the fields around-the-clock and seeking a thorough explanation makes perfect sense. I reached out to Luis Hurtado Barrutia of General Aviation Service. I wanted to know if, as service providers, they receive questions from clients and if they feel it necessary to provide additional details to clarify how it works.

T.O. Despite the availability of some information, I discovered that there is still a lot of confusion regarding FBO operations in Spain. Would you please think of another explanation? Because many people are still perplexed and I believe this is something that is absolutely necessary. For instance, do you have such questions during the events?

L.H.B. Yes, we do. Nevertheless, we are also the ones who are trying to supply it. I would advise you to double-check your comprehension. Because sometimes clients don't inquire because they believe all FBOs are the same. It looks extremely complex from the outside. What strange

information. Some operators have other concerns to deal with because they operate most of their flights outside of Spain. And we observe that we explain it during our meetings because, in most cases, people assume it's operating in a way that it isn't.

T.O. I would like to know if the terminal building is owned by any of the FBO providers. Or is it something else entirely?

L.H.B. I'll give you an example of a conversation we have with our clients. "No, but this handling provider is the terminal's owner," they may say. To which we reply, "No, no, this is a public network," This is just an airport-owned building. As a result, we can all work there, and anyone can open a handling company and work there in the same circumstances. We only make distinctions based on cost, handling cost, or the quality of the services provided. As a result, differentiation serves as a central location for all businesses. "So, what's the business?" they ask, making explanations extremely difficult at times. Therefore, why are you guys doing the tender if you don't have all the flights? "Okay, if I want to go for a tender, that means that none of you can," was a thought that kept coming to me. If I win, none of you can work there. But there are 200 hunters there when I visit. The answer was, "Yeah, because it's guaranteed," according to Spanish law, anyone can do it.

T.O. Are you actually suggesting that there is no variation in the landing fees, security line, etc.? Then, how should I pick from so many providers?

L.H.B. There is no difference, as you say. We share the same lounges and terminal. We must differentiate ourselves through the quality level of our services, team's knowledge, and commitment. Customers only need to focus on the top quality of services and prices you provide. And that the only way to stand out in Spain.

T.O. Obvious question - how is your company distinctive?

L.H.B. We differentiate by safety and environmental certifications, then by the quality of handling and services provided. Because the cost is inevitably largely driven by airport authorities. Parking and landing fees are still under the jurisdiction of this government agency. This is how you differentiate yourself from the rest, which is really only a small part of the total deal with each plane. You can prove that you have these qualities by providing your staff with training and illustrating your knowledge or expertise. This is the only real alternative. You must be aware that the quality and cost of the handling are the only factors that can make a difference.

T.O. Is the reason why people don't ask questions "Oh, shouldn't you know that by then?" in your opinion? Should you go ahead and explain what and how on a regular basis?

L.H.B. It is most likely one of the causes. However, I would advise going into detail and asking questions. One country where FBOs operate somewhat differently than is typically thought is Spain. We will. Let's try to make decision-making a little bit easier for people. That will be greatly appreciated by them, I believe. However, we have been working on these projects for years. And we constantly insist on merely trying to give the customer a brief lecture because we recognize how complex it is. Only three of the 46 airports under the control of a very large national airport corporation are actually operational and advantageous to the government's finances. There are deficits at the other airports. Local and regional airports are closed for most of the day except for the Iberia flight, which is legally obliged to fly there once a week. I then receive comments along the lines of "Okay, I want to fly there." It's closer to my destination. "Yeah," I answer, "but it's only open all day for two hours." You don't have toilet service for example. You have absolutely nothing. They cannot go through any audits or certifications because they only run a small number

of flights. That's the issue. An example: during our conversation yesterday, a customer said, "Yeah, but I want to have a service there." "How many times have you flown in the last three years?" I asked. "None," he said. However, I need someone to say, "Okay, I'll work out a deal with you," at this airport. If you fly to this airport, I will go to this airport to assist you. But, you have never flown there and you never will because every time you attempt to do so, you will think, "Okay, I'm going to get stuck there." If somebody is sick, they cannot open the airport.

As a result, we only have nine bases with high traffic, all the services they require, and the resources to deliver first-rate service. But in the end, I think this system is the same in every country. You have these unique characteristics. But in Spain, it's remarkable. Furthermore, since everyone in London is interested in the flight schedule, I assume that everyone is aware of this. But according to Spain, the rest of the year is calm, even though there are a lot of flies in the summer. And that's the problem.

T.O. In my opinion, Spain has excellent weather throughout the year, even in the fall and winter, so it makes sense to "educate" both potential and current clients.

L.H.B. We're going to work on this. It's still so good south of Spain that it is. December was my favorite month when I lived in Alicante because there were still plenty of sunny days. It's ideal to eat breakfast at the beach when you visit there. You become tanned and all that. It's winter, though. And this is the most lovely time in my opinion. And I believe this is the reason why people are traveling from overseas to purchase homes and either retire here or live here. Believe me, it's not for the summer.

T.O. So let's get to work on that and go into further detail. What makes business aviation in Spain different? And I believe that many people will find it extremely beneficial.

L.H.B. Yes, exactly. Updating our customers is crucial because they always want to know more after you explain things to them. However, they might not give it much thought at first. They do understand, though, once you start looking into it. Additionally, many customers actually told us that. I was unaware that this was the case. I had a different idea. Let's assist them. 50skyshades will make it slightly easier and better for customers to understand. And even if they don't ask, they will obtain the information. That's ideal, then.

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