

# Businesses Get PlaneSmart!

By Lyn Freeman



## *The Remarkable Advantages of Fractional Ownership Are Now Available to Companies of All Sizes*

When Bill Lear rolled out his first jet in the mid-sixties, the business community saw a remarkable new tool that delivered almost unlimited flexibility in travel schedules and efficiency. The real milestone, however, would come in the mid-eighties when NetJets launched the first fractional aircraft ownership company. The idea of paying only for the time you use the aircraft suddenly made aviation available to legions of companies which could not solely justify the cost of owning alone. But what may be one of the most significant events in this evolution of business aviation, a new form of fractional ownership that makes airplanes available to individuals and businesses of almost any size, is now on the radar, thanks

largely to a company in Texas called PlaneSmart!

“This totally changed the game for us,” says Steve W., the CFO of an oil company. After careful research, Steve recommended his company buy fractional ownership in a Cirrus SR22, a high tech single-engine airplane that is technologically more advanced than many airlines. The all composite aircraft comes with a menagerie of onboard computers, is as comfortable as any luxury car and even has a parachute capable of bringing the entire aircraft safely back to earth. When Steve ran the numbers of switching over to PlaneSmart!, it was a no brainer. “It’s a perfect application for us, and it

doesn’t make sense to do it any differently.”

PlaneSmart! manages a fleet of late model Cirrus aircraft based in Dallas, Houston and Austin, Texas, are broadening their aircraft product line, and continuing to expand into other markets. PlaneSmart! is available 24/7 and offers a professional pilot for the non-pilot owners. Fractional owners of the planes pay only for the hours the aircraft flies and PlaneSmart! takes care of everything else, from maintenance to insurance. Even if the fractional owner’s exact aircraft is for some reason unavailable, another aircraft is usually ready to roll.

"It was about 2-3 times cheaper than the aircraft chartering we'd been doing," Steve says. His company operates 8 field offices around the state, and situations arise where they need to respond immediately. "If the aircraft we wanted to charter wasn't available, we were dead in the water. PlaneSmart! literally changed the way we do business."

Here is how the PlaneSmart! program works. The advantages of this new paradigm for business aviation comes from several sources. First, businesses can purchase only the amount of airplane they need, from an eighth to a half interest. Second, an established fee, which includes all fuel and oil, is charged per flight hour, allowing for easy budgeting. Third, the 'unfun' of aircraft ownership—maintenance, insurance, chart/GPS/XM subscriptions, warranty issues, pilot training, aircraft storage and even a regular wash and wax—are all covered in one simple monthly management fee. Compared to whole aircraft ownership, the monthly expense with PlaneSmart! covers all typical expenses for a fraction of the price and 0% of the hassle. Businesses merely call to schedule a flight and they're good to go.

Kevin D., another owner in the PlaneSmart! program, works with a company that markets implants and biologics for surgical fixation, correction and tissue regeneration of the spine. His corporation regularly brings surgeons into the home office to provide a two-way dialogue between the company's research scientists and medical practitioners. The company had tried aircraft leasing, but the economics were not ideal. But traveling by commercial airliner didn't work well either. Kevin said that because of the way airlines have to schedule, "a one day trip to our office took three days."

One day Kevin thumbed through a magazine left behind by another passenger riding an airliner. He stopped to read an article about PlaneSmart! "I immediately saw the value and when I got back home, I contacted them. The rest is history," he says.

Now Kevin's group uses the Cirrus for a variety of missions, including bringing doctors to the company headquarters. "We put a surgeon on an airplane and an hour later I get a call that he's arrived and getting into a limousine. It would not have been possible in the old days to have somebody to go from Austin to Lubbock to Abilene and still be home that night." The value of being back home at the end of the day with his family is not lost on Kevin. He is also a father to two daughters.

Stuart S. also spent more time away from his family than he would have preferred. As a real estate developer with projects the width and breadth of Texas, it was "Amarillo by morning, and Houston that night." Needless to say, Stuart spent a lot of time driving, or waiting for South-

west Airlines. Then someone handed him a PlaneSmart! brochure.

"The last thing I ever thought I'd do is be involved in private aviation," he says. Stuart is not a pilot and has never owned any airplane. But the thought of being able to pick up the phone, schedule a business flight and be back in the office that afternoon lingered.

*"I get an enormous amount of business done thanks to PlaneSmart!"*

"I became very quickly convinced that the high tech Cirrus was perfect for me," he finally admitted. "I can get in and out of these places on my schedule and still be home for dinner."

Stuart is now in his third year of fractional ownership with PlaneSmart! "I've exceeded my time allotment every year!" he says with a smile.

Moreover, Stuart enjoys handing off the management of his asset, the fractional share of a new Cirrus. "I don't want to have to bother with managing a plane. I don't want to have to hire someone to manage the plane, and I don't want to have to manage them. That's not my business. But it is PlaneSmart!'s business and they do a good job of it."

But when it's all said and done, does owning a fractional share of a Cirrus really show up on his bottom line? "Yes," says Stuart without hesitation. "I get an enormous amount of business done thanks to PlaneSmart!"



Photo Copyright Pilatus Aircraft Ltd

The fractional ownership program has been so successful for non-pilot owners that many are now looking to expand into larger, more capable aircraft for the times they need more capacity or range. PlaneSmart! now offers fractional shares

of a Pilatus PC-12 turboprop, an Eclipse 500 light jet, and has other aircraft in the pipeline, including the new Cirrus Vision jet.

"Our customers told us that sometimes they need a jet or turboprop for the speed, space and weight carrying capacity, but didn't want to own one outright" says PlaneSmart!'s CEO, Michael Brosler. "Adding these larger aircraft to our program was just the natural evolution of our fractional ownership program."

Ricardo D., a PlaneSmart! customer from Austin, is the first to acknowledge the need for larger aircraft. His family business does extensive real estate development in Mexico, and owns a Lear jet and King Air. "But you need to justify the costs of flying those airplanes," Ricardo says. That's why he is also a fractional aircraft owner with PlaneSmart!

"For many of the trips I take, it's just me or a small group that's traveling. It just doesn't always make sense to fly the jet," he says. Ricardo looked at the costs of acquiring another aircraft, wholly owning something smaller and more economical. "But it just didn't pencil," he said, "owning the entire airplane myself." For a while he resigned himself to scheduled airliners, but stumbled across some information about PlaneSmart!'s fractional ownership program. It made sense for his company's bottom line, as well as his scheduling requirements. "Now I can get there in a few hours instead of taking several flights and traveling all day."

Even better, Ricardo has already earned his pilot license and often takes an instructor with him when he's flying the Cirrus. Soon he'll have his instrument rating and hopes to translate his experience into the left seat of a Pilatus PC-12 that PlaneSmart! will be managing later this Spring.

From his experience in owning and flying his Cirrus, Ricardo is looking forward to his managed share of the big turboprop. "I am really convinced the program works great," he says. While there are times he'll need a larger aircraft, he doesn't need one all the time. Ricardo is part of a group of PlaneSmart! fractional owners who take advantage of the opportunity to buy only as much airplane as they need.

For more information on fractional ownership and business aviation, contact PlaneSmart! at 888-2-AVIATE (228-4283), visit [www.planesmart.com](http://www.planesmart.com), or email [info@planesmart.com](mailto:info@planesmart.com).