

AIRTEXT CUSTOMERS TOUT VALUE, AFFORDABILITY AND EASE OF USE

In this age of personal devices, it's not unusual to see people sitting together and communicating feverishly—but not to each other! Typically, you can go into any restaurant and see patrons sitting across a table, focused not on each other, but their cell phone or tablet. When it's happening in an airplane, it's still out of the ordinary.

But, that's what ***John Terrasi*** saw as he glanced over his shoulder while flying his company's King Air with several "Millennials" on board. He couldn't help but notice that each of the passengers seemed to be completely engrossed in an ongoing conversation—but without a word being spoken. They were each communicating with someone in some other time zone via text messaging while traveling at 330 MPH at FL 280. Each had a satisfied look on his or her face and was oblivious to the outside world passing by five miles below. No one seemed to mind that they weren't talking to each other. They were conducting business, continuing a meeting that had begun before takeoff or, checking in at home. All of it was possible because the airplane was equipped with AIRTEXT, an electronic messaging service that allows up to 16 passengers to send and receive SMS messages anywhere in the world. By the time they landed, they had sent or received nearly 200 texts!

John books and flies air charter flights where real-time communications are essential in order to accommodate clients...but, at times, he also sounds a little like a baseball coach, too. "Some of our customers may have a change in plans or a 'need to know' right away—before they land and go into a meeting, for example. AIRTEXT has been a 'homerun' for us," he said. "The owner of the King Air we work with asked us to look into some type of system that would allow him and other clients to maintain steady communications while in the air. He routinely make trips to Texas and Tulsa, Oklahoma—about 4 hours away—and being incommunicado for that long put him and some corporate clients in tough situations. They needed real time information in order to be ready to do business when we landed. We got in touch with AIRTEXT and they provided us with exceptional response. We were the first King Air to be equipped with the system and their guys are great and readily available to help with any support we need, too.

“We also do a lot of flying down to Florida and on one trip we had a passenger who was a candidate for a job in Hawaii. She was texting back and forth all the way and completed the entire interview by the time we landed. We use it to get deals done, too,” John added.

The system is really “self amortizing,” he pointed out. “It pays for itself by allowing our owner or passengers to conclude a business deal that more than covers the cost of the hardware, installation and usage. That’s what makes it so slick. We give passengers a one-page instruction sheet on how to download the APP to their personal device and they jump right on and use it throughout the trip. If you need to be reachable, you can’t beat the cost of this thing,” he stated.

“Our customers have been passing the word around about AIRTEXT,” he continued. “The system is so simple and affordable. If you have an on-board satellite phone, you already have the antenna. Passengers can access the system through Bluetooth and AIRTEXT’s product support is excellent. They’re readily available and can reset computers and software while you’re talking with them if you have some type of service interruption.

“We’ve heard that AIRTEXT is upgrading the software, so that we’ll be able to do more things and talk on the phone, too. The quality of the product, the price and the convenience will be great—that’s a given. We’re looking forward to it. Knowing you can communicate with anyone, anywhere, anytime, even from the air —that’s a grand slam,” he concluded.

Tommy Lyons has AIRTEXT installed on his Citation X. His company’s CEO had agreed to allow an inventive friend to install the AIRTEXT system in his aircraft when it went in for a major inspection; the results were impressive. “We knew(AIRTEXT founder and CEO) David Gray

personally from previous business dealings and, since the airplane was having some interior work done anyway, we were able to pre-wire it to accommodate the AIRTEXT hardware,” he explained. It’s not like it required much in the way of modifications, actually. The system consists of a small ‘paperback-sized’ box that weighs a little more than a pound and connects to our existing Iridium phone antenna.

“The first time we used it on an international trip, I was able to text back and forth with a pilot friend in Germany all the way across the North Atlantic,” Tommy said. “It has allowed us to make en route changes to itineraries and it works well all the time, not just when we’re within range of broadband towers. The best part is that it’s very economical to acquire, it’s really easy to use—you just download the free APP—and it’s only 5 cents per text and less than \$2 per minute for voice calls. No one wants to spend 50,000 or 100,000 dollars and more for this capability, especially on older airplanes, but AIRTEXT is affordable and reliable. We’re really glad we have it. Even flying at FL 410 and Mach .89, I’m still in touch!”

Charlie Huggins knows the difference between AIRTEXT and more conventional—and expensive—systems. The Chief Pilot for Wilson Air Centers, which operates locations in Memphis, Charlotte, Chattanooga and Houston, Charlie has flown aircraft equipped with other systems. “It got quite expensive, quite quickly,” he recalled, “With data, voice, text and entertainment, we could run up a \$1000 expense on a trip in a hurry. Our president, Bob Wilson, knew David Gray and asked him if he could develop something we could use for on board entertainment. David developed a storage device that weighed less than 2 pounds. It allowed us to have music and movies as on board entertainment. After that, we started calling David ‘Professor Gadget.’ Bob asked David for a system that would allow him to stay in touch with the office while we were in flight and he helped us install AIRTEXT in our CJ3+. Bob used it and thought it was great; later, when we were taking a trip in our Pilatus, he wanted to text again...and we didn’t have AIRTEXT installed on that airplane. That was frustrating...so we’re equipping our entire fleet with AIRTEXT.

“It allows you to download a list of FAVORITES, notifies them every time you’re airborne and provides a contact number to be used while in flight. It tells them when you’ve landed, too, so they can go back to using regular ground-based communications. My wife uses it as a conven-

ient way to keep track of my takeoffs and landings too, so we can plan ahead. It's a great feature," he noted.

Charlie added that "AIRTEXT is just so economical to acquire and install because it takes very little hardware or space to add the system. It also allows the crew to be more efficient with our time in flight. I used it once as we were returning from a trip to Canada. We were landing in Ohio and had to clear Customs. I couldn't get them on the phone before we left, so I texted them en route with our ETA and they responded 'OK, fine' and were there to meet us. It has a myriad of uses for busy pilots that help us do our jobs better," he added.