

Personalization At Scale

An Interview with Greg Raiff, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Elevate Aviation Group

EDITORS' NOTE Greg Raiff is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Elevate Aviation Group. His aviation career began unconventionally – at 18, he filled a Boeing 747 for a student trip to the Bahamas, sparking a lifelong pursuit of building smarter, more connected aviation businesses. That entrepreneurial start evolved into StudentCity.com, which he founded from his dorm room and grew into a company serving more than 50,000 travelers annually before its acquisition by a FTSE 250 company. In 2003, Raiff launched Elevate Aviation Group to bring that same spirit of innovation to private aviation.



Greg Raiff

COMPANY BRIEF Elevate Aviation Group, (elevatejet.com) founded in 1995 and based in Miami Beach, is a comprehensive, integrated aviation services platform specializing in private jet charter, aircraft management, maintenance (MRO), and acquisition. It is one of the leading providers of global aircraft management, on-demand flight services, and maintenance solutions. The company provides tailored, high-touch aviation solutions for professional sports teams, Fortune 500 companies, and entertainment clients. The company's integrated capabilities span aircraft management, maintenance, brokerage, and advisory services – all supported by a focus on safety, transparency, and operational excellence. Today, Elevate Jet represents a new era of predictive luxury, one where every flight is not just exceptional, but effortlessly so. To support this, Elevate has launched Elevate Jet App, an instant booking platform that transforms three decades of operational learnings, proprietary data, and industry expertise into an AI-powered experience. It's designed to be the most intelligent, seamless way to book private aviation – merging the precision of proven systems with the speed and simplicity modern travelers expect.

What was your vision for creating Elevate Aviation Group?

The vision was to meet clients where they are, not where the industry assumed they should be. Private aviation has long operated on a single model: call a broker, negotiate a flight, repeat. We saw a client base that had evolved far beyond that, and we built Elevate Jet to reflect it.

Today, Elevate Jet is a complete private aviation ecosystem serving flyers, owners, and buyers. The Elevate Jet App puts self-serve instant booking directly in a client's hands. The Azurite Jet Card offers guaranteed hourly rates and superior cancellation terms for frequent flyers. Aircraft management and acquisition advisory serve owners and buyers who want the full depth of our operational expertise and market intelligence behind their asset. For those who want the high-touch, fully managed

experience, that exists too. Every product and service we offer is designed to serve the private aviation client at every stage of their journey, on their terms, in the way they want to fly.

Elevate Jet's business-to-business model serves diplomats, Fortune 100 executives, the world's most successful entertainers, legendary music artists, and professional sports teams. Will you provide an overview of Elevate Jet's programs and capabilities?

At this level, the people we fly are changing the world, and how they travel directly affects how they perform when they land. How rested an athlete is when they arrive for a game matters. How prepared an executive is when they step off a plane into a negotiation matters. Our clients do not have margin for the kinds of disruptions that would be inconveniences for anyone else.

For a touring artist and their crew, that means serving as a full logistical partner across multi-continental itineraries, accurately cost-estimating



Elevate Aviation Challenger 350 (above and opposite page)



complex routing, managing large traveling parties, accommodating substantial cargo and equipment requirements, and ensuring every leg connects without compromise to the schedule. There is no room for approximation at that scale.

What all of our clients rely on us for is a level of proactiveness that goes far beyond logistics. The job is to be operationally experienced enough to foresee obstacles before they can ever touch a client's schedule and to solve for them quietly, in advance, without the client ever knowing there was a problem to begin with. That requires deep institutional knowledge, relationships built over decades, and a team that is always thinking two steps ahead. The measure of our success in this part of the business is not what our clients see. It is what they never have to.

Elevate Jet just launched a new consumer app using agentic AI. What separates this app from others?

Most aviation technology has been built to serve the operator. Our app was built to serve the traveler. This distinction matters enormously. At the center of the Elevate Jet App is Ruby, our agentic AI and the intelligence engine that powers the entire experience. Ruby does not wait for a request. It anticipates, prepares, and acts. A client does not need to understand the mechanics of sourcing an aircraft, negotiating a leg, or coordinating ground transportation. Ruby handles that complexity so the experience feels seamless.

What separates us from others is that Ruby is not built in a vacuum. It is trained on more than 30 years of proprietary aviation data, and the feature we are most proud of reflects that directly: Ruby's dynamic pricing and feasibility intelligence. The ability to take three decades of operational knowledge and turn it into real-time, actionable insight at the moment of booking is genuinely transformative. It is not just a feature.

It is the foundation that makes instant booking in private aviation possible in a way it has never been before. That foundation is not something a new entrant can replicate.

Critically, the technology was designed with human oversight embedded at every mission-critical touchpoint. Ruby informs our flight logistics team, who review and confirm all requirements before anything is passed to the operator – no gaps, no ambiguity, full confidence on both sides of the transaction. We asked ourselves both “can we” and “should we” at every step of development, because in private aviation, safety and trust are non-negotiable.

What is the future of private aviation and jet charter given new technological innovations like AI?

The future is personalization at scale. For decades, the highest level of service was available only to those who had the relationships and resources to access it. AI is changing that equation. The intelligence that once lived in the heads of our most experienced advisors can now be embedded into a platform and made available to a broader audience without any sacrifice in quality.

But the companies that will lead this future are not the ones who simply adopted AI. They are the ones who adopted it responsibly. The biggest challenge in applying AI to private aviation is ensuring the technology serves the business and not the other way around. We measure success not in technology metrics, but in outcomes: booking conversion, client satisfaction, and the speed and accuracy of the booking experience. If clients are getting faster, more confident decisions and operators are receiving cleaner, more complete information, the technology is working. If not, it is noise.

We are also moving toward an industry that operates with far greater efficiency, smarter routing, better fleet utilization, and less friction at every touchpoint. The operators building that

infrastructure today will define what private aviation looks like for the next generation. We have been building toward this moment since 2010. Ruby and the Elevate Jet App are the result of that long game.

Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own business?

Freely admitted. When starting this company out of a garage 30 years ago, there was no idea where the journey would take us. The clients we have served, the places we have been, the world events this company has been a part of are things that have been and will continue to be written about in history books. No roadmap anticipated that.

The secret to how we got here, and perhaps the answer telegraphs it, is an unrelenting, uncompromising dedication to our clients' satisfaction, their journey, and their experience. The very first customer we flew in our first year in business is still flying with us today. Not only do I know that, everyone in the company knows that, because it is part of our culture. Some companies are organized around EBITDA. We are more aligned with Warren Buffett's conviction that an obsessive dedication to the customer is the foundation everything else is built on.

One of your early companies was acquired by private equity giant Bain. What drove you to continue working in this industry after experiencing such incredible success early in your career?

After that Bain chapter closed, a year away from aviation followed. During that time, my work with some of the partners met through Bain led to investing in early-stage internet companies in late 1999 and early 2000. That was genuinely exciting work. But aviation never let go. There was something irreplaceable about standing on a ramp, watching planes move, smelling jet fuel, and helping people get on their way to their next adventure. The industry pulled us back, and the work since has been defined by building something that honors what made it worth coming back to in the first place.

When you reflect on the growth and impact that Elevate Jet has achieved, are you able to enjoy the process and take moments to celebrate the wins?

Although surrounded by an extraordinary leadership team, deep involvement in the day-to-day remains a constant, because the work with our clients and helping the team make the magic happen never gets old. What colleagues and executives both inside and outside the company have reflected back on most often is conviction and the willingness to back that conviction with personal capital. The company remains entirely privately held, without private equity or outside investment, and that is a deliberate expression of that belief. There is a word that will never be used in an aviation context, and that word is risk. But conviction? That is the right word. A strong belief in our own ideas and a willingness to put capital behind the mind has served us well through every chapter of this journey. ●