

# How to satisfy the *iWant*

## Budgeting strategies

As you work through next year's budget, it is important to think through possible upgrades above and beyond airframe calendar events. Back in the day, budgeting for capital improvements for the typical corporate aircraft was usually straightforward. There was normally some type of mandate, domestic or international, that prompted the capital improvement. The FAA or ICAO would spell out the requirement and give you detailed timelines for compliance. All you would have to do was solicit a few proposals and then plug the numbers into your capital budget.

Fast-forward to the present and you find most of today's budget is driven by the discretionary "wants" of your principals. Instead of planning for clear cut operational requirements or mandates, you now have the murky proposition of selecting the "right" cabin improvements to place in your capital budget. For the first time in recent memory a typical airliner has a more advanced cabin environment than most business jets. If your passengers haven't asked for internet connectivity, they will. There are many ways to offer connectivity to your passengers, choosing the right solution for your flight department and setting the expectation for its use is paramount. Knowing the pros and cons of the available solutions will help you develop a solid budget to connect your *iWant* passengers.



Cabin connectivity can be broken down into two basic categories: domestic (terrestrial) and international (satellite) connectivity. If you fly exclusively domestic (in the contiguous United States), the optimum solution is terrestrial connectivity, for example, Aircell Gogo Biz™ broadband. If your typical international flying is 30% or more of your total missions, than serious consideration has to be paid to satellite connectivity solutions. A satellite network is the only effective way to connect your passengers to the internet when operating internationally. There are three basic satellite networks to choose from: Iridium, Inmarsat, or Ku-Band. Each network has its good points and bad points, which should be thoroughly understood before soliciting proposals for budgetary purposes. If you are flying a mix of domestic and international, the solution may be more complex. All of the satellite networks provide connectivity domestically. But operational cost or connectivity performance should factor into your choice of equipment, often a hybrid solution might be your best choice, there are many other factors such as equipment size, weight, and cost that should also play a role in your decision.

Probably the most important aspect in development of an effective discretionary budget is setting the expectations for your principal's internet experience. You will need to understand and explain how and when they will be connected and at what speeds and cost. Most knowledgeable avionics installation facilities have a great deal of experience with managing expectations. The major installation facilities have dealership agreements with all of the equipment manufacturers and can be your best ally in choosing the best solution for your flight department. Soliciting information from the avionics manufacturers directly is another option; but beware, they have a vested interest in selling what's best for them, not necessarily what is best for you.

When you entered into the corporate aviation field, you knew you would have to wear a lot of hats, who knew the IT hat would be the most important.

For more information on selecting the right solution for your *iWant* capital budget please contact:

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