



AUG 2025

ONeCALL's Mid-Year Dispatch Pulse Report

How Flight Departments Are
Preparing for 2026

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A Strategic Look Ahead for Business Aviation Leaders



As 2025 crosses the halfway mark, flight departments are feeling the pressure to assess their performance and prepare for what's next. This whitepaper offers a forward-looking snapshot of what aviation leaders should be evaluating right now to stay competitive and operationally sound in 2026. From staffing strategies and sustainability to dispatch tech trends and regulatory shifts, ONeCALL Flight Dispatch delivers real-world insights, key benchmarks, and actionable guidance to help you chart your course for the year ahead.

Mid-Year Performance Review: What's Working & What's Not

The midpoint of the year is a prime opportunity for aviation leaders to take stock of dispatch operations. A quick internal audit now can help prevent year-end surprises. Check out our **Mid-Year Dispatch Operations Audit Checklist**, a practical tool for aviation leaders to evaluate the current state of dispatch performance and readiness for 2026.



Lessons From 2025 + What to Expect Again in 2026



This year has already delivered its fair share of challenges. The most resilient departments know that disruptions in the industry are not going away, and they are preparing for 2026 by asking themselves:

- What caught us off guard this year?
- Did we have a contingency plan in place?
- What resources did we need, but didn't have in the moment?

Here's a snapshot of some trends ONeCALL and other business aviation leaders are observing across the dispatch landscape in the first half of 2025. We expect these trends to continue into 2026:



- 1 Extended Demand Cycles:** Flight demand isn't following the typical peaks and valleys. Operators are reporting longer "peak" seasons and heavier utilization earlier in the year, placing added pressure on dispatchers year-round.
- 2 Shift Toward Hybrid Staffing Models:** More departments are adopting a blend of in-house and supplemental dispatch solutions. This allows flexibility without overcommitting to headcount.
- 3 Dispatcher Burnout & Attrition:** Dispatchers are facing workload creep. Handling more tasks per trip, more irregular hours, and tighter margins for error.
- 4 Compliance Awareness Gaps:** As FAA and ICAO guidance evolves, some operators are falling behind on dispatcher duty/rest compliance or documentation standards.
- 5 Increased Interest in Sustainability Integration:** Forward-thinking operators are incorporating environmental impact into dispatch decisions, especially for high-net-worth or ESG-conscious clients.

Forecasting Flight Demand Into 2026



Demand in business aviation continues to fluctuate in ways that don't always follow historical patterns. But there are some key trends emerging that flight departments can use to better prepare for next year's operational tempo. Here's what we are seeing:

SUSTAINED DEMAND - BUT IT'S NOT EVENLY DISTRIBUTED

While demand has not returned to the extreme post-pandemic highs of 2022–2023, it remains above pre-COVID norms, particularly in the charter and owner-use segments. However, growth is uneven:

- High-net-worth individuals and corporations are flying more selectively.
- Regional demand has outpaced international growth in many markets.
- “Pop-up” demand (short-notice, high-priority trip requests) has increased.

COMPRESSED BOOKING WINDOWS ARE THE NEW NORMAL

Operators are reporting shorter lead times between trip confirmation and wheels up. This has created more pressure on dispatchers to coordinate logistics, flight planning, crew, and ground support with minimal notice.



SHIFTS IN CLIENT BEHAVIOR ARE REDEFINING “PEAK” TRAVEL

Traditional travel peaks such as summer vacation and holiday travel are blending into one another. Clients are flying more often throughout the year, leading to:

- Earlier seasonal demand spikes
- Prolonged summer flight schedules
- More frequent repositioning or one-way trips, increasing operational complexity

CORPORATE TRAVEL IS MORE STRATEGIC

Corporate clients are flying, but with an emphasis on efficiency:

- More multi-leg trips with tight turnarounds
- Increased demand for “working en route” capabilities
- Less tolerance for delays, miscommunication, or operational friction

2026

Based on current momentum and industry indicators, here's what ONeCALL predicts flight departments should prepare for in 2026:



- **Steady YoY Growth:** Expect modest increases in overall flight hours, especially in fractional, charter, and owner-ops.
- **Greater Operational Complexity:** More international routing, special event travel, and expanded client preferences for bespoke experiences.
- **Increased Request Volatility:** The ability to accommodate last-minute or rescheduled flights will be a competitive differentiator.
- **Emphasis on Cost Transparency:** Clients want more visibility into operational efficiency, including dispatch value and responsiveness.

Understanding Staffing Trends and Preparing for Turnover

The workforce challenges across business aviation haven't spared dispatch.

- Experienced dispatchers are aging out of the workforce
- Younger talent is in short supply and often unprepared for corporate flight operations.
- Burnout remains a major issue, especially in lean departments

Proactive flight departments are addressing this by:

- Cross-training team members
- Developing retention plans
- Tapping into contract or outsourced dispatch support during peak times or transitions

Flexible staffing is no longer a backup; it's a strategy.



Tech Trends: The Future of Dispatching

Dispatch operations are becoming increasingly tech enabled. The future is here and it's digital! As we approach 2026, new technologies are poised to elevate the role of dispatchers and redefine how flight departments operate.

Current Tech Trends:

Integrated Dispatch & Scheduling

Platforms: More operators are consolidating trip planning, crew scheduling, and dispatch communications into unified platforms (e.g., ForeFlight Dispatch, FlightBridge, BART, Leon, FOS).

This reduces friction between teams, improves situational awareness, and cuts down on redundant manual inputs.

Real-Time Data Integration: Modern

dispatching platforms now integrate with:

- Live weather feeds
- NOTAMs and TFR alerts
- Flight tracking systems
- Crew duty/rest monitoring
- Maintenance status updates

This real-time visibility enables dispatchers to make smarter decisions, faster.

Automation of Routine

Tasks: Automated flight release templates, pre-departure alerts, trip briefs, and basic routing functions are becoming standard. This frees up dispatchers to focus on critical thinking and coordination.

Improved Communication &

Notification Tools: The rise of secure, centralized communication channels (Slack-style systems for aviation, or embedded chat within platforms) is improving team responsiveness and reducing missed updates.

Cloud-Based and Mobile-

Optimized Systems: Dispatchers need to work from anywhere. Today's best-in-class software solutions are cloud-native, mobile-accessible, and allow secure, real-time collaboration.

So, what's coming in 2026? Here are the forward-looking trends ONeCALL suggests watching out for:

AI Assisted Flight Planning

Artificial intelligence is starting to enter dispatch workflows, assisting with:

- Route optimization based on weather, traffic, and fuel burn
- Predictive disruption alerts (based on weather trends, airport congestion, etc.)
- Suggested reroutes or alternates based on historical performance data

AI won't replace dispatchers, but it will support faster, smarter decision-making.

Predictive Maintenance Integration with Dispatching

We're moving toward a world where dispatchers will have real-time access to predictive maintenance data — allowing for better aircraft selection and fewer last-minute cancellations.

Sustainability-Driven Routing Tools

As ESG reporting and carbon accounting grow in importance, dispatch platforms will soon incorporate emissions calculators, SAF availability indicators, and green route planning tools.

Enhanced Data Dashboards and Analytics

Expect software to evolve with smarter dashboards that help dispatchers and leadership visualize:

- Operational efficiency
- Dispatcher productivity
- Delay root causes
- Crew utilization

These tools will help justify staffing models, identify inefficiencies, and improve flight department reporting.

Seamless Integration with Third-Party Vendors

Expect tighter API integration between dispatch tools and fuel vendors, FBOs, ground transport providers, and permit agencies. This creates a truly seamless end-to-end dispatch process.

Regulatory Updates Impacting Schedulers and Dispatchers



Regulations around duty limits, remote work protocols, and international trip planning are constantly evolving. Staying compliant isn't optional, it's mission critical. Here are a few key policy developments that have occurred so far in 2025:

FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 – Section 803: Owner Data Privacy

Effective March 28, 2025, aircraft owners may now request removal of personal data (such as name and address) from public FAA ownership databases. While not directly affecting dispatch workflows, it impacts international trip planning where ownership info is required for local permits or APIS filings.

FAA's Business Aviation Call to Action & Focus on Safety Culture

In early March 2025, the FAA convened the General and Business Aviation Call to Action, emphasizing clarity on safety protocols like VFR/IFR interactions, risk assessment best practices, and reinforcing safety management systems (SMS) in GA operations. Dispatch teams are encouraged to increase safety-related awareness and integrate these protocols into SOPs.

NOTAM Modernization Service Rollout (July–September 2025)

The FAA is accelerating deployment of its new NOTAM system. By mid-to-late 2025, dispatchers should prepare for an upgraded real-time notifications interface, improved filtering, and higher system reliability. The changes will impact how NOTAMs are sourced and integrated into planning workflows.

Performance Based Navigation (PBN) & ADS-B Deployments

As of January 2025, nearly all U.S. instrument approach airports support PBN/RNP procedures, and more than 70% of registered U.S. aircraft are equipped with ADS-B Out (with 60% having ADS-B In capabilities). This regulatory shift means dispatchers must manage routing using these capabilities and anticipate continued expansion of these technologies in domestic and oceanic airspace.



What to monitor heading into 2026:



Expanded CPDLC (Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications) Access

FAA plans to broaden CPDLC coverage for business aviation in late 2025. A tiered aircraft performance system (green/yellow/red) will manage access. Dispatchers will need to know avionics equipage status and understand any limitations — including potential CPDLC exclusion — when planning international or high-altitude flights.

Regulations for Remote Dispatcher Operations

Airline dispatcher remote work policies have been under scrutiny. While not yet regulated for business aviation, it's anticipated that FAA may clarify permissible remote dispatch environments, cybersecurity protocols, or facility oversight requirements in 2026. Ops already using or planning remote/hybrid dispatch models should anticipate and plan for potential compliance standards.

ATC Modernization & NextGen Enforcement

The NextGen transition continues with FAA investments in trajectory-based operations (TBO), Data Comm expansion, Surface Awareness tools, and Flight Data Distribution under SWIM. Dispatchers may face evolving requirements for trajectory optimization, updated route filing benchmarks, and integration with FAA traffic flow management tools throughout 2026.



Sustainability and Dispatch

Sustainability in aviation is no longer just about the aircraft. It's operational. Dispatchers play a key role in reducing a department's environmental impact. As you prepare for 2026, ask yourself:

- Are your dispatchers trained on emissions-conscious routing?
- Do your procedures account for noise-sensitive airports or carbon offset programs?
- Have you set internal goals for reducing fuel burn or environmental impact?

Sustainability-minded dispatching will soon be a standard, not a bonus.



Early Operations and Budget Planning for 2026



Flight departments that wait until Q4 to start planning and budgeting often find themselves boxed in. Here are some planning recommendations from the experts at ONeCALL Flight Dispatch:

1

Monthly percentages

Start Now

Planning ahead now allows for more accurate forecasting and strategic investments while there is still room in the budget. Don't just plug in last year's numbers. Rebuild your budget based on projected demand, team structure, risk management needs, and evolving tech and regulations that will likely affect daily operations.

2**Invest in Training Early**

Make sure your team is prepared in advance. Tech is only as effective as the people using it, staying on top of evolving compliance/regulations will help minimize costly errors, and increasing client expectations mean dispatchers will need to have deeper expertise.

3**Build Buffer Capacity**

Consider partnering with a supplemental dispatch provider like ONeCALL to ensure you're covered for unexpected spikes or staff shortages.

4**Model Multiple Scenarios**

Prepare for three versions of 2026: baseline (repeat of 2025), growth (+10–15%), and surge (+20–25%).

5**Use Q3 for Forecasting Drills**

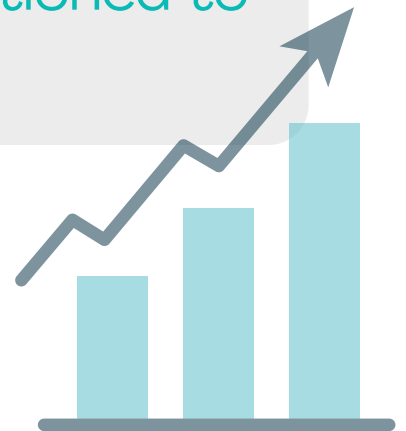
Align with your schedulers/dispatchers, sales team, and executive leadership to gather input and set realistic goals based on trends you're seeing now.

Your 2026 Dispatch Strategy Starts Now

Flight departments that take time now to review performance, forecast demand, and plan resources will be better positioned to succeed next year.

Whether you're looking to grow the business, modernize your tools, or build resilience into your team structure, strategic planning begins with honest evaluation... and the right partners.

ONeCALL Flight Dispatch can support your operation with supplemental dispatch services tailored to your evolving needs. From short-term coverage to long-term partnerships, we're here to keep your flight operations moving forward — smoothly, safely, and strategically.



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Your Flight, Our Dispatch Expertise.
It's What We Do.



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