

2025 YEAR-END DISPATCH BRIEFING

How Business Aviation Ops Are Evolving – and
What to Plan for in 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2025 has been a year of high demand and high complexity for business aviation. Fleet deliveries are climbing, backlogs are full, and private aviation continues to outperform pre-COVID levels. JETNET iQ forecasted 820 new business jets to be delivered in 2025, an 8% year-over-year increase with OEM backlogs representing more than two years of production ([JetNet](#)).

At the same time, operators are navigating chronic ATC staffing constraints, new safety mandates, tightening sustainability rules, and rapidly rising expectations for connectivity and data-driven decision-making.

For dispatch and scheduling teams, this is reshaping what “good” looks like. It’s no longer enough to simply build an efficient flight plan and assign a crew. The flight department of 2026 will be judged on:

- How effectively it operationalizes Safety Management Systems (SMS),
- How it integrates AI and digital tools without compromising safety,
- How it manages sustainability obligations (SAF, CORSIA, ReFuelEU),
- How it mitigates systemic risk from ATC, NOTAM, and supply-chain disruptions, and
- How it attracts and retains scarce operations talent.

This whitepaper offers:

1. A year-end wrap-up of 2025 for business and private aviation, through the lens of dispatch and scheduling.
2. A forward-looking view on 2026, focusing on industry-wide themes.





1. 2025 IN REVIEW: THE BUSINESS AVIATION OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

1.1 DEMAND: STRONG FUNDAMENTALS, MORE COMPLEX OPERATIONS

- Global private jet market value is projected to reach nearly \$40 billion by the end of 2025, up from about \$26 billion in 2021 ([Sentinel Aviation](#)).
- JETNET iQ's late-2025 outlook shows 820 new business jets and 365 turboprops delivering this year, with the "Big Five" OEMs holding a backlog of roughly \$55.5 billion, or more than two years of production.
- Honeywell's 2025 Global Business Aviation Outlook calls out continued growth from fractional operators and charter, alongside new economic policy tailwinds in some regions ([Honeywell](#)).

For dispatchers, this translates to:

- Busier fleets. Especially charter and fractional with more repositioning legs, mixed-owner itineraries, and complex duty-time puzzles.
- More diverse aircraft types entering fleets, each with different performance, data interfaces, and MEL/ETOPS nuances.
- Higher utilization on existing airframes, which drives knock-on scheduling challenges when maintenance or AOG events occur.

**“ HONEYWELL'S
2025 GLOBAL
BUSINESS
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OUTLOOK CALLS
OUT CONTINUED
GROWTH.**

1.2 OPERATIONAL FRICTION: ATC, NOTAMS, AND SYSTEMIC STRESS

Even with robust demand, the operational “plumbing” of the system remains under strain:

- The FAA has acknowledged ATC staffing shortages at multiple facilities, leading to deliberate flow restrictions and delays at major airports ([Avionics International](#)).
- A series of NOTAM outages, including one in March 2025 that disrupted the U.S. pilot safety messaging system for several hours, have underscored the fragility of legacy infrastructure.
- In response, the FAA accelerated its NOTAM Modernization Service. It went live in September 2025, and the full transition is scheduled for completion by late spring of 2026.

For dispatch, this means:

- Higher baseline uncertainty in day-of-operations performance.
- Greater reliance on tactical rerouting, slot management, and dynamic recovery planning.
- A need to directly integrate modern NOTAM feeds and filters into planning tools so dispatchers aren't buried in irrelevant data.



1.3 REGULATORY SHIFTS: SMS BECOMES OPERATIONAL, NOT THEORETICAL

The most consequential regulatory development for business aviation operations is the FAA's final rule on Safety Management Systems (SMS).

- The rule extends SMS requirements to Part 135 operators, certain Part 21 certificate holders, and 91.147 commercial air tour operators, formally issued in April 2024.
- Existing certificate holders and many applicants have 36 months to implement SMS, with a deadline of May 28, 2027 for operators certificated before May 28, 2024 ([FAA](#)).

While this is framed as a regulatory milestone, it's essentially a cultural reset for dispatch and scheduling:

- Risk assessments, change management, and safety reporting become embedded in daily workflows rather than paper exercises.
- Flight planners and schedulers will need to document risk controls around fatigue, weather, NOTAMs, maintenance deferrals, and airport suitability, not just assume "we've always done it this way."

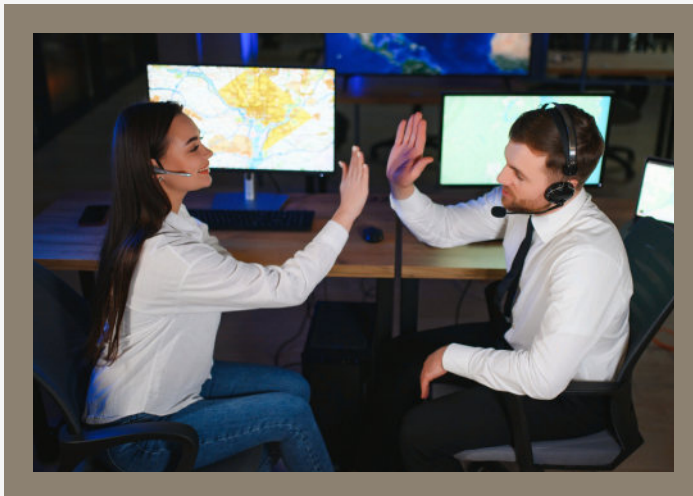
1.4 WORKFORCE: SCARCITY EXTENDS BEYOND COCKPITS

Most headlines focus on pilots and technicians, but the talent crunch is broader:

- NBAA points to a "dire shortage of pilots, maintenance technicians and other skilled aviation professionals", emphasizing that attracting and retaining talent is now a core leadership responsibility.
- CAE's global talent forecast estimates the industry will need roughly 1.47 million new aviation professionals by 2034, including pilots, technicians, cabin crew, and other roles ([CAE](#)).

Scheduling and dispatch roles, while smaller in raw headcount, sit in the same labor market:

- Experienced dispatchers who understand international ops, ETOPS, polar routes, and complex owner expectations are increasingly hard to find.
- Some business aviation organizations now offer hybrid or remote OCC models, flexible shifts, and more structured training to stay competitive.



1.5 CONNECTIVITY AND DIGITALIZATION: FROM NICE-TO-HAVE TO TABLE STAKES

The bar for connectivity rose sharply in 2025:

- The in-flight internet market is projected to grow from about \$1.7 billion in 2025 to \$3.1 billion by 2035, with satellite-based connectivity leading growth ([Future Market Insights](#)).
- Airlines and operators are moving towards free, high-speed Wi-Fi. United, for example, is rolling out Starlink-equipped Wi-Fi across nearly 1,000 aircraft, with regional fleet coverage targeted by the end of 2025.
- British Airways has publicly linked improved punctuality to AI-driven real-time weather and stand allocation systems, citing hundreds of thousands of minutes saved ([The Sun](#)).

For business aviation dispatch, this connectivity revolution:

- Enables near-real-time data on aircraft position, weather, passenger preferences, and maintenance status.
- Raises expectations from principals and corporate clients for predictable, data-backed ETAs and disruption handling.
- Forces OCCs to think about cybersecurity, data governance, and redundancy as operational issues, not just IT topics.

1.6 SUSTAINABILITY: FROM MESSAGING TO MEASURABLE OBLIGATIONS

Sustainability moved from “talking point” to “compliance driver” in 2025:

- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is widely recognized as the most impactful lever for business aviation’s net-zero by 2050 ambition.
- ICAO’s CORSIA scheme has transitioned from a pilot phase to Phase 1 (2024–2026), with Phase 2 (2027–2035) becoming mandatory for most international routes between participating states ([aviationbenefits.org](#)).
- Europe’s ReFuelEU Aviation regulation mandates a 2% SAF blend in 2025, accelerating to 6% by 2030 and then progressively higher, with additional sub-mandates for synthetic fuels ([APG](#)).

Dispatchers are increasingly pulled into sustainability reporting:

- Tracking fuel burn, SAF uptake, routings, and payload choices in a way that supports CORSIA and ReFuelEU compliance.
- Integrating “eco-routes” that balance fuel, time, ATC constraints, and customer expectations into planning options.



2. THE CHANGING ROLE OF DISPATCH & SCHEDULING

Against this backdrop, the dispatch function is evolving from “flight plan factory” to strategic risk and performance hub.

2.1 FROM TASK EXECUTION TO RISK MANAGEMENT

In an SMS world, dispatchers are:

- **Risk assessors:** Evaluating fatigue, weather, NOTAM impacts, airport suitability, and MEL configurations on every leg.
- **Gatekeepers of change management:** Flagging operational changes (new routes, new airports, new procedures) that require formal risk assessments.
- **Data storytellers:** Turning operational data into safety performance indicators (SPIs) and dashboards for leadership and regulators.



2.2 FROM STATIC PLANNING TO DYNAMIC ORCHESTRATION

With ATC constraints, NOTAM volatility, and supply-chain issues:



- OCCs must be able to re-sequence schedules, swap aircraft, and re-crew trips in near real time.
- Integrated tools — crew planning, maintenance tracking, flight planning, and communications — are becoming essential.
- Dispatchers are increasingly expected to coordinate with third-party providers (maintenance, FBOs, handling agents, and outsourced dispatch) as seamlessly as with internal teams.

2.3 FROM “BACK-OFFICE” TO STRATEGIC VOICE

Flight departments that perform well in disruption tend to:



Give dispatch a seat at the table in annual planning, capital decisions, and risk reviews.

Treat dispatchers as operational subject-matter experts, not purely administrative schedulers.



Encourage cross-training between dispatch, maintenance control, and safety roles to break down silos.



3. 2026 AND BEYOND: TEN KEY THEMES TO WATCH



The following themes are not predictions of specific events, but directional trends that flight operations leaders should plan around.

3.1 SMS MATURITY AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

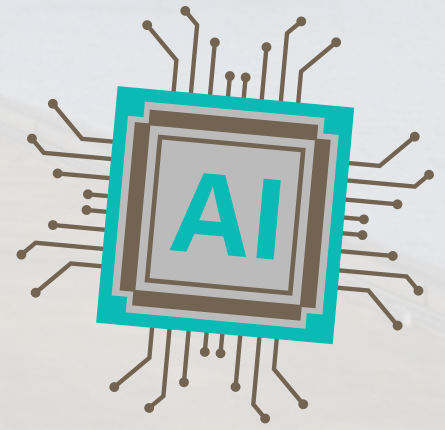
By 2026, operators will be midway through the SMS compliance window. The differentiator won't be having an SMS; it will be how mature and operational it is.

What to expect:

- Auditors and insurers will look for evidence that hazard reporting, risk assessments, and safety promotion are active in the OCC.
- Operators that use SMS data to optimize dispatch practices will see tangible benefits in safety and reliability. For example, adjusting crew pairing, curfews, or routing based on trend analysis.
- Sophisticated clients may start asking for SMS metrics as part of RFPs, charter agreements, or management contracts.

Implication for planning:

Make 2026 the year you move from building SMS processes to closing the loop, ensuring dispatch data is feeding safety reviews, and safety decisions are feeding dispatch procedures.



3.2 AI-AUGMENTED DISPATCH, NOT AI-PILOTED FLIGHTS

AI in aviation is still tightly bound, but the envelope is expanding in operations:

- The FAA's Roadmap for AI Safety Assurance explicitly recognizes AI's potential in dispatch, training, scenario prediction, and documentation (e.g., Safety Risk Management support) ([FAA](#)).
- Airlines like British Airways have already used AI for real-time weather rerouting and stand allocation, with measurable impacts on on-time performance.

In 2026, expect:

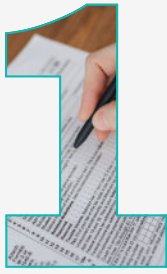
- Broader adoption of AI-assisted flight planning tools that propose fuel-optimized routes, highlight emerging weather risk, or offer tactical alternatives when ATC capacity drops.
- Natural-language interfaces that allow dispatchers to query historical operational data ("Show me all diversions to XYZ in the last 12 months and the causal factors").
- Increased regulator focus on explainability and human oversight, ensuring final decisions remain with qualified personnel.

Implication for planning:

OCCs should pilot AI-enabled tools in clearly bounded use cases (route suggestions, disruption prediction, document drafting), with robust training and oversight to avoid "automation complacency."

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY: COMPLIANCE, COST, AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

By 2026, sustainability will show up in three concrete ways:



Regulatory compliance

- a. Continued implementation of CORSIA Phase 1 and preparations for Phase 2 beginning in 2027.
- b. Creep of regional schemes like ReFuelEU and potential national SAF mandates into business aviation operations.



Cost dynamics

- a. SAF will likely carry a premium, but demand is being pushed by both policy and ESG-driven corporate policies. NBAA and industry coalitions are actively advocating measures to expand SAF production and incentives.



Client and passenger expectations

- a. Corporate flight departments may face internal mandates to report emissions, offsets, and SAF usage.
- b. High-net-worth principals increasingly ask what the sustainability plan is for their flight operations.

Implication for planning:

Dispatch and scheduling teams will need tools and processes that track fuel, routings, SAF utilization, and offsets at leg level, and can export data into sustainability reporting frameworks.

3.4 PERSISTENT ATC & INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS

Even with modernization initiatives, ATC and infrastructure challenges will not disappear overnight:

- FAA upgrades to NOTAM systems and ATC infrastructure will roll out gradually, but staffing shortages and fatigue issues are likely to remain an intermittent constraint.

Expect:

- More strategic use of departure times, routings, and alternate airports to avoid system bottlenecks.
- Continued need for contingency slots, creative routings, and early “branch planning” in dispatch; especially around peak holidays and major events.
- Greater reliance on collaborative decision-making among operators, ATC, and airports.

Implication for planning:

Build irregular operations (IROPs) playbooks that are dispatch-led: clear triggers, pre-briefed alternates, communication templates, and decision trees for key hubs and routes.

3.5 THE CONNECTIVITY ARMS RACE COMES TO BUSINESS AVIATION

Commercial airlines are rapidly moving toward free, high-bandwidth Wi-Fi as a standard amenity. While business aviation is different, principals and corporate travelers compare experiences.

By 2026:

- More business aircraft will field LEO-based connectivity and hybrid ATG/satellite solutions, enabling streaming, video calls, and richer real-time operational data ([NBAA](#)).
- Dispatch centers will gain more real-time visibility into aircraft systems, cabin conditions, and passenger needs.
- Cybersecurity for air-to-ground data flows will become a non-negotiable part of operational risk management.

Implication for planning:

Include dispatch in connectivity decisions. The value is not just passenger experience, but operational resilience (faster replans, better situational awareness) and richer data for SMS and performance management.



3.6 WORKFORCE: RETAINING DISPATCH TALENT IN A HOT LABOR MARKET

Business aviation already struggles to attract and retain technical talent. In 2026, expect continued pressure on:

- Senior dispatchers with international and complex-operations experience.
- Hybrid roles that blend dispatch, safety, and performance analysis.
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Winning organizations will:

- Offer clear career paths, including progression into leadership or safety roles.
- Provide continuous training, not just regulatory minimums, for new tech, AI tools, and international procedures.
- Explore more flexible scheduling and remote work options for certain OCC functions.

Implication for planning:

Treat the OCC as a strategic talent center, not just a cost center: invest in training, cross-training, and modern tooling that makes the job doable and satisfying.

3.7 SUPPLY-CHAIN AND MAINTENANCE HEADWINDS

Supply-chain friction will still be in the picture:

- Engine and parts shortages have significantly extended turnaround times; reports from 2025 describe owners leasing engines due to long waits, with some engine turnaround times stretching to 10 months ([Financial Times](#)).

For dispatch and scheduling:

- Expect more last-minute aircraft swaps, extended downtimes, and MX-driven schedule changes.
- Close integration between maintenance control and dispatch will be vital to minimize customer disruption.

Implication for planning:

Blend maintenance forecasting and dispatch planning: shared dashboards, joint “what-if” drills, and agreed priorities when parts scarcity forces tough choices.



3.8 EMERGING AIRCRAFT & NEW MISSION PROFILES

While 2026 won't be the year eVTOLs flood the skies, their ecosystem is maturing:

- OEMs are progressing with eVTOL and hybrid-electric concepts, and some early deployments may begin in specific corridors.
- Business aviation operators may experiment with short-haul shuttle models or first-/last-mile integrations.

Dispatch considerations:

- New aircraft types bring new performance envelopes, infrastructure requirements, and regulatory frameworks.
- OCCs must plan for multi-modal journeys that combine ground, eVTOL, and traditional bizjets.

Implication for planning:

Stay engaged with OEMs and industry groups; build internal “playbooks” for new types well before first entry into service.

3.9 DATA GOVERNANCE, CYBERSECURITY, AND VENDOR RISK

As OCCs integrate more:

- Flight planning tools
- AI decision-support systems
- EFB apps, maintenance systems, and connectivity portals

...the attack surface grows.

Regulators and insurers will increasingly expect:

- Documented cybersecurity controls around operational systems.
- Vendor risk assessments, especially where third-party tools are integrated into critical dispatch workflows.
- Clear incident response plans that include operational continuity.

Implication for planning:

Treat data and systems risk as part of operational risk, not separate IT risk. Dispatch leadership should be in the room when cyber policies and vendor choices are made.



3.10 TRANSPARENCY, KPIS, AND SERVICE-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

Corporate clients and aircraft owners are becoming more data-savvy.

They will increasingly ask:

- What are your completion rates, diversion rates, and delay causes?
- How do you measure safety performance and adherence to duty/FRMS policies?
- How quickly do you recover from major disruptions?

In 2026, expect:

- More formal service-level agreements (SLAs) and performance dashboards for managed and charter aircraft.
- Demand for near real-time visibility into trip status and disruptions. Not just post-hoc monthly reports.

Implication for planning:

Build a metrics framework now: define the KPIs that matter (safety, reliability, cost, sustainability) and ensure your dispatch and scheduling systems can capture and visualize them.





HOW OUTSOURCED DISPATCH FITS INTO A FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGY

While this whitepaper focuses on industry-wide trends, many operators, especially smaller flight departments, charter operators, and owner-operators, are asking a practical question: “How do we achieve this level of sophistication without building a 24/7 OCC from scratch?”

That is where specialized outsourced dispatch partners such as ONeCALL come into play. A modern outsourced dispatch solution can help:

- Extend coverage across time zones, holidays, and peak seasons without over-staffing internally.
- Provide specialist expertise in international ops, regulatory compliance, and new technologies that might be hard to build and maintain in-house.
- Support SMS implementation by standardizing risk assessments, data capture, and reporting across multiple aircraft or owner entities.
- Offer scalable levels of support, from night/weekend coverage to full outsourced OCC functions.

The key, however, is alignment:

- Operators should treat outsourced dispatch as a strategic partner, not a transactional vendor.
- Joint procedures, metrics, and IROPs playbooks should be developed so that owners, in-house staff, and outsourced teams operate as a single ecosystem.

In 2026 and beyond, the differentiator will be how coherently your dispatch, scheduling, maintenance, safety, and external partners work together... whether they sit in the same building or not.



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