

APP-arently More

Get Heli and TailHail, new app or web-based systems, are reinventing the way helicopters and private jets are chartered. We booked CEOs Laurent Vallet and James Moon for a discussion

Many customers appreciate the convenience of booking a private flight with just a few clicks through an app or website. The practice has become more common and is attractive to customers new to the industry, but also seasoned brokers. Now some companies, Get Heli and TailHail among them, are providing enhanced services and even a community aspect to their systems.

Get Heli is unusual in being dedicated to the helicopter charter market. CEO Laurent Vallet gives an overview: “Get Heli provides user-friendly, optimised performance on all platforms, whether

tablets, phones or computers. We receive regular positive feedback, including messages from pilots who prepare quotes on their tablet in the aircraft while they await their next client.”

In its launch territory – the UK – Get Heli has more than 100 aircraft registered from 15 operators and at Air Charter Expo 21 in September, the company announced its wider rollout. “We’ve started onboarding international operators, mostly from across Europe,” Vallet says. “We’ll drip feed these countries to brokers as they come in and so far we have helicopters on offer in Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. The list of available countries is updated and published regularly on our

request forms and we’ve already received interest from US operators.”

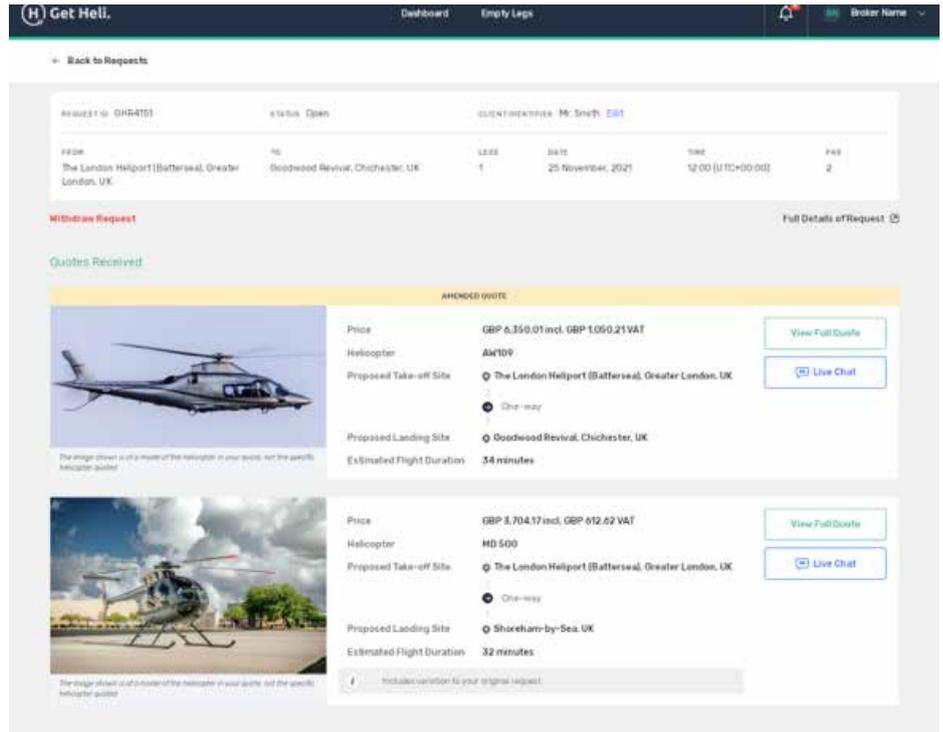
Compared to business jets, the helicopter industry’s fragmented nature complicates the process of buying charter. Get Heli learned that brokers were spending as much as a day working on a single helicopter trip. The result was seldom more than two quotes, while their limited market view prevented a full understanding of aircraft availability and prices – plus, the quality and legality of operators, especially abroad, was not always assured. Lengthy email exchanges and multiple calls to clarify customer requirements or the technicalities of the mission were also common.

“The old way is therefore highly



TailHail's James Moon aims to place more passengers here, safely and sustainably

inefficient,” Vallet says. “We’re addressing that comprehensively. Operators are registered, sorted and vetted, all in one place. Request forms are standardised and comprehensive, from simple one-way to complex multi-leg/multi-helicopter trips. Notifications are sent automatically, quoting happens without the need to chase and requests are easy to track from the dashboard. Quotes are clear and easy to compare, with prices broken down to show [re]positioning costs, landing fees and taxes, with photos and specification of the exact helicopter. AOC and insurance documents are ready to download, online secure payment through Stripe is available if required, and we’ve even standardised the operator/broker flight contract, working together with city law firm Kennedys Law, to the benefit of the industry. If any questions remain or the flight is particularly complex, an online chat function is available within the platform.



Quote presentation on Get Heli

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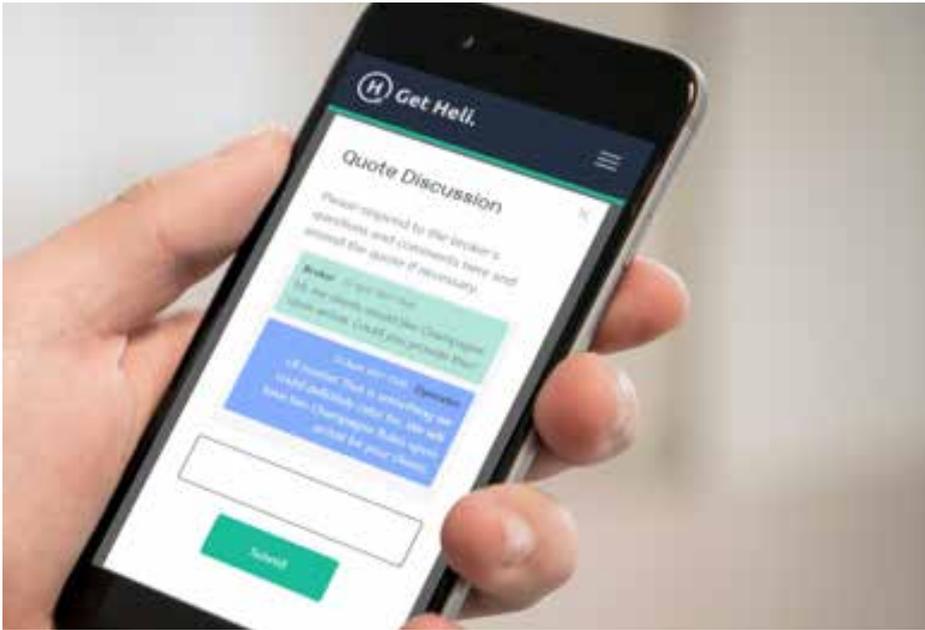
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Get Heli chat function on smart phone

“And, while brokers wait for quotes to arrive, price estimates based on our historical data are displayed. They allow the brokers to revert to their clients within minutes and hopefully secure that mandate before their peers.”

Get Heli is impressively comprehensive, therefore, but Vallet is clear on its remit. “We are merely facilitating business through technology. We are neither stepping into the process, nor taking part in the agreement and, if online payment is selected, we don’t transit funds through Get Heli either. The brokers are very much in control of the process and in direct touch with operators on the platform just as they used to be. They can ask all the complex questions they need to and do a good job for their clients. The only difference is that now they have a lot more time to organise other charters or prospect new clients.”

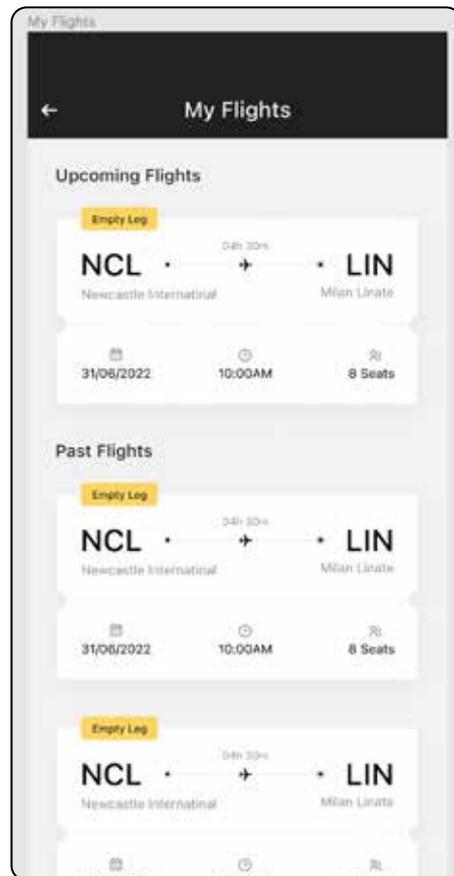
But Get Heli isn’t only for brokers, it’s for operators too. For them, Get Heli promises a good source of reliable business, international exposure, a much smoother charter arrangement process and a centralised booking management system. And thanks to Get Heli’s bespoke request and quoting forms, operators also receive comprehensive, detailed requests from brokers to which they can respond with quotes exactly meeting the needs and

flexibility requested by consumers, but within operational limits. And the chat functionality available to brokers is also there for operators to contact them direct.

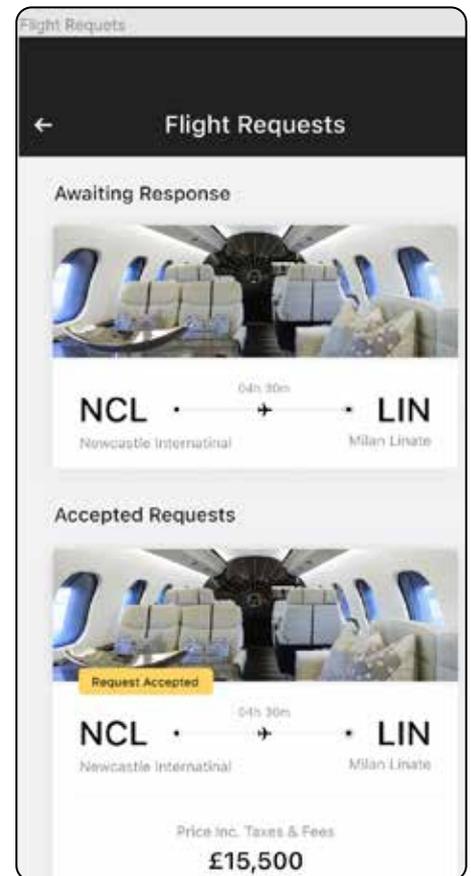
TailHail

A new jet charter membership service, TailHail offers customers access to private jets and a variety of ancillary benefits through a dedicated website and app for iOS or Android. Debuted in spring 2020, TailHail is still in the relatively early stages of its development and CEO James Moon candidly admits: “Our technology is only at 5% of what we want in terms of user experience, but we’ll officially launch in April 2022 with more than 50% of our functionality in place and operational.”

The system is not yet set up to integrate with other platforms, but Moon is continuing his fund-raising efforts and describes such integration as part of TailHail’s future ‘stage four deployment’. “We’ll have more on that capability towards the end of next year, but we’re already handling global flight requests and while we haven’t been particularly active from a marketing perspective, I am happy with our ability to generate traction in such a short space of time.”



Interface with the TailHail system



Quoting system via TailHail



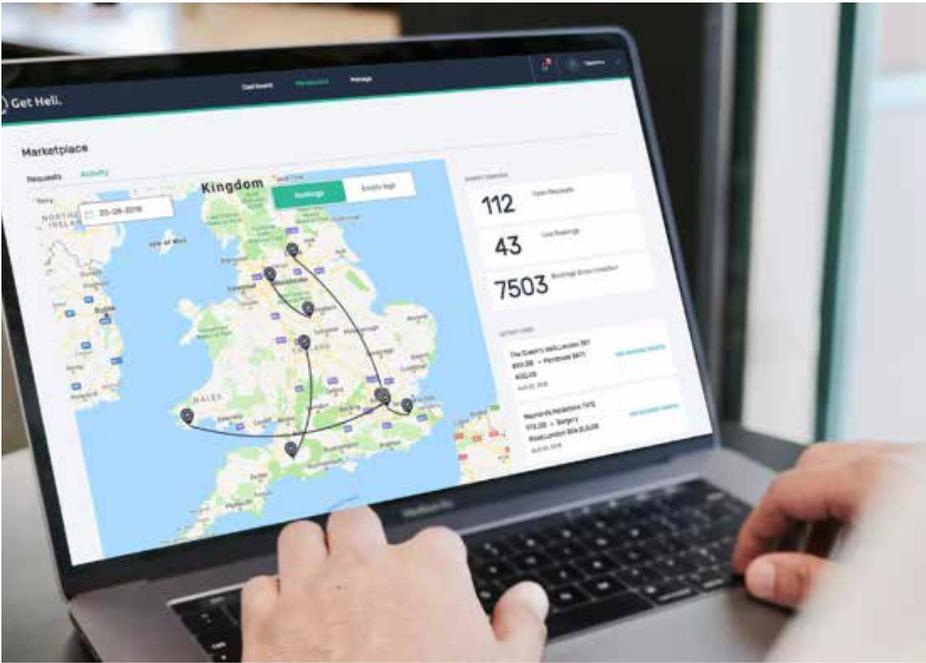
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The Get Heli platform on laptop

An annual membership fee provides access to the TailHail app and members' area on the website, both of which are portals into the TailHail world. Moon's ambition is to offer private jet experiences, rather than simply flights, and he notes: "TailHail offers a wide range of events and benefits. At present we have more than 45 complementary brand partners worldwide, from wine-tasting events in the French Riviera to an exclusive partnership with a hotel in the Maldives.

"And we are working to make private flying more accessible, affordable and sustainable. I believe that flight sharing is a great way to make our sector more efficient and truly affordable for individuals, families and businesses. Our users are able to find out who they might be sharing a flight with. We've seen our competitors struggle with handling shared flights, and we've learned from them how to offer a great shared flight experience."

TailHail therefore allows its members clarity on who they might be choosing to share an aircraft with, but what about the aircraft itself and the operator? Does booking through the TailHail system imply a level of guaranteed service and safety? "I speak on behalf of the sector globally when I say I'm appalled that illegal charter still exists," Moon states.

"It is a stain on our industry and our efforts to eradicate it have been poor. Here at TailHail, we safety vet and approve each aircraft operator before they are allowed onto the system. If they are unable to complete our aircraft upload process then they do not become part of the TailHail flight network. We ask for a comprehensive set of information, from a copy of their AOC, through insurance details, to accident history and more. The data is manually approved by a TailHail aviation team member before the operator appears to our customers."

Regular meetings with signed-up operators ensure they are happy with their TailHail experience and that Moon and his team are content with the relationship. At this still early development stage, the company is also enthusiastic about customer response, good and bad. "I want to address issues so that all our members have positive experiences," Moon declares. "Operating honestly and transparently, we've had direct discussions with users about what they expect from the TailHail experience and this has already allowed us to develop new features and functionality that will further set us apart from our competitors and offer one of the best private flight experiences around." ■

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Laurent Vallet, CEO, Get Heli