

Gabriella Somerville bio

Gabriella has over 25 years' experience in commercial and business aviation. Starting her career with Virgin Atlantic as Cabin Crew she was selected for the carrier's prolific promotional team, hosting VIP inaugural flights to several US cities. She then moved to British Airways, working in a number of roles, ultimately Manager of Cabin Crew at Gatwick Airport.

After running her own boutique events management company, creating bespoke events for private jet and concierge agencies, in 2006 Gabriella was appointed Client Relationship Manager for Bombardier company Skyjet International. She honed her customer relationship skills and aviation knowledge to evolve an innovative Jet Membership programme before joining successor company VistaJet as VP Program Sales.

Gabriella founded ConnectJets Ltd. in 2009 with her own seed capital, a business she continues to run today as MD. By year two, ConnectJets had bolstered turnover to just under £4m. Just recently Gabriella secured fresh new investment to expand charter/sales activity.

In 2012, Gabriella was invited to deliver the keynote at China's Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) Airshow. Addressing government officials and private enterprises, she spoke about future trends in business aviation, opining on what makes a successful business aviation model.

In January 2014, Gabriella secured a contract with Italian aircraft manufacturer Piaggio Aerospace as exclusive Sales Agent for the Avanti and new Avanti EVO business turboprop in the UK and Ireland. She became the first business woman at Piaggio to step into the role.

In 2014, Gabriella was selected as mentor for Sir Richard Branson's new Entrepreneurial Programme, *Virgin Start Up*, a not for profit Virgin Company for entrepreneurs.

Charity work is close to her heart and ConnectJets has raised over £150,000 for the Children's Hospice and Military Charities. RAF Odiham and Help for Heroes are key beneficiaries.