

# LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT IN THE ASIA- PACIFIC REGION

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**David Longridge,**  
Boeing Business Jets President

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Interview by Litalia Yoakum



**W**ith a growing market, the announcement of a new addition, and enthusiastic showings at business aviation shows across the globe, Boeing Business Jets has experienced an exciting few last years – in addition to marking its 20th anniversary this year for the popular jet series.

The new BBJ Max family was launched in 2014, with the BBJ Max 8 which has a 6,555 nautical mile range, more cabin space than a BBJ 2, and three times the cargo space. The BBJ Max 9 was launched just a year later, with a 6,375nm range. The newest member of the family, the BBJ Max 7, was announced at the 2016 Farnborough International Airshow. This ultra-long-range aircraft boasts an impressive 7,000nm range and is set to be launched in 2022.

In the interim, the BBJ team is continuing to capitalize on the success of the BBJ family. David Longridge, a veteran of Boeing, is at the forefront of Boeing Business Jets as the President. Since 1996, 238 BBJ airplanes have been sold, including the BBJ, BBJ 777, BBJ 787 and BBJ 747.

### What is the current outlook of business aviation in the Asia-Pacific region?

It's very healthy. We are very happy about how things are going for Boeing Business Jets. We have a total of 53 BBJs, including narrow and wide bodies, in the Asia-Pacific region. The bulk of these (38) are the BBJ family – based on the 737. There are three additional 737s that were sold outside of the BBJ framework. There have been four 787s sold, two 777s sold, one 747-8 sold and five BBJ Max (our new variant) sold in the region. Overall, total sales are healthy for us.

In service, there are 36 BBJs. 33 of them are from the BBJ family, two from the 737s, and one 787. Relative to the size and expense of a BBJ this size and price range, there is a lot of market activity.

### Is there one market that is more active than others?

Greater China is definitely the most active market in this region. We have 18 aircraft in service there, which amounts to 50% of the entire region's in-service fleet. This includes the region's first 787 BBJ. Of those 18 currently in service, 14 of them have entered service since 2014. This is relatively recent.

Greater China is also active, and doing particularly well, in the pre-owned market. In the last few months of 2015, five aircraft were sold to China and this year a few were sold, as well.

### Why is BBJ doing so well in the Greater China market?

The number one reason this market prefers the BBJ is the product itself. Boeing Business Jets has the only aircraft that goes non-stop from Beijing to New York and back again – that's the BBJ Max 8. The BBJ has about a 500nm range advantage over the next comparable

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business jet, which is an ACJ Neo. Aside from just the product, we offer a great product support organization and we have a dedicated field support representative in Beijing. We also have a fantastic sales force who really understand the Chinese market. It's not just the product, but the team we have behind it; the BBJ team is enthusiastic, professional, and knowledgeable and the market is responding to this through sales.

### What are the main differences between the market in the Asia-Pacific region and the markets of North America and Europe?

The biggest, most obvious difference for us between these markets is the pace of sales. China is by far Boeing Business Jets' most active region. It is a knowledgeable customer base. And more so, the sheer size and pace of the market is outdoing other regions. Even when China's economic growth is low, it still outpaces other regions. The distance that these customers are flying is often much longer than the distances of a customer in North America or Europe. This plays well into the BBJ market.



### What can the market expect from the latest BBJ addition – the BBJ Max 7?

The BBJ Max 7 – based on the 737-7 Max airliner – will be ready for deliveries in 2022. It will be six feet longer than a current BBJ. It's a bit smaller than a BBJ 2, but bigger than a BBJ, with a 7,000nm range. It will have a lower cabin altitude feature, for a maximum cabin altitude of 6,500 feet. It will also have the things in it that make the BBJ successful today, but it will fly further and be physically larger. This is a very exciting product and we believe this aircraft will sell very well.

The BBJ Max 7, 8, 9 and the BBJ 787 is a killer lineup. We would love to sell more 747 and more 777, but looking at the market the 787 and the BBJ Max will be the foundation of the market going forward.

### Will the latest BBJ Max detract from the BBJ pre-owned market?

No, not at all. One of the things that amazes me about this market is its sheer depth and size. If you look at Gulfstream or Bombardier, the pre-owned market hasn't slowed them down and they have a lot more to contend with than we do. The percentage of pre-owned aircraft available, relative to our total fleet, is in line with that of our competitors, so we aren't worried.

A big segment of our market consists of new aircraft deals and there's the other growing segment, which is the pre-owned market. A pre-owned aircraft is a great way to introduce people to what it's like to fly an ultra-large business jet, if you're moving up from, say a smaller jet. Some of these pre-owned BBJs are more financially within reach.

We believe that once you've flown on an aircraft of this size, with a shower, a bedroom, office, and a dining room, then it's difficult to go back to a smaller aircraft. Pre-owned

aircraft are a great way of introducing new customers to flying in a Boeing aircraft.

### What can we expect from Boeing Business Jets in the coming years?

In the ultra-large business jet range, we expect to see relatively stable and steady sales for the foreseeable future. This is not an enormous market, so we don't expect the numbers that Gulfstream or Bombardier may have. However, we do expect to sell between 6-10 aircraft annually.

Outside of sales, Boeing Business Jets has come a long way over the past few years. I worked for Boeing Business Jets in Western Europe 20 years ago. This company has a far more global brand, product and sales team than it did at the beginning of BBJ. Now, we have a nicely balanced market, where we can sell steadily.

Our product line will focus on the 737 max family and the 787. Probably more Max, but over time the 787 will still sell.

We'll continue to enhance our products. We are just putting the finishing touches on the upcoming Max 7, which will join the BBJ family. The 787 continues to be a very exciting product for a specific part of the market place. As always, we will continue to market our aircraft and improve them – making them faster and more interesting. We'll continue to stick to the perspective that when you buy an aircraft of this size, it's all about putting what you want in the interior. We're really pushing customization. Overall, we'll continue to be a world leader in customer support, and provide that with enthusiasm and a knowledgeable team.

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