

COMBINING EAST AND WEST IN CHINA GA

INTERVIEW WITH **DAVID PENG**, GENERAL MANAGER KINGS AVIATION

Interview by Litalia Yoakum



In 1996, David Peng was introduced to aviation for the first time at the “China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition” in Zhuhai, opening his eyes — and ears — to the roaring sounds of fighter jets, military and civil aircraft. The sights and sounds piqued Peng’s interest and left a lasting impression. During that time, China had also begun embracing general aviation; an opportune time to make a move in that direction. Since that first show in Zhuhai, Peng has grown with the industry; going on to establishing his own general aviation company in Shenzhen, China.

What is your background in the aviation industry?

In 2005, China’s leading general aviation service provider — Avion Pacific Limited — was recruiting marketing personnel, and I decided to make the move from the automobile industry to aviation. With the company, I performed market analysis and aircraft sales. It was also during this time that Avion Pacific’s

Chairman, Mr. Wu Zhendong and the current Asia Vice Sales Director, Mr. XueFeng Liao helped to guide me through the developing world of general aviation.

As an authorized agent of Hawker Beechcraft products, Avion Pacific enabled me to achieve one of my career highlights, which was the sale of the first Hawker 4000, a super-medium business jet. This was the first one to be imported into China.

What inspired Kings Aviation's establishment?

It began as a thought in 2009. With restrictions on lower altitude airspace becoming more relaxed, it was anticipated that China's GA market growth rate would accelerate; thus creating a large aircraft management demand and the demand for GA pilots.

In 2010, I was sent to establish a general aviation company, which is now King's Aviation. It started with aircraft sales and moved to aircraft operation. On June 13 2012, Shenzhen Kings Aviation acquired a CAAC Part 91 certification.

After years of exploration and development, Kings Aviation is now building up its brand and reputation in the GA industry. Our main operations are powerline patrol, forestry, air tourism, pilot training, serving power cable companies, forestry and firefighting departments, tourist attractions, and corporate and private aviation clients.

Currently, we operate out of Guangdong, Yangjiang, with a second base at Shenzhen Nantou Heliport. These two locations are pivotal to the services that we provide. For the needs of powerline patrol operations, Kings Aviation uses over 20 helicopter landing spots in Hubei, Hunan, Guizhou, Chongqing, Sichuan, and Yunan. For our forestry operation, we have bases at Jingzhou Shashi Airport and Wuchang Airport, while tourism operations are based in Qinghai, Guide and Chaka.

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What aircraft does Kings Aviation operate?

Currently, we operate two Airbus AS350B3s, one Sikorsky Schweitzer 300CBI, and we are planning to bring in a medium- or heavy-size helicopter, as well as fixed-wing aircraft.

What potential do you see in China's GA industry?

China's GA market is still limited by its small economic scale, operation restrictions and irrational competition. However, the GA market has huge potential for a number of reasons

including: 1) the country's large land mass, population, and high economic growth; 2) the government's continued support; and 3) the high enthusiasm among the investment world for China GA. Government executive transport, EMS, natural disaster and emergency response, construction, forestry and firefighting, air tourism, private recreational flight, and pilot training all have great room for growth.



What do you consider the industry's greatest challenge?

The greatest challenge is still the fact that the GA market is limited in terms of economic scale; the cake is small and everybody wants a piece of it. The average flying hours per aircraft are still low and operating cost is increasing, which dampens business development and growth. For safety reasons, GA operation relies on experienced chief pilots, which causes a shortage of experienced pilots. Young pilots often don't have the chance to build up their required flight hours to become an experienced pilot, causing a problem for GA development. Solving this problem requires effort from many different sides; to train better personnel and lower the cost of operation.

Still, GA is in a better position now than before the government's widespread support for the industry. At that time GA was considered on only a small economic scale. There was limited investment, a restricted operational environment, and a lack of professional personnel.

What makes Kings Aviation a reputable company?

Since 2012, keeping "Safety First" in mind, Kings Aviation has worked hard and built a reputable image by committing to our customers. The company has a crew with an international mindset, excellent potential and dedicated behavior. Influenced greatly by Avion Pacific, Kings Aviation has a company mission of promoting China GA development. Our team consists of international professionals, with outstanding capabilities, dedication, spirit, and cooperation.

www.kingsaviation.cn