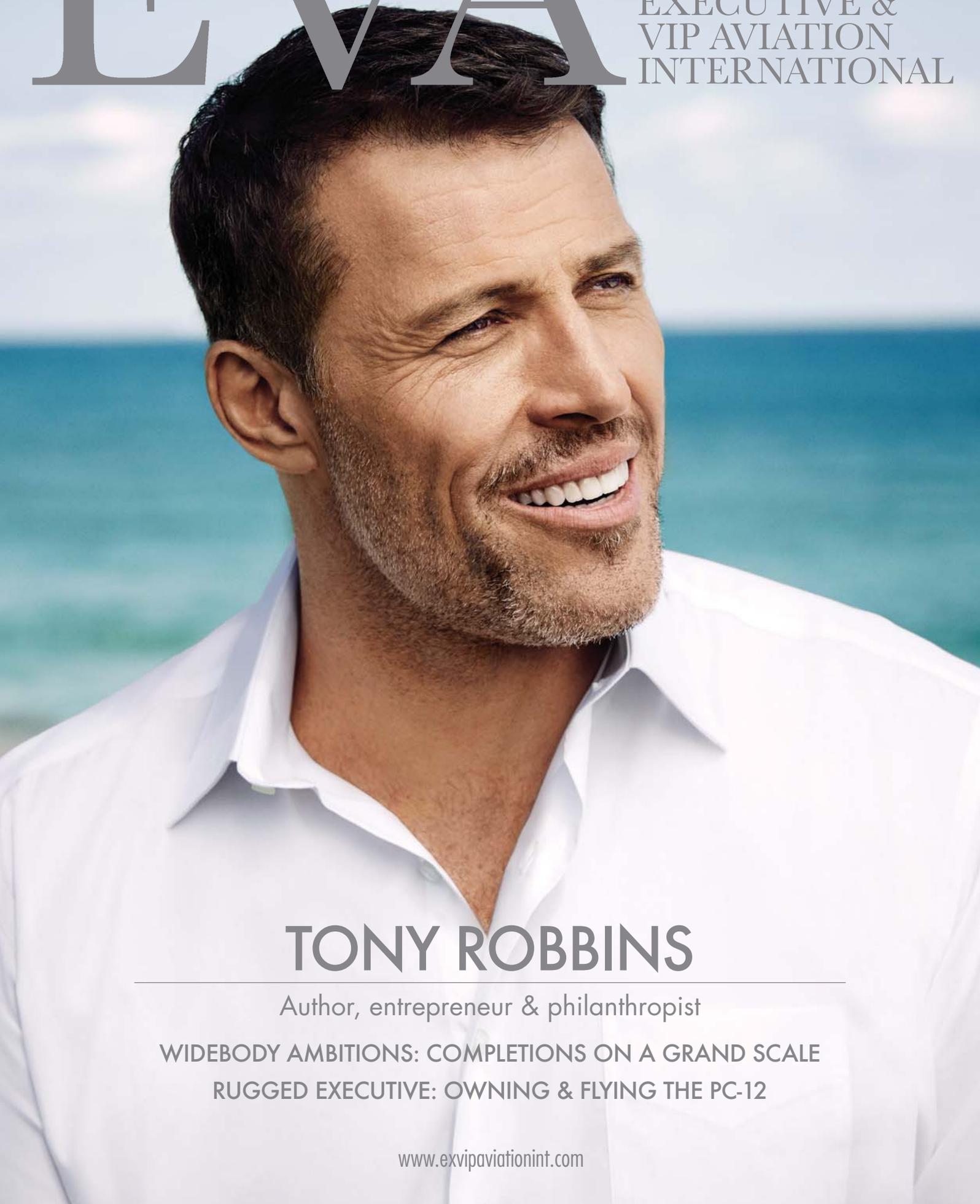


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Penetrating Corporate MRO Commsoft OASES

Nick Godwin is Managing Director of Commsoft, the company behind OASES (Open Aviation Strategic Engineering System), a comprehensive MRO control and monitoring software. Very well established among the commercial airlines, the product is now making inroads into business aviation, where operators and MROs are realising the benefits their airline colleagues have long enjoyed from the software.

With a dedicated team behind it, OASES offers huge levels of functionality with multiple capabilities; it's modular, embraces mobile technology and adaptable to integrate with existing systems. Ever enthusiastic, Godwin provides OASES's very public face – *EVA* managed to catch up with him during a rare few hours on the ground.

What brought you into the aerospace industry?

I was surrounded by aviation as I grew up. My dad was in the RAF, my uncle was an air traffic controller and my aunt was a hostess with British Midland at Glasgow Airport.

I spent my early career as a sales engineer with British Aerospace on the One-Eleven and 146 at Brooklands, and then I progressed to Prestwick with the launch of the Jetstream 31 and 41 regional airliners, before spending time with BAe in Washington DC. Then my career took me back to Scotland and on to Toulouse, in a joint venture with ATR, before I moved to the Derby area with Data Systems & Solutions (DS&S), a Rolls-Royce subsidiary.

I was briefly involved with Commsoft as a potential supplier to one of its customers, BMI, and then joined it in 2008.



Nick Godwin, Managing Director at Commsoft.

How did your previous experience influence your early work at Commsoft?

At BAe I was deeply involved in the launch, sales, marketing and specific upgrade projects around regional aircraft, including the J31, J41 and 146/RJ families. The work engaged my passion for aviation, while I learned about aircraft performance, operating economics and the factors, including maintenance, that contribute to them. I gained an extensive aviation grounding, but also understood the value of hard work, working in a leadership team and seeing new cultures worldwide.

Later, DS&S exposed me to the technical excellence of Rolls-Royce, but also taught me, the hard way, that organisations should not stifle talent. From a technical perspective, I profited hugely from understanding the power of data in transforming an operation with decision support tools and proactive reporting.

How would you describe Commsoft in 2008?

It was a nice company with nice people who had good intentions towards their customers, but I sensed that it lacked direction, consistent processes, energy and measurement. My first priority was to win more business, but at the same time it was clear we had to do more to retain

customers through service improvements, better processes and a more comprehensive technical offering, meeting the much broader functional requirements of an aviation engineering operation.

As a Chelsea fan, I often use football analogies around teamwork... we had to start from the back with a strong defence, build a global team ethic with a strong midfield and find some decent strikers! This increased energy, flexibility and focus on winning for our customers in delivering business value has become Commsoft's ethic... while also retaining a smile!

When I joined in 2008, there were around 35 customers. More than 20 of those remain, while OASES has now grown to in excess of 80 sites, supporting more than 120 aviation operations in 50-plus countries.

How has OASES evolved since 2008?

Commsoft uses a web-based service system. It's an extensive source of data covering customer-requested mods and improvements. We offer a personalised account manager team, which stays close to customers, backed up by detailed exchanges with our customer base at user groups, every 15 months or so.

Our developments are offered free of charge to all customers subscribing to the relevant modules within our standard rental model. Developments are driven by our customers' value needs. I'm always looking for more pace, but we've significantly developed much broader functionality and keep apace with technology through competitor benchmarking. We've just invested heavily in mobile technologies and interfacing with other systems, including electronic techlogs.

What benefits does OASES bring to business aircraft operators and MROs?

OASES works well in corporate aviation, but this has not been our focus until now. Several improvements have

been made in corporate aviation MRO and OASES can provide umbrella fleet management for operations managed in many OEM-embedded systems with many third party customers. The OEM-embedded systems dominate the market, but have weaknesses.

Commssoft has seen extensive growth with its CAMO customers, many of them looking after corporate aircraft for other operators. The basic principles of CAMO and MRO process control apply whatever an aircraft's role. As such, OASES covers these equally. But the corporate jet market is characterised by its much lower aircraft utilisation (typically 250-700 hours per annum for 'flexjet'-type schemes), compared to 2,000-3,500 hours for airliners. As such, OASES, which tracks hours, cycles and calendar-based events in parallel, covers all aspects. The difference is that an operator using OASES is more likely to be using a LUMP (low utilisation maintenance programme), with more emphasis on calendar-based checks.

From the MRO side, the processes of gathering, monitoring and managing production data from the shop floor are the same. OASES has been extensively developed to meet the requirements of various customers, including Harrods Aviation, to manage invoice generation and commercial management, and help develop future quotes.

While the processes for corporate aviation MRO are similar to those of airline MRO, a system like OASES has to cater for a much greater range of 'drop-in' customers, requesting smaller packages of work, or more diversity. As such, a corporate MRO is likely to have a larger range of customers from a wider registration base with smaller work content, all of which must be quoted clearly and invoiced promptly.

Commssoft currently has six corporate MRO customers, but we expect this to grow since OASES developments have focused on vastly improving functionality, including mobile applications, giving customer views.

Tell us more about Chelsea... And any other passions?

I'm a True Blue, an avid Chelsea fan, thanks to my family origins around southwest London. I like their combination of power, pace and skill, married to great mental strength – it's something all successful business need.

Otherwise, I'm an aviation nutter and something of an 'anorak'! I'm rare in enjoying long transit stops in strange airports, often with a camera. I've been hugely fortunate to enjoy in excess 80 countries and I've logged almost 10,000 hours from more than 5,000 flights from over 550 airfields.

Other passions include military aviation, airshow photography and music, which follows me around the world. My wife and I enjoy travel and we're working through our bucket list of places, food and cultures to visit together. And then there are the joys of our darling four-year old grandson and family gatherings. ■



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