

Mental Aerobatics: Thinking Around A Gyrating Marketplace

by Jay Mesinger

When an aerobatic pilot begins to enter a loop or barrel roll, he or she must plan for each speed change, aileron shift and elevator movement, anticipating each and every segment of the stunt as the horizon constantly changes. In the same way, buyers, sellers, dealers and brokers must be prepared for today's changing, gyrating marketplace.

Each entrant into this evolving market must approach it with clear convictions and a conscious strategy. If you are a seller, the good old days may be over. It will take more careful planning than ever before to sell your aircraft in today's supply-rich environment. The days of merely returning a phone call and selling an aircraft at asking price may become a story to tell your grandkids. Inventories are up and on the rise. In many segments of the market, the number of aircraft sold to end-users in the first six months of 2000 will have outpaced the last six months of the year. For instance, the Citation II market reveals 48 retail sales in the first six months and only 27 in the last five months of 2000. Available inventories were up 19.5% over the same period.

The lesson? *Do not enter the market passively.* Like an aerobatic pilot planning each phase of a maneuver, enter as a seller determined to get in and out of the market quickly. Price your aircraft aggressively. Vigorously promote the



benefits of the aircraft. Become a true marketer able to put yourself in the buyer's place, asking what will it take to win your aircraft a second look and make the buyer's short list?

If you are a buyer, these changing market horizons mean that you have certain opportunities that have not been as obvious over the last five years. In some ways, the buyer's dilemma is like that of the person buying a computer or selecting an IT solution. Some say, "I am

going to wait until they get faster and cheaper." If you really don't need a computer, that logic works. But if you need the increased productivity, you'll eventually figure out that waiting has a cost as well.

Buying correctly is still, and always will be, equal parts art and science. Since price is a one-time thing and cost is a lifetime thing, there is much more to buying than price. This is no time for buyers to be cavalier about the process. My message is always the same for the men and women who serve as buying and selling representatives: we have to work smart and continue to demonstrate a professionalism and expertise that goes beyond closing a transaction. Service that leverages years of experience must be our mission as we help buyers and sellers navigate both the top and the bottom of the loop of each transaction.



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