

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Skydiving operator sees jump in business and fall in operating costs

Honeywell TPE331-12JR turboprop engine helps improve efficiency and performance.



Overview:

Donnerflug Aviation Services GmbH, a Germany-based skydiving operator, has grown its business with the Supervan 900 aircraft – a Cessna Caravan conversion with Honeywell’s TPE331-12JR turboprop engine offered by Texas Turbine Conversions, Inc. Since operating the Supervan 900, **Donnerflug has increased its business by almost 50 percent and has reduced its fuel burn approximately 30 percent, from six liters per jumper to about four liters per jumper.**

Background:

Based in Saarlouis, Germany, Donnerflug started in 1988 when four members of one of the oldest and biggest skydiving clubs in Germany established the company and personally invested in a Cessna 206 Soloy. With the capacity to carry six skydivers, it proved to be a good airplane for building the company’s tandem and skydiving student business. Over time, Donnerflug grew to operating three 206 Soloy planes and averaging 6,500 jumps per season.

Business Need:

In 2009, with a twenty-year-old aircraft and a desire to attract new business to fuel additional growth, Donnerflug management decided to change its fleet. They wanted an aircraft that would allow them to carry more passengers per flight. In addition, Markus Bastuck, Donnerflug’s managing partner and an active member of the German eight-way formation skydiving team, wanted to be able to accommodate team training and host skydiving competitions. Donnerflug also wanted in their aircraft a proven engine that burned less fuel, was reliable, offered lower maintenance costs and that would meet the strict noise limitations of Germany. After searching for Cessna Caravan aircraft powered by other engines, Bastuck learned about Texas Turbine Conversions’ Supervan 900 with Honeywell’s TPE331-12JR turboprop powerplant.

QUICK FACTS

Customer Results

- Increased capacity per flight 3.5 times
- Almost 77 percent increase in business from greater capacity and ability to attract new customers
- Reduced fuel burn approximately 30 percent
- Quieter fly-over
- Longer maintenance intervals
- Lower overall operating costs

Honeywell Solutions

- Honeywell TPE331-12JR engine in the Supervan 900 conversion aircraft
- Implementation partner: Texas Turbine Conversions, Inc.

Why Honeywell

- Proven engine performance and reliability
- Reputation for leading aviation technology provider
- Global channel partner network

Customer

- Name: Donnerflug Aviation Services GmbH
- Geography/Location: Saarlouis, Germany
- Industry: General Aviation, SkyDiving Operator
- Website: www.fsz-saar.de



“As a result of operating the [Honeywell-powered] Supervan 900, we have attracted more jumpers and been able to accommodate other activities at Donnerflug... This aircraft differentiates us from our local competitors and is directly tied to our recent business growth.”

Markus Bastuck
Managing Partner & Pilot
Donnerflug Aviation Services GmbH

Solution:

While serving as a corporate pilot, Bastuck had positive experiences flying a Merlin 300 airplane powered by the Honeywell TPE331-10 engine. Based on his knowledge of and experience with the engine, the Supervan 900 immediately caught Bastuck's attention.

“Flying is my profession and from my experience with the Merlin, I knew I liked Honeywell engines,” said Bastuck. “The TPE331 was reliable, had high time between overhaul (TBO) and low fuel burn, was quiet and provided direct power response due to the single shaft. I knew the Caravan would be a solid jump ship, so we were ready to go with the PT6-powered aircraft. But when I found out through Texas Turbines that I could have the Caravan powered with the Honeywell engine, I knew that was the way to go.”

After researching options and speaking with Bobby Bishop of Texas Turbine Conversions and others, Bastuck was convinced the Honeywell-powered Supervan 900 aircraft could deliver what the business needed: more power, better performance, higher TBO, lower fuel consumption and lower per-hour operating cost. In the spring of 2010, Donnerflug took possession of its Supervan 900 with the TPE331-12JR powerplant.

Benefits:

Since operating the Supervan 900, Donnerflug has certainly been able to fly more missions with more jumpers, take off shorter, climb faster, cruise farther and burn less fuel – all while keep the neighbors around the drop zone happy because of the aircraft's low noise signature. Bastuck pointed to these specific benefits compared to their previous aircraft:

- Increased capacity 3.5 times to 21 skydivers per flight – up from 6 skydivers per flight*
- Increased jumps per season to 11,500 from 6,500 – almost 77 percent increase in business
- Improved fuel efficiency – decreased fuel consumption from 6 liters per jumper to 4-4.5 liters per jumper, representing a 30 percent reduction in fuel consumption per jumper
- Increase in TBO up to 7,000 hours
- Quiet flyover with certification to 76 decibels – meets Germany's Airfield Noise Protection Order and allows Donnerflug great flexibility in operating at the airfield

“As a result of operating the Supervan 900, we have attracted more jumpers and been able to accommodate other activities at Donnerflug,” said Bastuck. Specifically, the German national four-way and Swiss national eight-way formation teams chose the Donnerflug skydiving center as their

training base. “This aircraft differentiates us from our local competitors and is directly tied to our recent business growth.”

“The Supervan 900 is the most efficient aircraft that I've encountered so far in skydiving business,” said Dr. Joern Alexander Thiele, Germany Paratec-Saar National Skydiving League. “The climb times compared with the numbers of skydivers is very impressive. The advantages concerning speed, comfort and capacity of the aircraft made Donnerflug into a professional dropzone. I wouldn't be surprised to see more skydive operators with Supervans in the next few years.”

To help continue growing the business, Donnerflug has teamed up with an investor to purchase another Supervan 900 in 2011.

“We have been so satisfied with this aircraft and our return on investment that we've signed contracts to get another Honeywell-powered Supervan 900 from Texas Turbine Conversions,” said Bastuck.

* Grand Caravan U.S. registration is 21 people

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