Gatwick Diamond-based MacCarthy Aviation Holdings Ltd is an internationally renowned aircraft interiors company, which designs, manufactures, refurbishes, upgrades and retrofits aircraft interiors predominantly for commercial airlines and operators.

MacCarthy Aviation is an example of a Gatwick Diamond-based company that has taken advantage of its location close to the international airport. “Being located near to Gatwick has many advantages,” says Graham Hutchins, Marketing Manager at MacCarthy Aviation. “These include being in close proximity to some of our key customers and suppliers, ease of access to international and domestic markets and access to a skilled workforce.”

Established in 1962, MacCarthy Aviation has been to every corner of the globe for interior projects. Its core focus is the refurbishment and upgrade of aircraft lavatories, galleys, seats and baby cradles. Also included in its wide-ranging experience is the manufacture of stowages, bulkheads, literature pockets, bassinets and galleys. “We focus on the 2nd and 3rd tier airlines with smaller, older fleets,” says Graham. “That said, we count British Airways, Virgin Atlantic and Airbus as key customers.”

Throughout its fifty year history, MacCarthy Aviation has developed a rich heritage in VIP interiors for heads of state, politicians and private customers – a niche market which is much in demand today, as Graham explains: “We have had particular success in the Middle East, which has developed over a number of years. We have worked on some fabulous aircraft for Middle Eastern Royal families where no expense is spared. We have recently finished an extensive project for a Middle Eastern Prince, although we can’t elaborate due to confidentiality!”

Thanks to the development of modern technology, MacC arthy Aviation no longer faces barriers to conducting international business. “The international language of this industry is English, which is a massive plus,” says Graham, “and the only minor hurdle we face is working with customers in different time zones, although this is easily overcome using today’s modern technology.” In previous years, international collaboration could result in unexpected complications, as Graham recalls: “Many years ago, a team of fitters refurbishing an aircraft in Dakar were caught up in a military coup. They made a swift exit home – but only after they had finished the job!”

MacCarthy Aviation credits the success of its international strategy to its experience and contacts, as Graham explains: “Our staff have been in the industry for many years and have built up an extensive network of contacts. It’s more a case of ‘who you know’ and keeping in touch.”

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“Email campaigns have proved a cost effective way of reaching out to new customers and you can’t ignore trade magazines and exhibitions,” continues Graham. “This is a very niche market we are in. The recent Interiors Expo in Hamburg saw us come away from the show with over £10 million of serious enquiries, about which we hope to make a formal announcement very soon.”

Rosemary French, Executive Director of the Gatwick Diamond Initiative, considers MacCarthy Aviation’s development of its international business a fine example for other Gatwick Diamond-based businesses looking to grow in a niche market: “The Gatwick Diamond Initiative encourages businesses to capitalise further and faster on growth through international activity, as exemplified by MacCarthy Aviation’s success. Particularly impressive is the company’s global customer base, which is a credit to its marvellous craftsmen, who have built the company’s reputation over the last fifty years,” says Rosemary. “We wish them every success in the next fifty years and beyond!”