

Coffee Talk with: Raphael Maitre



During EAA AirVenture, Raphaël Maitre takes a break on the Daher Aircraft exhibit stand's Skydeck from his busy schedule of customer support meetings.



A career based on passion

Raphael began his professional career as a mechanical engineer, working in the space division of Aerospatiale (now ArianeGroup) on precision manufacturing and structural components for the European Ariane launch vehicle.

At this point, he already had identified his aviation-oriented future. "I had created a TBM drawing in the MacDraw vector graphics application," he stated. "I kept it on my wall and said: "That's where I want to be."

The goal became a reality in 1999 when he joined SOCATA – the predecessor company to Daher – as part of the technical support team. Since then, Raphael has taken on multiple roles: managing the engineering teams, overseeing the launch of the TBM 900 program, and ultimately returning to supporting the owners and operators of TBM and Kodiak aircraft as Vice President of Customer Support.

In parallel, he realized the dream of becoming a private pilot – using his home base in the Tarbes region to fly over southwest France and the region's Pyrenees mountains with a French-built Robin DR401 or SOCATA TB 20 Trinidad.

Raphael also received his Class Rating in the Kodiak aircraft: "It was a great first-hand experience to go through the training...wrapping up with the check ride that validates a pilot's understanding of the aircraft's operation and systems. Although my relationship with the TBM goes back many years, I'm now a big fan of the Kodiak 100 and Kodiak 900 too! "



Raphaël received his Class Rating in the Kodiak, providing him with a perspective on training processes.

"You never fly alone"

When asked how he defines Daher's approach to customer support, Raphael has a straightforward answer: "It's about presence and engagement. This is reflected in our slogan: With Daher, you never fly alone."

Daher Aircraft's support team takes this mantra seriously, whether it's troubleshooting in the field, collaborating with service centers, or meeting pilots face-to-face at events throughout the year.

"We want owners to feel like they're part of a family. It's not just a product – it's a community".

This sense of connection comes with a responsibility: to be accessible, to listen carefully, and act quickly. He cites a recent example when one of the company members in the Daher service Network deployed on short notice to assist returning a grounded aircraft to flight status, resolving the situation within 24 hours. "That's what matters: being creative, responsive, and human," Raphael added.

He's a strong supporter of Safe Horizons, Daher's safety awareness program. "Technical flying skills are essential, but soft skills – like judgment, communications, and situational awareness – are what truly keep pilots safe, " Raphael emphasizes.



Serving two communities, one philosophy

When asked how he defines Daher's approach to customer support, Raphael has a Since Daher Aircraft's acquisition of the Kodiak product line in 2019, Raphael has overseen the integration of customer support for this multi-role airplane into the already-established resources for the TBM family. And while TBM and Kodiak operators may differ in how they use their aircraft (many Kodiak customers are institutional and mission-based users, while a higher percentage of TBM customers are owner/operators) – the core values remain.

"Whether it's a government agency or humanitarian organization that utilizes a Kodiak...or a TBM owner traveling with the family or for business...both need to feel supported, to be heard, and to fly safely," he says. "And our job is to provide that continuity across continents, cultures, and mission profiles."



Growing the network that covers a broad range of customers

Daher continues to expand its service Network, including two new additions announced during the EAA AirVenture fly-in: Victory Lane Aviation in North Carolina for TBM; and Silver Sky Aviation in Wasilla, Alaska for Kodiak.

Raphael views the Network growth as both a technical and cultural endeavor. "In addition to looking for Network customer service partners who are skilled, they also need to be aligned with the spirit of what we are providing. This isn't just maintenance and support activity, its helping people fly safely and with confidence."

His blend of professionalism and passion is what keeps Raphael motivated after more than two decades with the company. "There's nothing better than seeing an aircraft back in the air, a pilot feeling supported, and a team working together like family."

A final sip!

As for his coffee ritual every morning in Tarbes? "It's just how I start the day right," he concluded. "Making sure things are clean, working, and ready—for myself and for everyone else. It's the same thing we do in customer support. We're here first, to make sure our owners and operators are ready to fly – safely."

At EAA AirVenture, Raphaël prepares his morning coffee on the Daher Aircraft exhibit stand.





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