

AEROCONTRACTORS COMPANY OF NIGERIA

RISING LIKE A PHEONIX





AEROCONTRACTORS IS A COMPANY WITH A PROUD HISTORY, BUT ONE THAT HAS BEEN THROUGH SOME TOUGH TIMES. WE LOOK AT HOW THEY'VE MANAGED TO TURN THINGS AROUND.

RISING LIKE A PHOENIX

AeroContractors is a well-respected aviation service provider in the helicopter offshore oil and gas sector as well as playing a key role in the oil and gas operation in Nigeria. They also play a crucial role in the the fixed wing scheduled and charter passenger sector. It's a company that has leveraged its unique placement in the Nigerian market to offer rotary and fixed wing services to the very highest standards.

AeroContractors is a company that was established nearly 60 years ago supplying logistics support to the oil and gas industry," explains Captain Ado Sanusi, CEO of the company. "Oil and gas industry companies came to us wanting logistics that could support their exploration efforts, so we became a well-respected aviation service provider in the rotary wing offshore oil and gas sector. As we grew we moved from the smaller helicopters to more complex helicopters, and we were eventually operating with over 25 helicopters in operation. Soon, from there, we moved into fixed wing craft. In a nutshell, it started as logistic support and grew into an airline business by 1999."

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**Captain Ado Sanusi, CEO,
AeroContractors**

However, despite a proud history and impressive growth, when Sanusi joined the company they were facing some serious issues.

"I joined the company in February when it had been shut down for four months," Sanusi tells us. "We were just in the stage of managing the crisis. We were under receivership, and my idea was to turn around the company and put it on the path of recovery. So, we were looking at how we can do that turnaround. We were in crisis mode, and realised we have to do things differently."

RISING AGAIN

Sanusi joined a company that had been facing numerous challenges from within and without, including devalued local currency, a fleet of aircraft that was rapidly becoming obsolete, and a fleet of helicopters that had been reduced from an impressive 30-strong fleet to only three.

"Eventually the Asset Management Company of Nigeria came and took over and helped us get back on our feet," Sanusi says. >>



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“NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION,” HE SAYS. “WE LOOKED INWARD AND LOOKED AT WHAT WE COULD DO DIFFERENTLY”

While some might be daunted by the scale of the challenge, Sanusi relished it as an opportunity to innovate and reshape the business into a powerful player in the industry.

“Necessity is the mother of invention,” he says. “We looked inward and looked at what we could do differently.”

For Sanusi, this means a bold reinvention of the business and its goals.



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“Fleet renewal is our main challenge now, and that will start in 2019,” he explains. “We need to reinvent ourselves as the dominant player in the helicopter business for the oil and gas industry.”

One such area where this reinvention has made itself evident has been in Aero Contractor’s efforts to bring certain costs in-house, and in the process, open up bold new avenues of revenue.

“We looked at the aircraft we have and doing the C checks ourselves, so we can maintain them in house for another 24-36 months while we do fleet renewal,” he says.

With their company’s own in-house C-checks turnout out successfully, AeroContractors is now performing the service for other fleets in Nigeria and beyond. Sanusi tells us, “We’ve processes

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in place for fleet checks, we’re working with the leasing company for the helicopter business and we’ve upgraded our facilities.”

READY TO WIN

Another way AeroContractors is rebuilding itself is by paying attention to the core qualities that made the company a success in the first place.

“We’re a one stop shop for the oil and gas industry. We have maintenance facilities and maintain our own aircraft to a very high standard. We’re safe and reliable. Our record shows we’ve been operating at a very high level of safety and standards,” Sanusi explains. We’re constantly being audited by oil and gas companies to keep those standards high.” >>

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They're able to maintain these standards thanks to the highly dedicated and competent staff that make up the company- something AeroContractors is constantly investing in.

“AeroContractors have been in business for 60 years, and was originally formed by the Schreiner Group, so we've inherited that culture of training and retraining staff,” Sanusi points out. “For the engineers we get young engineers from the Nigerian College of Technology, we train them in-house and sometimes take them outside of the country to train them, as well as putting them in on the job training. We do the same thing for the pilots. As we change the fleet we make sure the pilots are retrained, we have expert pilots with the experience that can

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is the rebirth of the company,” Sanusi remembers. “We got some training facilities in-house to train the staff to make sure we have a leaner work force, a more efficient work force and one that is thinking towards the objective of a turnaround which is very, very important. This was a project of turning a company around, and that is what we did.”

And while the company was forced to let go of a number of staff, they have already begun rehiring them back into the firm.

“This is a massive rebirth. My vision for the AeroContractors is to be the dominant player in West and Central Africa. It was the number one airline before in Nigeria, we want to surpass that level,” Sanusi says. “We want to upgrade our facility. Ghana have given us authority to perform fleet checks in Ghana. We’re also moving into Ghana, Senegal, and elsewhere. We’re getting approval and maintaining their aeroplanes. But we’re not just focusing on the maintenance sector, but on a rebirth of the airline and a business strategy that is sustainable, looking 20, 30 years into the future.” ☺

^ AeroContractors have been in business for 60 years

give the training to the young ones coming in, especially in the helicopter section.”

Indeed, Sanusi places the company’s emphasis on investing in its people as one of the key ingredients in turning around the company’s fate.

“When I joined the company, there was a big challenge. The company was already in receivership, it might not have come back to life. We did a lot of meetings with the staff to bring about a way of thinking that’s this





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