

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Vol. 46, No. 21

THE COMMUNITY OF BUSINESS™

May 26 – June 1, 2025 • \$5.00

BIG APPLE JET SET

AVIATION: Schubach Opens First Expansion Office in NYC

■ By ELI WALSH

CARLSBAD – Schubach Aviation's business is taking off.

The charter jet operator has flourished over the last half decade under the ownership of CEO **Kimberly Herrell**, and the company recently announced that it would take the next step in its growth by establishing an office in New York City.

The hub in downtown Manhattan is Schubach's first outside of Carlsbad and the first of multiple new markets to which the company could expand as its customer demand continues to increase.

"We're building up a good clientele out there... and so it just felt like, if not now, when?" Herrell said. "It just really made a ton of sense."

➔ [Schubach page 38](#)

Schubach Aviation CEO Kimberly Herrell (left) and Vice President of Business Development Trish Gentile. Herrell bought the company in 2020, and Gentile will head the New York City office expansion. Photo courtesy Schubach Aviation



Better Buzz's CFO Laurie Lawhorne hopes to bring the same energy to new locations as the coffee shop expands. Photo courtesy Madison Geering

Better Buzz Plans 'Launch Pad' Growth

FOOD & BEVERAGE: Aims to Double Locations Across 3 States

■ By MADISON GEERING

SAN DIEGO – What started in 2002 as a coffee cart in a local business park is now a rapidly growing chain. **Better Buzz Coffee** has its sights on doubling locations by the end of 2025 – from 24 to 48 storefronts across California, Nevada and Arizona. The move is the company's next step in its ambitious growth plan.

"This year's expansion is laying the foundation for the future," Better Buzz CFO **Laurie Lawhorne** said. "And we're adding a significant number of team members to help us continue delivering the great Buzz experience our guests know and love."

➔ [Better Buzz page 37](#)

Schubach

➔ *from page 1*

Herrell is in her 20th year with Schubach, ascending to become president of the company in 2018 before purchasing it from founder **Henry Schubach** in 2020 and becoming CEO.

Schubach's fleet has expanded in that time to number between 15 and 20 planes and the company continues to receive booking requests from across the country and for international flights, necessitating the expansion to the East Coast, according to Vice President of Business Development **Trish Gentile**.

"We've obviously got a huge presence in Carlsbad and Southern California, but our clients started to really expand nationwide, truly in states all across the country," she said. "And the conversations that we started having with not only charter clients, but with aircraft owners, wasn't limited to Southern California."

Sharing Schubach's History with East Coast Clientele

Gentile joined Schubach just over a year ago after spending more than a decade



Vice president of business development Trish Gentile will head the new East Coast office. Photo courtesy Schubach Aviation



Schubach Aviation's Gulfstream G200, which the charter jet company added to its fleet in February and stationed in Scottsdale, Arizona. Photo courtesy Schubach Aviation

working with major charter operators like VistaJet subsidiary XO, NetJets and Jet Edge, which VistaJet acquired in 2022.

Much of that experience was based in New York, and Gentile will take on a new role as the leader of the Manhattan office as

a result.

"When you look at the market, there's a lot of inventory out there and there is availability, so clients are able to not be forced like they once were into joining a company or having a long-term commitment," Gentile said. "I think for New York, a lot of relationships and partnerships I had just stemmed from me knowing these people for years, flying these people for years, I put them in a program years ago, and they just want to work with somebody that they know and trust."

Herrell and Gentile both argued that while Schubach has operated for more than three decades, potential clients are often unaware of the company's longevity and stability and are more inclined to work with Schubach once they learn the company's history.

Many potential clients also know little about the aviation industry or what they're looking for when seeking out a charter jet.

"They don't know the right questions to ask, and they think a plane is a plane and a pilot is a pilot, and as long as there's wings, engines and wheels you're off to the races," Gentile said. "And they could not be further from the truth."

Part of the company's growth strategy includes basic education for potential clients about aspects like pricing and safety and the experience of its pilots. Herrell argued that ensuring clients feel comfortable and safe goes beyond baseline regulatory operating approval from the **Federal Aviation**

Administration.

Gentile added that the industry has no shortage of brokers operating in bad faith.

"When you look at our team and you see the requirements to be a pilot with us, the requirements to have a plane in our fleet, we're above the industry average," Gentile said. "So when people are flying with us, they kind of have the head to the pillow and think, 'okay, I know I trust them, I know I can rely on them and I know that I am on a very safe airplane.'"

Despite the company's history, Herrell said she feels like Schubach is just getting started in the charter industry and continues to attract major talents like Gentile and Director of Operations **Robert Ruffi**, who joined the company in September.

"As I've looked to grow the company, it's really been about building this team of industry all-stars," Herrell said. "And we really are transforming into this more national player, and just loving every second of it." ■

Schubach Aviation



FOUNDED: 1992

CEO: Kimberly Herrell

HEADQUARTERS: Carlsbad

BUSINESS: Charter flight service

EMPLOYEES: 52, including roughly 36-38 pilots

WEBSITE: schubachaviation.com

CONTACT: charter@schubachaviation.com

NOTABLE: Schubach also maintains a fleet presence in Scottsdale, Arizona