

# newsworthy trends

## Private Jet Sweepstakes Takes Small Business Customers To New Heights Ⓜ

(NAPSA)—More than 25.8 million small businesses are operating in the United States today, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration, and every year more than 671,000 new companies open their doors. At the same time, nearly 544,800 companies close. It takes a good idea, a sound business plan and a lot of hard work to achieve lasting success in the small-business space.

Nevertheless, plenty of businesspeople are jumping in, eager for the big advantages that come with being small: independence and the agility and power to address customers' needs as soon as they arise.

Many new small businesses are being launched by people who are leaving corporate careers behind and bringing with them knowledge about the sorts of investments big businesses make to increase the efficiency and productivity of key executives.

Business travel, for example, has become a major source of stress and inconvenience—as a result of often unreliable commercial airline flight schedules, airport security juggernauts and growing herds of travelers around the luggage carousel. So most corporations fly their CEOs and top personnel by private jet.

With the cost of private jet travel starting to come down, time-strapped entrepreneurs are finding the benefits to be within reach and cost-effective, too. “The Marquis Jet Card program, backed by the NetJets fleet, is a powerful efficiency tool that has helped small and midsize busi-

nesses strengthen and grow,” said Ken Austin, executive vice president of Marquis Jet. Reflecting the growth in the industry, Marquis Jet, the global leader in private jet cards, reports that demand has increased dramatically: from selling its first jet card in 2001 to more than 3,000 active Marquis Jet Card owners today.

Innovative companies, such as Microsoft Corp., that serve small businesses are recognizing this trend. To help its customers reduce travel-related fatigue and stress, Microsoft Office Live is launching the “I’m Going Places” sweepstakes, with 10 hours of private jet travel on Marquis Jets to anywhere Marquis Jets flies for up to seven people as the grand prize. There are also daily prizes, including laptop computers.

“Microsoft Office Live has an established track record of providing small businesses with the same tools available to larger enterprises,” said Michael Schultz, U.S. Business and Marketing lead for Microsoft Office Live. “We can add wings to any business with the tools to establish a powerful Web presence. It’s just like private jet travel: a better way for small-business owners to manage their business.”

To help make your fast life easier and your small business soar, enter to win the Microsoft Office Live “I’m Going Places” sweepstakes at <http://www.officeliveoffers.com/win>. The grand prize winner will be announced at the Microsoft Small Business Summit on March 23.