

Daher Integrates Customer Support For TBM, Kodiak

Bill Carey | May 24, 2024



Months before announcing the Kodiak 900, Daher unveiled the TBM 960 at the Sun 'n Fun Aerospace Expo in April 2022. The 960 is the fifth evolution of Daher's TBM-series line of pressurized single-engine turboprops. Credit: Daher Aerospace

French manufacturer Daher Aerospace has unified the maintenance networks of its TBM and Kodiak models to pool its resources and provide integrated customer support of both aircraft types.

TBMs and Kodiaks are single-engine turboprops that share some of the same major suppliers—both have Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6 engines, Hartzell propellers and Garmin avionics. But they would otherwise seem to make strange bedfellows: the Kodiak 100 and newer 900 are rugged, unpressurized, multirole airplanes suited for backcountry operations; the TBM 910 and latest 960 are stylish, fast, high-end turboprops.

During a visit to Daher's Kodiak final assembly facility in Sandpoint, Idaho, in early May, Richard Townsend, customer care manager for Kodiak and TBM Care, described the manufacturer's integration efforts since Daher acquired Quest Aircraft Co. from Setouchi Holdings of Japan in October 2019. Quest built the Kodiak 100 in Sandpoint, a ski resort town on the shores of Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho, before Setouchi purchased the company in 2015.



Daher unveiled the Kodiak 900, a faster, stretched version of the legacy Kodiak 100, at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh in July 2022. Shown is the original flight-test article of the 900 model, parked at the Daher Kodiak complex in Sandpoint, Idaho. Credit: Bill Carey

Surprisingly, there are examples of operators who fly both TBM and Kodiak, the latter type being an SUV of sorts that Daher markets as the ultimate getaway vehicle. Melding their customer support operations provides owners of either aircraft with a global network of 66 authorized service centers, four owned service centers (in Sandpoint; Pompano Beach, Florida; and Toussus-le-Noble and Tarbes, France) and a base of more than 5,000 supported aircraft, when counting legacy (pre-Daher) Socata models.

Daher now brings its maintenance providers and some of its suppliers together in a joint Kodiak-TBM Network Meeting, an event that was specific to TBM before the manufacturer acquired Quest Aircraft.

Not all the authorized service centers currently work on both TBM and Kodiak types, but Daher supports any center that chooses to do so through maintenance training, documentation, and on-site evaluations. The manufacturer is developing a harmonized service center agreement, or contract, that incorporates both model types, and it makes an effort to visit several service centers each year, Townsend said.

In 2023, Metal Innovations of Aurora, Oregon, a longtime Kodiak authorized service center, expanded its capabilities to support TBMs. SimAvia of Yerevan, Armenia, joined the TBM side of the network. This year, Air Gold Coast of Queensland, Australia, a longtime TBM authorized service center, expanded to support Kodiaks. Turbo Air of Boise, Idaho, joined the Kodiak side.

“More and more, as time goes on, we’re trying to utilize the network for both Kodiaks and TBMs as much as possible,” Townsend said. “Both sides have been doing a lot of things really well for a long time. We’re putting a lot of effort into finding out who does what better than the other and how [we can] integrate the best of each.”

Daher provides customer support training of its own personnel and incorporates training offered by common suppliers like Garmin. It is cross-training specialists to be able to support both aircraft platforms.

“The ultimate goal is to have multiple people at Tarbes and multiple people at Pompano, and multiple people (in Sandpoint) that are well versed in each of the aircraft,” Townsend said. “They will be able to provide that detailed support we’re known for at each location for each model.”

Daher provides 24/7 Aircraft On Ground and technical support of TBM and Kodiak operators. Last year, it designated Simcom Aviation Training as a factory-approved training organization for Kodiak 100/900 pilots, supported by a Frasca flight simulator at Simcom’s Scottsdale, Arizona, location.

The manufacturer employs 54 people at four locations to fulfill parts orders and stocks 33,500 part numbers.

Daher is in the process of developing a new, intracompany Customer Relationship Management platform to track data for both aircraft types from point-of-sale through the life of the aircraft. It plans to eventually merge its public-facing MyTBM.aero and Kodiak.aero websites.

The integration of TBM and Kodiak has certainly involved a learning curve, Townsend acknowledged. But it has not been interrupted by any cultural clash between legacy French and American manufacturers.

“The biggest thing was [Daher TBM] had been doing this for so long—they had their processes refined and their way of doing things,” Townsend said. “Coming into it, there was a lot of time spent on trying to understand each other’s processes. But really, from a cultural standpoint, they shared a lot of the same values. It was really a pretty easy merger.”