

taxi. After listening to the stories from his more-established peers, Halle decided to skip the investment in Phoenix apartment buildings and buy his first jet—a Cessna Citation.

“That changed my life,” Halle says. “Airplanes have allowed me to do all of this travel efficiently and quickly all over the country. And the staff on the plane has nowhere to go, so we can focus. We couldn’t have grown this way taking commercial flights.”

Besides, having a corporate plane would be very, very cool.

Halle was quick to share his enjoyment of private jet travel with his employees. As Gary Van Brunt and Steve Fournier built revenues in Arizona, Halle decided it would be fun to reward them with an airborne outing. In 1979, he sent Van Brunt, Fournier and Holman from Phoenix to Orange County, California—for dinner. The next morning, he arrived at work early and called his friends in as soon as they got to the office, giddier than they were about their experience, according to Holman.

Eventually, the flight on a company jet would be a standing commitment for Halle. When any store reaches \$200,000 in monthly sales, Halle sends a company plane to take the full-time employees and their significant others on an outing. The flight might take them from Detroit to Mackinac Island or from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles. For most employees, it would be the first time on a corporate jet.

“These are young people in the stores and to get a day of jetting with their wives or their friends, that’s exciting,” Halle says, visibly excited by the idea. “On a private jet! Most people never get on one.”

Since the first incentive flight in 1983, Discount Tire has flown more than four thousand employees on these trips. Halle has resisted suggestions that he raise the threshold level for a corporate flight to reflect the impact of inflation. The flight is both a reward and an incentive, in his mind, and the sooner he incentivizes the people in his stores, the better.

“Someone will tell me we should increase the incentive sales level because tires cost more now,” Halle notes, “but my response is always the same: ‘Why didn’t you mention that idea when it was your turn to take the flight?’”