

STRATOLAUNCH

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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About Stratolaunch

1. What is Stratolaunch?

Stratolaunch is a leading pure-play American hypersonics company built to deliver the testing, targets, data and systems the U.S. and its allies need to compete in the next era of aerospace defense.

Through its portfolio of reusable test vehicles, expendable targets and weapon subsystems, Stratolaunch provides government and commercial customers with responsive, flexible flight test services across the full hypersonics ecosystem, from technology development and testing to training and operational readiness.

Stratolaunch enables faster, more affordable and more realistic hypersonic development customers need to validate technologies quicker and with greater operational flexibility.

2. What does Stratolaunch do?

Stratolaunch delivers advanced hypersonic capabilities that help government and commercial customers:

- Accelerate technology development
- Evaluate propulsion systems
- Test materials, thermal protection systems, sensors and guidance technologies
- Collect critical flight data
- Accelerate development timelines
- Reduce testing costs compared with traditional methods

Today, the company operates across three complementary business areas:

- **Reusable Test Vehicles** that enable customers to evaluate technologies in real-world hypersonic flight conditions.
- **Expendable Targets** that replicate real-world hypersonic threats for missile defense testing, military exercises and training.
- **Weapons Sub-Systems** that provide avionics, actuation systems and other critical technologies supporting next-generation hypersonic programs.

Together, these capabilities help customers accelerate innovation, collect critical flight data and move new technologies from concept to capability more quickly.

3. What is hypersonic flight?

Hypersonic flight refers to speeds greater than Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound.

Vehicles operating at hypersonic speeds experience extreme temperatures, aerodynamic forces and complex flight conditions that require specialized testing before operational deployment.

Because these conditions are difficult to replicate on the ground, real-world flight testing is essential.

As a leading American hypersonics company, Stratolaunch advances these capabilities through reusable test vehicles, expendable targets and weapon subsystems that accelerate the development of next-generation aerospace and defense technologies.

4. Why is hypersonic testing important?

Hypersonic technologies are transforming national security by enabling faster, more capable systems for defense, scientific research and future commercial applications.

As demand for hypersonic capabilities continues to grow, so does the need for reliable, repeatable and responsive flight testing to provide a source of truth data.

Stratolaunch provides the flight test infrastructure customers need to generate truth data and validate technologies faster, with greater operational flexibility. Through its reusable airborne launch platforms, the company makes hypersonic flight testing more accessible, responsive and cost-effective while supporting a broad range of mission requirements.

Company History

5. Who founded Stratolaunch?

Stratolaunch was founded in 2011 by philanthropist and technology entrepreneur **Paul Allen**.

His vision was to create an air-launch platform capable of carrying large payloads into space. That vision led to the development of Roc, the world's largest aircraft by wingspan.

Originally focused on commercial space launch, Stratolaunch has since evolved into a leading American hypersonics company accelerating the development, testing, evaluation and deployment of next-generation hypersonic capabilities.

6. When did Cerberus acquire Stratolaunch?

Cerberus Capital Management acquired Stratolaunch in 2019.

Following the acquisition, the company shifted its focus from commercial space launch to hypersonic flight testing and the development of next-generation hypersonic capabilities.

Today, Stratolaunch provides advanced airborne testing services that help accelerate national hypersonic development.

7. How has Stratolaunch evolved?

Stratolaunch has successfully transformed from a concept focused primarily on launching payloads into space into a leading American hypersonics company.

Today, the company develops reusable test vehicles, expendable targets and weapons sub-systems that help accelerate the development, testing and deployment of next-generation hypersonic technologies.

This evolution has positioned Stratolaunch as a critical partner supporting government and commercial aerospace innovation.

Roc

8. What is Roc?

Roc is the world's largest aircraft by wingspan (385 feet).

Designed as an airborne launch platform, Roc carries large payloads beneath its center wing before releasing them during flight. Today, it remains one of Stratolaunch's signature flight test assets and continues to support advanced hypersonic testing.

9. Why was Roc originally built?

Roc was originally developed to support air-launch access to space. Launching vehicles from altitude offers several advantages:

- Unparalleled payload capacity (weight and volume)
- Flexible launch locations
- Weather avoidance
- Increased operational responsiveness

Roc's exceptional payload capacity makes it an ideal platform for advanced hypersonic flight testing.

10. Who built Roc?

Roc was designed and developed by Scaled Composites with contributions from leading aerospace engineers and suppliers across the industry.

Its twin-fuselage design and 385-foot wingspan make it unlike any other operational aircraft.

11. Is Roc still important to Stratolaunch?

Roc represents an important part of Stratolaunch's heritage, and it also remains a valuable operational asset supporting specialized hypersonic flight test missions.

Stratolaunch's future extends beyond a single aircraft. The company continues expanding its fleet and capabilities to provide customers with greater mission flexibility and increased flight capacity.

Spirit of Mojave

12. What is the Spirit of Mojave?

Spirit of Mojave is Stratolaunch's Boeing 747 airborne launch platform.

With worldwide launch capability and minimal ground support, it complements Roc by providing customers with an additional aircraft capable of supporting a broad range of hypersonic flight test missions.

13. Why did Stratolaunch acquire Spirit of Mojave?

Spirit of Mojave significantly expands Stratolaunch's flight test capacity by providing:

- Worldwide mission applicability
- Proven 747 reliability
- Flexible payload integration
- Established launch infrastructure
- Faster mission preparation
- Increased flight availability
- Ability to support a broader range of customer missions

Together, Roc and Spirit of Mojave provide customers with multiple airborne launch platforms tailored to different mission requirements.

14. When was Spirit of Mojave acquired?

Stratolaunch acquired the aircraft in 2023 as part of its long-term strategy to expand reusable hypersonic flight testing capacity.

15. Why use Spirit of Mojave instead of Roc?

Depends on the mission.

Spirit of Mojave offers:

- Greater operational flexibility
- Proven worldwide deployability
- Simplified logistics
- An established 747 maintenance ecosystem
- Efficient payload integration

Roc provides unique heavy-lift capabilities for specialized missions.

Together, the two aircraft allow Stratolaunch to tailor flight test solutions to each customer's requirements.

16. Can Spirit of Mojave operate worldwide?

Yes.

Because it is built on the proven Boeing 747 platform, Spirit of Mojave can operate from airports around the world with relatively minimal ground infrastructure.

Its global mobility allows customers to conduct testing from locations that best support mission objectives while increasing operational flexibility.

Talon-A

17. What is Talon-A?

Talon-A is the world's only autonomous, reusable, air-launched hypersonic flight test platform.

Stratolaunch's Talon-A enables customers to evaluate advanced technologies in true hypersonic flight conditions while collecting critical flight data throughout the mission. Its reusable design supports more frequent testing and helps accelerate technology development.

18. Why is Talon-A important?

Talon-A represents a significant advancement in reusable hypersonic testing.

Unlike traditional test approaches that require a new vehicle for each mission, Talon-A's reusable design allows customers to conduct more frequent tests, collect valuable flight data and accelerate technology development while reducing development costs and timelines.

19. Has Talon-A flown?

Yes.

Talon-A has successfully completed 10+ powered hypersonic flight demonstrations, validating Stratolaunch's air-launch approach and proving the maturity of its reusable flight test capability.

Each successful mission advances the company's goal of increasing hypersonic flight test capacity and providing customers with more frequent, responsive access to realistic flight environments.

Customers & Programs

20. Is Stratolaunch part of MACH-TB?

Yes.

Stratolaunch supports the **MACH-TB** (Multi-Service Advanced Capability Hypersonics Test Bed) program by providing reusable airborne hypersonic flight testing capabilities.

The program is designed to increase the frequency, affordability and accessibility of hypersonic testing for U.S. government customers. Stratolaunch's participation reflects its broader role in accelerating the development, testing and evaluation of next-generation hypersonic capabilities.

21. Who are Stratolaunch's customers?

Stratolaunch supports a growing portfolio of U.S. government organizations, defense agencies, research organizations and commercial aerospace companies developing next-generation hypersonic capabilities.

Customers rely on Stratolaunch to accelerate technology development, testing and evaluation through responsive, reusable flight test services.

While many customer relationships and programs remain confidential because of contractual and national security requirements, the company supports a wide range of mission-critical initiatives across offensive and defensive hypersonic applications.

22. Does Stratolaunch manufacture weapons?

No. Stratolaunch does not manufacture operational weapons.

The company develops reusable test vehicles, expendable targets and weapon subsystems that help customers accelerate the development, testing and evaluation of next-generation hypersonic technologies.

Its role is to provide the flight test infrastructure and supporting technologies that enable customers to evaluate and mature advanced capabilities, not to manufacture operational weapon systems.

23. Is Stratolaunch a defense contractor?

Stratolaunch is an advanced aerospace and defense company supporting U.S. national security through reusable test vehicles, expendable targets and weapon subsystems.

The company partners with government and commercial customers to accelerate the development, testing and evaluation of next-generation hypersonic technologies while maintaining rigorous engineering, safety and security standards.

Future

24. What's next after Talon-A?

Stratolaunch continues investing in the future of hypersonic flight testing by expanding its portfolio of reusable flight capabilities.

Future developments are focused on increasing:

- Mission flexibility
- Payload compatibility
- Flight cadence
- Customer responsiveness

- Operational scalability

As customer demand continues to grow, Stratolaunch is expanding its capabilities to provide more frequent, responsive and flexible flight test services.

25. What makes Stratolaunch different?

Several capabilities distinguish Stratolaunch from other aerospace and defense companies.

Key differentiators include:

- The world's only reusable autonomous hypersonic platform, enabling faster iteration, greater affordability and more frequent testing.
- End-to-end capabilities spanning reusable test vehicles, expendable targets, weapon subsystems, manufacturing and mission operations.
- Unique airborne launch platforms, including Roc and Spirit of Mojave, providing unmatched operational flexibility.
- Rapid mission turnaround.
- High-fidelity flight data collection.
- Scalable flight test architecture.
- The ability to support a wide range of customer missions.
- A trusted partner supporting U.S. government and commercial customers across offensive and defensive hypersonic applications.

Together, these capabilities position Stratolaunch as a leader in reusable hypersonic flight testing and a critical partner advancing U.S. aerospace innovation and national security.

Looking Ahead

26. What is Stratolaunch's vision?

Stratolaunch's vision is to transform how hypersonic technologies are developed by making flight data more frequent, available, and efficient.

As demand for hypersonic capabilities continues to grow, Stratolaunch is expanding its portfolio of reusable test vehicles, expendable targets and weapons sub-systems to help customers move faster from concept to capability while advancing the future of high-speed flight.

By accelerating innovation across the hypersonics ecosystem, Stratolaunch is committed to strengthening its position as America's leading hypersonics company and a trusted partner supporting U.S. national security.