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AIR TRANSPORT ORGANISATION

2023_RECOMMENDATIONS

RECRUITING AND RETAINING TALENT: THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

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RECRUITING AND RETAINING TALENT: THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

A recent report by Oxford Analytics states that 2.3 million jobs have been lost across airlines, airports, and civil aviation groups since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, global passenger volumes are set to double by 2039 from their pre- pandemic levels. Thus, it is evident that the aviation industry needs to retain its existing workers and to extensively hire and train new workers to meet labor needs.

The Hermes Air Transport Organization asked industry and government associations to provide recommendations for recruiting and retaining employees. Recommendations include, diversifying the pool of employment applicants, standardizing employment positions, and working with governments, educational institutions and other interested parties to provide both the educational and the financial means to train new employees. The recommendations contained in the Hermes report can provide the aviation industry with ideas for meeting current and future labor requirements.

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Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

A recent report by Oxford Analytics states that 2.3 million jobs have been lost across airlines, airports, and civil aviation groups since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, a 21 percent reduction from pre-pandemic levels.[1] Although employee layoffs conserved cash during the low points of the pandemic period, the decisions to reduce workforces have had longer term consequences. As travel restrictions eased and demand for air travel increased, sectors of the aviation industry have been confronted with severe staffing shortages, leading to reduced schedules, flight delays and cancellations, lost baggage, and disgruntled passengers.

It is evident that the aviation industry will have to hire and train extensively over the next several years to meet labor requirements. Moreover, aviation firms will need to retain existing employees, a difficult task given the preponderance of shift work and travel requirements in the industry. The labor shortage will require firms to be proactive in their approaches to hiring, training, and retaining workers. For example, United Airlines instituted its Aviate Academy to attract and train pilots, and this year successfully graduated its first class of fifty-one trainees. United views the Aviate Academy as a key resource in its efforts to hire 10,000 pilots by the end of the decade.[2]

Aviation industry associations, including ACI World and the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), have provided advice to their members on hiring and retaining workers.[3] Broad guidelines outlined in industry publications include, carefully analyzing the competitive environment, addressing work-life balance concerns, and providing clear career paths for advancement. Many industry experts agree that compensation, alone, is insufficient to keep employees in the fold. "Quality of life is a big part of attracting and retaining good people."[4]

Industry specialists suggest that aviation firms will need to seek out a more diverse workforce to meet labor requirements. Pilots in the US, for example, are predominantly male and overwhelmingly White.[5] Clearly, drawing talent from a more diverse population can help alleviate labor shortages in the industry.

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[1] https://www.ft.com/content/93736968-8fcf-425f-b8e5-fcd9736d37f6

[2] https://simpleflying.com/united-airlines-aviate-academy-celebrates-first-graduating-class/

[3] For example, see the ACI World's recent publication, *The Evolution of the Airport Workforce: Turning Challenges into Opportunities White Paper*.

[4] Greg Adams, director of operations at Jen-Air LLC, https://nbaa.org/professional-development/workforce-initiatives/strategies-retaining-skilled-business-aviation-professionals/.

[5] For example, it has been reported that 92% of airline pilots in the U.S. are male, while 93% are White. See: https://www.floridatechonline.com/blog/aviation-management/increasing-diversity-in-aviation-why-and-how/.

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Given the importance of hiring and retaining talent in the aviation industry, Hermes Air Transport Organisation invites you to participate in the dialog by addressing the following questions:

1. How can the aviation industry attract new employees? What advice can you provide to your constituent firms and organisations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from many other industries?

2. How can the aviation industry retain its current employees? What advice can you provide to firms and organisations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?

3. How can industry associations work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?

Your organisation is cordially invited to prepare a position paper on **Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry** taking into consideration the foregoing background information.

The position paper should not exceed 3,000 words. Your organisation is requested to email it to secretariat@hermes.aero by 17:00 CET, **Friday 28th of April 2023**.

All position papers will be thoroughly studied by the members of the 2023 Hermes Report Committee consisting of:

Chairperson
Professor Martin Dresner, Chair, Air Transport Research Society (ATRS)

Members
-Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu. Honorary Member, Hermes - Air Transport Organisation & founder and President of iPADIS
-Angela Gittens, President, Hermes - Air Transport Organisation
-Mario Nemeth, ex Director General of Civil Aviation, Slovakia
-Professor Dr Andreas Papatheodorou, President, Hellenic Aviation Society & Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Air Transport Studies

The Committee will then convene in June 2023 to synthesise the opinions expressed in the various position papers and the conclusions of the 2023 Hermes AGM and produce a unified report, which will be made public.

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INTERVIEW

R23-I/01
01/08/23

Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Interview with Salvatore Sciacchitano, President of the Council, ICAO)

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How can the aviation industry attract new employees?

As aviation professions are increasingly not perceived as attractive enough to potential candidates, there is significant competition with other industry sectors for skilled employees. Therefore there is a need for the aviation industry to align with competition and propose attractive work conditions to potential candidates.

Furthermore, training capacity is insufficient to meet demand, and there is a lack of accessibility to affordable training. This means that we should facilitate access to affordable training to attract candidates, including through the promotion of scholarships.

ICAO's Next Generation of Aviation Professionals initiative should be mainstreamed into all global and regional strategic aviation plans of aviation, including the ICAO Global air navigation and aviation safety and security plans.

Job marketing and branding should be enhanced, including through social media, speed networking, both academic and career fairs, and mentorship.

We also need to invest in corporate social responsibility programmes that attract and retain diverse and skilled professionals. Here we can look to better recast careers in aviation to focus on the social and sustainable development benefits of flight, highlighting the industry's unique worldwide commitments to decarbonization, aviation's role in connecting people and cultures of the world, its humanitarian relief role, and its other key positive influences on sustainable development and growth, especially for lesser developed, landlocked, and small island States.

This includes the promotion of diversity, inclusion and gender equality. We need to stress the message there is a role in aviation for everyone who has the skill and the ability, and reject pushback and misperceptions on this point. We should look at creating special programmes adapted to the realities for the populations that are under-represented in our industry, including persons living with disabilities.
We also need to promote the mutual recognition of academic degrees and certifications to support a seamless flow of professionals within the global aviation eco-system.

Likewise, some aviation disciplines lack a harmonization of competencies and recognition of certification, which is an obstacle to the workforce global mobility. Harmonizing competencies will also facilitate recruitment of international employees and global mobility.

Finally, I would like to highlight that we need to better promote the life long career-development opportunities that exist within aviation – that our industry offers strong pathways of continuous career progression.

What advice can you provide to your constituent firms and organisations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from many other industries?

This question is in many respects similar to the first one, and I could repeat many of the same points.

I would however like to highlight the importance of strengthening States's commitment to supporting aviation organizations and businesses in implementing appropriate policies to institutionalize HR capacity-building, taking into consideration mainstreaming of young aviation professionals and gender equality.

I would also like to use this platform to encourage member States to reinforce interaction between their aviation and education ministries and administrations, to integrate aviation into curricula, and to facilitate the marketing of aviation through new programmes. I encourage governments to start introducing aviation from the grassroots of the children's education.

Partnerships between States, academia and industry would furthermore harmonize strategies for promoting aviation careers, and help to launch educational programmes that are fully aligned with regulatory and industry needs and priorities. Facilitating the creation and implementation of specialized aviation programmes, practical training, and scholarships that are in line with industry needs is in fact essential.

We also need to promote best management practices that accommodate the needs and values of the next generation of aviation professionals to enhance their interest, commitment, productivity, performance and retention. This includes providing avenues for their continuous upskilling, to meet the accelerated pace of innovations and introduction of new technologies.

How can the aviation industry retain its current employees?
The factors I have just mentioned will help not just attract professionals, but retain them too.
There are however aspects that are specific to retention.

Firstly, we need to promote transformative management systems, offer incentives and flexible working arrangements to build passion, commitment, motivate improve morale and facilitate employee performance.

This is linked to actively learning and understanding the work culture and preferences of the next generation aviation professionals, and adjust requirements that accommodate their needs to the highest extent possible.

Along with the progressive human resource policies that promote equal opportunities and diversity that I mentioned earlier, we also need to develop progressive social policies and value-added programmes to safeguard the professionals' well-being working in the aviation industry.

What advice can you provide to firms and organisations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?
In the first instance, the fact is that skill development will require investment. This investment needs to target research, innovation, training and development, to help aviation professionals adapt to changing technologies to remain resilient and competitive in the job market.

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Training programmes on advanced technologies specifically are particularly crucial to developing the technical skills and competencies that aviation professionals will need in order to thrive.
Here, incubation programmes can help support innovation and keep organizations abreast with new technologies.

Similarly, enhanced collaborative linkages between educational and training institutions with industry will facilitate the alignment of industry capacity requirements with training and competency development programmes offered to Next Generation Aviation Professionals.

These should be supported and delivered with training centres of excellence that offer specialized courses and programmes for a diverse workforce.

How can industry associations work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?
Industry associations can play a key role in helping ICAO advocate for action on the points I have raised.

They can help determine potential standard industry approaches to addressing its challenges, minimize duplication of efforts and optimize utilization of resources.

They can also help identify the requirements for rare specializations in aviation, acting in liaison with academia and training institutions to foster curricula relevance in terms of industry requirements.

Associations can provide a platform for pooling resources, including for the provision of scholarship opportunities and financial support to underrepresented groups, while boosting mentorship programmes and support, and proactively supporting internship programmes, especially for so-called "hard to attract" highly specialized aviation subjects.

I would like to suggest that associations look at implementing leadership exchange programmes and enhancing other knowledge-sharing opportunities to expand knowledge and competency frameworks. This could even include the creation of a global database of specialized talent pool of experts in emerging areas of specialization, with a view of centralizing support for the development of next generation aviation professionals in these specialized fields.

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INTERVIEW

R23-I/02
28/03/23

Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Interview with Mehmet T. Nane, Chair, Board of Governors, IATA)

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1. How can the aviation industry attract new employees?

The aviation industry has its own attractions as a sector. To attract new employees, we must highlight the bright future that awaits them including being part of an expanding industry that offers fantastic career opportunities, utilises the world's latest technologies while also presenting many social benefits such as discounted family tickets. This industry offers the chance to work in a growing and challenging sector alongside a multi-cultural workforce, that becoming part of it means the opportunity to improve oneself daily and have access to high quality social opportunities.

2. What advice can you provide to your constituent firms and organisations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from many other industries?

I would encourage them to follow new technologies closely, create career development opportunities, and foster environments where their employees can exchange ideas and attract others through word-of-mouth recommendations. And lastly, to be empathetic. To attract people continuously, you should have a solid vision and create abundant opportunities for them.

3. How can the aviation industry retain its current employees?

By creating attractive and supportive work environments, serving career and self-development opportunities, providing a wide range of tools and equipment to ensure that jobs can be done effectively and efficiently. But most importantly, current employees can be retained only if we build and maintain trust in the companies as well as trust in the wider industry.

4. What advice can you provide to firms and organisations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?

Encourage them, provide the necessary tools, and give them the right opportunities to advance in the sector. Raise awareness about the power and the potential that the aviation industry has. Encourage the workforce to develop ideas, give and take continuously, while equipping them with the newest technologies, creating agility, encouraging teamwork, and offering support in every process.

5. How can industry associations work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?

The industry can attract and retain talent from a diverse pool by emphasising the power and the potential of this industry, as well as the sectoral and career growth opportunities within it. The sector can also attract the interest of target talent groups through a number of communications

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measures such as awareness and information campaigns that include organising showrooms in and out of the country, infomercials and advertising, regular profiling of department managers in local and international press, and employer branding activities in social platforms such as LinkedIn. Talents should be well-informed that they can have a bright prospect in a challenging and growing sector.

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R23-PP/01
27/04/23

Sustainability of the aviation industry: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by ACI World)

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The aviation industry has faced a significant new capacity challenge in recent years, not due to infrastructure or system restrictions as previously, but due to the availability of workforce. According to the latest ACI World forecasts, 2019 (pre-pandemic) global passenger volumes (9.2 billion) are expected to double by the year 2039 to 18.3 billion. The availability of a strong and diverse workforce to cater to and accommodate this future demand is of utmost importance. The significant restrictions experienced on resource availability can have negative impacts on service quality, operational performance, and the overall aviation system's capacity to meet expected growth profiles. These constraints can equate to economic losses for industry and local economies, given the important role aviation plays as an engine of growth for communities and regions around the globe.

In addition to the resource and skills gap, the industry is equally grappling with issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Women and minority groups remain underrepresented in many aviation fields; this lack of diversity can have negative consequences on the industry's global performance and growth and limit its potential to provide positive and lasting socioeconomic benefits.

Staff and skills shortages are impacting the operations and performance of many industries and companies around the world, including airports and the wider aviation ecosystem. Many workers left their aviation jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to downsizing and early retirement offers or because they chose other pathways and industries. According to the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), the aviation workforce contracted by 43%, equating to 4.8 million jobs globally, during the pandemic. New employees are difficult to find, as the priorities of many people have changed and competition to attract talent is fierce. This is happening at a time when traffic is bouncing back, potentially creating a widening gap that can cause important operational challenges, particularly during airports' peak periods.

In this context, the industry needs to adopt a strategic and novel approach to workforce planning and development focusing on both short-term and long-term solutions. This includes investing in training and education programs, promoting DEI, fostering a positive work environment, and providing competitive compensation and benefits among the industry and its stakeholders. By addressing these challenges proactively and creating awareness, the aviation industry can build a workforce that is prepared to meet the expected future demand and continue to be driven by innovation and growth.

Current aviation workforce

The aviation industry is a complex ecosystem, consisting of multiple players and processes, that requires the availability of a large and well-trained workforce. With 11.3 million jobs directly linked to the aviation sector, the workforce plays a crucial role in ensuring the safe and efficient operations across the entire aviation industry. A large portion of these jobs, around 60%, takes place at airports, where various roles such as aviation security agents, ground handling personnel, cleaning and maintenance staff, airport operations specialist, customer experience hosts, and staff working in catering and food and beverage outlets are required. Each one of these roles is necessary to keep

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delivering the multitude of services required to make the aviation system function on a day-to-day basis across all regions of the world.

The availability of a well-trained and competent workforce is critical to accommodating the increasing demand in aircraft movements, passengers, and cargo operations. As mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated drop in traffic had significant impact on the aviation ecosystem's workforce, compounding previous systemic challenges.

The instability in employment in aviation generated by unpredictable traffic patterns due to the wide variety of health measures and travel restrictions implemented by States had a significant impact on aviation's attractiveness as an employer. In addition, the ongoing debate around the environmental sustainability of the aviation system has further impacted aviation as an optimal career path, particularly for the next generation of professionals. However, the wider changes and challenges are prompting the industry to rethink its employer brand, as its international and fast paced nature, and commitment to fight climate change, are features that can be highlighted to attract job seekers.

To ensure that the aviation workforce remains sustainable and appealing, industry stakeholders must prioritize investing in training and upskilling programs that equip the workforce with the necessary skills and competencies. The industry needs to focus on including DEI in recruitment strategies to keep working towards regaining its attractivity and bringing in new talent from a diverse employment pool.

Many of the core aviation jobs are highly skilled professional roles that require significant amounts of investments to train candidates and bring them up to the required levels of skill and competence. These tend to be well-paid and highly sought-after roles but are not accessible to all individuals. There is however a significant portion of the aviation ecosystem's jobs that require lower levels of training and qualifications, and may tend to have less job security and lower levels of remuneration, but that are equally as important for the industry. These jobs, such as check-in and gate agents, baggage handlers, ground operations agents, airfield maintenance, and many more, found across the different sectors of activity, need to have equivalent terms and conditions to similar jobs in other sectors, and be recognised and understood for the critical support they provide to aviation as a whole.

The reality of the pandemic has changed many aspects of day-to-day life as a whole as well as of employment conditions in general. The aviation industry has equally been affected with new concerns by employees around job security, fair pay, working conditions and equity of treatment. A range of strategies are needed in the future to retain and develop employees already in the industry and keep cultivating an attractive industry. Some of the key considerations to achieve these goals are:

- **Providing growth opportunities and career paths.** Employees want to feel like they are learning and growing in their jobs. Having sufficient training and development opportunities to enhance employee's skills and knowledge will allow them to become more effective in their current roles but also be prepared for future career opportunities.

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- **Foster a positive work environment.** Creating a positive work environment in which the baseline culture values employees and their successes, ensures appropriate wellness measures are present, achieves a work-life balance and seeks to meet social conditions will help generate a positive work environment in which employees will thrive.

- **Emphasize communication.** Overall ensuring a sufficient level of transparency and communication on the organization's success and failures, on the state of the industry and any changes that may impact their jobs will develop trust and understanding.

- **Create flexibility.** Providing employees with appropriately tailored flexibility to their schedules or through other arrangements will help creating an environment in which employees want to remain and grow.

- **Offer competitive pay.** Where possible, aligning pay scales with other sectors creates a more competitive and attractive workplace reducing the rate of attrition and turnover.
  Workforce skills
  The accelerated rate of innovation, introduction of new technologies, and automation are other challenges the industry will have to face. Partnerships with universities or technical institutes can allow for and support the needed upskilling of the workforce. In addition, the establishment of aviation programs adapted to younger-age populations, such as high schools or pre-university schools, creates additional visibility and understanding of aviation for the next generation of talent. These types of partnerships between industry and education institutions, ideally supported by State policies, will grow the visibility of and generate interest in the industry and its appeal as a career path.

As the workforce's requirements and expectations continue to evolve and aviation professionals seek opportunities across different sectors or in different States, facilitating the workforce's global mobility is becoming increasingly important. Mutual recognition of training certificates, industry designations, and validation of competencies across States, as well as accelerated security vetting processes, while maintaining high levels of safety and security oversight, will facilitate the integration of workers into new environments in a faster and more seamless manner.

DEI is vital for the aviation workforce as it is essential to ensure the industry is accessible to all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. The aviation industry should strive to attract a diverse range of employees, including individuals from underrepresented groups. One of the primary benefits of prioritizing DEI in the aviation industry is that it can help to create a more innovative and creative workforce. When employees come from diverse backgrounds, they bring a range of perspectives, ideas, and experiences to the table. This diversity of thought can lead to more innovative solutions, better decision-making and stronger competitive advantage.

The industry must prioritize DEI in its recruitment, training, and promotion practices to create a more equitable and inclusive work environment as a core development. Through proactive DEI practices, organizations can provide opportunities for their employees to develop new skills and advance their careers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or disability etc. By creating a diverse and inclusive workforce, the aviation industry can benefit from different perspectives and experiences in leadership.

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In addition to DEI, the aviation industry must focus on the labour needs of Generation Z. As the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age, they have unique skills and perspectives that can benefit the aviation industry in many ways. However, in order to bring this new generation into the industry, it is necessary to increase the visibility of the industry through partnerships systems and program schools as examples. Increasing visibility is the first step in improving the recruitment process, while also following the workforces' evolving needs and adapting policies and ways of working to remain a relevant industry.

Indeed, Generation Z bring valuable skills to the aviation industry, such as high digital literacy needed for a variety of areas such as customer relations, communications and marketing, and cybersecurity. It is also the most diverse generation in history with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and acceptance of diverse cultures and background. Their desire for flexibility is core to their work-life balance with an interest to work in environments that offer flexible work arrangements such as remote work, flexible hours, and job sharing. For the most part, the aviation industry is able to offer and provide such arrangements which can also help attract and retain talent.

This generation also values organizations that promote innovation, personal growth trajectories, and sustainability with a conscious approach to environmental protection. Promoting these core values through the industry should be prioritised to help with the recruitment of this generation.

With the global transition to greener economies and evolving technology, jobs will change and meeting the future skills needs is going to be a challenge the industry needs to anticipate. Stakeholders should already be investing in reskilling their workers to meet the needs of tomorrow. An initial comparison between the nature of their workforce today with the skills they will need in the medium- and long-term is needed to identify the possible skill gaps. This gap analysis should result in a strategy for human capital to meet future needs, based on this high-level organizational strategy.

Reskilling can be costly. Incentives and support schemes from States may help offset some of the costs, but they should also be seen as an investment which will provide returns in the longer term. Pre-pandemic research from the World Economic Forum revealed that across a wide range of scenarios, investment in workforce reskilling and human capital development is a "no-regret action," i.e., it will be a beneficial investment even in the absence of skills shortages. It also means giving staff the time to learn new skills. Some organizations have set aside a day of the week dedicated to learning and development. This time needs to be purposeful and utilized for professional development that fits under the employee's pre-agreed career pathway.

The need for collaboration

Collaboration and coordination to address current and future workforce challenges is particularly important. Working across the industry with industry partners, aviation worker's representatives, and employers' representatives to create a sustainable working environment for all aviation workers is key to finding solutions and re-establishing the industry as an attractive place to work.

During the ACI World General Assembly in October 2022, a resolution on *Creating a strong and diverse airport workforce to meet future demand and ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the aviation system* was approved. This resolution highlights and recognizes the

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importance of collaboration among all stakeholders and industry sectors while calling for dialogue and joint initiatives to achieve this objective.

In a joint working paper submitted to the 41st ICAO Assembly (September 2022), ACI and seven other international organizations issued a call to action to States and ICAO to identify strategies and actions that could be taken to increase the attractiveness of the aviation sector for the next generation of aviation personnel.

The submission called on States to collaborate with Ministries of Education and Employment by identifying future skill gaps, including technical and higher education aviation programs, as part of the broader national education policies, to support collaboration between educational institutions and the industry on a national and local basis to develop skills labs and other forms of aviation training institutes. It also called on States to take the necessary measures to ensure the recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of aviation workers.

The ICAO Assembly recognised that States, international organizations and industry must take necessary measures to facilitate the vetting, recruitment, training, mobility, and retention of aviation workers to ensure that the aviation industry remains an attractive sector to its workforce.

Aviation is a resilient industry. Having faced multiple shocks over the last decades, from 9/11 to COVID-19, aviation has been able to recover, rebound, and come back stronger every time. The current shortages of staff and the severe operational challenges they are bringing to many airports worldwide present the industry with an opportunity to rethink and take strategic actions to correct its trajectory and build the workforce of the future.

These strategic actions should focus on three main axes: accelerating the introduction of technology, placing humans back in the centre of aviation, and creating an attractive aviation industry for present and future aviation personnel. These axes are not contradictory. Together, they can help bring about a better travel experience, more satisfied customers, happier and more engaged staff, and more efficient processes that will be essential to meet future traffic growth and ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the aviation ecosystem.

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![HERMES AIR TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION logo]

POSITION PAPER

R23-PP/02
03/05/23

Sustainability of the aviation industry: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by ERA)

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Introduction

ERA (European Regions Airline Association) is the trade association representing more than 58 airlines and over 160 associate members, including manufacturers, airports, suppliers, and aviation service providers, across the entire spectrum of the aviation industry.

ERA works on behalf of its members to represent their interests before Europe's major regulatory bodies, governments and legislators to encourage and develop long-term and sustainable growth for the sector and industry, and championing green and sustainable air connectivity and European air transport. ERA members service the European regions airline sector in through the protection and development of regional economies and local communities.

Our sector is an essential and crucial element of European air transport and regional aviation makes a significant contribution to the economic growth and development of many regions in Europe and around the world. It plays a vital role in connecting people and businesses, supporting industries, and driving tourism. However, a skilled workforce is essential to meet the demands of the rapidly changing aviation industry, one where the regional carriers are at the forefront of technological and sustainability changes.

A shortage of skilled workers can lead to a ripple effect on various aspects of regional aviation, which can ultimately impede the sector's growth and development.

Background

Regional aviation refers mainly to passenger air transportation services connecting smaller communities or regions with larger cities. It is operated mainly by regional airlines and usually serves fewer passengers than legacy and low-cost carriers but remains an essential mode of transportation for many communities.

It is critical because it connects people and goods to the global economy, supports growth and development in smaller regions, and enhances tourism. It enables people to move quickly, efficiently, safely, and affordably across regions and nations, thereby increasing productivity and enabling businesses to expand their markets.

However, the regional sector is under significant pressure, particularly when speaking about environmental sustainability. ERA members are at the forefront of the investing in sustainable technologies and regional aviation cannot grow and be fit for purpose without such investments, and it is therefore vital that we continue to highlight the value that regional aviation brings to communities in tandem with having long term benefits for the environment. At our recent Regional Airline Conference held in Nice, over 275 representatives from the association came together to discuss not just environmental sustainability, but also economic and social sustainability, recognising that each area has cannot move forward at the expense of the others. Skills, experience and attracting talent is at the forefront of our thinking and we are delighted to have to be able to discuss this topic in this paper.

Skills Shortages in Regional Aviation

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Skills shortages are becoming increasingly prevalent in the aviation industry and are being keenly felt by the regional sector. There are several reasons for this:

Firstly, the impact of an aging workforce is resulting in

many skilled and experienced pilots and engineers retiring.

Secondly, the rapid growth of aviation technology requires a more specialized skill set, resulting in not enough skilled workers to meet demands.

Thirdly, the availability of training programs for aviation professionals has been low, meaning that there are not enough qualified candidates to fill the positions that are available.

Finally, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant. Over the past three years, a good percentage of staff, particularly, although not exclusively limited to the lower end of the wage scale, have reassessed their work / life balance resulting in many deciding to leave the industry and look for other opportunities. The industry lost a lot of talented people to other progressive sectors as a result.

While people that exist in aviation typically do so because of the passion they hold for it, that is quickly outweighed by the fact that the industry is always the first hit by crisis and normally the last to recover.

Impact of Skills Shortages on Regional Aviation

The shortage of skilled workers affects several aspects of the sector, with potential major impacts on safety, economics, and maintenance.

Safety

One of the most significant impacts of skills shortages is on safety. The aviation industry is highly regulated, and any shortage of skilled workers can compromise the safety of passengers and crew. The pool of available pilots, engineers, and technicians is shrinking, meaning that airlines may have to stretch resources by working their professionals longer hours, which increases the risk of human error. The consequences of accidents and incidents can impact the reputation and financial stability of the entire regional aviation sector.

ERA is therefore proud to co-sponsor the 2023 Safety Forum in conjunction with the Flight Safety Foundation and EUROCONTROL, which will focus this year on "Knowledge, Skills and Experience for Safe Operations" The issue affects everyone – people in flight operations, maintenance, ground handling, air traffic control and airport personnel, as well as management and others.

Economics

Skills shortages can also have significant impacts on the economics of regional aviation. The shortage of skilled workers can lead to higher wages and salaries, as airlines compete to attract the best professionals, leading to the increased cost of operations. This increased cost is eventually passed onto the consumers leading to higher ticket prices, which can lead to reduced demand for regional services, affecting revenues and profitability all those in the regional eco-system.

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Maintenance

Maintenance is an essential aspect of aviation; it ensures that the aircraft remain airworthy and safe for passengers and crew. The shortage of engineers and technicians can lead to delays in maintenance schedules and repairs, which can cause more downtime for the aircraft. This can result in disruptions to the regional aviation service, leading to cancellations, lower seat capacity, and reduced profitability.

Efforts to Address Skills Shortages in Regional Aviation

To address skills shortages in regional aviation, several proposals and potential initiatives have been put forward by members. Areas of focus should include training and education, wider collaboration with the industry, public policies and programs, as well as a concerted efforts to ensure retention of existing staff.

Training and Education Programs

Training and education programs aim to develop a pool of skilled workers in regional aviation. Many universities and colleges are offering aviation programs that provide students with the required skillset to be successful in the industry. Aviation training institutes and schools are also providing various training programs for pilots, engineers, technicians, and other professionals. These programs should be supported by governments or be industry sponsored. Fully or partially supported costs of training, either through mounting special training courses at in-house academies or external training courses. However, care needs to be taken that contracts have suitable clauses that limit the possibility to terminate the contracts following successful completion of training. A minimum period of employment should ideally be agreed to mitigate resource leakage to other companies.

In terms of attracting new talent, members are competing with other sectors that younger generation probably find more appealing, such as technology and sustainability, however these areas are not promoted as widely as they should be given they are intrinsic to aviation as we move forward.
The sector has historically and currently is not gender balanced, female presence is still very low, most especially in technical jobs across the entire eco-system. Role models should be promoted to encourage more female presence in the industry at all levels and starting from the very early stages of education and the more junior roles. Expanding gender and ethnic diversity in aviation can only lead to improving the skills and talent pool, and should be encouraged by all stakeholders.

Collaboration with the Industry

Collaboration with the industry is also an effective way to address the skills shortages. These collaborations can take various forms, such as internships and apprenticeships, industry-led training programs, and partnerships with aviation institutes and schools. Collaboration with the industry allows employees to learn on the job, providing hands-on experience and training to new hires. A member airline noted that 'aviation organisations should target talented, multiskilling people. Training and peoples' development should be promoted during the recruitment process and therefore the recruitment process should not be an HR only initiative and must involve company management and departments' specialists. Aviation was always perceived as an attractive, extrovert industry but should be able to learn from other sectors who often have different and innovative

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methods in this area'. Companies could work together by prioritizing and integrating different perspectives into collaborative targets with goals and leverages aligned. Establishing collaborative networks, workshops and sharing views and feedback is seen as essential, and working hand in hand with new technologies, environmental protection, and community inclusion.

Public Policies and Programs

Governments and policy makers also play a crucial role in reducing skills shortages in regional aviation through the implementation of policies and programs that encourage education and training. Governments can provide subsidies, tax incentives, and other benefits to institutions providing education and training for aviation professionals. They can also provide funding to aviation institutes and schools to improve their programs and facilitate research and development efforts aimed at reducing skills shortages.

Lobbying and advocacy with governments is required to assure programs and financial incentives for teenagers (scholarships) that might be interested in aviation careers, making note that these are very difficult and important technical careers for the country. Pilots training for instance, in many states, is very expensive, which results in being a very elitist career only available to those families who have generous incomes. This balance needs to be addressed, and through diversity programmes make the industry attractive to those minorities not currently well represented.

Some states also have a very high tax policy for specialised and high income professionals such as pilots, making them uncompetitive countries when it comes to procuring pilot talent. For example, in Portugal, the tax burden for pilots is on average around 50% of the gross wage and the airline has an additional burden of 23.75%. The problem for European regional operators is that the skills shortage issue is a global one. Governments need to be made fully aware of the looming pilot shortage crisis and look to explore how to they can retain the existing talent that is fundamental in serving their communities and population.

At the recent ERA CEO meeting, it was also clear that some airlines are looking for more flexibility in the context of retirement age limitations for pilots, with EASA having a key role to play in this topic.
Programs can and should also be encouraged and coordinated at European level (through the Social Dialogue platforms in place) and we look forward to the outcome of the European Year of Skills.

Staff retainment

Those in membership that specialise in recruitment services are working closely with member airlines and have identified three main pillars when it comes to addressing retainment of staff. These can be summarised as follows:

Security & stability – Aviation is a very cyclical Industry and is subject to various external pressures and forces that typically result in occasional periods of significant downturn. As alluded to previously, the pandemic was by far the worst crisis that the industry has faced, and the industry lost a lot of talented individuals to other sectors as a result. While people that exist in aviation typically do so because of the passion they hold for it, that is quickly outweighed by the fact that the industry is always the first hit by crisis and normally the last to recover. Therefore, it is vital that strategies and initiatives are put in place to mitigate these downturns. Naturally, with such a broad range of

member states from across the EU and in some third countries, one size does not fit all and therefore in line with a wider collaboration with industry, partnership with subject matter experts in the field should be encouraged. To retain employees, opportunities should be provided that facilitates a continuous learning process is seen as essential. Only through development will valuable skills of the employees be improved and will also ensure a better level of support to the company.

Work/life balance – The airline business is a fragile one with profit margins very low when compared to overall turnover. Therefore, it is understandable that airlines are constantly evaluating how to maximum flexibility with their personnel that allows the optimum levels of productivity and maximum efficiency. However, in some cases, this comes at the cost of the employee whose ability to plan and enjoy a quality personal life can suffer. In the past, many people accepted that in order to work in the industry that they are passionate about. But events such as the pandemic, the ongoing cosy of living crisis combined with a fading of industry attractiveness generally bought about in part by the ultra-low cost (LCC) model that is now commonplace across the world, has increased the level of competition for LLC's, legacy/flag carriers and regionals alike. The impact of this is flexible rosters planned to minimum rest, multi-sector days with regular discretion have become the norm for flight crew and in some cases creates an environment which encourages existing experience to seek an alternative career path.

Pay & benefits – Given the acute skills shortage that spans all areas of the industry, the current market is probably the most competitive that has been seen in decades. When combined with record high inflation and cost of living increases and the fact of the matter is that if airlines and aviation businesses want to attract and retain their people they will have to be extremely competitive with the remuneration offering. This is not necessarily all about salary as taking into consideration the above pillars should alleviate the need to be the highest payer on the market, which is never going to be the case given the regional business model. But there it is becoming obvious that some renumeration increases will be needed in the short to medium term. This doesn't need to be in terms of direct salary and could come in different guises to help airlines avoid front loading the cost, such as improved pensions, retainment bonuses or similar.

One member airline commented that they would be open to exploring flexibility clauses in the agreements with labour unions in order that the quality of living is addressed and improved. For example, crews that are requested to operate a block of days outside their base, can have improved number of rest days at home.

ERA sits on the EU sectoral Social Dialogue platform with both representatives from employer and employee associations, and whilst not mandated to speak or negotiate on our members behalf, we work closely with our

partners on the platform to articulate and understand the needs on all sides in an effort to address and share best practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, skills shortages in regional aviation can have severe long-term impacts both on the regional sector and the wider industry. It can affect the safety of passengers and crew, its economics

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and maintenance, leading to lower profitability and reduced demand for regional aviation services. Addressing skills shortages through training and education programs, collaboration with the industry, and government policies and programs can lead to the development of a skilled workforce that can meet the growing demand for regional aviation services.

However, it will take time and concerted efforts from all stakeholders to overcome these shortages, and progress should be closely monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of the aviation industry.

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Sustainability of the aviation industry: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by ALTA)

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BACKGROUND

The Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA) acknowledges the need to develop joint solutions within all stakeholders in the industry to overcome the challenges of technical personnel shortages worldwide. Airlines have experienced these shortages over the years, due to economic cycles, new markets opening in other parts of the world and specific political, labor and economic situations on a per-country basis.

ALTA is engaged in different initiatives that will help attract, retain and advance more talent in the region. These are discussed as part of the responses below.

ANSWERS TO HERMES AIR TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION PAPER QUESTIONS

1. How can the aviation industry attract new employees? What advice can you provide to your

constituent firms and organizations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from

many other industries?

To successfully attract talent in a competitive job market, the industry and constituent firms and organizations can consider the following:

- Build a strong employer brand: Creating a strong employer brand can help differentiate organizations from competitors and attract top talent. This can include highlighting the company culture, values, and mission. Many individuals are looking for a workplace that aligns with their personal values and beliefs.

- Offering competitive salaries and benefits: One of the most effective ways to attract new employees is by offering competitive salaries and benefits packages and it can become crucial when competing with other companies or industries. This includes offering health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off and other benefits.

- Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace: Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace can attract a wider pool of talent and help differentiate your organization from competitors. This includes creating an environment that values and respects individuals from all backgrounds and cultures.

- Creating a positive work culture: The aviation industry can attract new employees by creating a positive work culture that values teamwork, communication, and collaboration. This can include offering flexible schedules, promoting work-life balance, and creating a supportive work environment.

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- Providing career development opportunities: The aviation industry can attract new employees by providing clear career paths and opportunities for advancement. This can include training programs, apprenticeships, internships and mentoring programs.

- Emphasizing the importance of safety: Safety is paramount in the aviation industry. By emphasizing this, the industry can attract individuals who are passionate about safety and committed to ensuring the safety of passengers and crew.

- Leveraging technology and innovation: The aviation industry is constantly evolving and incorporating new technology and innovations. By showcasing these advancements, the industry can attract individuals who are interested in working with cutting-edge technology and support the development of new advancements in their fields.

- Partnering with educational institutions: The aviation industry can partner with educational institutions to create programs that educate and train students for careers in the industry. This can include partnerships with universities, trade schools, and vocational programs.

- Partnering with industry associations: The aviation industry can partner with associations such as ALTA, IAWA, and others to create programs to attract a wider pool of candidates to the industry, creating scholarship programs, job fairs and other initiatives. ALTA has partnered with the International Aviation Womens Association (IAWA) in promoting the advancement of women in the industry. ALTA has hosted IAWA Connects and Workshops at different Conferences and locations in the region and has a joint scholarship program to support women studying technical careers in the industry with the Technological University of Panama (UTP).

2. How can the aviation industry retain its current employees?

The aviation industry can retain its current employees by implementing the following strategies:

- Competitive Compensation and Benefits: One of the most effective ways to retain employees is to offer competitive compensation and benefits packages that are at par with or better than the industry standard.

- Training and Development: Providing regular training and development opportunities for employees helps to improve their skills and expertise, which can lead to job satisfaction and loyalty.

- Flexible Work Arrangements: Offering flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible schedules, and job sharing, can help employees balance their work and personal life.

- Recognition and Rewards: Providing recognition and rewards for employees who perform well, such as bonuses or public acknowledgement, can help boost morale and increase employee loyalty.

- Employee Engagement: Engaging employees in decision-making, providing opportunities for feedback and input, and creating a positive work environment can help employees feel valued and invested in the company.

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- Career Advancement: Providing opportunities for career advancement, such as promotions, additional responsibilities, and job rotations, can help employees grow and develop within the company.

- Work-Life Balance and Well-being programs: Providing a healthy work-life balance is important for retaining employees. This can be achieved by offering paid time off, vacation days, and other employee benefits that support a healthy work-life balance. In addition, well-being programs should be the base platform to support employees to build resilience in the workplace, support mental health and create a better work environment. At ALTA we are committed to supporting members in achieving this and we partnered with renowned psychiatrist Augusto Cury, to develop a mental health program for aviation professionals. The program was released in September 2022, and it can support corporations or individuals in the analysis of the process of building thoughts, the functioning of the human mind and strategies to have a free and healthy mind.

What advice can you provide to firms and organizations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?

- Invest in employee training and development: Companies should invest in training and development programs to help employees develop new skills, stay up to date with industry trends, and adapt to changing technology and work culture. This could include on-the-job training, workshops, seminars, online courses, and other forms of learning opportunities.

- Foster a culture of continuous learning: Encourage employees to take ownership of their own learning and development by creating a culture of continuous learning. This could include offering incentives for employees who complete courses or acquire new skills or creating opportunities for employees to share their knowledge and expertise with others in the organization.

- Emphasize soft skills: In addition to technical skills, organizations should also focus on developing soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership. These skills are increasingly important in the 21st century workplace and can help employees be more effective and adaptable.

- Partner with educational institutions: Partnering with educational institutions such as universities, community colleges, and vocational schools can help companies stay up to date with industry trends and provide employees with access to the latest knowledge and skills.

- Encourage diversity and inclusivity: Encourage diversity and inclusivity within the workplace by promoting an environment where people from different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences can learn from each other. This can help foster innovation and creativity, as well as ensure that the organization is representative of the communities it serves.

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By implementing these strategies, firms and organizations can ensure that their personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century. ALTA is fully committed to education and in 2022 released the following initiatives:

A) ALTA's Aviation Training Committee. It was initiated in September 2022 and gathers Training Directors from its members and partners, and it has already become the discussion forum for training matters in the region. The Committee has started with the Pilot Training sub-group, and we are working with the members in initiatives as the implementation of Evidence-based training (EBT), regulations harmonization related to pilot training aspects, the incorporation of AI in training among others. The objective is to create sub-groups for other technical personnel training in the industry.

B) ALTA's Educational Hub, released in September 2022 and aimed for professionals in the industry to find different types of courses and academic programs in a single place. The Educational Hub includes courses as a virtual 2-hour ground handling course, to an on-site Master in Sustainability program. ALTA has partnered with highly recognized academic institutions that offer high quality programs to the industry. Over 100 programs are already available in Spanish, English and Portuguese. More can be found at www.alta.aero/education.

3. How can industry associations work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure

that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?

Industry associations and aviation firms can work together with other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool by implementing the following strategies:

- Promote Diversity and Inclusion: Industry associations and aviation firms can work together to create awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion. This can be achieved by organizing seminars, workshops, and conferences that discuss the benefits of having a diverse workforce.

- Offer Diversity Training: Offering diversity training to employees can help to eliminate bias and promote diversity and inclusion. Industry associations and aviation firms can work together to develop training programs that help employees to understand and appreciate diversity.

- Recruitment: Industry associations and aviation firms can work together to identify and recruit candidates from diverse backgrounds. This can be achieved by attending job fairs and reaching out to universities and colleges that have a diverse student body.

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- Mentorship Programs: Mentorship programs can help to attract and retain talent from a diverse employment pool. Industry associations and aviation firms can work together to develop mentorship programs that connect employees from diverse backgrounds with experienced professionals in the industry.

- Support Career Development: Industry associations and aviation firms can work together to support the career development of employees from diverse backgrounds. This can be achieved by offering training and development programs, as well as opportunities for promotion and advancement.

- Employee Resource Groups: Employee resource groups can provide a sense of community and support for employees from diverse backgrounds. Industry associations and aviation firms can work together to establish and support these groups, which can help to attract and retain diverse talent.

- Collaboration with Community Organizations: Industry associations and aviation firms can collaborate with community organizations to identify and attract talent from diverse backgrounds. This can be achieved by participating in community events and establishing partnerships with organizations that serve diverse populations.

ALTA wishes to collaborate with the Hermes Organization in initiatives that can contribute to these topics, and we remain at your disposal for any follow-up questions or comments.

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Recruitment and Retention of Talent for ANSPs

(Presented by CANSO)

The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) is the global voice of air traffic management. Its Members are Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) and leading providers of technology and services to the industry. The paper below, prepared by CANSO, examines issues and factors affecting the recruitment and retention of employee talent for ANSPs.

Introduction

Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) provide services and infrastructure that remain essential to the aviation industry and the safety of our skies. Employees remain at the core of the ANSP as it is through them that service is delivered, safety is maintained, and efficiency is achieved.

The recruitment and retention of employees in ANSPs in general and air traffic control (ATC) functions in particular can be challenging, as this profession requires specific skills, knowledge, and a high level of responsibility. In this paper, we will explore the challenges of recruiting and retaining employees for ANSPs, as well as the strategies that can help overcome these challenges.

Air Traffic Controllers in Operations (ATCOs) form a significant percentage of the employee base of ANSPs. The exact proportion depends on several factors, including the full scope of responsibility of the ANSP, which can vary by country. On average ATCOs made up approximately 40 percent of staff employed by ANSPs and form the largest single employment category. For that reason and some unique characteristics relevant to their recruitment and retention they are explored separately in the paper that follows.

Recruitment of Air Traffic Controllers

There are approximately 80,000 licenced air traffic controllers globally, making it a small career relative to others. Given traffic growth projections, ICAO projects that demand for air traffic controllers will rise by 88 percent between now and 2037 with a significant amount of that new demand coming in the Asia Pacific region.

As a career it is stable, with high rates of pay and good working conditions. In most cases training is paid for by the employer, with many instances of trainees being paid a training salary while completing their training. Yet, there continue to be challenges with ATC recruitment. Some of the main challenges of recruiting employees in ATC functions are:

1. Limited pool of candidates: Except in narrow examples of recruitment of experienced controllers ANSPs in most circumstances are not so much hiring air traffic controllers as making air traffic controllers (i.e. taking someone who is not an ATC and training them). In most countries it is not something one studies at post-secondary school. Awareness of the career remains limited and therefore the number of individuals who are interested in pursuing a career in ATC is small. Youth that want to join aviation as a career often think of more public facing jobs such as pilot. ATC is not a career many youth consider unless they personally know someone in the job. Additionally ATC must meet certain medical and security criteria.

2. Work environment: There is a perception that ATC work is stressful. It is true that ATCOs are required to make decisions with critical safety consequences, but the training programme prepares candidates well for this. However the perception of a stressful work environment is a disincentive for some potential candidates.

3. Work schedule: Air traffic control functions are provided 24/7/365 necessitating that ATCOs work shift work. This can make it challenging to recruit individuals who are prioritising work-life balance or who have parental responsibilities that may make shift work challenging.

4. Rigorous training: ATC professionals are responsible for ensuring the safety of all flights within their jurisdiction. This requires a high level of attention to detail, focus, and situational awareness. Candidates who do not have the required skills and abilities may not pass the training process. Failure rates range from 5 percent, to as high as 60 percent in complex airspace, with the average failure rate across ANSPs at 18.8 percent. Additionally the training process can take two to four years, depending on the complexity and location of the airspace. During this time, trainees may face uncertainty, pressure and attrition.

5. Technical knowledge: ATC professionals must have a deep understanding of aviation regulations, procedures, and technologies. Candidates who lack technical knowledge and the ability to memorize large amounts of information may not pass the training process.

6. Limitations of the training pipeline: Most ANSPs are constrained in the number of new ATC students they can intake per year due to limitations in the training stream (e.g. instructors, simulator capacity, on the job training limitations). Even those facing staff shortages are often challenged to ramp up training capacity in a meaningful way.

Retention in Air Traffic Control

Retention is equally important as recruitment in ATC functions, particularly given the high cost and large amounts of time invested in training an ab initio student to the point at which they obtain an ATC license.

Thankfully retention rates remain remarkably high. Very few employees leave the career prior to retirement. Some do pursue opportunities within ANSP management, largely motivated by opportunities for career growth and in some cases more consistent work hours.

As ANSPs are generally monopolies in their own countries, being an air traffic controller usually means staying with the same employer. There is some limited movement of air traffic controllers between countries, with experienced controllers being recruited, or seeking to relocate. Unlike retirement related turnover, this can be difficult to plan for and its occurrence in other than isolated cases can put some ANSPs in short staffing situations.

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Other Factors and Opportunities

Increased automation is providing controller decision support tools that is enabling safe increases in productivity. Global productivity as measured by IFR flight hours per ATCO hour has risen by 20 percent in the decade between 2009 and 2019. Air traffic control positions will continue to see evolution in the nature of the position with automation enabling new opportunities.

Automation and improved simulation may also deliver benefits to the training stream, reducing failure rates.

Changes to training and licencing that permits flexible deployment of resources in line with traffic will enable technical advances like virtual centres to reach their maximum benefit. There is variability in the existence of mandatory retirement ages across jurisdictions. As with the review of pilot retirement ages, it may be appropriate to review ATCO retirement ages as well.

Other ANSP Careers

ANSPs have a range of careers other than air traffic control. Many of these are still operational in nature and require specialized training (e.g. instrument procedure designers, pilots, air traffic safety electronics personnel). While others are professional careers common to other industries and therefore ones in which ANSPs may compete with other industries to be attractive to potential candidates (e.g. lawyers, human resources personnel, engineers, computer programmers). Retention in these positions is more challenging because the monopoly nature of the ANSP does not ensure retention of employees in these job categories and there is therefore a higher likelihood that employees may change employers or even industries during their career.

The factors that make employers attractive and workplaces supportive environments can help to attract and retain employees in the diverse careers that ANSPs employ.

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Strategies for Attracting and Keeping Future Talent

Organizations can implement various strategies to ensure the continued attractiveness of our industry and our individual companies to future talent. These strategies include:

1. Getting it right on sustainability: Surveys continue to show that youth are looking to work for organizations that align with their values. Demonstrating that aviation has a robust and ambitious plan to decarbonize its activities and is making meaningful progress in that regard is critical to our ability to attract the skills to our industry to help us make the transition.

2. Embracing diversity and inclusion: Organizations must promote a culture of respect and acceptance and remove barriers in order to ensure a healthy workplace for diverse employees and diverse views. This can help attract individuals from different backgrounds and experiences and improve employee morale. The industry continues to have challenges in addressing gender parity issues, particularly in key operational positions like pilots, maintenance engineers and ATCOs where the percentage of female employees remains small.

3. Fostering a positive work environment: Organizations can foster a positive work environment by promoting teamwork, communication, and recognition. This can help reduce stress levels and improve employee morale.

4. Offering competitive compensation and benefits: To attract and retain talent, organizations must offer competitive compensation and benefits packages. Pay and benefits should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remains in line with market pressures.

5. Targeted recruitment: Targeting recruitment efforts to individuals who have the required skills and have demonstrated an interest in aviation can be a very successful strategy. This can be done by partnering with universities, technical schools, and aviation organizations or youth cadets programmes.

6. Providing training and development: The aviation industry in general provides significant training focused on the successful completion of employees existing jobs. New technology, new procedures all must be trained for prior to implementation. Organizations must look at how they incorporate development opportunities to help employees grow and develop their skills.

7. Implementing employee supports: Organizations can implement mental health and other employee support programs, including formal peer support programmes. This can include counseling services, support groups, and stress management programs.

8. Offering flexible work arrangements: Aviation is currently limited in the extent to which it can offer flexible work arrangements, as many jobs must be performed on site. However employers can look at programs that provide flexibility for employees needing to balance

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their work and personal lives. This can be especially beneficial for employees with young children or elderly parents.

9. Providing career opportunities: Organizations can provide career opportunities to help employees feel that their career is advancing. This need not always be promotions and can include lateral moves, special project assignments, or a role in training new employees.

Conclusion

Aviation's forecasted growth means that the recruitment and retention of employees will remain critically important. New skills in AI, cybersecurity and other areas will continue to grow in importance as the industry advances with automation of certain tasks and becomes more connected in its networks and systems in order to unlock efficiencies.

Challenges remain with awareness of careers and demands for flexible work arrangements and opportunities for advancement that may be more challenging for the industry to deliver to all employment categories.

By implementing targeted recruitment, offering competitive compensation and benefits, providing training and development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment with employee support programmes, organizations can overcome these challenges and build a strong workforce. The industry must take particular care to bolster its environmental reputation in order to remain attractive to a generation of employees looking for employers who align with their values.

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The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by AFCAC)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AFCAC has over the years collaborated with International Partners in Capacity Building activities within the continent. While the aviation industry in Africa is undergoing significant growth, it is having difficulty meeting its human capital demands in civil aviation. This is impacting the availability of qualified technical aviation professionals, and the ability of African States to effectively implement ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) and other ICAO programs. It is therefore, important that all stakeholders collaborate to ensure that the industry attracts the personnel needed to sustain the operations. This Paper provides a basis of discussion with responses to the pertinent questions that have been raised as far as attraction and retention of the trained and qualified personnel is concerned. In addition, it further provides advice regarding what firms and organizations need to do in order to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century. Finally, it also suggests ways in which the industry associations can work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of inadequate Aviation professionals is prevalent globally. ICAO Aviation Safety and Security Audits, have identified the lack of qualified aviation personnel as one of the common deficiency and root cause for low scores in the average Effective Implementation (EI) of critical elements (CEs) of a State Safety and Security Oversight System, hence low levels of compliance with ICAO SARPs in many States. This adversely impedes States' fulfillment of their international obligations under the Chicago Convention and effective participation in the global aviation market. In order to enhance its efforts in the fulfilment of its mandate for Capacity Building to Member States, AFCAC continues to partner with various Institutions, States and Organizations in this endeavor.

DISCUSSION

The following discussions based on the questions raised have been consistently presented and discussed at global and regional forums, including the ICAO Assembly, AFI week events, regional workshops/ seminars etc. The solutions therein lie in the ability of all stakeholders to work together to build and maintain human capacity in various fields of Aviation which include but not limited to aviation meteorology, aircraft manufacturing continues to be a primary hindrance to States performance and compliance to ICAO SARPs, aircraft maintenance, air traffic control, flying, cabin crew, flight dispatch, environmental protection, aviation law, aviation security, air transport, civil aviation management and aerodrome operations. Adequate human resources in these areas as a minimum would assist stakeholders in developing a robust and resilient Civil Aviation industry.
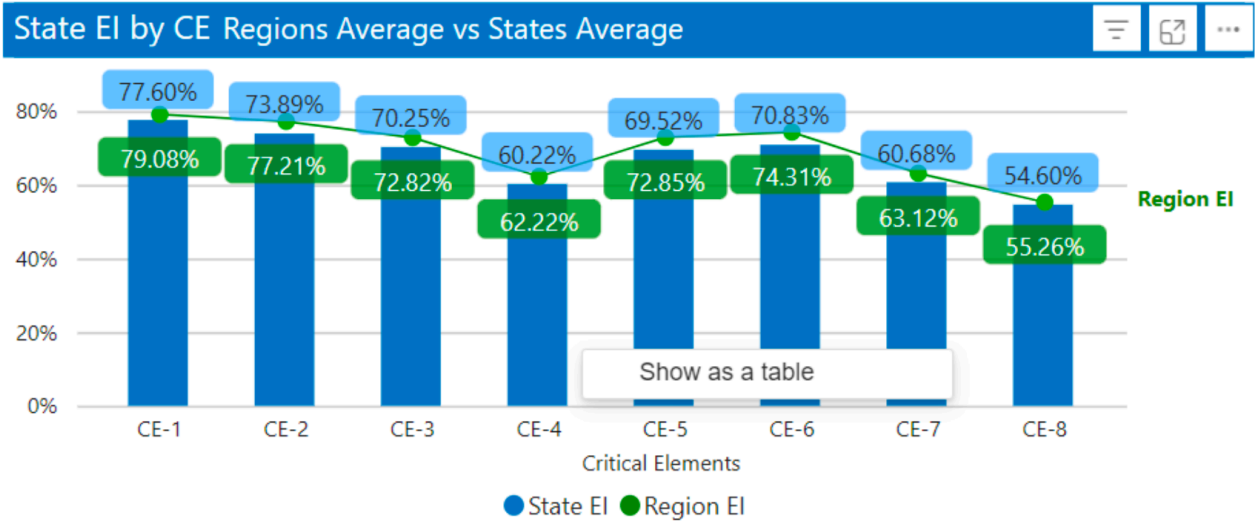
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State EI by CE Regions Average vs States Average

Source: ICAO ISTARS December 2022)

The average least performing EIs by critical element are CE 4 (Technical Personnel, qualification & training) – 60.22 (State EI) / 62.22% (Region EI) and CE-8 (Resolution of Safety Concerns) – 54.60% (State EI) and 55.26% (Region EI). Without qualified and competent personnel in the aviation industry safety cannot be guaranteed. This sets the scene for the following questions to be addressed as raised.

1. How can the aviation industry attract new employees? What advice can you provide to your constituent firms and organizations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from many other industries?

The aviation industry in Africa aviation is fast recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, this recovery and the projected growth cannot be sustained where the industry continues to lose experienced and competent aviation professionals. For the industry to grow and flourish, it must attract skilled work force amidst the stiff competition from many other industries. It would be beneficial to consider the following aspects in order to attract new employees.

a) Awarenesscreation

It is for a fact that, many people do not know the various job opportunities in aviation industry. They are always limited to the obvious careers for pilots, cabin crew and air traffic controllers. This has pushed quite a number to venture into flying yet unable to complete due to the heavy financial resources required for this the training. In essence we have people who are enthusiastic about flying but cannot achieve their dreams. Awareness creation for the other available opportunities in the aviation industry is critical and can be achieved through social media, television, easy writing about aviation, celebration of especial aviation days and any other available means.

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Another aspect of creating awareness is to highlight the industry's unique appeal and its exciting and dynamic nature. Constituent firms and organizations need to showcase the opportunities for personal and professional growth, the chance to travel, and the fulfillment of being part of an industry that connects people and cultures worldwide. By enhancing connectivity across continents, it realistically makes the world a global village. Organizations should also use a multi-channel approach to reach potential employees. This includes utilizing social media platforms, online job boards, industry-specific platforms, and career fairs to promote opportunities within the aviation industry. Engagement with universities, colleges, and technical schools to establish partnerships and promote aviation-related programs would also support awareness creation.

b) Attractive recruitment strategies

The aviation industry should design appropriate recruitment strategies to attract more people. Organizations that make recruitment efforts towards specific demographic groups such as the youth and women are more appealing to potential employees stand a greater chance of motivating the work force. Organizations need to recognize that different demographics may have varying motivations for pursuing a career in aviation. It is important that employers develop targeted messaging and initiatives to appeal to students, recent graduates, mid-career professionals, and individuals from diverse backgrounds.

It is also important for employers to offer competitive compensation and benefits: The aviation industry faces competition from other sectors, so it's important to offer competitive salaries and benefits packages. Highlight unique benefits such as flight privileges, health and wellness programs, career development opportunities, and work-life balance initiatives.

The workload in the aviation industry is quite a huge one, the only worse thing to do is to reward staff below the effort they exuberate to get the job done. Aviation is training-based, an existing staff with all the training giving will look for greener pastures elsewhere if their salary cannot support their livelihood. They will run into other business to create a better living, which indirectly is a loss to the aviation industry.

c) Employeemoraleenhancementprograms

In as much as the industry needs more competent and qualified personnel, we cannot underestimate the need of having employees who are passionate at what they do or what they wish to become. Such people have unique approach to solving issues related to aviation and always go all out. Organizations can stir up passion amongst employees though enabling innovation and collaboration. Similarly, employers need to create an atmosphere in which employees are able to creatively contribute ideas and solutions to improve business processes and operations. In addition, a supportive and an all-inclusive work environment that values teamwork, open communication, and knowledge sharing enhances the morale and passion of employees. Morale can also be enhanced whenever employers recognise and reward employees for their innovative contributions.

Employers need to support employees to pprioritize work-life balance. The aviation industry often involves irregular schedules and demanding workloads. Organizations need to iimplement policies and initiatives that promote work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling, wellness programs, and

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employee assistance programs. This shows appreciation for employees' efforts and provide opportunities for downtime and relaxation.

The industry should endeavor to be competitive with compensation and benefits for its employees by ensuring regular reviews and improvement of compensation and benefit packages to remain competitive in the market. Where possible employers are advised to cconduct salary surveys to ensure salaries align with industry standards and include additional perks such as travel incentives, employee discounts, and retirement savings plans to enhance employee satisfaction.

d) Personnel training and career progression

Training for aviation professionals is usually very costly. In most cases there is no allocation of funds for aviation training and empowerment in the budgets of many States especially in Africa since it is perceived as a luxurious industry. Although such budgets drawn include provisions for educational needs, it is rather unfortunate that few countries consider the inclusion of aviation training in the national budgets. Some sectors of education like medicine take priority and get sponsorship. This leaves many aspiring aviators to support themselves through aviation training with the associated cost factor.

Introduction of aviation syllabus in our educational system can also help create awareness and provoke interest among the youth. It is true that most of our educational systems highlight with emphasis other professional careers right from the beginning as opposes to aviation. If aviation is introduced in a similar manner, it would help the youth to consider careers in aviation early enough.

It is also apparent that some employers do not invest in employee career progression. The employees may be doing all the work, getting the work done but there is no plan for staff to advance their careers and ambitions. This is counterproductive since when employees cannot tell the next stage in their career, there is a higher chance that, they may quit the industry. It is important for employers to take this aspect into consideration in order to motivate staff.

Based on the foregoing, there is great need for the industry embrace personnel training and career progression. Organizations must deliberately ccommunicate their commitment to continuous learning and career advancement. This can be achieved when the organizations highlight training programs, mentorship opportunities, and the potential for growth within the organization. Showcase success stories of individuals who have advanced their careers within the aviation industry.

The industry is urged to establish comprehensive training programs to enhance employees' skills and knowledgeand provide opportunities for continuous learning, certifications, and cross-training in different roles within the organization. Employers need to create opportunities for employees to attend industry conferences, workshops, and seminars to stay updated on the latest trends and technologies. Employees must be trained to build their confidence in their respective roles.

It's crucial to tailor your recruitment strategies to the specific needs and desires of potential candidates. By implementing these approaches, you can increase your organization's chances of attracting top talent to the aviation industry.

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2. How can the aviation industry retain its current employees? What advice can you provide to firms and organizations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?

To retain current employees in the aviation industry and ensure they have the necessary skills to advance in the 21st century, firms and organizations need to embrace the factors discussed for the first question. In addition, the following areas can supplement the efforts made by firms to retain their employees:

a) Willingness to adapt to change

Whenever an organization is open to new ideas that are brought about for various reasons, the employees will feel a sense of belonginess and will be motivated to stay in the organization longer. This aspect is instrumental in establishing a culture of learning among the employees. The management needs to cultivate a culture of continuous learning within the organization by promoting the importance of personal growth and provide opportunities for employees to attend conferences, workshops, and industry events. Create an environment where employees feel motivated to expand their knowledge and skills.

In addition, employers should be willing to accept and adapt technological advancements. It's prudent for organizations to invest in and leverage on emerging technologies that can improve efficiency and streamline operations in the aviation industry. By creating opportunities for employees to learn and adapt to these technologies, organizations will increase the chances of retaining employees who are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in the digital age.

b) Effective communication and inclusivity

Employees feel more secure in an organization that communicates well at all levels and involves employees in decision-making whenever appropriate. Management personnel would benefit more if they embrace open and transparent communication channels within the organization. Involve employees in decision-making processes whenever possible, seeking their input and feedback. When employees feel their voices are heard and their opinions matter, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to the organization. Encourage employees to share their experiences on platforms like Glassdoor or LinkedIn, and regularly communicate your organization's values, achievements, and employee success stories through various channels.

It is important for firms to foster diversity and inclusion of employees in matters that directly affect them. This creates a diverse and inclusive workplace atmosphere where individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives are welcomed and respected. Similarly, organizations need to promote diversity in leadership roles and ensure equal opportunities for career growth in. Diverse teams bring fresh perspectives and ideas, leading to better problem-solving and innovation.

By implementing these strategies, firms and organizations in the aviation industry can create a positive and supportive work environment, retain their current employees, and ensure they have the necessary skills to foster a strong employer brand. Finally, the top management should endeavor to establish and maintain a positive reputation as an employer of choice.

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3. How can industry associations work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?

Industry associations can play a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusivity within the aviation industry by collaborating with aviation firms and other stakeholders. Here are several ways in which industry associations can work together with these entities to attract and retain talent from a diverse employment pool.

a) *Establish Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:* Industry associations can create dedicated committees or task forces focused on diversity and inclusion. These groups can work with aviation firms and stakeholders to develop strategies, set goals, and implement initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining talent from diverse backgrounds.

b) *Establish partnerships with educational institutions:* Collaborate with universities, colleges, and technical schools to attract students and recent graduates. Offer internships, co-op programs, or scholarships to cultivate a pipeline of talent and demonstrate a commitment to investing in the next generation of aviation professionals.

c) *Foster Collaboration and Networking Opportunities:* Industry associations can organize networking events, conferences, and workshops that bring together professionals from different backgrounds within the aviation industry. These platforms provide opportunities for individuals to connect, share experiences, and build relationships, fostering a more inclusive environment.

d) *Support Educational and Mentorship Programs:* By partnering with educational institutions and aviation firms, industry associations can support scholarship programs and internships targeted at underrepresented groups. Additionally, they can establish mentorship programs that pair experienced professionals with individuals from diverse backgrounds to provide guidance, support, and career development opportunities.

e) *Promote Diversity in Leadership Positions:* Industry associations can encourage aviation firms to have diverse representation in leadership positions. This can be done by advocating for inclusive hiring practices, promoting mentorship and sponsorship programs, and recognizing and highlighting success stories of diverse leaders within the industry.

f) *Provide Training and Resources:* Industry associations can develop training programs and resources to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within aviation firms. These resources can include workshops, webinars, and best practice guidelines that help organizations create an inclusive work environment and address unconscious biases.

g) *Advocate for Policies and Legislation:* Industry associations can engage with government bodies and regulatory authorities to advocate for policies and legislation that promote diversity and inclusivity within the aviation industry. They can support initiatives that address barriers to entry, eliminate discrimination, and encourage equal opportunities for all individuals.

h) *Collect and Share Data:* Industry associations can collaborate with aviation firms to collect and analyse data on diversity and inclusion within the industry. This data can help identify areas of improvement, measure progress, and share best practices to drive meaningful change.

i) ***Raise Awareness and Promote Positive Representation:*** Industry associations can use their platforms to raise awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusion. This can be done through campaigns, publications, and media outreach, highlighting the value of diverse perspectives and the positive impact they have on the industry.

j) ***Promote apprenticeships and internships:*** Encourage firms to offer apprenticeship and internship programs that provide hands-on experience and exposure to the actual work environment.

By working in tandem with aviation firms and other stakeholders, industry associations can create a more diverse and inclusive industry that attracts and retains talent from a wide range of backgrounds, ultimately leading to a stronger and more innovative aviation sector.

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Sustainability of the aviation industry: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by A4A)

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Airlines for America (A4A)[1] is the trade association that represents the United States (U.S.) leading passenger and cargo airlines. It advocates on behalf of its members to shape crucial policies and measures that promote safety, security, and a robust U.S. airline industry. Our collaborative work with our member carriers, labor partners, members of congress, the Administration and other groups aids in improving aviation for the traveling and shipping public. A recent report by Oxford Analytics states that 2.3 million jobs have been lost across airlines, airports and civil aviation groups since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, a 21 percent reduction from pre-pandemic levels.[2] The industry has faced a tumultuous period of decline and resurgence. As the demand for domestic and international air travel resumes, airlines are striving to increase employment across all sectors in the industry.

As of December 2022, U.S. passenger airlines employed approximately 473,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) – the most since July 2002. In 2021 they added 46,000 jobs and an additional 50,000 jobs in 2022, adding a total of 96,000 FTEs within two years. Globally, U.S. passenger and all-cargo airlines employed approximately 784,000 workers, up 53,000 from December 2021.[3] The industry is also making efforts to surpass pre-pandemic pilot and flight attendant employment numbers. In 2022, U.S. passenger airlines employed 5% more pilots and 1% more flight attendants than they did in 2019, while U.S. cargo airlines employed 21% more pilots than they did in 2019.

Despite these recent increases in staffing, diversity within the aviation workforce remains a significant concern. Reports indicate that 92% of U.S. airline pilots are male, and 93% are white. Some of A4A member airlines have launched pilot training programs to attract a diverse group of pilots and increase pilot numbers. But many airline training programs are silent on diversity and therefore no meaningful analysis can be conducted as to how airlines are working to bring women and individuals of all races into the workforce.

This paper addresses and provides proposed solutions for diversifying and increasing the aviation workforce.

Talent Recruitment

How can the aviation industry attract new employees? What advice can you provide to your constituent firms and organizations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from many other industries?

To attract new employees, recruitment efforts must be expansive and diverse in nature. Presently, some organizations within the aviation industry use linear and outdated methods that limit the pool of qualified, diverse talent. Introducing alternatives forms of recruitment, expanding applicant pool

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[1] A4A's members are Alaska Airlines, Inc.; American Airlines Group, Inc.; Atlas Air, Inc.; Delta Air Lines, Inc.; FedEx Corp.; Hawaiian Airlines; JetBlue Airways Corp.; Southwest Airlines Co.; United Airlines Holdings, Inc.; and United Parcel Service Co. Air Canada is an associate member.

[2] https://www.ft.com/content/93736968-8fcf-425f-b8e5-fcd9736d37f6

[3] A4A Economist insights. John Heimlich, 2023

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to appeal to include those in underrepresented communities, and investing in advanced platform technologies are imperative.

At A4A, our member carriers have expanded their methods of recruiting by partnering with aviation focused collegiate institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to broaden their access to those in traditionally underrepresented communities. The purpose of these partnerships is to introduce careers to a population who may be unfamiliar with vast array of career opportunities offered by the aviation industry. While career opportunities continue to focus on training in the fields aviation maintenance, engineering, and crew operations; the push for expanded and diverse pilot operations training and recruitment has blossomed extensively within recent years.

In 2022, United Airlines launched Aviate Academy – a flight training academy dedicated to employing the next generation of highly qualified and diverse professional pilots. United Airlines views the program as a key resource in hiring 10,000 pilots by the end of the decade. This year, the Aviate Academy graduated its first class of 51 trainees with nearly 80% being women or people of color. Similarly, Delta Air Lines is preparing to launch its fourth installation of its Propel program this summer, which is centered around the training and hiring of pilots. To expand its recruitment strategies, Delta Air Lines currently coordinates on-campus recruiting events at HBCUs for students to meet with Delta's talent acquisition team through the airline's "Delta Days" program. They also offer co-ops, Internships and MBA opportunities for college students and recent graduates. Southwest Airlines Destination 225 University Pathway is for individuals interested in pursuing their university degree while building post-graduate flight instructing time within their college's flight program. The accomplished group of Southwest's university partners include Angelo State University, Arizona State University, University of Nebraska at Omaha, The University of Oklahoma, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Texas Southern University and recent 2023 addition, Auburn University's School of Aviation.

Our members recognize limited funding and access to financial resources are the leading deterrent in attracting new employees to the field of aviation; the airline industry is looking to amend that. Major air carriers are consorting with financial banking institutions and agencies to form alliances that offer scholarships and private funding to enrollees for tuition and other support. Specifically, Delta Air Lines has committed over $1.5 million to 37 HBCUs through multiple United Negro College Fund (UNCF) grant programs. Additionally, both United Airlines and American Airlines are hoping to harness additional financial resources such as federal funding to alleviate the financial burden of training costs. The airlines hope that the alleviation of this burden will garner a new and vested interest in careers in pilot operations.

Carriers are also focusing on improving technological capabilities. To compete with other industries, airlines must contend with the long-standing history of tech-based companies advancing technology forward. Platform technologies tend to appeal to mass audiences, and they allow for cohesion throughout the entirety of a project's production. The ability to have centralized, digital software from conception to completion is key in ensuring that collaborative partnerships are concise and cohesive. For example, the movement toward New Distribution Capability (NDC) is a data exchange format that streamlines distribution channels, but without adoption by other entities like global distribution systems (GDSs), then progress is stymied. If airlines were able to implement more effectively current and developing technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI),

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then they could employ a higher number of individuals to fill these novel positions. Ultimately, the use of platform technologies affects competitive hiring practices and is consistent with forward-facing company vision.

Talent Retention

How can the aviation industry retain its current employees? What advice can you provide to firms and organizations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?

Workplace culture has transformed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The values and overall attitude of company culture has shifted to one centered on work-life balance, hybrid and/or remote options, and attractive benefits beyond that of pay scale. In 2021, air transportation employees earned wages 37 percent higher than the average private sector[4]. Previously allotted annual cost of living pay increases, holiday bonuses and modes retirement fund matching are no longer adequate in retaining employees[5]. It is crucial, in retaining employees, to prioritize and advertise a harmonious and healthy work environment by allowing for slightly untraditional methods of working culture. To achieve this, our advice to other firms and organization is to hone in on differing generational values and overall lifestyles of the employee in determining what employer-implemented changes are necessary. For corporate aviation employees, a flexible work environment may be of the best ways to achieve the balance many employees seek. Offering flexibility in employee start and end times, unlimited personal time off, and hybrid work schedules, could attract an influx in employment applications – particularly from younger generations who have spoken favorable of creating balance. For all employees, retention-based pay increases and semi-annual pay raises could entice prolonged retention. For those on the aircraft, the hiring of additional qualified employees could allow for regularly scheduled vacation and holiday time off. These measures add greatly to the quality of life of the employee outside of their standard workday.

In addition, a diverse and inclusive workforce can dramatically improve business performance and production, leading to prolonged retention of employees. A 2013 study by Deloitte Australia highlighted that "when employees think their organization is highly committed to, and supportive of diversity, and they feel highly included, then they are 80% more likely to agree that they work in a high performing organization." Additional studies highlight that equitable treatment and diversity in managerial positions give employees a since of belonging and future career aspirations.

Lastly, a multifaceted approach to building global cultures that emphasizes mentorship programs, tuition reimbursement programs and career advancement pathways can aid in ensuring employees have the necessary skills to progress within the ever-changing dynamics of the aviation industry. The addition of internship programs, collegiate programs to garner interest within the field of aviation prior to graduation, and even middle and high school career mentorship programs can aid

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[4] Bureau of Economic Analysis

[5] https://nbaa.org/professional-development/workforce-initiatives/strategies-retaining-skilled-business-aviation-professionals/

in future generational interest in the field of aviation. These "beyond the pay" mitigating efforts are pivotal for other firms and organizations to ensure that personnel have access to adequate training and are prepared with the necessary skills to progress within their respective organizations.

Industry Collaboration

How can industry associations work together with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?

Industry associations like A4A and other stakeholders can leverage the renewed focus on expanding aviation career opportunities to historically underrepresented communities through the repurposing of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant monies from an above-wing focus to a more diverse, fiscal initiative. If the United States Federal Government (USFG) increases grant money from $10 million to $50 million annually, then aviation stakeholders can enhance training and hiring directives to widen the pool of non-traditional candidates.

The time is ripe. As of today, Congress is reviewing the proposed *Aviation Minority Workforce Development Act* (Bill), which would direct the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to create a federal grant program to increase racial and gender minority access and representation in the aviation workforce. As previously explained, the bill is parallel to our suggestion to increase awareness of aviation-related job opportunities at minority serving institutions. However, for the Bill to maximize its intended causal effect of greater racial and gender access to aviation sector careers, it needs funding. Currently, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 focuses on increasing the number of pilots, aerospace engineers, or unmanned aircraft systems operator. Typically, these positions are male dominated and attract non-diverse candidates. Industry organizations need to inform and persuade other congressional members that the myopic focus of the Act, although immediately beneficial, does not address the long-term needs of the aviation sector, including closing the diversity gap in its managerial and administrative branches.

Conclusion

In sum, a focus on workforce development and readiness through the expansion of the candidate diversity in association with emergent technologies is needed to redress staffing shortages. The industry cannot act alone. It requires the leveraging of governmental aid to benefit the public at-large who have experienced staffing shortages at airports and on aircraft.

To affect change, there needs to be cross-functional leadership, where members of Congress and aviation industry leaders combine their expertise within their respective organizations to meet the future needs of air transportation and its workforce. In the U.S., advocating for increased funding and new initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion on Capitol Hill will transform these goals into tangible objectives.

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Recruiting and Retaining Talent for Ground Handling: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by Airport Services Association -ASA)

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Introduction

In the fast-paced and complex world of airport operations, ground handlers play a vital role in ensuring the smooth flow of aircraft, passengers, and cargo. These skilled professionals are responsible for a range of tasks, including aircraft loading and unloading, baggage handling, fuelling, and marshalling. However, one of the significant challenges faced by ground handlers in recent years has been the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified personnel.

Several factors contribute to the hiring difficulties experienced by ground handlers. Firstly, the aviation industry has experienced a period of rapid growth, leading to increased demand for ground handling services. As airlines expand their fleets and open new routes, the need for proficient ground handlers has soared. This surge in demand has put considerable pressure on ground handling companies to find suitable candidates who possess the necessary skills, experience, and certifications.

Moreover, ground handling roles often require individuals to work irregular hours, including weekends, evenings, and holidays. The demanding nature of the job and the need for round-the-clock operations can deter potential candidates from pursuing a career in ground handling. Additionally, the physical demands of the job, such as heavy lifting and exposure to various weather conditions, can further limit the pool of available applicants.

To address these challenges and ensure a steady supply of qualified ground handlers, the Airport Services Association (ASA) has been asked by its members and the ground handling community at large to play a more prominent role. ASA is an industry association that represents ground handling companies and provides a platform for collaboration, advocacy, and professional development. By bringing together industry stakeholders, ASA aims to address common issues and foster an environment that supports the recruitment and retention of skilled ground handlers.

To find out more about ASA, please visit its website at: www.asaworld.aero or via the social media: www.linkedin.com/company/asa-the-airport-services-association

Recruitment Strategies

To attract talented individuals to the ground handling sector, the ASA can implement several strategies. Firstly, creating awareness among job seekers about the diverse career opportunities in ground handling is essential. Collaborating with educational institutions, organizing career fairs, or conducting awareness campaigns can help shed light on the benefits and potential for growth in this field.

Moreover, the ASA can establish partnerships with training centers and develop comprehensive training programs that equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge for ground handling roles. Offering scholarships and apprenticeship programs can incentivize potential candidates to pursue a career in this sector and encourage them to choose ground handling as a viable and rewarding option.

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Another important aspect will be the creation of joint synergies with other sectors of air transport to promote the defense of work values that matter to (especially younger) employees. In this regard, ASA and ACI-World have announced in April 2023 that they will combine forces in the drafting of a high-level White Paper for the promotion of Decent Work at airports, a paper that the two associations hope will help create a precedent and a benchmark that both airports and ground handlers around the globe will want to match, and even surpass.

Retaining Talent

Retaining talented individuals within the ground handling sector is equally crucial. The ASA can collaborate with industry stakeholders to create a positive and supportive work environment that values employee well-being and growth. Implementing competitive compensation packages, performance-based incentives, and career development opportunities are effective measures to retain talent.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of continuous learning and providing ongoing training programs can enhance the skill sets of ground handling professionals, making them feel valued and motivated. Encouraging teamwork, recognizing outstanding achievements, and offering opportunities for advancement within the organization can also contribute to higher employee satisfaction and loyalty.

The recognition of people's skills is central. Yet, there exists today no cross recognition of company provided training for the workforce in ground handling. By establishing a robust process for any organisation who provides accredited training to their employees or indeed the training of others in ground handling this may take a step forward into the future.

An employee receiving training from an ASA accredited organization will gain a qualification which has mutual recognition between other ASA accredited organisations. This has the opportunity for any new employer to accept this "task training" and not repeat it, so giving the person with aviation experience and skills a higher likelihood of remaining in the industry and giving the employer the possibility to avoid additional training time with a person already competent.

Beyond these two attributes which we can all appreciate, there lies a greater benefit to the entire sector, steering ground handlers toward the globally harmonized standards contained within the IATA AHM as a baseline for training standards. This promotes a move toward greater harmonisation of standards globally.

The ASA Training Accreditation Program (ATAP) will recognize a training organization through an assessment process. Organizations will be assessed by ASA according to the specific requirements of the program. Organizations compliant with such requirements shall be recognized as "*ASA Accredited Training Organization (AATO)*".

According to this ground handling training standard, retraining is not required when an employee moves from one company to another when the training has been provided by the ASA Accredited

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Training Organization (AATO). This is invaluable for current as well as future employees in ground handling.

Embracing technological advancements

The ASA is also looking at recognizing the potential of technology in optimizing ground handling operations. Embracing automation, robotics, and digital tools can streamline processes, reduce manual labour, and enhance overall efficiency. Investing in training programs that equip ground handling professionals with the necessary digital skills is essential to ensure their competence in an increasingly technology-driven industry.

Promoting diversity and inclusion

Finally, to foster innovation and excellence in ground handling, the ASA is also looking at ways of actively promoting diversity and inclusion within the sector. Encouraging the recruitment of individuals from diverse backgrounds, supporting gender equality, and providing equal opportunities for career growth will create a workforce that reflects the global passenger base. A diverse workforce brings fresh perspectives, creativity, and adaptability, which are essential in addressing the evolving needs of the aviation industry.

Conclusion

Recruiting and retaining talented individuals in ground handling is a critical factor in the success of the aviation industry. By implementing effective recruitment strategies, creating a supportive work environment, embracing technological advancements, and promoting diversity and inclusion, the ASA can ensure a skilled and motivated workforce. Investing in talent acquisition and retention will ultimately enhance the quality of ground handling services, improve passenger experience, and drive the overall success and competitiveness of the aviation industry.

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Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

(Presented by ACAO)

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At the beginning of this paper, it is essential to emphasize the role of the aviation industry in achieving sustainable development for all societies, in accordance with the seventeen goals set by the United Nations. This role is achieved through facilitating the transportation of individuals and goods, which enables the creation of wealth and employment opportunities within the industry or the transportation infrastructure.

Air transport, as an integral part of this system, distinguishes itself from other modes of transportation through its speed, efficiency, regularity, and high level of safety. It adheres to international standards at the institutional, legal, economic, and technical levels. It is worth mentioning the efforts of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in establishing standards and recommended practices, which are incorporated in the first annex to the Chicago Convention to assist members states in issuing licenses for flight crew members, including pilots, engineers, navigators, air traffic controllers, operators of civil aviation stations, maintenance technicians, and dispatchers.

Furthermore, the consolidation of a culture of aviation security and safety, as consistently pursued by the International Civil Aviation Organization, has enabled the expansion of the security and safety management system to include all human resources within government authorities, aviation industry entities, and institutions. This system undergoes periodic audits aimed at enhancing its efficiency. Aviation industry institutions have actively embraced and reinforced this culture by adopting programs for the training and qualification of their human resources, which serves as a significant incentive for them, in addition to adopting initiatives to encourage employment in these institutions, which provide funding for training, obtaining licenses, and incentives for retention.

Furthermore, the international nature that characterizes the aviation sector has prompted countries to establish fundamental principles within the framework of the Chicago Convention and define implementing standards and regulations in its annexes, which are still applicable and in force, We are called upon to continuously adapt to developments in the international environment. One of the significant consequences of the crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to accelerate the digital transformation and reduce carbon dioxide emissions to mitigate negative and severe climate changes. This challenge adds to the existing challenges faced by the aviation sector, which were extensively discussed during the 41st General Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization. These discussions resulted in the adoption of short-term and long-term action plans.

Moreover, we believe that the implementation of these programs will create significant opportunities to stimulate the sector's human resources and attract new and diverse talent, especially as air transport activity approaches pre-COVID-19 levels and is expected to continue growing in the future.

While the Arab Civil Aviation Organization supports this approach, we must note that the League of Arab States, of which we are a technical arm, is currently developing a comprehensive plan for the technical and vocational education system in The Arab countries, in accordance with a decision issued by the Arab Development Summit. The decision highlights the importance of enhancing technical and vocational education in the Arab world and directs the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, specialized organizations, and relevant entities to establish a comprehensive

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development plan aligned with labor market needs and to develop mechanisms for its implementation.

This plan fits within the context of achieving the education-related Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, with an emphasis on quality, inclusive, and equitable education for all, decent work, and economic development. It seeks to reduce unemployment, develop industry, and increase its competitiveness.

We cease this opportunity to present the objectives of the plan and the mechanisms for its implementation.

The objectives of the plan are as follows:

1. Aligning the technical and vocational education system with current and future labor market needs, taking into account future professions and anticipating the required skills.

2. Building regional and international cooperation based on common interests.

3. Developing organized legislative projects for the labor market that go beyond ensuring the rights of all parties involved in the system, extending to incentivizing youth to pursue technical and vocational education.

4. Establishing a mechanism to periodically update curricula and courses to align them with developments in the labor market.

5. Enhancing the capacities of teachers, trainers, and administrations in the basic and continuous technical and vocational education system.

6. Establishing specialized electronic systems for managing education and distance learning.

7. Integrating people with disabilities into the technical and vocational education system (implementing accessibility codes in technical education schools and training institutes).

8. Adopting "non-traditional" mechanisms for resource management that contribute to increasing financial allocations directed towards the advancement of technical and vocational education to ensure sustainable development.

9. Improving societal perception regarding the importance of technical and vocational education and the value of its certificates.

10. Involving all stakeholders in the development and evaluation processes of the proposed plan.

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Proposal for mechanisms to achieve the objectives

- **Objectives 1 and 2:**

> ❖ Linking the vocational and technical education system to current and future labor market needs, taking into consideration the professions of the future and anticipating the required skills.
>
> ❖ Building regional and international cooperation bridges based on common interests.

- Conduct field studies to identify current labor market needs in terms of quantity and quality in each Arab country, in accordance with the individual investment plans of each country.

- Anticipate the future professions required by the labor market through modern and accredited international studies.

- Implement studies to enumerate the number of young people of school age, and monitor their distribution in terms of age, gender, living conditions, and geographic distribution.

- Work on establishing "labor market information systems" and activate existing ones to identify current and future workforce needs, thus preparing suitable specializations on an ongoing basis.

- Conduct a study to determine digital factors for the cost of infrastructure preparations, which should include the type of vocational school, the number of students per class, and the establishment or development of a specialized class in vocational schools (industrial, agricultural, hospitality, nursing, commercial, etc.).

- Collaborate and form partnerships with specialized international training institutions, accreditation bodies, and qualification authorities that evaluate and develop international vocational education programs.

- **Objective 3:**

> ❖ Preparing organized legislation projects for the labor market that ensure the rights of all stakeholders within the system and contribute to motivating youth to pursue technical and vocational education.

- Organizing a forum to raise and discuss the issue of developing labor legislation that provides incentives for working in professional and technical fields, including insurance, extended contracts, and appropriate salaries for workers in these fields.

- Encouraging and involving the public and private sectors in supporting the technical education system, vocational training, and ensuring their employment in exchange for

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granting benefits such as tax exemptions, thereby alleviating the burden of material management and training expenses on countries.

- Exchanging experiences and practices among Arab countries in this regard.

- Enacting laws that take into account previous achievements and recognize them.

- Establishing regulations for granting professional licenses.

- **Objectives 4, 5, 6 and 7**

> ❖ Establishing a mechanism for periodically updating curricula and syllabi to align them with the developments in the labor market and enhance them with concepts of information technology, digital transformation, and smart cities, while linking them to professional certifications in various fields.
>
> ❖ Enhancing the capabilities of teachers in basic and continuous vocational and technical education.
>
> ❖ Establishing electronic systems specifically for the management of remote education and learning.
>
> ❖ Integrating individuals with disabilities into the vocational and technical education system (implementing accessibility codes).
>
> ❖ Adopting "non-traditional" resource management mechanisms that contribute to increasing financial allocations directed towards the advancement of vocational and technical education, **ensuring sustainable development.**

- Introducing a reference framework through which the alignment between curricula and the needs of the labor market is periodically achieved.

- Developing the capacities of administrative and educational staff in vocational and technical schools and institutes, particularly in the management of remote learning.

- Adopting successful experiences in the field of vocational education and gradually implementing them, taking into account the country's circumstances.

- Establishing continuous training systems (in-person or remote) in collaboration with the targeted industry to enhance the proficiency of teachers and trainers, and linking training to career advancement.

- Expanding the concept of "learning in the labor market."

- Adopting an integrated system of "productive investment vocational schools" (such as having a factory, farm, or hotel within the school premises) that are managed in an investment-oriented manner with independent budgets, benefiting all stakeholders and

contributing to increased financial allocations directed towards the advancement of vocational and technical education.

- Gradually transitioning towards distance learning, particularly electronic learning, based on the requirements of each profession.

- Developing an Arab portal for remote learning resources, especially those related to training for practical work execution.

- Establishing a unified Arab framework for qualifications.

- Adopting transitional training programs to facilitate the career transition of unemployed graduates and equip them with market-relevant skills.

- Incorporating technology, entrepreneurship, life skills, and work-related concepts into vocational and technical education curricula.

- Establishing departments responsible for integrating individuals with disabilities into the vocational and technical education system by applying accessibility codes and managing the necessary budgets to utilize their skills and integrate them into their communities.

- Designing educational programs that facilitate students' transition between general education and vocational education.

- **OBJECTIVES 8 and 9:**

  ❖ Enhancing the positive perception of the community towards vocational and technical education and training.

  ❖ Engaging all stakeholders in the processes of development and evaluation of the proposed plan.

- Opening up opportunities for vocational education students to continue their studies and obtain bachelor's, master's, and professional doctoral degrees.

- Supporting the organization of specialized events for vocational skills at the Arab level and adopting the idea of holding skills competitions for various professions in each Arab country, as well as organizing an annual competition at the Arab level and encouraging Arab countries to participate in the WorldSkills competition.

- Developing a communication plan aimed at raising awareness of the importance of vocational education to indirectly influence and guide society towards vocational education, as well as promoting it.

- Activating the role of career guidance.

- Providing a conducive environment for women to join various technical and professional fields.

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- Focusing on instilling professional ethics and employability skills among students in vocational and technical programs.

- Encouraging companies to link career advancement to job descriptions and competency in fulfilling job requirements, rather than solely relying on academic qualifications.

- Expanding support for entrepreneurship programs and encouraging youth participation in them.

- Conducting surveys and organizing workshops, seminars, or forums that involve all stakeholders (students, teachers, trainers, parents, official authorities, representatives of relevant ministries, business people, media, international funding agencies, international references, etc.) to discuss the development and evaluation of the proposed plan for the vocational education system.

In recognition of the importance of human resources as one of the key pillars of the aviation industry, the Arab Civil Aviation Organization has adopted a qualitative approach aimed at developing a comprehensive training system and enhancing the institutional, organizational, and technical capacities of Arab authorities and institutions operating in the field of civil aviation. This is to achieve strategic objectives in the areas of air transport, air navigation, security, safety, and environmental protection.

We believe that the implementation of this plan by the training officials in civil aviation authorities, in partnership with accredited training institutions and centers, will enable the member states to harness their potentials to meet the needs of the aviation industry in terms of attracting and qualifying human resources. It will also involve developing more flexible, effective, and efficient programs that reconsider training methodologies in light of the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly remote training, in accordance with the outcomes of the high-level ICAO conference on the coronavirus for the year 2021. Additionally, it will aim to enhance cooperation among these centers to improve the quality of training courses and programs.

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Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

The case of Air Traffic Safety Electronics Professionals

(Presented by IFATSEA)

RECRUITING AND RETAINING TALENT:
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By Theodore Kiritsis, President

During and after the recent covid-19 crisis, the total aviation system was faced with an unprecedented economic sustainability challenge. Airlines, ANSPs and airports as well all supporting services had to maintain financial resilience and survivability in a very hostile environment. Many 'short sighteted' economic measures and initiatives were invented/ one of which was to let go professionals from the related business areas. And I am using the word professionals instead of just employees because the aviation environment both in flight or on the ground rotates on well-oiled and designed gears through specialization and continuous training that maintains the high competence levels and currency of capabilities.

The easy step and formula towards letting thousands of professionals with a well-established expertize did not plan, prepare or take into account the day after. A job is the way of earning a living for the worker's family budget. Of course there is job satisfaction and other elements of employee rewarding but the principal objective is financial strength to drive the family budget requirements some of which are imperative.

The 2020 ACE report* states " 2020 saw a -3.4% reduction (-1 943 FTEs) in the total number of ATM/CNS staff, mainly reflecting decreases in the following staff categories:

- Other staff (-780 FTEs, or -20.1%);

- ATCOs in OPS (-477 FTEs, or -2.7%);

- Technical support for operational maintenance (-376 FTEs, or -3.9%);

- Administrative staff (-323 FTEs, or -3.3%); and,

- Staff for ancillary services (-112 FTEs or -5.8%).

Whereas in 2022 in the ACE Report it is stated: " In 2021, the number of ATM/CNS staff fell by -1.5% (-783 FTEs) compared to 2020 reflecting the impact of measures implemented by ANSPs to adapt to lower traffic volumes.

The lower staff number observed for 2021 mainly reflects decreases in the following staff categories:

- Administrative staff (-306 FTEs, or -3.4%);

- ATCOs in OPS (-197 FTEs, or -1.2%);

- Ab-initio trainees (-126 FTEs, or -12.5%); and

- Technical support staff for planning and development (-102 FTEs, or -3.2%).

Thus people who lost their jobs during the covid-19 crisis had to look for other jobs many of which proved, judging from employee return rate, equally satisfying and rewarding for them so as not to return to their old jobs in their aviation related domain. Moreover, the fact that aviation is now considered a volatile industry in terms of permanency of employment and continuous salary flow equally guaranteeing, like for corporate entities, the cash flow ensuring economic resilience. Who knows when the next pandemic or regional conflict will come up and what to do then? This is one of the ways, employees will look at their old jobs in aviation.

Having to hire new employees in place of the old experienced ones revealed the issue of a hidden, not-originally anticipated cost that of retraining the new employees and making sure that they will be attracted for the job and after training they will be retained in the corporate entity. Issues like the learning curve of the employees as well as the time to reach maximum performance levels, similar or equivalent to those that have been laid off, have their negative impact on the related company performance index. Moreover, today, in 2023, traffic has returned back stronger and despite regional conflicts like in Ukraine, it is more demanding for more capacity, less delays, more punctuality and airport passenger flow.

More specifically for ANSPs, the issue of their financial resilience became apparent since, especially in Europe the financial model is mainly on just cost recovery without allowing for them to build a sustainability fund that could ensure their financing during crisis times like it has been for the SARS epidemic, the Covid 19 pandemic etc.

All this has happened when the world and more specifically in Europe there is an effort to drive aviation towards more digitalization and automation, the renovation of the legacy CNS/ATM systems in a technologically intensive endeavor. This needed a considerable amount of funding, estimated only within SESAR of the order of magnitude of 2.5 bn Euros. Of course, deploying new CNS/ATM systems, especially in some cases of a hybrid nature, space and ground based, and integrating it with legacy ones, requires expertise, deep understanding and time resources for the technical personnel, the ATSEP, to operate, maintain and attend to them while maintaining the legacy or state of the art CNS/ATM systems and services.

Needless to say, when implementing state of the art or beyond, ATSEP are required to be trained to new technologies and concepts data and services of which will be fused with the old, existing elements of the technical and operational leg of the Total ANS. Moreover, the new architectures like the SJU Air Space Architecture study (https://www.sesarju.eu/sites/default/files/2019-05/AAS_FINAL_0.pdf) new challenges came about like Cybersecurity. Therefore, the adjustment of training in order to be able to address failure and degraded modes of distributed ANS systems and services needs to be made quickly and proactively. But that needs to shine the light onto this crucial profession elements starting from their entry qualifications with the scientific background required to serve the new technologies, their training, competency and recurrent training. This has not been done so far.

The new thing is that as the ATSEP job complexity increases significantly, there is a new threat from other industrial areas that have significantly better and less demanding career paths as well as

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a lot more rewarding salaries and job appreciation from corporations. Establish frameworks for assessing and accrediting relevant skills and competencies, ensuring a smooth transition and facilitating career progression. For sure we need to apply some incentives to compromise the burden of all these requirements and give these professional the feeling that we appreciated their critical safety duties. The best approach to this is the inclusion of the ATSEP Profession in ICAO Annex 1 and subsequent licensing like the Pilots, aircraft avionic engineers and ATCO

It is clear that most technical jobs that ensure the resilience and service continuity like the ATM environment almost never come into contact with the customer, being the passenger, the pilot or the airline and thus the job important recognition is not there. We hear of many cases when the technical staff of an ANSP never come into contact with management apart from their customary inaugural speech.

The fact that in most ANSP technical and operational jobs, there is 24/7 rostering and the expertise attained mostly does not relate to the wider, outside aviation, industrial environment is a counterattractive element. The fact that the ATSEP job is also connected with responsibility, even liability in some cases e.g an aviation accident/incident, is repelling to young engineers looking for a job as an ATSEP. To add to this, there is no concern on the ATSEP career path, nor any publicity or promotion for the existence and benefits related to the profession. This drives towards a situation where, while the European commission or ICAO are driving towards a more technology based and dependent ANS system, there will be not enough ATSEP to maintain the legacy system running, implement and deploy the new SESAR or NextGen technologies developed.

The International Federation Air Traffic Safety Electronics Associations has warned, there is already an evident lack of ATSEP in Europe as we speak. Many countries across the European continent are looking to hire ATSEP but they cannot find them. A lot of them are doing advertising campaigns promoting the benefits of the job. One of them has had an out flux of ATSEP that were hired and trained but could not be retained.

The poor career paths and financial compensation, salaries, were the main reasons of the shortage of those professionals. Why should a trained engineer who invested up to a university or a postgraduate course in electronics or networks not choose a job in the industrial sector where the salary would be quadruple? I know of my personal experience that ATSEP in Greece are about 65% with postgraduate diplomas as we speak. A careful staff power planning exercise per ANSP has to be developed, as EU regulations demanded, and audited by EASA and NSAs at every inspection. In this aspect, the retirement rate and projected times have to be integrated in the staff planning exercises so as to identify any staffing problems and proactively address their potential shortages taking into account the time to train them, their average learning curve translated into time, as well as the on the job training before they takeover full duties.

 If we want to face the situation and address the problem, these issues have to be elaborated, measures and steps towards addressing them be developed, in collaboration with Professional staff organizations, employer's organizations like CANSO, regulatory establishments like ICAO and EASA or organizations like HERMES.

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If there is no job recognition by the corporations, salaries are low and no career path projected, how will a new engineer look into the ATSEP or similar job direction? If no professional esteem is generated, how and why a young scientist would look into the specific and proprietary networks in aviation which would not add specific expertize that may enable mobility for a young engineer? The best approach to this, besides the safety benefit, is the inclusion of the ATSEP Profession in ICAO Annex 1 and subsequent licensing like the Pilots, aircraft avionic engineers and ATCO.

Studies like the European study on Legal, economic and regulatory aspects of ADSPs talks about raising the level of scientific expertise requirements of the ATSEP, but at the same time talks about the economies of scale implicitly due to the reduction of ATSEP, giving a warning sign against job security which is counterproductive. The reduction of ATSEP must not be seen as a means of reducing cost but as an investment that impacts positively and sustains CNS/ATM systems and services availability and continuity that drives ANSP and even national economies and international interconnectivity. In fact, ATSEP must be part of the performance scheme in the ANSP and be rewarded for their performance. These professionals are an asset to every organization.

And last but not least, the issue of diversity as women are currently a minority in most ANSPs. It is commendable that recently ICAO in their EURONAT area, have approached the issue of gender vigorously and starting a campaign. IFATSEA has also a Women's committee that is addressing the issue. This is also a factor of the equation on the human resources question of the present and the future.

So coming to the questions in in an attempt to summarize or elaborate on the prologue:

➢ Q1: How can the aviation industry **attract** new employees? What advice can you provide to your constituent firms and organizations for successfully attracting talent, given stiff competition from many other industries?

Attracting new Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEP) to the aviation industry can be challenging, given the competition from other industries. To successfully attract talent, here are some strategies and advice for constituent ANSPs and organizations in the aviation industry:

○ **Standardization of Job Requirements:** Collaborate on establishing standardized job requirements for ATSEP across the industry. Define the necessary qualifications, skills, and experience needed for different ATSEP roles. This ensures consistency and clarity in attracting talent from other industries. This standardization must be done with a vision to future requirements.

○ **Indicate the Importance and Impact**: Emphasize the critical role ATSEP play in ensuring the safety and efficiency of air navigation systems. Highlight the impact their work has on the aviation industry and the opportunity to contribute to a vital sector that connects people and drives economic growth.

○ **Promotion of the Profession:** Jointly promote the ATSEP profession and its benefits to professionals in other industries. Engage in targeted marketing campaigns, organize industry events, and leverage digital platforms to create awareness about the unique opportunities and

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challenges that the ATSEP profession offers. Identify the counter argument towards selecting an non safety critical job.

○ **Competitive Compensation and Benefits**: Offer competitive salary packages and attractive benefits to make the aviation industry more appealing compared to other sectors. Conduct market research to understand industry standards and adjust compensation accordingly to attract and retain top talent. ATSEP and their management must feel that they are part of the performance of the ANSP and its success. Provide the correct incentives for such safety critical profession.

○ **Career path Development and Advancement Opportunities:** Collaborate on the development of clear and structured career paths for ATSEP. Provide clear paths for career development and advancement within the organization. Offer training programs, certifications, and opportunities for skill enhancement to demonstrate a commitment to the professional growth of ATSEP. Define competency frameworks, establish training programs, and provide guidance on career progression to attract professionals looking for long-term growth and development opportunities

○ **Skills Recognition and Transferability**: Establish mechanisms to recognize and transfer skills from other related industries. Create pathways and support programs that enable professionals from related fields such as IT, telecommunications, or electronic engineering to transition into the ATSEP profession and leverage their existing skills and knowledge.

○ **Technological Advancements**: Showcase the cutting-edge technologies and innovative projects that ATSEP will have the opportunity to work on. Highlight the industry's commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements, such as automation, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity, to attract individuals interested in working with advanced systems.

○ **Collaborate with Educational Institutions**: Establish partnerships with universities, technical schools, and training centers to promote the profession and offer internships or apprenticeships. Engage with students in related educational areas like technical colleges and universities early on to create awareness and attract talent to the aviation industry.

○ **Employer Branding and Marketing:** Develop a strong employer brand that highlights the unique aspects and advantages of working in the ANSPS. Leverage social media platforms, industry events, and career fairs to showcase the organization's culture, values, and opportunities for growth. Promote scholarships during education paths as one of the ways of stimulation of interest.

○ **Work-Life Balance and Flexibility**: Recognize the importance of work-life balance and offer flexible work arrangements when possible. Highlight initiatives such as remote work options, flexible schedules, and employee well-being programs to appeal to individuals seeking a healthy work-life integration.

○ **Diversity and Inclusion:** Emphasize the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment can attract talent from diverse

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backgrounds and enhance the industry's reputation as an inclusive and equal opportunity employer.

○ **Networking and Collaboration:** Engage with professional associations, industry networks, and forums to build connections and collaborate with other organizations. Actively participate in events, conferences, and workshops to promote the organization and attract talent through networking opportunities.

○ **Employee Referral Programs:** Encourage current employees to refer potential candidates through referral programs. Incentivize employees to refer qualified individuals and recognize their contributions when successful referrals are made.

By implementing the above strategies and advice, constituent firms and organizations in the aviation industry can enhance their ability to **attract** new ATSEP and compete effectively with other industries for top talent. Creating an appealing work environment, offering competitive compensation, highlighting career development opportunities, and showcasing the industry's technological advancements and impact can all contribute to attracting and retaining skilled ATSEP professionals.

➢ How can the aviation industry **retain** its current employees? What advice can you provide to firms and organizations to ensure that personnel have the necessary skills to advance the industry in the 21st century?

To retain current ATSEP and ensure their skills align with the needs of the 21st-century aviation industry, firms and organizations can consider the following strategies:

○ **Continuous Professional Development**: Offer ongoing training and development opportunities to ATSEP, enabling them to enhance their skills and stay up-to-date with industry advancements. Provide access to relevant courses, workshops, conferences, and certifications to support their professional growth.

○ **Status Recognition**: Advocate for the recognition of ATSEP inclusion in ICAO Annex I as a job accreditation scheme and status recognition of safety importance element for ATSEP. Work collectively to establish industry-wide ATSEP licensing framework that not only ensure competence but also professional status to ATSEP professionals, contributing to their motivation and retention in the industry.

○ **Career Progression, job security and Advancement:** Create clear career progression paths for ATSEP, allowing them to see opportunities for growth within the organization. Offer mentorship programs, job rotations where possible and leadership development initiatives to nurture their career advancement. Emphasize the importance of continuous professional development for ATSEP. Encourage participation in training programs, conferences, workshops, and industry events to keep professionals up to date with the latest technological advancements and best practices.

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- **Recognition and Rewards:** Implement recognition programs to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of ATSEP. Provide competitive rewards, bonuses, and incentives based on performance and significant contributions to motivate and retain talented personnel.

- **Work-Life Balance**: Promote a healthy work-life balance by offering flexible work/ rostering arrangements, such as flexible schedules or remote work options when feasible. Encourage a supportive and inclusive work culture that values the well-being of employees.

- **Industry-wide Recognition and Advancement:** Advocate for industry-wide recognition and advancement opportunities for ATSEP. Work together to establish professional certifications, industry standards, and career advancement frameworks that support the growth and recognition of ATSEP professionals.

- **Technology and Innovation:** Invest in state-of-the-art technologies and tools that enhance the capabilities of ATSEP. Provide them with access to cutting-edge equipment and systems, enabling them to work efficiently and stay engaged in their roles.

- **Collaboration and Teamwork**: Foster a collaborative work environment that encourages teamwork and knowledge-sharing among ATSEP. Promote cross-functional collaboration, where they can learn from each other's experiences and collectively contribute to solving complex challenges. The same with other professions e.g ATCO , AIS or AFISO in teamwork towards common goals , exchange of ideas , promoting interdisciplinary cooperation and mutual understanding.

- **Feedback and Communication:** Establish open lines of communication with ATSEP to understand their needs, concerns, and suggestions. Conduct regular performance reviews and provide constructive feedback to help them improve and align their skills with ANSP requirements and management to understand ATSEP requirements.

- **Competitive Compensation and Benefits**: Ensure that ATSEP are well compensated in line with similar industry standards. Regularly assess salary structures and benefits packages to remain competitive and demonstrate that their contributions are valued.

- **Safety and Cybersecurity Culture:** Foster a strong safety and cybersecurity culture within the organization, emphasizing the importance of safety and security in air navigation services. Provide ATSEP with the necessary resources, training, tools and support to prioritize safety in their work.

- **Employee Engagement:** Create opportunities for ATSEP to provide input and contribute to decision-making processes. Involve them in projects and initiatives that align with their interests and strengths, making them feel valued and engaged in their roles. An involved and appreciated employee is far more involved than one that is not or partially appreciated. This is not an easy task as it necessitates that the management side understands (which is demanding) and appreciates the ATSEP contribution to the ANSP final product. If they feel that they are not part of it they will not be as involved and motivated. ANSPs need to inform of their business plans to their employees.

- ○ **Psychological support:** As in any other safety critical job with extended working hours (24/7) the effects of fatigue and stress should be handle professionally. Also in cases of incident or accidents implementing CISM principles will certainly improve the job perception.

By implementing these strategies, ANSPs and organizations can <u>enhance the retention</u> of current ATSEP and ensure they have the necessary skills to advance the aviation industry in the 21st century. Providing continuous professional development, career progression opportunities, work-life balance, recognition, and a supportive work environment will contribute to the satisfaction and engagement of ATSEP, fostering their commitment to the organization and the industry

➢ Q3: How can **industry associations work together** with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool?

Professional associations such as and IFATSEA (International Federation of Air Traffic Safety Electronics Associations) and industry CANSO (Civil Air Navigation Services Organization) can collaborate with aviation firms and other stakeholders to ensure that the industry attracts and retains talent from a diverse employment pool through the following approaches:

- ○ **Collaboration and Networking**: Associations can facilitate collaboration and networking opportunities among ANSPs (Air Navigation Service Providers), aviation firms, and other stakeholders. This can include organizing conferences, workshops, and forums where industry professionals can share experiences, exchange ideas, and collaborate on initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining diverse talent. Combine efforts through mutual understanding and appreciation of the ATSEP job.

- ○ **Skills Recognition and Transferability:** Establish frameworks for assessing and accrediting relevant skills and competencies, ensuring a smooth transition and facilitating career progression. The best approach to this is the inclusion of the ATSEP Profession in ICAO Annex 1 and subsequent licensing like the Pilots, aircraft avionic engineers and ATCO.

- ○ **Talent Promotion and Outreach:** Collaborate on joint marketing and outreach campaigns that highlight the unique opportunities and benefits of working in the aviation industry. Showcase the exciting projects, career growth prospects, and positive aspects of the industry to attract professionals from other sectors. Develop mechanisms to recognize and validate skills acquired in other industries, making it easier for professionals from diverse backgrounds to transition into aviation.

- ○ **Promote Diversity and Inclusion**: Industry associations can actively advocate for diversity and inclusion within the aviation industry. They can develop policies, guidelines, and best practices that encourage organizations to foster inclusive work environments and address barriers to diversity. This can include promoting equal opportunities, combating bias, and

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supporting initiatives that encourage diversity in recruitment, retention, and career progression.

○ **Sharing Best Practices:** Industry associations can compile and share best practices related to diversity and inclusion. They can gather success stories, case studies, and practical strategies that organizations have implemented to attract and retain talent from diverse backgrounds. Sharing these insights can inspire other firms to adopt similar practices and create a more inclusive workforce.

○ **Scholarship and Financial Support**: Collaborate on initiatives to provide scholarships and financial support for individuals interested in pursuing a career as ATSEP. Establish funding programs, sponsorships, or partnerships with educational institutions to attract and support talented individuals.

○ **Internship and Apprenticeship Programs:** Create internship and apprenticeship programs in collaboration with ANSPs and industry stakeholders. These programs provide hands-on training and real-world experience to individuals interested in entering the ATSEP profession, allowing them to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge.

○ **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs:** Associations can facilitate mentorship and sponsorship programs that connect experienced professionals with individuals from underrepresented groups. These programs can provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities for diverse talent, helping them navigate their careers and overcome challenges.

○ **Collaboration with Educational Institutions:** Associations can collaborate with educational institutions like technical colleges or universities to promote careers in the aviation industry, particularly among underrepresented groups. This can involve participating in career fairs, providing guest speakers, offering internships, and establishing scholarship programs to attract diverse talent and expose students to the opportunities within the industry.

○ **Awareness and Outreach Campaigns:** Associations can collaborate on awareness and outreach campaigns to promote the aviation industry as an inclusive and attractive career option. These campaigns can target diverse communities, highlighting the opportunities, benefits, and success stories within the industry.

○ **Research and Data Collection:** Associations can undertake research and collect data on diversity and inclusion within the aviation industry. It is interesting that the number of ATSEP, i.e the contribution of the Human pilar, has not been included in a recent study on CNS as if systems look after themselves and/or never fail. Thus, by studying and identifying gaps, monitoring and tracking progress over time, associations can provide valuable insights and recommendations to stakeholders on strategies for improvement. However, EU, state or ANSP funding has to be made available through the creation of specific research areas and funding opportunities like for scientific institutions (e.g 100% funding rate)

○ **Policy Advocacy:** Industry associations can advocate for policies and regulations relating to the Human factor within the aviation industry. They can collaborate with regulatory bodies, governments, and other relevant organizations to influence and cross fertilize policies that

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promote hiring of the necessary qualified individuals by equal opportunities, diversity, and non-discrimination.

By working together, industry associations, ANSPs, aviation firms, and other stakeholders can leverage their collective resources, knowledge, and influence to create a more diverse and inclusive aviation industry. Through collaboration, education, awareness, and the sharing of best practices, they can attract and retain talent from diverse backgrounds, fostering innovation, creativity, and a stronger workforce for the future.

Most of the above elements are not only ATSEP specific and can be used to attract and retain new employees in the aviation ecosystem. We believe that if the aviation professionals are valued and this appreciation practically shared and indicated through rewarding either professionally or financially or in working conditions, every professional will be motivated to contribute his/her best as they feel part of the team. Obviously this applies to all employees in all steps of the employment chain.

IFATSEA remains available to provide our professional expertise to all collaborating organizations and institutions on the question of human resources in aviation especially ATSEP. We also expect and invite International organizations like ICAO, and HERMES to embark on activities that will secure the best Professionals for the Total Aviation System.

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REPORT

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Recruiting and Retaining Talent: The Key to Success in the Aviation Industry

The Predicament

In its brief to the Hermes Air Transport Organization, Airports Council International (ACI) notes that the aviation workforce contracted by 43% during the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving a significant labor deficit in the industry. Moreover, global passenger volumes are set to double by 2039 from their pre-Covid-19 pandemic levels. Thus, it is evident that the aviation industry needs to retain its existing workers and to hire and train new workers extensively over the next several years to meet labor requirements.

The African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) brief notes that a shortage of workers in the industry raises potential safety concerns. The brief states that ICAO Aviation Safety and Security Audits have identified the lack of qualified aviation personnel as a common deficiency and root cause for low safety scores. Therefore, it is imperative that the industry retains its current workforce and recruits new talent.

In retaining and recruiting employees, the aviation industry faces considerable challenges. These include the following:

1. The need for employees with specialized skills: The industry needs employees with specialized skillsets that may require many years of education and training. Along these lines, the brief from the International Federation of Air Traffic Safety Electronics Associations (IFATSEA) notes that the industry requires "professionals", not just employees, because of the specialization and skill levels needed in the workforce.

2. The nature of employment in the aviation industry: The Airport Services Association (ASA) writes that many employees in the industry need to work irregular hours, including weekends, evenings, and holidays, and that these schedules can deter potential job candidates. Moreover, the physical demands of the job, such as heavy lifting and exposure to various weather conditions, can further limit the pool of available applicants. The Civil Air Services Navigation Organization (CANSO) also notes that jobs, such as air traffic controller, may be perceived as stressful to potential job candidates, thus decreasing their attractiveness.

3. The low profile of jobs in the industry: Although some positions in the aviation industry are well known and highly sought after, such as airline pilot, others may not be on the radar of job candidates. The Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA) writes that companies and organizations in the industry may suffer from lack of brand awareness. AFCAC states that many people do not know of the various job opportunities in aviation.

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4. The workforce in the industry is aging: The European Regions Airport Association (ERA) states that a major reason for a skills shortage in the industry is the impact of an aging workforce and notes that many skilled and experienced pilots and engineers are retiring.

5. Perceived higher pay and better opportunities in other industries: IFATSEA states that other industries may have significantly better career paths and more rewarding salaries. ALTA cites competitive salaries as a major problem in attracting and retaining workers in civil aviation.

6. Government programs may prioritize other industries: AFCAC notes that States may not allocate funds for aviation training since aviation is perceived as a non-essential industry. Instead, States may prioritize funding to individuals pursuing careers in industries perceived as more important to society, such as medicine.

7. Training new employees is lengthy and costly with uncertain outcomes: The AFCAC brief notes that training for aviation professionals is usually very costly. CANSO states that the failure rates for air traffic control trainees range from 5 percent to as high as 60 percent in complex airspace, with an average failure rate of 18.8 percent. Moreover, the training process can take two to four years, depending on the complexity and location of the airspace.

Retaining and Recruiting Employees

The briefs presented by the international organizations provide many proposals for retaining current employees and attracting new workers into the industry. Several of the ideas are quite straightforward. These include increasing pay, providing better training opportunities, structuring positions with a healthier work-life balance, and increasing opportunities for promotion and personal growth. Moreover, quite a few of the briefs recommend greater collaboration with educational and training institutions to increase the pipeline of potential employees. For example, the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) states that the technical and vocational education system needs to be aligned with current and future labor market needs. In addition, there should be an enhancement of the capacities of teachers, trainers, and administrators to facilitate the education of potential employees.

Some of the more specific recommendations to retain and recruit employees into civil aviation include the following:

1. Standardize job requirements: The ICAO Council President states that some aviation disciplines lack a harmonization of competencies and recognition of certification, which is an obstacle to workforce global mobility. IFATSEA suggests that companies and organizations collaborate on establishing standardized job requirements across the industry in the belief that greater standardization will ensure consistency and clarity in attracting talent. ACI states that there should be mutual recognition of training certificates, industry designations, and validation of competencies across States, as well as accelerated security vetting processes. This will facilitate the integration of workers into new environments in a faster and more seamless manner.

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2. Enhance the technological capabilities of the workforce: ASA recommends investing in training programs to equip professionals with the necessary digital skills to ensure competencies in an increasingly technology-driven industry. Embracing automation, robotics, and digital tools can streamline processes, reduce manual labor, and enhance overall workforce efficiency. The ALTA brief further notes that the aviation industry is constantly evolving and incorporating new technology and innovations. By showcasing these advancements, the industry can attract individuals who are interested in working with cutting-edge technologies.

3. Broaden and diversify the employment pipeline: The briefs cite the need to diversify and broaden the pipeline of potential workers. For example, A4A describes a pilot training program initiated by a member airline that graduated a first class of 51 trainees with nearly 80% women or people of color. A4A cautions, however, that training programs can be costly, with tuition expenses out of reach for potential recruits. Therefore, organizations in the industry need to work with banking institutions, government agencies, and other sources to secure funds needed to support the trainees. ACI states that the industry must prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in its recruitment, training, and promotion practices to create a more equitable and inclusive work environment.

4. Strengthen awareness and enhance the image of the industry: The ICAO Council President states, marketing and branding should be enhanced, including through social media, speed networking, academic and career fairs, and mentorship. AFCAC echoes this view, recommending increasing awareness in civil aviation through social media, television, and other means. The AFCAC brief states that it is important to develop targeted messaging to appeal to students, recent graduates, mid-career professionals, and individuals from diverse backgrounds. CANSO states that recruitment efforts require the industry "gets it right on sustainability". Surveys show that members of the younger generation want to work for organizations that align with their values. CANSO states that demonstrating aviation's robust and ambitious plans to decarbonize is critical to attracting the skills needed in the industry. The ICAO Council President notes careers in aviation must be recast to focus on the social and sustainable development benefits of flight, highlighting the industry's unique worldwide commitments to decarbonization, aviation's role in connecting people and cultures of the world, aviation's humanitarian relief role, and its other key positive influences on sustainable development and growth.

Working Collectively Toward the Goal of Retaining and Recruiting a Civil Aviation Workforce

Several of the briefs noted the importance of organizations in civil aviation working collectively through their trade associations, and together with governments and educational institutions, to promote the hiring, training, and retention of civil aviation workers. Proposals include the following:

ICAO/IFATSEA/ASA/ALTA/AFCAC/ACI/ACAO: Establish partnerships with universities, technical schools, and training centers to promote the profession and offer internships and apprenticeships.

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A4A: Expand recruiting by partnering with aviation-focused collegiate institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities to broaden access to those in traditionally underrepresented communities.

ERA: Involve governments and policy makers in the implementation of policies and programs that encourage education and training. Governments can provide subsidies, tax incentives, and other benefits to institutions providing education and training to aviation professionals.

ICAO Council President: Encourage industry associations to provide platforms for pooling resources, including the provision of scholarship opportunities and financial support to underrepresented groups.

Recommendations

1. Promote recognition of the careers available in civil aviation. Promotions should be coordinated with industry associations, governments, and educational and training institutions. Specific targeting should be developed to broaden the scope of employees in the industry, including women and underrepresented minorities.

2. Develop funding sources to offset training costs. Work with governments, educational institutions, and private sector organizations to develop funding to offset training costs for individuals interested in pursuing careers in civil aviation.

3. Expand efforts to retain employees. Civil aviation organizations should offer competitive salaries, employ technology to facilitate operational tasks, provide better training and advancement opportunities, and offer a work environment with a better work-life balance.

4. Promote the standardization of job requirements. Work through ICAO and other industry organizations to develop standardized job descriptions and requirements to facilitate training programs and employee mobility within the industry.

5. Empower cooperation among training organizations. Offer opportunities to job candidates who may be unsuccessful in one aviation field (e.g., air traffic control) to continue in other, more suitable, positions in aviation.

6. Introduce and enhance proactive DEI practices. In this way, organizations can provide opportunities for employees to develop new skills and advance their careers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability. Based on the implementation of such practices, bright and hard-working employees can progress to the upper echelons of their organization's hierarchy without facing explicit or tacit glass ceiling constraints.

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