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POST-COVID RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SURPLUS OF PILOTS



BARTOLINI AIR

Bartolini Air

- Founded in 2006
 - The largest ATO in Poland
 - 22000+ operations per year
 - 200 pilots trained every year
 - Two bases (EPLL and EPSY)
 - 14 aircraft full EFIS equipped
 - 9 single engine Tecnams
 - 4 twin engines Tecnams
 - 1 CAP 10C NG for UPRT
 - 3 FNPTII simulators
 - A320
 - B737
 - P2006T
 - Training pilots from zero to airline-ready
 - Modular and integrated training
 - Ryanair training partner
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Pre-Covid market:

Pilot shortage due to high airline demand led to a shortage of good instructors

- The flight deck of an airliner will always be the first choice for young pilots
- Instructor salaries are lower than those of airline pilots
- Even those who would be willing to become FI(A) for a while are afraid of “missing the train”
- Often instructors recruited from those rejected by the airlines, due to lack of skills, knowledge or an inappropriate personality
- Instructors were the bottleneck for most ATOs



You cannot expect a good harvest if you do not sow with the best grain

Covid and early post-Covid market:

Pilot unemployment leads to surplus of FI(A)'s and wanabee FI(A). But does it really help?

- Flying an airliner is different than flying a GA aircraft especially in a training environment
- The skills required to be a good instructors are not the same as the skills required to be a good airline pilot
- Will he/she stay once the industry recovers?
- What is the real motivation?
- Does it make sense to invest in an FI(A), if we are unable to understand their real motivation?
- Is the candidate's knowledge up-to-date and appropriate for the position?



How to
separate the
wheat from
the chaff?

Bartolini Air example

2019

- 0 FI(A) spontaneous applications
- 1 FI(A) spontaneous application from a wanabee
- 5 applications for FI(A) bonded training (advertised)
- 3 FI(A) selected, trained and hired.

2020

- 108 FI(A) spontaneous applications
- 63 spontaneous applications from FI(A) wanabee
- 5 FI(A) selected and trained – a pool of FI(A)'s created.

FI(A) candidates applying only due to the crisis on the airline market

- No real motivation
- Difficulty judging the real motivation
- Long-term / medium-term risk that the person will leave at the first opportunity
- Lack of appropriate knowledge and skills
- Possibility of becoming a troublemaker due to the frustration of doing a different job than intended
- High pressure on salaries
- Lack of relevant FI(A) standards



Key risk factors

FI(A) candidates applying only due to the crisis on the airline market

- Well structured recruitment process (HR and tools)
- Clear selection criteria
- Inhouse or subcontracted aviation psychologist
- Transparent long-term remuneration policy
- Well-developped standarization proces (no shortcuts!)
- Don't look for the cheapest solution



Possible mitigation

Surplus of FI(A)'s and wannabee FI(A)'s on the market

- Low remuneration expectations may lead to choosing the cheapest instructors over the best
- The temptation to revise the pay to prioritize short term financial gains over long term quality
- Risk of hiring too many of them „just in case“
- Overloaded HR department
- Risk of not selecting a good potential FI(A) due to too many applications and an overloaded system



Key risk factors

Surplus of FI(A)'s and wanabee FI(A)'s on the market

- Give priority to long term solutions v.s. short-term
- Keep your team motivated at the highest possible level by organizing frequent meetings – explain the situation do not hide the reality
- Make a realistic assessment of your future needs
- Create a clear application filtering procedure and system with clear and legible criteria.
- Have access to an aviation psychologist, create clear selection criteria together



Possible mitigation

Risk of ending up with an incorrect number of FI(A)'s due to the unpredictability of the market

Key risk factors

- Too many instructors can lead to low income and resultant frustration
- Too few instructors may lead to:
 - overload, fatigue and poor application of standards
 - a major problem if the market suddenly recovers – long training cycle



Risk of ending up with an incorrect number of FI(A)'s due to the unpredictability of the market

- Appropriate assessment of possible future needs
- Appropriately assess other possible bottlenecks (fleet, airspace, key people ...)
- Prioritize standardization v.s. the temptation of increasing income
- Adapt your employment policy to the new situation and be flexible
- Create a pool of FI(A)'s



Possible mitigation

Thank you