GOLDEN AGE OF PILOTS – SIX-FIGURE SALARY AND GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

News / Maintenance / Trainings



Airlines across the globe have gotten themselves in real age crisis. On one hand, the industry needs new pilots (close to 600 every week to be exact), on the other – current captains and PiCs are going gray. British Airways alone are expecting to have over 250 retirements in the next 4 years and US carriers will lose over 15 000 65+ professionals in 5 years. A real pickle for airlines which translates into a true wonderland for those seeking career opportunities. But is everyone willing to pay the price?

High base salaries, impressive complementary bonuses and financial assistance programs – seems like the pilot's seat has never lost its charm, six-figure salary and perks. However, experts are witnessing quite the opposite – youngsters are not rushing into training schools, mainly due to the cost. And it is no surprise as trainee willing to pay for his own studies will quickly fall into debt of around $100 000 for initial training with no guaranteed seat in cockpit. But as Skaiste Knyzaite, CEO of AviationCV.com explains, it is actually the perfect time to go all-in and invest into pilot career.

"Since the so-called pilot crisis started, airlines across the globe are offering increasingly more

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attractive career packages to beginners and even better job opportunities for experienced crew. Asia and the Middle East are on a serious headhunt while pilots in Europe and the US are ageing. Thus, for example Chinese carriers can offer up to $250 000 per year for captains, while European airlines are attracting the newcomers with favorable motivational systems as well as bonus packages. It's win-win situation in which the pilots win whole a lot more."

Despite that, there are still myths concerning costs or potential employment, explains the expert. Most of the freshmen are usually concerned about two other things in addition to the cost of the studies: length of studies and future employment opportunities (including prospective salary). The ATP type rating needed for commercial pilots takes 2 years to complete, additional practice hours that are demanded by airlines can prolong the study period to 3 years or more in case bachelor's degree is desired. Nevertheless, pilot studies are usually shorter compared to regular bachelor degree equivalents like finance or management, for example.

As of employment opportunities, the demand numbers speak for themselves. However, the reality is that fresh off the school graduates are not always the most wanted by airlines, since the real struggle is in finding experienced pilots. "Nevertheless, companies are not only increasing the packages for senior PiCs, but increasingly introduce better career growth opportunities. For start, airlines have increased entry-level packages over the past year due to stiff competition – freshman in the industry can now get up to $35 000, while the number would be several thousand lower two years ago. Another advantage is a much quicker transition into PiC and then to captain. In some Asian countries it could be as short as 5 years," explains S. Knyzaite.

And if one does not have the liberty to cover the training costs instantly, there are other options – for instance, a bank loan. Using bank's financial assistance is widely accepted and commonly used practice in the world of aviation. To add, study loans help to preserve family savings and signal the start of adult's life followed by the commitment to personal financial responsibilities and independence. Moreover, Bankrate research revealed that Civil Engineer, Economist and Pilot all have almost the same study cost-loan repayment period ratio equal to 6-7 years.

"At the end of the day, one has to choose between cadet programs and self-sponsored studies, but the answer to the main question – is it worth it, is crystal clear. Surround yourself with trusted career partners, great training providers and you have yourself a pretty darn good career plan. When you are not the one running after each and every opportunity, but airlines are chasing you down like the Golden Snitch, the six-figure salary, as well as the life of travel and global opportunities is closer than you might think. I would say that's a dream career worth going after," concludes the CEO of AviationCV.com.

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