**INDUSTRY WATCH**

**AVIATION: ASOARING CAREER**

**THE AVIATION INDUSTRY ABOUNDS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLED CANDIDATES,SAYS ESSA SULAIMAN AHMAD**

The aviation sector has always been a great industry for job seekers. Pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, cabin crew, technicians, marketing personnel and ground duty service officers are some of the popular positions in the aviation industry. Working as cabin crew with a leading airline provides employees with immense exposure to not only a professional working environment, but also varied cultures across the globe

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Working in an airline makes you eligible for many job perks such as tax-free salaries, life and accident insurance, annual confirmed tickets to your home country, comprehensive medical services, end-of-service benefits and many more.

For cabin crew recruitment, airlines usually look for candidates who are at least 21 years of age. As far as physical traits are concerned, the cabin crew should be medically fit to meet aircrew requirements and have a minimum arm reach of 212 cm (on tip toes),so that they are able to reach the emergency equipments.

Personal grooming is another very important aspect of the job profile as the candidates are expected to be presentable.

The cabin crew goes through extensive training lasting a few weeks, during which they are trained for different aspects of their job such as safety and emergency procedures, medical training, in flight service, etc. They are also given specialist training on ways to communicate with and serve people from different cultures. The biggest challenge faced by any airline is to recruit the right candidates for a variety of positions needed to make the airline successful - from executives to pilots, cabin crew and maintenance personnel. A good strategy is to identify quality staff by creating a line of communication with each department in order to access their specific needs and recruit the best candidate for the job. **The author is vice president, India and Nepal, Emirates Airline**



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| **INDUSTRY WATCH AVIATION**  **The flight of aspirations**  Female employees have soared in the last decade in the aviation industry, discovers Palak Bhatia    The aviation sector is now opening up tremendously for women in varied roles and job responsibilities. Women have been stepping out of conventional roles like flight attendants to take up other jobs in the aviation field. As the sector is people-oriented, it holds a special charm for women professionals. Shrutidhar Paliwal, VP & head - corporate communications and media relations, Aptech Ltd tells us how the number of women in the aviation industry has increased in the last decade or so, When one visits the airport today, we see an almost equal number of women and men handling passengers at the check-in area. This is also true for the security check area where you have men and women alike doing the final checks and guiding passengers in to the pickup and drop vehicles. The cockpit too has seen a change of hands where almost every second aircraft has a woman pilot or co-pilot commanding the aircraft. The number of women in this industry is only growing, considering it is a people intensive industry where interpersonal skills and patience are the need of the hour.  Is aviation still viewed as a male-oriented field Vinit Phatak, managing director, Invision Air answers, On one hand, one could argue that it is still a very male oriented field. As a consequence of the erratic hours and the nature of the work, it is tougher to keep up with family commitments that are still largely seen as being the primary responsibility of women. In addition, some of the work, particularly in the maintenance field, such as tyre changes, engine changes, etc can be quite physically demanding, thus making it easier for men to dominate those roles. Lastly, working in shifts that at times might run through the night, is difficult for women not only because of their perceived responsibility as a home-maker, but also as a consequence of the increasing levels of crimes against women and the poor night-time public transport systems in many Indian cities.  Sunil Goel, MD, Globa Hunt tells us why the future of women looks bright in the aviation industry, Though women have been under-represented in the aviation and aerospace sectors, the scenario is changing now and the playing field has been nearly levelled. There have been observations that women are better performers in hospitality and outshine their male counterparts in the same. In the future, a lot of technical jobs will be created, which can be taken up by women. Structural changes will also open doors for women in other job segments like pilots, flight instructors, etc.  Thus, there is a lot to look forward to for women in this industry as there are many more career opportunities to come.   |  | | --- | | INDUSTRY WATCHAVIATION  **CLEAR SKIES AHEAD**  Despite turbulent times, the Indian aviation industry continues to sail through and create career opportunities, discovers **Yasmin Taj**  According to a study by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) ,by 2020, traffic at Indian airports is expected to reach 450 million.73 per cent of the respondents in a survey by IATA expect an improvement in profitability in the next 12 months. How is the aviation industry faring at the moment Sajid Khan, country manager - India, South African Airways opines, I wouldnt say that the good days are back, but the industry has definitely learnt to work its way around the hiccups - high fuel prices, for example. There are some interesting developments like the unbundling of services, joint ventures, the growth of low cost carriers and mergers.  Valerian Ferreira, head - HR and admin, learning and development, Air India SATS Airport Services Pvt Ltd (AISATS) feels that although the aviation industry has demonstrated some signs of improvement, it is too early to predict a complete recovery. Some players are still reporting losses and reduced earnings; and cost management continues to remain a high priority for most, he adds. However, air ticket prices have been rationalised and the top three Indian operators will have positive balance sheets this year. A significant amount of infusion of cash by way of equity participation in this sector including big deals and strategic foreign airline participation indicate good times ahead, states Rajeev Wadhwa, chairman & CEO, Baron Luxury and Lifestyles Pvt Ltd.  The employment opportunities in aviation are immense, since the key players and stakeholders are rapidly growing and acclimatising themselves to the changing requirements of the industry. There is no dearth of talent available in the market; it is upto the employer to identify this untapped potential talent. While requirements for pilots, engineers and crew continue to exist, some of the newer avenues that have opened up in the aviation industry include aviation-related global security and intelligence, air-traffic management or aircraft maintenance science, marketing and media related positions, reveals Khan. The emergence of new airlines, additional flights and increased turnover has created a demand for skilled employment within the industry. To cater to the increased demand and changing industry trends, cabin crew and ground handling staff are gaining increasing importance, adds Ferreira. Though there are a good number of career opportunities in this sector, there are certain roles, which usually face a shortage of talent. There is a shortage of Pilots in Command (PIC); most PICs happen to be expats. Also, there is a shortage of ATC professionals in the country. The other opportunities for employment are in aircraft engineering, operations management and ground handling, Wadhwa informs. Further discussing the major challenges being faced by the industry, Ferreira adds, The attractiveness of overseas employment options poses a threat to retaining skilled employees in ground handling. Employers in the aviation industry must focus on training staff in a systematic manner and provide an environment where employees can constantly gain knowledge and improve skills.  The aviation industry is massive and crucial to an increasingly globalised world. He states, In terms of qualifications, there are specialised courses for almost every field, so that makes it easy for aspirants. The industry needs people who are ready to think out-of-the-box and provide solutions that make a given hurdle less intimidating. Strong leadership skills, comprehensive knowledge of the aviation industry and new trends are other requirements that are essential, avers Khan.  Thus, with the industry gaining back its momentum, perhaps, we can look forward to clear skies. yasmin.taj@timesgroup.com  http://lite.epaper.timesofindia.com/Repository/CAP/2013/06/05/47/Img/Pc0470600.jpg   http://lite.epaper.timesofindia.com/Repository/CAP/2013/06/05/47/Img/Pc0471100.jpg  *SAJID KHAN, South African Airways*  http://lite.epaper.timesofindia.com/Repository/CAP/2013/06/05/47/Img/Pc0470900.jpg  *RAJEEV WADHWA, Baron Luxury and Lifestyles Pvt. 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