



# Now Hiring!

Only the best need apply

BY JAMES ALBRIGHT james@code7770.com

It isn't completely accurate to say the world is facing a pilot shortage of epic proportions. It would be far more accurate to say we are facing an epic shortage of highly qualified pilots. Ask anyone in the business of hiring professional pilots and you will hear the same complaint: We have more than enough applicants; it's good applicants we are lacking!

I've been in the business of hiring pilots for many years and have never seen it this bad. So here is my blatant sales pitch disguised as a magazine article for two, distinct audiences. If you are in the business of hiring pilots, I'll share a few of my trade secrets and reveal a few of the mistakes I have made along the way in the hope that you can do better. If you are in the business of getting hired, perhaps I can show you what we are looking for. Then it is up to you to acquire the skills, experience,

and knowledge for which we are all searching.

## The Prerequisites

It is a wise policy to hire the person first and the pilot second, but it does you no good to hire a good person who is a lousy pilot. We often focus on a list of qualifications that are simply prerequisites, the price of admission. The pilot must have the necessary certificates and ratings, the appropriate medical certificate, and at least an entry level ability for the type of operation.

**Hours.** How many hours makes a well-rounded, well-qualified pilot? Some hours are better and some are worse. A military pilot with 2,000 hr. flying transport category aircraft should easily outshine a civilian pilot with twice those hours, but this isn't always the case. An accomplished Alaska bush pilot may

**There are more quality jobs out there than qualified applicants.**

be the perfect pilot for flying in poor weather from small, uncontrolled fields. But if you are in the business of flying IFR at major airports, the bush pilot might be a poor hire.

So how many hours are enough? You should consider industry averages for your type of operation and then apply some common sense. I once hired a 4,000-hr. pilot expecting the kind of experience most of my peers had at that point. But he didn't. He couldn't cope with the pace of our operations and we eventually had to let him go.

**Aircraft size.** Moving up to the next bigger aircraft is a rite of passage and should normally not be a problem. Almost every Boeing 747 pilot, for example, comes from smaller equipment. But with an increase in aircraft size will come an increase in challenges.

► Most pilots stepping up to their first aircraft requiring a type rating can be



surprised that larger aircraft are not always as nimble and responsive as their light twin or single-engine trainers. Pilots must learn to extrapolate aircraft performance; planning ahead becomes critical.

► Larger and newer aircraft may have greater systems complexity which require new levels of automation management that are not easily learned on the job.

► Larger aircraft often have higher takeoff and landing speeds and require quicker decision making. Flying an instrument approach to minimums at 135 kt. is considerably more difficult than at 90 kt.

You should evaluate the applicant's experience against your operation; it could be that you are asking too much. Expecting a King Air pilot to adapt to a Citation is probably reasonable and should work out. But expecting the same King Air pilot to adapt to a Challenger 605 without issue is probably unwise.

**Type ratings.** Depending on discounts and aircraft novelty, a type rating can set you back between \$10,000 and \$110,000. There are two opposing schools of thoughts on whether to type a new pilot or not.

► Why spend a considerable sum on a pilot who may or may not pass the type rating evaluation, may or may not fit in with your operation, or may or may not be a long-term hire?

► Why hire an already typed pilot who might not fit in with those already hired, who might refuse to adapt to your operation, or might quit, looking for greener pastures and a larger salary?

If you are flying currently popular equipment and find pilots already typed, you need to ask yourself why they are on the market. If they have a valid reason you might have yourself a bargain hire, or you might be inheriting someone else's problem.

**Turbine time.** Turboprop pilots will tell you turbine time is turbine time and in

many respects that is true. But flying a jet without a propeller in front requires the pilot to think at higher speeds and higher altitudes. One of my flight departments hired two high time turboprop pilots and expected both to excel. One did, the other did not. In retrospect, the successful hire had a track record of adapting to changes and new equipment; he was well practiced in the art of learning. The other pilot had spent many years dealing with the extra levers on his turboprop and only begrudgingly agreed to restart his learning process.

**Operational experience.** Most smaller flight departments cannot afford full time instructors to bring pilots with no applicable operational experience up to speed without disrupting day-to-day operations. We once hired a pilot who grew up flying in the Midwest with little or no time in the busy Northeast New York to Boston corridor. He excelled at everything except high tempo IFR, where he failed miserably. We hired another pilot who thought himself to be an international operations expert, and he did very well in the North Atlantic. He didn't do so well, however, in South America or Africa. We were able to train the international "expert" but the pilot with weak IFR skills never caught up.

**Trainability.** The maxim "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" is only partially true. Some old dogs have spent their careers learning and are excellent at seamlessly moving from student to practitioner to instructor and back again. Others have spent so much time with the four bars of a captain, no amount of instruction is going to turn them into a competent pilot monitoring. Another problem is found with solo pilots. We ex-military pilots think of



**A Cessna 172 alongside a Gulfstream IV at Morristown Municipal Airport, New Jersey (KMMU)**

this as the fighter pilot with crew resource management disabilities. But the problem goes further to the pilot with thousands of hours flying single pilot in dense IFR environments. Pilots with only distant memories as the “pilot not in charge” can pose special training challenges. Some adapt, some do not.

Each of these issues — total hours, large aircraft experience, existing type ratings, non-turbine versus turbine versus jet, operational experience, and trainability — should be weighed against your operation’s requirements as prerequisites. It may be helpful to examine your current pilot staffing and that of similar operations to get an idea of what you can reasonably expect for the salaries you are willing to pay. Always remember that airline salaries are going up and the major air carriers look upon many corporate pilots as bargain hires. If your salaries don’t keep pace, you may find your perfect candidate turns you down. With these concepts in hand, you can begin the search.

## Where to Cast Your Net

Pilot forums, aviation headhunters, and advertising in aviation publications are tried and true methods to generate numbers in the application process. The wider you cast your net in the pilot pool, however, the more time you will need to spend throwing small fish back.

**Contract pilots.** There is no better way to anticipate how a pilot will fit in with your operation than to give that pilot a “trial run.” Pilots I thought would be ideal turned out to be too hard to deal with on the road. Others that I thought too inexperienced for high tempo operations turned out to be true road warriors. My greatest hiring mistakes were in operations where I didn’t have the opportunity to “fly before buy.” But, on the other hand, if you limit your search to those already typed in your aircraft you could be missing the best person for the job.

**Local pilot user’s groups.** Finding a local pilot simplifies the hiring process and reduces the chance the pilot will have relocation issues when buying or selling a house, moving children between schools, or convincing family members to uproot from familiar surroundings. Hiring a local pilot also increases the odds you will know someone who has seen the candidate in the heat of battle. But most of these pilots will have already been taken for these very reasons; you should never limit your search

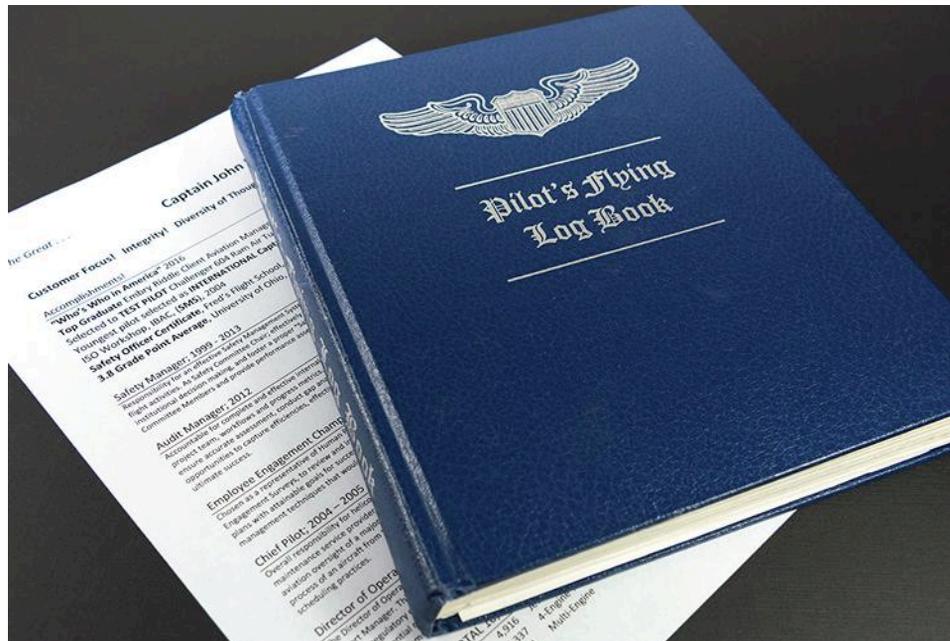
to just those who won’t need to relocate.

**Personal Network.** Some pilots prefer to forego the social scene, spending very little time at parties thrown by aircraft manufacturers, local user’s groups, FBOs, and other flight related organizations. However, a pilot in the business of hiring other pilots does not have this luxury. The next great hire could be part of a golf foursome you will never have met if you’ve never learned to swing a club. Even without a bag of clubs, your personal network can be an effective tool by simply picking up the phone and keeping plugged into the local pilot scene. Whenever you hear of a company move, merger, or other changes, you should immediately think about pi-

company who sent forward a pilot who had previously crashed a perfectly good airplane through negligence. The agency knew this but withheld the fact. The pilot made it all the way to the final interview with the CEO who had the intuition to suspect and the good sense to ask. (We dodged that bullet!)

**Websites, blogs, or other Internet sources.** There may come a day when an employer-pilot match-making service proves itself worthy of your consideration. For us, that day has not yet arrived. (But we keep hoping.)

No matter how you build your pool of potential candidates, it will be up to you to sort the keepers from the throwbacks. That is usually done by reading resumes.



lots looking for jobs.

**Aircraft training centers.** Finding a pilot at your next recurrent might ensure the pilot will be able to fly your aircraft without too much additional training. But, on the other hand, you must be wary of those pilots simply wanting to rack up a few hundred hours of experience before shopping around for the job they really want. I’ve hired one such pilot. Only after he quit and his family’s annual Christmas newsletter revealed their plan was to spend two winters before leaving did we finally realize we had been played for fools.

**Headhunters.** You should always remember that a hiring agency has two clients: you and the prospective pilot. Before I arrived at my current flight department, they used an employment

**A pilot’s resume can hide as much as it illuminates.**

## Resume Red Flags

The biggest problem with resumes is that the product you see often tells more about the writing skills of the pilot or resume writing service than of the skills of the pilot. Some of the best pilots I’ve ever known had lousy resumes, and some of the worst pilots had the best. Resume reading is a skill unto itself but there are a few things to watch out for. (I have seen each of these red flags, and each foretold a deeper issue.)

**College attendance without mention of a degree.** While you may or may not require a college degree, an applicant who lists a college without the degree may be

trying to portray being a college graduate and that could flag integrity issues. A better approach would be to leave it out if it didn't end with a tangible result.

**Catch phrases.** An overuse of popular catch phrases — think “customer focus” and “process oriented” — can be a sign of a pilot with no real positive accomplishments. A better approach is a sentence or two demonstrating the catch phrase, not the catch phrase itself. “Wrote company Safety Management System manuals and led effort to achieve top SMS rating” speaks volumes; “safety first pilot” is a mere platitude.

**Jargon.** A candidate who throws about arcane terminology is either a poor writer or someone with an inflated view of their own place in the world. Military pilots can be the worst offenders here. While those of us with Air Force backgrounds might know that a pilot with an “SCI” was granted special security access, most resume readers do not. And even those of us who know what Sensitive Compartmented Information is must wonder why that matters on a pilot's resume. Civilians can also be offenders here. Many of us who manage international flight operations are acutely aware of “EU ETS” but don't care to see that on a resume unless the pilot's involvement with the European Union Emissions Trading System is something we are specifically seeking.

**“Pay for praise” services.** Pilots who include references from well-known vanity publications that will say nice things about them for a price should be avoided. A membership to “Who's Who in Aviation,” the “Top 500 Leaders in Aviation,” or other similar organizations could be a tip that not only was the pilot duped into membership, but the pilot believes you are as gullible. There are also legitimate organizations that perform personality profiles that provide honest assessments of a candidate's strengths, but they omit any weaknesses. We once received a resume with fifteen pages of such strengths. Further investigation revealed these were boiler plated strengths and the pages that were omitted were more revealing than those that were included.

**Unrealistic or inflated claims.** How pilots write resumes provide windows into their personalities. A pilot who is tasked

with performing annual routine maintenance checks who claims to be a test pilot, for example, may have an inflated and unrealistic confidence in his or her abilities. Another pilot who wrote on one line about “extensive international experience” but then bragged about “14 Atlantic crossings” on another did not have

It may be helpful to examine your current pilot staffing and that of similar operations to get an idea of **what you can reasonably expect** for the salaries you are willing to pay.

the international “chops” we needed.

**Vagrant tendencies.** There are often valid reasons for switching jobs frequently and spending very little time at each. But these incidents should be explainable. It isn't unusual to see a flight department close when the business is sold, for example. But a pilot who upgrades to the next level of equipment and spends less than a few years before changing employers to repeat the process again and again may be a sign of trouble.

They say a resume gets you the interview but could cost you the job. The resume tells us if further investigation is worth the effort. Further investigation is best served by talking to someone who knows the applicant personally.

## Personal Recommendations

No matter how you generate job candidates, it pays to have a personal recommendation from someone you trust. A long list of recommendations from persons of importance does you no good if

these people do not have relevant experience with the candidate or are unwilling to be candid.

Even someone who has a personal history with (and even flown with) a prospective pilot candidate can be an unreliable source if not prompted skillfully. I used to ask, “Would you let your family fly on an airplane flown by this pilot,” thinking that would be the best litmus test of them all. But that question is too easy to brush aside, reasoning that on any given day flying can be risky and given the right circumstances the pilot in question will be adequate. It also fails to address the non-flying aspects of the candidate's viability.

Questions with yes or no answers are too easily rationalized. It is far better to ask questions that require the recommender to think back and produce historical examples of the candidate's performance. For example, “How does Fred handle telling passengers ‘no’ when the request pushes him past duty time limits, weather concerns, or other company limitations?” If the answer is an evasive, “our passengers are pretty good about this,” or “we've been pretty lucky,” you might tweak the recommender with, “oh, we are looking for someone with more experience at this kind of thing.” For every question that follows, you can try a variation of “oh, we are looking for someone . . .” to prompt a more complete answer.

“How does Fred promote crew coordination on the flight deck when things get stressful?”

“How does Fred react to new procedures and techniques imposed on from upper management?”

“How does Fred deal with unhappy passengers or crewmembers?”

You can also frame the questions in terms of the recommender and the candidate to elicit open discussion. “I heard you had a busy schedule. How did you cope with that kind of tempo?” “Was the boss easy to deal with?” By allowing the recommender to speak in personal terms you remove the pressure to focus only on the candidate. Once that is done, you can steer the answers to the candidate in a way that can reveal hidden secrets.

The best source of information may be a previous employer. You should never call the current employer without the candidate's permission, however. Many of the already mentioned



## A hostile environment can shut down communication before it begins.

questions will work here but a great one to add is, “would you hire this pilot again?”

After you’ve ensured the pilot meets the prerequisites and spoken to knowledgeable references, you are set for the interviews. But you need to keep in mind what it is, exactly, you are looking for.

## The Real Objective

In a very large organization with set schedules and standardized equipment, hiring a pilot with personality issues is a bad thing, but probably not catastrophic. The same pilot can cripple a small flight department with missed trips and high personnel turnover. You should tailor your interview process to catch not only flying skill issues, but also those based more on integrity, suitability, and personality.

**Integrity.** You don’t want just any pilot, you want a pilot you can trust to fly your expensive equipment to your most demanding destinations in the worst weather that can be negotiated safely. But more importantly, you want a pilot with the integrity to tell you what you are asking for cannot be done safely when that is indeed the case. Any pilot can look you in the eye and say, “Yes!” You need a pilot who can say “No” when that is the right answer.

**Suitability.** You don’t want a pilot who will take your investment of time and money and exchange the type rating and/or experience you have given them for the next high paying job to come his or her way. While such a decision is complex and the pilot must act in his or her

own best interest, you need to be wary of such a possibility. I’ve twice seen pilots complete initial training only to have an airline or better corporate offer lure them away, wasting our time and investment. We should have realized the former was an airline pilot “wannabe” from day one and that the latter was such a prize catch that our pay offer was too low.

**Personality.** You don’t want a pilot who will alienate your current staff by being aloof, abrasive, or intolerant of others. You want a pilot who “works and plays well with others.” Unfortunately, these traits cannot be determined by a simple multiple choice test or yes/no answers in an interview. It will take multiple sessions.

## The Interview(s)

How many interviews does it take to find the best pilot for your opening? How much time do you have? The higher your standards, the longer the process will take, the fewer qualified candidates will be available, and the more time and money you will have to invest in the search. I recommend the following four-step process. But if you can’t afford the time or money for all four, you will need to combine steps to ensure you have all the considerations covered.

## The Phone Interview

The logistics of a face-to-face interview can be problematic, especially for overseas operators looking to include distant candidates. But even if you are hiring a local pilot you’ll need to make an initial contact that says, “I’m interested in you.” I’ve found the best way to

approach what the Trekkies call “first contact” is to introduce yourself, present a quick overview of the job, and ask, “is this something that interests you?” Then give the candidate a chance to talk. If all that goes well, it is up to you to schedule the real interview.

## The First Interview (Location: Your Office)

We traditionally approach the interview with the idea we (the company) are evaluating them (the pilots) to see if they have what we need. While that is certainly true, there are two other purposes we need to consider when structuring the interview. First, we are also trying to sell ourselves to them, since we are competing with other companies for their services. And secondly, we are trying to paint a realistic picture of what they should expect if hired, to avoid pilots who quit after a short term because the job isn’t what they had hoped for. If you’ve ever endured or given an interview designed to make the candidate nervous (picture the semicircle of hostile inquisitors surrounding the lone “inquisitee”), you are defeating the purpose of the interview. If you put the candidate on the defensive, you are unlikely to get the candidate’s honest feelings.

You should ask the candidate to describe him or herself, a job history, and any other questions that steer the conversation to pilot experience. Allow the candidate to talk at length and try not to interrupt with questions that hit you on the spot. Save these for later. A few good questions to get things rolling:

1) How did you get your start? Follow up: Who was your favorite mentor? Which aircraft taught you the most? Would you recommend this path to today’s generation?

2) What type of flying do you enjoy the most? Follow up: Does this kind of flying contribute to your attitude towards safety? Is “stick and rudder” more, less, or as important as judgement? If you were not a pilot, what would you be doing for a living?

3) Did you consider another path (such as the airlines, the military, the civilian CFI route, etc.)? Follow up: In retrospect, were the other paths available to you? Would they have been a better choice?

4) Over the years, what has given you the greatest challenge? Follow up: which challenges have been the most

rewarding and which took the most effort and longest time to overcome?

As you listen, try to formulate questions and comments to steer the conversation towards things you want to know but shouldn't ask directly. I've made this mistake in several ways. Saying to a candidate, "describe a situation where you had to tell your boss a trip can't be done," is unlikely to get a straightforward answer. "What would you do if . . ." will also generate fanciful answers that are little more than parrying hypotheticals between debate partners. The ability to do this takes practice, but it can be learned. If the candidate had made a comment about "always placing safety over schedule," for example, you can make a comment of your own that should provoke a response. "I know my passengers care about safety but every now and then it seems the schedule pushes too hard. We turn down trips now and then, and that is never easy." This should generate a response, but if it doesn't you might add, "what do you think?"

Notice we haven't peppered the candidate with question after question about flying; there will be time for that. If you start the interview with the technical aspects of flying, you may not get what you are looking for on the personal side. But once you've got the candidate talking, try to weave in a few flying questions, almost as if an "aside." As the conversation flows, the following questions will give you a great insight into the pilot's conduct in the cockpit:

- 1) How does your company define a "stabilized approach?" How does your personal philosophy differ?
- 2) What is the best way to handle disagreements in the cockpit? What has worked best for you?
- 3) How has your airplane held up over the years? What was the most difficult abnormal or emergency you've seen? Did your training prepare you for that?
- 4) Some airlines say, "you can't go unless you've been" but we don't have that luxury, do we? How do you approach an international destination where you, your crew, and your operator have no experience?

## The Second Interview (Location: A Nice Pub)

A social setting for a second interview is often dismissed as unnecessary; you are hiring the pilot not a dinner date, after

all! But sitting down in a relaxing environment over a glass of wine and fine food can reveal aspects of the candidate that are vital to future success. Try very hard to avoid a continuation of the questions and answers of the first interview. Rather engage in social small talk and see where the conversation leads you.

About ten years ago I was in a flight department that relied on three steps: the reading of the resume, the calling of the references, and the meeting of the candidate. These three steps are accompanied by three problems: resumes can mislead, references can be coy, and we may not learn all that we need from an interview. Within the space of six months we hired two pilots both of which would have been flagged as poor fits by a simple dinner. The first had moral objections to the consumption of alcohol and tended to become distant when others partook in "adult beverages." The second was on the opposite of the alcohol spectrum and believed anything good was better in excess. The former became a reliable pilot nobody wanted to fly with, the latter a pilot who sometimes failed to show up for a trip and was eventually let go.

We more recently declined to hire a great pilot who lacked the social graces our company would expect of a pilot. This pilot, if asked, would be sure to say his role flying the airplane was up front, not in back making small talk. But we are sometimes put into social situations with our passengers and this pilot had a gift for making people at the dinner table uncomfortable.

Besides finding out if the candidate is a good social fit with existing personnel, a simple dinner gives you both a chance to relax and speak more freely of issues that may be of use in a hiring decision. Steering the conversation toward the latest technological innovation can give you an idea about the pilot's view towards learning new systems and likelihood of success in a new aircraft. Talking about mutual acquaintances may give you more references to call.

## The Third Interview (Location: Simulator or Aircraft)

Over the years, I was complicit in hiring a pilot who couldn't handle the pace of operations in the New York to Boston corridor, another who tended to explode in rage when confronted with an all-too-common Teterboro ground stop, and a

third who became flustered whenever things didn't go as planned. We could have avoided all three problem pilots with a simple one hour simulator flight.

If you have a full-service contract with FlightSafety you can arrange a simulator session with an instructor for the right seat and a simulator operator, often at no charge. While there are several ways to approach this session, here is ours:

1) We allow the candidate to pick the aircraft (provided the aircraft is available) and we provide the basic profile (takeoff, instrument pattern, all engine landing, takeoff with an engine failure, instrument pattern, and landing), and reassurance that we aren't playing "gotcha."

2) We mention that we prefer to do this at Teterboro Airport, New Jersey (KTEB) since we go there so often, but they are free to choose someplace they would be more comfortable. (If they are not familiar with Teterboro and elect to go just to please us, that tells us volumes about their decision-making skills.)

3) We ask the right seater to be a competent first officer.

It may seem that we are setting up the pilot for success and that is certainly true. But even in such a benign environment we can get a glimpse of the pilot's competence. Is the pilot "by the book" and comfortable with following checklist procedure? Does the pilot seem uncomfortable with industry best practices?

You might also consider simulator profiles that test the candidate's decision making ability and integrity. You could, for example, provide a flight profile that requires the aircraft to be overloaded and the only viable solutions are to delay the trip or plan an intermediate stop. Remember that the simulator vendor will not provide any level of evaluation; it is up to you to make the determination. No matter how you conduct the simulator, provide the pilot with an honest assessment.

## The Decision to Go Forward

As chief pilots, aviation directors, and other pilots in the management food chain, we often simply recommend while someone above us makes the hiring decision. Every candidate we send forward is a test of our credibility and that test is getting harder as the pool of highly qualified pilots continues to shrink. If you structured your interview process wisely, your decision to go forward will be an informed one:

1) Does the pilot have the necessary skills to accomplish the job? Can the pilot grow into the position?

2) Will the pilot work well with the personnel already in place?

3) How likely is the pilot to successfully relocate? Will there be family issues?

4) Does the pilot's age pose a problem with international age requirements? (Many European countries are enforcing International Civil Aviation Organization rules mandating that at least one pilot in a two-pilot crew is not over age 60.)

5) Is the pilot a "touch and go" risk? Is the pilot simply looking for a place to collect a type rating and build time?

6) Will the pilot have the integrity to say "no" to an unsafe schedule, passenger request, or crew issue?

7) Is the pilot so over-qualified that he or she will soon become bored and become either a disinterested employee or just a temporary occupant of a pilot position?

Before you decide a pilot deserves a coveted place on your team, a background check can pay for itself if you avoid a bad hire. There are pilots out there that can stop your operation cold in some countries as well as destroy your credibility with the boss. Pilots with unresolved Driving Under the Influence arrests can be barred from entry into Canada, for example. For everyone involved, it's better to discover these deal breakers beforehand than try to resolve them later.

You should also request a check of pilot records and any accident, incident, and enforcement (AIE) actions from the FAA for U.S. pilots. Here commercial operators have the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996 (PRIA) process to help them. Non-commercial operators are limited to the last two of the following three avenues:

1) PRIA requires all commercial air carriers and air operators to request, receive, and review pilot records before placing a pilot in service.

2) For pilot records, the candidate can complete AC 8060-69, "Request for copies of my complete or partial airman file to be released to a third party." This is handled by AFS-760. Here you are looking for certificates and ratings, written test scores, and any notice of disapprovals (failed

check rides). Keep in mind however, that the listed certificates may not be valid due to enforcement actions (i.e., suspension).

3) For verification of medical and pilot certificates and any enforcement actions, your company can request an airman's accident, incident, and enforcement history through a separate Privacy Act request. This is handled by AFS-620. Under the Privacy Act request, the subject is not required to sign a release for the requested information, not required to be notified that a request has been

The lesson here  
is clear.  
The best way  
to get the next  
job is to do  
the best at  
the job you  
already have.

made, and does not receive a copy of the provided information. There is no official form for Privacy Act requests, however a "Privacy Act verification letter request" template can be found at [https://www.faa.gov/pilots/lic\\_cert/pria/](https://www.faa.gov/pilots/lic_cert/pria/)

Whether or not your candidate is hired, you should make note of the effectiveness of your interview process. Did you produce a candidate that the organization found acceptable? Did the candidate meet your expectations? The pilot hiring process is a learned skill; with study, practice, and honest self-assessment, you will get better at it.

## A Word to Job Seekers

Seeing what we are looking for can help you learn how to best present yourself, so that you may be our next hire. You can see that many of the resume padding techniques advocated by some can actually hurt you. Note also that the interview process is a two-way street; you need to learn if the company fits you as well as you fitting the company. But you should also realize that the best thing you have going for you is how well you perform at your current position.

We in the business of hiring pilots look for candid recommendations from more than just the few you've provided. While we have a duty to stick up for our people and reward our high performers with top recommendations, we also owe it to the industry to provide honest reviews. ("What goes around, comes around.")

I've been on the receiving end of phone calls from prospective employers for several decades now, and with only one exception I've given glowing recommendations. In that case, I told the personnel department of a major airline that the prospect they were looking at was a competent pilot who could fly an ILS to minimums as well as anyone I knew. But I also told them this pilot took joy in antagonizing junior pilots and the cabin crew and was the biggest complainer I had ever flown with. "I would never hire him." And they didn't. The lesson here is clear. The best way to get the next job is to do the best at the job you already have.

The world is facing a shortage of highly qualified pilots and that may seem like a bad thing for us doing the hiring and a good thing for those being hired. But this also makes it difficult for the best pilots to stand out from the rest of the crowd. You need to learn what it is that is being sought, and steer your career towards those goals. The next pilot who walks in my door who has a track record of placing safety above all other concerns, who works and plays well with others, who has a track record of integrity, and who has impressed all who he or she has worked for in the past as a "can do" professional will hear "you're hired." **BCA**