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**Samantha Wilson, Head of Executive Search and Aviation at GOOSE Recruitment**



### ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

According to Samantha Wilson, Head of Executive Search and Aviation at GOOSE Recruitment, the demand for maintenance personnel has been steady throughout the pandemic.

“There is a shortage of skilled, type-rated engineers and some employers have found it hard to identify them and have come to us for help,” she says. “We have seen global demand for our recruitment services – particularly in Europe, where there is great demand for maintenance personnel.

“The majority of cabin crew we have spoken to have either been put on some type of furlough or been made redundant.

Many took alternative employment – retail, in particular, has been popular. We believe many have left aviation during this time.

“Since October 2021 we have seen more demand for cabin crew personnel, but while there are still some in holding pools at many airlines, we believe we will see the real uptick in 2022.

“In *The Pilot Survey 2021*, which we released in January 2021 with FlightGlobal, we reported that 30% of pilots globally were unemployed, a further 17% were furloughed, 4% working in an industry outside aviation and 6% in other aviation employment, meaning that only 43% of pilots were employed and flying.

“During the last 18 months, we have seen some pilots transfer from passenger to cargo flying on a contract basis. Now that these contracts are ending and passenger airlines are calling back pilots, demand for cargo pilots is going back up. Again, this has been on a global basis, but particularly in Belgium and France.”

Matching personnel to vacant positions is of course the expertise for which these agencies are consulted. They are helped nowadays by IT applications for record-keeping – licences, hours, health updates and so on – but interpersonal skills are still best assessed in direct communication between the agency and the candidate.

“At GOOSE we use a headhunting approach to match personnel to vacant positions,” says Wilson. “We utilise IT processes via our customer relationship management system that is key to storing IT applications and information such as licensing and documents.

“We are also able to ensure that we have systems in place to know when a licence or document is about to be out of date and can ensure we gather up-to-date information from applications in good time.

“Checks, however, are done personally by one of our consultants and the human eye is integral for such important information and to spot inconsistencies. The GOOSE ethos is high-touch recruitment and we will always prefer to speak to someone on the telephone, via Teams/Zoom or in person rather than relying only on email communications.”

### MAKING A GOOD MATCH

At Total Pilot Solutions, Fleming looks for a variety of attributes when it comes to

**Maintenance personnel were not hit quite as hard as pilots and cabin crew during the pandemic.**

Photo: Juergen Mai/Lufthansa Technik





Nearly back to normal: recruiter David George of Brookfield Aviation says aviation engineers are in high demand.

matching personnel with roles. “First and foremost, the pilot has to meet minimum criteria concerning hours/experience, type rating, valid medical and so on,” she says.

“Next, we look at the preferred criteria of our airline clients – in some cases, airlines will advise us of the type of profile that has been successful for them in past hiring rounds, or one that has integrated well with their pilot base.

“We interview all qualified candidates and discuss their current priorities and objectives in finding a new role and try to match them with roles that can improve their situation, whether that be financial, preferable location, or that gives them a better work-life balance.

“One of the most attractive things about working at an LCC, for example, is that while most duties are four-sector days with a high workload, the crew are rarely away from home base for too many overnights – something that can be very appealing to crew members with younger families.”

Fleming adds that as each airline Total Pilot Solutions works with has its own set of tools and software packages, the agency is not over-reliant on IT applications.

“We have CMS and applicant tracking software for database management but prefer to customise a tracking tool for each client to track key information and document expiries,” she says.

“For example, in cases where a pilot is required to do a full licence conversion or obtain a local validation, there can be a lot of

extra documentation to manage. We have a bespoke tracker for each client which we share with them and fine-tune collaboratively.”

Similarly, David George notes that Brookfield has an experienced, hard-working team who understand the airlines’ requirements and don’t rely on candidate-matching software.

“However, our database with 50,000-plus individuals’ data, constantly being updated, is vital,” he says. “We also have MINT TMS, a complete software solution to

automatically improve training planning and crew scheduling while ensuring compliance with existing regulations and reducing human error.”

Before reaching the interview stage, candidates must deliver strong applications and each agency has seen certain pitfalls that candidates should avoid when preparing those submissions.

George says: “Many candidates who have spent 18 months at home and out of work don’t have a complete set of documentation with which to apply for jobs.

“Also, so much that we see is just poorly presented or full of errors. There is just no excuse for that. Getting a job in aviation these days is tough and the employers or recipients of contract services can afford to pick and choose.

“Our advice would be, first, to spend some money on training to get yourself current. That can be expensive but it’s a way back to work and shows a positive attitude.

“It’s worth doing, even if you need to remortgage your house to invest in



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## get in touch.

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