Leaders in Aviation Report 2024

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Leaders in Aviation Report

A report by GOOSE Recruitment

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Leaders in Aviation Report

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Welcome from GOOSE Recruitment

GOOSE Recruitment is a global people specialist for the Aviation and Airline sectors. We have big ambitions to become the global number one in Aviation and Airline recruitment. We are part of the **Faststream Recruitment Group**, employing over 100 people and with a history spanning from 1999.

We operate across the world, including the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific, servicing our customers, both candidates and clients.

We partner with many of the world's leading employers across the Aviation and Airline sectors. Our clients represent a wide range of businesses including Airlines (passenger and cargo/freight), Aircraft Leasing companies, Third Party MRO Providers, Aftermarket OEMs, Aviation Finance, Aircraft Brokerage, Charter Brokerage, Business Aviation, General Aviation, Defence Contractors and Airport Operators and Owners to name just a few.

We believe in being a valued partner and contributing to your recruitment strategy with thoughts and ideas. We're high touch, not just high tech – we want to know you, not your email address (but that would be great too).

The goose is synonymous with long-distance flying and incredible teamwork, this aptly represents the foundations of GOOSE Recruitment – an incredible team of recruitment consultants striving to be the very best in the industry, here for the long term and spanning the globe.

Executive search from GOOSE Recruitment

We are an expert in Executive Search and specialise in the search, recruitment, and selection of senior executives and directors for the global Aviation and Airlines market.

Our approach is results-focused and whilst our search process is well established, we don't sell unnecessary 'bells and whistles'. Executive coaching, consultancy, and telling you how to run your business is not what we do.

We use tried and tested execution skills that are governed by four principles; understanding, accuracy, specialism and dialogue.

Our philosophy is based on understanding and responding quickly and effectively to our customers' confidential and strategic needs. We believe that a partnership approach is the key to a successful executive search and selection relationship.

We can accurately identify the right candidates in your search which is delivered by our extensive knowledge of the market and the candidates available.

We know what it is to be a true specialist in a generalist executive search marketplace.

Dialogue is everything to us – we keep our customers up to date at every stage of our search process to ensure we are building relationships that are successful and long-lasting.

For details, visit **www.goose-recruitment.com**

Leaders in Aviation Report

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Welcome from the Authors

The surveys and report were conducted by GOOSE Recruitment.

Mark Charman
CEO & Founder of GOOSE Recruitment

Mark is the CEO and Founder of GOOSE Recruitment and founded the parent company, Faststream Recruitment Group, in 1999. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in recruiting in high-demand, skill-short sectors globally, and he is bringing these new ideas to the aviation and pilot recruitment market.

As a Fellow of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, he is a renowned thought leader in specialist recruitment. Mark's involvement as a speaker, panellist and writer provides a head hunters perspective into human factors in the workplace.

Martin Bennell
Chief Operating Officer of GOOSE Recruitment

Martin is the Chief Operating Officer of GOOSE Recruitment, leading the business operations. Martin is a recruitment veteran starting his career in the sector in 2000. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in recruiting in high-demand, skill-short sectors globally.

Being a Fellow of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, Martin stands as a distinguished thought leader in specialist recruitment. His engagements as a speaker, panellist, and writer offer a unique headhunter's insight into the human dynamics within workplaces.

Samantha Wilson
Associate Director - Executive Search & Aviation Recruitment of GOOSE Recruitment

Samantha is the Associate Director of GOOSE Recruitment, leading our global aviation and pilot operations and executive search offering.

Established as an expert in national and international account management, Samantha prides herself on delivering the GOOSE high-touch ethos through her friendly, efficient and professional manner. Samantha's 12 years plus experience partnering with a variety of professional organisations has developed her unique ability to understand the needs of her customers.
She is passionate about people and takes great pride in developing her team and building relationships.

Executive summary
Leaders in Aviation Report

In the dynamic aviation and airline sectors, aviation leaders navigate change and shape the future. Leadership is not about merely maintaining the course but charting a journey toward the future. This report explores emerging trends and challenges, delving into the heart of the aviation landscape.

We endeavour to uncover the changes that we have seen since our previous survey and explore careers, reward, leadership, AI (artificial intelligence), and the future of talent in aviation.

52% of aviation leaders shared they had been concerned about their job security in the last two years. Age, AI, economics, politics, budget restrictions, culture, strategy and long-term business viability were all noted as factors.

There has been movement at the top with 40% of respondents saying they had changed jobs in the last two years, but 22% regretted doing so. The commonality of their job change regret was that the role or company culture had been overpromised and then undelivered.

64% had plans to change jobs over the next two years, the top reason for aviation leaders to either job seek or stay loyal was the same. They either needed a new challenge in a new job, or their role still challenged them enough to make them stay.

The top skills and knowledge aviation leaders wanted to improve over the next 12 months included knowledge of AI, industry trends, change management, understanding new generations, communication, and empathetic leadership.

There was a range of stress levels revealed by aviation leaders. Just under a quarter rated their stress as low, 40% rated it as very high, with the remainder citing at mid-level. Leaders in the majority were happy in their roles though, with 53% sharing they felt very happy or happy, just 14% said they were unhappy.

Company culture was what mattered most to aviation leaders at work. For employees, they felt that company culture and career progression were the top factors they could improve to make a positive impact on their business.

When looking at their reward packages, 95% felt that the inflation rates and the cost of living would have a short or long-term impact on it. The future looked brighter and 39% foresaw reward rising in real terms for leaders in the next two years.

63% of aviation leaders shared that reward was more important for retaining talent than attracting them. Additionally, 74% were feeling under more pressure to be more transparent and fair when it came to reward for their teams.

34% of aviation leaders said their business was already using AI, and there were mixed thoughts on whether it would replace jobs, improve jobs or create new ones.

92% of aviation leaders would recommend their careers in aviation to new generations, but just over three-quarters thought that new generations had what it takes to be successful in aviation. 49% did not believe there was sufficient talent in the sectors to be future leaders.

The top skills aviation leaders wanted more of in their teams included adaptability, change management, and resilience.

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Aviation leaders careers
Leaders in Aviation Report

How do aviation leaders view their careers? Do they feel secure in their jobs? Are they looking to change jobs? What do they view as most important in their careers? And what skills do they want to develop in the future to become better leaders?

Over half of aviation leaders are concerned about their job security

In our last survey amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it would have been no surprise that so many leaders may have been concerned about their job security. Three years on and 52% of leaders say job security is still a problem.

"*I can understand why we still have so many leaders in aviation concerned about their job security. As a leader, there are so many factors today that can influence our jobs and businesses. From economic conditions, political conflict, business stability, market demand, technological changes, and mergers and acquisitions to name but a few.*"

Businesses thrive when leaders feel secure in their roles, enabling a strategic vision with long-term decisions and plans that benefit the business's stability and continuity. Investment confidence soars, business culture can thrive, and it can even impact the morale of employees, leading to increased retention and setting the business up as an attractive place to work.

"*The knock-on effect of concerns over job security is that there is the potential for leaders to act differently and this is significant when it is those who are responsible for leading the business.*"

Job insecurity by region
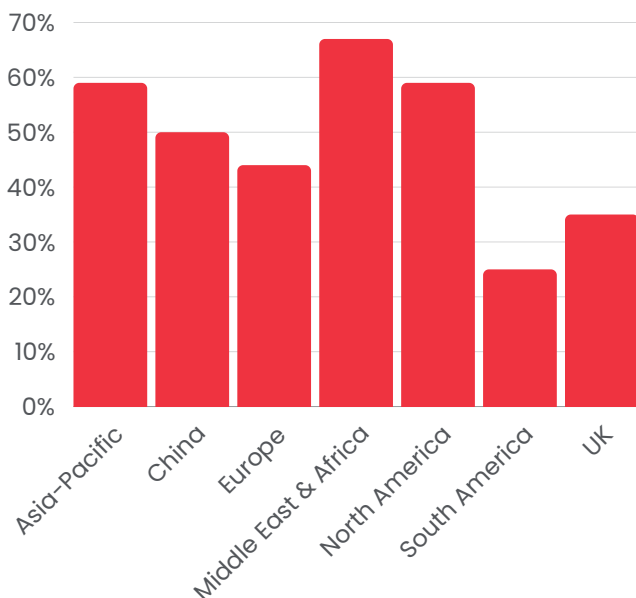
We asked in a few words, why leaders felt their job security was a concern:

- A new COO was put in place to reduce overhead costs, eliminating people with high salaries was their priority. **Aviation Leader in North America**

- The emergence of AI-powered tools and innovations has the potential to replace people in jobs. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- Ageism – being white, male and over 50. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- I feel as though job security nowadays is a concern for most people. Personally, it is the economic standpoint that concerns me most. Funding is the main concern, because of today's economy. **Aviation Leader in North America**

- Asia (Japan) is unwilling to grow with the rest of the world. **Aviation Leader in Asia-Pacific**

- The political situation in the country I live in, inflation and the threat of currency devaluation. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- Leadership changes, culture, and continued long-term viability of our airline in the current economic environment. **Aviation Leader in North America**

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52% of aviation leaders are concerned about their job security

Leadership rotation

Movement at the top can create considerable pressure on businesses, especially if adequate succession planning has not been put into place.

Over 40% of aviation leaders said they had changed jobs in the last two years, nearly matching the 39% who said in our 2021 survey that they would be very confident to change jobs in the next two years.

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The great regret

22% of those who had changed jobs said they regretted it, and the commonality was that the role itself or the company culture had been overpromised and then had underdelivered. It serves as a poignant lesson for employers and recruiters alike: whilst it is natural to strive to attract top talent by presenting an enticing job offer, these promises must align with the actual work environment and opportunities. Ensuring congruence between promises and reality is essential for building trust, fostering employee satisfaction, and minimising turnover in the long run.

"Businesses can pile on the flattery and compliments, pledge the world, and hotly pursue a candidate (usually with good intentions). However, we can see from these results that the reality is not always living up to the expectations. A group of aviation leaders are feeling regret in their job move. They are far from alone in this feeling, and a lesson for us all is that whilst we are motivated to convince the best candidate to take the job offer, promises must meet the reality."

People are planning to change jobs, even you

It is well documented that people are feeling confident changing jobs. More movement at the top is also predicted based on the survey results. 64% of aviation leaders agreed that a job move was on the cards over the next two years.

"With my recruitment hat on, my immediate reaction is movement at the top is a positive move for us, with more businesses needing to source the best senior talent in the aviation and airline sectors. In the last 12 months, we have seen a significant increase in inbound enquiries for senior leadership searches. But, for the businesses themselves, it will create considerable pressure to hire experienced and reliable senior talent. This could create a turbulent talent marketplace, with much unrest at the top, and the potential to affect the sectors moving forward. On top of that, 3% said they were planning to retire We can all take some change, but could the industry deal with huge movement at the top?"

64% of aviation leaders plan to change jobs

Seeking growth: why challenge matters for aviation leaders

The top reason for aviation leaders to either job seek or stay loyal was the same. They either needed a new challenge in a new job, or their role still challenged them enough to make them stay.

The top three reasons aviation leaders are seeking a new job over the next two years

New challenge	29%
Career progression	19%
Better work-life balance	15%

"2024's key trend will be 'growth'. We are in a time where many of us are looking for our job to provide continuous learning opportunities. If your job no longer challenges you, your intrinsic motivations (why you get up in the morning) might be depleting. Extrinsic motivations such as reward, title, and power can only hold up for so long."

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The top three reasons aviation leaders are staying in their current job over the next two years

My role still challenges me	42%
Company culture and values	22%
Work-life balance	11%

Challenges in our jobs often present opportunities to learn, adapt, and grow in our roles. Overcoming challenges often requires the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and experiences.

"Creativity and innovation can be boosted too. We must explore new ways of doing things and come up with solutions that will benefit business success. We can become more motivated with a better sense of purpose and drive as we continue to learn from mistakes, stay resilient, and achieve success."

Cultivating commitment through culture and values

Nearly a quarter of aviation leaders who were planning on staying with their employer over the next two years cited the company culture and values as the reason.

"We have already spoken about the impact a toxic or overpromised culture can have on job change regrets. Creating a workplace where people can thrive and be happy backed up by well-thought out values cultivates a commitment from employees to stay loyal. This could be a secret source of driving retention across the board. If your company culture thrives on developing and progressing your employees, I think you could have the competitive edge this year."

Skills for tomorrow: meeting the challenges of industry trends, AI and new generations

Wanting challenges often means aspiring to learn more and develop new skills. We asked aviation leaders over the next 12 months what the top three skills and knowledge areas they wanted to improve the most. The top answers included knowledge of AI, improved knowledge of industry trends (E.G. Decarbonisation, Green Technology, ESG, Alternative fuels), change management, understanding new generations, communication, and empathetic leadership.

Aviation leaders are aware that they need to lead on the changes that their business makes regarding industry trends such as decarbonisation and ESG. Of course, experts will be needed at other levels, but ultimately leaders must create the vision and make it a reality.

"I find it encouraging that so many aviation leaders are determined to advance their knowledge in these fields, and it feels optimistic that aviation is heading in the right direction."

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Understanding new generations was a popular answer to this question. Generation Z is creating many debates in people conversations. Different generations are often viewed as vastly dissimilar from one another, but we must also acknowledge some of the similarities and experiences that all generations in our workforce have faced. Rapid changes in technology, political conflict, economic peaks and troughs, global warming, health crises, and social injustice in varying forms have impacted us all.

"We must get to grips with what motivates people, what they care about, how they want to be communicated with, how they view reward and loyalty, and what they look for in their leaders across all generations, not just the new."

Using some of these shared experiences instead of purely focusing on what makes us different, may create improved retention strategies with tweaks for any nuances in different groups. Decreasing or eliminating assumptions that the things that motivate people, the way they want to be communicated with, keep them loyal, or make them leave have stayed the same.

Leading with clarity

Communication was rated as a top skill to develop in our 2021 survey too. A lack of communication can make employees feel less valued leading to a loss of interest in their roles and the business they work for.

It could be easy to negate communication with employees whilst firefighting other concerns in the business, but in experience, this can lead to animosity rather than advocacy. Building an image of stability, trust, and transparency internally and externally can be done through clear communication in leadership.

"Communication can come in many forms and is required with different stakeholders. Human-to-human communication that is transparent and defined is what people crave."

The top skills and knowledge areas aviation leaders want to improve

1.	**Knowledge of AI**
2.	**Improved knowledge of industry trends**
3.	**Change management**
4.	**Understanding new generations**
5.	**Communication**
6.	**Empathetic leadership**
7.	**Creativity**

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Stress, happiness and priorities

Leaders in Aviation Report

Happiness, stress, and the priorities of people are regularly covered in the media, predominantly based on low to mid-level employees and not the leaders themselves. The emotional and motivational states of leaders are critical because they have a ripple effect throughout a business. Negative emotions and high-stress levels can hinder leadership effectiveness, whereas happy and less stressed leaders are more likely to create a positive workplace culture.

Balancing stress and success

It would be reasonable to assume that the stress levels of leaders in any industry would be high, due to the nature of their roles and responsibilities. While aviation leaders often enjoy significant rewards and opportunities, their positions also come with unique pressures and demands that could elevate stress levels higher than their employees.

40% of aviation leaders rated their stress level as high, 24% rated it as low, and the remainder cited it as mid-level.

"I think these answers sum up what we see. There are people who simply never feel stress, they have developed techniques to manage and mitigate what might seemingly contribute to it. You have others who might feel the stress through the sheer complexity of their role, market and financial pressures, and expectations. Something that we might forget is the isolation that can be felt in the top jobs. Not being able to share your challenges and concerns makes it difficult to work through stress, and I've seen some leaders who look for outside coaching and development to help them operate through it."

Aviation leaders' stress levels

Low stress 24%
High stress 40%
Mid-level stress 36%
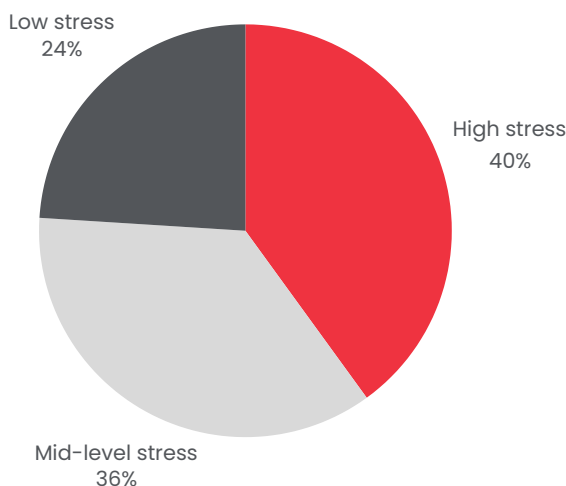
The happy leader

Although we can see that many aviation leaders are feeling stressed, many more are feeling happy in their roles. Just 14% said they were very unhappy or unhappy. 53% said they were very happy or happy and the remainder felt content.

"We all want our employees to be happy at work, and I'm pleased to see these sentiments are reflective for the majority of aviation leaders too. Being happy at work has a significant impact not only on the way we lead our businesses but also on our personal lives. It is more natural to inspire and engage with your teams, make better decisions, and handle challenges with resilience and creativity when you feel happy. We shouldn't forget how we behave as leaders can set the tone of workplace culture too."

Aviation leaders' happiness levels

Unhappy 14%
Happy 53%
Content 33%
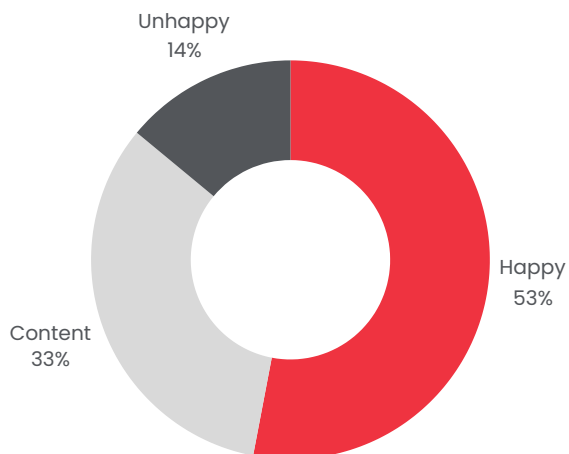
Culture first

When we asked aviation leaders what mattered most to them at work, developing or maintaining their company culture was rated at the top, an underlying factor to the future success of their business. Often described as the personality of a company and how it defines the environment in which employees work, it can also include other elements such as mission, values, purpose, ethics, expectations, and goals.

"Aviation leaders are recognising the fundamental impact of company culture on the success of their business. It is vital because it directly influences leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, talent attraction and retention, business performance, and the overall reputation and sustainability of a business. Aviation leaders are making a statement here, it means they want to lead by example and contribute to a positive and thriving work environment."

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Letting talent slip away

Retaining talented staff was voted overall as the fifth priority (out of six) for aviation leaders and we have to question why. Long-term employees often play an important role in upholding a company's culture and values (aviation leaders' top priority). Their presence can help maintain a positive workplace culture and reinforce a business's mission and purpose.

"I believe that retaining talent nowadays is crucial for business success, and it is tough. We all know that stability in our teams can lead to cost savings, innovation, employee morale, and long-term competitiveness. We play an important role in creating an environment that fosters talent retention and development, and ensuring that our people feel valued, rewarded, and motivated."

Creating future leaders has been re-prioritised

Creating new leaders for the future moved up the priority list for aviation leaders. Whilst it can feel uncomfortable to think about who might take your job if you retire or your circumstances change in the future, it is the reality of life in business.

"We talk internally about our rising stars, 'Who has the potential to be a leader in the future?' But creating future leaders is not without effort. Recruiting, training, developing, and retaining individuals with a range of competencies who have the potential to implement your current and future goals in your business is growing in importance. In an increasingly unpredictable environment, we are all going to need people who can adapt quickly, with the mindset and ability to embrace challenges and come up with creative solutions, rather than relying on what has already been done. If aviation leaders don't reprioritise retaining their talent, they will be forced to look externally for their future leaders."

What matters the most to you at work?

Ranking	Results
1.	Company culture
2.	Work-life balance
3.	Creating new leaders
4.	Career progression
5.	Retaining employees
6.	Reward

Enhancing employee experiences at work

We asked aviation leaders to share with us what areas they could improve at work for employees that would have the most positive impact on their business.

Again, company culture was rated at the top, followed by career progression. A renewed focus on career progression could be an active stance on providing more learning and development opportunities, with a vision to promote within and give greater reasons for employees to remain in the business for the long term.

"I was surprised that reward wasn't ranked first but I think that aviation leaders may only be looking at this in isolation of pay as a hygiene factor. I believe we are moving into a time where we will see more micro-raises and recognition being put into play as part of reward. Employees' expectations for regular rewards and recognition are growing, not necessarily because they are entitled but because it is what they are used to. Raised in a world of likes and comments on social media (and none of us are immune to this), we all want and expect continuous feedback. Rewarding and recognising great work needs to be done and done often."

What could you improve for employees that would have the most positive impact on your business?

Ranking	Results
1.	Company culture
2.	Career progression
3.	Reward
4.	Work-life balance
5.	Training

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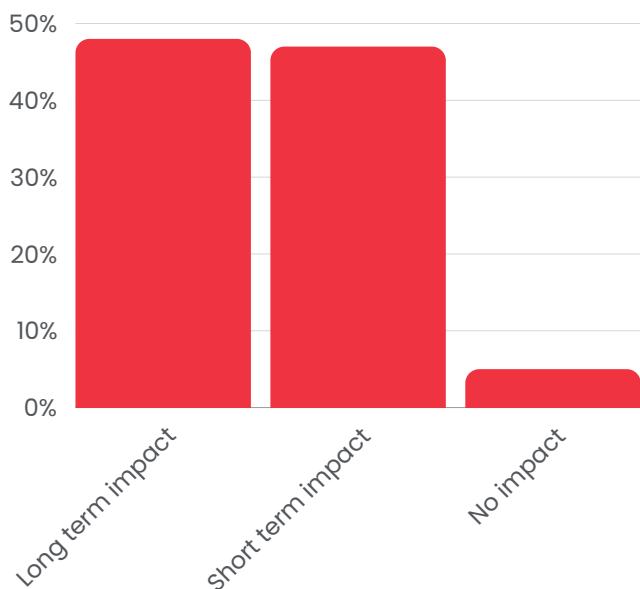
Reward
Leaders in Aviation Report

If you are having conversations internally about reward, you are not alone. Particularly for human resources leaders, it can feel like you are stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to getting it right.

Compensation in a changing economy

We cannot escape the rising cost of living or inflation rates. We wanted to focus on its impact on aviation leaders. 48% of aviation leaders said they thought it would create a long-term impact on their reward, whilst 47% felt it would have a short-term impact with the remaining 5% sharing it would not have any impact at all.

"These opinions might mean that aviation leaders feel more uncomfortable requesting an increase or having an increase considered when their reward package is compared to some of their employees. Others might want to prioritise increasing their team's reward before their own. The reality though is that as the cost of living and inflation rates go up, the value of reward can feel like it is decreasing even when it has stayed the same or even increased slightly."

What impact will the rising cost of living and inflation rates have on reward for aviation leaders?

The future of reward for aviation leaders

Even though aviation leaders foresaw short- and long-term impacts on their reward packages, the future did look brighter. 39% believed that reward would increase in real terms for leaders and 42% said it would stay the same.

"Given the unrelenting pressures and complexities of leading an aviation business or airline, you might consider that it is only fair that reward continues to increase (in real terms) in line with it. Aviation leader reward still feels disjointed and dependent on the type of business you work for, and I wouldn't say there are any clear norms. Some leaders may already be getting paid more than their counterparts in other sectors, others less. Many of us sacrificed salaries and benefits for the good of our businesses during the pandemic, some of you may also be allowing your pay to stagnate to get through the worst of inflation rates and increased cost of living crisis. But this goodwill cannot last forever and aviation leaders, just like any other employee, will want to see their reward package grow, to ultimately improve their lives and advance their opportunities to better things."

With a significant number of aviation leaders planning to change jobs in the next two years, it could put pressure on businesses to attract experienced talent. This shift could lead to a turbulent senior talent marketplace, putting pressure on leadership pay as a way to attract the top people.

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Reward – *continued*
## Leaders in Aviation Report

Investing in loyalty

Historically the focus of compensation and benefits has been on attracting new talent. We are now in a time where we have seen a shift, and now aviation leaders are realising there is a balancing act when it comes to reward.

"Getting reward right now is a balancing act. Striking the right weight between attraction and retention strategies is essential. As is navigating the delicate balance between the emotional needs of employees and data-driven decision-making."

63% of aviation leaders said that reward was most important for retaining talent, whilst 37% rated it as more important for attraction.

Do you think reward is most important for attracting talent or retaining talent?

Attraction 37%

Retention 63%
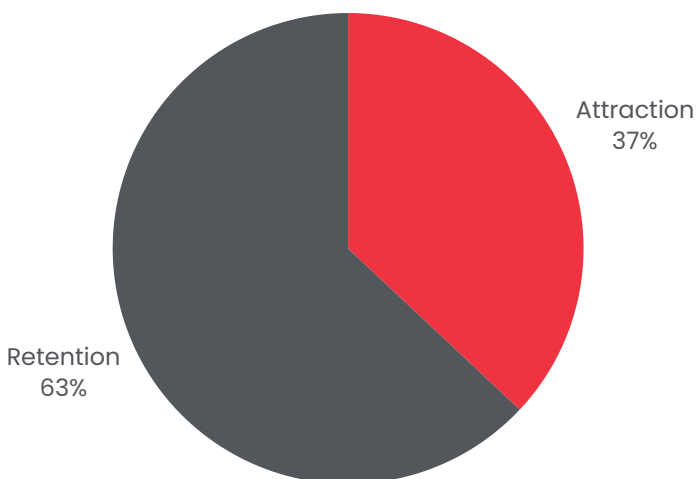
"A notable trend has emerged where individuals are enticed by competitive salary and benefits packages when considering new job opportunities, yet they also demonstrate loyalty to their current employer for the same reasons. Consequently, reward management becomes a nuanced balancing act."

Mismanaging compensation can place businesses in a precarious position, as it increases the likelihood of employees seeking new opportunities elsewhere. When compensation packages fail to align with employees' expectations or industry standards, it can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration among the workforce. In turn, this discontentment may prompt talented individuals to explore alternative employment options in pursuit of better compensation and benefits.

The growing pressure on transparency in reward

74% of aviation leaders said in the last 12 months they had felt under pressure to be more transparent and fairer about reward within their teams.

Transparency has become increasingly prevalent in discussions surrounding compensation and benefits, particularly among younger generations such as Generation Z or Generation Choice. Unlike their predecessors, these individuals are more inclined to openly share and discuss their compensation expectations and needs within the workplace.

"Raised in an era of heightened connectivity and information sharing, they view conversations about money as less taboo and more normalised."

However, it's essential to note that the desire for transparency and fairness is not exclusive to younger generations; rather, they may simply be more comfortable expressing it. Regardless of generational differences, the importance of transparency in compensation remains universal and relevant to all employees.

"

74% of aviation leaders feel under more pressure to be more transparent about pay

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Keeping pace with the demand for more frequent pay rises

Are the days of annual pay reviews and appraisals long gone? 67% of aviation leaders shared they were feeling under increased pressure to offer their employees more frequent pay raises.

What is driving this pressure from employees?

"I think whilst it is multi-faceted there are two key drivers we are seeing. Firstly, the rising cost of living is making our people feel like they have less income. Secondly, I think it is this growth mindset that we are seeing in people this year. As people grow and develop themselves, learn new skills and take on more responsibility, they in turn want to be recognised for this. If they don't feel they are receiving the recognition they deserve through praise, they may believe that a pay rise is a sign instead."

Reward from an aviation leader's perspective

We asked aviation leaders to provide their commentary on the state of reward:

- I believe that attracting and retaining great employees is best achieved through performance-based rewards. A system to earn rewards through recognition and monetary means is critical. Upward mobility within the organisation, a stake in the success, and tangible opportunities to do more than simply pay the bills is a critical component of the reward system. **Aviation Leader in North America**

> **"**

67% of aviation leaders feel under increased pressure to offer their employees more frequent pay rises

- Reward should be based on performance, and it should be paid by the employer without employees asking for it. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- Pay rises are never in line with the country's inflation which is always a difficult discussion internally. The trend over the past 24 months made the wage increase gap bigger in comparison to the inflation rate. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- Reward is a key issue that has to be discussed openly if we are going to attract and retain talent. **Aviation Leader in Asia-Pacific**

- Many companies are hiding pay scales and raise percentages which is creating a lot of needless commotion. Recently we started a benchmarking process that would improve this situation and completely end this habit in one of our upcoming companies in Africa. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

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The impact of AI on people, work, and recruitment
Leaders in Aviation Report
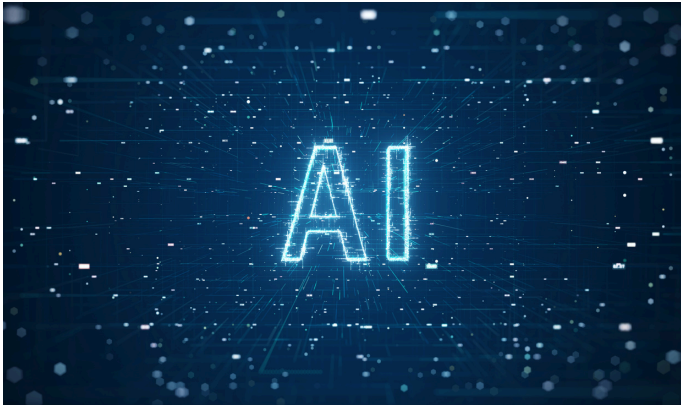
AI is set to significantly transform the way work is conducted and it might be sooner than you think. There is the potential that if implemented and communicated correctly, aviation businesses and airlines may become more efficient, but it also holds the prospect of not only replacing jobs but also improving them and creating new ones.

"The creators of ChatGPT (OpenAI) conducted a research study that estimates 80% of today's workers could see their jobs impacted by AI. I cannot see aviation not being part of this."

AI initiatives gain traction in aviation

Over a third of aviation leaders said their business was already using AI, whilst 64% said they were not and 2% did not know.

"AI was the top skill or knowledge that aviation leaders wanted to improve upon in our survey this year, and we can see why. With the majority still not using it in their businesses, there is a huge opportunity to get in on the action and see how it can benefit their business. This may be through business performance and efficiency, cost reductions, or even how people do their jobs."

Are you currently using AI in your business?

Don't know 2%

Yes 34%

No 64%
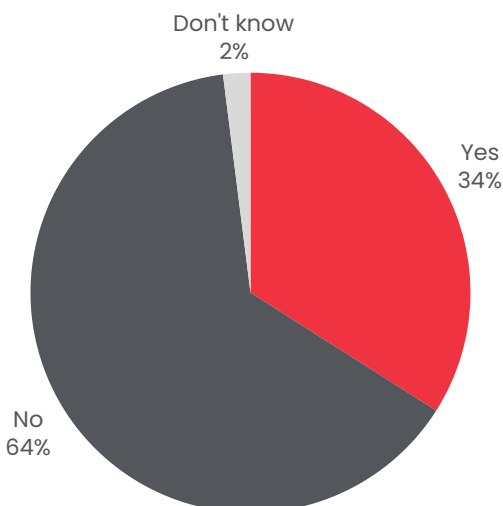
AI's potential to elevate aviation employment

We asked aviation leaders what impact they believed AI would have on jobs in aviation over the next two years. 15% said it would replace some aviation jobs, 9% said it would create new aviation jobs, 28% felt it would improve jobs, 40% said it would impact all of these areas and 8% didn't see it as having an impact at all.

"What we are seeing from these answers is a real sense of opportunity in aviation. More jobs and better jobs in aviation whilst replacing others. I believe what won't change with AI is the need for strong and clear leadership with a heightened focus on the human element. We must remember the things that AI cannot do or excel at. Judgment, rationality, empathy, and creativity are what make us human, and no computer, technology, or robot can replicate this (well at least not yet)."

Do you think AI in aviation over the next two years will:

Options	Percentage
Replace some aviation jobs	15%
Create new aviation jobs	9%
Improve aviation jobs	28%
All of the above	40%
It will have no impact	8%

AI Anxiety

For anyone reading this part of the report, it may create some feelings for you or your team of 'AI Anxiety', a phenomenon of people worrying and questioning whether AI will replace their jobs.

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The impact of AI on people, work, and recruitment
Leaders in Aviation Report

"It is natural that if you implement AI in your business there will be fears that some of your employees will become obsolete. This threat can feel personal and create concerns about a person's workplace value and what their professional identity is and will be. Questions like, 'What will I do?' 'Who will I be?' could be coming to you and other leaders in your business by implementing AI without the right communication to your people."

It's crucial to recognise that while AI possesses significant capabilities, it primarily mimics rather than innovates or creates. Despite these anxieties, it's premature to anticipate a total takeover by robots in the workforce.

"I don't think robots are coming for our jobs just yet."

AI from an aviation leader perspective

We asked aviation leaders to provide their commentary on the impact of AI:

- The core of many frontline roles will remain unaffected by AI, but AI will provide a valuable tool to improve performance and the provision of real-time data in operational settings. In non-frontline roles, AI will have a massive impact. The way the industry, unions and colleagues harness these opportunities could provide fantastic opportunities for job enrichment, more exciting career choices and real changes in workplace practices - by removing some of the routine and repetitive tasks and using our people for added-value tasks (high-value customer service, critical decision-making, strategic development, safety, and security). **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- I am not really into AI but understand its importance, a bit like you don't have the choice and you would have to adhere to it. Is it for good or bad? Nobody knows. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- AI will be invaluable as part of any organisation. Data analysis of leading and lagging indicators to identify trends and actionable information will enhance safety and the compliance-based aspect of aviation for one example. **Aviation Leader in North America**

- Aviation moves at a much slower pace. Two years is nothing in aviation... no approval of AI will be granted in the next two years. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- AI will continue to disrupt the aviation industry as we know it. Those who don't embrace it will be left behind by competition. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- AI has been improving different areas of aviation for a while, from aircraft design, performance analysis, weather forecasts, and so on; in the next few years traffic management and piloting roles will be under this trend too, the most important is not to struggle with the changes but to understand how can we adapt to it before it's too late. **Aviation Leader in Asia-Pacific**

- The best companies will utilise AI to improve their people's capabilities. It needs to add value and not replace the people whom we need to look after as our assets. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

" I don't think robots are coming for our jobs just yet

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Future aviation talent and leadership

A goal for aviation is to continue to create advocates for working in the industry. Aviation leaders must not control the conversation of advocacy but enable, inspire, and influence it with their positive sentiments for the industry. 92% of aviation leaders agreed they would recommend a career in aviation to new generations, and this is important.

"Generation Z and Generation Alpha are in the throes of choosing their career, the industries that they are aware of, and what is deemed attractive. They don't care what you say as a business, they care about what their friends, colleagues, and families think. Aviation must keep joining the conversation, use its advocates, and become more open to different types of people joining the workforce."

Would you recommend your career to new generations?

92%

A new era in aviation

76% of aviation leaders believed that new generations had what it takes to be successful in aviation, leaving nearly a quarter not so sure.

"Aviation is at an important time when it must embrace new generations for its future success. Can aviation continue to be successful if we just hire based on the 'like me' effect? Having people who fit with your culture and align with your values is always going to be positive but what we don't want to do is stall change and limit diversity. This may mean that we may have to hire differently in aviation moving forward."

Aviation leaders shared their thoughts on new generations in aviation:

- Aviation might not be as glamorous as "before", but it still offers a wide range of opportunities and careers. And it is worldwide. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- The next generations have a knack for technology and will be able to better leverage the potential of all the new technological advancements. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

"
We may have to hire differently in aviation moving forward

- COVID-19 created the perfect storm for the aviation profession and industry. The already existing shortfall in terms of qualified professional pilots was exacerbated by the significant global impact of COVID-19. Now, this shortfall has extended to all aviation professionals to include leadership, ATC, and maintenance. Many highly skilled aviation leaders have decided to leave the industry. The challenge is whether the pipeline of aviation professionals across the spectrum of operations will be sufficient to meet future demand. **Aviation Leader in North America**

- Lack of resilience. They want too immediate results and are not patient enough to wait. They lack the strength to face adversities. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- I do have reservations though as they have high expectations of fast-track careers without recognising the importance of hard-earned experience or the willingness to supplement limited experience with additional discretionary effort. **Aviation Leader in the UK**

- I think general stereotypes aren't helpful here. In any generation, there will be people with the skills and desire to succeed and those that don't. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- Aviation is hard work - the new generation is lazy and expects things to happen without putting in the effort. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- I am concerned about the skill shortage, of pilots, engineers etc. Also, the lack of comfort in young people picking up the phone to talk to people. There is a surprising anxiety about this in the "click for everything" generation... **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- The enthusiasm of young people for the industry hasn't waned. There are still more governments can do to ensure young people leaving education have the practical skills for the workplace, and to support the industry with the expense of technical skills (so that demographic factors don't continue to be a barrier to entry in some roles). **Aviation Leader in Europe**

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Leaders of the future

Not only do we need new generations of talent coming into aviation, but we also need to be succession planning for our future leaders. Just over half of aviation leaders believe there is sufficient talent in the sector who have the potential to become future aviation leaders.

"Aviation leaders prioritised developing leaders for the future and this might be why. If 49% don't think there is sufficient talent, they will either have to develop them or seek them externally. Effective leadership transitions are essential and a natural part of business. Recognising and promoting internal talent sends a positive message to employees about the business's commitment to their growth and development. If employees can see a clear path for career development it can boost retention, along with motivation and engagement."

Future-ready skills: a blueprint for employee competencies

With the world of work changing at an exponential rate, in line with the competitiveness of the market, new skills in our workforce will be needed. Aviation leaders shared the skills they believed they would need more of in their teams over the next two years. The top six included: adaptability, change management, resilience, communication, knowledge of AI, and improved knowledge of industry trends.

Adaptability feels like a skill every human needs in today's world. Past, present, and future changes mean we must learn to adapt. We need to feel empowered to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and lead more fulfilling lives, whether at work or home.

"I think what aviation leaders are identifying in adaptability is the speed and openness to it, rather than the complete lack of it. People will generally adapt eventually but leaders need people to do it quickly, especially if they are trying to implement a new strategic direction for the business or dealing with a crisis."

Hand in hand with adaptability, aviation leaders identified change management as a skill they wanted to see more of from their employees.

"The economic, political, market and business landscape is rapidly changing. Leaders need people who are great at the process of planning, implementing and controlling changes to a business' processes, culture or technologies. This doesn't come naturally to many people but a skill they must continue to hone."

Reflections on leadership

Reflecting on the most important factors that have impacted your leadership style over the past 12 months is important for self-awareness, continuous improvement, adaptation and effective decision-making.

We asked aviation leaders to share the big-ticket items that impacted their leadership:

- Understanding the need to learn and integrate advanced technologies. Forward-thinking and strategic vision regarding the impact of change. Retaining the fundamental necessity to ensure that the employee(s) have the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies (right person and order of merit) versus a focus on sociopolitical issues in highly technical fields. **Aviation Leader in North America**

- I have never been as empathic as a leader as I am now. But COVID burnout has taken its toll and businesses are not recognising that. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- I had to learn how to adapt to circumstances that are outside of my control, and with this, I had to focus on motivating my staff to find solutions to problems that the defence industry is facing. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- Think outside of the box, stretch your knowledge, learn, and enjoy new ways of working and implementing. I enjoyed new ways of implementation in different finance-related areas and thoroughly enjoyed it. **Aviation Leader in Asia-Pacific**

- Really good guidance and patience pay off. Showing them other ways of doing their business, trying to convince them, again and again. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- The continued war for talent - opened our industry to talent from outside the industry, and very much for the better. It's meant all airline leaders have had to adapt and change to reflect a more open and dynamic workplace. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

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Future aviation talent and leadership - *continued*
Leaders in Aviation Report

Defining our leadership style for tomorrow

We shared in 2021 that 79% of aviation leaders had changed their leadership through the pandemic. Three years on we wanted to see if they felt more changes were needed. 48% agreed that they did. They shared their thoughts on their answers:
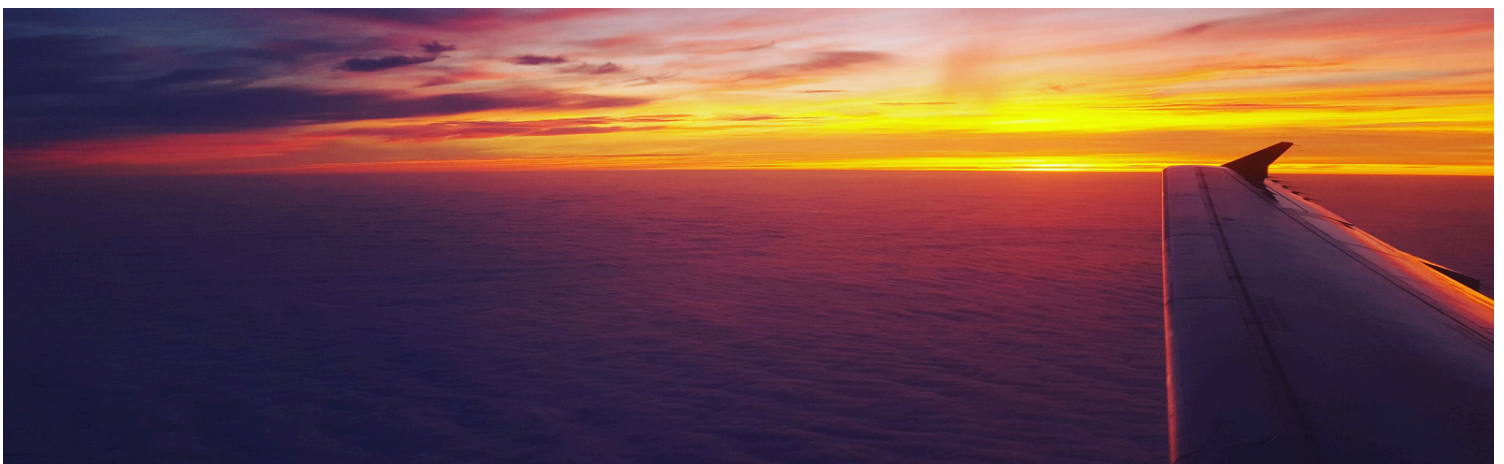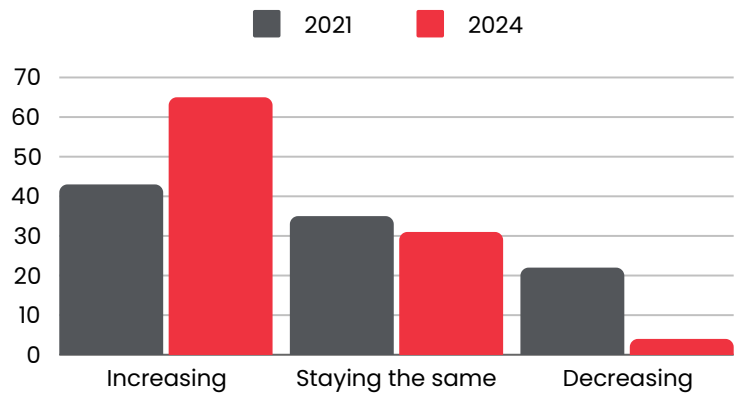
- Leadership is constantly changing - we'll all need to keep adapting our leadership style to meet the changing needs of the industry and the workplace. **Aviation Leader in Europe**

- Leadership is dynamic and needs to change according to the environment and culture. It also needs to adapt to refresh ideas following new generations finding the balance to mitigate the stress and opening new challenges to all teams. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- It's necessary to always review your approach and actions and adapt to circumstances, whilst retaining core values. **Aviation Leader in the UK**

- I need to force middle management to take the reins, so I do not have to do their jobs for them. This is so my stress level is reduced, and I become more pleasant to deal with. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

- Up-skill and gain more knowledge without prejudice. Give more importance to work-life balance, thereby gaining more confidence. **Aviation Leader in Asia-Pacific**

- New generations in old-style roles, leadership and communications are topics to be aware of, especially in a well-connected world and a multicultural industry like aviation. **Aviation Leader in the Middle East & Africa**

Optimism in the growth of teams

For the final part of our future aviation leaders and talent section, we wanted to share the optimism we are seeing in hiring plans from aviation leaders. In 2021, we shared that 43% of aviation leaders believed their team would increase in size within six months, 22% saw it decreasing and 35% saw no change on the horizon.

Today, leaders are more positive with 65% believing their team would increase in the next six months, whilst only 4% saw it decreasing. The remaining group believed it would stay the same.

How do you see your team changing in the next six months?

Legend: 2021 (grey), 2024 (red)

Category	2021	2024
Increasing	43	65
Staying the same	35	31
Decreasing	22	4

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Final thoughts
Leaders in Aviation Report

Aviation has always been no stranger to change, navigating through various challenges and embracing new horizons. Today, we stand on the threshold of a transformative era characterised by digitalisation, environmental stewardship, the pursuit of greater efficiency, and the cultivation of our aviation workforce and leaders of tomorrow.

In the spirit of pioneering visionaries, let us not merely observe the trends we've encountered but seize them as opportunities to redefine the future of aviation. While the challenges ahead may seem daunting, they are met with aviation's steadfast commitment to excellence. With optimism, determination, and a shared sense of purpose, we conclude this report, charting a course towards an aviation future that shines brighter, is more resilient, and is built upon the bedrock of innovation and leadership.

Together, we will continue to navigate these waters, shaping the aviation legacy of tomorrow. It has been an honour to share the insights and perspectives of leaders in aviation, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated.

We are proud to have crafted and shared this with the aviation community, hoping that the insights offered have been both engaging and thought-provoking.

Mark, Martin, and Samantha

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Leaders in Aviation Report

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Methodology
Leaders in Aviation Report

The Leaders in Aviation Survey 2024 was open for three weeks and closed at the end of March 2024.

The survey

The survey was designed for Leaders in Aviation to take part, representing those who led teams that consisted of flying roles, non-flying roles and a combination of the two.

Respondents answered the survey questions anonymously online using Survey Monkey, an industry-leading survey platform.

Respondents were asked questions and all responses were held in the strictest confidence. No answers were linked to any personal data that could identify an individual.

Data gathering

To ensure the integrity of the survey data we only promoted the survey via email and LinkedIn messages to aviation professionals who qualified as working in a leadership position.

Data analysis

The responses to the survey were analysed to identify the most important trends and points of interest in the research. Our experts worldwide have reviewed the data to ensure that it reflects the reality of the local markets and global trends.

We believe the combination of the survey's unique reach, and our market expertise means that this report delivers a representative view of trends and opportunities in employment, leadership, and remuneration in our sector, right across the world.

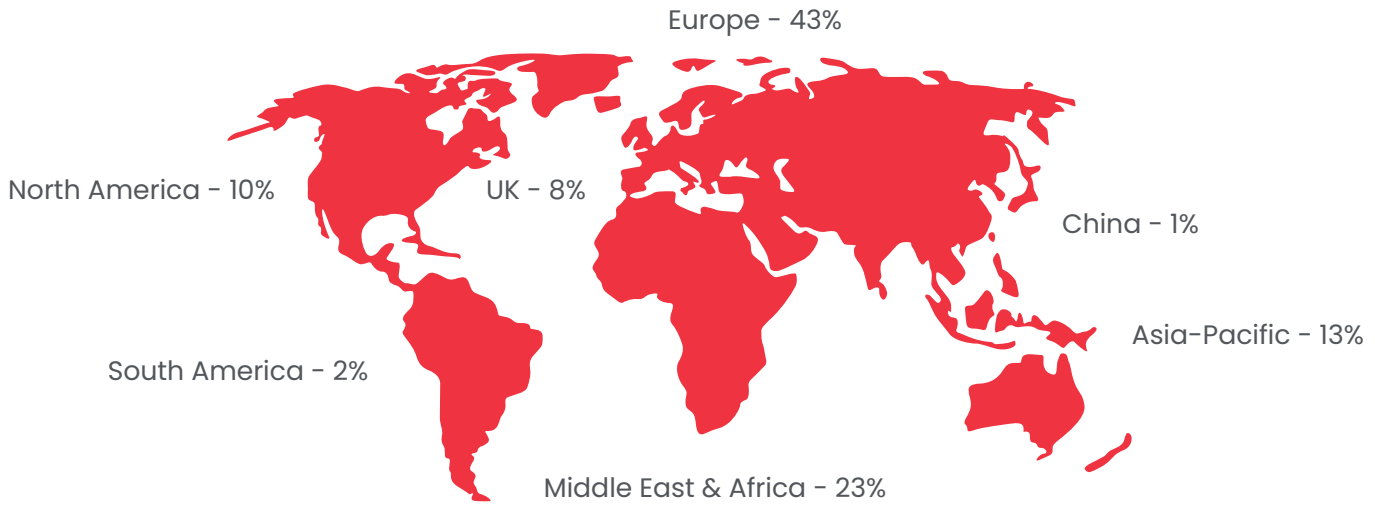This report was created internally by GOOSE Recruitment.

Please note, that quotes from respondents represent their thoughts and views and not those of GOOSE Recruitment.
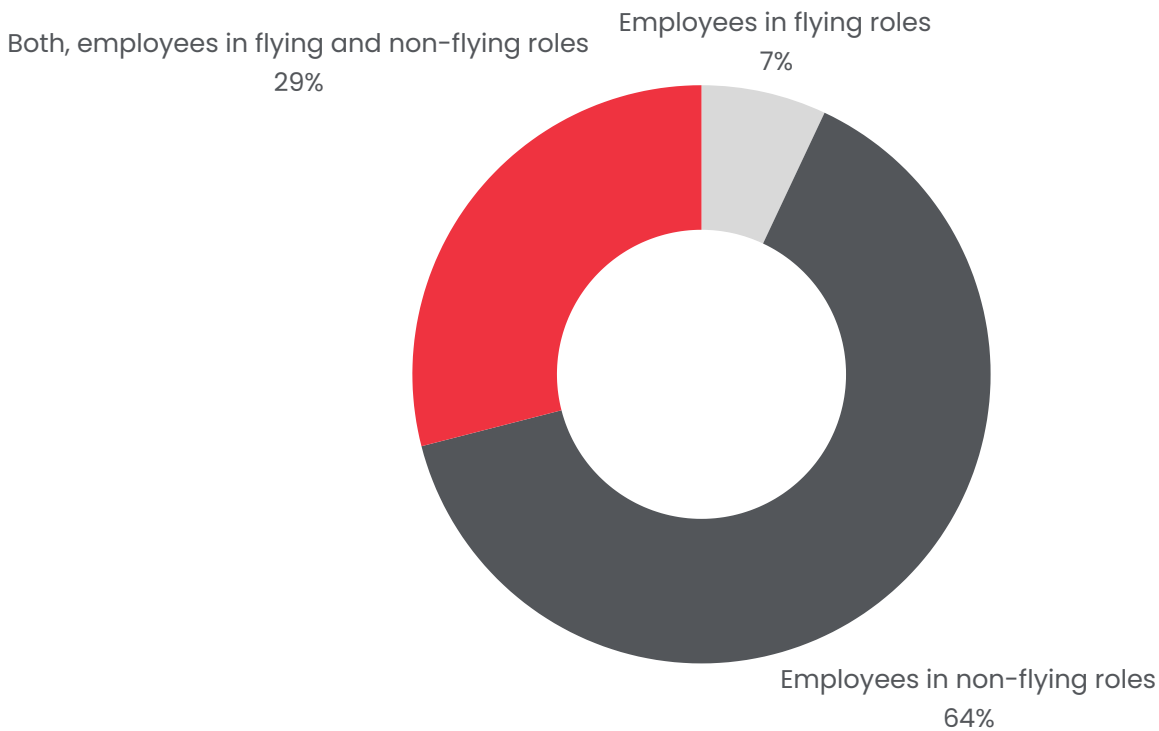
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Demographics
Leaders in Aviation Report

This world map demonstrates the breakdown of respondents by working location

Europe - 43%

North America - 10%

UK - 8%

China - 1%

Asia-Pacific - 13%

South America - 2%

Middle East & Africa - 23%

This chart illustrates the type of teams that the respondents were leading

Both, employees in flying and non-flying roles
29%

Employees in flying roles
7%

Employees in non-flying roles
64%

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