

THREE KEYS TO RECRUITING AND RETAINING AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

Don Henderson | December 2019

In an ever-increasing competitive landscape for aviation professionals, having a sound recruiting and retention strategy is critical. Quite commonly, the conversation leads with compensation. However, this is just one of three equally critical areas that deserve attention.

Compensation. Quality of Worklife. Leadership.

Compensation

Recall your days in Economics 101. You learned about the supply/demand curve and its impact on market pricing. In short, if supply declines and demand increases, market pricing increases. There are several internal and external forces which influence the market. In the case of aviation professionals, there are simply not enough newly qualified professionals to meet the growing demand... and it's only going to get worse. [CAE](#) and [Boeing](#) recently provided projections for professional pilots; the numbers are alarming. Ten-year projections forecast that 270,000 new commercial airline pilots and 50,000 new business aviation pilots will be needed worldwide. In 2019 alone, the demand for commercial airline pilots increased by over 6% while the total population of professional pilots grew less than 1%. There are similar figures projected for aviation technicians in the near future.

As you consider compensation strategy, it's important to understand not just the current market, but also where the market is headed. Keeping a close eye on trends will enable you to position your organization ahead of market changes. Additionally, salaries are only one part of the compensation equation. Short and long-term incentive compensation, benefits, and bonuses should be included in the total earnings calculation.

Quality of Worklife

More and more, the topic of quality of worklife is playing into career decision making. The predictability of airline schedules has tremendous value to many aviation professionals. The key benefits of business aviation include the ability to be responsive to important needs or flexible to changing schedules. Your organization's philosophy on supporting these needs will have a direct impact on the quality of life for your aviation professionals. Also factoring into the discussion is your organization's investment in training and career development. These valuable initiatives also influence quality of worklife. Training and development days can quickly total over 20 days per year per person.

All these factors play into your organization's health relative to quality of worklife. The solution is to have a staffing strategy which balances your organization's needs and the aviation department's quality of worklife. Overlay this with sound policies and procedures as well (eg. hard days off, fatigue management, PTO).

Leadership

"People leave managers, not their companies." There is some truth to this statement. You cannot pay people enough to work for a leader they do not trust or respect. If your organization has a poor leadership, an aggressive compensation package will only attract and retain mercenaries... those staying for the wrong reason. You must address the root cause. Invest in regular assessments and development of your aviation team's leadership in areas such as communication, team building, and conflict resolution. Leverage your internal corporate resources or explore business aviation-specific classes.

Having a sound strategy around these three key principles will help your organization recruit and retain quality aviation professionals. As with any part of your business, these strategies should be regularly reviewed, measured, and adjusted. Contact VanAllen today to learn how we can assist you and your organization on these topics and more.



To learn more, contact VanAllen today.