

## Viewpoint

# For your safety: Pilot training

Later this spring, all Piedmont pilots will begin using USAir flight procedures in preparation for the upcoming merger of Piedmont into USAir. These include the pre-flight checklist, common flight procedures, and weight and balance systems, among others. This is part of the "mirror image" process to standardize the operations of the two airlines to become one airline. The mirror image program is the same process we used last year in merging Pacific Southwest Airlines with USAir.

When two airlines merge, the FAA approves all plans for integrating the two airlines' operations. To date, USAir's program for the merger with PSA has been one of the quickest to receive FAA approval. The FAA credited that speedy approval to the mirror image concept. As the manager of the Pittsburgh FAA office said last year when the FAA gave its final approval to USAir's total PSA merger program, "The mirror image concept is the best thing that's happened to the merger process since deregulation. We made the USAir/PSA integration a showcase on how to merge two airlines. USAir and PSA had the talent to make it happen and that will make future mergers much easier."

As predicted, the experience we had with the PSA merger, specifically with the flight crews, is making this much larger merger easier.

Prior to the use of mirror image procedures, all Piedmont pilots attended ground school for USAir's procedures training. After ground school, they received proficiency checks in the simulator. Such rigorous training is not new to USAir or Piedmont. Both have long had rigorous pilot-training programs.

To begin with, having a good pilot group starts with the quality of applicants accepted. USAir hires far above the minimum qualifications. To be a commercial airline pilot, the FAA requires a commercial license with an instrument rating to fly multi-engine aircraft. This can be obtained in about 200 hours of total flight time. USAir requires that rating, but also requires a minimum of 2,000 hours of flight time, of which a significant amount must be spent in jet-powered aircraft.

The applicants USAir selects for interviews are given a written exam and a flight-simulator exam. From those tested, we hire about one out of five applicants.

All newly-hired pilots receive 10 days of aircraft-systems training, and seven days of simulator training. Then, they have 25 hours of line flying for observation from the jumpseat before occupying the flight-engineer or co-pilot seat.

Beyond new-hire training, twice a year all captains are trained on the appropriate simulator for their aircraft type.



This training session is preceded by a one-hour oral exam. First officers and flight engineers receive this training once a year. Once a year each pilot attends two days of ground-school training and is checked on the line at least once a year by a check pilot.

In addition, there is a regular flow of information to all pilots, primarily through the bimonthly publication *Flight Crew View*. This publication was recently recognized by the Flight Safety Foundation as an "excellent vehicle for the dissemination of safety information."

USAir is constantly working to find ways to improve its pilot training. Chief among these is our commitment to the best in state-of-the-art training equipment. Combined, USAir and Piedmont have 17 flight training simulators. These training devices allow the majority of pilot training to be done in the simulators, rather than in the aircraft. Better than that, they enable pilots to be trained for the "what if?" situations, such as engine fires, hydraulic failures, and wind shear.

This year some 6,000 pilots will be trained on the USAir and Piedmont simulators, as well as hundreds of pilots from other airlines, both domestic and foreign.

In terms of the human-factors side of pilot training, USAir provides new captains with a three-day course emphasizing the human-resource management elements of a captain's responsibility. In addition, the FAA is reviewing a new human-factors training program that will be introduced early this year for all pilots.

By the time USAir's first officers become captain, they have five to seven years of experience with USAir. Add to this a top-flight training program that meets—and exceeds—FAA regulations, and you have among the best in the business!

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