



EXPAT VACANCY CONSIDERATIONS

There is a lot of information circulating on the internet about applying and working as an expat pilot – especially pertaining to Asia. Some of it's true but a lot of it is false or exaggerated.

At Paramount, we approach the process of finding a new vacancy from the Pilot's perspective – our job is to present as much information to you that we can so that you and your family can evaluate whether a vacancy will be a good match for you.

I had personal reservations about going to work as an expat pilot for a foreign airline. However, it proved to be an excellent experience and presented opportunities I would not have been exposed to otherwise. I encourage you to consider this type of vacancy as an option. However, please be sure to discuss as much of the details we list below to help you understand what your life is going to be like after you join a foreign airline. We are always happy to discuss these types of issues and answer any questions with you.

Presently, Asia has the highest demand for pilots in the world. Because the demand for qualified pilots is so high the market is very competitive – many airlines jockeying to attract pilots from the same pool of qualified candidates. As such, the terms and conditions have improved considerably over the past few years: better pay, more rotation options, opportunity for transition and advancement, and out-basing are some of the key aspects that have improved.

Here are some considerations to consider about expat jobs – especially in Asia.

There are three general categories that Pilots consider when evaluating a new opportunity:

1. Pay and Benefits
2. Quality of Life
3. Stability

Pay and Benefits

All of the pay terms posted on Paramount information is net of taxes – this is the amount that will be deposited into your bank account. China, especially, is paying very high rates. Most often the benefits for an expat pilot are fairly limited. In China, for example, if you decide to live in China then you often will be provided with health insurance coverage. However, the coverage is effective only while you are in China – it is not global.

Mr. Mac Baird, Manager – Procurement Division

+1-540-737-4600, ext. 201 or

Direct at +1-850-462-9546

Mac.baird@paramountarg.com

www.Paramountarg.com

Quality of Life

This aspect of work most often is equal to or more important than pay. We all want to earn as much as possible while working as little as possible. Quality of life can be further delineated into two sub categories:

1. Personal Quality of Life
2. Professional Quality of Life

Personal Quality of Life – In its simplest form, this relates directly to days off. This is where the rotation or commutability of a vacancy is considered. Most jobs offer multiple choices for rotation options: 6 weeks ON / 2 weeks OFF or 4 weeks ON / 4 weeks OFF, etc. It is important to note, that the rotation you choose will directly affect how much money you earn. For example, in a 4 ON / 4 OFF rotation you are essentially only working 6 months per year. However, with a local rotation – where you live in your base – you would work a higher number of days per year and hence earn more money. You have to decide what option gives you the best balance between time off and the amount of money you will earn.

Professional Quality of Life – This pertains to how your life will be while working. These factors include, scheduling, culture, transition, upgrade, training bonds among others. With the high demand for pilots many opportunities are available for pilots to transition. For A-320 pilots, this means you may have the option to get an A-330 job. Once you have worked at an airline for a period of time, you will then be able to transition to another airplane – like the B-787 for example. Some airlines offer Captain upgrade – while others do not.

Stability

The growth and trend for new aircraft orders – again, especially in Asia – gives us a good idea of how predictable and stable your future can be. In most cases, you will be able to stay and fly until you reach the mandatory retirement age. For expats, the retirement age in Japan is currently 67. China has a limit of 60. However, there is an aspect of working as an expat pilot that is a real advantage for you – contract term. When you work as an expat pilot you will sign a term contract – which means it will be valid for a set period of time, from 1 to 5 years. At the end of the term, you will have the option to renew your contract or to decline the option to renew and move onto something else. This gives you options.



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Experience and Currency Requirements

Regardless of where you apply, they will have set experience and recency / currency requirements. This aspect of the flying profession can be a real trap because – the longer you are out of the cockpit the harder it is to get back into the cockpit.

This is where understanding the difference between recency and currency is important. They are not the same – yet both play a critical role in qualifying for a vacancy:

Recency pertains to when you last flew the airplane.

Currency pertains to maintaining the legality of your license, most often through required checkrides.

If you have not flown an aircraft for over a year but have continued to get annual sim checks you are current, but you do not have any recent flying experience.

Most vacancies will require you to be current AND to have flown the airplane within the previous 6 or 12 months.

This is important to know – because if you wait too long to try and find the world's best job you may be jeopardizing your ability to find a flying job.

In my opinion, it is better to find a good job that keeps you in the cockpit so you can continue to search for a better job than to simply wait for a perfect job and not fly.

We are here to help.

I wish you the best of luck in your search –
Michael

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