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The Complete Airline Pilot Interview Course DVD

"So, Mr Bloggs, you want to fly for our airline. Tell me, what's the rationale behind our route structure, and what's wrong with the fleet we currently operate on that structure? While you're explaining that, please draw a diagram to illustrate Bernoulli's Theorem. Have you ever been in trouble with the police? The taxman? The local vicar? Oh, and your mother called. She said to remind you to wear a clean shirt."

I daresay there will have been rather more than a handful of fledgling pilots who've woken in a sweat in the dead of night from just such a nightmare interview scenario. All job interviews are stressful, but airline pilot job interviews can be particularly taxing, not least because the airline will want to get an idea of how well the candidate functions under pressure.

There are several books available which are designed to help pilots through the crucial interview stage of airline recruitment. Some of these are more general, others are more airline-specific. What they all aim to do is take away some of the fear of the airline recruitment interview by helping the candidate to prepare for some of the questions they are likely to face. FTN will be reviewing a selection of these shortly.

The Complete Airline Pilot Interview Course is a little different. It aims to do the same job - namely to help prepare a candidate for their job interview - but it's a DVD. There is also a workbook, available as a download from the Flightdeck Consulting website, but this wasn't available for review. I admit, I was a little sceptical of this idea before I started this review, particularly when I realised I didn't have the workbook. As it happens, that didn't matter and it quickly became clear just what a good idea it was to

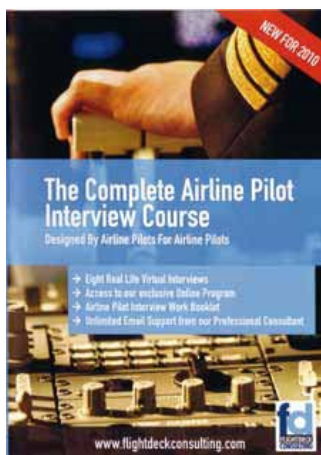
produce this DVD.

The books all tend to give useful background and rationales for the sort of questions candidates are likely to face, but when you see these questions on paper they can look a little academic. It's very easy to read about a particular form of questioning and make a mental note to squirrel away that thought for future use. Then, come the Big Day, the question still comes as a complete surprise. That's probably because the book lacks an element of reality.

Imagine how much more helpful it might be to sit in front of a TV, or computer screen, facing an interview panel and have a real person put these questions to you. All of a sudden, the questions, and the purpose behind those questions becomes so much more real. Imagine also, how you'd react if, while giving your answer, the interview panel exchanges glances, fiddles with their notes, scribbles down a few comments, or merely looks at you in a vaguely disappointed way. Not going to get that from a book, are you?

How it works is very clever. There are five different aircrew interviews on the DVD (plus a further series of non aviation-specific mock interviews). In each one an interview panel of aircrew and HR people put a series of questions, followed by about 15 seconds or so in which they react, silently, in the various different ways above, while you give your answer to the screen. If you need more time, the DVD pauses before the next question. So, when the training captain asks you, "Have you ever knowingly broken a regulation or standard operating procedure?" then sits and looks disapprovingly, or exchanges meaningful glances with his colleague, while you give your answer, that's rather more useful preparation than reading a book which warns you of this likely line of questioning.

Certainly, you're rather less likely to forget this experience in a hurry, and rather more likely to have an answer worked through in your mind, so that,



when he asks the next question - "So, what would you do differently next time if the same scenario happened again?" you're ready for him.

I found the whole experience of working through this DVD quite salutary. Giving some sample answers, just for fun, I found myself feeling genuine pressure, worrying about the body language I was getting back from the TV screen. I simply couldn't help myself. Even if the answer is a textbook one, if the man on screen (who has no way of knowing what you just said, of course) reacts with distaste, doubts begin to creep in. It's brilliant psychology and, if my experience is any measure, the sort of questions and responses are much more likely to stick and be there for recall when needed, than they would be if you had simply, in the words of the immortal Manuel, "learned it from a book". **Highly recommended.**

The Complete Airline Pilot Interview Course DVD and workbook, typical price around £60-70, from pilot shops. Produced by Flightdeck Consulting www.flightdeckconsulting.com

Professional Pilot, proven tactics and PIC Strategies by John Lowery

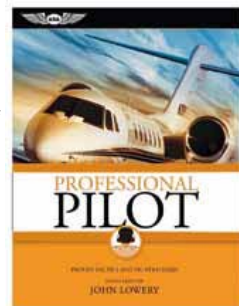
Quite a few books have been written with the aim of guiding aircrew in important subjects, but subjects which are nevertheless not part of a pilot's formal training. FTN has reviewed books such as Phil Croucher's 'Professional Pilot's Manual' in the past, and we have always recognised the importance of books like these in helping to top up a young pilot's bucket of experience, before his bucket of luck runs dry.

Professional Pilot, proven tactics and PIC Strategies is a carefully-written, thoughtful and comprehensive book, with four sections divided into Resource Management, The Takeoff Phase, The Enroute Phase, and, wait for it, The Landing Phase. Some of this is fairly straightforward CRM; some of it feels like the benefit of experience handed down by an old and experienced hand; and some is the result of careful and thoughtful analysis. It's all good and valuable stuff, and I suspect that most pilots, even experienced ones, would find something useful and worth taking away from this book. For a newcomer to the world of professional flying, particularly one who isn't operating in a large, airline environment, this could be an invaluable reference.

This is the third edition, published by the invariably excellent ASA. The first edition appeared in 2001 and to judge from this version it looks likely to remain in print through many subsequent editions.

Highly recommended. Professional Pilot, proven tactics and PIC strategies - by John Lowery

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