

Smart Recruitment

Combining Proven & Innovative Technical Solutions



The Client



Symbiotics were delighted to be approached by the Airline Pilot Club (APC) on behalf of Avianca to support them in streamlining their recruitment campaign.

Avianca is the largest airline in Colombia and is the flagship of a group of ten Latin American airlines - these operate as one airline using a code sharing system. As an employer, Avianca inspires great loyalty amongst its employees. The Airline is inspirational for many Colombians who are looking to enter the aviation industry, including the younger generation who are drawn to the airline seeking a long-term career within aviation.



The Airline Pilot Club (APC) is a smart recruitment company that combines proven and innovative AI tech to enable its community of aspiring pilots, newly qualified pilots, flying schools and airlines to meet their professional and commercial targets. APC's focus on quality in pilot selection, training and recruitment is a unique blend of decades of airline experience coupled with leading edge Personal Evidence Based Training (PEBT) software.

With over 25 years of experience, Symbiotics lead the aviation industry to excellence in online psychometric assessments. They provide assessment and selection solutions to airlines, business jet operators, air forces, and flight training schools. Their purpose as a global assessment provider is to collaborate with clients to deliver robust and reliable solutions for candidate selection including pilot psychological assessment for compliance with EASA regulation EASA.CAT.GEN.MPA.175(b).

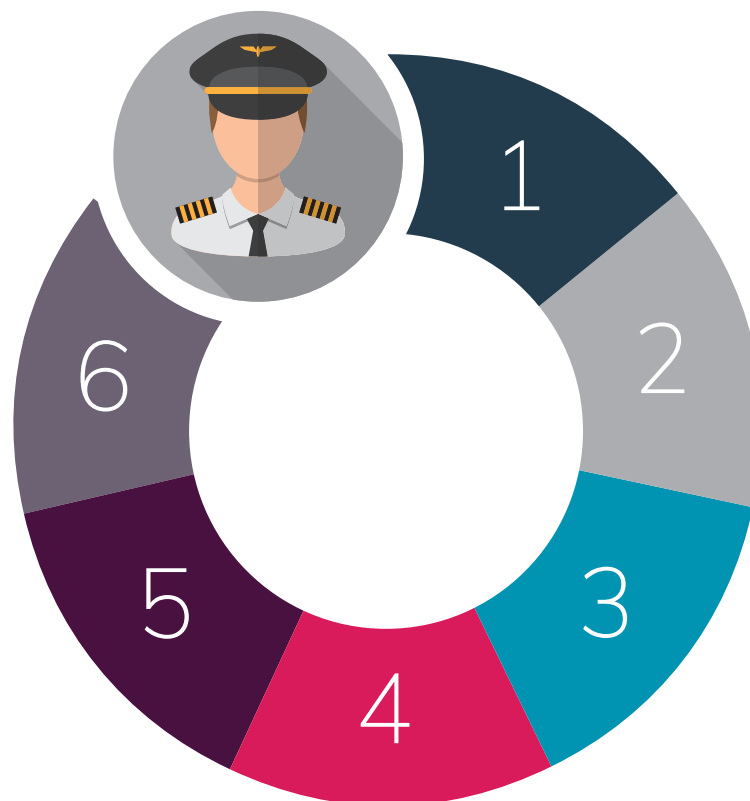
The Need

Avianca sought backing with their vision of creating a cultural profile of the optimum Avianca pilot in support of their pilot recruitment programme selection process.

The airline has been anticipating significant growth, with plans to take delivery of new aircraft, and therefore anticipated increases in the number of pilots and instructors that are required.

To help them with challenges in recruiting, APC set out to examine, with the support of Symbiotics, the following criteria:

- 1. Optimum pilot profile
- 2. Candidate mental processing capacity (cognitive aptitude)
- 3. Candidate workload management capacity
- 4. Candidate situational awareness
- 5. Candidate personal attributes
- 6. Spoken English capability of applicants



The Solution

APC deployed their software platform within Avianca. This platform enables candidate profile build, delivery of training and other resources, publishing to job boards, reviewing of applicants, setting up of communications, testing of candidates and scheduling interviews. The platform also aides with selection by culminating a series of data points to produce a map of candidate suitability.

To support Avianca with their vision of creating a cultural profile of the perfect pilot, Symbiotics sought to create an Optimum Profile to be included within APC's tracking system. The Profile looked at Job Description, Organisational Culture, Skills and Attributes of the role, training syllabus and challenges against the backdrop of the national educational standards and culture of Avianca and its requirements.

This information was then analysed and mapped against 64 ADAPT behavioural profiles, along with any key competencies, attributes, attitudes, and skills that would inform the selection process. Doing this helps to ensure that the right candidates are being identified who would not only be competent pilots or maintenance operators, but also good employees who would provide a sufficient length of service to maximise the Airlines Return on Investment.

Stage 1: Preparing the Profile

In order to ensure the correct measures and weightings were applied to the test outputs, a Profiling activity was conducted within Avianca to understand its culture and requirements for the future. To generate the profile, Symbiotics conducted interviews using a number of techniques including Repertory Grid and Critical Incident, and also issued an Organisational Questionnaire to individuals within the organisation, covering a range of experience, roles, and positions. The Profiling task involved:

- Issuing the Questionnaire and Questions
- Analysing the Questionnaire and interview responses
- Researching Colombian culture, educational standards, and lifestyle
- Analysing the results and producing an Organisational profile and the preferred Pilot portrait
- Delivering a Profile Report

Avianca's culture was assessed via the questionnaires and interviews to identify desirable characteristics. The profiling interviews aimed to understand the preferred styles of individuals who successfully complete training, then make a good career within Avianca. This Profile could then be used against assessment of candidates to ascertain their cultural fit within the Airline.

The Outcome

Stage 2: Profiling during the recruitment process

1,800 candidates were input into the recruitment process. All candidates were qualified pilots with varying levels of experience and recency in their flying activity.

These were originally filtered down through an English language assessment and technical suitability interview. As part of this, APC through their applicant tracking system, recruited 20 interviewers across a 6-week period, where 3 data points were created - these included: quality of English, suitability from a cultural and personality perspective, and suitability from a technical point of view.

At this stage, 620 candidates then underwent the Symbiotics Optimum Profile, including Knowledge tests: Cognitive Reasoning, Future Aptitude Selection Tool (FAST) and ADAPT Personality Questionnaire (APQ) to produce a further 35 data points.

As part of this, areas that were included consisted of:

The 'Silhouette': ADAPT has 64 main profiles that are based on behaviour under pressure and an ability to learn and develop. They form the basis of the behavioural and learning profile and are referred to as the 'Silhouette'. The 'Silhouette' is described as the primary trait of an individual who may alter behaviour with training, but who when subjected to pressure will revert to their original, natural responses.

Interview core competency measures: these categories directly link to the IATA competencies and are more operationally specific to the FO/Training role than the APQ. These can be cross-referenced and linked directly back to elements of the APQ to provide a more holistic picture.

After undertaking both the Symbiotics Optimum Profile and Knowledge tests, 553 candidates were then screened down to a further 360 through additional assessments and simulator time. This ultimately produced 180 candidates who were recommended for A320 TR.

Client Satisfaction

Across the entire recruitment campaign, 49 data points were produced and analysed with APC's applicant tracking platform and AI. A heat map was created which highlighted high-standard candidates at the top and those with competency development issues towards the bottom.

This process clearly identified who should be recommended to the Airline with the likelihood of having a successful, safe, and efficient career.

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Avianca Testimonial

APC has been working with Avianca for the last twelve months on a number of workstreams. These include pilot selection and recruitment for Avianca's A320 type rating training. APC was required to recommend 180 type rating students, over a six-month period, out of 1,800 applications.

As required by Avianca, APC recommended thirty students per month for six months, on time and to the required standard. The combination of APC's platform and AI, Symbiotics' pilot profiling process, and Symbiotics' psychometric assessments gave us confidence that the optimum pilot has been recruited by Avianca.

APC are highly professional and dedicated to completing tasks to the highest standards. They are flexible and pleasant to work with.

Avianca, April 2024

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The Airline Pilot Club.

Pilots from every background

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