



EUROPE' LARGEST AVIATION TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT EVENT, PILOT EXPO 2024, INTERVIEW WITH INGMARS KIBERMANIS

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Today 50skyshades has the pleasure to welcome the guilty one who once created Pilot Expo – Ingmars Kibermanis. We have a lot of questions, just because for us it will be first time visiting this show next February.

T.O. We have to be prepared, can you tell us – how you got the idea? Because you're the guilty one who actually came up, then got a team. And now the show is running quite successfully. So, tell us how it was.

I.K. It's running very successfully. It a long story short, that was 2015 or 16. We were at some show in London Heathrow together with my good German friends. And typically, we were discussing the quality of the show. And then at some moment they said: stop criticizing, make one yourself. Which I kind of did, as you mentioned. It's working well. And it is growing. It was obviously growing rapidly before the COVID and then there was the impact that everyone had in industry. So, we had to close it for one year and then restarted it quite slowly. But again, the growth is there. I don't think there is anyone currently in airline industry complaining about the

market. The market is on our side. About the show – it will be one more year, even bigger and better one. Much more crowded than ever before. So it will be cool, I believe.

T.O. A question I can't avoid – we're living quite aggressive aviation bashing. I think you know that in France we even have some people saying that kids should stop to dream about aviation. At your show, when you see people coming dreaming to be a part of this amazing industry... Do you think we need to promote it more or we're good and it is enough?

I.K. It's a million-dollar question. Obviously. You know yourself - aviation is big and, in some sense, slow for most. The idea that pilots or cabin crew will soon be replaced by machines is nice, but it will not happen so quickly as many people might imagine. It will take some time and obviously why not to fulfill the dream of those people dreaming of this, to be a part of this great industry. I meet daily a lot of aspiring youngsters really to become pilots, cabin crew, engineers. All my previous works have been in connection with pilot training and that and I'm fully on their side. If I was younger, I would be one of them for sure.

T.O. Do you think we need to talk more about different jobs in aviation? If we talk about aviation first two jobs people will think about – pilots and cabin crew. Let not forget and highlight the technical part of aviation! When we talk about shortage of all aviation jobs, we don't talk that much about the technical staff. Without that, nothing is flying. Pilot can be a very good one. But if there is no aircraft which was maintained or repaired accordingly, he can't fly! From that perspective, what do you think we need to do to get more engineering MRO people?

I.K. You're right. It is the case. I mean, salaries of B1 or B2 engineers are on the same level or often higher than the pilot salaries. And this job is certainly not less interesting. Yeah, it might not be the typical Instagram job you want to put online and show the girls how cool you are. Although as well, standing by the big engine. That's a good post too. But yes, that's where it's going. I mean, the shortage of good engineers, the shortage of flight dispatchers, shortage of other personnel is almost the same level as the pilot shortage. Somehow the public always talks about the pilot shortage, but the shortage is much bigger. I believe in natural regulation. So, there's a supply and demand and it will obviously lead to the goal. Let's say our impact can be just to adjust to fine tune some small things, to create such opportunities. But if we're back to engineers... Sorry, dear pilots, but creating an engineer takes much longer time than training a pilot. Pilot training is typically two years while engineer is five. So that's why it's longer process. It's the process that has to be by the airlines. It has to be considered even longer in advance. Which leads to the fact, yes, those guys are not less cool than the pilots.

T.O. I think media and film industry could proceed with some interesting proposals and movies about aircraft engineering. Tom Cruise did a lot to make the pilot job even more attractive. So, we should find some good scenarios for engineering guys!

I.K. That might be our next goal, but yes, you are right. Let's be transparent – engineering job gives you a stability. You'll be home every night. Mostly. You will not have layovers, I don't know, another part of the world and so on. So, there are certainly a lot of benefits for being an engineer in the airline. And again, it is up to airlines to promote those jobs, up to airlines to tell the story. How good is the job to attract more people and get people in. And that's what they are doing, to be honest, it's happening.

T.O. We will work on that. An obvious question - do you still have a little space for companies willing to exhibit at Pilot Expo 2024? I know that you're pretty full, but if there are companies desperately willing to join the event?

I.K. Yes, they can still do that. You can always pull one more passenger in a full bus. Yes, we do. Obviously, we do. And we are trying hard to get more interesting customers, more interesting exhibitors from different regions. Offering wider options for our visitors. We will always find space for a few more. There is no secret, at this point we have 80 and something exhibitors agreed. Our capacity is between 110 and 150. We're expecting to be full by the beginning of next year.

T.O. So before going off for Christmas, people should think and do it quickly. As you know in sometimes people have the tendency to think very last minute. My last question – why colleagues should absolutely attend the event?

I.K. The event was created exactly the way we wanted. It's a business forum. There are a lot of things happening. I mean, it's not only recruitment or training or something. There's a lot of deals signing - flight schools are buying aircraft; airlines of flight schools are buying equipment. But the main thing we kept from the very beginning, easy going and nice environment where people are smiling. It is fun! It is exactly as we wanted it to be - people like it not just because it's a business, but because it's a good time spending. Once you open the doors of the halls and once you enter the area, you'll see people are smiling. If you smile, you can do some mistakes. People will forgive that. It's a nice environment. Everyone who has ever been on Pilot Expo, they always refer that it was useful, and it was very nice atmosphere. So that's why if you want to spend good time and do some business, you should be there. Just simple as that.

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