



FIRST 30 YEARS OF ALSIM SUCCESS STORY - INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-PAUL MONNIN

News / Maintenance / Trainings



It is not a secret that all industry actors and , of course, media of are talking since some years about pilot shortage problem. Indeed, market demand is rising, and it means Flight training organizations need to form more students to bring more pilots ready to take the job. It also means that we need more flight training devices on the market. As a French one, I am so proud that we have a Made in France success story - ALSIM, who just celebrated first 30 years of the company. Before Pilot Expo 2024 in Berlin, we had a pleasure to talk with ALSIM president Jean-Paul Monnin.

T.O. So, before heading up to Pilot expo 2024 we have to pleasure to meet ALSIM president and ask some tricky questions.

J.P.M. Hello. Good morning.

T.O. You've just celebrated 30 years of the company. I would say first thirty years of the company. Obvious question. What are biggest achievements and the most important what you've learned during these decades?

J.P.M. Well, I think, the biggest achievement for us is very simple: to be useful for the aviation industry. I think that's definitely the primary goal we've achieved we've helped the training industry to improve the quality of training for students over the years through the advancement of FTD technology. we also believe it contributes to the financial health to our customers. For training institutions, a simulator is a way of being financially healthy and very efficient in terms of training. So, for me, that's the most, important achievement. Additionally, customer satisfaction is crucial in our environment, and we are building our future on this customer's satisfaction. That's the second point. In the history of ALSIM, we started from a garage and became a leader in this niche of the market.

T.O. It's a little bit American dream story because I was reading a lot about. You started literary from nothing!

J.P.M. Absolutely. Yeah. From an idea, you know, with a friend of mine, and we really started from a garage. For a few years we shared a private house and this garage. So, from there to where we are now, it's an amazing achievement. We are very proud of our results and figures after these three decades. We have certified 450 devices certified in over 60 countries. We became very International. For us, it's a tremendous achievement. We also believe that becoming industrial in this niche is important. we used to be craftsmen, doing some simulators once in a while. Now, in terms of volumes, we had to become industrialized, and more educated in terms of production. We believe we've achieved that. We're inspired by industry leaders like Airbus or even auto industry. And so, if one day you come to see us, you will see that the production site is really well designed as a production chain, and it's fascinating to observe our production process.

T.O. You made a road from a garage to a real manufacturer. As a French one I am so proud to say it is made in France! In a world of globalization, when you have no idea where from products are delivered, here you know – it is made in France.

J.P.M. Yes, absolutely and we've done it well! Thirty years ago, we came up with the idea of a reconfigurable class of aircraft simulator. European regulators allowed us to have credit of hours to use an FTD, which is not a type-specific device. That's the DNA of the company - to innovate by utilizing screens. Thirty years ago, using a screen to display an instrument was pretty new. This idea introduced a reconfigurable and generic cockpit. It is interesting because it allows you to learn how to fly in a generic environment, as opposed to a type rating where you learn to fly a specific type of aircraft. In general aviation and initial training, starting in a generic environment helps you to understand flight principles and concepts, allowing you to focus on mastering these fundamentals. Later on, specific types of simulators are introduced. It was innovative thirty years ago. If we look at sales then – our bestsellers are generic products. We went from producing just two to hundreds of them. This proves that the idea 30 years ago was the right one.

T.O. You are talking about pilots. I'm hearing nonstop about actual pilot shortage and the one we will face in the near future. How it impacts the market and how it impacts sales of your devices? Is the demand raising? It's not a secret we need to form pilots in all aviation sectors.

J.P.M. Absolutely. The pilot shortage creates triple effects in the aviation industry. That's sure. The shortage has persisted for many years now and is growing. Training institutions must bring more

pilots to the market. In fact, it has a very interesting impact on parents. Investing so much in your child's training, you want to be sure they will secure a job in the end. During this period of pilot shortage, it is particularly reassuring for parents. To invest in something that will certainly provide good job opportunities for their children. This leads to a significant increase in enrollment at training institutions. We can witness this with our customers. They are getting more enrollment than ever. There is a growing demand for pilots due to this shortage. COVID impact on this is quite evident – a lot of people retired earlier, and some of them left the industry. As a result of these factors, you have a tremendous lack of pilots on the market. It brings more students to our customers.

T.O. That means that need you need to produce more simulators because they need to train more pilots.

J.P.M. Yes, exactly. They need more aircraft and more FTDs, they need more devices altogether. We also have another phenomenon: due to the pilot's shortage, airlines have to hire younger pilots than they used to. As a young pilots, they don't have much experience. Therefore, the initial training has to be at a higher level than before. There's limited room for growth in the aviation industry. Especially in Europe, directly after finishing your studies at the training institution, you move into a type rating for an Airbus or Boeing. Here is where FTDs provide the opportunity for the training institutions to offer a higher level of training because... The best place to learn how to fly is in a simulator. You gain knowledge in a simulator, and then you apply that knowledge in the aircraft. We are also aided by regulators, who allocate more credit hours towards the FTDs. That's a good thing. As FTDs manufacturers, we continuously enhance our devices with better flight models, improved visuals, and upgraded cockpits etc. These enhancements make the simulator more realistic and provide additional training tools for instructors. All these technical improvements have made simulators more efficient for training purposes. An FTD is a safe place – you can simulate diverse situations without risk. You can repeat simulations as many times as necessary. In terms of efficiency of learning curve, it surpasses that of an aircraft. Another issue for our customers is the shortage of aircraft. They don't find the airplanes they need. The worldwide aircraft fleet is aging. You don't have enough of new aircraft on the market. Numerous factors are facilitating sales of our FTDs. Also, the environmental pressure. Reducing flights for training also helps the planet. You must consider the pressure of residents in areas around the airports regarding noise, pollution and traffic reduction.. In terms of operations, FTDs allow for optimization. Managing an FTD is a so much easier than managing an aircraft. And you saving CO2 emissions!

T.O. what we can expect from ALSIM in 2024? Are you coming up with new models, improving something? Are you focusing on new markets?

J.P.M. Sure. We are very resilient. In this post Covid era, things are looking good for us! We were recently chosen by Cirrus Aircraft to produce and supply their new G7 aircraft FTD. So, this year, we are going to deliver, this new G7 at the HQ in, Knoxville, United States. This will be a new product for us, available to everyone on the market. We also offer an option for one of our bestsellers – AL250. Many of our customers have space issues. While they have huge hangars for they often overlook the need space for ALSIM FTDs. This is something that needs to be changed, but for now, we have created a compact version of the AL250. Very interesting product because it requires much less space. One important aspect – previously we had agents in United States. Now we have an office, open from 7 Am to 22PM. Every customer is welcome, our office is based in Sarasota. It is a partnership with Cirrus Aviation, which should not be confused with Cirrus Aircraft. We've been in America for 20 years, but now we have established roots there.

T.O. I can see that 2024 will be a busy year for you! Almost packing for Pilot Expo 2024 in Berlin. For me it will be the first one, you've already been there. What do you expect from Pilot Expo 2024?

J.P.M. Yes, Pilot Expo for us is a kind of a habit, it is an annual meeting that we are recurrently attend. We're sponsoring this event. For us, it is a place to meet all our customers in one location. So, it is interesting. It is a way for us to meet them face-to-face so we can discuss various issues and explain our latest news. This year we are bringing technical experts with us to assist our customers and answer all their questions. It is a great event for us because in just a few days we are able to see all of them.

T.O. I've been told that it's quite different aviation event, it's a happy event, everyone is smiling. So, when you're meeting your customers, basically, everyone is smiling and happy to see at least once per year and discuss everything as I understand.

J.P.M. Yes, for sure! You know, we work hard every day for customer satisfaction. When we go to Pilot Expo, it is a really good meeting. Like in any couple or relationship, from time to time, you need to talk seriously. What's your situation? What can we offer you? It is really beneficial for us.

T.O. Perfect, looking forward to! If I will be able to catch you somewhere in the middle of your customers in Berlin, let's say on the second day of the show, just to ask you how happy you are about the event.

J.P.M. Yes, sure!

T.O. Thank you. Very much and see you in Berlin!

23 FEBRUARY 2024

ARTICLE LINK:

<https://50skyshades.com/news/maintenance-trainings/first-30-years-of-alsim-success-story-interview-with-jean-paul-monnin>