

Global Aviation Faces Critical Talent Shortage as 1.46 Million Workers Needed by 2034

The aviation industry needs 1.46 million new workers by 2034 to meet rising demand driven by technology, sustainability, and digital transformation.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The aviation sector is on the verge of one of its largest workforce shifts in history, with experts projecting the need for 1.46 million skilled professionals by 2034. This wave of recruitment is likely to determine which companies set the pace in a market being reshaped by new aircraft technologies, sustainability targets, and rapid digital transformation.



“The future of aviation depends on the talent we attract today — building the right teams now will shape the industry’s success for decades.”

Giovanna Mirabile

Around 300,000 new pilots will be required worldwide over the next decade, with most joining commercial airlines and the remainder supporting business aviation. Growing e-commerce demand is also increasing the need for cargo pilots. Meanwhile, electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) operators are preparing to launch urban air taxi services as early as 2026, creating an entirely new category of pilot. These pilots will need specialised training to operate hybrid aircraft capable of both vertical lift and winged cruising.

Aircraft maintenance and avionics technicians are

expected to experience some of the strongest recruitment demand, with 416,000 new positions anticipated by 2034. Many of these roles will focus on supporting commercial airlines, but the rise of hybrid-electric and eVTOL aircraft will require new technical expertise, including digital diagnostics, avionics integration, and safe handling of high-voltage systems.

Air traffic management is another area facing a significant shortage. Around 71,000 new air

traffic controllers will be needed globally, with some countries already increasing pay to attract candidates. The rollout of modern air traffic control systems, including satellite-based surveillance and remote tower technology, is also creating opportunities for systems engineers, cybersecurity specialists, and technology trainers.

Sustainability is becoming a defining factor in aviation recruitment. Sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) can cut lifecycle carbon emissions by up to 80 per cent, but scaling production and distribution remains a challenge. This is opening opportunities for environmental engineers, SAF supply chain managers, and carbon compliance experts to help airlines meet international emissions targets.

As aviation becomes increasingly digital, cybersecurity has become a critical priority. Airlines, airports, and manufacturers are seeking experts who can protect avionics systems, air traffic control networks, and maintenance platforms from cyber attacks. Specialists familiar with aviation-specific security standards such as NIS2 and DO-326A are in particularly high demand.

Advances in artificial intelligence and predictive maintenance are reshaping airline operations, helping carriers detect equipment failures before they occur. Engineers and data scientists with expertise in AI, sensor analytics, and machine learning will play a central role in keeping aircraft flying safely and reducing unplanned downtime.

Training capacity is another challenge the industry must address. More qualified flight instructors, simulator trainers, and technical training managers will be required to prepare the next generation of pilots, technicians, and eVTOL operators. Many training programmes are now using AI, virtual reality, and augmented reality to accelerate learning and meet demand.

Research and development engineers are also vital to the future of flight. Specialists in propulsion systems, batteries, lightweight materials, and certification processes will help ensure that new aircraft designs are safe, efficient, and ready for commercial use.

Industry experts agree that the recruitment decisions made in 2025 will shape aviation for the next decade. Companies that secure the [right hires](#), from pilots to propulsion engineers, are likely to emerge as market leaders. Organisations such as [Aeroates](#), which focus on aviation-specific staffing and workforce strategies, are increasingly being called upon to help carriers and manufacturers build skilled, adaptable teams ready for the challenges ahead.

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