

# Aviation International News

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## Airshows

ABACE to bow this month › page 19

## Pilot Report

AIN flies the Cabri G2 two-seat trainer › page 44

## Safety

Enlisting ships in the event of a ditch › page 13

## Rotorcraft

FAA addresses 'doors off' flights › page 57

## Industry

Bombardier considers Downsview sale › page 43

## Air transport

E190-E2 wins three approvals › page 60

## GE spools up on bizav engines

by Kerry Lynch

With the unveiling of the official name of the Advanced Turboprop engine as the Catalyst, GE Aviation celebrated 10 years in the business and general aviation (B&GA) turboprop sector and its substantial progress toward becoming a provider of a suite of engines reaching up to 1,700 shp.

GE jumped into the B&GA turboprop market sector through its 2008 acquisition of the former Walter Engines line of turboprops, providing the foundation for the light turboprop market with engines ranging from 750 shp to 850 shp. That acquisition gave GE Aviation a foothold in the already developed Czech Republic manufacturing sector, a built-in customer base, and knowledge of the types of services necessary for such engines, said Brad Mottier, v-p and general manager of GE Aviation's Business and General Aviation and Integrated Systems division.

But as important to GE, the former Walter family, now known as the H-Series, has provided "domain expertise" that has helped pave the way for a clean-sheet design turboprop family to pit against the venerable Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6 series.

GE announced that 900- to 1,700-shp turboprop family in 2015 originally as the Advanced Turboprop (ATP) line. And with that announcement, GE had its first major win: a contract to power Cessna's new single-turboprop Denali.

Mottier revealed the change in the name from the ATP to the Catalyst last month to reporters in Prague, saying it signifies GE's newest turboprop engine family is "a catalyst for change, it's a catalyst for the competition to be working on something else...it's a catalyst for new airframe designs...for new maintenance...for new operations...for better pilot experience...[and] for better service."

Emphasizing that the engine is not intended only to provide a means to go faster or be more fuel efficient, Mottier said it is designed to change the pilot experience to more of a "jet like" environment.

› continues on page 54



Read Our **SPECIAL REPORT**

## FBO survey results

After a decade in the doldrums, FBO operators are seeing some positive signs. Consolidation has been the watchword for the last few years, and that will continue, at a more measured pace. As always, service is key.

› page 20

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# Female fliers hold the key to solving pilot shortage

by Kimberly Perkins

Aviation is a highly romanticized industry. Culturally, we talk about the best aspects, which include exotic destinations, fancy first-class seating, and courageous pilots.

We read fascinating fighter jet stories and watch intriguing documentaries that augment the luster of the industry. Yet, a closer look reveals that nearly half of the



Kimberly Perkins, international jet captain

population is left in the contrails. Women are drastically underrepresented in aviation—a situation that has not improved over time like other STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. The reason lies in small fragments of a much larger cultural issue.

In the United States, women make up 47 percent of the total workforce. But, professional female pilots constitute 5 percent of the piloting workforce, a statistic that has remained unmoved in four decades. Compared to other STEM fields and “traditionally” male-dominated industries, aviation has one of the lowest percentages of female participants. There are mentors, scholarships, conferences, magazines, and organizations that all have a goal to increase participation, yet the number remains. When experts are questioned on this topic, often the same old explanation is given: “It’s a pipeline problem.” It is more than that. While there certainly are pipeline issues, women face gender-unique social pressures, double standards, and systemic barriers that deter their entrance into aviation.

Women have been interested in aviation since Wilbur and Orville gave up bicycles for airplanes at the turn of the 20th century. Women participated in air races throughout the 1930s and became test pilots and flight instructors during World War II. They have joined airlines and become an integral (albeit, small) piece of the aviation industry. Therefore, the situation is more complex than labeling it as a “pipeline problem.” We must evaluate the issue holistically and discuss the uncomfortable truths that propagate the barriers keeping woman from aviation.

## Aviation-specific Gender Inequity

There are many factors that contribute to job satisfaction, such as salary, retirement, location, the duties of the job, and potential for growth. Aside from salary, those slices remain relatively gender-neutral in the job-selection pie. A large piece of this pie, and often overlooked, is the topic of soft issues. Soft issues are human issues. They can include morale at the office, interpersonal relationships, the ability to approach management, a good work/life balance, a sense of worth in the work product, and the nebulous feeling of happiness at work. Soft issues are harder to measure quantitatively because they are subjective; yet they play a significantly important qualitative role in determining where people want to work. The answer to the “why are there so few female pilots” question lives in this piece of the pie. It

is time we address the problems here in hopes of sweetening that slice.

Bias can be conscious or subconscious; both forms can be divisive. An explicit gender bias is one made consciously and is a form of micro-aggression. For example, a female pilot keys the mic in response to air traffic control. She is met with another pilot on frequency responding to her voice with the well-worn “another empty kitchen” comment. I have received a handful of these statements, always in the United States, and always from a male pilot.

An implicit bias is formed subconsciously and often carries less intentional malice. When I was pregnant, colleagues and peers often asked me, flabbergasted, how I was going to manage being a parent and a pilot. I have worked with male colleagues with children the same age as mine. They have never been asked this question. There is a presumption that female pilots cannot be parents and have a flying career, yet men are exempt from such categorization. This is an implicit bias that women are meant to give up their career to become the primary caregiver for children. Implicit biases are more harmful to gender equality because they are insidious, more prevalent, and seemingly socially acceptable. They perpetuate age-old stigmas and stereotypes that women have been fighting against for years.

## Practical Solutions

Over my past 15 years in aviation, many of the men I have met are inclusive and not-inherently sexist. It is time we build a bridge. Ignorance is no longer tolerable. Rarely does a social injustice radically improve without assistance from the majority. We need men to stop justifying their sexist colleagues and start defending the disenfranchised.

The casual sexism that exists in our society and permeates our workplace creates a divisive double standard. A Wall Street Journal editorial blamed women for fatherless children, using the term “female careerism.” When you Google “female careerism” you get more than 60,000 hits. The same is not true when you Google “male careerism.” The double standard is perpetuated by some of the kindest people and sometimes in the subtlest of ways. How many working fathers are made to feel bad about their choice of keeping their career rather than becoming a stay-at-home parent? Some women do not want to end their careers, nor should they feel compelled to do so because someone else did. We can end this double standard and subtle sexism by ensuring we avoid language that promulgates societal inequities. Women have every right to the same career and family choices as men.

I have heard the perpetuation of a common stereotype that piloting is not a family-friendly industry with the “you chose to be a pilot, which means you’ll miss things” statement in a variety of versions over the past 15 years. In every scenario, it has been a male colleague whose

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wife stays at home with the children. Not all families are structured as such. When compared to aviation dads, pilot moms overwhelmingly have working partners, which means no stay-at-home parent. This phenomenon means that mom pilots are overwhelmingly disadvantaged when it comes to flying pop-up trips and adjusting to last-minute schedule changes. Employing empathy is a basic, yet highly underutilized, managerial trait. We must all put our own biases aside and become cognizant that not all family structures support an equal work/life balance for all employees, therefore, negative rhetoric does little for employee encouragement.

#### Value Diversity

In addition, operators should insist on having a diverse group of candidates. It is not about lowering any standards; it is about removing obstacles that hinder others from joining the process. Ensure your hiring practices do not exclude diversity by insisting the new hire look and think like everyone else. Such biases perpetuate an exclusive good old boys club, which could affect productivity and workplace creativity. Studies from MIT and a variety of think tanks show that diverse groups make better decisions and are more productive. So, evaluate your hiring practices to ensure you are not subconsciously limiting your potential by hiring only those that look and think like you.

Aviation remains very much a good old boys club, which is a homogenized network of people that look and think alike. It can be difficult to break into the cliques and break down the clichés. Women are at a disadvantage from the start because they lack direct access to networking, the passing of information, and access to resources, which could provide immeasurable benefits.

When I was a young female pilot, I looked around my flight school at a classroom filled with young men, where the hallways were lined with posters of male pilots. As I moved through my flying career, I was never lucky enough to encounter a female manager mentor. As I looked up that corporate ladder, it was a sea of men. Such an environment can be lonely, unwelcoming, and intimidating, which is why establishing a mentoring program is critical.

Beyond basic human rights and morality, we have ample justification to end the gender bias in aviation. The pilot shortage can be



rectified by accessing a great populace, and the retention of employees can be resolved when we use a multifaceted lens to evaluate why women are consistently underrepresented in aviation. The reason lies in the soft issues that are hard to quantify but vitally important to evaluate.

For the aviation industry to be resilient, it must grow with modernity. We have parked the old DC-3s and retired the need for flight

engineers. Let us also park the sexist rhetoric, Top Gun chauvinism, and subtle biases that keep half of our population from joining our industry. With these changes, we can sweeten the aviation pie.

*Kimberly Perkins is a mother, daughter, wife, and a career pilot. She is an international jet captain flying for 15 years. She is the Founder of the non-profit Aviation for Humanity and on the board of directors for the Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association. She has piloted airline and private executive jets on six continents. She resides in Seattle.*



## Hawker Pacific - Brisbane (YBBN)

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YBCS	Hawker Pacific	Cairns	Australia	ZJHK	Deer Jet	Haikou	China
YPPH	Hawker Pacific	Perth	Australia	ZJSY	Deer Jet	Sanya	China
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