



Checklist for Success

A Pilot's Guide to the Successful Airline Interview

Cheryl A. Cage

Sixth Edition

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Aviation Supplies & Academics, Inc.
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Disclaimer: This book is a general information book on preparing for an airline pilot interview. It is understood that the information contained in this book does not guarantee success. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in this book.

Visit www.asa2fly.com/reader/cklist for a free download of an interactive audio-visual software program that allows aspiring pilots to both hear and see examples of typical airline interview scenarios.

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To Young
For your never-ending encouragement

What People Say!

Mr. Don Skiados, Director

Air Line Pilots Association Communications Dept.

As director of communications for the Air Line Pilots Association, the nation's largest trade union for professional airline pilots, I have had the pleasure of doing business with Cage Consulting, Inc. since its founding in 1988. And as a professional communicator myself for more than 30 years, I know the kind of quality products its founder, Cheryl Cage, delivers.

Her name has become synonymous with providing exceptional quality career guidance, from the interview process to keeping an individual's career progression on track. Her popular seminars draw on her vast knowledge and thorough preparation and provide information in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere. *Checklist for Success*, her book on the (pilot) interview process, has become the definitive "how-to" manual for our members, and she pioneered in the industry with the first interactive CD interview preparation guide. Our Association values the relationship we have established with Cage Consulting.

Captain Jim West, Allied Pilots Association — National Membership/Furlough Committee

With over 2,000 American Airlines Pilots and their families' lives being changed with their furlough notice from American Airlines, APA's National Membership/Furlough Committee hosted Cage Seminars for our Furloughed Pilots. All who attended found the information very useful and the one thing I noticed at the completion of the seminars was that the pilots felt more confident about their future. Unlike other Aviation Consulting Firms, Cheryl has developed a seminar that provides the necessary tools to help pilots find employment in other fields while awaiting recall to the cockpit. I strongly recommend anyone who is facing the possibility of a furlough to contact Cage Consulting. The information gained is invaluable.

Captain David Smith

Chairman, United Airlines Pilot Council 33

I wanted to send you a big thank you for the exceptional work you and your company accomplished on behalf of the United Airline's furloughed pilots. Your seminar entitled "The Resilient Pilot" was very well received. The feedback from the attendees included noting of the relaxed atmosphere, the interactive approach, and the real-life solutions that were provided to the participants. It is quite obvious that the perceived value of furloughed seminars to this pilot group. Thanks again for your time and effort in making this seminar happen.

Patty Taylor

Former Manager of Pilot Recruitment, American Airlines

Because of Cheryl's excellent reputation in the aviation industry, in equal parts because of her books and her consulting services, Cheryl's name is always a draw. And, audiences are never disappointed! Cheryl's advice, enthusiasm, and optimism keeps the audiences' attention. Her easy-going style encourages members of the audience (no matter how shy) to feel comfortable asking questions and voicing concerns. I wholeheartedly recommend Cheryl as a speaker for any aviation, or general audience, career conference.

Captain Christopher Beebe

Chairman USAirways Master Executive Council (ALPA)

I hired Ms. Cage to conduct Airline Interview Preparation and Resume Workshops for US Airways. Her workshops were thorough, organized, filled with specific ideas and suggestions, and delivered with optimism and motivation. Ms. Cage has a personality that invites openness and discussion. With her innate ability to assess personal situations, years of aviation involvement and education, Cheryl is well qualified to discuss today's airline interviewing process.

Captain Al Neil, American Airlines

Thank you for your excellent presentation. As a mentor and mentor coordinator, sometimes I get bogged down with the responsibility, but when I hear an organized, well-thought-out approach to problems it sure takes a load off my mind. I am deeply grateful.

CageMarshall Consulting

www.cageconsulting.com

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Please Read!

In preparing for an interview you will discover a great deal of “simple” advice (for example: provide all applicable documentation when discussing a problem area; keep your resume to one page; wear a suit; never say “I have no answer to that question”). Each piece of “simple” advice is like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. Taken separately they can be confusing. Put them all together and the picture becomes clear.

Although I have worked hard to present this advice and information in a logical order, there are times when a comment may seem out of place in Chapter 1, only to make perfect sense upon completing Chapter 3.

For this reason I ask that you read the entire workbook before beginning your chapter-by-chapter preparation.

Airline Interviews

This workbook is written from the perspective of interviewing with a major carrier. However, the same approach should be used for any pilot interview.

He or She?

For no other reason than clarity, masculine pronouns are used throughout this workbook.

Updates

Information is updated as procedures and regulations change, and available at www.asa2fly.com/reader/cklist

1 Getting the Interview

“To Interview” Criteria

Waiting for a pilot interview can be a frustrating and anxiety-ridden experience. During this waiting period, trips to the mailbox take on a whole new dimension.

Your application is constantly being judged based on the competition at the time.

Applicants invited to an interview are selected based on criteria deemed important by the individual airline. This “to interview” criteria basically consists of concrete information such as flight time, type of flight jobs held, ratings, and education. This criteria can change depending on the experience level of the available applicants. It is important to remember that your application is constantly being judged *based on the competition at the time.*

A clear example of this fact: in 1982 Braniff became the first major airline to go into bankruptcy. Until that time the majority of major airline pilot applicants came from the military, commuter airlines, and corporate flight departments. Because of the seniority system, it was virtually unheard of to have an airline pilot leave one carrier to start over with another. Deregulation, the tidal wave of bankruptcies, and the airlines’ newly enlightened view of “seasoned” pilots changed all that.

After 1982, the traditional applicant (who came directly from the military or the commuter/corporate world) became overshadowed by the scores of experienced ex-airline pilots flooding the market. It was not unusual for these ex-airline pilots to have 20 years of airline experience and over 10,000 hours of flying time. Because the airlines had this abundance of highly qualified applicants to choose from, not surprisingly, the traditional pilot-applicants were put on the bottom of the “to interview” list. The high experience level of these displaced airline pilots caused the *criteria* for being invited for an interview to change.

No matter what circumstances the airline industry is facing (massive hiring or massive furloughs), the same basic premise is a constant within the “to interview” selection process. If you are a pilot with a bachelors degree, 1,500 hours of flight time, and in your first year of working for a commuter, but the majority of available pilot applicants possess a bachelors degree, 2,500 hours, and three years of commuter experience you can assume that you will not be selected for an interview *until those applicants have been reviewed.*

Increasing Your Odds

For these reasons it is imperative that you continue to update your skills and background. You must never stop working to increase your marketability. Some ideas:

- Keep flying and building your hours
- Earn additional ratings and certifications
- If you are in the military, earn your civilian ratings
- Continue to upgrade at the earliest possible time
- Complete your bachelors degree or higher education degrees

In addition to specific training and education there are other steps you can take that may help put your name closer to the top of an airline’s “to interview” list.

- Find out if there are any “airline specific” steps you can take to increase your chances for an interview (for example: a letter of recommendation from a pilot or other employee).

Make sure you ask the right people if a particular process is acceptable. One of my clients was given the advice from a company pilot to “just take your application to the employment office and wait until someone will talk to you.” Luckily, my client asked around and discovered that this type of action was actually looked upon as overly aggressive and not very polite. Someone within the Personnel Department would have been the logical person to ask if this approach was acceptable.

- If a company pilot offers to hand-carry your application into the employment office, make sure you know how this individual is viewed by the company.



I had one client who had his application hand-carried to the airline's employment office by a senior captain. Unfortunately, he found out too late that this captain had been involved in numerous altercations with the employment office concerning applicants he felt should be hired. (Although this client was not harmed in this particular instance, it caused him a great deal of concern and many sleepless nights.)

There is no magic formula for securing an interview.

- Update your applications on a regular basis. Be sure to follow the airline's update schedule. If they allow an update once every six months, do not send a new application every three months.
- By all means exploit your network! If the brother of your college roommate's wife is the V.P. of Flight Operations for an airline you want to work for—seek an introduction.

There is no magic formula for securing an interview. However, by following these steps you can rest at night knowing you are doing everything possible to get your foot in the door.

About the Author

Cheryl Cage began Cage Consulting, Inc. in 1988. Over 100,000 pilots have used the Interview Preparation and Career Planning products and services of Cage Consulting.

Cheryl is the author of five aviation career books including the best-selling *Checklist for Success: A Pilot's Guide to the Successful Airline Interview* (with over 50,000 copies sold).

In addition to her work with individual clients, Cheryl served as an independent consultant for many corporate clients such as Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Northwest Airlines, and unions including the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA). In 1996, Cheryl developed and presented pilot interview preparation seminars to thousands of displaced ALPA pilots from Pan Am, Midway, US Airways, TWA, Air Wisconsin, West Air, and Aspen Airways to name a few.

The publishing division of Cage Consulting was expanded in 1996. This resulted in several new titles including the popular *Airline Pilot Technical Interviews* and *Mental Math for Pilots* by Ronald McElroy. Cheryl added the books *Reporting Clear?* and *Your Job Search Partner* to her writing credits.

Cheryl's career articles have appeared in numerous aviation periodicals including *Flight Training*, *Air Line Pilot*, *Aviation for Women*, and *The Independent*. For a period of two years, Cheryl wrote a career column for *The Army*, *Navy*, and *Air Force Times*.

In 1999 Cheryl and her husband, Young, moved to Tucson, Arizona. In 2004 Cheryl turned the reins of Cage Consulting over to Angela Marshall, a long-time Cage Consulting employee. In the ensuing years Cage Consulting became CageMarshall Consulting with Angela heading the organization.

Although Cheryl continued to consult with CageMarshall Consulting, starting in 2006 her main focus was directed toward local politics in southern Arizona. She managed four legislative campaigns and served as her party's County Chair. Her husband, Young, died in 2012 after a brief illness. Cheryl continues to make Tucson her home.

In 2015 Cheryl returned to CageMarshall Consulting to lead the expansion of CageMarshall's Professional Development and Career Services. Using the same approach to career consulting that has proven so successful for our aviation clients for the past twenty-seven years, CageMarshall Consulting now provides these career services to professionals outside of the aviation industry.

Cheryl graduated from college with a B.A. in Psychology. Directly after college she spent five years with Braniff International Airways. With the bankruptcy of Braniff in 1982 Cheryl made a career transition into marketing and management for a national sports company. She left this position to start Cage Consulting, Inc.

Career Services

From CageMarshall Consulting

Whether you are a low time pilot or a seasoned pilot with thousands of hours, CageMarshall Consulting has the experience to help you expand your professional pilot career. Cheryl has prepared pilots for interviews with: Alaska, American, ATA, AirTran, America West, Airborne, Cathay Pacific, Continental, Delta, Frontier, Federal Express, JetBlue, Northwest, Southwest, UPS, United, USA 3000, the majority of regional carriers, numerous corporate flight departments, military pilot positions within the National Guard, and pilot slots on the Thunderbirds and Blue Angels. Cheryl has helped over 6,000 individual clients with career planning or solving a career problem.

Interview Preparation

Pilots of Any Experience Level

VIA Telephone or In-Person (Tucson, Arizona)

Paperwork review: application and resume, discussion of required documentation and presentation of documentation. Mock interview with on-going critique including verbal presentation, specific stories, problem areas and attitude, etc. In-person consultation includes all of the above in addition to your mock interview being videotaped.

Career Consulting

This consultation is for airline pilots, beginning pilots, military pilots and corporate pilots with any type of career planning question (i.e., military-to-civilian transition, education, flight training).

Special Concerns Consulting

Do you have an area in your career that is causing you concern? As you have probably discovered, worrying doesn't help! Cheryl has worked on career problems with over 6,000 pilot-clients. Most likely, she has helped someone who has the *same* problem, or worry, as you.

Professional Development Within Any Career Field

Beginning in 2015, CageMarshall Consulting is pleased to announce Cheryl Cage is now offering her expertise in career guidance to professionals within *any* career field.

If you are searching for a balanced, informed and thoughtful view of your career path, or need specific advice concerning a difficult career issue contact us to set an appointment.

*For more information on our services or
to set an appointment please call*

CageMarshall Consulting
www.cageconsulting.com