

# Single Pilot Jet Operations

At the **Citation Jet Pilots Conference** that occurred over Labor Day (2009) in Aspen there was a "Training Round Table" in which various owners, instructors and mentors shared their training experiences with attendees. During the session a heated debate resulted centering on the practicality of a low time pilot earning their "S" type rating early in their training regimen. While the session ended before the issue could be properly addressed it served as an example as to how misunderstood the role of the "S" Type rating as a training tool truly is.

In this age of technically advanced aircraft, web based pilot proficiency evaluations and full motion simulators; it's easy to assume that the role of the mentor / instructor is diminishing. This couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, in the case of the single pilot operators there is now a greater need for mentors than ever before.

Take for instance: "Sally" Pilot is intent on being a single pilot operator of her own turbine aircraft. Here are Sally's two choices:

## **Pro School Experience:**

"Sally" is a (500TT) private / multi engine / instrument rated pilot with no high altitude, advanced wx or turbine time. She completed a generic (pro school) pilot proficiency evaluation and was informed by the "Pro School" that she cannot enroll in the Single Pilot PIC (Pilot in Command) / Crew curriculum but could possibly complete an SIC 2 (Second In Command) rating. At this point everyone just lost a new jet owner.

## **Professional Mentor / Instructor Experience:**

Sally meets Mentor who evaluates her knowledge / skill set and develops a comprehensive transition curriculum including fundamental ADM / CRM protocols, Wx, High Altitude, etc.....The goal here is to prepare Sally to successfully complete her Single Pilot "S" Type Rating and then continue with the more advanced phases of her jet transition with a mentor who has the authority to provide initial ground & flight training and continue mentoring until Sally is signed off as "Proficient". We now have a new jet owner / pilot by managing expectations and meeting her unique training requirements.

## **Why the big difference between the two training scenarios?**

Pro schools, by their very nature, offer standardized transition & recurrent curriculums. They successfully accommodate a large segment of the turbine and or pressurized pilot population by meeting their annual recurrency requirements spelled out by their employer or insurance carrier. Where they fall short is their inability to accommodate non cookie cutter pilots whom are very motivated yet lack the historic "basics" in previous experience (50TT+ turbine time, 1000TT overall PIC). By denying this dedicated "Jet Newbie" the ability to begin a pro caliber curriculum with an "S" type rating as an interim step in their mentored transition process is enough to turn away many prospective jet pilots.

## **Why be "S" typed?**

The fact is that an "S" type rating is a very viable training tool for many motivated but less experienced jet pilots. Merely possessing the "S" doesn't allow them to solo their jet until such time as the mentor deems them to be proficient. What it enables them to do is start and finish a curriculum that is based upon single pilot operational procedures. The end result is a pro caliber pilot that has ADM / CRM procedures and practices consistent with a pro single pilot operator\*.

There are no insurance ramifications for this procedure since the mentor still has final authority on evaluating pilot proficiency just as they would have under any other scenario. In fact, the insurer will rate the policy based upon the “Pro” mentor pilot’s credentials, no matter what type rating the jet student does or doesn’t possess.

Thus, pro schools are an important standardized training / proficiency tool for a large segment of the pilot population. However, as technically advanced turbine aircraft become more commonplace, so do prospective jet owners with increasingly diverse training / mentoring requirements. Many of these prospective jet pilots have the means and the motivation to pursue jet aircraft ownership if they are provided a path to single pilot operations.

\* There is an emerging school of thought that considers interim SIC training to be “negative training” on the path to developing Single Pilot Resource Management (SPRM) skills and an S type rating.

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