

Virtual Airline CEO Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in our VA CEO interview for the Virtual Airline List. Depending on the editor this word document it will be published on the social network and our website:

Please take your time answering the questions.

1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself? For example; how old you are, what your background with flying in general is and what brought you to creating your own Virtual Airline.

Sure, Michael and I are both over 40 ;) , both fathers and husbands to wonderfully patient and supportive wives. Michael is a real world instructor, a huge contribution to our Professional Division which mimics a real world training and checkride program. We utilize Team Viewer so that pilots can actually have an 'instructor' along for their checkride!

Myself, I am the COO and main trouble shooter for the site and I have been an avid aviation enthusiasts since the age of 8 when I took my first walkthrough on a P3A Orion with my father, an avionics tech rep with Lockheed and I've been simming for about 12 years. Incidentally, Michael, my partner and CEO, is none other than the YouTube sim personality, "Captain Mac"!

We have both flown with various VA's and though all have their advantages there was always something missing. So we bounced around the idea of creating our own VA for about 4 years and this year we finally decided to pull the trigger. Millennium Aviation Company (MacAir) is the result of our vision.

2. When did you start your Virtual Airline?

The idea began a few years ago while actual development began in February of 2017. Our official launch was July 4th of the same year. But don't let our new status discourage you! Between us Michael and I have 20+ years of simming experience, 12 years of real world flight expertise, and a combined 10 years of VA experience.

3. Do you consider your Virtual Airline successful?

Absolutely! In our first 8 days of officially being 'open' we have added over 100 pilots to our roster with over 15 joining our Historic Division and 8 taking on the grueling challenge of our PRO Division. Which includes theoretical exams, dedicated training flights and a final checkride for each level.

We have also landed at the ranking of 11 (currently) on VA Central in this short period of time.

We also encourage other VA's to 'partner' with us in an attempt to create a VA 'Group' which would have the ability to cater to any pilot's desires and cover the entire spectrum of VA offerings. Our first partner, Mirage Executive Charters, is one such VA. By partnering we not only add to what each VA can offer, but it also helps to build each VA's roster by encouraging 'cross membership' between the others and providing events for each VA individually with pilots from each VA able to participate.

4. What is your most interesting experience with your Virtual Airline, what has happened that makes you think so?

That's a tough question. The whole process has been an incredible learning experience starting with implementing our idea, finding a developer who could actually make it a reality (big thanks to Servetas at PHP-Mods!), and then the beta testing, tweaking, testing, etc.

But all in all I'd say that meeting and working with our pilots has been the most interesting. These are people who belong to a very eclectic group and are passionate about their hobby. Getting to know some of them through our forums has been a rewarding experience.

5. Did you have any bad experiences with your Virtual Airline?

In the beginning, pre-launch, we had to deal with someone who decided to perform a DDoS attack on our site. Not sure who or why but our host was able to successfully stop these attacks and we've had no issues since. These things happen and it's usually for no other reason except, 'they can'. It didn't deter us in the least.

Other than that, it's been a great experience and we look forward to what the future will bring.

6. What do you think of your Virtual Airline's flow of new and leaving VA pilots? Is there something you do to attract more pilots? And why do you think some pilots leave your Virtual Airline?

We're still young so we haven't really created a ratio of arriving/leaving pilots yet. But as with all VA's it's an unavoidable part of running one. Life, work, loss of interest...these are just a few of the reasons that folks join and either never take their first flight, or simply fade away after a short period of time.

We do our best to make our VA stand out with not only the unique Triple Division system we created but also periodic Fly-in's, unique tours for each division, an active forum, exceptional and timely pilot support, and a drive to develop a feeling of 'family' with our pilot community.

7. What types of planes does your Virtual Airline use and do you have all the custom liveries available for your VA?

We have over 3,000 aircraft in our fleet utilizing virtually every aircraft and airframe available as well as virtually any airline you could want. If there's an aircraft, airframe, schedule, tour or specific airline our pilots want that doesn't exist in our fleet all they need do is ask and we'll add it immediately. This goes for both our Open Division and the Historic.

We are still in the process of creating custom Captain Mac 'MacAir' liveries for all our available airframes (if pilots choose to use them) but with the availability of virtually any airline in the world in our fleet we aren't terribly rushed to do so.

8. Does your VA fly on a network? If so, what do you think about it? Do you feel it supplements the general flying experience, what do you think of the network in general and is it required for your pilots to fly on this network?

We encourage our pilots to fly online as much as possible, be it Vatsim or Ivao. We believe this leads to a more realistic approach to simming and enhances the entire experience. However, we also know that online flying is definitely not for everyone and therefore do not make it a requirement.

9. Do you use any flight tracking software? If so, which one, and are you happy about the service it provides? Would you like to improve it for example?

We currently use SmartCars as our flight tracking software and for now, it serves its purpose. In the first quarter of 2018 however, we will be creating a custom ACARS with the ability to track as much data as possible from the flight. Taxi lights, taxi speed, ascent/descent rate, all other aircraft lighting, overspeeds, etc. Our goal is to enable our hub managers and PRO Division instructors to track all parameters of a flight for not only realism, but to help our pilots grow in their skills.

10. Do you make use of the offers some developers / distributors have for Virtual Airlines? Do you think these developers / distributors have good offers? And does it fit your Virtual Airline policy?

We haven't taken advantage of any offers as yet. We are currently looking into the feasibility of creating an online store for MacAir products such as mugs, t-shirts, mouse pads, etc. But that is still in the 'idea' phase.

11. Does your Virtual Airline have a custom made internet web page or do you use, for example, PHPVMS and equivalents? Are you happy about your VA's web page?

Our homepage and forums use custom templates which are coded to the phpvms system. The homepage itself is packed with an incredible amount of available data for our pilots including a live, interactive flight map, average VA landing rate, top 5 daily landing rates, new pilots, etc. Much more than I can list here.

We are extremely pleased with our homepage and forums! The folks at PHP-Mods went above and beyond what we envisioned and have given us a site that anyone would be proud to call their own.

12. And lastly, what are your expectations for your Virtual Airline in the coming twelve months?

We fully expect to grow consistently as word gets out about MacAir. Over the next year we are looking to create not only our custom ACARS but to also add more divisions (military and cargo) as well as newly updated schedules and a more complex flight search and flight planning system. We have many ideas in store for our pilots to keep things fresh, exciting and to provide a truly unique experience in the VA community.

Please send this questionnaire to admin@va-list.com so we can review it and post it on the Virtual Airline List and social network.

Kind regards,
The Virtual Airline List team