



November 2, 2016

INDUSTRY NEWS

### Annual Flight School Operators Conference Announced for February 2017

FSANA is pleased to announce the 8th annual Flight School Operators Conference will take place February 14-17, 2017, at the Hyatt Regency North Houston in Houston, Texas.

FSANA encourages everyone who plans to attend to reserve your room by calling Hyatt at 888-421-1442 and mention that you are booking for the Flight School Operators Conference to receive the conference rate.



Book as early as possible to make sure you get a room and the early booking rate.

[Click Here to Start Your Reservation](#)

Conference registration for attendees is scheduled to open in a few weeks and a detailed program will be announced soon. This conference is a great opportunity for flight training business operators to come together and discuss current issues, regulations, and best business practices. If you are in the business of flight training, make your plans to attend now!.

For more information on the Hyatt Regency North Houston, [Click Here](#).

Advertisement for FSP (Flight Schedule Pro) software. The background is blue. On the left is the FSP logo with the text 'by Flight Schedule Pro'. In the center is an orange button that says 'New Version Now Available'. To the right, the text reads 'Online Scheduling and Business Management for Flight Schools'. On the far right, there is an image of a smartphone and the 'Available on iTunes' logo.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

### A Message from FSANA's President

The Fall season provides some of the most enjoyable flying weather in North America. Great visibility combined with comfortable temperatures allows prospective new pilots, along with the existing pilot community, to explore the airspace that only aviators can enjoy.

As FSANA continues to grow and explore new opportunities for our members, we are constantly reminded why FSANA was formed. Helping our members to attain new and improved business models coupled with ongoing problem solving forms the backbone of the trade association.

FSANA's programs continue to create added value for our members. FSANA's AeroCamp program alone is proof that an increase in new-student-pilot start rates is a direct result of member schools embracing FSANA programs. Imagine if every flight school in America operated an AeroCamp program annually--the country's new-student-pilot start rate would soar.

Flight schools that are proactive with marketing, coupled with new customer development and retention process, are growing. Many of these schools have greatly benefited from their FSANA membership and participation. It is humbling to see FSANA members who joined a few years ago and started with 1-2 aircraft now have 6-7 aircraft or more.

A few weeks ago, several FSANA members and industry colleagues joined us in Washington, DC, to discuss a series of important national issues. The quality and depth of knowledge around the table was outstanding and reminded us how important FSANA is to our industry and beyond.

We encourage all flight training providers to become members of FSANA. Together, we continue to help shape and evolve the "Business of Flight Training."

--Bob Rockmaker, FSANA president



**PUBLIC AWARENESS**

**Learn to Fly Month Debuting May 2017**

FSANA is pleased to announce "Learn to Fly Month," an exciting new initiative that will help increase a dwindling U.S. civil pilot population and engage non-aviators to explore the wonders of flight along with the aviation and aerospace industry. Just as importantly, Learn to Fly Month will give flight schools across the country the opportunity to engage their local communities with their facilities and services.

**Bob Rockmaker**, FSANA president stated, "One of the major goals of FSANA is to grow the pilot population. **Learn to Fly Month** will be a significant opportunity to create a focused platform to achieve that goal. Rockmaker goes on to add, "The long-term success of Learn to Fly Month will be beneficial for all who make their career in the aviation and aerospace industry."

During the month of May 2017, flight schools will be encouraged to create their own programs for the public that may include open houses, family aviation days, introductory ground schools, local air tours and all things related to attracting non-aviators to come out to the airport/heliport and engage with the industry.

By establishing a month-long window, at the local level, flight schools are afforded plenty of flexibility within their programs and schedules to promote learning to fly, coupled with public aviation and aerospace awareness.

FSANA is in the process of assembling a **Learn to Fly Month toolkit** of opportunities and marketing tools for its members. The toolkit will include everything from planning strategies to

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community outreach ideas and financial assistance resources. FSANA members will also be listed on the FSANA website by state.

FSANA's Learn to Fly Month initiative will reach a wide audience critical to building the pilot and aerospace industry. Through FSANA's media networking efforts alone, the projected audience reach during the month is expected to be between 20-40 million print impressions coupled with an additional 10-20 million E-views. A majority of the promotional campaign will be focused on non aviation markets.



FSANA invites others in the industry, including supply chain and trade associations, to become involved. For more information about how your organization can jump on board, please contact Debbie Sparks, FSANA director of Business Development at [dsparks@fsana.com](mailto:dsparks@fsana.com) or via phone at 561-767-6826 or Bob Rockmaker, FSANA president at [bob@fsana.com](mailto:bob@fsana.com) or via phone at 610-791-4359.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**2017 FSANA International Flight School Operators Conference**  
Houston, TX  
February 14-17



## TRAINING NEWS

### Simhawk Launches Global Simulator Marketplace



Williston, VT - October 26, 2016 - Simhawk Inc. announced the launch of its online marketplace for buyers and sellers of flight simulator time and training services. The marketplace, which brings the benefits of the on-demand economy to the world of simulator training, can be accessed online at [simhawk.com](http://simhawk.com) and is focused on providing customers with a more efficient way to buy and sell simulator time and training.

"Over the past 10 years, the number of simulator operators and training providers has grown significantly, resulting in more options and alternatives than ever before," said Chris Weinberg, Founder and CEO of Simhawk. "Simhawk enables customers that need to buy simulator time or training services to find the best available options based on a variety of criteria, eliminating the need to contact multiple providers, and providing customers with access to a global network of providers in order to take advantage of changes in supply and demand."

Simhawk also increases revenue and asset utilization for simulator operators or training service providers, that have excess capacity or last minute availability, by providing them access to a larger global network of simulator customers in a way that reduces their risks and costs.

"Our unique process enables simulator operators and training providers to pursue opportunities that they might not be aware of or that they previously considered unattainable," said Weinberg, who was most recently the Chief Information Officer at FlightSafety International. "The Simhawk platform allows sellers to respond rapidly to the frequent changes in global demand for simulator time without having to take focus away from their existing customer base."

In addition to serving existing users and operators of full flight simulators, by taking advantage of excess capacity, Simhawk offers flight schools and universities increased access to full flight simulators. This enables them to take advantage of the safety benefits that the devices provide and to offer valuable additional training such as airline transition, type rating, and ATP CTP programs.

Simhawk plans to continue to enhance its platform with additional features and functionality that will provide value to both buyers and sellers of simulator time and training. For more information about Simhawk, please visit us at [simhawk.com/about](http://simhawk.com/about)

**Contact:**

tel: (802) 858-4188 x 1000  
 email: [info@simhawk.com](mailto:info@simhawk.com)  
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## MARKETING TIPS

# Four Ways Flight Schools Can Retain Students - That Don't Involve Buying New Airplanes, Discounting Your Rates or Building a New Facility!

By Kathryn B. Creedy

Attracting new students is only the beginning of a journey for both the prospective pilot and the flight school. Flight schools can sign up students all day long but they are wasting their time if they do not make the extra effort to ensure a candidate stays the course.

For flight schools, this is even more important because the drop out rate for student pilots is astronomical.

*More people give up on their flight training than complete it. . . Only about 40% of those earning a student pilot certificate go on to earn a private pilot certificate. It's not known how many people quit even before becoming a student pilot.*

- Marc C. Lee, *Plane and Pilot Magazine*



Why do flight students quit? Of course, it can happen for any number of reasons that may or may not be apparent as a student progresses through training.

The most extensive study on the topic was done in a study commissioned by AOPA in 2011. Although six years have passed, the findings still echo what we hear from flight students today.

*Mark Benson, APCO Insight chairman, said the survey found that, although many people believe that time and cost are the driving factors in a student pilot's decision to continue or drop out of flight training, the major factor turns out to be the educational quality. Benson reported that five of the 11 discrete factors determined by the survey were directly related to educational quality with respect to both individual flight instructor effectiveness and flight school support for and management of instructors.*

*While cost is a factor, Benson said that the survey found that value, and a student's perception of a school's ability to be fair and honest, were more important. Student pilots, he reported, are more concerned about getting good value with the money they spend than about the actual dollars and cents amount. They want to know that the flight school and instructors put the students' interests first and look for ways to minimize cost and maximize the effectiveness of every dollar spent.*

- Tom Berensen, *Flying Magazine*

That is why it is of paramount importance to stay close to your students, build enthusiasm and reward progress throughout the process. Flight schools not only need to provide the training, they must be there to guide students along their journey and help them overcome the obstacles in



their path. They must become the team behind the pilot to get them to the finish line.

After all, when a person has made the decision to pursue a pilot's license they should feel they have been accepted into a unique community that isn't replicated elsewhere.

### **1. Set a Tone of Enthusiasm and Encouragement**

A flight school should set a positive tone and continually renew the enthusiasm students have when they start. It is important, however, to ensure the entire staff follows suit. As much as possible, Flight schools must attract and retain staff who mirror the enthusiasm and positive, can-do attitudes that lead to pilot success.

If you're excited, your students will be excited. Sales is a transfer of enthusiasm. Students should know they are more than just a customer; and flight schools can foster this feeling by getting to know the individual and becoming his aviation family with an equal stake in achieving his success.

The particulars of each of these motives should change the way different parts of flight training are emphasized. Granted, there are many "required" topics to cover, but you can put them into a context that's most relevant for the student's mindset. A career-oriented student will be looking for the best preparation for life as a first officer. A commuter will be more interested in cross country navigation.

### **2. Visualize and Reward Progress**

Although you want your students to feel they have joined a unique community, it is important to help them achieve, and SEE, steady progress toward his individual goal.

The more they understand that the flight school is on the team with them, trying to achieve the same goals, (rather than just rack up the instruction and flight hours!) the more likely they are to stay the course.

Watch their social media activity and re-tweet their accomplishments. Equally important is finding opportunities to celebrate those accomplishments throughout their training and beyond. These celebrations not only mark milestones for those achieving them but also show others the way! It is all part of the support that comes from creating relationships.

You know your current training process better than anyone. Explore ways you can show students how far they've come, and celebrate small victories where possible.

### **3. Focus on the Relationship**

To an aviator, there is nothing more fun than sharing aviation. Flight schools must create opportunities to share the excitement so students, instructors, former students and flight school managers can connect with one another and form relationships that will last a lifetime. Whether it is creating an online community on Facebook or having a monthly barbecue pot luck to get your students and staff together to share their enthusiasm for the craft, building relationships is one of the most important things a flight school can do.

Understand what drives the student to learn to fly in the first place. Are they trying to break into the prestigious globetrotting lifestyle of an airline pilot career? Are they looking for a more convenient way to travel for their business or other endeavor? Or are they looking for a recreational activity that cuts them loose from the "surly bonds of earth?"

Encourage students to share their experiences on your social media platforms. Word of mouth, after all, is your best tool for not only attracting new students but in sharing the enthusiasm your students feel for the flight training process and the sport.

Start conversations on your social media platforms such as the toughest thing students encountered in flight training and how they overcame it. Ask them for the top advice they would give to new students. Ask them to describe the most exhilarating experience they had with your organization. Was it soloing? Was it taking the controls for the first time or was it their first landing?

### **4. Demonstrate Quality and Professionalism**

There is nothing that speaks to the pride and attention to excellence at a given company than the professionalism it projects. It is this professionalism that engenders confidence in the staff and the school that will keep your students with you.

Aviation itself has its own brand of professionalism; especially when it has anything to do with fostering safety. But this professionalism extends far beyond the do's and don'ts of a professional cockpit, it is in the feeling evoked when a student walks through a thoughtfully designed and professionally maintained facility.

A clean, organized facility, whether in the classroom, the maintenance bay or the pilot lounge, speaks volumes about the care you take with your organization and, by extension, your students. A well-maintained aircraft is also part of the equation, which, by the way, includes the interior of the aircraft - (something strangely overlooked by many flight schools!) bespeaks an operational philosophy that shows you are dedicated to excellence.

**Could You Create 60% More Success Stories?**

When you get together with flight school owners and managers, you often hear tales of woe about how "the economy is causing students to drop out," that "people are just too busy to learn to fly anymore" and that "you just can't retain students without discounting or investing in a new facility or new airplanes." But the data, and conversations with real flight students, paint a very different picture.

Imagine the impact on your flight training program if you could retain most of the students you worked so hard to recruit in the first place!

Many of the reasons they tend to quit may be well within your control. Among them -- managing instructors to set a positive tone, demonstrating the value of the program by showing each student predictable individual progress, building trust by fostering relationships, and demonstrating the educational quality of your program in a very visible way.



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**FSANA ENGAGEMENT**

**FSANA Needs Your Support Now More Than Ever**

*By Debbie Sparks, FSANA Director Business Development*

The FSANA team continues to listen to our members and business partners and often the plea for assistance involve the same subjects, just from a different perspective.

Flight school operators have experienced great difficulty in areas of finance, both for equipment and their students, as well as significant hardship when it comes to the check ride process.

Business partners are hard pressed to advance their products and services to a large number of flight training schools due to small margins in part to items mentioned above.



FSANA has been working hard to complete Phase 2 of our **Accreditation Program** to one day advance Title IV funding to the independent flight schools across the country. This has been a

monumental effort that is advancing daily, but again, we need your support.

In the area of the check ride process, FSANA, along with our distinguished panel of experts, have ventured into uncharted waters and are working hard to be a voice for our constituents. This effort has involved countless hours of peer communication and, more recently, trips to the DC beltway to speak on behalf of our customers.

In the coming weeks, our panel has been invited to Oklahoma City to further advance our efforts in a very positive setting with extremely willing participants.

These are colossal efforts that require not only hard work, but the financial resources to finish the job. Our commitment to support "The Business of Flight Training" is unwaivered, unparalleled and some of the most forward-thinking initiatives ever taken on by a trade association in the aviation industry.

We ask you, our aviation partners, associates, business community and any person that makes a living in the business of flight training to support our efforts and become a part of this crucial effort to influence change and help evolve the **Business of Flight Training**.

For their part, **FSANA Partners** receive year-round brand exposure in both print and electronic platforms in multiple channels and a host of other benefits. To learn how you can help, please contact **Debbie Sparks**, FSANA director of Business Development, at [dsparks@fsana.com](mailto:dsparks@fsana.com) or **561-767-6826**.



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\* \* \*

### Flight School for Sale in Ohio

Interested in expanding your flight school or taking on a new location? How about buying a flight school for the first time? A flight training operation in Ohio may be the opportunity for which you are looking.

The operation is a successful flight training business with two owned aircraft and multiple leaseback aircraft, a large client base, a FBO business and maintenance services. The operation has simulators and operates both FAR Part 61 and 141 training curricula, is SEVP approved, has VA approval, and operates a PSI testing center. Interested parties should contact John Bonfiglio CPA at 440-461-6227.

\* \* \*

**Aircraft Lease or Purchase Opportunity**

Premier Flight Academy in Cleveland, OH, requires two Diamond DA-20 aircraft. G-500 preferred but not required. Contact Tony Rohloff at 440-289-3221.

\* \* \*

**Chief Pilot/Chief Flight Instructor Required**

Chief Pilot for Part 141 International flight school in Austin, Texas, region is needed. Responsible for training 100-200 Ab Initio students annually. Compensation \$65,000-\$70,000. Contact Marc McKee at marc.mckee@gmail.com or 440-487-5391.

\* \* \*

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\* \* \*

**FEEDBACK**

We want feedback from the readers of this newsletter! Tell us what is important to you as a school owner, manager or chief flight instructor. We will share comments received in an upcoming edition of **Flight Schools News eMonthly**. Send your thoughts to [info@fsana.com](mailto:info@fsana.com).

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2016 CONFERENCE SPONSORS



Established in 2009, the Flight School Association of North America (FSANA) is the first and only association of its kind dedicated solely to the flight training industry. FSANA represents flight schools, firms that provide products and services to the flight training or aviation industry, and other supporting partners.

**FSANA MISSION:** The Mission of the Flight School Association is to work in alliance with the aviation and aerospace industry; to serve and foster the flight training industry; to provide programs and services that will enhance the ability of flight schools to serve their customers and communities; and to promote best business practices which will help flight schools and their industry thrive and increase the pilot population.

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