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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025 • VOLUME 27 • ISSUE 1

MRO

Management



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Engineered for growth

Pascal Parant, group chief commercial and marketing officer at Vallair, shares how the company's strategic growth plan balances innovation, global partnerships and a commitment to the next generation of talent



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I'm deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of talent
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PASCAL PARANT

group chief commercial and marketing officer, Vallair

▶ **What perspective or expertise do you bring to your role at Vallair, and how does it align with your responsibilities in driving the company's overall strategy?**

Together with my five years of engineering studies, I bring 34 years of aviation experience affording both transversal and horizontal perspectives.

I've had the privilege to wear many hats in our industry: board member of an airline, aircraft sales and leasing, parts trading, MRO, manufacturing, and M&A. This diverse background has allowed me to develop an extensive network of contacts built over the years. Many of these relationships have grown alongside my own career and today a number of these connections occupy C-level positions.

At the same time, I'm deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of talent. Through initiatives like the USAIRE Student Award and my annual lectures at ESTACA on the 'Economic Life Cycle of an Aircraft', I've been fortunate to meet and guide passionate students who are eager to build careers in aeronautics, airlines and MRO. It's inspiring to witness their enthusiasm and energy and I endeavour to share my experience to help them find their place in the industry after graduation.

The beauty of the aviation sector lies in its human dimension. Relationships are crucial in this industry. To put things into perspective: there are approximately



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32,000 commercial aircraft in operation globally, generating around \$1 trillion annually. Compare this with the automotive industry, which generates \$2 trillion in revenue but produces over 88 million cars annually. This stark difference underscores why personal relationships remain central in aviation.

When technical expertise is combined with a strong network, it creates a powerful, impactful role. I've also been fortunate to learn from great mentors like Patrick Aherne and Peter Chapman at AAR Corporation, whose leadership and optimism left a lasting impression on me. I aim to carry forward the lessons I learned from them, especially in leading commercial teams.

Given Vallair's aggressive growth targets in a favourable market, I'm eager to contribute all my expertise to the outstanding sales team I joined upon arrival. I see myself as a



“ Parts trading and asset management also remain central to our strategy ”

conductor, with the ‘score’ written by our chief executive, Grégoire Lebigot. I’m supported by incredible technical expertise from Gilles Fossecave, chief executive of Vallair MRO, and his team, as well as strong financial guidance from Andriy Lavrov and Maxime Gorsse. Together, we form a professional orchestra ready to play his composition and propel Vallair to new heights.

► **What do you see as the main challenges currently facing the aviation MRO industry, and how is Vallair addressing them?**

The two major challenges facing the industry are well-known: the shortage of qualified B1/B2 technicians and supply chain disruptions.

The supply chain challenge presents an opportunity. Aircraft manufacturers are struggling to meet demand, leading to reduced production. As a result, older aircraft are staying in operation longer and requiring more maintenance.

It’s not uncommon to see 24-year-old aircraft undergoing a second 12-year check. Airlines are left with two choices: extend the life of their fleets or cut routes. Similarly, the used serviceable material (USM) market is under pressure as OEMs face production delays. Our parts trading division is in high demand, though the supply chain issues can sometimes impact turnaround times for MRO work.

Regarding the technician shortage, Vallair took proactive steps by investing in a mechanics school several years ago. We train 30 technicians annually, but it’s a long-term process – three years of studies and two years of practical experience are required to produce an autonomous technician.

This global shortage of technicians could limit air transport growth in the coming years. On the positive side, globalisation allows skilled workers to cross borders for better opportunities. Low-cost regions are becoming less competitive as they must increase wages to retain talent. Vallair

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TRILLION

There are approximately 32,000 commercial aircraft in operation globally, generating around \$1 trillion annually

Group is addressing this challenge on two fronts: through our training school, Aircraft Academy, and by facilitating international recruitment to bring skilled workers to our team.

► **Following the 2023 MoU with Saudi Arabia’s National Industrial Development Centre, what milestones have been achieved, and how does this partnership strengthen Vallair’s presence in the Middle East?**

1. Vallair Group’s Aircraft Academy is a dedicated mechanics school
2. Vallair is a multifaceted aviation business that aims to maximise the life and value of aircraft, engines and parts

The Middle East, and Saudi Arabia in particular, represents a massive market with ambitious fleet expansion plans. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud's vision to prepare Saudi Arabia for a post-oil future is the right direction: opening the country to tourism, fostering entrepreneurship, and creating a business-friendly environment.

We continue to work actively on this development but, for strategic reasons, I cannot disclose all ongoing initiatives at this stage.

► **What sets Vallair apart from its competitors, and what can attendees at this year's MRO Middle East expect to see at your booth?**

What can attendees expect? The team, of course! As aforementioned, human relationships are at the heart of our aerospace community. MRO events provide the invaluable opportunity to meet face-to-face, understand different perspectives and align expectations.

While we keep a close eye on technological advancements like drone inspections, AI and other innovations shaping the industry, these demonstrations are typically presented by tech developers. For us, the conference is about connecting with existing and new customers and showcasing our two MRO sites virtually.

One unique advantage of Vallair Group is our Aircraft Academy, a dedicated

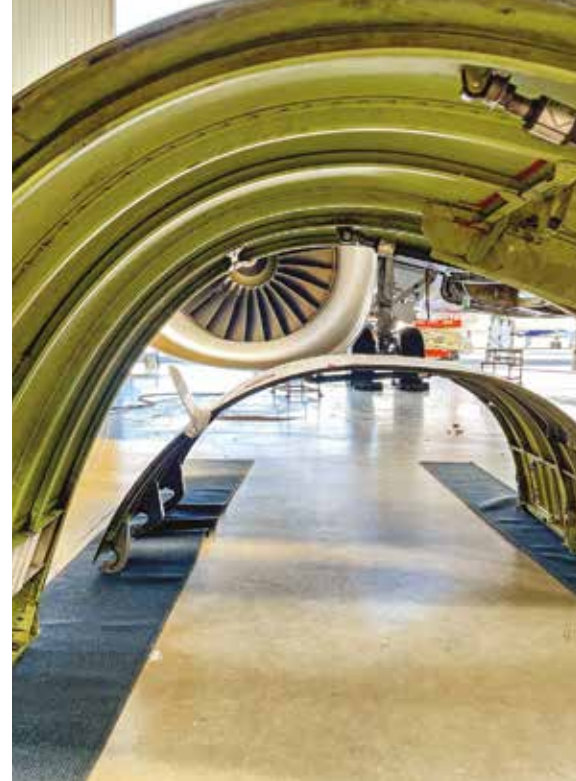
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Relationships are crucial in this industry
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mechanics school. While supply chain issues dominate headlines, the next major challenge for the industry is the shortage of B1/B2 certified mechanics. Globally, 300,000 mechanics are currently needed, a number expected to rise to 700,000 in the coming years. We began with a cohort of 30 students, but the demand far exceeds this. Our chief executive's vision is to expand far beyond these initial efforts to train tens of thousands of students annually.

This will undoubtedly be one of the greatest challenges facing our industry, and Vallair is committed to being a key player in solving it. I encourage anyone interested in a career in aviation to reach out to us during MRO Dubai or through the contact form on our website.

► **What are your top priorities as chief commercial officer over the next 12-18 months?**

My main priority is already clear: energising the sales force to align with our core business areas – airframe MRO, aerostructure, trading, asset management and our new CAMO service.



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1&2. Vallair's aerostructure division provides composite repairs to aircraft owners and operators

For airframe MRO, I aim to strike a balance between airlines and lessors. Among airlines, we're targeting both long-term contracts and smaller fleets with occasional needs. Supporting smaller fleets is just as important as serving large ones. Lessors remain a traditional core focus for Vallair, and we're committed to accommodating their needs, even on short notice.

For our aerostructures service, I want to balance work from our own airframe MRO customers and third-party customers. I'm exploring the possibility of offering long-term storage solutions for nacelles and flight surfaces at our Châteauroux facility. Simultaneously, we are ramping up our engine service activities, including quick change, modular work, hospital shop repairs and teardown operations in our three large engine bays.

Parts trading and asset management also remain central to our strategy. Our experienced team specialises in engine and airframe parts trading, engine leasing, and aircraft sales – a historical strength of Vallair.

Finally, our CAMO organisation is growing. We currently support our subsidiary airline, FTL (an A330 E-Class cargo operator), and are expanding to serve third-party customers. ●



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