

Precision Air's Mwanri: My plans for the airline's future

PROFILE. 44-year old Mwanri - who took over the airline's top spot from Sauda Rajab after her contract came to an end - banks his hopes on continuous investment in technology and code-sharing arrangements to strengthen the airline

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Dar es Salaam. Precision Air Company managing director and chief executive officer Patrick Mwanri - who was appointed to the post on November 1 last year - says he is committed to turn the company's fortunes into profit-making.

Precision Air's financial loss was significantly reduced to Sh21.54 billion in 2018 down from Sh27.24 billion in the preceding year - thanks to investment in technology intended to capture all due revenues.

44-year old Mwanri - who took over the airline's top spot from Sauda Rajab after her contract came to an end - banks his hopes for continuous investment in technology and code-sharing arrangements, to strengthen the airline.

The first-born in a family of two children, Mwanri says they were seeking code-sharing arrangements with Air Tanzania Company Ltd (ATCL) especially on the India, Guangzhou (China), London and Johannesburg (South Africa) routes.

The father of four children tells *The Citizen* that the 26-year old Precision Air was also in talks for code-sharing with, among others, KLM, Qatar and RwandAir.

Mr Mwanri - who built a reputation as a detail-oriented aviation expert for over 16 years - believes that the aviation industry can be taken to the next higher level should the government reduce the burdening charges on airlines.

The holder of a Computer Science and Technology Engineering Degree from Saint Petersburg University (Russia) says multi-regulatory bodies were making things even tougher as they add to operational costs.

With each imposing their own fees - in addition to those imposed by the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA) - airlines are also monitored by the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) and National Environment Management Council (NEMC).

Other regulatory bodies are Tanzania Bureau of Standards and department of the Government Chemist.

"If the oversight for the aviation sector could be left under TCAA of which stakeholders could be consulting to, at least visibility on the costs in airlines could be seen," observes Mr Mwanri, who also holds Master's Degree in Business Administration (aerospace management) from France.

Earlier in his career at Precision Air where he joined in May 2004 as air flight operation assistant person, Mr Mwanri rose through the ranks

to become the CEO, thanks to his hard working and capability.

Mr Mwanri, whose hobbies are playing badminton game and swimming, started his career in 2003 as an IT guy at Dahaco, currently Swissport Tanzania, where he served for one year before joining to Precision Air.

Before the appointment as the CEO at Precision Air, Mr Mwanri, who had in the past held various senior leadership positions, was the Quality, Safety, Environments and Security director.

"Mwanri has always been 'the details guy'. There's no questions about his knowledge and acumen," says Jimray Nangawe, an aviation expert and former Precision Air network planning and strategy manager.

Mr Mwanri, he adds, has aircraft and airports operation background and he has also been able to establish

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MWANRI | PRECISION AIR CEO

the relationship with the industry's stakeholders. "It is just a matter of time, I am optimistic he will turn-around Precision Air," he says.

He was very impressed to join Precision Air because of his passionate with the aviation industry.

Immediately after joining the airline, he was sent to Nairobi for two months to study flight operations management and dispatch.

After coming back, he found that a lot of activities were being done manually.

As it stands, he came up with an idea that there was a need to transform by computerizing operations.

And that it where his potentials began. In 2013, the former Precision Air's CEO Alphonce Kioko saw Mr Mwanri's potentials and in one of his meetings with him he said:

"We can see efficiency down you. So, I think I need to invest more in you."

Connection between his childhood and who he is today.

Every kid wants to be a pilot, but when Mr Mwanri joined Precision Air there was also an opportunity for him join the field but he turned down an offer.

He really wanted to be on the field of technology regardless to whether be aviation industry or not.

However, he says, the leadership skills that he has developed, he had also have the years back, saying in school whatever he did he tried to do it at the best. "I have got a lot of leadership passions. I really like to see things are moving on the right direction," says Mr Mwanri.

Secret behind success

Hard work is a secret behind his success and even now he keeps on telling his team that "whenever you do your work don't do so for your boss to see."

Instead everyone should make

sure that work is done and colleagues are happy to see "you are part of the team."

What he has been trying to give himself is knowledge as much as he could as well as working with people who can always challenge him.

He says the moment you get some brighter people behind you it pushes you to work better than them and so is you grow in career.

Role of family

Noting that his wife has been very supportive, he says, with the type of role if you don't have a stable family, you can bring your frustration from home to your work.

Key role in current position and achievements in career

Looking at the organisation and protect the shareholders' interests, is his major role.

On achievements, he says, from someone to come from a very junior staff within fifteen years to become a CEO is not a small task.

"I see myself as one of the young aviation experts in the country," he says.

As it is, he put a lot of efforts during all his career period especially when he was the quality and safety director to make sure that more young people are inspired and also get the knowledge that is required for them to achieve their goal.

During that time he had a number of trainings to attend outside the country but what he did most of those times was to call instructors to come here so that he could share with the rest of the team on what is required for them to be the aviation experts.

Precision Air and Mwanri in 5 years from now

He wants it to be a profitable airline and be the firm which most of people would love to come and work.

Mr Mwanri is looking at how through his skills and knowledge, can continue contributing to the country by making Precision Air grow better.

Role model

Precision Air chairman Michael Shirima, who has been working with him so closely is his role model.

Mr Shirima is very patient, quiet, people-centred, business-oriented and a person who always likes to see results. "So I also wish when I reach my retirement age, then I can be someone like him," says Mr Mwanri.

Unforgettable experience

During his growth he once entered in misunderstanding with some of his bosses because of the standards that he had and it was almost going to cost his job and career.

"I put a lot of efforts during that time and you find somebody who really doesn't appreciate the efforts that you put just because of some personal interests," says Mr Mwanri.

Advice to young people

They have to make sure they have correct attitudes. Because you can have education and qualification but if you have got a bad attitude, most of the employees even people surrounding you won't recommend you for higher posts. In addition, they have to make sure they read a lot, understand your career so that at least you are update.

"Share your knowledge so that others can also open up to you to also share theirs. With this, you will be able to expand your reach because now people will know you better," he suggests.

Balance between family and office time

Noting that he respects his time at office, Mr Mwanri says he always reports to the office around 7.30 am and strives as much as he can to knock out at 5 pm.

He has empowered his team--all department heads are supposed to be in charge of their divisions.

"They only come to me when something is inter-departmental or something that requires my approval," says Mr Mwanri.



Precision Air chief executive officer Patrick Mwanri speaks during an exclusive interview with a *BusinessWeek* reporter in Dar es Salaam last week. PHOTO | SALIM SHAO