

# MRO

Aerospace Magazine



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News, trends and forecast for 2022

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### Industry Interview

Louis Philippe Mallette  
AJW Technique

# Q & A

INDUSTRY INTERVIEW

## In the hot seat...

Louis Philippe Mallette  
SVP Operations, AJW Technique



Louis Philippe Mallette, SVP Operations.  
All photos: AJW Technique

### **What attracted you to this industry?**

From an early age I was interested in aerospace – attracted by technology and a career that combines engineering with the opportunity to travel the world. Flying takes away the constraints that cars and boats have in terms of travel and the more I discovered about the aerospace sector the more I loved it.

For the last 18 years I have travelled the world improving operations for companies in China, Japan, Northern Ireland, Morocco, Mexico, United States and Taiwan. I joined AJW Technique last year as SVP Operations, with a view to taking the business to the next level at an exciting time of expansion and diversification.

I grew up just 10 minutes away from the AJW Technique facility in Montreal and following my 18-year international

adventure, I was ready to come home to Canada, so the role at Technique felt like it was meant to be.

AJW Technique has a great reputation and is a well-known name in the sector, the Group is well-known for the quality of work and the support it gives to airlines - it has a long history and should be proud of that. It has adapted well over the last 90 years to changing markets and that is a massive strength.

### **What does a typical day involve in your role?**

AJW Technique is the central hub for AJW Group's component maintenance, repair and overhaul service. We work directly with AJWA Group and global customers to improve component reliability, maximise time on-wing, and reduce direct maintenance costs. We employ a pool of highly skilled, licensed engineers and

technicians, and are in a prime position to deliver world-class solutions.

I manage both the Montreal facility and the new centre of excellence for Battery MRO facility, AJW Technique Europe, at the Group's Headquarters in the UK. The Montreal facilities are extremely impressive and the work culture outstanding, it is not surprising that last year the facility was named one of Montreal's Top Employers.

Our focus for the start of 2022 is ensuring that our wealth of knowledge and experience is harnessed and made more transferable. AJW Technique is going through a period of growth and diversification, building on its considerable success and knowledgebase. I want to ensure that people are given the winning conditions so that we can be confident on the next phase of growth in our tenth year of operations.





Technicians at AJW Technique, Montreal.

### **Are you seeing much recovery in the market for MRO services?**

We see growth in all our business lines – leasing, engines, parts, exchanges, maintenance, and contracted services scope. As a market-leading integrator, we can provide a one-stop shop for all customers worldwide, with the agility to support one aircraft to three hundred aircraft fleets with bespoke or end-to-end supply chain solutions.

Volumes have picked up exponentially over the last few months, nearing 2019 levels for some airline customers. There has been a shift in the repairs market with more mechanical units than avionics work, and an increase of in-service narrow body fleet like the Airbus 320s and in the widebody fleet like the Boeing 787 versus other platforms that have gone into early retirement or repurposed to cargo aircraft. Our key customers are sharing with us their forecasted flight plans, providing a very confident outlook for the year ahead.

In response to the demands of our local European customers, last year we expanded AJW Technique into a franchise with the launch of AJW Technique Europe. It is operating as a battery shop and will expand into a series of other capabilities to complement the repair services offered at AJW Technique in Canada.

Last year we also added AJW Technique

Interiors product lines to our capability list, helping airlines who need to refit cabins, replace seat covering and carpets by reducing costs and supplying a superior alternative.

### **At AJW, how do you ensure consistency in terms of repair quality for aircraft components?**

We consider our technicians the real commodity of our business, most of the technicians here at AJW Technique have over 25 years of experience in the maintenance, repair and overhaul world dating back from the days of Aveos. It is their legacy knowledge that is unmatched and that keeps our customers' confident that their units are in good hands.

At AJW Technique, our foundation for training is what sets us apart. We focus on both Quality Control and Quality Assurance. Through our On-The-Job training programme, we cover process tools and hundreds of hours on aircraft components to ensure that the strict standards are met and surpassed. Our training programme is Transport Canada approved and allows every qualified technician to receive an airworthiness certificate on every unit on which they have worked. Technicians generally start on the simpler components and then progress to the more complex units as they gain experience.

On a monthly basis, our training committee (which oversees the certification of all new qualifications) reviews performance levels and provides feedback and recommendations on evolving the training programme to ensure that AJW is always ahead of industry requirements.

We focus on continuous improvement so technicians creatively streamline the repair process on the units they specialise in to reduce the price to the customer and decrease turnaround time.

### **What has been the market response to the new AJW Technique Interiors business?**

AJW Technique Interiors is a specialist facility specialising in aircraft interiors, innovative materials for seat covers and the manufacturer and supply of headrest covers, life vest pouches and carpet kitting. We see AJW Technique Interiors as a complimentary service, giving our customers one-stop-shop with design, development, testing and production all housed under one roof to drive cost savings and efficiencies. Alongside AJW Technique Europe and AJW Technique Montreal, this venture allows us to offer global maintenance services across all regional and commodity needs.

AJW Technique Interiors can furnish you with a fully tailored solution for the design, development and production of replacement seat covers in the revolutionary new synthetic leather designed for aviation by the automotive industry, SkyLeather®. We also offer seat cover manufacturing, carpet kitting, headrest covers and life vest pouches from our European facilities in central Europe, with automotive quality and unparalleled savings driven by economies of scale. These innovative products and the associated cost savings have been met with great interest from the airlines we are in discussions with and plan to share exciting news early this year on our launch customer!

### **Did you see a slowdown in the seat cover manufacturing sector because of the pandemic?**

No, quite the opposite, the weight-savings, eco-friendly material and durability make SkyLeather, an ingenious alternate

to reconstructed or hide leather, an extremely cost competitive product. And our seat cover cut and sew services, for material or leather, is highly competitively priced so we are able to offer considerable cost savings to airlines for all seat cover materials and processes.

## How is the digital push progressing at AJW Technique?

We are proud of our achievements over the past two years, from dashboards that closely monitor fleet recoveries by customer and by platform ensuring our operations are synchronised with flying patterns as well as customer-facing real-time monitoring dashboards and tracking tools, which make internal productivity fully transparent and the customer experience seamless from end to end.

To maximise our technicians' component touch-time, we invested in tools to enable a digital shop floor, such as productivity trackers, automated payables and receivables, credit control automation, turnaround time gaming systems, performance management dashboards, piece parts provisioning models, and dynamic pricing algorithms. We have also tested asset location tracking using RFID and Bluetooth technology as a proof of concept. This allows our technicians to



AJW technique workshop floor.

have a full view of high value assets at their fingertips facilitating traceability and workflow management. Beyond RFID technology, we have also invested in hands-free systems and collaborated on predictive maintenance discoveries.

There continues to be huge advancements in digital products that will streamline legacy processes known to the aviation industry for decades. Such as more mainstream solutions for predictive maintenance, remote auditing from aviation authorities, streamlined request for proposal processes which are

in most cases subcontracted to consulting partners to manage due to the high analytical and administrative nature.

We predict that more aviation businesses, MROs, OEMs, airlines and brokers alike will come together to develop more digital products that fix some core industry issues as opposed to creating siloed solutions that solve bits of their four walls. Most part sales businesses have gone fully digital as well. AJW has launched a series of online platforms such as AJW® eventory our on-line inventory store for example which automates parts trading but also flows work into AJW Technique by securing repairs of as-removed parts.

## What are your priorities for 2022?

For a company that was established 90 years ago in 1932 our business model has always been entrepreneurial, flexible and agile, which has been fundamental to our continued success over the past two years and we see as pertinent for the coming year.

Our priorities will continue to focus on continuous improvement and service delivery excellence, ramping up and growing AJW from strength to strength in its 90th year alongside AJW Technique in its 10th. Operators are looking for choice, flexibility and customisation which as an independent company are the strengths of AJW. The future for the MRO aftermarket is looking strong, and we are setting ourselves up for success.



AJW Technique Europe is operating as a battery shop and will expand into other capabilities.