



## **Foundation of Marketing (HS402aN)**



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**Company Name:** Delta Airlines

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## **Profile and history:**



Delta airlines ranking the 68<sup>th</sup> position in the Fortune500 list with 91000 employees, CEO Edward Herman Bastian, making a total sales revenue of \$45.1B. Delta airlines today is one of the most major airlines in the United states and a founding member in the SkyTeam airline alliance. Delta Airlines was first founded on the 2nd of March 1925, in Macon, Georgia before moving later in the summer of

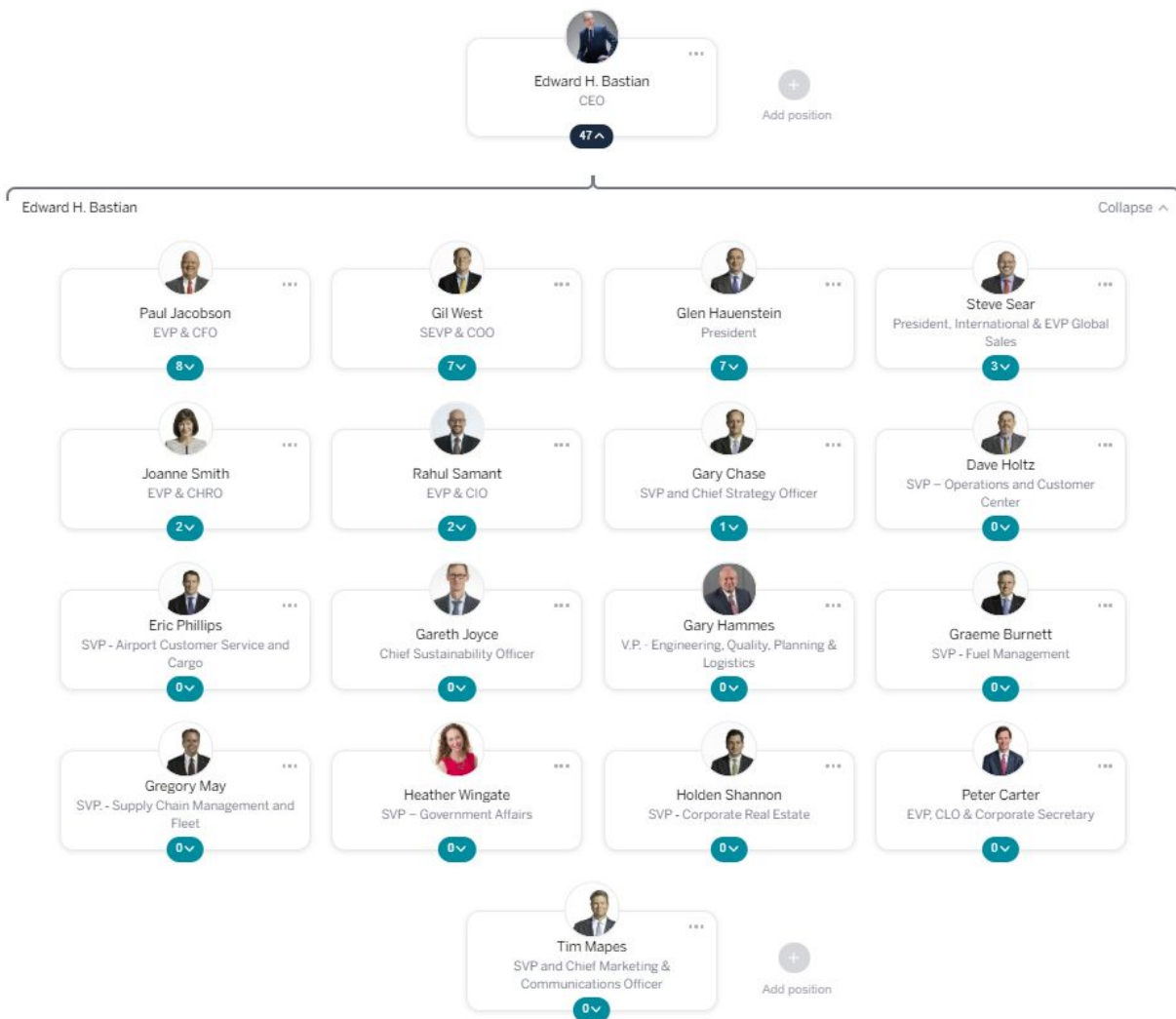
the same year 1925 to Monroe, Louisiana. C.E Woolman, general manager and later Delta's first CEO, successfully convinced local investors to acquire the company's assets on 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1928. Delta Air Service was incorporated, and named after the Mississippi Delta region. Delta Air Lines' had the world's first aerial crop dusting operation known as Huff Daland Dusters, Inc. In 1929, Delta airlines operated its first passenger flight from Dallas, Texas, to Jackson, Miss., with stops in Shreveport and Monroe, La. Service and soon the flight routes started to expand flying to 242 destinations serving 52 countries across the six continents. Delta Air Corporation in 1934 secured a contract with air mail contract, and started doing business as Delta Air Lines over Mail Route 24, stretching from Fort Worth, Texas, to Charleston, South Carolina. Delta airline's headquarters from Monroe, Louisiana, to its current location in Atlanta in 1941. The company was finally officially named as Delta Air Lines in 1945. The airline received the National Safety Council Award for over 300 million passenger miles and 10 years of flight without a passenger or crew fatality. In 1997, Delta airlines was the first airline to reach 100 million passengers on board in a year. In the same year, Delta began to expand their international routes into Latin America. Delta airlines today owns the world's second largest airline fleet owning a total of 878 commercial aircrafts (Airbus, Boeing, and McDonnell Douglas) in operation.

### **Delta Airlines currently has nine hubs:**

- 1- Atlanta
- 2- Boston
- 3- Detroit
- 4- Los Angeles
- 5- Minneapolis
- 6- New York–JFK
- 7- New York–LaGuardia
- 8- Salt Lake City
- 9- Seattle–Tacoma

## Marketing Departments of Delta Airlines:

Delta Airlines type of organization usually have very formal operating rules with a centralized power structure, which means power flows from the top. Can be called a “Machine Bureaucracy” type company that elaborates administrative structures that flow between management and front line staff.



Mr Tim Mapes is Delta’s senior vice president and Chief Marketing and Communication Officer. Tim’s responsibilities include marketing, advertising, product development, corporate

communications, social and traditional media engagement, and community engagement activities, with the goal of enhancing Delta's reputation as a trusted and well known International consumer brand. Tim is a member of the Delta Leadership Committee of top executives who report to CEO Ed Bastian who is leading the team of more than 90000 professional employees globally around the world that makes up Delta airlines.

**Delta got total pilots:** 14,703

Pilots hired since 2014: 5,748

Pilots hired since 2020: 415

Mandatory FAA Pilot Retirement Age: 65

Average age of the Delta Pilot group: 50.81



Delta calls its marketing strategy customer oriented marketing. Apart from digital promotions, the company also uses other channels to gain publicity like fashion shows and art projects. In 2017, the company was listed as one of the top ten most innovative companies by BizWash for its outstanding marketing strategy.

## **Products and Services:**

Delta airlines offers a wide variety of both products and services. Including baggage services, Check-in services, e-certificate programs, in-flight services and other products that include mobile app, Delta university, Delta Cargo services and a bunch of other special services that include [Assistive Devices, Extra Seat - Personal Comfort, Onboard Medical Oxygen, Peanut Allergy Policy, Travelers with Disabilities, Unaccompanied Minor (UMNR) Service, Wheelchair Services]. The wifi connection service is also being offered on all Delta Airlines fleet for free from 2019 for better and unique experience on board. In 2015, Delta airlines started a cabin branding upgrade offering six different cabin services to choose from:



1- **Delta One:** is the premier business class product available on long international routes. as well as transcontinental service from New York JFK to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle/Tacoma. In August 2016, Delta Airlines announced the introduction of Delta One Suites on select widebody fleets. The suites have a door to the aisle for enhanced privacy and comfort of passengers, in addition to more room for storage, and a larger IFE screen with an updated

design for the entertainment of passengers on long routes. The suites were first installed in the Airbus A350 fleet in July 2017, and later being installed within the Boeing 777 fleet.

2- **Delta Premium Select:** the new premium economy cabin added in April 2016, featured with extra legroom, adjustable leg rests, extra seat pitch, width, and recline, and a new premium service for offering comfy trips for a fair price.

3- **First class:** available on mainline domestic flights (except those featuring Delta One service), and short/medium-haul international flights, and Delta Connection aircraft with more than 50 seats. Passengers in the first class enjoy a variety of free snacks compared to Main Cabin, as well as free drinks, and full meal service. Some fleets also enjoy the feature power ports available in each seat in addition to free entertainment products offered by Delta Studio. First Class passengers enjoy the priority of boarding to the planes.

4- **Comfort+:** Delta comfort+ seats are being installed in all of their aircraft except the new A350s. These seats are unique with their sizes and how comfy they are compared to the main cabin.

5- **Main Cabin:** Main Cabin (Economy Class) is available on all aircrafts. Passengers of the main cabin are offered complimentary snacks and non-alcoholic drinks on all flights and limited choice of meals depending on the flight route with standard seats.

6- **Basic Economy:** it is the basic version of the Main Cabin with the same services offered but however with fewer flexibility options and choices for a cheaper price. The limitations in the options may include fixed tickets without flexible changes, no refunds, no paid or complimentary upgrades regardless of frequent-flier status, and only have the choice of the seat when you check-in.

## **Key Competitors**

The airline industry is highly competitive in the past few decades. Airline carriers around the world have worked to cut down costs to be able to offer lower prices to customers to have a competitive advantage. Some of Delta's major well known competitors are American Airlines, United Continental Holdings, Southwest Airlines, JetBlue Airways, United Airlines, and Air France.

Despite all that Delta is one of the highly performing airlines in the world. The airline, known for customer care and luxury, has maintained its upper middle class and business travel customer

base. While many airlines continue to cut costs to compete with emerging low-cost airlines, Delta is continuing to serve the upper-class market where it thrives.

American Airlines Group: AAL is a holding company for American Airlines and U.S. Airways. The airlines merged on Dec. 9, 2013, as American Airlines emerged from bankruptcy. The merger created the world's largest airline in terms of fleet size and number of passengers.

Southwest airlines:

Southwest Airlines Co. has continued to make a major impact in the airline industry, taking market share away from thriving airlines such as Delta.

Southwest is relatively new compared to Delta and targets middle-class fliers as opposed to luxury or business class travelers. In addition, Southwest is heavily dependent on the American market in comparison to Delta, which operates internationally.

United Continental Holdings: UAL is one of the largest airline holding companies in the world. United targets the same customer groups as Delta: the upper middle class and frequent business travelers. Both are known as premier airlines offering high-quality service. United is the founding member of Star Alliance. Star Alliance directly competes with SkyTeam, affiliated with Delta.

Most of Airlines have common marketing strategies applied in order to appeal to corporate customers, focus on all elements of the marketing mix on a new target customer that is less cost-conscious and less patient with the inconveniences of travel, and to offer new different services, offers, convenience and comfort that business travelers require.

## **Product Distribution**

Delta's tickets are sold through various distribution channels including telephone reservations, Delta.com, and traditional brick and mortar and online travel agencies. Delta annual advertising budget is around \$270 million. The airline industry is fueled by strategic alliances that allow individual carriers to extend their service without physically flying into new territory. Delta's alliance with SkyTeam extends the airline's reach to more than 900 destinations in 170-plus countries around the globe. The company gets a boost in global coverage with airlines around the world coming aboard the SkyTeam alliance. Delta has five joint ventures with foreign carriers.

## **Company social responsibility**

The company is dedicated to being the best airline in the eyes of our customers. It will provide value and distinctive products to their customers, a superior return for investors and challenging

and rewarding work for Delta people in an environment that respects and values their contributions.

Building lasting relationships with their customers is one of Delta's priorities. To do this, they strive each day to provide the safest, most reliable and convenient experience possible on every flight and through every interaction. This includes calls to their Customer Engagement Centers and customer inquiries through social media. Delta continues to enhance the travel experience through innovation, streamlined security procedures and an unrelenting focus on safety. They also continue to invest in customer-facing employees, providing training to more than 9,000 of them during 2018 to further enhance customer interactions.

Additional keys to keeping satisfaction high during extraordinary circumstances have been advance planning, proactive communication and support in airports for impacted customers. For example, when severe weather or other events disrupt operations, Delta may issue a travel waiver to give customers the chance to take alternate flights without paying a change fee. To make it easier for customers to know when a waiver is available, Delta now notifies customers via email or text when they are traveling from, through or to a market with a waiver. A pilot test of the tool drove a significant increase in customer satisfaction scores.



As a responsible business, we remain mindful of the impact of our global decisions. Nowhere is this clearer than in our view and approach to reducing carbon emissions and managing our environmental impacts. Environmental responsibility at Delta includes not only quantifying and



reducing our emissions that result primarily from the burning of jet fuel, but also minimizing the impact of activities throughout our global business.

CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS			
 GOAL	Improve fuel efficiency by an average of 1.5 percent per year	Achieve carbon-neutral growth on international aircraft emissions	Reduce net aviation CO <sub>2</sub> emissions by 50 percent, relative to 2005 emissions levels
 HORIZON	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
 TIME-FRAME	2009-2020	2021-2035	By 2050
 HOW IT IS MEASURED	Fuel needed to carry a set amount of weight a certain distance (expressed as gallons per 100 revenue ton miles)	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions for international flights from 2021 onward	Net aircraft emissions in 2050 compared to 2005
 WHAT DELTA IS DOING	Fleet upgrades, rightsizing onboard provisions to decrease weight, reducing auxiliary power unit use (see page 50)	Carbon offsets (see pages 52-53)	Annual fuel savings initiatives (see page 50)
 OUR PROGRESS	9.16% improvement since 2009; 1.02% average per year	Carbon-neutral growth on international, domestic and ground emissions since 2012	11% reduction since 2005

### **Delta airlines segments:**

- 1-The passenger segment
- 2-The cargo segment
- 3-Baggage fee
- 4-Ticket change fees
- 5-Aircraft maintenance
- 6-Repair and overhaul
- 7-Staffing services for third parties

8-Vacation packages

9-Private jet operations

**The target segment is the passenger segment, the company derives 87.2% of its revenue from it.**

### **Delta's geographic segments:**

1-Domestic region

2-Atlantic region

3-Pacific region

4-Latin America region

**The company's domestic revenue accounts for 65.8% of its total revenue.**

### **Marketing environment of Delta airlines and its components**

As mentioned previously, every year Delta Airlines serves more than 180 million customers and offers service to 323 destinations across six continents in 59 countries. Today the company employs more than 80,000 people worldwide. Its mainline fleet has more than 800 aircraft. Its main focus is making the customers' experience on the ground as good as in the air.

### **Micro marketing**

#### **Product/Services:**

Delta airlines also offers a wide range of premium services. Leading inflight products and services provided by Delta include Delta Comfort+, Delta One amongst many more, and nearly all include several premium conveniences like snacks and complimentary beverages on most flights. Added to that Delta Premium select is a superior economy cabin (available only on select international routes of Delta airlines) and some of the premium conveniences included are a dedicated flight attendant, high-resolution entertainment screen as well as TUMI amenities and priority Sky service. Delta also offers Basic Economy (E booking class) services. Lastly, Other services by Delta airlines include Delta cargo, shuttles, private jets and Delta vacations. The company also offers special services for passengers with disabilities.

#### **Place:**

Delta airlines' head office is in Atlanta, Georgia. The main hubs in the operations of Delta airlines include airports in Amsterdam, Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, London-Heathrow, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York-LaGuardia, New York-JFK, Paris-Charles de Gaulle, Salt Lake City, São Paulo, Seattle, Seoul-Incheon and Tokyo-Narita.

Monroe is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Delta Airlines which has its operations in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and operates the Trainer refinery facility. It includes pipelines, terminals, and terminal assets which allow the refinery to supply jet fuel to Delta's airline.

### **Price:**

Striving to maintain the strategy of a customer-oriented airline business, Delta offers flight services at various costs, the company has offered a large range of premium services targeted at leisure, "normal" travelers. In this way, Delta's flight services are available to customers at various price points based upon their preferences. Luckily, its wide range of premium services has helped attract wealthy customers as well in large numbers, and manage the price competition in the industry.

### **Promotion:**

Its website and app are the main focus of marketing and promotions for Delta airlines since they are used by the leading players in the Airline industry. Currently focusing strongly on social media for promotions, publicity and sharing information with passengers and followers throughout the globe. Apart from digital promotions, the company also uses other channels to gain publicity like fashion shows and art projects. All its efforts to enhance the customer experience. Delta airlines also invests heavily in CSR (Corporate social responsibility) and sustainability for instance their latest brand campaign "same flight" which promotes diversity and inclusivity.

### **People:**

Alongside hiring skilled pilots other staff members that make up the workforce include Flight attendants, ground support personnel and other personnel. Delta prioritizes focus on human resource management, diversity and inclusion to maintain an employee-customer friendly work culture.

## **Macro marketing**

### **Economic:**

The performance of the airline brands depends a lot on the global economic scenario. As the condition of the economy, so will be the profits and revenue of the airlines brands. Now, the recession is over and the condition of employment has improved which means increased business for the airlines industry. A rising middle class is also good news for airlines brands like Delta as it means more and more people are using air travel for tours as well as business travel.

### **Technological:**

Including its website and mobile application, Delta realizes that it must constantly improve on its existing technology. But more recently Delta is branching out into new technologies in ways not applied to aviation with such focus. These technological advancements are available through collaborations with other companies and they include:

#### **Robotics**

The airline is partnering with Sarcos Robotics to utilize exoskeletal robotics to help aid employees with lifting luggage and other heavy objects. By becoming an initial member of a new Exoskeleton Technical Advisory Group (X-TAG)

#### **Seamless Air Alliance**

Delta Air Lines is also a founding member of the new Seamless Air Alliance, in partnership with Airbus, Airtel, OneWeb and Sprint which promises to improve internet access both in the air and on the ground.

#### **Advanced Turbulence Avoidance System**

Turbulence is a serious threat to flight safety and costs airlines approximately \$100 million a year. Delta developed a Flight Weather Viewer app, through a partnership with Basic Commerce and Industries (BCI), which can accurately plot turbulence and issues live updates to pilots in the cabin, as well as to flight dispatchers and Delta's team of meteorologists in headquarters, allowing for quick flight-path changes when a threat arises.

#### **Launching the first-ever facial recognition biometric terminal in the US**

Delta customers flying internationally out of Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport's Terminal F now have the option to use facial biometrics instead of a boarding pass or government-issued ID to check in, check a bag, pass through security and board their flight.

### **Political:**

Delta's business spans several countries and as such the government and the political environment of these countries can have a direct and deep impact on the business of Delta airlines. In the US with the deregulation of 1978, several major hindrances were eliminated which reduced the barriers before the airlines industry. The situation differs amongst the different nations. Several markets are still highly regulated and restrictive in terms of business. In such markets the hurdles to profitable business are bigger. However, Several governments have noted this factor and therefore eased the government regulations to make the environment more suitable for airlines business as there are economic benefits of airlines for countries.

### **Legal:**

Even after the deregulation in 1978, there is a large web of laws that affects airlines companies domestically and internationally. There are several legal risks and the airlines have to do their best to remain compliant. In 2017, Delta signed a settlement agreement with OSHA to protect workers that operate baggage-handling vehicles. These settlement agreements are considered highly effective tools used to ensure that the companies address the hazards that can kill the workers.

### **Social:**

Delta's plan future-wise is to focus on the millennial generation as they currently dominate the demand for air travel. Additionally, there is a mutually beneficial relationship between the society and the airlines industry as the airlines industry is a large employer globally.

Delta airlines alone employs more than 80,000 people. The entire society including businesses and people are benefited by the wide network of flights globally.

### **Environmental:**

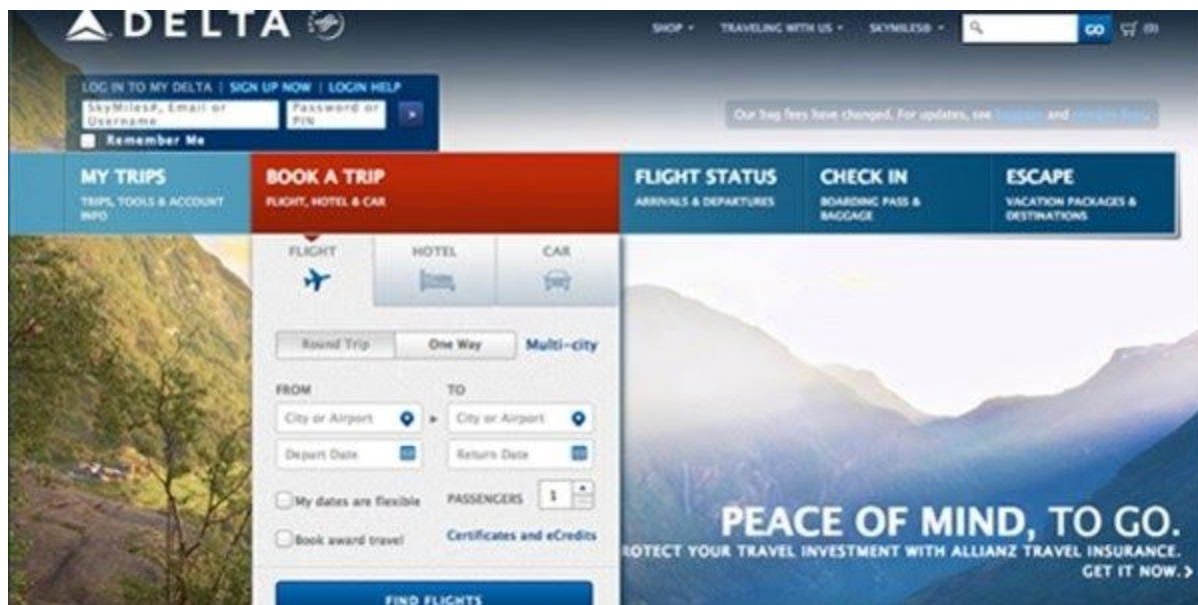
The airlines industry is responsible for around 2% of the entire emissions globally. Sustainability is an important concern for the airlines companies just like the other businesses across the world. Delta has started several initiatives across its operations to cut down on its CO2 emissions.

## **Pricing**

As Delta Airlines compete in a highly competitive market choosing the proper pricing strategy is a challenge in order to remain competitive, cover up costs, sustain growth and satisfy customer needs keeping up with the quality standards and reputation. Specially that as the airlines operate internationally, it has to keep in consideration different currencies, different government regulations and economic situations. Prices highly depend on fuel prices, therefore a fuel hedging program is used to minimise the risks of the fluctuating fuel prices as the fuel prices is one of the most effective costs for running the business. Delta Airlines offer a variety of services at different price ranges in order to satisfy different passengers preferences.

## **Delta Airlines Online:**

Delta Airlines is one of the leading companies in using the internet for booking tickets and offers a vast variety of services. Delta airlines have an official website that offers a brief history and a summary about the company, rules and regulations, departments. The website gives passengers the chance of looking through numerous offered services with all details required from their homes and book and pay for them online. It is even possible to check in online and choose your seat on the plane while booking. Online customer services and chatbots are even founded. The e-services are available and reachable from all over the world with different languages and accepting different currencies. As Delta airlines works hard to keep up to date they launched a mobile app which is available on playstore and apple store so passengers can easily keep on track on their bookings and make changes anywhere and any time. The applications offer the same services as in the website and even more friendly to use.



## **Opinion**

**To what extent does your company believe in marketing? Is the marketing a function like any other inside the company or the backbone of success? Justify.**

Delta's marketing department is considered it's one of the most important functions in the company. As the completions continued to grow, they realized that diversity, inclusiveness and catering to a wider span of consumers price-wise is the only way to success.

In the beginning the airline struggled with catering to the leisure travelers i.e. ppl with families or friends or flying solo. Since these types of travelers are where the minority of the profit comes from as they plan in advance to get the best deals and their consternation is more on the price of the ticket rather than the duration or comfort of their flight. Unlike the business travelers that were the more profitable sector for the airline as they were willing to pay the set price and buy the tickets at a later time. Their concentration is on getting to the destination fast. Until now the business traveler is Delta's most important customer and it's where it excels above other competitors whose main focus is on the normal "leisure" traveler. However, Delta realized that catering to the "common" leisure sector is important and it went from offering only three seating choices when flying: coach, business or first class to offering six different cabin services to choose from. They are continuously trying to achieve this by lowering costs and increasing mile deals through collaborations with other companies. Also increasing the legroom, providing more comfortable seats and more diverse meals catering to different pallets and food sensitivities. All to show inclusiveness and expand the customer range.

In an effort to promote diversity and try to join the conversation their latest brand campaign "same flight" shows delta invites viewers (in this case also consumers) of different languages, beliefs, customs and nationalities to use their airline to venture out into the world and seek adventure. Also, to promote equality and diversity the company also places a heavy focus on diversity when hiring employees to maintain a friendly work culture.

They are constantly promoting the airline through magazines, tv ads, billboards, street art, their website and lately using social media to connect with consumers and get feedback on flights and ways to improve service. They among other airline companies are promoting their flights through collaborations and offers to trending celebrities and influencers who have millions of followers. These influencers would sell the "experience" to their followers increasing airlines' revenues.

**Your recommendations after analyzing your company.**

I would suggest putting more effort into “normal” people but the company is already aware and making the effort of offering deals and miles through the usage of other products and services unrelated to the airline itself through collaboration.

### **What’s marketing is all about??**

Delta’s focus has always been upon operational efficiency, customer service, and customer experience. They market their “premium experience” through their websites and multiple outlets, and currently through social media. facilitating the more costly delta services including Delta Comfort+, Delta One and Delta Premium Select, for the leisure customer through decreasing the cost of the tickets by earning miles through collaborations with other different businesses such as Lyft, restaurants and credit card using from certain banks. The airline’s most engaging marketing events include a fashion show to unveil Delta’s new uniforms, a collaborative art project with Seattle pro soccer team Sounders FC and interactive booths during the Oscars and Emmys pre-party. The events provide attendees with an interactive element, like the virtual dressing room at the uniform event, to get a hands-on experience with the brand.

### **Is it a smart company? Is it a proactive company?**

For a company to be proactive and smart it must put emphasis on forward- thinking strategic planning, and strive to be different and innovative in ways to carry out their business. This is accomplished through strategic planning, having a smart business model whilst utilizing smart technology and individuals.

That’s shown in Delta airlines CEO Ed Bastian efforts to use technology to improve the flying experience. One of these technological improvements is their constant effort to upgrade their Fly Delta application. Their newest feature on the app is that you’ll be informed about when your group is boarding, which security checkpoint at the airport would be best for you, given which gate you’re leaving from. the app may soon let you choose seats through an AR experience and may feature proactive weather alerts that could affect your future flights.

Also previously mentioned, the extended partnership with Lyft, one of the high rising American ridesharing companies, will allow you earn flight miles when booking Lyft rides as well as the ability to use frequent flier miles to pay for rides.

The company also acknowledges the value of Parallel Reality and what it would bring to its customers’ experience. Where the technology can be used to create seamless, engaging and personalized experiences in nearly any out-of-home venue — ranging from stadiums to theme parks to convention centers and more.

They are planning to enhance their passengers’ “binging” experience, they decided to add a “binge button” that will let you watch entire seasons of a show uninterrupted.



Also, to improve their employees' work experience and help aid them, they are partnering with Sarcos Robotics, to help its employees for lifting heavy objects. The exoskeleton could help an employee lift up to 200 pounds repeatedly for up to eight hours without fatigue.

Since delta airlines main focus is on Business Travelers, they are the most profitable sector for the company. They predict that the “millennial traveler” aka. customers under 35 are the future of airline revenue success. Therefore, this is why Delta is subtly — and not so subtly — trying to recruit younger travelers not only from the nation’s most formidable employers, including elite consulting firms, but also from universities. The reason behind this prediction is that delta is seeing younger travelers break from norms set by older consumers as they prefer experiences rather than tactile goods, and that trend should be favorable for all airlines. So, their future plan is to provide the millennial traveler with sought-after premium products, such as seats with extra legroom and first-class upgrades and reliable Wi-Fi. Their proof is that first class revenues from all customers increased 23 percent in November, year-over-year, as more customers have bought-up to a better experience.

Minor changes to try to interest younger customers is to emulate other tech-savvy retailers, such as Amazon, and let consumers make one-click purchases, wherever convenient. And also making its design as simple and easy-to-understand as Apple.

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