

Title:

Airline Customer Service Careers

Word Count:

647

Summary:

The US airline industry appears to be getting out of its long term slump. New carriers have taken flight and several discount carriers are continuing to grow in size and influence. Opportunities for airline customer service personnel continues to improve; please read on for some tips as to where to look for employment.

Keywords:

airline jobs, ramp agents, passenger service agents, customer service agents, baggage handlers, EOS

Article Body:

The US airline industry is gradually moving away from all the bloodletting that brought about the bankruptcy of four major carriers over the past several years while at the same time marked the emergence of many discount carriers into the forefront of the business. Indeed, the face of commercial aviation has changed dramatically over the past decade and it now appears that the worst is behind us. This does not mean that further layoffs and downsizings are not possible, but for the person seeking a customer service career in the aviation industry, the future has brightened considerably.

Customer service opportunities with the airlines includes the following job titles: reservation agents, ramp agents, line service technicians, customer service agents, baggage handlers, and various management positions including station manager, customer service manager, and airport operations manager. Similar job titles exist, but for the sake of brevity in using the term "airline customer service" I mean those ground personnel tasked with assisting customers as they get to and from their destinations.

So, exactly who is hiring? Well, on any given day just about everyone could be. The turn over rate for customer service personnel can be high, depending on the airline and the working conditions. To make it easier on you, the following is a break down of the various airlines who hire customer service agents. In most cases you will work directly for the airline but in some cases a position may be with a vendor or for the airport authority itself.

**Legacy Carriers** - American, Continental, Delta, Northwest, United, and USAir all qualify as legacy carriers. Simply defined these are the carriers that helped the airline industry get its start in the U.S. Out of the six listed, only American and Continental have avoided bankruptcy. Thus, a career with a legacy carrier can be a risky proposition.

**Foreign Carriers** - Many foreign carriers fly in and out of the U.S. and are worth a look. Depending on the carrier selected, you may be required to speak the language of the carrier's country in addition to speaking English. Chief carriers include: Air Canada, Mexicana, Air France, British Airways, Japan Airlines, Korean Airlines, KLM, Lufthansa, and flag carriers as well as discount carriers from dozens of countries from around the globe.

**Discount Carriers** - Some of the strongest carriers in operation today are discount airlines. Two of the best are Southwest and JetBlue, both of which are expanding and are hiring on a regular basis. Other discount carriers include: Spirit, USA3000, and many small more regional carriers.

**Regional Operators** - Working as "feeder" airlines for the big carriers, regional operators include Colgan, Republic, Shuttle America, American Eagle, Comair, and Great Lakes. Some of these carriers are awash in cash with very promising futures.

**Charter Carriers** - A few airlines fly chartered flights principally although some have scheduled flights too. Some of the more noted charter operators include: Miami Air, Xtra Airways, and Sun Country.

**Cargo Carriers** -- Not every carrier moves people. Some carriers move goods, merchandise, and equipment. Customer service jobs as sales agents and equipment handlers are an option for potential employees. Chief cargo companies include: DHL, FEDEX, UPS, Emery Worldwide, and Amerijet.

Two recently launched carriers, EOS Airlines and Maxjet Airways, went through a hiring surge immediately preceding their first flights in Autumn 2005. As with any start up, long term career possibilities are a big question as most start ups eventually fail.

In all, the opportunities for you in the airline industry have improved. While pay for hourly workers is generally low the benefits, including flight privileges, are usually fairly good. In spite of everything, the airline industry remains a point of interest for so many people and with decreasing fuel prices and strength in the economy, the job market for customer service

personnel is on an upswing.