

Main Topics Discussed:

- Delta is not hiring in 2021
- Conditional job offers
- Fleet simplification
- 2021 goals
- Health and safety are the road to recovery

On March 10th, 2021 NGPA's Brian Gambino (President) and Troy Merritt (NGPA Vice President) hosted Delta's contributors Captain Patrick Burns (Vice President of Flight Operations and System Chief Pilot), First Officer Iyob Makonnen (Manager- Pilot Selection), and Kelvin Mason (Manager-Propel).

To answer the million-dollar question: Delta has no plans to hire in 2021. There has been a rumor floating around about them hiring 1500 pilots beginning at the end of 2021 and, while this cannot be confirmed or denied by First Officer Makonnen, it is not a very realistic rumor per Captain Burns. They continually reassess, but it does not appear Delta will be hiring before Summer 2022/23.

Delta currently employs 12,648 pilots. 1800 pilots accepted an early retirement package, the company had 0 involuntary pilot furloughs, and 17 pilots transitioned to non-flying positions in response to recovery efforts. The company is currently blocking middle seats through (at least) April 30, 2021 and maintains the ability to increase operations rapidly, using current crew members, by simply selling the remaining third of seats.

No specific number was released, but there were pilots with conditional job offers on the table when the pandemic hit. While CJOs are paused, the company is in touch and intends to go forward with hiring logistics as recovery takes hold and customers feel comfortable flying again. There will be retirements on the horizon, and they will welcome new candidates...eventually. It was a challenge for Delta to downsize and will be a challenge to reintegrate their employees, but they believe they have the resiliency to make it look effortless.

The company's revised goals for 2021 are: take care of their people (customers and employees), minimize cash burn, and do no long-term harm. They aim to pivot recovery efforts to growth as soon as the economy improves. While focusing on all aspects of customer experiences, they are investing in Seattle, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, and LaGuardia airports.

With new objectives in mind, they have also accelerated changes for a simpler and more efficient fleet. They will retire the Boeing 777, MD 88/90, and Boeing 737-700 by the end of the year. They also intend to retire the Boeing 767-300, Boeing 717, and CRJ-200 by the end of 2025. This will leave them with a simplified fleet of deliveries through 2026 including: Airbus 350, Airbus 330-900, Airbus 321 CEO and NEO, and the Airbus 220-100/300. Of course, they will continue flying the 737NG going forward.

Delta is confident the road to recovery begins with health and safety and has implemented high-risk pay protection for all employees to ensure employees at high-risk or with a high-risk family member will not have to worry about bringing the virus home. They are offering rapid testing in all 7 domiciles and mailing at-home testing kits to employees' homes, encouraging everyone to test weekly. They have also invested in contact tracing and focused on the quarantine process for those exposed. While Delta is consistently involved in community affairs, they made recent headlines by offering the Delta History Museum to accommodate one of the largest mass vaccination sites in the state of Georgia. CEO Ed Bastian stated, "Vaccinations are the most important thing we can accomplish to get our lives and economy back on track."

Kelvin discussed the Propel Program. There are 3 ways into the program and, on average, those from schools and from within the company will be a Delta pilot in 42 months. The 1st Propel participant is at a regional and expected to join the Delta team soon after hiring resumes.

The legacy carrier is not feeling at all threatened by the ultra-low-cost carriers. If anything, they believe pressure from the competition will have long-run benefits for the company as it has in the past. It will consistently allow them to up their operational excellence, improve upon their culture and relationships, and always bring their A game.

What can you do to stand out at Delta? Differentiate yourself. You are not alone in your currency, recency, or competitiveness and they understand the scenario. As Captain Burns said, "Be proud of where you are. Love the journey as much as the destination. Be in it for the right reason." They are looking for employees that demonstrate their "Rules of the Road" including honesty, respect, perseverance, and servant leadership.

Be sure to submit your application and internal recommendations through Airline Apps. They also highly encourage following their Delta Air Lines Pilot Recruiting Page on Facebook to interact, have questions answered, and for the latest hiring information.

<https://www.facebook.com/deltapilotrecruiting/>