

Air Transportation – A Management Perspective

by *Jonh G. Wensveen*

Text books about civil aviation and air transportation are published rather frequently. John G. Wensveen has added a comprehensive that provides readers with valuable expert views of today's air transportation industry. A little more focus remains a recommendation though.

Book review by Willem-Jan Zondag

The air transport industry is such a complex industry that it deserves high quality text books to properly instruct students and other (prospective) employees. Providing an overview of all relevant industrial and organizational airline business issues, however, is not an easy task. John Wensveen is the author of the successful volume 'Air Transportation – A Management Perspective'. Although the sixth edition of this book was recently published, it is only the first time that this book is discussed in Airlines.

Point of origin for the content of the book is the definition of the term 'air transportation'. As explained in the first part of the book, air transportation covers 'all civil flying performed by certificated air carriers and general aviation'. Hence, a chapter is dedicated to general aviation, while other chapters deal with US regulators and associations, with a historical perspective, and with international developments.

The focus of the book is on the airline business, and on the business of legacy carriers in particular. The book pays in-depth attention to such topics as airline management & organization, forecasting methods, passenger marketing, pricing, demand & output determinants, air cargo, scheduling, fleet planning, labor relations and finance. This summary of the table of content also makes clear that this book provides its readers with a bird's eye view on topics that are relevant in today's airline business. Students who concentrate on reading chapters 7-15 will get invaluable insight in the ins and outs of running an airline today.

A valuable addition is chapter sixteen, which deals with international developments, and the legal framework in particular, in which international airlines operate today. Unfortunately, this chapter lacks a discussion on the differences between deregulation and open skies, as well as an elucidation on the impact of the recent US-EU air transport treaty.

Given the author's entrepreneurial background, it appears to be strange that his book is focused on students who want to

become an employee of an existing airline. Nothing is said about starting up an airline (!). The inclusion of Wensveen's expertise on start-ups would have really added value to the existing literature on airline business and management.

My recommendation for improvement for the seventh edition of the book is to skip the first part, as well as skipping the appendices. Although these chapters are interesting reading material, their added value is relatively limited. This will not only save 165 pages (of the book's current 568 pages), it will also make room for various highly relevant topics like 'the start-up of an airline', the differences of running a low-cost airline business (nothing is said about that either). A more focused book on, let's say, 'Airline Business – A Management Perspective', is recommended. It would also make sense to update the chapter on air cargo – the nature and complexity of that business deserves more attention, while nothing is said on engineering and maintenance at all. In conclusion, the book is very much focused on the US, and, thus, a more international scope would be desirable for a possible new edition.

About the Author

Dr. John Wensveen is president & CEO of Airlinvisions. He has been Vice-president of MAXjet Airways and professor of Airline Management and operations at Embry-Riddle University.

About the Reviewer

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About the Book

Title: Air Transportation - A Management Perspective

Author: John G. Wensveen

Publisher: Ashgate

ISBN: 0 7546 7165 8

Publication Date: 11/2007

