



BUY UNION

How to fly union

Delta and JetBlue are nonunion outliers in a mostly union industry

By Don McIntosh

At a time when just 6.7 percent of America's private sector workers belong to a union, passenger airlines are one of the few remaining heavily-unionized industries. Three of the top four carriers are at or above 80 percent unionized. Their union contracts set an industry standard and give workers job security and good enough pay and benefits that they can enjoy a comfortable middle class standard of living. For example, under a collective bargaining agreement ratified in August at United Airlines, flight attendant base pay starts at \$26.68 an hour and tops out at \$62 an hour after 13 years of service.

Airlines right now are taking in record profits — \$24 billion industry-wide in the last four calendar quarters. The profit surge is made possible by the fact that fuel prices plunged a few years ago, but ticket prices stayed about the same. That's just what you'd expect in an oligopoly where just four airlines control 69 percent of total market share and the top seven air-

lines have 82 percent of the market, according to the latest numbers from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

But they're not all the same: Two of the top seven have worked hard to keep unions down and out — Delta and JetBlue.

Delta, the nation's third largest carrier, has long fought to remain nonunion. After Northwest Airlines merged into Delta, Northwest flight attendants and ground crews lost their unions. Just one-sixth of Delta workers today are union-represented — pilots and dispatchers. Delta does have a regional subsidiary, Envoy Air, where flight attendants, pilots and dispatchers are union. And workers at a Pennsylvania jet fuel refinery owned by another Delta subsidiary are represented by United Steel Workers.

Meanwhile, JetBlue, the #2 low-cost carrier after Southwest, has never yet signed a union contract. After two failed efforts to unionize, JetBlue pilots succeeded in winning union representation in April 2014 by a 74 percent margin. But the union has yet to reach agreement over a first contract with JetBlue.

Airlines	Market Share	Percent Unionized	Unions
American	19.6%	82	APA 12,800 pilots APFA 24,100 flight attendants CWA/IBT 16,500 passenger service TWU/IAM 30,430 fleet service, mechanics, etc.
Southwest	18.2%	83	SWAPA 7,600 pilots TWU 13,100 flight attendants TWU 11,387 ramp, operations, dispatch IAM 6,390 customer service AMFA 2,540 mechanics IBT 330 stock clerks, simulator techs
Delta	16.9%	18	ALPA 12,080 pilots PAFCA 400 dispatchers
United	14.4%	80	ALPA 11,204 pilots AFA 21,078 flight attendants IAM 25,456 fleet service, passenger service, storekeepers, etc. IBT 8,899 technicians PAFCA 383 dispatchers
JetBlue	5.4%	18	ALPA 2,857 pilots
Alaska	4.6%	83	ALPA 1,697 pilots AFA 3,660 flight attendants IAM 3,546 passenger service, clerical, ramp service, stock clerks AMFA 665 mechanics, inspectors, cleaners TWU 44 dispatchers
Spirit	2.9%	73	ALPA 1,266 pilots AFA 2,075 flight attendants IAM 190 ramp service agents (Fort Lauderdale only) TWU 35 dispatchers

Market share is from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics, and is based on revenue passenger miles from August 2015 to July 2016. Union percentage is as of Dec. 31, 2015, and comes from the 2015 10-K reports filed by each company with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

- AFA** - Association of Flight Attendants, a division of CWA, AFL-CIO
- ALPA** - Air Line Pilots Association, AFL-CIO
- AMFA** - Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (independent union)
- APA** - Allied Pilots Association (independent union, only at American Airlines)
- APFA** - Association of Professional Flight Attendants (independent union, only at American Airlines)
- CWA** - Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO
- IAM** - International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO
- IBT** - International Brotherhood of Teamsters (independent union)
- PAFCA** - Professional Airline Flight Control Association (independent union)
- TWU** - Transport Workers Union, AFL-CIO
- SWAPA** - Southwest Airlines Pilots Association (independent union, only at Southwest Airlines)

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