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## Finding your way in a wild new world pdf

Photo Courtesy: Elena Buzmakova(borisova)/Pexels Flight attendants have seemed glamorous for decades, starting with the romance of the Pan Am stewardesses back when commercial flight first became doable. Since then, countless people who love to travel have dreamed of working in the airline industry. And it's easy, right? Just push around a cart and buckle seat belts. Wrong. Being a flight attendant is one of the most difficult jobs out there, from the entry requirements to the day-to-day work, and it comes with some wild drawbacks — and advantages — you'd never imagine. The position of flight attendant is a coveted role, which means that there are plenty of applicants but not enough positions to go around. Because of that, airlines use strict rules and requirements as a way to narrow down the list. Photo Courtesy: Petar Milošević/Wikipedia Unfortunately, those strict rules and parameters can make it nearly impossible to get the job, with some people claiming that it's easier to get into Harvard than to get a job as a flight attendant. Since thousands of people often apply for a single opening, that's not too surprising. If you actually manage to land the job, you now have to undergo six to eight weeks of (usually) unpaid intensive training for every single worst-case scenario that might arise in the skies. You're put through crash simulations in planes that shake and fill with smoke. Photo Courtesy: marciesobol/Twitter You need to learn how to work the safety equipment, such as inflatable ramps, rafts and more, become proficient in self-defense and to memorize the entire layout of every aircraft the airline owns. You also have to take tests daily, and if you fail, you won't become a flight attendant. There are several reasons why housing can be a real challenge as a flight attendant. The first is that the salaries aren't great, so having money for rent isn't as easy. More challenging still is that you aren't always based out of your own city. Photo Courtesy: Brandon Griggs/Unsplash Because renting multiple apartments in expensive major cities often isn't practical, flight attendants sometimes band together to rent a place. It's cheaper and more comfortable than constantly staying in hotels, and they mostly just need a place to catch some shuteye between flights. If that all seems terrible, remember that one of the biggest perks of being a flight attendant is all the places you get to see. You're likely to be based out of the largest city on your route, so if urban life is for you, it could be a good time. Photo Courtesy: Harley-Davidson/Unsplash Depending on the routes you fly, you might be able to regularly visit all sorts of exciting domestic or foreign destinations. You might get to spend an evening out in Vegas or taking in the sights of Paris. The downside of all that travel is the insane schedule. Flights attendants are often on call, meaning they have to be ready to fly and near enough to the airport that they can get there and go in less than two hours. Photo Courtesy: Collins Lesulie/Unsplash Most flight attendants don't have a set schedule in terms of time of day (or night) or days of the week that they fly, which can complicate every other aspect of their lives. That also means that even when flight attendants aren't actively working, they often need to remain in a state of anticipation for whenever the call comes. Jetlag is still a thing for flight attendants. While they're certainly more experienced in coping with it, human biology can adapt so far to constantly shifting daylight hours and windows for sleep. Photo Courtesy: Joyce Romero/Unsplash A lot of flight attendants struggle with insomnia, chronic exhaustion and other issues. It often becomes impossible for them to sleep for more than a few hours at a time due to the stress and frequent changes in routine caused by the job. With the crazy schedule, weird hours, constant coming and going, and of course, difficulty sleeping, it can be hard to maintain healthy relationships as a flight attendant. You may have to miss family events, which can breed resentment. Photo Courtesy: Simon Rae/Unsplash Meeting new people to date can be easy, but seeing them more than once can be tough. It's especially difficult to be a parent while working as a flight attendant since you likely won't be there for many important life events. When you think about the number of hours that a flight attendant spends at work, you'd probably assume that they make a decent amount of money if only because of how long they work. The reality, however, is that they aren't paid for all the time they work — instead, they're paid only for flight hours. Photo Courtesy: Oxfordian Kissuth/Wikipedia That means that until the doors on the airplane close, they're not making money. If a flight is delayed, flight attendants aren't paid for that time. They're also not paid for those hours of pre-flight checks in the cabin, nor even during boarding time. And speaking of pay, the paycheck as a new flight attendant isn't as great as you'd think. In reality, they often only bring in about \$17 per flight hour, which works out to only around \$25,000 a year. Photo Courtesy: Sharon McCutcheon/Unsplash The pay is so bad that many flight attendants need other side gigs to make ends meet, which in turn is made more difficult by their erratic schedules. Because so many people dream of being flight attendants, however, airlines feel little pressure to raise their pay. Another upside for flight attendants is that when they do get to take a real vacation, they generally pay less. Airline workers get discounted or even free flight tickets as well as discounts from select hotels, resorts and even tourist attractions as a perk of being cabin crew. Photo Courtesy: Chen Mizrach/Unsplash They can even get cheaper tickets for family to travel with them, which is a huge bonus. Flight attendants often use these perks to see more distant family, visit new cities, return to old haunts or just to travel on a whim. One of the many issues flight attendants can potentially face is terrorism. While this is obviously a rare occurrence, it remains a possibility that they must remain aware of every day on the job. Photo Courtesy: Anthony Fomin/Unsplash While the TSA always seems to be rolling out new safety regulations, flight attendants need to be prepared for them to fail. While they receive training on how to respond to all sorts of terrorist scenarios, no matter how much they prepare, the possibility things will take a turn for the worse is just something they have to live with. One of the best things about being a flight attendant — assuming you like trying new things — is that pretty much every day, you experience something new. Every flight is different from every other flight. You work with different cabin crew on many flights and meet new people a few times a day. Photo Courtesy: William Bout/Unsplash And as you work in the industry, you experience new places, try new things, travel to new places, and even learn new languages. Many flight attendants must be bi-lingual for international flights, and many airlines encourage cabin crew to learn multiple languages for versatility. Of course, one of the downsides of meeting new people all the time is that said new people sometimes think you're looking for someone to flirt with. Many flight attendants have been propositioned by passengers, regardless of their or the passenger's gender. Photo Courtesy: Rich Gallo/Wikipedia The old mindset of flight attendants as servants with pretty faces is sadly still very much a thing. Pan Am may no longer be in business, but many passengers don't seem to care that flight attendants are hard at work and not looking for a date. Flight attendants are required by airlines to have a weight that is "proportionate to your height." They usually require your body-mass index (BMI) be between 19 to 24.9, with anything higher being unacceptable. That's harsher than what most doctors recommend. Photo Courtesy: Gartreezy/Twitter You typically receive a warning to lose the extra weight before a certain deadline, but if not, you can kiss your dreams of flying goodbye. Sometimes, there isn't even that much warning — you go over the maximum, you're out. Some airlines, such as Jet Airways and Qatar Airways, do not accept applications from married people unless the person in question is an experienced flight attendant. Some airlines have fired cabin crew who married or became pregnant within the first five years of employment. Photo Courtesy: Public Domain/Wikipedia The U.N. condemned this practice for violating the terms of theInternational Labour Organization, so most airlines have phased out this outdated rule. However, some are still holding firm to their old standards. When you become a flight attendant, you often find that passengers think you're the barkeeper on the airplane. Flight attendants serve drinks on the plane, but they also get unloaded on by emotionally vulnerable people. Photo Courtesy: Steven Thompson/Unsplash Folks boarding flights are often in a very emotional state as the result of having to say goodbye to a loved one, attending a wedding or other life events. The high altitude also results in dehydration, which in turn increases emotional volatility. While it's true that flight attendants can use layovers as miniature vacations in exotic locations, they often don't get to fully exploit those opportunities. Most of the time, layovers are between 10 and 18 hours, which sometimes only gives them enough time to grab some food and pass out on the hotel bed. Photo Courtesy: Priscilla Du Preez/Unsplash If flight attendants are on call, it's even worse. They may have only 15 minutes to return a call to get to work, and they need to be ready to hook it back to the airport immediately afterward. That doesn't leave time for taking time, going out into the wilderness for hiking or anything else like that. Potential threat of terrorism aside, there's also the possibility of more mundane yet potentiall far stranger drama in the air. Weird accidents happen, such as one man who set his hair on fire while smoking crack in a lavatory, and even the most law-abiding citizens may act out due to exhaustion or boredom. Photo Courtesy: Daniel Eledut/Unsplash In short, you're trapped in a giant metal tube with dozens or even hundreds of strangers who are capable of just about anything. Plus, there's always the chance a medical emergency or mechanical failure will cause a situation. If you happen to be someone who gets bored easily, then being a flight attendant could be just the thing for you. The schedule for work is extremely varied and usually comes in monthly increments. While the inability to plan can be too much of a hindrance for some, or others, it's an opportunity to live a fast-paced and exciting life. Photo Courtesy: Bundesarchiv/Wikipedia With changing destinations, co-workers, passengers and protocols, there's always something new around the corner. At the same time, however, friends in the industry and the various cities you visit can be a source of support that don't change wherever you go in the world. Speaking of co-workers, your fellow flight attendants, pilots and other people in the airline industry are usually interesting people. They've often traveled the world, experienced new cultures and come from diverse backgrounds. Photo Courtesy: Russavia/Wikipedia They may hold PhDs in unusual topics or have no college degree at all. Many will have grown up in parts of the world you're not familiar with, while others will inspire you with the things they've overcome to get where they are. As you travel the world as a flight attendant, you'll meet people at airports, hotels, bars, restaurants and more. You'll literally have friends all over the routes you fly, and depending on the airline, that could mean much of the world. Photo Courtesy: JacobyClingman/Twitter While it's true that the flight attendant life makes it difficult to maintain close relationships, it also opens up the possibility of new ones that would never be possible outside of the industry. As a flight attendant, it's pretty easy to make new friends even if you otherwise struggle to meet people. Despite needing to memorize the technical details of aircraft and emergency landing evacuation procedures, flight attendants are often treated little better than servants by the passengers they serve. Photo Courtesy: Austrian Airlines/Wikipedia It can be frustrating to work so hard only to be treated like a glorified waiter or butler. Nonetheless, rude and demanding passengers are just part of the job, and flight attendants are expected to maintain a cheerful demeanor no how terrible the passengers are. While every would-be flight attendant dreams of getting to fly to exotic locations, not all of them get to do it. While international flights are a big part of the airline industry's business, many flights are domestic, and some aren't even that far. Photo Courtesy: JESHOOITS.COM/Unsplash You could fight to become a flight attendant and really see the country only to be assigned to flights ferrying people between smaller cities and a major travel hub like New York or San Francisco. The hub itself might not even be that glamorous — Newark, New Jersey, for instance, isn't exactly a major tourist destination even if millions of people pass through its airport. One of the biggest advantages of this line of work is that not only are you never stuck in an office cubicle, but you get views that no office window could hope to rival. When the cruising altitude of your job is between 31,000 and 38,000 feet, you get to see endlessly beautiful views. Photo Courtesy: Charu Chaturvedi/Unsplash You may get a chance to see natural wonders like the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef or the northern lights in a way most people never get to. Majestic sunsets and awesomely terrifying thunderstorms are also just another day at work. While airline Instagram pictures from work may look glamorous, the long hours required of a flight attendant are anything but. In addition to unpaid travel time to the airport, pre-flight briefings, security checks, boarding and the ever-real possibility of delays, the flights themselves can sometimes last up to 16 hours. That's a long shift for anyone. Photo Courtesy: Tim Mossholder/Unsplash Flight attendants also don't get the usual half hour lunch and two 15 minute breaks that many people working an eight hour shift get. Instead, they get 20 minutes every 12 hours. As noted before, flight attendants often don't get the sleep they need. However, that's just the start of their health problems. Lack of sleep can cause their metabolic rates to decrease, which leads to weight gain even while they need to mind their BMI. Pre-made food and unhealthy snacks only exacerbate the problem. Photo Courtesy: Matthew Henry/Unsplash Lack of sleep also gives flight attendants lowered immunity to viruses and bacteria. The job requires working in cramped quarters for hours with people who are sometimes sick, which means flight attendants' immune systems are under a lot of stress. If you've ever been on a long international flight, you've probably been tempted to take a nap to speed the trip along and hold off exhaustion. And since plane cabins are often on the colder side, you've probably been tempted to use one of the blankets provided on the plane. What's the harm?According to many flight attendants, the blankets, pillows and other bedding provided on planes often aren't washed between flights. Just because someone took the time to fold your blanket back up doesn't mean it was cleaned, so it might be better just to bear the chill. Photo Courtesy: Brina Blum/Unsplash A downside to working as a flight attendant that no one seems to talk about is how the job can cause premature aging. The recycled air and lack of humidity often result in dry skin, which over time can lead to wrinkles. Photo Courtesy: itsdougthepeg/Twitter Another common health and beauty problem comes from the frequent use of nail varnish and artificial nails. Flight attendants are often required to use nail polish, and frequent use can lead to nails becoming brittle. While flight attendants may not have the most competitive pay compared to other occupations, they're not completely without financial benefits. Beyond the other benefits mentioned above, many airlines offer retirement plans, including paid life insurance and long-term disability insurance. Photo Courtesy: Rita Franz/Wikipedia Depending on the employer, other perks can include free flights for family and discounts on a variety of hospitality services. While the benefits probably aren't enough to get someone into this line of work who wasn't already willing to overlook the major downsides of the job, they're still something. With how little flight attendants make, it's probably sometimes tempting to keep working even when they're feeling under the weather. However, doing so can lead to them being fired. Photo Courtesy: twinsfisch/Unsplash The cramped conditions on planes are perfect for spreading disease, so it's in airlines' best interests to protect their passengers and crew from getting sick. However, too many days of sick leave can also lead to termination, especially if they're taken during peak flight times like Thanksgiving.

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