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ATC 101 Career Research Essay

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Flight Attendant Career Research Essay

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Handbook*, “Major airlines are required by law to provide flight attendants for the safety and security of the traveling public. Although the primary job of the flight attendants is to ensure that security and safety regulations are followed, attendants also try to make flights comfortable and enjoyable for passengers” (BLS). To me, customer service is crucial, especially in a career like this one. I like having the responsibility of making sure I did everything I could do to make at least one person’s day a little bit brighter. I am interested in becoming a flight attendant not only because I believe it is a great opportunity to see the world, but because it is also a great opportunity to meet new people and to make flying a safe and enjoyable experience.

**Educational Plan and Career Overview**

I have made an appointment to meet with Counselor Jane Jepson to develop an educational plan for a Flight Attendant Associate in Science Degree. My goal is to complete the Basic and Advanced Flight Attendant Certificates first and then complete the degree within the next two years, so that I am able to begin applying for flight attendant positions as soon as I turn twenty or twenty-one. There are a few minimum requirements for becoming a flight attendant. The *BLS Occupational Handbook* notes that there is no maximum age, but applicants must be no younger than eighteen to twenty-one years of age to apply. The height requirement typically ranges from 5’2” to 6’ but some are some exceptions (BLS). Flight attendants must have correctable 20/20 vision, which means glasses or contacts are okay. Applicants must be able to pass both a physical examination and drug test. Their weight should be in proportion to their height, and they must be able to fit on a flight attendant jumpseat (Reiland). Applicants must also pass an extensive background check process that includes reviewing the last ten years of work history (BLS). According to the American Airlines’ website, applicants must be twenty-one-years old (AA).

**Training and Other Qualifications**

The *BLS Occupational Handbook* also notes, “Flight attendants must be certified by the FAA. A high school diploma or its equivalent is the minimum educational requirement, but airlines increasingly prefer applicants who have a college degree.” Having previous experience in customer service is also an added bonus. “Once hired, all candidates must undergo a period of formal training. The length of training, ranging from 3 to 6 weeks, depends on the size and type of carrier and takes place at the airline's flight training center. Airlines that do not operate training centers generally send new employees to the center of another airline. Some airlines may provide transportation to the training centers and an allowance for room, board, and school supplies, while other airlines charge individuals for training” (BLS).

**Job Outlook**

Since the tragic events that took place on 9/11, aviation jobs took a hit and the duties of being a flight attendant were altered. “Even after the terrorist attacks of September 11, few flight attendants quit their jobs to pursue a “safer” career. Some may have taken time off to reflect, but the vast majority continued to report for their flights and do their part to return the industry back to normal. If anything, flight attendants are more dedicated than ever to keeping the actions of the select few from disrupting their industry again” (Kirkwood 10). The airline industry has rebounded with the major airlines making a profit and the majority of airlines appear to be hiring.

**Earnings**

Although flight attendants do not make a large sum of money, they do get paid well and the benefits alone make everything worth it. “Median annual wages of flight attendants were $44,860 in 2015 (BLS). The lowest 10 percent earned less than $25,930, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $72,090” (BLS). The best part of being a flight attendant though is the access to flight benefits for themselves and their immediate families, which provides free or discounted fares on their own airline and reduced fares on most other airlines. Some airlines require that the flight attendant be with an airline for 3 to 6 months before taking advantage of this benefit (BLS). Other benefits may include medical, dental, and life insurance; 401K or other retirement plan; sick leave; paid holidays; stock options; paid vacations; and tuition reimbursement. Flight attendants also receive a “per diem” allowance for meal expenses while on duty away from home” (BLS). Since my goal is travel to all seven continents, I look forward to using these flight benefits.

**Industry Trends**

The desire to become a flight attendant will continue to be popular as long as the desire of travel continues to play a role, making it very competitive to get into the industry. Employment of flight attendants is expected to grow by six percent, which is about as fast as the average for all occupations over the 2014–2024 period (BLS). Population growth and an improving economy are expected to boost the number of airline passengers. As the airlines continue to merge and increase their capacity to meet rising demand by increasing the number and size of planes in operation and the number of flights offered, more flight attendants will be needed (BLS).

**Summary**

Like many people, I have a passion for travel. There is something romantic that goes along with this industry. Although it is hard work and you have to be extremely reliable to be completely a flight attendant, I think that the experiences that I will gain will be worth everything in the long run. The places I will be able to visit, the relationships and memories I will be able to make are priceless. I cannot wait to become part of the airline industry.

***(See next page for sample Works Cited)***

Works Cited

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