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The Added Value of a Third Crewmember

a.k.a. Flight Attendant

FACTS® Training is often asked if there are research and data available to justify flight attendants on corporate aircraft. Over the years we have collected many anecdotal stories, heard of some casual studies, and have formulated our position on this subject. We have made it a goal to conduct formal industry surveys researching the cost versus the benefits, financial and otherwise, of having a trained third crewmember aboard private and corporate aircraft. Surveys and statistics are available at www.crewsupport.com. Please provide your input.

Per FAR Part 1- Definitions...“Crewmember” means a person assigned to perform duty in an aircraft during flight time. While a flight attendant aboard the typical corporate jet is not a *required crewmember*... they *do* perform *assigned duties* during flight. Furthermore, it can be argued... if they are on board the aircraft, providing “service”, assisting with bags, seating, coats, coffee, lunch, etc.... It could certainly be assumed that they are there for a reason (in other words-“*assigned to perform those duties in an aircraft during flight time*”). These “assigned duties” also make the case for the legal and insurance term... *liability of dispatch* which basically refers to the assumptions made by the passengers, the government, the legal, and the insurance communities, that the aircraft is operated meeting all government requirements and industry standards which include, but are not limited to: personnel qualifications, training, maintenance, flight planning and passenger handling. Therefore, if passengers, support vendors, friends, and the public assume a person aboard the aircraft is a crewmember, and that person performs crewmember and/or assigned service duties, then in a case of litigation, that person will most likely be interpreted as a crewmember and will be required to produce documentation that the obligation of training has been met (regardless of being a *required crewmember* or not).

If it...Looks like a flight attendant...

Acts like a flight attendant...

Talks like a flight attendant...

Then it probably is... A CREWMEMBER!

Under the current Federal Aviation Regulations for Parts 91 (private, corporate, not-for-hire) operations and Part 135 (charter/for-hire) operations using aircraft with 19 passenger seats or less... there are no requirements for a third crewmember (flight attendant). Even so, the industry seems to be leaning toward utilizing a third crewmember in most cabin-class (Gulfstream, Challenger, Global Express, Falcon) aircraft, primarily for safety, but also for service. However, in addition to the regulations, several other issues of utilizing a third crewmember must be considered, e.g. expense versus cost-savings, emotional costs, psychological costs, equipment/interior repair costs, time-savings, and the two most important factors... safety and customer service. After all, isn't that what we're providing our passengers... Isn't time, convenience, service and safety *exactly* what we're “selling”?



Considerations:

We have hundreds of flight attendants attending FACTS Training on a recurring basis. We know that job descriptions, responsibilities and annual pay vary widely. However, the common themes, for both crewmembers AND flight departments, are *safety* and *professionalism*!

Professionals work as a team to meet the needs of the company, the flight department, and the passengers... safely and efficiently. These professionals are well trained as crewmembers. As per the guidelines set by FACTS Training some 20 years ago and following the *NBAA Management Guide*, training subjects should include:

Federal Aviation Regulations

Basic knowledge of the regulatory body that governs corporate aviation

"Dispatch liability" factors

Review of regulations

Requirements for passenger safety briefings

Authority of PIC

Aircraft familiarization

APU shutdown/fire

How to use the radio in an emergency

Galley equipment

Cabin amenities

Controls for audio, video, lighting, heating and cooling

Types of emergencies

Location and use of emergency equipment (i.e., "hands on" training of all emergency equipment, including fire extinguishers, life jackets and life rafts, operation of exit doors and windows, and supplemental oxygen bottles)

Fire and smoke procedures

InFlight medical procedures / CPR / Defibrillation / Blood-borne pathogens

Decompression procedures

Evacuation procedures: land and water, planned and unplanned

Human factors

Crew resource management/cabin-cockpit communications

Passenger handling and confidentiality

Passenger manifests

Protocol and etiquette

Unusual situations / Hijacking / Bomb threats / Aircraft Security

Food handling and catering concerns

FBOs and review of international procedures

Aviation terminology, time conversions, etc.

Hazardous Materials / Dangerous Goods Awareness

Aircraft Surface Contamination

Sources: FACTS Training Curriculum/NBAA Management Guide 2000

Training is important to passenger and flight safety. A trained crewmember is an asset in regard to safety; and even though a third crewmember is not a *required crewmember* in most corporate operations, they are an *important* part of the professional team that make up today's flight departments.

Costs are always an important consideration in a flight operation. However, *all* the costs must be considered.

Financially, a third crewmember is an expense. Pay and benefits, according to location, job description and duties, can range from \$200 per day to over \$100,000 per year for some long-time, salaried employees. Additionally, there are costs of training, uniforms, taxes, insurance, etc.

In a casual, year-long study done by one of our contract FACTS trainers who worked as a flight attendant... He found that over a year's time, he saved his flight department well over 100% of his salary in catering/food savings and in cabin equipment maintenance and repair. The food savings did include some self-catering and prep work, but also included less waste and more control over catering costs.

Additionally, we hear about many incidents when passengers have flooded the lav, clogged the galley drains, spilled beverages, and misused the audio/video, galley, and safety equipment. These incidents can be very costly; moreover, this "breakage" is not only a budget issue, but without a trained flight attendant it can be a significant safety issue.

Consideration also must be given to emotional and psychological expenses. For example... what is the cost of having one of the pilots leave the flight deck, or step out of their professional comfort zone, to attend to a cabin or service issue (which they are NOT normally comfortable with)? This is usually not an ego issue... it's merely a *professional* issue. While it *is* done... leaving the cockpit for service and assistance reasons that are *not* part of the "safety of flight," *and* are not part of the typical pilot's self image, which can be emotionally and psychologically expensive to the team, and technically is not allowed per the regulations. (FAR Part 91.105, Flight crewmembers at stations, "During takeoff and landing, and while enroute, each required flight crewmember shall- (a) Be at the crewmember station unless the absence is necessary to perform duties with the operation of the aircraft or in connection with physiological needs; and (2) Keep the safety belt fastened while at crewmember station...")

Another important issue is "time"! After all... isn't time-savings one of the main reasons corporations have flight operations? What are the costs, both in financial terms *and* in man-hours, of not having a third crewmember to share the crew duties?

Without a third crewmember it will be a duty of the flight crew to not only perform their flight duties, but also perform the many required, but unseen tasks to accomplish each mission. To realize the importance of all the crew duties, one must consider "when" a flight starts. For many third crewmembers, pre-flight planning, purchasing and preparation for a "simple" domestic flight begins far ahead of time. This can include checking the passenger load, passenger medical issues, meal preferences, menu planning, ordering catering, prepping parts of the menu, preparing and stocking the aircraft, checking the passenger convenience equipment, pre-flight checks of the emergency equipment, cleaning, coordinating the "overnights", working with dispatchers, meeting with the flight crew, and much more... all long before the passengers step foot on the aircraft. In considering the value of the third crewmember... consider the extra work load flying without a flight attendant can add to the *required* flight crew's already busy duties. With the human factors involved, these added tasks can even distract from the pilot's focus on their real job.... *safety of flight*.

Ninety percent of what the passenger sees is service related... Only ten percent safety. However, in reality it is just the opposite. Even though the third crewmember (flight attendant) is many times perceived as *just* a service person, safety was the FAA's original intent and purpose when this crew position was included in the regulations. *The third crew-member is aboard for both passenger and crew safety!*

Again, at FACTS, we hear many classroom stories and see NTSB accident reports where the third crewmember made a difference between substantial loss (life and property)... acted to remedy a potentially disastrous situation... and saved the flight department money, time and a life!

Examples:

LANDING - Landed 1200+ meters short of the runway... in the water. The flight attendant (with a fractured arm), was instrumental in getting the crew and the two charter passengers out of the aircraft.

LANDING - Landed long in icy conditions... after going through a fence, crossing a busy street, coming to stop in a parking lot... the third crewmember assisted with the evacuation and controlled bystanders to maintain a safe distance around the aircraft until rescuers arrived.

INFLIGHT -Flight attendant smelled "something hot" in the galley area. Pulled circuit breakers and informed the pilots. Problem found to be a "hot cup" unit overheating when in the "off" mode.

INFLIGHT -Flight attendant noticed the lead passenger acting somewhat unusual... crewmember kept watch and witnessed passenger having short lapses of consciousness... informed the pilots... provided oxygen to the passenger... contacted ACCESS™ Assistance... discussed the passenger's condition with the ACCESS physician... provided inflight medical care until patient could be treated by paramedics on the ground.

INFLIGHT -Flight attendant witnessed the lone passenger choking during the meal service... assessed the situation... performed the Heimlich maneuver to resolve the passenger's airway problem.

The list of similar events goes on and on. In most cases, had there not been a trained third crewmember *in the cabin* there would have been more damage than there was (fire, breakage, etc.) and a much greater potential for loss of life.

In summary, until third crewmembers are a required safety item, we can only offer our professional opinion based on nearly twenty years in the corporate/private aviation industry and some just plain ol' common sense...

Third crewmembers fill an important, cost-effective position in a flight department's mission to provide safe and efficient transportation.

Douglas B. Mykol, ND President

Doug Mykol is President and owner of AirCare Solutions Group and FACTS Training International. FACTS Training has been providing human factors-based emergency procedures training for pilots, flight engineers, and flight attendants for over twenty years. With five mobile cockpit and cabin simulators and training over 1000 crewmembers per year, FACTS is considered the largest corporate emergency procedures and medical training company in the world.

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