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Delta - Be Better

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> While the usual suspects ended up buying a handful of A380s due to national pressure (Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways), delusions of grandeur (Malaysia, Thai), or me-too syndrome (Asiana, Etihad, Qatar), there was really only one airline that truly loved the airplane. That was Emirates.
>
> - A cool airplane blog [a] I like to read

Emirates A380

Airlines and their routes are fun because the decision to fly a plane from one city to another can be made from more than just an immediate profit seeking perspective.

Air Canada flies from Seattle (SEA) to Vancouver (YYZ) — a distance of 126 miles — to feed its Asian and domestic Canadian flights. Delta and Alaska fly the same route to feed their domestic US flights.

American Airlines started flying [b] from Dallas (DFW) to the airport near Reykjavik Iceland (KEF) when WOW Air (now defunct) and Icelandair already flew the route to protect their dominance in the Dallas market.

And Qatar Airways flies from Doha (DOH) to Atlanta (ATL) “in order to rub salt into the wounds of Delta” according to its colorful CEO Akbar Al Baker.

Qatar A350

Delta has long alleged the three largest Middle Eastern carriers — Emirates of Dubai, UAE, Qatar Airways of Doha, Qatar, and Etihad of Abu Dhabi, UAE — collectively ME3 are in violation of the treaty that allows the airlines to fly to the United States because of the money they (do almost certainly receive) from their respective governments, but I’m not very concerned.

ME3 have collective orders for hundreds of American manufactured planes - directly providing American jobs. Delta has four outstanding orders for planes manufactured by American companies.

What's more, American Airlines, directly partners with Qatar Airways as part of the One World Alliance, giving it a share of revenue on passengers traveling to destinations it doesn't serve (India, Africa, etc). JetBlue and its minimal international route network benefits even more — connecting passengers to all of ME3.

Delta too has only picks convent times to complain — throwing a regulatory fit at Qatar Airways' investment in tiny (15 plane fleet — only five of which can fly across the Atlantic) Air Italy while standing aside as Etihad invested billions into Delta partner Alitalia.

Delta is widely known to the be the best mainline carrier in the United States. They should focus on expanding that excellence beyond an airline that makes no money flying passengers [c] and one that drags doctors off overbooked flights [d].

Some nice but not so America Delta planes

Related reading:

Dallas (DFW) is what is known as a fortress hub [e] — which arguably do more to hurt the traveling public than anything else.

Travelers often prefer nonstop flights — which airlines are increasingly able to offer with aircraft like the Boeing 787 and A350. Singapore Airlines flies nearly 20 hours from New York to Singapore, Qantas flies a similar distance from Perth to London, and even Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania now has a non-stop to London. As routes like these only grow in scope, airlines of the newly connected city pairs will have a material advantage over airlines that require a connection — lessening the impact of ME3 on their passengers even further. Indeed, the Middle East is not a particularly efficient place to connect passengers traveling from the United States to Europe, South America, or (north) Asia.

United 787

(It is worth noting here that so-called "fifth freedom" flights like the one Emirates operates from New York to Milan, Cathay Pacific has from New York to Vancouver, or Singapore Airlines offers from New York to Frankfurt are not particularly common).

Also worth noting that while Delta has orders for foreign designed planes like the Airbus A220 and A320, these planes will most likely be manufactured at Airbus' facility in Mobile, Alabama [f].

Links

a. crankyflier.com/2019/02/19/an-appreciation-for-the-a380-an-airplane-that-never-should-have-been-built
b. avgeekery.com/american-back-old-fortress-hub-tricks-aa-launches-iceland-service-defends-dfw
c. viewfromthewing.boardingarea.com/2018/10/26/sec-filing-shows-american-airlines-loses-money-flying-on-loyalty-program-earns-profit
d. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Express_Flight_3411_incident
e. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airline_hub#Fortress_hub
f. businessinsider.com/airbus-mobile-alabama-factory-tour-a320-american-delta-jetblue-2019-1