UNIT 7

Hit the Road

READING

Read the text. What does it take to run an airline?

What Does It Take to Run an Airline?



The aviation industry is huge. Around 10 million people travel by plane every day. Commercial aircraft take off around the world at the rate of 400 per hour, and there are thousands of planes in the sky at any one time, all operated by airlines. Anyone who wants to run an airline has to bear in mind that it's one of the most challenging industries in the world. To begin with, the start-up costs are very high—a relatively small airplane such as a Boeing 737 costs over $50 million. It's also very competitive and there are a large number of regulations that an airline has to follow. An airline can even lose money because of the weather! It's possible to make money in aviation, but it's important to clearly understand what the main challenges are.

One of the biggest single costs that an airline faces is the cost of fuel. Major US airlines spend around $10 billion year on fuel altogether. Jet fuel has to be very high quality, which makes it more expensive than fuel used in heating or road transport. And airlines aim for their planes to spend as much time as possible in the air, rather than on the ground, because that's where they make money, but that's also where they burn fuel. The cost of jet fuel can vary a great deal as the price of oil varies, so airlines often agree to buy fuel in the future at a fixed price. If the price of oil goes up, the airline gets its fuel cheaply, but when the price of oil goes down, the opposite happens.

Another large cost an airline faces is labor. It takes a long time to train as a pilot, and it's an expensive process, so qualified pilots can expect high salaries. Other roles on an aircraft, such as members of cabin crew, are paid less, but there are a number of regulations that control how much time they can spend working. This means that at the end of a flight, the airline often has to pay hotel costs and other expenses for each worker before they can work on another flight back to their own country the following day. In addition to labor and fuel, airlines face other business costs, such as aircraft maintenance costs, airport fees, government fees, and the cost of in-flight food for passengers.

Apart from business costs, every airline these days has to be aware of the cost of aviation to the environment. Planes cause pollution and emit greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. Airlines invest in fuel-efficient aircraft—airplanes that use less fuel to go a given distance and produce less pollution. Airplanes these days generally fly at slower speeds, which also use less fuel. Airlines use flight simulators to train pilots, reducing the number of training flights that are necessary. In addition, computers are used to plan the best routes, taking into account weather conditions along the way.

Running an airline in the future will be no less challenging. Some forecasts expect the number of flights to double by the mid-2030s, even in spite of the efforts of environmentalists to try to convince everyone to fly less. Around the world, more and more people will be able to afford to fly as people in the developing world become richer. It will become even more important to be sustainable while also being competitive. Innovations such as more fuel-efficient engines, electric planes, artificial intelligence, and even unmanned aircraft will all have a role to play.

aviation (n): the activity of flying planes

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 7

Hit the Road

VOCABULARY

Choose the correct option.

1 Gliders and helicopters are both types of …
a airship. **b** airplane. **c** aircraft.

2 The government creates …, which airlines must follow.
a restrictions **b** regulations **c** instructions

3 The people who give you food on an airplane are the …
a waiters. **b** cabin crew. **c** servers.

4 All planes need regular … to prevent any problems.
a fixing **b** updates **c** maintenance

5 … gases in the atmosphere cause global warming.
a Greenhouse **b** Heating **c** Blanket

COMPREHENSION

Choose *True* or *False*.

1 One problem is that there isn't much competition in the aviation industry. True / False
2 Airlines keep their planes on the ground to try to save fuel. True / False
3 Airlines usually have to pay for tickets to fly cabin crew back home. True / False
4 One way to reduce pollution is for airplanes to go more slowly. True / False
5 In the future, people who can't afford it now will be able to afford to travel by plane. True / False

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 7

Hit the Road

READING

Read the text. Have you used any unusual travel services?

Unusual Travel Services You Should Try



The travel industry has changed enormously in recent decades. In the past, people planning a trip used to visit a travel agency. There, they would look through brochures and choose from the trips that particular travel agency offered. Today, travelers search for and book trips online and there is a lot of competition. In order to compete in that market, a number of companies are offering innovative travel services to help you plan your trip, covering everything from flights to unusual activities to do at your destination.

The first challenge when planning a trip is to find a flight that is not too expensive. The prices of flights vary greatly. Factors that affect the price include the time of year, the precise moment you book a flight, and the number of empty seats on the flight, meaning that there's a real skill to finding the right flight at the right price. Flightfox, an American company, provides a service that promises to save you money. For a fee, their flight experts will take the details of your planned trip and find the cheapest way of getting there, saving you money compared to searching for flights yourself. A Canadian company, Hopper, takes a different approach to saving you money. They take into account all the factors that affect price and predict how the prices are going to change in the future. That enables you to book at exactly the right time, when the price is at its lowest.

Once you've booked your flight, you need to get ready for your trip. Some places can be dangerous, and you may have questions about your destination such as "Can I drink the water?" Sitata, another Canadian company, will take the details of your trip and advise you on any health concerns or safety issues. Once you know about that kind of thing, then it's time to pack for your trip. It's not always easy to know what weather to expect or what to take for different activities you have planned. The PackPoint app is designed to help you. Based on your destination and your itinerary, the app creates a personalized packing list, which you can share with other people you are traveling with so that everyone knows what they're going to need to take.

On the trip itself, traditional activities, such as spending time on the beach, are still popular, but more and more people are looking for unusual experiences that they can tell their friends and family about and of course that look good on social media. Localike, a company based in New York, shares local knowledge with visitors and shows them a side of the city that most tourists don't see. For a fee, they will give you information that only local people know and that doesn't appear in guidebooks, such as interesting markets to shop at or rooftop restaurants to visit.

To record your trip and show it off on your social media accounts, Polarsteps, an app created by a Dutch company, may be what you need. This app will track all the places you visit on a trip, give you statistics such as how far you've come, arrange your photos, and allow your friends and family to follow every step of your trip. The app will even automatically create a book for you to order that provides a permanent record of your trip.

As more companies innovate in the travel industry, we can expect to see services that are difficult to imagine right now but which will transform our travel experiences.

itinerary (n): the plan of a journey, the places you intend to visit, etc.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 7

Hit the Road

VOCABULARY

Match the definitions to the words.

1	a magazine describing services or products …	**a** fee
2	the place you are traveling to …	**b** statistic
3	someone who knows a lot about a subject …	**c** brochure
4	an amount of money you pay for a service …	**d** destination
5	a number that describes a fact …	**e** expert

COMPREHENSION

Choose the correct option.

1 One way in which the travel industry has changed is that …

a travel agencies don't produce brochures today.

b travel agencies had no competition in the past.

c people arrange a trip themselves these days.

2 What is **not** mentioned as a factor that affects the price of a flight?

a what month you travel

b the number of people in your group

c how full the flight is

3 PackPoint can be useful if you …

a want to avoid bad weather.

b want to pack exactly what you'll need.

c find it hard to plan activities in advance.

4 If you use Localike, you will feel as if you …

a live in New York.

b know what other tourists know.

c know which guidebooks are useful.

5 When planning a trip, in what order might you use these apps?

a Sitata, then Polarsteps, then Flightfox

b Hopper, then PackPoint, then Polarsteps

c PackPoint, then Localike, then Hopper

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 7

Hit the Road

READING

Read the text. Can you "buy" happiness with travel?

Travel and Happiness



There's an old saying that money can't buy happiness. Some scientists argue that in fact it can but only up to a point. This is known as the Easterlin Paradox, after Richard Easterlin, professor of economics, who described it in 1974. He noticed that as Americans got wealthier, they didn't necessarily get happier. It raises the question of what exactly makes us happy. In the 1970s, Americans were better off than they ever had been and were able to buy a wider range of consumer goods than ever before. So why didn't that mean that their happiness increased in the same way?

One problem with material goods as a source of happiness is "adaptation." When you buy something that you desire, such as a new automobile or a new smartphone, you are excited at first because it's something new in your life. It makes you happy. However, after a short while, you adapt to having it in your life and it stops having a positive effect on your emotions. Your happiness level returns to more or less what it was before. Continuing to buy new things in order to have that feeling of excitement will only ever result in a temporary boost to your emotional well-being.

Instead of consumer goods, experiences seem to provide a more lasting basis for happiness. At first, that might seem strange because material products last for a long time, whereas an experience, such as a vacation, is over in a week or two. However, the difference between experiences and consumer goods is that experiences change who you are. It's the power of experiences to alter you, your personality, and your view of the world that means they can truly transform you into a happier person. And one experience that has huge potential to make people happier is travel.

Travel has a number of positive effects on a person. People who travel often find that it boosts their confidence. Through travel, you may discover that you have the ability to cope with unexpected situations. This characteristic then helps you in all areas of your life, including in your working life. Being more effective in your career will probably mean that you are happier overall. Traveling also often involves meeting new people. Developing social skills and having the opportunity to use them generally makes people feel happy.

When you travel, you get a new perspective on your life. For example, it gives you the chance to miss people and places. When you are far from home, you often get a new sense of appreciation for friends, family members, and familiar places. It also gives you time to focus on yourself and to consider what it is that you really value in life. You can do that more effectively when you are away from the day-to-day pressures of your usual life, including the demands of social media. Travel can be a great way to take a break from your online life.

Another way in which travel contributes to happiness is in giving you the opportunity to learn. Learning makes people happy as they gain new knowledge and new skills. When you travel, you learn about other cultures, other ways of life, and other languages. You may also learn new practical skills, such as cooking exotic dishes or making things using traditional handicrafts. These skills become a permanent part of who you are, making you happy because of the sense of achievement you get.

Travel provides experiences, skills, and memories that last for a long time and that have a positive effect on all aspects of your life.

consumer goods (n): things that are available to buy

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 7

Hit the Road

VOCABULARY

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

alter contribute cope desire transform

1 Sometimes, we _____ things that are not necessarily good for us.
2 Do you think health and wealth _____ to a person's happiness?
3 You are not allowed to _____ your answers to the test after you click on "submit."
4 Travel has the power to _____ your personality.
5 After everything went wrong on my vacation, I know I can _____ with anything!

COMPREHENSION

Choose the correct option.

1 It seems surprising that Americans in the 1970s **weren't happier when they became wealthy / didn't buy as many consumer goods as they could.**
2 Money only buys happiness up to a point because **we always want more new things / we soon get used to new objects.**
3 Experiences produce a feeling of happiness because they **change your personality / don't last too long.**
4 Skills such as coping with unexpected situations can be helpful **during your career / when you meet new people.**
5 Travel can help you feel more positive about **the role social media plays in your life / the life you**

LIVEWORKSHEETS