

Antara Gupta

Mr. Speice

Independent Study & Mentorship

November 4, 2017

Interview Assessment #4

Name of Professional: Ms. Alison Taylor

Profession/ Title: Senior Vice President of Global Sales

Business/ Company Name: American Airlines

Date of Interview: November 2, 2017

Hoping to gain a holistic understanding of International Business by exploring different sectors of the corporate world, I had the pleasure to interview Ms. Alison Taylor, the Senior Vice President of Global Sales for American Airlines. Through my interview with Ms. Taylor, I was able to gain insight on how sales are made at the corporate level. Given her vast experience in international sales, I was also able to expand on my understanding of International Business and learn how different sectors of business work together.

Ms. Taylor explained that as the Senior Vice President of Global Sales, her job entails contracting corporate clients to use the American Airlines flight service to fulfill all traveling needs. When a contract is made, the company essentially agrees to only use American Airlines flight services for their employees. During the negotiations, certain demands may be made by the

corporate client and vice versa, American Airlines may require a certain market share in order to prove loyalty. The length of a contract varies from two to six years and each contract is worth billions of dollars, making each sale quite important to the functionality of American Airlines. After a contract is made, there is an American Airlines account manager that manages the account all year long in order to ensure that all questions and concerns can be addressed quickly. In fact, Ms. Taylor noted that American Airline's quick response time and customer service for corporate clients are often the feature that tips the scale in their favor when a company is debating over which flight service to contract with. Customer service and the ability to efficiently communicate with clients is also something that Ms. Regina Borda, the Chief Brand Officer for the Latin American and Caribbean regions, emphasized. Ms. Borda had talked about why social media marketing has become so prevalent in today's society; namely, because of the increased reliability and efficiency that it provides customers. As a result, it becomes apparent that the concept of customer services plays an integral role in the functionality of any department or organization.

In terms of the corporate contracts that are made, Ms. Taylor noted that she often has to deal with different organizational structures of corporate clients, and as a result, it is important to be flexible. For example, some companies have one representative dedicated to managing flight services in all international locations. Thus, the job of conveying contract changes becomes much easier. However, other customers employ intermediaries such as a TMC, or a travel manager company. As a result, Ms. Taylor's job is not just limited to dealing with corporate clients; she also has to work with intermediary companies to ensure that they use American Airlines for both corporate and private bookings.

During the negotiation process, both the corporate client and American Airlines have to consider many aspects in terms of the contract. In addition to business class seating and baggage amenities, there are also many rewards programs such as Oneworld and Skyteam that can be used to further increase the amount of benefits available. OneWorld and Skyteam are airline alliances that were made in order to make the flight routes and connecting flights much more easier. For example, OneWorld is an airline alliance that consists of American Airlines, Japan Airlines, British Airways, Qatar Airways, and eleven other flight agencies. Because of these alliances, however, it becomes even harder to coordinate and negotiate contracts with corporate clients because the terms of the contract have to be agreed upon by all members of the alliance. As a result, Ms. Taylor said that her job includes ample coordination with the legal structure of American Airlines to ensure that the contracts are valid and upheld by all airlines in the alliance.

Transitioning to a more personal topic, Ms. Taylor also talked about her experience working in the Airline industry, a predominantly male corporation. Ms. Taylor felt as if everyone treated her equally especially because there has been a recent increase in the number of females in high positions. Even when dealing with customers from different countries where females in high positions were looked down upon, Ms. Taylor still believes that she received the level of respect that she deserved. However, sometimes she would have to take a male employee with her because the client would only talk to men. Ms. Taylor advised me that this often happens in International Business and it is important to not get offended by such incidents.

Despite the equal treatment that Ms. Taylor has received at work, she believes that there are some limitations that can arise. What Ms. Taylor finds the hardest is balancing work life and home life. Traveling almost every week, she often had little time at home and it was the

sacrifices that her husband made for their family that allowed Ms. Taylor to excel at her job. Furthermore, given the international status of her job, Ms. Taylor has spent much of her life in different countries, and as a result, she has raised her family in various cities around the world. Although it was hard to accommodate to the lifestyles and culture of different countries, Ms. Taylor found the overall experience to be rewarding because it allowed her family to gain an open-minded perspective on different cultures. In many of my other interviews, professionals had talked about their experience living in different countries, but they had never talked about the effect that it had on their families. As a result, it was great to hear a different perspective on being an expatriate.

As final words of parting advice, Ms. Taylor told me to continue seeking opportunities for growth by organizing informational interviews and interning at different businesses. She told me to brace myself for hard experiences because the only way to reach the top in business is to start at the bottom. With these words of advice, along with the beneficial information that Ms. Taylor provided to me about global sales, I hope to continue increasing my knowledge on international business so that I can truly achieve my goal of making a positive impact on others.