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DELTA

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT

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I. Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Delta Airlines is an international aviation company that specializes in commercial flights. Created in 1923, Delta has revolutionized the aviation industry, and been a main contender in the globalization of modern society. Delta Airlines bases their company values and purpose around "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion," "Community Engagement," and "Sustainability." Even in face of this substantial company development, Delta Airlines faces a significant gap in AI implementation throughout technical, physical, and instructive programs, and we plan to integrate "FLIGHT" to counteract these conflicts!



"In 2023, the people of Delta Air Lines led the industry, strengthening our trusted global brand by consistently delivering operational excellence, unmatched financial performance and the welcoming, caring and elevated service our customers deserve. Once again, Delta's longstanding values of always putting people first set us apart from the competition."- **Ed Bastian (CEO)**

PRIMARY INSIDERS:



"It was a pleasure speaking with these aspiring high school students, as I was impressed by their enthusiasm for how Delta Airlines integrates AI systems, as well as their ability to analyze and comprehend both challenges and opportunities for growth within the company."- **Tanina Ferreri (Sales Account Executive)**

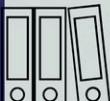


"Had a great time talking to these kids! Aviation is so important, and our job as employees is to see this industry we care so much for flourish and evolve to new heights!"- **Gustavo Quero (Head of Operations)**

COMPANY KEY VALUES:



RESEARCH METHODS USED IN STUDY

 PRIMARY RESEARCH	<u>PRIMARY VISITS:</u> <u>EMPLOYEES</u> Our research included anonymous interviews and surveys with Delta employees to assess awareness and opinions on AI initiatives, revealing concerns like job displacement and opportunities for efficiency improvements, which shaped our recommendations.	<u>PRIMARY VISITS:</u> <u>CUSTOMERS</u> We conducted anonymous interviews for privacy reason with Delta Airlines customers through various channels to understand their perceptions of AI, gathering insights on its benefits and concerns, which informed our strategic plan to align with customer expectations.	<u>INTERVIEWS</u> Our research included pivotal interviews with Tanina Ferreri, a Sales Account Executive, and Mr. Quero, Delta's Head of Operations, whose insights on AI's role in marketing, customer relations, and operational efficiencies significantly shaped our strategic recommendations.
	SECONDARY RESEARCH 	<u>INTERNET RESEARCH:</u> Our research process, spanning from before our first interview with Delta's Marketing Board to the study's conclusion, involved continuous exploration of Delta's history, marketing, and AI initiatives, alongside broader aviation AI trends, to contextualize and enhance discussions with stakeholders and refine insights into Delta's competitive AI strategy.	<u>COMPANY FILES</u> During our December meeting with Mrs. Ferreri, reviewing Delta Airlines' internal documents and AI proposals provided invaluable insights into their current AI projects, implementation challenges, and opportunities to enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer experience within their existing framework.

RESEARCH TIMELINE

1
Late Oct:
Conducted customer interviews to assess AI perceptions and expectations.

2
Early Nov:
Conducted an employee survey and interviewed Tanina Ferreri on AI in Delta Airlines marketing.

3
Late Nov:
Interviewed Gustavo from the Operations Department on AI in mechanics and initiated internet and competitor research.

4
Dec:
Conducted Employee interviews, finalized customer interviews, and completed analysis to refine recommendations.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

FINDINGS

- Over 36% of Delta Airlines employees answered “Not Familiar” and 16% answered “Might Have Heard Of”, displaying large lack of understanding
- Budget of over \$100 million on training programs
- On-time flight success rate of 78.8%, in 2023, which is higher than competitors such as United Airlines, but still substantially low.

CONCLUSIONS

- Delta Airlines’s Excessive Resource Funding surrounding Training programs
- Inefficiencies of Boarding and Baggage Procedures
- Enhance current Flight Control Systems and Aircraft Communications
- Employee Awareness
- Connectivity between Delta Airlines Factions

PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

FLIGHT is a 5-phase plan that effectively targets certain initiatives and strategies that enhance aviation process through AI

F

Focus

On Data Collection

ANALYZE BOARDING AND TAXI INEFFICIENCIES AND GATHER REAL-TIME ATC DATA.

L

Leverage

AI Technology

DEVELOP AI ALGORITHMS FOR OPERATIONS AND TRAIN AI USING SIMULATION DATA.

I

Integrate

Seamless Processes

TEST AI IN DELTA’S SIMULATORS AND OPTIMIZE BOARDING AND TAXI TRANSITIONS

G

Generate

Real-Time Solutions

REAL-TIME FLIGHT PATH OPTIMIZATION AND DYNAMIC GATE AND TAXIWAY COORDINATION

H

Hone

Pilot Training

USE AI SIMULATORS TO ENHANCE DECISION-MAKING AND PROVIDE PILOTS WITH REAL-TIME AI FEEDBACK

T

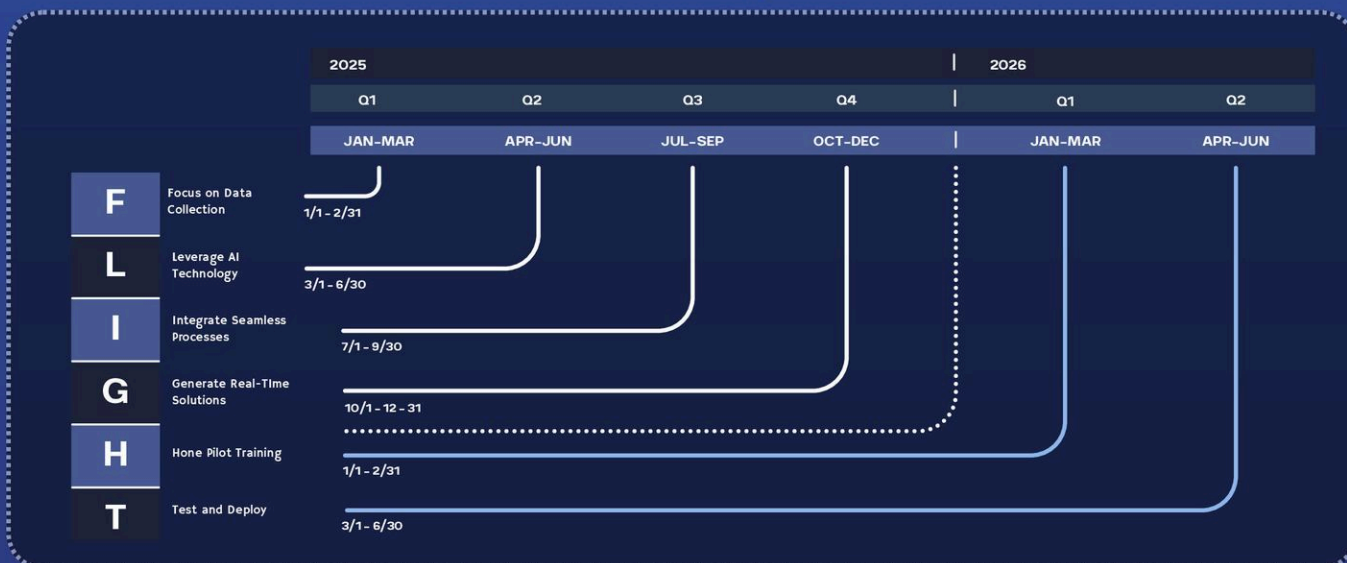
Test

And Deploy

CONDUCT TRIALS ON EMPTY AIRCRAFT FOR OPERATIONAL CONSISTENCY AND SECURE APPROVALS AND DEPLOY AI TO DELTA’S FLEET

PROPOSED TIMELINE

FLIGHT is a 18-month operation starting in January 2025 and ending in June 2026, with quarterly milestones and phased implementation to ensure seamless AI integration.



PROPOSED BUDGET

Phase	Cost (USD)	Rationale
Focus on Data Collection	\$350,000	Tools for data collection (\$150,000) and analysis of boarding and taxi inefficiencies (\$200,000).
Leverage AI Technology	\$800,000	Development of AI algorithms (\$400,000) and training AI using simulation data (\$400,000).
Integrate Seamless Processes	\$400,000	AI testing in cockpit simulators (\$200,000) and optimization of transitions (\$200,000).
Generate Real-Time Solutions	\$600,000	Real-time flight path optimization (\$300,000) and dynamic gate/taxiway coordination (\$300,000).
Hone Pilot Training	\$500,000	AI-enhanced pilot training in simulators (\$250,000) and real-time AI feedback systems (\$250,000).
Test and Deploy	\$600,000	Conduct trials on empty aircraft (\$300,000) Secure approvals and deploy AI to Delta's fleet (\$300,000)

Unexpected Costs: 325,000 (10%)

Total Cost: \$3,575,000.

\$685 MILLION–\$1.41 BILLION is generated annually with Delta's FLIGHT Plan, resulting in an ROI of **52,381%**

In 2023, Delta Air Lines made a revenue of \$58 billion. The total initial cost for the FLIGHT Plan is 0.006% of Delta's annual revenue. It is projected to generate Delta an additional \$685 million to \$1.41 billion annually through savings and revenue increases during its first fiscal year of implementation.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION

Delta Air Lines is one of the world's leading airlines, renowned for its global reach, operational excellence, and customer service. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Delta operates a vast network with over 4,000 daily flights to more than 290 destinations across six continents.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Delta's origins date back to March 2, 1925, when it was founded as Huff Daland Dusters in Macon, Georgia, marking the world's first aerial crop-dusting company. In 1928, C.E. Woolman led a group of investors to acquire the company's assets, renaming it Delta Air Service, inspired by the Mississippi Delta region. The airline commenced passenger operations on June 17, 1929, with flights from Dallas, Texas, to Jackson, Mississippi, including stops in Shreveport and Monroe, Louisiana.



1953: Merged with Chicago and Southern Air Lines, extending its network to the Caribbean and South America.

1972: Acquired Northeast Airlines, enhancing its presence in the northeastern United States.

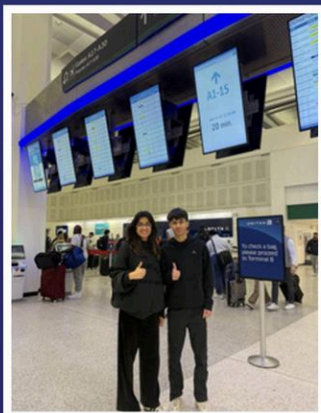
1987: Purchased Western Airlines, establishing a strong foothold on the West Coast.

2008: Delta announced its acquisition of Northwest Airlines, which was completed by 2010, making Delta the world's largest airline at that time.

DELTA AIR LINES TODAY

As of November 2024, Delta Air Lines maintains nine hubs, with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport being its largest in terms of total passengers and number of departures. Delta's fleet comprises over 1,275 aircraft, including models from Airbus and Boeing, serving both domestic and international routes.

The airline is a founding member of the SkyTeam alliance, collaborating with global partners to offer extensive connectivity and benefits to passengers. Delta places a strong emphasis on sustainability, aiming to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Initiatives include investing in fuel-efficient aircraft, exploring sustainable aviation fuels, and implementing carbon offset programs.



DELTA TODAY IN TERMINAL A AT IAH



DELTA CHECK IN CENTER TODAY AT IAH

As a purpose-driven brand, Delta connects people to opportunities while expanding the understanding of our planet and the people within it. Both in the air and on the ground, Delta is focused on lowering its carbon footprint, furthering an equitable work environment that values diversity and inclusion, and living these values in the communities where it operates.

Financially, Delta is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol DAL. The airline has demonstrated resilience and profitability, with recent reports indicating strong financial performance. Delta Air Lines continues to be a leader in the aviation industry, known for its commitment to customer service, operational excellence, and global connectivity.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGET MARKET



DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender: Delta Air Lines demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, appealing to a broad demographic base. Gender-specific passenger demographics are not explicitly disclosed, but industry data suggests a relatively balanced distribution, with women comprising about **52%** of U.S. air travelers traveling with **Delta airlines** being the second most searched airline. Additionally, Delta is widely recognized within the LGBTQ+ community, particularly among gay male travelers, due to its premium services, inclusive marketing strategies, and partnerships with organizations like American Express. **Delta** further reflects its dedication to diversity through its supplier relationships, actively engaging with minority-owned, women-owned, LGBTQ-owned, and other diverse businesses (source: Delta's Supplier Diversity page). The airline also offers non-binary gender options in its booking systems, ensuring inclusivity for all passengers. These efforts highlight Delta's broad appeal across genders and reinforce its status as an industry leader in embracing diversity.

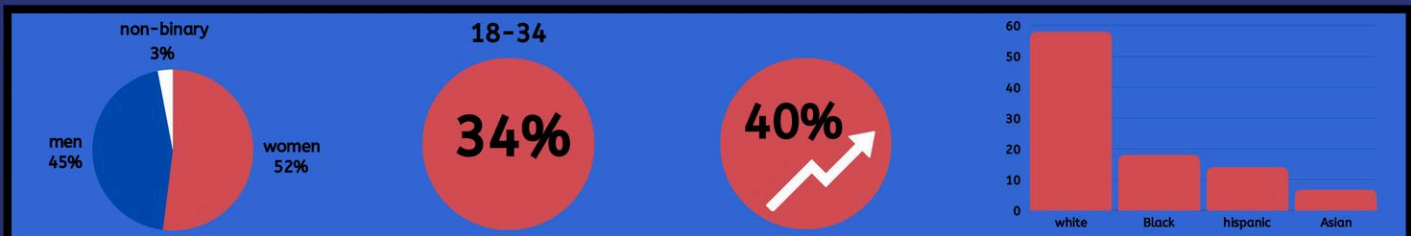


Scheb's fiance Phil Tuzynski at delta airline's sky club . Ryan Scheb (via US Today)

Race and Ethnicities: According to **Delta.com** The racial and ethnic diversity of Delta's workforce is evident, with employees comprising **58%** White, **16%** Black or African American, **14%** Hispanic or Latino, **6.7%** Asian, and 5.3% from other racial backgrounds. This diversity reflects Delta's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace that mirrors the communities it serves. The company actively supports programs to increase diversity in traditionally underrepresented areas, such as piloting and technical roles. **Delta's** diversity initiatives play a crucial role in fostering an equitable environment within the aviation industry.

Income: In terms of income, **Delta** has experienced increased demand for its premium services, particularly among higher-income households. These households have seen a **40%** increase in wealth since 2019, leading to a greater propensity to spend on luxury travel experiences. This trend is especially pronounced among millennials and Gen Z travelers, who are more inclined to invest in premium offerings. Notably, according to a Forbes article **Delta's** transatlantic flights have seen a surge in affluent passengers, with the airline reporting that its premium cabins to Europe are often fully booked. This shift reflects a broader industry trend where airlines are enhancing premium services to cater to the growing demand from wealthier travelers.

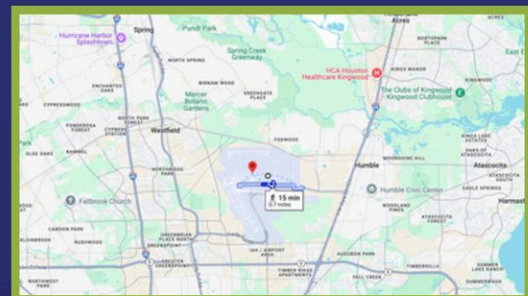
Age: **Delta Air Lines** appeals to a wide range of age groups, with a significant portion of its customers being younger travelers. Approximately **34%** of Americans aged **18-34** reported flying with Delta in the past year, highlighting its popularity among younger demographics. (consumer insights think with google)



GEOGRAPHICS

Delta Air Lines, **headquartered in Atlanta**, operates globally with key hubs in cities like Amsterdam, London-Heathrow, Tokyo, and Houston. At George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) in **Houston**, Delta operates from **Terminal A**, offering direct flights to major hubs such as Atlanta and Salt Lake City. These routes connect Houston travelers to Delta's extensive domestic and international network.

IAH serves as a crucial gateway for diverse travelers, with Delta catering significantly to business professionals through routes to major hubs, premium services like the Sky Club, onboard Wi-Fi, and priority boarding. **Delta** also attracts many connecting passengers, leveraging Houston's strategic location as a transit point for domestic and international journeys, particularly to Central and South America. Robust partnerships and codeshare agreements further enhance seamless connectivity, establishing **Delta** as a key player at one of Houston's most important transportation hubs.



IAH ON GOOGLE MAPS

EXTERIOR OF IAH





When examining Delta Airlines' psychographics, it's important to look at the **values, emotions, and lifestyle preferences** that the airline seeks to align with in order to appeal to its customers. Delta Airlines positions itself as a premium, customer-centric brand, placing a **high emphasis on comfort, reliability, and world-class service**. The typical Delta traveler tends to value efficiency and convenience, seeking a seamless travel experience that minimizes stress and enhances comfort. This is reflected in Delta's focus on high-quality amenities, loyalty programs, and a strong emphasis on customer service, positioning itself as a solution for **discerning travelers who prioritize ease and dependability**.

Politically, Delta Airlines has a more **neutral** stance, though it tends to reflect broader American corporate attitudes. The company has been involved in various social issues but tries to maintain an inclusive, progressive image without alienating any particular group. For instance, Delta has taken stances on issues such as **LGBTQ+ rights, racial equality, and sustainability**, signaling support for progressive social values, while avoiding overt political partisanship. Their brand messaging, while focused on inclusivity and diversity, is also careful to remain non-controversial, aiming to resonate with a wide range of passengers. As such, Delta's psychographic appeal is largely to **socially conscious individuals** who value ethical business practices, but who also desire a smooth, professional, and no-nonsense service experience.

The psychographic profile of Delta's customers also suggests a customer base that enjoys **premium experiences and sophisticated leisure**. Many of Delta's frequent flyers belong to upper-middle and high-income brackets, and they tend to appreciate the airline's commitment to **luxury, technology, and innovation**, including amenities such as in-flight Wi-Fi, power outlets, and Delta Sky Clubs. Additionally, there is a focus on business and international travelers who value global connectivity and the reliability that Delta offers in terms of flight schedules and customer service. Delta appeals to those who lead **busy, fast-paced lives**, making it an attractive option for those who expect efficiency and a high standard of care during their travel experiences. Overall, Delta Airlines caters to a **diverse, socially aware, and relatively affluent** demographic that prioritizes comfort, convenience, and ethical considerations.



AT THE DELTA BAGGAGE SERVICE DESK
DISPLAYING OUR DELTA DIAMOND

C. OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION'S CURRENT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STRATEGIES AND USAGE

Delta Air Lines, one of the major global carriers, has started deploying artificial intelligence in its operations to improve customer experience, price its offerings optimally, and accelerate decision-making. This paper discusses Delta's AI efforts, classifying them as customer service, pricing, and long-term strategic objectives, while emphasizing what in fact underlines the airline's disciplined approach to the adoption of technology.

AI in Customer Service

Delta's first implementations of AI are in those areas of the company that improve reservation response times and agent efficiency, allowing them to rapidly retrieve answers from procedural manuals for customer inquiries. This means access to information on traveling with pets, for example, that took several minutes can now be done in a matter of seconds, greatly improving the customer experience.

AI in Pricing Optimization

Delta has just begun using AI to remake its pricing strategies, especially for premium products, by looking at consumer behavior and market trends for determining the price optimally relative to base fares. "AI accelerates pricing decisions by automating feedback loops that once required tremendous amounts of time and effort, streamlining the process," according to Delta President Glen Hauenstein. Moreover, AI affords data-driven recommendations that enhance analyst productivity and enable analysts to make better decisions faster. This approach will enable Delta to remain competitive in the dynamic market while maximizing revenue opportunities.

Long-Term AI Strategy

Delta sees AI as a key differentiator in solving multi-dimensional problems that use a lot of data, allowing it to unlock long-term value and efficiency. With over \$40 billion in assets, even minimal improvements in efficiency will go a long way toward justifying the costs and making AI important for Delta's operations. CEO Ed Bastian stressed the need for clean data and clearly defined rules of deployment so that AI systems, if poorly set up, do not make errors or 'hallucinate'. Through its disciplined approach, Delta ensures AI continues to enhance operational integrity while minimizing risks-and positions the company for sustainable innovation.

COMPETITOR RESEARCH: AIRLINES & AI



American Airlines : Uses AI for hyper-personalized in-flight experiences, leveraging customer data to recommend services and upgrades.



United Airlines: Focuses on personalized customer interactions via AI chatbots and machine learning-driven pricing strategies.



Lufthansa: Pioneered AI in operational disruptions, using its OPS AI system to reschedule flights and manage passenger rebooking.



Singapore Airlines: has announced that it will adopt Pathfinder, an AI-tool jointly developed by KLM Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) and Boston Consulting Group (BCG), to improve its management of aircraft management.

III. Research Methods Used in Study

A. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES SELECTED TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

The Goal: The primary goal of our research was to receive a full understanding of the AI techniques implemented a Delta Airlines, or specifically Delta Airlines at George Bush International Airport. By separating our research into Primary and Secondary Research, and then developing a Proposed Strategic Plan from the collected research, we were able to gain deeper insight on the influence AI may hold at Delta Airlines, and how our strategy will benefit Delta Airlines.

Primary Research

Research Method	Description	Rationale
Primary Visits: Employees	Our research included anonymous interviews and a digital survey with over 50 Delta employees at George Bush Intercontinental Airport to assess their awareness, perceptions, and concerns about Delta's AI initiatives. Insights gathered highlighted concerns like job displacement and opportunities for AI to enhance efficiency and customer service, shaping the recommendations in our strategic proposal.	Employee Visits: Analysing the data collected from the Operations employees provided us with an inner perspective on the overall management of current AI techniques at Delta Airlines.
Primary Visits: Customers	We interviewed over 15 anonymous Delta Airlines customers and questioned them on their knowledge of Delta Airlines current AI techniques and weaknesses in which AI would improve.	Customer Visits: Conversing with customers anonymously led to us obtaining flight, management, and overall experience angles from all perspectives.
Interviews	Interviews with Tanina Ferreri and Mr. Quero provided vital insights into AI's role in Delta's marketing, customer relations, and operations, shaping our strategic recommendations.	Interviews with Marketing Board: By meeting with Tania Ferreri and Mr. Quero we successfully proposed our hypothetical AI "FLIGHT" strategy and contributed to our secondary direction of internet research , and which Delta techniques were influenced by AI the most.

Secondary Research

Research Method	Description	Rationale
Internet Research	We utilized various sources for our study. The Delta News Hub provided insights into Delta's target market, demographics, and recent marketing strategies. The Delta Museum offered a historical timeline, helping us understand the company's roots. Additionally, Forbes highlighted Delta's current AI strategies, while Delta's website gave us a comprehensive view of the company's operations in 2024.	Internet Research: To prepare for our meetings with Delta Airlines' marketing team and board, we used various sources to ensure we were well-informed. These resources helped us understand Delta's strategies, history, and current initiatives, allowing us to engage confidently and present relevant insights during discussions.
Company Files Analysis	We met with Sales Account Executive Tanina Ferreri and were able to read Delta Airlines marketing propositions on future Artificial Intelligence integrations, budget allocations, and management.	Company Files Analysis: To further our understanding of Delta Airlines AI implementations in comparison to other competitors, we asked to read Delta's process of proposing and creating their AI techniques.
Competitor Research	Sources such as Amplify XL and Delta Airlines News allowed us to understand the basic management, employee, and flight data to compare to Delta Airlines .	Competitor Research: To prepare for our meeting with the Delta Airlines Marketing Board, we pre collected information and data on competitors, such as United Airlines and Southwest Airlines, on their current implementations on AI.

B. PROCESS USED TO CONDUCT THE SELECTED RESEARCH METHOD

Primary Research Methods: The principal methods employed to conduct our primary research methods included speaking and understanding the position of each Delta employee in -person, reaching out to a myriad of different Delta employees through email, and producing effective data through digital interviews in Zoom. All of the interviews presented were held in November and December of 2024, and every in-person interview was held at the George Bush International Airport.

Primary Visits: Employees

A key component of our research involved conducting anonymous, in-person and digital interviews with Delta employees at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in late November and early December. In early November, we sent out a digital survey form on Google Forms to over 50 Delta Airlines employees from various sectors. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge the awareness, understanding, and opinions of employees regarding Delta's current AI initiatives. We wanted to understand how AI was perceived across different levels of the organization, from front-line staff to more technical roles. The feedback from these employees helped identify any concerns about AI implementation, such as fears of job displacement, as well as opportunities for AI to improve efficiency and customer service. Their responses were instrumental in shaping our understanding of employee sentiment, which, in turn, influenced the recommendations made in our strategic proposal.

SCAN ME



Help Klein Cain High School students
and fill out this quick survey!

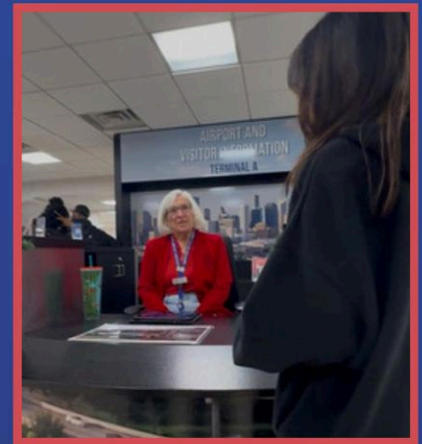
DISPLAYED HERE IS THE OFFICIAL QR CODE
DISTRIBUTED TO ABOUT 50 DELTA EMPLOYEES
FOR INICIAL RESEARCH, WITH THE HELP OF MRS.
FERRERI



PICTURE WITH DELTA AIRLINES FLIGHT ATTENDANTS AFTER CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW



DEVANSH STANDING IN FRONT OF THE DELTA BAGGAGE SERVICE



SHREYA INTERVIEWING THE IAH DESK ATTENDANT ON AI IMPLEMENTATIONS

Primary Visits: Customers

Our anonymous interviews with Delta Airlines customers generally ranged from in-person, email, and internet forums. These interviews and statements collected ranged from late October to Early December. Mirroring the importance of understanding the average employee perspective on Delta's AI implementation, we also believed that understanding customers' stances provided depth to the direction of our proposed strategic plan, and how the support of Delta customers proportionally relates to the success of our proposition.



Interviews:

Two seminal interviews with key personnel at Delta Airlines really enriched our research. Tanina Ferreri—a Sales Account Executive with years of experience in sales, marketing, and advertising for the airline industry—provided critical insight in a Zoom interview in early November and an in-person meeting in December. She provided great depth on how Delta uses AI in its marketing and customer relationship management. Her perspectives on AI's potential to enhance customer acquisition, retention, and competitive positioning were of immense value in shaping the marketing components of our proposed strategy.

Similarly, Our in-person interview with Mr. Quero, Delta's Head of Operations, in November 2024, was incredibly enlightening for the operations at Delta. With his background in mechanical and aerospace systems, he shared how Delta applies AI to predictive maintenance, customer service, and operational efficiency. He also discussed challenges and opportunities around integrating AI into aviation operations; indeed, his insights were critical in framing the operational focus of our recommendations. These discussions furthered our understanding of the impact of AI at Delta and informed the development of our proposal.



DEVANSH ANALYZING CURRENT FLIGHT SIMULATOR WITH MR QUERO



Secondary Research Methods: In addition to primary research, secondary research was critical to supplement the insights we gathered and to ensure a thorough understanding of Delta Airlines' operations and the broader aviation industry. Secondary research was conducted through various channels, including internet searches, analysis of company files, and competitor bench marking. This research was carried out throughout and after our primary interviews, with data collection continuing into December 2024. The secondary research helped fill in gaps, verify information obtained from interviews, and provide context for our proposed strategy.

Internet Research:

Our internet research was a continuous process that began before our first interview with Delta's Marketing Board in late November and continued throughout the duration of our study. We made a concerted effort to familiarize ourselves with Delta's corporate history, marketing strategies, and existing AI initiatives through websites like Delta news, Delta museum and the Delta websites were some of the sources that helped us ensure we were well-prepared for discussions with key stakeholders. After each interview, we would revisit our research to clarify any points raised or to explore new topics that emerged during conversations. The research focused on understanding how Delta Airlines has integrated AI into various aspects of its business, including operations, customer service, and marketing. We also researched AI trends in the aviation industry more broadly, allowing us to position Delta's AI strategy within a larger context. This helped us refine our understanding of the competitive landscape and identify potential areas for improvement in Delta's use of AI.

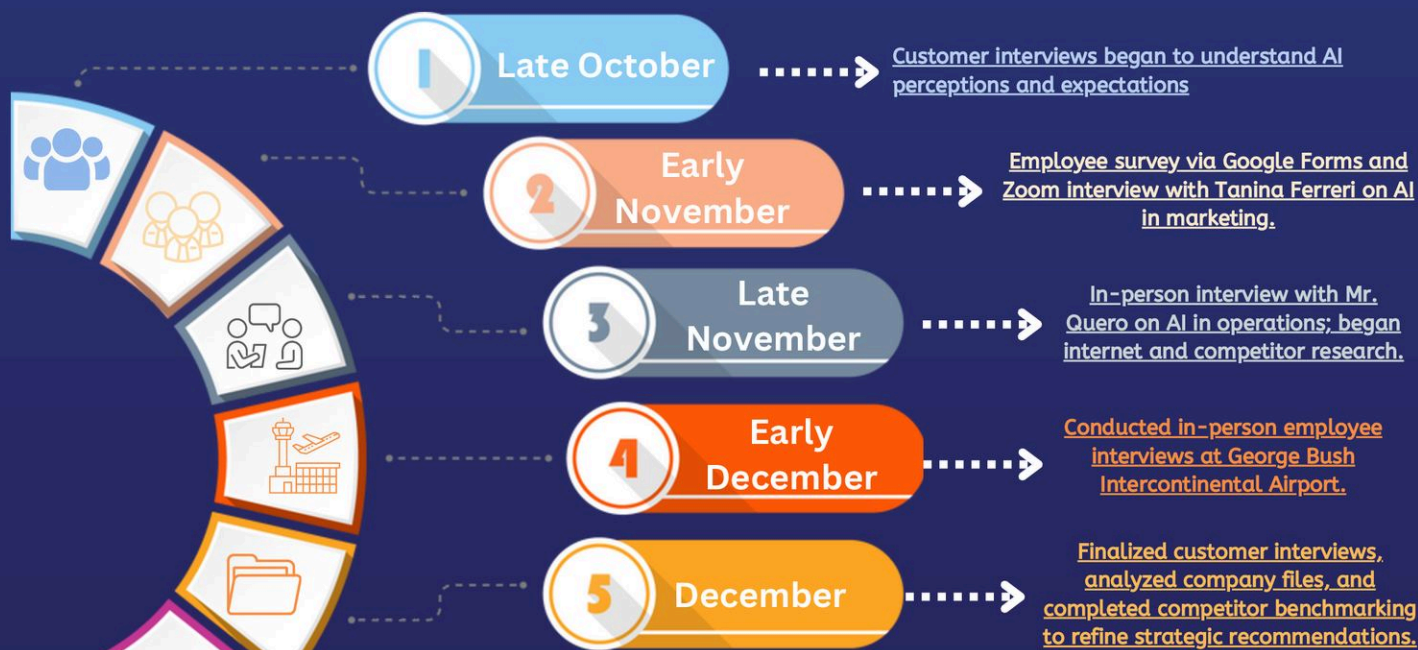
Company Files Analysis:

During our second in-person meeting with Mrs. Ferreri in December, we had the opportunity to access select internal documents and AI proposals used by Delta Airlines. These documents provided us with a deeper understanding of the company's current AI projects and the challenges the airline faces in implementing AI across its various departments. By reviewing these files, we were able to gain insight into Delta's internal processes, including project development timelines, budget allocations, and key performance indicators for AI initiatives. This behind-the-scenes look at Delta's AI strategy was invaluable for ensuring our proposed plan was aligned with the company's objectives and could realistically be implemented within their existing framework. The documents also highlighted areas where AI could play a more prominent role, such as in enhancing operational efficiency, reducing costs, and improving the overall customer experience.

Competitor Research:

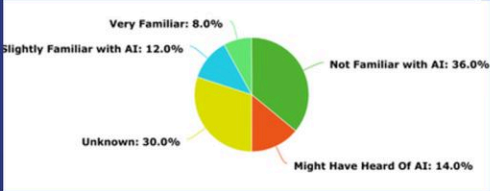
Understanding the competitive landscape was essential to developing a robust and forward-thinking AI strategy for Delta Airlines. We conducted extensive research into Delta's primary competitors, including United Airlines, American Airlines, and Frontier Airlines, to gain insights into how these companies were adopting and leveraging AI technologies. This included examining their AI implementations in areas such as predictive maintenance, customer service automation, and personalized marketing. By comparing Delta's AI initiatives with those of its competitors, we were able to identify areas where Delta had a competitive advantage and areas where improvements could be made. Furthermore, we examined industry-wide trends in AI adoption within the aviation sector, particularly in relation to customer service automation, flight optimization, and operational efficiencies. This allowed us to benchmark Delta's AI strategy against the best practices in the industry and propose enhancements that could position Delta as a leader in AI innovation within the airline industry.

RESEARCH TIMELINE



IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. FINDINGS OF RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Primary Research	The primary research ultimately uncovered the basis of our proposal strategy, which surrounds three main points: training programs, baggage procedures, and flight control systems . Throughout the research, we found that these facets displayed the most promise in partnership with our proposed AI integration.	In our meeting with the Delta Airlines IAH Marketing Board, 5 out of the 8 members displayed interest in integrating AI into training programs, as Delta Airlines spends over 100 million dollars yearly on just instruction.
Secondary Research	The secondary research conducted provided a myriad of different findings when understanding Delta Airline's overall SWOT analysis, AI integrations, and competitor advantages and disadvantages in both AI industries and overall factors.	In terms of on-time arrivals, Delta Airlines displayed a 78.8% success rate, in comparison to United Airlines with 76.2% and American Airlines with 71.6% , which may indicate directing AI integrations to boarding procedures to further increase on-time flights
Pivotal Component: Surveys	The surveys distributed to around 50 employees displayed a pivotal point that not many Delta employees truly understand current AI integrations, as over 36% of employees responded that they were "Not Familiar" with Delta Airlines current AI feature in flight operations.	

The primary and secondary research conducted, or specifically the *internet research*, led to us creating a SWOT diagram, displaying Delta Airlines overall Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This diagram was conducted for us to fully understand the parameters in which our AI integration should follow.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths:

- Recognized for excellent customer service, flight reliability and premium experience
- Extensive global networks, with pivotal hubs in major cities
- Robust fleet magnitude, management, and operation
- Increased financial stability in comparison to competitors such as United Airlines

Weaknesses:

- Substantial carbon footprint facing backlash from environmental groups
- Expensive operation costs for fleet maintenance, fuel, mechanics, etc.
- Inflated market prices, and lacks in competing against budget-friendly airline competitors

Opportunities:

- Employ sustainability measures to both reduce carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly aviation management
- Attain larger international hubs and partnerships, such as the one with LATAM Airlines
- Integrate Artificial Intelligence into mechanical components

Threats:

- Constant competitive evolution from aviation companies such as United, Southwest, and American Airlines
- Subject to fleet malfunctions throughout cockpit and internal machines
- Inconsistencies in delay, cancellations, and bookings

B. CONCLUSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

From the findings presented above, we were able to find 4 main conclusions that will influence the structure of our “FLIGHT” proposed strategy. The purpose of these conclusions is for us to understand the gaps in which AI implementation will provide success, and categorize how our findings developed our improved “FLIGHT” proposal.

Conclusion #1: Delta Airlines's Excessive Resource Funding surrounding Training programs

Throughout the process of conducting internet research and employee surveys, we discovered that a large amount from Delta Airlines yearly budget is allocated to training programs for employees of all sectors, but specifically for pilots, flight attendants, and aircraft mechanics. In November 2024, Delta Airlines debuted a \$50 million dollar pilot training facility in Salt Lake City, but these substantial purchase does not include employee trainers, resources, and the necessary equipment to successfully and safely provide necessary instruction.

Conclusion #2: Inefficiencies of Boarding and Baggage Procedures

Specifically displayed throughout our interview with Diamond, a Delta Airline's employee stationed at Baggage Service at George Bush International Airport, a slight disdain against the productivity of Delta Airlines current protocols surrounding baggage claims and tracking was displayed. Currently, when faced with lost baggage, the current protocols in place lack definitive aid for both the customer and employee, and are severely outdated. When analyzing gaps in which the company could efficiently and effectively implement artificial intelligence, Diamond expressed unanimous interest in adding AI systems to baggage and boarding procedures, not only to make his personal job less tedious, but also provide the customer with more accurate data surrounding their baggage conflicts.

Conclusion #3: Enhance current Flight Control Systems and Aircraft Communications

A key finding in our meetings with the Delta Airlines IAH Head of Operations, Gustavo, was the stagnant evolution of Delta's current flight control systems, both inside the aircraft itself and the systems of the airport, and how AI integration could not only make the process of commercial flight easier to understand and navigate, but also amplify communications between aircraft mid-flight for safety and efficiency purposes. In contrast to its growing budget allocations, physical flight control systems such as cockpits for various plane models and technological flight control systems remain in similar levels of advancement as they did 5-10 years ago. Our experience in communicating with a professional Delta employee that specializes in flight communications, and understands the weaknesses of Deltas current practices, led us to fully understand the industries and components of the company in which artificial intelligence is necessary.

Conclusion #4: Employee Awareness

Alternatively, throughout all of our anonymous and scheduled meetings, a key factor displayed was the lack of employee awareness of certain Delta Airlines policies. Displayed most clearly in our survey distributed to over 50 different employees, it was clear to us that Delta employees didn't completely understand their company's current AI implementations, or even knew that Delta Airlines was using AI for simple factors such as flight operations and pricing predictions. The findings from our survey displayed this, and we decided that a key point of our proposed strategy “FLIGHT” was going to be advertisement and information networking across all employee sectors.

Conclusion #5: Connectivity between Delta Airlines Factions

Finally, also seen throughout our general meetings with various employees, it was clearly discerned that Delta Airlines could improve their overall connectivity between overlapping sections of employment. To preface, this statement does not state that Delta Airlines has no connections between departments, as this is highly unrealistic and completely inefficient in global functioning companies. Conversely, we found that AI could be advantageous when enhancing communications and connectivity between procedures surrounding baggage loading, exporting, and taxi arrivals. Although the concepts may seem distant, integrating AI into these factors provides smooth transitions for customers and employees, which would enhance the company itself.

V. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

A. OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE OF THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

Integrate AI into Delta's advanced aircraft simulation training programs within 3 years to enhance pilot and community learning.

01

This objective focuses on embedding AI system's into Delta's full-scale cockpit simulators, allowing the AI to undergo extensive training through many scenarios providing ground and air training. By simulating real-world communications and flight conditions, the AI will refine its decision-making capabilities but also serve as a tool for pilots and the aviation community.

Increase the efficiency of boarding and taxiing processes by integrating AI-driven responses within 1 year.

02

This object addresses inefficient processes in boarding and taxing. This would involve reforming lengthy processes through analysis's of real-time data, such as passengers' flow, time taken to load luggage, and the availability of ground crew. It would be able to provide exact suggestions and dynamic scheduling depending on the aircraft's position, which cuts off idle time and makes for a fast transition from boarding into taxing.

Integrate AI-driven automation to reform flight control systems within 5 years, minimizing human error and enhancing precision.

03

This objective addresses focusing on resolving discrepancies within Delta's aircraft communication and satellite communication by integrating cutting-edge AI technology. Focusing on elevating tarmac and aerial safety while ensuring safe and precise responses through advanced algorithms.

B. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINES

The 5-phase plan, "FLIGHT," consists of targeted initiatives and strategies procured to enhance aviation processes and efficiency through AI-driven solutions.

Focus on Data Collection



Initiative 1: Analyze boarding and taxi inefficiencies.
Initiative 2: Gather real-time ATC data.

Leverage AI Technology



Initiative 1: Develop AI algorithms for operations
Initiative 2: Train AI using simulation data.

Integrate Seamless Processes



Initiative 1: Test AI in Delta's simulators.
Initiative 2: Optimize boarding and taxi transitions

Generate Real-Time Solutions



Initiative 1: Real-Time Flight Path Optimization
Initiative 2: Dynamic Gate and Taxiway Coordination

Hone Pilot Training



Initiative 1: Use AI simulators to enhance decision-making
Initiative 2: Provide pilots with real-time AI feedback

Test and Deploy



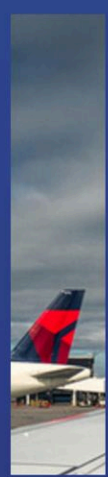
Initiative 1: Conduct trials on empty aircraft for operational consistency
Initiative 2: Secure approvals and deploy AI to Delta's fleet



Focus on Data Collection

Achieves objectives 1 and 3 □ **QUARTER 1**

Initiative 1: Analyze Boarding and Taxi inefficiencies



Delta will model inefficiencies in processes for boarding and taxiing, studying any bottlenecks to inform AI development in key areas: passenger flow, readiness of ground crews, luggage handling, gate assignments, and coordination of taxiways with ATC at major hubs such as George Bush International Airport and Los Angeles International Airport. A team of 10 analysts will monitor boarding times across various aircraft types, evaluate ground crew efficiency in luggage loading, and assess idle time between boarding completion and taxiing. Real-time data on taxi routes, bottlenecks, and ATC communications will also be collected. The effort will employ advanced tracking software and automated scheduling systems with a budget of \$150,000 allocated for tools, personnel, and airport coordination. The final deliverable of the present effort will have Delta identify the top-five root causes of delays, give detailed metrics on boarding and taxi times, and then advance procedural recommendations, such as optimized crew scheduling and gate reassignment processes. This report will also be disseminated to the operations managers and AI developers to make certain that current challenges are aligned with future AI solutions.

Initiative 2: Gather Real Time ATC Data



To improve the AI's capacity to manage real-world tasks, real-time Air Traffic Control (ATC) communication data will be gathered and examined from Delta's key hubs, including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and Los Angeles International Airport. This information will encompass both regular directives, such as taxi clearances and gate modifications, along with unusual situations like weather-related delays or emergencies. By merging ATC communications with aircraft movement behaviors and taxiway configurations, the AI will be trained to react flexibly and adjust to intricate operational difficulties. A group of analysts, utilizing sophisticated data-logging tools, will compile a thorough dataset that guarantees the AI is prepared to smoothly engage with ATC systems and modify taxi plans instantly. With an allocation of \$200,000, this project establishes the foundation for more intelligent, safer, and more efficient decision-making throughout Delta's operations.



Figure 1.1

Boarding and Taxi efficiency tracker
Cost per unit: \$225



Figure 1.2

Handheld Operational Data Logger
Cost per unit: \$325



Leverage AI Technology

Achieves objectives 1 and 3 □ **QUARTER 2**

JANUARY-MARCH 2025

Initiative 1: Develop AI Algorithms

AI algorithms will be developed to analyze a range of data sets, including taxiing procedures and safety inspections, with the aim of improving operational efficiency. With the aid of a robust algorithm which is able to deliver accurate information fast, Delta seeks to make improvements in the boarding and taxiing processes that would help the company reduce costs from fuel consumption and delays. Further, the algorithm will have an emergency protocol and will be capable of taking total control over the systems if the situation turns critical, including hijacking.

Initiative 2: Train AI Using Simulation Data

The idea behind this proposal is to train advanced artificial intelligence models in a self-contained virtual environment that accurately depicts airport operations. These would involve various scenarios, such as air-traffic control communications, coordination among crews on the ground, and emergency situations using data assembled in the previous step. Testing of the AI in millions of routine and high-pressure scenarios will facilitate its iterative ability to adapt and respond dynamically to changing conditions. By the end of this phase, it is expected that the AI would have achieved a better level of precision in its operations. At this stage, the AI is expected to show better precision.

In conclusion, These initiatives provide the fundamentals for complex algorithms to serve as a tool at airport operations, analyzing data and providing real-world communications that help elevate efficiency and safety.



Figure 1.3

Aerologic Algorithm Module

Full integration: \$200,000-\$300,000



Integrate Seamless Processes

Achieves objectives 1 and 3 □ QUARTER 3

Initiative 1: Test AI Using Simulation Modules

- Design predictive AI models to optimize passenger flow, gate assignments, and taxiing operations.
- Build adaptive algorithms that dynamically coordinate with ATC and handle real-time data.
- Validate AI models using historical Data from Delta to ensure precision and scalability.

Budget Allocation: \$200,000

This initiative aims at developing predictive and adaptive AI systems that help to manage some of the most crucial processes at the airport such as passenger movement, gate utilization and air traffic management. The models will be trained using Delta's historical data and the accuracy and the scalability of the models will be the key focus area for testing, which will create a platform for real time integration with ATC and hence enhance the operational efficiency.



JULY -
SEPTEMBER 2025**Initiative 2: Optimize AI for Boarding and Taxiing Transitions**

This initiative will focus on elevating AI systems under realistic operational conditions at airport, using advanced simulation environments. It will be dynamically performed by simulation.

Gate Congestion
ManagementDynamic Passenger
Flow OptimizationReal-Time ATC
Communication

Various tests will be performed on the AI systems, under different situations, including harsh weather conditions, changes of gate, and emergency conditions among others. Such instances will tune the adaptability of the AI towards giving responses to real-time situations with accuracy. The aim is to achieve a high level of dependability in an AI system coupled with its efficiency in operations. It would definitely add readiness for piloting integration, smoothening out possible delays from bottlenecks caused at times in boarding and taxiing.

This overall effort will cost \$400,000 in simulation development, data integration inclusive of iterative testing. Training shall be completed by June 30, 2025.

Total Budget Allocation: \$400,000

**Generate Real Time Solutions**

Achieves objectives 1, 2, and 3 □ **QUARTER 4**

Initiative 1: Real-Time Flight Path Optimization

Objective: Allow AI to dynamically adjust flight paths based on real-time inputs such as weather, air traffic, and airspace restrictions.

Activities:

- Implement AI-powered analysis of the current weather and air traffic conditions.
- Test dynamic routing algorithms in simulated environments.
- Ensure compliance with safety protocols during flight path adjustments.

Expected Outcome:

- Reduced delays due to weather or congestion. Improved operational efficiency and fuel savings.

Initiative 2: Optimize AI for Boarding and Taxiing Transitions

Objective: Refine the performance of AI by deploying them in real-time operational environments, and to achieve seamless transitions between boarding, taxiing, and management at the gate.

Activities:

- Conduct Live Simulation Data
- Refine Algorithms Based on Feedback
- Enhance Pilot Coordination

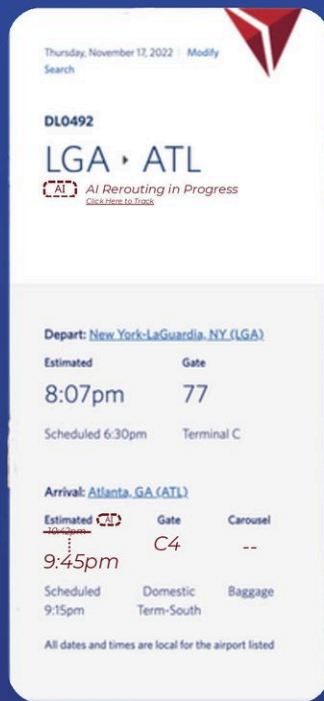
Expected Outcome:

- AI systems that reduce the time spent in boarding and taxiing, making operations more efficient. Refiner and already-validated algorithms, ready for live operation integration.

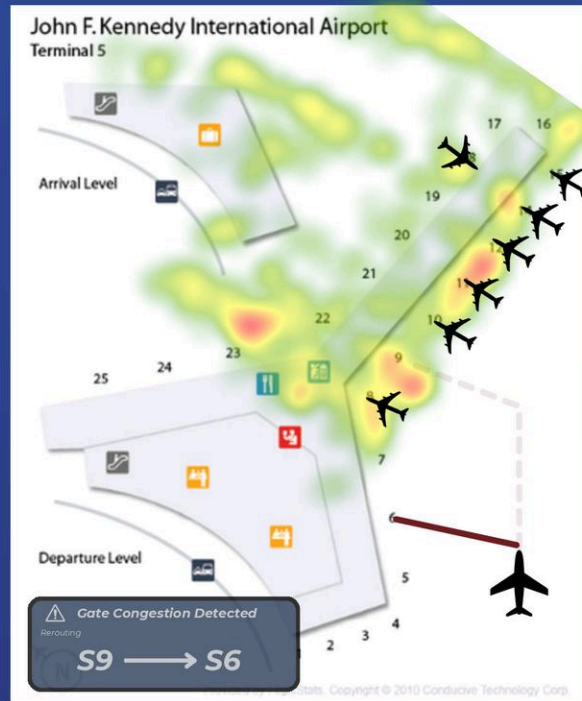
Budget: \$600,000

OCT - DEC 2025

OCT - DEC 2025



Automated AI rerouting to prevent delays



Gate Congestion Heatmap, and automatic assignment



Hone Pilot Training

Achieves objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 □ **QUARTER 1**

Initiative 1: Use AI simulators to enhance decision-making **QUARTER 1**

Objective: Enhance Pilot skills on collaborating with AI during critical times.

- **Details:** Advanced training sessions will be carried out with pilots using AI-integrated cockpit simulators. These simulators simulate real-life scenarios, including adverse weather conditions, mid-flight technical failures, and emergency rerouting. The focus is on joint decision-making between pilots and AI.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Increased Pilot confidence in handling AI-assisted systems
 - Enhanced safety protocols through effective collaboration
- **Cost:** \$250,000



Flight Simulator integrated with AI

This initiative is aimed at equipping pilots with more sophisticated skills in working with AI during emergency situations. Advanced cockpit simulators will be used for training pilots in cases of severe weather disruptions, mid-flight technical failures, and rerouting ordered by air traffic control. Real-time recommendations provided by the AI system will foster joint decision-making and enhance safety protocols. With immersive simulations and iterative feedback, confidence and expertise are built up over time in aviators on how to use AI as a real decision-support tool and making the best decision in the face of doubt or ambiguity during critical situations.

JANUARY - MARCH 2026

Initiative 2: Provide pilots with real-time AI feedback

The initiative is going to empower pilots to inject AI-generated, real-time insights in simulations and live operations. Integrating dynamic data streams like weather updates, ATC instructions, and flight conditions, the pilots are trained to interpret and act on AI recommendations. These systems can provide optimized flight paths, emergency response suggestions, and operational adjustments while ensuring faster reaction times with improved situational awareness. This initiative has been a catalyst for training pilots by iterating between training and feedback to create seamless synergy between human expertise and AI-driven solutions. It ultimately will be driven by safety, fewer delays, and operational excellence.



Test and Deploy

 Achieves objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 ▢ **QUARTER 2**

Initiative 1: Conduct Trials on Empty Aircraft

This initiative's objective is to validate AI's performance in real-world scenarios to ensure, safety, efficiency, and reliability.

Use a select empty fleet of aircraft to test AI systems under live conditions with pilots supervising.

Monitor AI performance, focusing on metrics like decision-making accuracy, response time, and reliability.

Simulate real-world challenges such as weather disruptions, ATC rerouting, and boarding/taxi inefficiencies



Delta's AI Powered Aircraft

Confirm that the AI can seamlessly handle dynamic operational demands, ensuring verification for fleet-wide deployment

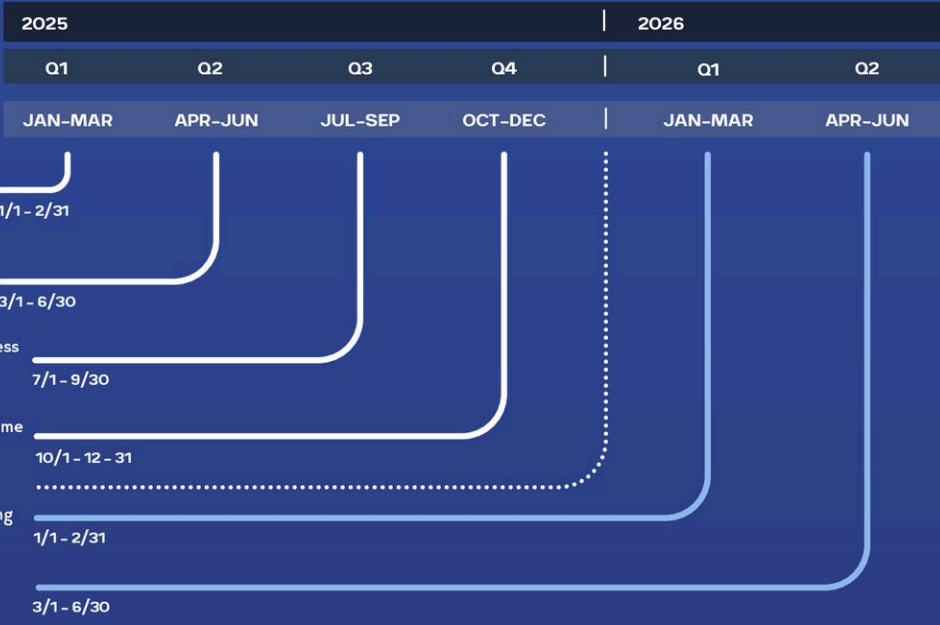
Initiative 2: Secure Approvals and Begin Fleet-Wide Deployment

The initiative focuses on gaining the necessary regulatory compliance and seamlessly operating the AI system throughout its fleet. Delta will conclude with aviation authorities such as FAA and ICAO those approvals regarding the operational use of AI, making sure that safety and efficiency standards are achieved. It will be very gradual deployment, starting with a few routes, monitoring performance, addressing whatever initial challenges there may be. Full-fledged training programs will be carried out with pilots and crew members so that they may integrate the new AI platform smoothly into daily operations. It, in the end, tries to achieve better operational efficacy for Delta and sets an example in AI-driven best practices for aviation.

Timeline

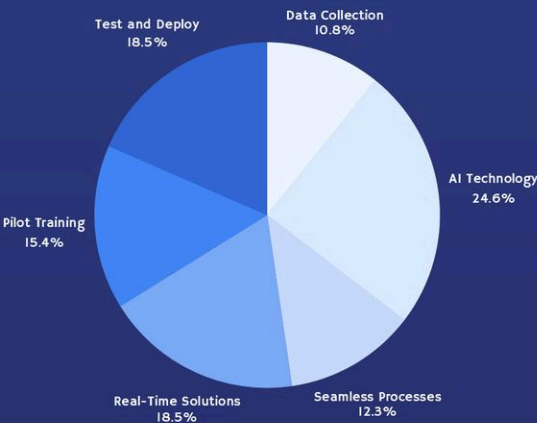
The FLIGHT timeline ranges from January 2024 to June 2025, outlining six major stages in the AI Integration Project of Delta. It starts with Focus on Data Collection, Q1 2024, where the collection of fundamental data is done to pinpoint the areas of inefficiency, and then Leverage AI Technology, Q2 2024, where the development and training of AI algorithms are concerned. This tests the AI in simulators for fine-tuning in boarding and taxiing solutions in Q3 2024 in the stage described as Integrate Seamless Processes, resulting in Q4 2024 to create real-time solutions with the goal of undertaking trials of a live scenario. Afterward, in Q1 2025, this will hone pilot training around AI-assisted emergency decision-making before completing the final step at Q2 2025 with test and deployment phases of implementation across fleets, one step at a time, after the necessary approval. It also calls for a planned timeline of progression toward operational excellence in the smoothness of execution.

APRIL - JUNE 2026



VI. PROPOSED BUDGET

Cost Breakdown



Phase	Cost (USD)	Rationale
Focus on Data Collection	\$350,000	Tools for data collection (\$150,000) and analysis of boarding and taxi inefficiencies (\$200,000).
Leverage AI Technology	\$800,000	Development of AI algorithms (\$400,000) and training AI using simulation data (\$400,000).
Integrate Seamless Processes	\$400,000	AI testing in cockpit simulators (\$200,000) and optimization of transitions (\$200,000).
Generate Real-Time Solutions	\$600,000	Real-time flight path optimization (\$300,000) and dynamic gate/taxiway coordination (\$300,000).
Hone Pilot Training	\$500,000	AI-enhanced pilot training in simulators (\$250,000) and real-time AI feedback systems (\$250,000).
Test and Deploy	\$600,000	Conduct trials on empty aircraft (\$300,000) Secure approvals and deploy AI to Delta's fleet (\$300,000)

Unexpected Costs: 325,000 (10%)

Total Cost: \$3,575,000.

The total investment for the FLIGHT Plan is \$3.25 million, including a 10% contingency reserve. This accounts for ~0.006% of Delta's annual revenue of \$58 billion.

Delta's Return On Investment (ROI)

The ROI projected for the Delta FLIGHT Plan remains impressively high: an initial investment of \$3.575 million yields significant operational and revenue improvements over five years. Key drivers will be fuel efficiency improvements of ~1.5% annually on a \$4 billion fuel budget, a reduction in operational delays, and increased passenger satisfaction boosting ticket sales by ~0.5% annually. Conservatively combined, these gains are estimated to be approximately \$1.875 billion in total over five years. This gives a revised ROI of ~52,381%, placing Delta as one of the leaders in AI-driven aviation efficiency and profitability.

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**Form given to Employees via
QR code**

Letter from Tanina Ferreri and Gustavo Quero. In the letter, Both review and approve each step of Project FLIGHT.

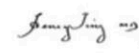
DELTA
December 10, 2024

Tanina Ferreri and Gustavo Quero
Sales Account Executive and Head of Operations
Delta Air Lines World Headquarters
1030 Delta Blvd
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Mr. Bhalla, Ms. Bhalla, and Ms. Quero

Thank you for presenting your innovative proposal for Delta's FLIGHT Plan. We are excited about the opportunity to collaborate on this groundbreaking initiative to transform aviation efficiency, safety, and innovation. The FLIGHT Plan will begin with collecting critical data to identify operational inefficiencies, forming the foundation for AI development. The second step involves leveraging advanced AI technology to optimize passenger flow, gate assignments, and taxi processes. Next, we will integrate seamless processes into simulators to validate solutions and ensure readiness for real-world implementation. Real-time solutions will be developed to handle dynamic rerouting, ATC coordination, and operational adjustments. Pilot training will be enhanced using AI-assisted decision-making tools to prepare for complex scenarios. Finally, the plan will culminate in the phased testing and deployment of these AI solutions across our fleet, establishing Delta as a leader in AI-driven aviation. The projected outcomes are extraordinary, with anticipated annual savings and revenue gains between \$685 million and \$1.41 billion, driven by improved fuel efficiency, reduced delays, and increased passenger satisfaction. Your partnership is instrumental in helping us achieve these ambitious goals, and we look forward to working together to bring the FLIGHT Plan to life. Please do not hesitate to reach out with further questions or suggestions as we embark on this transformative journey.

Sincerely,


Tanina Ferreri
Sales Account Executive
Delta Air Lines


Gustavo Quero
Head Of Operations
Delta Air Lines