

# What is 232 feet long, 19½ feet wide, has 16 wheels, and flies? Charles Betz' 600-mph office, that's what.

Twenty-four-year-old Betz, a lithe, good-looking Californian, is representative of a new breed of young executives whose managerial talents, and responsibilities, are as awesome as their offices—TWA's fleet of 747s.

When superjets rolled off Boeing assembly lines in Everett, Wash., it became apparent that any airplane that big—tripling passenger accommodations of a 707—would require a special approach to passenger needs, care and attention.

So TWA created a completely new position in airlines management ranks, Director of Customer Service.

"He's a management representative aboard every 747 flight," says Richard Veres, Manager of 747 Flight Service, "with the authority and commensurate responsibility for optimum service."

Early in '70, the first class of directors was enrolled in TWA's Breech Training Academy, Overland Park, Kansas.

"Twenty of us 'survived' the five-week course," grins Betz. "They taught us everything about that new jet, except how to fly it. We dug into management motivation techniques, human relations, safety procedures, logistics of provisioning, the food, refreshments and entertainment. We even had to learn how the five movie projectors aboard operated."

Qualifications and curriculum were equally rugged, which explains why so far, out of more than 1,400 applicants, only 97 young men and women have graduated into active service.

Betz' background is typical of the scope of experience sought by TWA for its Directors.

He was an editor of his college newspaper at San Jose State College; an honors graduate in the School of Journalism; an international honors student at the University of Uppsala,

Sweden, where he authored a paper on urban planning and researched mass communications; a public relations assistant for Bechtel Corp., a worldwide construction firm, and a part-time TWA ticket agent at San Francisco International Airport, a job he had held weekends since he was 18 to help finance his education.

What are the specific duties of a Director of Customer Service?

Betz' preflight checklist is multi-sheeted. Specifically, he reports for work 3½ hours before a flight. His first stop is TWA's operations office at the airport of departure. There he familiarizes himself with the passenger list.

Will there be any handicapped persons who need wheelchairs to board and disembark? Which passengers have requested to sit together? Are there families aboard, with infants, that need special attention?

Do some require special food? How many kosher meals? Who's a vegetarian? A diabetic?

The Director's next preflight checkpoint is the airport's dining and commissary unit, where he equates his passenger count with food servings ordered, and personally checks to make certain all items are properly prepared, tastefully arranged, and complete for each passenger. He also checks the count and condition of silverware, china, crystal, linens, refreshments and reading material.

"The total accountability in a Director's job description means just that," says Betz. "Every passenger is entitled to exactly what's advertised."

It's now about an hour and forty-five minutes before takeoff. He visits the assigned boarding lounge in the airport to make certain it's shipshape; that flight designation signs are up, and gate numbers, departure times and movie choices displayed. (Cont.)

## MEET THE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

*Right: Before takeoff, flight crew and Director of Customer Service confer. Betz talks to 747 Captain Robert G. Guss.*

*Lower right: Passenger list gets final check-over prior to boarding.*

*Below: Betz spot-checks 747 food trays to make certain menus are complete.*





# DIRECTOR

"It's similar to setting up a convention session, banquet, entertainment program and all," says Betz. "The only differences are that our aerial conventions are mobile and there's no after-dinner speaker."

Now he enters a small, unmarked door in the terminal, where his in-flight cabin crew has assembled for a preflight briefing. Betz, the flight service manager, flight purser and hostesses talk over the menus, special passenger needs, and sequence of service inflight for all five cabins.

When passengers begin arriving at the departure lounge, Betz is there, assisting in boarding, moving among his customers, introducing himself and matching names with faces.

Shortly before boarding, Betz boards the aircraft for a final, ready check. He climbs the circular stairs and meets the flight crew.

Then it's back to the boarding lounge until the last passenger is aboard.

"Now comes my speech, only it's a before-dinner one," Betz grins. "I get on the intercom, introduce the staff, explain my function on board, and otherwise establish that important link of communication with our customers."

A Director rarely sits down on a flight, unless it's to talk to a passenger. He can issue tickets for continuing or future flights, confirm reservations for Hilton International and domestic hotels and . . . well, even stage a party at 39,000 feet over the Atlantic, as he did last Christmas time when "we all felt a little lonely away from our families."

A Director's job is not finished when the jet lands and passengers disembark. He walks with them through customs, to the baggage-claim area, helps arrange transportation into the city . . . and relaxes only when the last one of his aerial charges leaves the terminal.

Well, relax is not quite the word.

Betz and his colleagues still have to complete paperwork, reporting details of the flight, evaluating the cabin crew . . . and setting up details of the return flight.

Director of Customer Service is no mere job title for these young men and women of TWA's unique inflight corps who are "at your service, exactly as advertised."