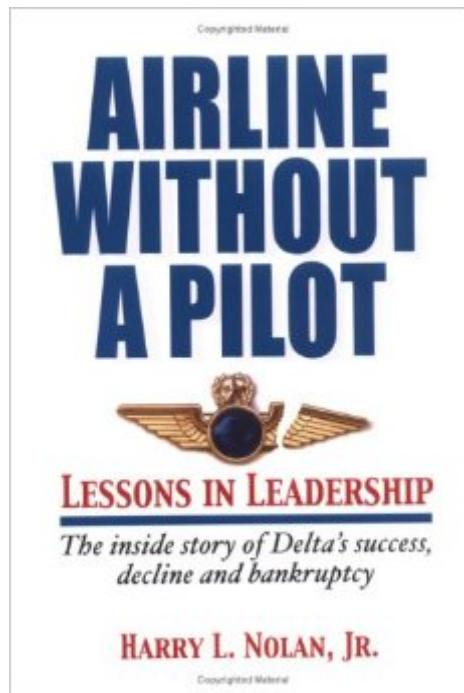


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# Airline Without A Pilot - Leadership Lessons/Inside Story Of Delta's Success, Decline And Bankruptcy



## Synopsis

The no holds barred, inside story of Delta's success, decline and path to bankruptcy...the lessons learned...and what it needs to do to take off again. It gives fresh answers to the often asked question, "What happened to Delta?" This book goes behind the incessant news stories for unique, never before published facts and insights into a classic success story and tragedy. It is based on extensive research, including behind-the-scenes information from 59 members of the "Delta family", the author's in-depth personal knowledge as a member of that family, and his broad experience as a business executive and management consultant. While giving poignant examples from many companies, Delta Air Lines is the book's poster child of a Board of Directors' and a leader's dramatic effects on tens of thousands of people. The book examines the leadership decisions by each of Delta's 7 CEO's and its Board of Directors and then highlights the decisions that built a highly profitable company for decades and those that have brought it to bankruptcy. The book is not the typical trip down 'memory lane', the template of many books about a corporation. Nor is it like the dozens of books today that focus on the airline industry. Instead, it is about leadership. There are profound and valuable lessons in this book for any leader, whatever the future brings for Delta. It guides them to answers to the questions, "What lessons can I learn from Delta to be more successful?" and "What can I learn from Delta to make sure it doesn't happen to my organization?". It is also about a remarkable group of people. As the book shows, Delta employees and retirees have been shining examples of commitment to its heritage - Service and Hospitality From The Heart - even when constrained by ineffective leaders. Part of the tragedy is the price they are now paying and will be paying for that ineffective leadership. The book is co-dedicated to the thousands of Delta employees and retirees who love what Delta once was and hope the current leaders have what it takes to restore it. This book is a fascinating inside look at a major U.S. corporation from both a business and a human perspective.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a current Delta Air Lines captain with many years invested with the company, I want to express my great appreciation for the book *Airline Without a Pilot*. I have long maintained that the story of Delta would be a model case study for any business school wanting to demonstrate how NOT to run a business, with a particular emphasis on the difference between "management" and "leadership". The book effectively does this and is "spot on" in so many areas, particularly in the discussion of the management/employee relationship necessary in a service industry. In the military, we used to say, "Take care of your troops, and they'll take care of you." Sadly, I have learned that all too often this adage does not transfer into the business world. This does seem strange, since everywhere that philosophy is tried, it meets with incredible success. Again, my experience with the "Harvard MBA's" (Leo Mullin, Michelle Burns, et. al.) has been that they merely learned how to transfer company assets into their pockets and then move on. The book also confirmed my negative instincts about many in the "consulting" industry, but the author's common-sense approaches truly bring a breath of fresh air into those discussions. I was absorbed as I progressed through the book (read in 1 evening), and I could not help but keep repeating to myself, "This guy GETS IT!" The author effectively recorded and discussed so many events that have been churning in my mind (and stomach) for so long, but had thus far evaded public scrutiny. My sincere hope is that this book will effectively shine a very bright light on the real causes for Delta's demise. My only (constructive!) criticism is that I wish that the author had dealt with Mr.

I spent 30 years at "Daddy Delta". After I retired, I went back to school, for yet another degree, and am now an RN. While I found the book interesting, its lack of depth is obvious. The author went to great pains to point out Ron Allen was out of his depth. Duh? This is not exactly breaking news. I was looking for a more in depth analysis of exactly how Ron came to be CEO. Is the popular story that he was Mr. Bebe's son's college roommate at Georgia Tech true? The timeline is that Bebe retired, named Garrett CEO, and Garrett named Ron Allen as president. This event shocked the whole corporation, as it was commonly assumed that Hollis Harris would be named President.

Nolan makes no attempt to address this point, nor to address the relationship between Bebe, Garrett, Allen, and Harris. One commonly held theory is that Mr. Bebe retired early only on the guarantee that Mr. Garrett would name Ron as president. In that case Mr. Garrett was screwed, as Mr. Bebe knew that he was dying of terminal cancer when he resigned. Did David Garrett know that? I would think not. As an aside point Mr. Bebe's retirement contract gave him a great deal of money ...500K per year...as a consultant, and if he did not live to the length of the consultant contract the money would be paid to his heirs. Nice deal. Nolan also made no attempt to address the sudden resignation from the board of directors Mr. Biedenharn. A member of the Biedenharn family had served on the Board of Directors of Delta Air Lines since it's beginning. The Biedenharn family owns the Ouachita, Louisiana Coca Cola franchise. And their company held lot of Delta stock. Mr. Biedenharn resigned from the board in the same time frame that came to see Ron Allen named president. Mr. Nolan completely missed that point.

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