Equipment Utilization Key To Successful Airlines

Melvin A. Brenner, vice president of American Airlines, talked on airline scheduling at the interdepartmental Flight Transportation Seminar October 11.

Mr. Brenner explained that an airline's success depends on getting the maximum use from its equipment. The schedule planner's job is to coordinate the operating, sales, and personnel departments of the airline to produce an efficient schedule. He tries to overcompensate the competition and maximize profits while meeting the needs of the passengers clearly in his mind.

The weather, type of equipment available, flight crew regulations, and airport and gate openings are all limiting factors which the planner must take into consideration. Mr. Brenner stressed the sensitivity of flight schedules, saying that even slight variations in departure time could mean a heavy loss in revenue for the airline.

As an example, he said, that if American lost ten round trip transcontinental jet passengers per day, the company would lose about a million dollars a year.

The operational cost of a flight increases only slightly as the number of passengers increases on any one flight, but not necessarily with each additional passenger. The jet revolution is another problem for the schedule planner. Jets are faster than conventional aircraft and it takes more passengers to fill them. Also, many airports are not equipped to handle the bigger planes and consequently cannot be included in jet flight schedules.

The introduction of the jet has necessitated changes in almost every part of the company's schedule. Mr. Brenner has had experience in air transportation management in both private business and in government. He helped form the International Civil Aviation Board while serving on the Civil Aeronautics Board.

He has also been a consultant to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Transportation, Bureau of the Budget, and served in the Department of Commerce.

Brenner joined American Airlines in 1955 and successively served as manager of route development, manager of schedule planning, director of schedule planning and forecasting, and, finally, vice president for schedules and equipment utilization.