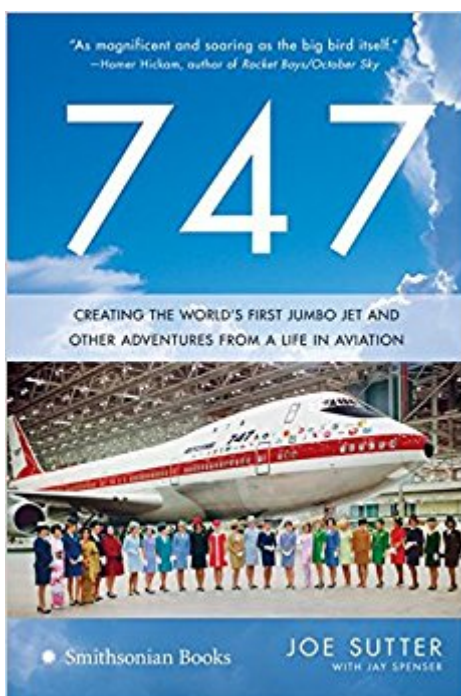


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747: Creating The World's First Jumbo Jet And Other Adventures From A Life In Aviation



Synopsis

747 is the thrilling story behind "the Queen of the Skies" – the Boeing 747 – as told by Joe Sutter, one of the most celebrated engineers of the twentieth century, who spearheaded its design and construction. Sutter's vivid narrative takes us back to a time when American technology was cutting-edge and jet travel was still glamorous and new. With wit and warmth, he gives an insider's sense of the larger than life-size personalities and the tensions in the aeronautical world.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (May 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060882425

ISBN-13: 978-0060882426

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 94 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #215,640 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #34 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Aerospace > Aircraft Design & Construction](#) #91 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > Aviation > History](#) #331 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > History](#)

Customer Reviews

As leader of the Boeing company's design and engineering team that created the 747 – the world's first wide-body, twin-aisle airplane – Sutter had perhaps the best overall view of all aspects of the 747's development in the mid 1960s. This engaging look at the technical, political and corporate forces that clashed over the 747 adds important details to Clive Irving's 1993 *Wide-Body: The Triumph of the 747*. Sutter's descriptions of the furious pace his team had to maintain proves his assertion that the 747's development process closely resembled that of aviation's colorful early days. It is fascinating to read that while the 747 later became Boeing's crowning achievement, with variations of the plane continuing to remain popular during the past three decades, various Boeing executives during the '60s "were taken in by the enticing vision" of supersonic transports like the Concorde, and Sutter had to fight "every step of the way to get the 747 designed, built, certified, and into service." 8-page b&w photo insert, 20 b&w photos throughout,

not seen by PW. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The chief engineer of the 747 here recounts his experience designing one of the most iconic airplanes in aviation history. At pains to dispel the perception that the humpbacked behemoth was a one-man show, Sutter mentions many colleagues as he relates a process that partook as much of intra- and intercorporate diplomacy as of nuts-and-bolts engineering. Indeed the narrative dynamic arises from the interaction of technical problems with the nonengineering concerns of the Boeing hierarchy. The company was in deep financial trouble at the time of development (1965-70), as its supersonic transport project hemorrhaged money. Pressure on Sutter was intense both to expedite the 747 and slash costs; in the book's climax, Sutter faces down the executives' demand that he fire thousands of his engineers. Sutter's story also reveals in the intuition and technical precision that resulted in the 747's distinctive appearance and capabilities. Replete with energetic anecdotes from Sutter's non-747 life, this memoir will fascinate fans of aviation. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

To this day I remember waiting in line for some hours or more to simply walk through one of the first 747's that was on a National tour and parked on the tarmac at Greater Southwest International Airport half way between Dallas and Ft. Worth in the late 1960's. Accepting the enormity of the aircraft was somewhat difficult even when seeing it and walking through it. With its double aisles and four distinct passenger cabin areas its spaciousness was really overwhelming. The next versions of double aisle jet liners, the DC-10, L-1011 and B767 all were introduced some years later. The first scheduled 747 commercial flights by Pan Am to London began in the Summer of 1970. Personally my first 747 flight was on an Air France version nonstop from Chicago O'Hare to Paris de Gaulle in the mid 1970's. Since that time I have been fortunate to fly the 747 many times, but, the thrill of travel on this aircraft never became jaded. And initially the development of the 747 was almost an afterthought. When Boeing lost the competition for the design and construction of a large military transport plane to the Lockheed C5A-Galaxy, their design for that U.S. Government specification was the basis for the upper cockpit and for the lower front to back passenger cabin. The Queen reigned for more than thirty-five years before the development and entry into service of the A-380 in 2007. This book details the story of the creation of the 747.

A good easy read about Joe Sutter and the 747. I'd seen a few documentaries about the genesis of the 747 and Joe was in most of them. He lays it all out in the book and details the struggle to keep the project moving forward while fighting off upper management's cost cutting efforts, others trying to get him replaced as the lead, and trying to satisfy the customer. He was interesting to listen to as a man in his 90s when he recalled the story in the documentaries, but I can only imagine what he must have been like in his prime when doing battle in his arena. Glad to have it in my library.

A beautifully written book. All design engineers should read it - Sutter's motto: do it right the first time. Or as Stephen Covey would say: begin with the end in mind. Joe Sutter sets the bar high for engineering professionals. A true leader and a fine, fine man.

Joe Sutter describes the development of the Boeing 747 from his point of view as a member of the engineering and management team that made it happen. The book delves deeply into the influences that shaped the 747 to become the plane it did, such as the head of Pan American Airlines. As such, it offers interesting insights into the politics at the Boeing company, at least as seen by Mr. Sutter. Some have criticized the book as disjointed, etc. but that is a disservice to Mr. Sutter. After all, he's describing the development of the 747 from his point of view. This is not meant to be an end-all comprehensive tome that chronicles all the development stages of the plane in a manner that allows all who partook in it to have a voice (which is inherently impossible for a project of this size). Instead, it is a sampling of the engineering and political challenges that Mr. Sutter faced during his tenure with the 747, which I found incredibly interesting. The 747 was a big gamble that almost bankrupted Boeing. One of the reasons it got off the ground at all was because the decision-makers at Boeing were willing to bet the farm that this type of airplane would find broad use in a market that had yet to fully develop. From Mr. Sutter's point of view, it was this bold and intuitive decision-making that put Boeing on the path to dominate its domestic and foreign rivals. I would love to see further analysis from Mr. Sutter in this area of expertise... the challenge of Embraer and Comac is looming and I wonder what he makes of the Boeing/Airbus response to a challenge to their bread and butter market.

.This book is authored by Joe Sutter and Jay Spenser and chronicles Sutter's life and the development of the 747 from Sutter's perspective as chief engineer. I recently watched a special on Boeing where Sutter was briefly interviewed and discussed the recent entry of the Boeing 787 into commercial service. Below are two observations and five excerpts from the book that I found

valuable from a leadership perspective. Observations

A. Sutter was a believer in simple and not afraid to try different things. It is amazing to know he cut out paper airplane engines and moved them around a line drawing of a 737 as part of the process that established engine location for the 747.

B. Even at Sutter's high status and power level negative politics are a fact of life and must be dealt with. He provided examples of unwanted help he had to take, unrealistic deadlines and people trying to take over his roles and responsibilities.

Excerpts from the book

1. By far the biggest lesson I learned from the 737 was never to take an initial design configuration as a given. It's human nature to do just that and go charging ahead to work within an existing framework... Engineers love to dive right in and analyze the hell out of reams of data. Very often though, they can't see the forest for the trees because they haven't done the simple work up front to be sure they are starting down the right path... The more brain power you apply up front, the greater the likelihood that you'll find the design path that solves your challenges and meets your customers' requirements... If I made an individual contribution, it was my insistence that we take stock before charging out of the starting blocks.
2. I let my people run with the ball and made sure to give credit where it was due. I also strove to communicate well. On the 747 program, I was the one making the decisions--I'm not a consensus guy--but I generally did so only after hearing everybody out with an open mind.
3. Real leadership means having the courage to do what you know is right. (This always sounds easier than it is and Sutter provides some examples of high pressure situations where he did this)
4. If we had differences, I made sure we resolved them on the spot.
5. ...I realized that all of us on that incredibly complex and demanding program were so close to our own problems that we probably couldn't see the forest for the trees. I decided to fix that... I worked hard to keep my 747 engineering team as broadly informed as myself. Sitting in on their meetings or visiting their locales for impromptu gatherings, I covered the sales picture, our engineering challenges and successes, pertinent events inside and outside the company... I saw the role of the manager isn't simply to pass out instructions; it is also to inform... people need to know where they stand. It's a psychological necessity, and morale suffers in the absence of such knowledge.

This book proves once again the fundamental parameters for success are not complex. The key lies in the discipline (yours and the organization's) to adhere to those parameters.

- * Evaluate all options before going forward*
- * Empower people and give them credit*
- * Make decisions only after listening*
- * Stand up for what is right*
- * Resolve issues quickly*
- * Constantly communicate the big picture to everyone

Examine the bullets above. How are you and your organization performing against these fundamentals?

Dr. James T. Brown, PMP PE,
Author, The Handbook of Program Management - McGraw-Hill

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