

## ***Faye Business Systems Group Blog Post***

### **“Customer Service 101 & Southwest Airlines”**

By DAVID FAYE

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I flew in from Arizona on Sunday. Southwest Airlines from Phoenix to Burbank. For those of you in Southern California, you know the weather was unusually intense for SoCal. It was intensely raining and really windy. It was actually one of the bumpiest flights I've ever taken. When we got close to landing in Burbank, we felt the plane (out of nowhere) begin to rise instead of descend, and it felt like we were turning around. The next thing we knew, we heard an announcement that we were about to land in Ontario. We landed in Ontario, and my group decided to rent a car and drive back to the Valley. Others decided to stay on the plane and wait it out to see if the plane would soon take off and fly into Burbank. I'm not sure what happened from there. However, I never felt particularly bad about what happened. It seemed like “one of those things”, and certainly I didn't blame Southwest for what happened.

I just got this email from a Fred Taylor at Southwest Airlines (I'm pasting it in this Blog in its entirety, because it's so unbelievable):

*Greetings from Southwest Airlines:*

*After reading about the circumstances surrounding your March 20 flight to Burbank, I can imagine your frustration (as well as your apprehension) and I'm sorry for the disappointing travel experience.*

*Naturally, the diversions were taxing (to say the least) and, of course, the limited alternatives to accommodate everyone really made for an exhausting day. And though I can write pages explaining the details about how this happened, the fact of the matter is you didn't receive the type of service that you (and we) expect from Southwest Airlines.*

*In addition to my sincere apologies, and in an effort to try to restore some of the goodwill that we may have lost, I am sending a LUV Voucher (separately, but to the same e-mail address) to try to “make up” for our shortcomings. Of course, measuring the total amount of each person’s inconvenience is difficult to do; but I ask you to please accept this gesture and give us another chance to provide you with far better trips in the days ahead.*

*Sincerely, Fred Taylor, Jr.*

Not to overstate this, but this is one of the greatest emails I’ve ever received. There is so much to learn from it, I feel like you could base an entire business class on the whole thing – personal, apologetic, taking responsibility, not making excuses, and providing a financial benefit. Wow. This might be something that a lot of great companies do (and something that Southwest does all the time), but I’ve never seen it.

And, I don’t know Fred Taylor, but I’ve decided I like him. I looked up his profile on Linked In and found this as part of his job description:

*Anticipate potential operational irregularities; implement contingency plans to minimize Customer inconvenience; and develop proactive communication services that keep our Customers informed about interruptions in the Company’s scheduled service.*

Yes!!!!!! Fred – you’re invited to our company holiday party this year. Oh, and I’ll be flying Southwest quite a bit....