

NUTS: Southwest Airlines Blog

“Being Proactive—The Next Generation of Customer Service”

Part Five—The Benefits of Proactive Customer Service

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(In the first installment, I outlined the need for Proactive Customer Service; in the second, we drilled down a bit deeper into how that is accomplished; in the third, we looked at the key elements to effective communication; and in the fourth posting of this series, I demonstrated how my Team “walks the talk.” In this last posting about “Being Proactive,” I’ll share with you the fruits of our labor.)

The End Result

Create the “WOW!” Factor with your Proactive Customer Service Product.

Southwest spends a lot of time, energy, and resources trying to make sure that our Customers feel good about selecting our product before they go to the airport, once they step onboard our LUV Jets, and even after they get home. What my Team tries to do is roll all of the Company’s efforts into one proactive communication piece that is sent to our Customers before they contact us—I call completing the Customer Service Loop.

Many times, when we reach out to them, our Customers are shocked to receive our open and sincere acknowledgment of their concern. They are impressed that we took the time to provide them with a quality response. And, they appreciate our effort to make them feel better about their experience with Southwest Airlines.

To this end, the benefits of being proactive are enormous. First, all Employees are up-to-speed on what’s happening, and what is our Customer Service gameplan. This helps our Employees feel empowered to step up and assist our Customers when they might feel compelled to count on another department to help. Second, our Customers will be given timely and consistent information about our operation and accommodations. This helps our Customers relax and instills confidence in the product we work so hard to provide. Third, when you complete the Customer Service Loop, it lets everyone know that we care about them, and we are committed to providing the best service imaginable. Fourth, there is a positive return on investment in terms of Customer goodwill and product loyalty.

Finally, I know our proactive correspondence works because my Team gets a lot of positive responses from our Customers every day. Also, our proactive approach has been featured in *Business Week*, *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Wall Street*

Journal; international news publications, and on three television networks (to name just a few). And all of this, of course, is a very satisfying reward for our hard work and dedicated effort to provide Positively Outrageous Customer Service, but the best reward is your continued patronage.