

NUTS: Southwest Airlines Blog

“Being Proactive—The Next Generation of Customer Service”

Part One—Intro

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In an ever-changing world where public opinion is driven in part by what the mass-media dictates, the Customers' trust in Southwest Airlines is contingent upon our ability to deliver effective communications before, during, and after a story breaks. Customers commit themselves to our Company when they sense that we truly care about their individual needs, and that our Employees will protect their best interests every step of the way. To this end, maintaining our Customers' loyalty depends upon whether or not our Employees are willing to uphold our Customers' high hopes and deliver more than what they expect.

Providing truly proactive Customer Service requires a careful understanding of how our business process works; a sense of ownership about our Company's success; a determination to create win/win solutions for all involved; and the intuition to provide the appropriate followup communication. This is particularly important to keep in mind if there is a highly unusual disruption of our scheduled service.

Over the years, we've never been afraid to say we're sorry. And being able to apologize proactively requires the foresight to evaluate if an event, which by its very nature, has the potential “to grow legs and take on a life of its own.” Our proactive efforts in this regard have evolved over the past eight or so years, and we realized that it had become necessary to designate a Leader to implement and uphold the Company's proactive service initiatives and to build a support structure that would consistently monitor our operations on a 24/7/365 basis.

To help the cause, I have the distinct privilege to lead a Team of four Fun-LUVing People who are dedicated to providing proactive communications. Our Mission is simple—focus on delivering consistent, helpful, and timely information to make sure our Internal and External Customers are on the same page about what's happening with our operation.

(Over the next four installments, I will outline the basics of our Company's approach to Proactive Customer Service and how my Team gets the job done.)