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**CUSTOMER SERVICE OF A NORTH AMERICAN
COMPANY WITH COMMENTARY AND
GLOSSARY**

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**Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a
použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.**

Plzeň, červenec 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis deals with unique customer service of a North American Airline – WestJet Airlines. This airline in a short period of time has become one the most admired companies in North America. The main focus will be on what this airline does differently in terms of its customer service to set itself apart from its competitors and how this has helped the company to succeed.

In an industry where profit margins are very slim and daily operating costs are very large, the drive to be good at what you do counts immensely. Distinguishing yourself from your competitors is a matter of life and death in the airline industry. In Canada, the consumer has little choice of airlines for travel, basically two to choose from, WestJet and Air Canada. Now, when Canadians travel most during the wintertime, the charter airlines appear in the mix and fight for the customers' hard earned dollar. This time of year means more options for the consumer however, the potential for airlines like WestJet to lose out on revenue. The contrasts in options between airlines are vastly different in their approach to customer service. Details will be provided between two airlines specifically, WestJet and Sunwing airlines, yet primarily focusing on WestJet and how they excel with the customer service experience.

WestJet has brought forth a unique business culture that has been difficult for others to duplicate. This culture has been altered and even adopted by different industries but never successfully implemented. WestJet's focus on both its employees and its customers has created very strong brand loyalty because of this focus.

There is a transparent and engaged leadership running the company. There is a two-way open door policy has created empowerment within all employees. Can you imagine with this model that

a new employee has access to the CEO to offer suggestions or even ask questions?

Encouragement of giving back stands strong in the company, whether this is through volunteering either with company support or on an individual basis. Community involvement speaks volumes about a company, its workforce and ultimately is socially responsible.

WestJet has been able to continue this corporate culture since its conception. It has adapted to changes in business, marketing and demand. Change can be difficult, even a change of direction for a company and having employee support is the difference in success and failure, something all WestJet employees embrace well.

In the end, aircraft fly you places but it is the people who get you there and create the memorable experience.

2. HISTORY

WestJet airlines was founded in 1996 by four business men who set out to create an airline that cost less to fly but the service provided was not less as well. [1] Modeled after the American air carrier Southwest, WestJet borrow the low-cost no frills idea for air travel. [2] They created a company culture to provide caring and excellent customer service to all its customers it referred to as guests. This is what has set WestJet Airlines apart from other airlines in North America. It provides what it calls an experience. Re-writing what everyone else refers to as customer service, it has propelled the company into a league of its own. Aircraft fly you to places, it is the people who get you there and create the memorable experience. It is this experience that WestJet strives to achieve, maintain and does better than any other airline in North America.

3. CANADIAN AIRLINE INDUSTRY

The airline industry in Canada is very limited. There are today only two major airlines, WestJet and Air Canada. The charter airline market is very prominent in the peak travel time of winter offering flights to various warm southerly destinations for Canadians. During the winter months the consumer's air travel choices increase, so consistent customer service is key. Airlines like Sunwing offer excellent affordability to southern destinations but lack the customer service. These reduced airfares from competition can severely eat into the bottom line of the major airlines of Canada. As a result, exceptional customer service and a consistent delivery of product will insure repeat business.

Some of the business hurdles for a Canadian airline operator would include the airport fees including landing fees, the cost of fuel as well as taxes imposed by the government to airline operators. These cost are passed onto the consumer in various ways, usually on the purchase of the ticket.

The airline industry in Canada is slowly adapting to increase its bottom line yet maintain its brand. The Canadian air carriers are following in the footsteps of their worldwide counterparts. New services offered onboard the aircraft to add to the bottom line have been tried, including selling various items like blankets and food.

4. THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

Creating clear and consistent standards and promises so the customer service and experiences delivered are consistent. Creating a framework that gives every employee or “WestJetter” what they need to effectively fulfill their role. The airline provides WestJetters and guests tools that improve the travel experience. The frontline WestJetters are supported and implement a consistent approach to recover from many uncontrollable mistakes. They are able to identify potential issues and are each empowered to make it right with all available resources at their disposal.

The company asks each employee to be remarkable, to be yourself by doing things that are out of the ordinary and, therefore, recognized by guests. In other words, simply be noteworthy every time. WestJet has even tested this theory with its guests. When asked what makes a remarkable travel experience, guests mention great communication, a friendly smile and a caring attitude.

This is why using a caring mentality to describe what WestJetters do is perfect. It is actionable, grounded in what they do, achievable and understood by WestJetters and guests alike. Most importantly, it is who they have been since day one.

A voluntary annual customer service course is offered to WestJetters to come learn more about how the company is doing with its customer service and what employee’s can do to create a caring experience. Through the use of the WestJet Guest Experience Manual (or Playbook), which was developed as a baseline for customer service, employees can learn, refine and develop a more remarkable experience for their guests. The manual outlines the basic ways to make an impact, solve a situation or use their empowerment to make that difference with their guest interaction. It ensures that the guest experience remains the primary focus for all employees. [Appendix 1]

WestJet Airlines Guest Manual

This manual outlines some of the training and commitment to customer service the company undertakes. It solidifies the foundation of the company, guests experience.

WESTJET GUEST EXPERIENCE

GUEST PROMISES AND FULFILLMENT

We believe every WestJetter should have the ability to solve guest issues on the spot and have the tools and the trust of the organization to "do the right thing" for the guest.

As a flight attendant, you are empowered to assist guests and resolve issues while on board the aircraft without permission, fear of being reprimanded or escalation for a solution. We are committed to making this as easy as possible; this section outlines the tools and considerations in following through on this promise of empowerment.


INFLIGHT SERVICE PROMISE AND EMPOWERMENT

At WestJet, our "ticket" is our promise. Guest's expectation of WestJet is that we provide a stress-free and safe experience, by being friendly and caring and in our unique way making people smile. Creating a Memorable Experience (CARE) is owing the relationship with each guest; fulfilling each need and, when necessary, providing a prompt resolution if a guest promise is broken.

Should a guest experience an issue during their WestJet travel, the key is to take action and solve the issue immediately. The quicker WestJet is able to solve a guest's issue the more likely the guest will remain satisfied and loyal.

Service recovery is not based solely on compensating the guest with onboard product or a Travel Bank credit; often, simply listening, acknowledging and apologizing for the guest's experience is all that is required to resolve the situation. It will help to keep the following three core things in mind:

- Is it good for the guest?
- Is it good for WestJet?
- Is it good for your fellow WestJetters?



When these core things are considered, WestJet in turn promises to support your empowerment and the promise you made to CARE for our guests:

- We trust the guest is bringing concerns forward legitimately and for a reason.
- Your leader trusts you to do the right thing, using your decision-making skills.
- You trust your leader(s) to not reprimand you for making any guest recovery decisions, but rather engage you in a meaningful, constructive and respectful conversation.
- You trust that the organization has the capability to fulfill promises you make to our guests.

Fulfillment Guest Promises

This is a guide designed to help you make the first step in recovering from a challenging situation or a potential guest failure on board the aircraft. Most often a sincere apology, solving or changing a situation while showing genuine CARE will be adequate. Year-over-year, the most common inflight issues encountered by our guests are as follows:

1. In-flight Entertainment System (IFE), including Pay Per View and Live Satellite TV.
2. Poor Customer Service (e.g. rude, not helpful, unprofessional behavior)
3. Buy On Board
4. Seating Issues
5. Dry Cleaning issues (e.g. food and drink spills)

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WESTJET GUEST EXPERIENCE

Fulfillment Resources and Tools

Outlined below are a number of resources and tools available to you for managing guest issues on board the aircraft. In every situation, begin with the LAST method (outlined below), and then determine your next course of action. Remember, you are not alone in the guest resolution process. Utilize this information and the fulfillment matrix as a guide to make your decision. Your crew, the Captain, CSA and the guest are also great resources to define the fulfillment, if necessary.

L.A.S.T.

When guests express a complaint or a problem, we must immediately empathize and show we understand what the guest is feeling in order to address their personal need. If the needs are not met, the guest will talk about it to many of their friends. This does not build guest loyalty or enhance our brand.

Step 1: Listen

The model begins with a guest need. Our task is to fully understand what the guest's problem is. The best way we can do that is to isolate their personal need, their technical need, and actively listen.

Listen and clarify. Never defend or justify. No excuses, just solutions.

Step 2: Acknowledge/Apologize

After you have listened to a guest's problem or complaint, you need to take ownership for it. To the guest, you are the face of WestJet, and in some way WestJet has let the guest down. Even though we know we are not always responsible for a guest's problem, it is not what the guest believes. So, we need to stop the "It's not my fault" or "It's a Transport Canada Regulation" syndrome, and move towards, "What can I do for you?" We do that by first acknowledging and/or apologizing to the guest. A sincere, "I'm so sorry this happened" or "I'm so sorry that you feel that way" is not necessarily an admission that WestJet did something wrong – it is the guest's perception, and many times a phrase, "I'm sorry," will satisfy them.

Try, "I'm sorry," vs. "We apologize." Corporations apologize. People who care say, "I'm sorry."

Sometimes, acknowledgement alone won't be enough. Consider the guest's perspective. Has WestJet done something wrong, or caused them any inconvenience? If so, then it's completely alright to say "I'm sorry." The guest is looking for someone to take responsibility.

Step 3: Solve

We've listened to the guest's complaint, we've acknowledged how they feel and apologized for any wrongs. Now it is time to provide a solution.

Get the Guest Involved

- Present them with options
- Have them tell you what they need/want. "What will make it right?"
- Create a partnership
- Keep them involved

Make it right. Ask the guest, "What can I do to make this right for you?"

Be the judge of what is fair but allow them the opportunity to feel empowered over the situation. You can then take your own empowerment to satisfy their needs. After balancing the needs of the guest, your fellow WestJetters and the business you are free to solve the issue right away, make a promise, and have the Experience Facilitation Team (EFT) follow through on that promise.

Step 4: Thank

The final step in the LAST model is to "thank" the guest, and show our appreciation to the guest for bringing a problem to our attention. Imagine the number of people that don't bring their problems forward, walk off the aircraft dissatisfied, and don't give us the opportunity to make it up to them. Our guests tell us that we can show them we care by letting them know we appreciate them. Thank them for giving you that second chance for letting you know that it didn't work like it normally does, for giving you the chance to make it right, and for the opportunity not to damage WestJet's reputation.

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WESTJET GUEST EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE FACILITATION TEAM & WESTJET CARES PROMISE CARD

The Experience Facilitation Team (EFT) is dedicated to fulfilling all guest fulfillment promises made by frontline teams that do not have access to technical systems. The EFT goal is to deliver on each FA promise within seven days. The earlier we receive your guest promise the better able we are to deliver within that time period. The WestJet Care Promise Card (WCPC) will be used by each flight attendant to ensure that promises made to our guests can be fulfilled by the EFT via the service link on WestJet, email, telephone or fax.

As each situation will differ, flight attendants will determine the recovery mechanism and compensation needed by working with the guest and tailoring the promise to the individual needs and situation. The EFT will not "question" or "push back" on any decision that you make – they are simply there to fulfill your promise to the guest. Flight attendants will complete the WCPC and provide the guest with the upper portion of the card; the flight attendant will then submit the completed bottom portion of the WCPC card to the EFT within 7 days (preferably within 48 hours where possible). Once the EFT has processed your "promise to the guest" and the situation has been resolved, the EFT will send the flight attendant an email advising the recovery is complete.

Contacting the EFT

Details are also listed on the back of the employee portion of the WestJet CARES Promise Card

<p>Online: WestJet</p> <p>When sending a request using the online form, fill in the information you collected on your WCPC then submit. Keep your form as a copy. Once EFT has contacted you via e-mail or phone ensure the form is destroyed as it contains our guest's personal information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WestJet main homepage link will be on the sandwich board on the left-hand side. WestJet-OurCompany-GuestExperiences-Experience Facilitation Team (EFT). WestJet-Departments-PeopleCulture-FlightPages/FlightCabinServices.aspx
<p>E-Mail: FacilitationTeam@westjet.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When sending an e-mail be sure to include all information recorded on the WCPC load in point form for ease of facilitation. Best practice is to send from your WestJet email whenever possible and to delete "sent items" to avoid storage of guest's personal details in your Sent Items.
<p>Phone: Toll free: 1-877-429-1541</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This number is used for WestJetters only, not the general public. Hours of phone support are Monday - Friday from 0600 - 1630. Once you have reached EFT advise the agent of the situation, the promise you made to the guest and the information located on the bottom of the WCPC. The EFT agent will then fulfill your "promise" to the guest.
<p>Fax: 1-403-648-8707</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When faxing in a request or WCPC be sure to have information clear and concise with a short description of the situation and promise to the guest.

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WESTJET GUEST EXPERIENCE


Detailed description of sections within the EFT:

WestJet CARES Promise Card (WCPC)

This card is an excellent tool to ensure any service recovery promise you have made to the guest is fulfilled by the EFT. A box of WCPC cards is located in the Flight Attendant Folder (FAF). Once you have filled out both portions of the card you must then submit your portion to the EFT using one of the following methods: online submission, e-mail, telephone or fax. The WCPC is to be used when there has been a general customer service failure by other WestJetters (i.e. rudeness, unhelpful, unprofessional) or where we have not lived up to our mission, vision and values. The WCPC cannot be used in most guest BOP situations.

WestJet CARES Promise Card steps:

- Using the information available to you in this manual, solve a guest's situation and if a promise is made (i.e. Travel Bank credit) fill out all information on the WCPC.
- Once complete, separate the card along the perforation and give the top half of the card to the guest you have made the promise to. Advise the guest that someone from the Experience Facilitation Team will contact them within 7 days to confirm their promise has been taken care of.
- Submit the information to the EFT using the resources on the bottom half of the WCPC.



Travel Bank Credit

A Travel Bank credit is a form of compensation typically given when there is a service failure to which we apologize, but also want to compensate a guest so they are enticed to travel with WestJet again. Travel Bank credits are a very responsive recovery tool as they cost the company less than fly credits on the dollar and bring in additional incremental revenue. They would be used when there is:

- A general customer service failure by other WestJetters (rudeness, unhelpful, unprofessional) where we have not lived up to the expectations the guest has of WestJet and its people (stress-free and safe, friendly and caring, making a guest smile)
- A service failure for a purchased product or service that we did not fulfill or meet the guest's expectations

A Travel Bank credit is a form of compensation where a monetary value is set up under a guest's profile for a set dollar amount. Travel Bank credits are valid for one year from the date they are created with guests only having to book by the expiry date; travel does not have to be completed within the one year period. The amount can be set at any dollar amount as determined by the WestJetter offering this as a form of compensation and guests are able to apply the dollar amount towards future WestJet bookings. A guest can use Travel Banks in the following ways:

- Payment on a WestJet booking made at the airport, through the SSC and on westjet.com
- Payment on another guest's booking. Travel Bank ownership must be verified or transferred to the guest who will be flying prior to ticketing the itinerary
- A guest may use their travel bank towards another guest's future travels as long as the Travel Bank owner is the person contacting the SSC. When using a Travel Bank credit on westjet.com, the booking must be made in the name of the guest who owns the Travel Bank
- Credits in a guest's Travel Bank can be transferred to another guest's Travel Bank upon request from the owner of the Travel Bank
- Travel Bank credits cannot be used towards Charter, Rights, Fees or WestJet Vacations (WJV) bookings

WestJet Profile Information (needed to create Travel Bank)

The promise of a WestJet Travel Bank (Travel Bank Credit) can only be fulfilled by using the WCPC. A WestJet Profile will be created by the EFT before giving a Travel Bank credit to a guest. In order to create a profile for a guest specific information about the guest is needed (i.e. name or it appears on their identification, email address, phone number and mailing address). Some guests may already have a WestJet Profile ID number which the EFT can use to directly access their profile to apply credits.

- The profile has 3 important features:
 - It houses a Travel Bank where Travel Bank Credits are held
 - It houses WestJet Dollars when guests have a RBC WestJet MasterCard or are part of the WestJet Rewards program
 - It contains personal information including mailing address, phone numbers and email specific to each guest

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5. AIRPORTS

A guest's air travel experience includes plenty of time in the airport. This means WestJetters in the airport can have a significant impact on the impression guests have of their travels and of WestJet Airlines. To ensure every guest has a remarkable experience with WestJet, the team at the airport is focused on: a stress-free and safe experience. Since they help to create a stress-free experience, on-time flights improve guest satisfaction and lower costs. That does not mean much, though, if someone gets hurt because safety is sacrificed in the name of speed. When safety and on-time performance are brought together, guests have a remarkable experience.

Being safety conscious means always: [3]

- Considering the safety of the guest first.
- Using the appropriate methods, safety devices and personal protective equipment.
- Reporting hazards or unsafe conditions and working to remove or reduce hazards.
- Keeping work areas clean.

Getting caught doing something right, WestJet's own research mirrors a number of external studies around guest loyalty. Employee interactions with others affect guests' perceptions just as much as if they had the experience themselves. As such, the team members at the airport treat other WestJetters and airport staff members with the same respect and care they would treat a guest.

Treating every guest as a VIP (Very Important Person), whether it is a couple in relaxed clothing with a group of kids and equipment, a business person always on their smartphone, a construction worker headed to work or another WestJetter, every guest gets the same friendly

and caring treatment. With the expansion of code-share and interline partnerships, more and more of WestJet's guests are visiting from around the globe. They represent different ethnicities, religions, genders, physical abilities and ages. Being mindful and respectful of those differences and always going the extra mile to help guests who may have a difficult time communicating goes a long way. It is about caring for guests and making their experiences with WestJet as stress free as possible. Showing up with a friendly and caring attitude. Most people do not travel by air more than once or twice a year, and many WestJet guests are flying for the first time. The airport world that is so familiar to WestJetters, is often very strange to many guests. Treating every question with kindness, courtesy and care while always keeping in mind that the first-time guest may be lost and confused ensures every guest's airport experience is as stress free and enjoyable as possible. Going the extra mile to approach guests who look confused can also change the airport experience from awkward to remarkable. At WestJet, employees are humble, open and quick to acknowledge mistakes. At times, they are required to apologize for errors that are beyond their control, and they do so genuinely because it is in their guests' best interest. They also recognize and appreciate the personalities that make each day a little brighter by sending thanks, sharing a laugh (or two) and saying, thank you for being you. A genuine smile is a personality trademark that is used all the time in greeting and guiding guests. Happiness is very contagious and a good mood is communicated very well through tone and expression. A simple smile can turn a good experience into a remarkable one. Here are some examples of little things WestJetters do to keep guests smiling: [4]

- Make eye contact and smile.
- Thank guests for choosing WestJet.
- Take ownership of guests' needs and concerns with empathy.
- Make friendly announcements.
- Treat guests' possessions with the utmost care.

- Board guests with a sense of safety and with on-time performance in mind.
- Apologize for mistakes.

6. CONTACT CENTRE

For many WestJet guests, the flight-booking process begins with a phone call. Another phone call may be required if a guest needs to make changes to a reservation or if other concerns arise. This means the Contact Centre team often represents WestJet by sound and voice alone. To ensure every guest has a remarkable experience with WestJet, the people in the Contact Centre are focused on using the appropriate tone. The Contact Centre team creates a stress-free environment in which guests feel reassured and free to speak openly about their needs by: [5]

- Using a friendly, warm, inviting and sincere tone.
- Displaying enthusiasm and a genuine interest in the guest.
- Speaking with a smile. It comes through over the phone.
- Adjusting the tone of voice used to match the guest and the situation.

WestJetters take the time to express appreciation for every customer's business and to make guests smile, every guest is genuinely and specifically thanked.

Trying to fully understand the guest's needs takes a unique individual who can assess the situation and use all means necessary to fulfill the request. Although it is easy to assume that one call will be similar to another, making sure guests' needs are understood ensures they get the help they need. A number of resources help with responses to guest's inquiries. Knowing where and how to access these resources is a key component in ensuring every guest has a remarkable experience on the phone. Maintaining a friendly and caring tone, clarifying a guest's request by asking questions, paying attention to detail and using available tools to assist with the investigation helps to ensure guests get the answers they need.

Demonstrating patience and respect are key qualities that WestJet employees excel in. The company takes pride in continual training and

maintaining these caring talents. WestJetters know how important it is to demonstrate a willingness to help. So, although it is sometimes tempting to speed through a call by anticipating the guest's needs, guests should be able to communicate how they choose, especially during conflict when they really need to know their concerns are being heard. The airline industry is complex, although WestJetters understand the process and rules, for some guests this booking may be their first. Showing patience, answering questions with respect and ensuring guests fully understand what happens next ensures it will not be their last. Employees naturally display empathy or apologize for situations brought forth by guests. These are key qualities sought after in the original recruitment of present and future WestJetters. Being empathetic does not necessarily mean sharing emotions. Sometimes all it takes is acknowledging the emotion. When a guest is upset, saying "I am sorry" (even if it is not the companies fault) shows WestJet cares and can turn the situation from negative to positive. [6] When it is WestJet's fault, guests are offered acknowledgement of the employee's role, a sincere apology and, whenever possible, a solution. Even though resolving every guest's concerns is the goal, sometimes the solution requested cannot be provided. In those cases, options will be presented to the guest. Support from other internal WestJet departments, including the Reservation Support Desk, WestJet Vacations, Guest Relations, Experience Facilitation and Central Baggage Services, may be sought in an effort to create that remarkable experiences. [7]

7. INFLIGHT

Guests expect WestJet to provide a stress-free and safe experience while being friendly and caring and making people smile in their unique way. This is what sets WestJet apart, and there are a number of ways they achieve this in the air. Creating a remarkable experience means owning the relationship with each guest. Inflight fulfills each need and provides a prompt resolution if a guest promise is broken.

The inflight experience starts the moment boarding begins. At five meters from the aircraft, guests reach the hospitality zone, where interaction with flight attendants begins with acknowledgment – eye contact and a smile on the aircraft gate, for example. At one meter, a warm smile and nod make the guest feel special. Once they step on board, guests are welcomed and a connection is made. Guests are directed with open hand gestures and are guided by flight attendants who are strategically waiting in their boarding positions to offer assistance. [8]

Inflight announcements also play a key role in creating a remarkable experience for guests since the messages convey a safe environment, keep guests informed and may help to reduce stress for anxious guests. Flight attendants deliver announcements clearly and articulately – often with a little bit of fun mixed in – and they tailor the message to the audience and individual guests. Flight attendants are empowered to make decisions and help with guest recovery. WestJet trusts them to do the right thing and, in turn, flight attendants trust that they will be supported by their leadership team and the company when making the right decision to fulfill the guest's needs. When they fly with WestJet, guests can expect knowledgeable, compassionate and friendly flight attendants. They also get well-trained and disciplined safety professionals in the industry. It is the little things, like helping parents with children, assisting the elderly and going that extra mile to comfort someone in a time of need, that count. Even telling a WestJet joke always

goes a long way to make guests smile. Through interactions with guests, flight attendants show their unique personalities and reinforce the element of WestJet's brand that has made the company famous – their people.

8. FLIGHT OPERATIONS

The pilot's announcements and interactions with the guests play a significant role in creating remarkable experiences for guests on board a flight. Of course, pilots need to balance their friendly and caring guest interaction with their main priority – flight deck duties and safely flying guests to their destination on time. In an effort to provide remarkable guest experience, every WestJet pilot strives to convey a positive, confident, professional and lasting image to each guest. Since guests like to see people enjoy their jobs and because safety information does not have to be alarming to be effective, pilots are encouraged by the company to use humour when it is appropriate. [9]

Delivering effective announcements which would include:

- Leadership and credibility are established with confident behaviour and a friendly demeanour.
- Eye contact and body language reinforce the message. Guests often appreciate when the pilot and first officer talk to them at the gate or use announcements to communicate.
- Thoughtful timing, pace, tone and articulation go a long way toward ensuring announcements are well received.
- Using plain language with guests helps to make the message clear.
- Including optional items (like identifying points of interest on a clear day or providing updates about major sporting events) when appropriate shows guests WestJet cares.

9. CUSTOMER SERVICE THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

WestJetters are empowered to make decisions for the good of the company but most importantly for the guest experience. The elimination of “having to ask a supervisor” allows for a more seamless guest experience. [10] Every part of the company is laced together with this one common goal. When people imagine the phrase customer service, they often think of bored, not caring, unpleasant and sometimes rude staff. On the flip side they are pleasantly surprised when they get help, a smile and a kind attitude and it makes them tell their friends. [11] These genuine attributes alone set WestJet apart from all others in the industry and outside the industry. Empowering employees has been proven and continues to improve productivity.

Ultimately WestJet culture allows WestJetters to gain as well as nurture their skills and knowledge. The company encourages listening without judgment in order to effectively communicate to guests and fellow team members. So if salesman would like to be successful, he needs to remember to maintain a positive attitude and the fact that he needs to start his customer service with the basic small details that create a whole experience. We can divide these details into the 2 main categories. [12] WestJet communicates with its audience whether a guest or employee, and consistently delivers on its promises through its recruitment, retention and development of its unique employees we call WestJetters. WestJet provides a work environment that people want to work for, strive to be like and guests want to support.

First of all is the appearance of the salesman:

- Kind and positive attitude to customers,
- Eye contact, smile, head high, friendly expressions,
- Well-fitted clothing corresponding with the type of business,
- Clean clothes and shoes, professional outward. [13]

Competition is great for all companies. It offers selection but it also offers a comparison too. Sunwing airlines offer the same destinations as WestJet, on the same model of aircraft however, the major difference is the customer experience. Sunwing lacks that internal pride, that ownership style of culture purely due to a different business model and leadership style. The empowerment is missing and the structure of a company union limits the Sunwing employee in their ability to make decisions. Unfortunately, this is reflected on the customer service experience. Sunwing is modeled more towards a lower fare price point than a travel experience. They offer items onboard their aircraft to entice the customer to choose them, for example free champagne. [14]

Although bound by regulatory and government laws each company, WestJet and Sunwing are able to outline their procedures for rules, rates and tariffs. WestJet clearly defines in its procedures how it will conduct business as well as the possibility to a tariff refund. Sunwing does not outline at all, nor does it clearly state its rules, rates and tariffs.

At WestJet, empowerment means every WestJetter controls the company's relationship with guests. Every WestJetter should be focused on ensuring a guest's experience is remarkable. When issues arise, WestJettters decide what needs to be done to make sure guests leave satisfied and loyal. With few exceptions, including safety and regulatory issues, every recovery solution will be considered. WestJettters working to ensure every guest has a remarkable experience have leader support to do so as they see fit. Like all decisions at WestJet, guest experience decisions should be made with an understanding of the impact they will make on WestJet's people, guests and overall business. When they consider the value to each of these, balanced decisions are made, potential issues are mitigated and the best guest experience will be delivered.

10. GUEST COMMUNICATION

WestJet maintains an active link between the company and its customer base. It encourages active listening by its employees to minimize misunderstanding. “They have wants, needs, and desires, and we as business owners need to make sure that our products, services, and messages can deliver on all that.” [15]

On the other hand, dealing with customers in a kind way while providing bad service is pointless. Good looks and a kind attitude alone will not satisfy a customer. *Service needs to be compact:*

- A perfect product
- Delivered by a caring, friendly person
- In a timely fashion.... with (because any of those three elements may misfire)
- The support of an effective problem resolution process” [16]

The first two points were already mentioned, points number three and four represent dealing with the problems, tasks and questions from customers. Salesmen need to be problem solvers and adapt to any situation in a timely manner.

When there is a problem that the salesman cannot solve quickly or he needs more time to manage it, there is a good way to answer the customer in a polite way, to tell to customer that this problem needs couple of days to be solved and ask for his patience. This attitude shows the customer that the salesman really cares about his problem and he is working on fixing it. [17]

Dealing with customers is very closely connected with appropriate language. It shows your skill level of solving problems and answering questions.

“Language is crucial to how a customer experiences your business,

which makes it a critical element of your brand. It's the next stop on our itinerary." [18]

Better customer service can also be reached, when employees anticipate needs of customers, not just solve situation when it happens.

"That is the difference between providing ho-hum service by merely reacting to customer requests and building loyalty through true anticipatory service." [19]

This statement goes hand in hand with the intuition. But an intuition does not mean uninformed decisions, but on the contrary be informed and follow your instincts. [20]

The WestJet phone call center is open 24 hours a day and you will speak with a caring person if you call in. This adds to that caring experience, that personal touch. It creates better communication between the customer and the company itself rather than an automated system. Best way how to reach this is to be on convenient place where the company can be contacted whenever customers needs to. [21]

Proper customer service needs to be:

- Useful in dealings with the product.
- Easy to log on company Web site and reach solution immediately.
- Enjoyable for customers, that they feel their words were heard. [22]

11. ACTIVE COMMUNICATION

The company offers an active ear in listening to both employees and guests. WestJet appreciates the views and concerns of their People and Guests through always trying to improve the “guest experience”. The company strives to align the interest of its people and the interests of the company.

Through continuous feedback on performance, WestJet informs its people about its success and direction, including areas of improvement. “Town Hall Meetings” help inform WestJetters to be aware of issues, bring forth areas of concerns and create an open door for communication.

WestJet never strays from their cultural success and are quick to make adjustments along the way to accommodate the changing needs of its employees, guests and the aviation marketplace. They continue to explore the benefits of social media communication too. They welcome customers to access them by their website. Showing them, how important are they for their business. [23] Adding some information about number of people using their product as well as various methods to access help. Always conscious that not everyone is so handy to find everything he needs on the web site, that is why the use of their web site needs to be simple and easy for orientation. [24]

12. OWNERSHIP

WestJet provides an ownership style employment opportunity. It gives all employees the option to buy into the companies employee share purchase plan, effectively putting ownership into the employee. [25]

Sharing the wealth of the company's success is something WestJet does well. The ability to give back to the people who create the experience and who create a better travel journey ultimately increases the bottom line. Giving back to the hard working WestJetters through profit sharing inspires the capitalist in each of us. Becoming an owner makes us responsible for the company's bottom line. The better the company does, the better the potential reward of the profit share. Each WestJetter has the opportunity to be an "owner" through the Employee Share Purchase Plan and the majority takes part. Through the company's Employee Share Purchase Plan, each WestJetter has the option to contribute up to 20% of their pay cheque towards shares in the company of which the company will match dollar for dollar. [26] This value of ownership creates pride and investment for both the employee and the company as well as for the employee's future.

13. RECRUITMENT

Internally the company treats its employees the same way it expects its employees to treat its guests externally. They hire individuals for various positions based on their positive attitude and personality. You cannot train or instill the attitude of a future WestJet, it is something you just feel. [27] It is a critical fit to the continued success of a highly recognized brand, image and company. WestJetters go above and beyond and apply a positive and passionate attitude in everything they do. While never taking themselves seriously, these employees uphold safety, maintain honesty and keep commitments in a fun and caring environment.

Training and experience is one integral part of a career at WestJet, but the complete package would include the spirit that you feel deep inside. That commitment to a culture that drives productivity, upholding safety to highest regards while continually trying to improve the guest experience. On the ground, are you that ambassador for the company, striving to create a remarkable experience? Would you continue to improve your skill sets and share them with your fellow WestJetters? Are you able to effectively communicate and listen to guests and fellow team members? Can you see the big picture? Would you feel empowered to make it right?

A potential WestJet would be an active team member. Professional and passionate yet not taking themselves too seriously with the ability to answer all the above questions.

Sunwing has an active recruitment process but one major difference is that most of the positions are seasonal or positions available for the busy period only. [28] This works well for some employees but for others, the knowledge that their position will end at a set date could be quite depressing. With this accordion business model, employee retention

is difficult and the chance of losing good, qualified employees are greatly increased. If the employee does not have support from the company to maintain their position there is a sense of lack of support from the company on other levels. These feelings spill over into the customer service experience in day-to-day operations.

14. CELEBRATION OF SUCCESS

Celebrating the success of the company comes in many ways; from celebrations for profit sharing to birthday parties for the company. [29] Each one promotes success while including fun and laughter. It creates a family environment that is giving, sharing and making those within and outside the company better.

This celebration of success creates a unique brand. It solidifies the workplace making it easier for the company to stay focused allowing it to define, share and deliver its goals.

WestJet offers employee programs (or parties) across the country celebrating both the success of the company and the development or success of company ideas. The most well known is the “Profit Share” parties and the most recent was the celebration of WestJet Encore. [30]

New programs include everyone, WestJetters and the guests themselves. These programs celebrate the improvement of the guest experience as well as the employee’s commitment to the guest experience. The ideas must also be something the employees are proud of and promote. An example would include the use of social media channels, most recently the Christmas Present Wish List and delivery on a flight in December. [31]

15. SOCIAL MEDIA

Corporate culture is able to reach a larger audience through the use of social media. This outlet also reaches existing guests themselves and potentially new guests. It gives an interactive view point of WestJet and its people doing what they do best.

The company is able to provide direct communication to all guests. It provides a playful presence as well as increase public recognition. A global market can be reached through these channels.

Various examples can be found of day-to-day experiences outlining the extraordinary passion the WestJetters take in their careers. Whether it would be a compassion for charity or a spoof on April Fool's Day, it solidifies a key commitment to WestJet to have fun, be friendly and of course caring. [32] The more recent viral video on the company's YouTube channel show guests talking to Santa by video and placing their holiday wishes in the city of Toronto then flying to the city of Calgary. After landing in Calgary the guests found all their holiday wishes granted and being distributed to them on the baggage claim belt.

One of the most important things in business is to look around you and see, how big companies are dealing with their customers. The best thing every firm can do is to use the Internet as much as possible.

These companies are using as many communication channels as possible. The most important are:

- Flickr,
- Facebook,
- Twitter,
- LinkedIn,
- YouTube,

- Yelp. [33]

The best way on how to be seen is to use all of these mentioned. Using all of them can also let you to offer to your customers the possibility of choice, because with all these you can address lots of customers and it is their choice, which channel they like the best for communication. The most widely used channels in the world are Twitter and Facebook.

“Consumers are learning to follow the companies they do business with on Twitter and Facebook when they are given a return on their time investment.”[34]

Many customers prefer an instant response in case of urgency. This can be offered on Twitter because its instant replies serve like a public forum and with a connection to Google, tweets are part of a Google search.

“Customers expect good service and prompt resolution to problems.” [35]

The faster the responses are, the more trustful and loyal customer will be. That is the reason, why many companies have a team of people responsible for prompt answering to customers. For this case it is better to have a signature for every member of a team, so it can be recognizable, who was answering. This applies when one team is answering from one Twitter account. [36] A non-automatic response also gives a good impression. [37]

Twitter is the main reason for the success of Dell. They started to post computer tips and they offered bargain coupon deals. Earnings after these services are counted to millions of dollars. [38]

Some segmentation is also very useful to do, for example in areas or in types of products. Customers will choose and they will know where to specifically ask for service.

The main advantage of Internet customer service is that companies have a real-time feedback. Many people can instantly write their experience, problems, that can be useful for other customers, so it means that customers say what do they want. This can be very useful for changing products, improving your service. Business will be much easier if you do what people need. [39]

“While companies are either blindly hobbling along, doing things the way they always have done, or perhaps noticing something probably needs to change, the customer has taken things into [his or her] own hands.” [40]

Great example is the situation, when retail executives were asked who has seen E.T. (Steven Spielberg's movie). This is mainly a kid's movie, so only couple of people raised hands. Then they were asked how they might relate to their customers if they do not know their pop culture and the way they think. [41]

We can also add Instagram between communication channels mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Instagram is a simple application for sharing pictures with the whole world.

Kuwaiti salesmen are selling goods via Instagram. It is free, simple steps are - create an account, take a picture of your own production (animals, fruit, ...), use some effects and add a price. Next step is to wait, when someone answers. Successful businessmen are followed by thousands of people on Instagram.

Kuwaiti businessmen found a new way how to address new potential customers. Even older salesmen are not afraid of starting with Instagram. [42]. Customers do not use telephones or emails that often, because via social networks they can get attention of millions. [43]

WestJet Airlines Christmas Wish Video

One of the most successful social media marketing videos for customer service.

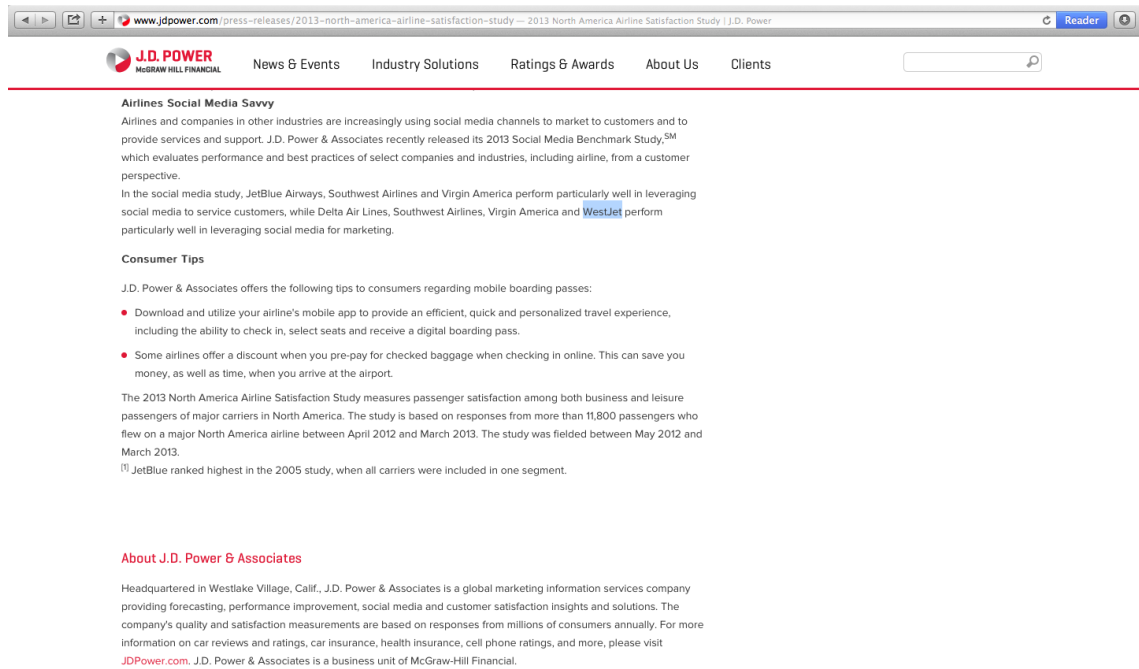
The screenshot shows a YouTube video player for the video 'WestJet Christmas Miracle: real-time giving'. The video title is 'WestJet Christmas Miracle: real-time giving' and it has 36,156,968 views. The video player shows a dark screen with the text 'Twas a Night Before Christmas...' and a play button. Below the video player, there is a description: 'Published on Dec 8, 2013. Thanks to a team of merry WestJetters and the power of technology, we've learned that miracles really do happen. Read our blog post to learn more about this video: http://fly.ws/MakingXmasMiracle'. To the right of the video player, there is a list of recommended videos, including 'WestJet Christmas Miracle: Santa's bloopers', 'WestJet Christmas Miracle: Why?', 'Planet WestJet - Profit Share November 2013', 'A day in the life of WestJet's connection runner', 'RMR: Rick and Westjet', 'Paying for People's Groceries', 'Google', 'What Would You Do?: Girlfriend Buys Positive Pregnancy Test', 'Three-Year-Old Beyoncé Dancer Is Heaven!', and 'SURPRISE ENDING - Flash Mob'.

WestJet Airlines April Fool's Day Video

This video launched WestJet into the social media mainstream. April Fool's Day, a day for humour has become WestJet's window for new guests as they anxiously await each years new video release. It really shows the playful side of the company through its humour.

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player for the video 'April Fool's - WestJet introduces child-free cabins - Kargo Kids'. The video title is 'April Fool's - WestJet introduces child-free cabins - Kargo Kids' and it has 1,084,688 views. The video player shows a man in a red sweater standing in front of a WestJet logo on a wall. Below the video player, there is a description: 'Published on Apr 1, 2012. http://fly.ws/kargokids April 1, 2012 - Introducing Kargo Kids, an exciting new program allowing guests to travel on select child-free flights, creating a quieter and more relaxing inflight experience, while children travel in a "special VIP" area of the aircraft.' To the right of the video player, there is a list of recommended videos, including 'WestJet Christmas Miracle: real-time giving', 'WestJet converts to metric time - April Fool's', 'Father's Day Surprise - WestJet & Ronald McDonald House Charities', 'R.A. Dickey - WestJet commercial bloopers', 'What Would You Do?: Girlfriend Buys Positive Pregnancy Test', 'She Planned Her Own Proposal and Didn't Even Know It!', 'Flashmob of British Army musicians surprises Christmas shoppers in', 'Hilarious Westjet flight attendant before takeoff with Tommy', and 'Ellen Show - Inspiring Story: Young Boy and a Soldier March 13, 2014'.

WestJet Social Media Distinction by J.D. Power



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a press release from J.D. Power. The browser's address bar shows the URL: www.jdpower.com/press-releases/2013-north-america-airline-satisfaction-study. The page header includes the J.D. Power logo (McGraw-Hill Financial) and navigation links for News & Events, Industry Solutions, Ratings & Awards, About Us, and Clients. A search bar is also present.

Airlines Social Media Savvy

Airlines and companies in other industries are increasingly using social media channels to market to customers and to provide services and support. J.D. Power & Associates recently released its 2013 Social Media Benchmark Study,SM which evaluates performance and best practices of select companies and industries, including airline, from a customer perspective.

In the social media study, JetBlue Airways, Southwest Airlines and Virgin America perform particularly well in leveraging social media to service customers, while Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, Virgin America and WestJet perform particularly well in leveraging social media for marketing.

Consumer Tips

J.D. Power & Associates offers the following tips to consumers regarding mobile boarding passes:

- Download and utilize your airline's mobile app to provide an efficient, quick and personalized travel experience, including the ability to check in, select seats and receive a digital boarding pass.
- Some airlines offer a discount when you pre-pay for checked baggage when checking in online. This can save you money, as well as time, when you arrive at the airport.

The 2013 North America Airline Satisfaction Study measures passenger satisfaction among both business and leisure passengers of major carriers in North America. The study is based on responses from more than 11,800 passengers who flew on a major North America airline between April 2012 and March 2013. The study was fielded between May 2012 and March 2013.

^[1] JetBlue ranked highest in the 2005 study, when all carriers were included in one segment.

About J.D. Power & Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power & Associates is a global marketing information services company providing forecasting, performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information on car reviews and ratings, car insurance, health insurance, cell phone ratings, and more, please visit JDPower.com. J.D. Power & Associates is a business unit of McGraw-Hill Financial.

16. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In celebrating our success we are socially responsible and committed to our community. When we give back either corporately or individually our culture is reaffirmed. The company encourages selfless acts of giving back by WestJetters and more often than not, the employees contribute and volunteer all on their own.

A culture that gives back will succeed not only in the public eye but also on an individual basis. It speaks volumes of the people involved and builds on fundamentals of basic humanity. We have a social responsibility to the public and the environment. This undertaking and commitment is the selfless acts WestJetters do each and everyday.

The investment in community can be as simple as recycling or reducing our carbon footprint through fuel efficiency, to donating to individual or corporate charities such as Ronald McDonald House Children's Charity. [44] Our people inspire us and inspire others.

17. REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE

WestJet's goal to create a remarkable experience does not stop with frontline WestJetters. It is WestJetters on the frontline that have direct contact with guests, but a great guest experience includes the complete travel experience. From ensuring every aircraft is properly and safely maintained to getting guest bags to their destination on time and in the same condition they departed. Creating self-serve and web options that meet guests needs, to preparing the financial and regulatory reports required by government and investors. The list goes on and on. WestJetters in offices, airports and hangars across this airline contribute significantly to guest experience, perhaps without ever speaking directly to a guest. Since WestJet's success is built on caring for guests, the business and each other, a conversation about guest experience simply would not be complete if they did not mention the importance of ensuring internal guests – WestJetters – have remarkable experiences when they work with other WestJetters. By keeping the three elements of great guest experience in mind, every WestJetter – regardless of role, team or location – can provide a stress-free and safe, friendly and caring experience for both internal and external guests. They do it all with a smile knowing that their hard work and passion has brought a smile to a guest's face.

18. GUEST FEEDBACK

The company regularly asks guests (WestJet's and competitors') to talk about their recent flight experience. WestJet asks how they felt about their overall experience as well as specific questions about each aspect of their experience – from booking to arrivals. They use five key questions to track how the company is doing on guest experience: [45]

- How satisfied were you with your recent flight experience?
- How likely are you to recommend the airline to your friends and family?
- Did the airline's employees show they cared about you?
- During this recent flight, did you encounter any problems or issues?
- How satisfied were you with the manner in which this problem or issue was handled?

The satisfaction, care and recommend questions are asked on a 10 point scale. When the survey results are reviewed, the company pays particular attention to the percentage of guests that gave WestJet a nine or 10 rating. Guests who rate WestJet nine or 10 are truly satisfied or loyal, which means they will choose the airline over the competition in the future and will recommend it to their friends and family. In fact, it is found that, guests who are very satisfied with their flight experience (give WestJet a nine or 10 satisfaction rating) are four times more likely to say they would recommend the airline than guests who are not satisfied. [46]

WestJet Airlines World Airline Awards

Numerous awards of distinction from various rating agencies outline the strong commitment and loyalty WestJet has maintained with its guests.

www.worldairlineawards.com/awards-2010/airline2010.htm -- 2010 World Airline Awards Results Archive | SKYTRAX

Best Low-Cost Airlines

BEST LOW-COST AIRLINE - ASIA	
1	AirAsia
2	Jetstar Airways
3	Tiger Airways

BEST LOW-COST AIRLINE - EUROPE	
1	Air Berlin
2	easyJet
3	Norwegian

BEST LOW-COST AIRLINE - AUSTRALIA/PACIFIC	
1	Virgin Blue
2	Jetstar Airways
3	Tiger Airways

BEST LOW-COST AIRLINE - C. ASIA/INDIA	
1	IndiGo Airlines
2	SpiceJet
3	Kingfisher Red

BEST LOW-COST AIRLINE - SOUTH AMERICA	
1	Gol
2	Webjet
3	Easyfly

BEST LOW-COST AIRLINE - NORTH AMERICA	
1	Virgin America
2	WestJet
3	Southwest Airlines

Airline Staff Service Excellence Awards - by Region

STAFF SERVICE EXCELLENCE - AFRICA	
1	South African Airways
2	Kenya Airways
3	Air Mauritius

STAFF SERVICE EXCELLENCE - ASIA	
1	Malaysia Airlines
2	Asiana Airlines
3	Singapore Airlines

STAFF EXCELLENCE - AUSTRALIA/PACIFIC	
1	Air New Zealand
2	Qantas Airways
3	V Australia

STAFF SERVICE EXCELLENCE - CHINA	
1	Hainan Airlines
2	China Southern Airlines
3	China Eastern Airlines

STAFF EXCELLENCE - CENTRAL ASIA/INDIA	
1	Kingfisher Airlines
2	Jet Airways
3	SriLankan Airlines

STAFF SERVICE EXCELLENCE - EUROPE	
1	Swiss International Air Lines
2	Austrian Airlines
3	Aegean Airlines

STAFF EXCELLENCE - MIDDLE EAST	
1	Emirates
2	Qatar Airways
3	Etihad Airways

STAFF SERVICE EXCELLENCE - NORTH AMERICA	
1	Delta Air Lines
2	Allegiant Air
3	JetBlue Airways

19. AN INTERVIEW WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE AGENT

TONYA BARRETT

I had the opportunity to ask Tonya Barrett a few questions on how WestJet responds to baggage concerns with their guests. Tonya is a Customer Service Agent in the Baggage Service at the Toronto, Ontario Canada Lester Pearson International Airport, and a major hub for WestJet Airlines.

- 1) How would you describe the attitude of the average guest you deal with on a daily bases?
 - a) Most guests arrive with a sense of disappointment and a raised sense of concern however; by the time they leave they are usually smiling and satisfied with our efforts.
- 2) What would be the most common complaint or concern?
 - a) A lost bag or damaged bag
- 3) How do you or WestJet ensure a loss or damage bag is avoided?
 - a) WestJet is continually trying to have the lowest miss-handled baggage in North America. It contracts out almost all of its baggage handling to another company but remains involved in training these baggage handlers to WestJet standards. This involves separating bags by destination in the belly of the airplane to easily find bags with tight connections to other flights. Training the WestJet term to all baggage handlers that if you touch the bag, read the bag tag and verify. Fragile items or big items like baby strollers are placed in the belly of the aircraft separate from other bags to minimize damage. Damage does happen from time to time and the company handles this very well.

4) What is WestJet's baggage policy?

- a) A lost bag or delayed bag requires some information to be recorded to create a file for tracking and contact purposes. We look for your bag from the airport level in the first five days. After that, your file is transferred to our head office and they continue to track down your bag. We will provide you with any items you may require to continue your journey. On average we offer about \$150.00 per person for five days plus money for you replace your bag itself. The compensation varies depending on contents and delay time. If your bag is found we will deliver it to wherever you may be.
- b) A damaged bag is either sent off for repair or we will give you money to purchase a new bag of similar size, brand and style. A file report is also created in this case too and must be reported within one week.
- c) On the odd occasion we receive reports of stolen items from bags. Again a file report is created but our head office deals specifically with these cases.
- d) In all cases we have the ability to do what is best for the guests based on the situation but also have WestJet's best interests in mind too. We are all owners, every decision could affect our potential profit share but also impact guest experience.

5) How often do bags get left behind?

- a) WestJet will delay the flight to ensure all guests bags are onboard the aircraft. The pilots even have the ability to make this decision or are often the ones verifying all guests' bags are onboard. The decision to leave bags behind may happen if WestJet operations decide there will be a big impact on the overall airlines fleet schedule, such as connections.

6) What makes WestJet's baggage policy better than another airlines policy?

- a) The commitment to make it right for each and every guest. A guest who is satisfied with their experience will travel again with us. We care. Often we are notified a guests bag did not make a flight prior to their arrival at their destination airport and we already have a plan or resolution in place.

7) What compensation can a travelling guest expect to receive?

Compensation varies depending on situation and is unique to each guest. Typically we offer a compensation that will minimize the disruption to the guests travel, this may include money to purchase clothes, a new bag, replacement of items and in some cases with unique circumstances, future travel credits. There was a bride and groom who were travelling for their wedding; some of their bags did not arrive at their destination. The flight crew happened to be overnighing at the same destination. The crew was informed that the brides wedding dress did not arrive, so as a crew, they all contributed their own money towards buying a dress for the bride so the wedding could still take place. This is what makes WestJet different and better.

The interview with Tonya was an enlightening insight into an employee's first hand internal experience with the company. Given the duration of employment with the company, Tonya has been with the WestJet long enough to see numerous changes, growth and external influences on the company, such as the 2009 recession. She offered her honest opinion of first hand experience with WestJet's frontline customer service. Tonya's opinion validated all external references of the company, both print and online material benefiting my thesis paper greatly.

Arranging a time to do the interview proved a little difficult, with Tonya and WestJet Airlines being located in Canada. With the help of Dallen Clarke, my other employee company reference for information, I was provided a point of contact for the interview. Time zone differences and the fact Tonya works at various times on different days posed a challenge to set up a time that worked for both of us. After four failed attempts to conduct a Skype interview, our schedules finally matched up. On July 3, 2014, lasting twenty minutes, I was able to conduct a candid interview with Tonya who lives in Toronto, Canada. She was genuinely excited to talk about her work, the company and her impact on people everyday.

My questions were outlined as very professional. Tonya's goodwill and infectious attitude quickly lightened the process, the tone became much less formal, almost fun. I can see why interactions with WestJetters is as good as everyone boasts about. As a mother of three, Tonya volunteers in her home country of Jamaica and her local community in Toronto. Proudly supported by family and even WestJet itself with her various volunteer work through days off or financial donations. She truly echoed the personality WestJet looks for in their recruitment process.

The inspiration and commitment in Tonya's voice echoed over our Skype interview. I heard first hand in her voice how passionate WestJetters really are about their jobs and the guests they serve. The videos and online material I researched was supported by her own words. Tonya spoke freely about the company knowing full well I had limited exposure to the WestJet culture and this would remain true mainly due to our geographical locations.

Given the route network of WestJet, here in the Czech Republic, we have limited exposure to a flight operated by them. However, with

social media the world is a much smaller place and we can obtain more insight into WestJet and its better customer service, striving for similar here in the Czech Republic.

The customer service experience that WestJet promotes, delivers and remains committed to is an excellent example for many businesses of how customer service should be. How a company treats its customer base as well as its employees promotes increased brand loyalty. Tonya was just one of the many WestJetters who make a difference everyday, something we can all learn from, personally and as a business.

WestJet Airlines Baggage Policy

The baggage policy as outlined by the company available for all guests.

www.westjet.com/guest/en/travel/basics/baggage/claim.shtml -- Delayed, damaged and/or missing baggage with WestJet

Sign up / Sign in Feedback / Contact Help Français Enter your search

WESTJET

Travel advisory: LAX issues travel advisory for "Century Crunch". [More details >](#)

Flights Vacations Deals **Travel Info** My WestJet Rewards

Travel Info

- Basics
 - Security and travel advisories
 - Fares, taxes and fees
 - Check in and airport arrival
 - ID requirements
 - Baggage
 - Carry-on baggage
 - Checked and excess baggage
 - Sporting equipment
 - Fishing and hunting equipment
 - Restricted items
 - Special items
 - **Delayed, damaged and/or missing baggage**
 - Packing smarter to get more out of your trip
 - Seat selection
 - Inflight services
 - Children, infants and expectant mothers
- + Special arrangements

Delayed, damaged and/or missing baggage

At WestJet, we're working hard to have one of the lowest mishandled-baggage ratios in North America. But sometimes, despite our best efforts, baggage may be delayed or damaged. If that happens, we'll do everything we can to resolve the issue as quickly and efficiently as possible. If your baggage is delayed, damaged or missing, it is important to [contact us](#) as soon as possible.

Travelling with WestJet and another airline

It is important to note the baggage policies, restrictions and fees of our partner airlines may be different from ours. Please see our [airline partners page](#) as generally, the most restrictive guidelines will apply.

If you are a guest travelling with both WestJet and one of our [partner airlines](#) and your baggage and/or contents are delayed, damaged or missing, please contact the airline that flew you to your final destination.

Delayed baggage

- Delayed baggage must be reported to WestJet within 30 days of your flight's arrival.
- A WestJet representative will create a delayed baggage report for you. You'll be asked for your contact information, and a description of your baggage and its contents to assist in the search.
- Once this report has been completed, a WestJet representative from Baggage Services will advise you of the next steps.
- During the first five days, we will work to locate your baggage. If your baggage is not recovered in five days, our Central Baggage team will take over the search.

Damaged baggage

Damage to baggage or contents must be reported to a WestJet representative within seven days of your flight's arrival. If you're traveling within Canada, and need to report damage to your baggage, please call 1-866-666-6224. Outside of Canada, please call 403-444-2581.

Check baggage status

Delayed baggage: If you have notified WestJet of your delayed baggage, please enter your last name and file number below.

Last Name

File Number

File Number - You may omit leading zeros when entering your claim number. For example: LFLW50000486 becomes LFLW5486.

CHECK STATUS

20. GLOSSARY

1. Air Fare (Cena letenky)- the fee charged for transporting people or goods from place to the next by airplane.
2. Air Waybill (Průvodka)- the document entitled Air Waybill made out by or on behalf of the shipper that evidences the contract between the shipper and carrier for carriage of goods over routes of the carrier.
3. Airline (Letecká společnost)- a business providing air transportation to one or more places.
4. Airline Industry (Letecký průmysl)- a system of businesses that contribute to the safe air travel of people, goods and items.
5. Airport Code (Kód letiště)- the three digit code which is unique to a specific airport.
6. Airport Fees (Letištní poplatky)- the charges specific to each airport for use of its facilities such as security to a navigation fee, all passed on from the airline to the passenger.
7. Available Seat Kilometer (Mile) (Volná sedadla)- a measurement of an airline flight's passenger carrying capacity. A formula of the number of seats available divided by the distance flown.
8. Baggage Allowance (Povolená váha zavazadla)- the weight of the luggage the airline allows the traveller to check-in.
9. Boarding Pass (Palubní vstupenka)- a card given to the passenger after check-in which allocates a seat number or indicates a boarding pattern.
10. Brand (Značka)- a make or label identifying a particular company.

11. Brand Loyalty (Loajalita zákazníka)- the tendency for a consumer to purchase from the same brand of goods opposed to the competitors brand.
12. Business Culture (Kultura, chování firmy)- the behavior or interactions of a company's employee's and how they attach themselves to this culture.
13. Carbon Footprint (Dopad na životní prostředí)- a company's impact on the environment.
14. Cargo (Náklad)- any goods carried on an aircraft and covered by an air waybill.
15. Carry-on (Příruční (kabinové) zavazadlo)- hand-baggage or luggage that has not been checked-in.
16. Carriage (Přeprava)- equivalent to the term transport, means carriage of passengers and/or baggage by air, gratuitously or for hire.
17. Carrier (Přepravce)- another name for an airline.
18. Central Baggage Services (Reklamace zavazadel)- the counter located in each airport where guests can go to inquire about various baggage concerns or issues.
19. CEO (Generální ředitel)- Chief Executive Officer, the most senior individual in charge of running a business or an organization.
20. Charter Airline (Charterová letecká společnost)- an airline providing on demand flight service, not scheduled, usually to tourist or vacation destinations.
21. Check-in (Odbavení)- the time before departure when your luggage goes onto the airline and boarding cards are issued.

22. Code Share (Spolupráce, častěji pouze code share)- an agreement between airlines to share and sell tickets on another airline. One airline will operate the flight on behalf of another airline.
23. Competitor (Konkurent)- a rival business offering the same service such as an airline.
24. Confirmation (Potvrzení)- oral or written communication that informs the carrier that you will definitely be on a flight or flights.
25. Connecting Flights (Lety s přestupem)- a journey where the passenger must change planes to reach their final destination.
26. Contact Centre (Call centrum)- a company's telephone call centre.
27. Culture (Kultura, styl)- the style or unique relationship of colleagues and employees
28. Customer Service Agent (Pracovník péče o zákazníky)- the employee who interacts directly with the passenger at the airport checking them in for the flight as well as weighing and taking the passengers checked baggage.
29. Direct Flight (Přímý let)- a flight where the passenger does not need to change planes but the aircraft may stop en-route.
30. Empowerment (Oprávnění)- the ability of a WestJet employee to make decisions for the greater good of the company without having to get a supervisors approval.
31. ESP (Zaměstnanecké akcie)- Employee Share Purchase Plan offered to WestJetters to contribute up to 20% of their annual income of which the company will match dollar for dollar.
32. Excess Baggage (Nadměrné zavazadlo)- checked-in baggage that exceeds the weight of the baggage allowance.

33. Experience Facilitation (Oddělení WestJet zabývající se kontaktem se zákazníky)- the department within WestJet which develops and implements how the frontline WestJetters will interact and create that guest experience.
34. Expedite Baggage (Zavazadlo, které necestuje s cestujícím)- passenger baggage that is not traveling with the passenger and is being forwarded on to them.
35. Fare (Cena)- price of an airline ticket
36. Feeder Airline (Menší odvětví společnosti)- a smaller airline within an airline providing service to smaller routes or airports.
37. Flight Number (Číslo letu)- the numerical designation or identification of a flight.
38. Flight Operations (Letový úsek)- the various departments that work together to get a flight underway, including pilots.
39. Frontline WestJetter (Zaměstnanec s přímým kontaktem se zákazníkem)- the WestJet employees who have direct contact with their guest such as Customer Services Agents or Flight Attendants.
40. Guest (Host)- the name for a WestJet passenger.
41. Guest Relations (Vztahy se zákazníky)- the specific part of WestJet that addresses any guest concerns or feedback to the company as well as how the company relates to its guests.
42. Hub (Mateřské letiště)- a major airport that serves as a base for most of a company's departures and arrivals. A major airport where an airline has many flights leaving to smaller destinations.
43. Inflight (Úsek letových posádek)- the department that Flight Attendants are managed under.

44. Interline Partnership (Spolupráce leteckých společností)- an agreement between airlines to handle passengers and their baggage or cargo on flights where one airline may not fly to a particular destination. Using multiple airlines to reach the final destination in which there may be a formal relationship between the carriers to facilitate baggage transfer and ticketing or it could simply be two or more unconnected companies where the traveller is responsible for luggage and connection timings.
45. IROP (Nestandardní postup)- Irregular Operations, disruption of an airlines normal operations.
46. Jet-lag (Únava z časového posunu mezi časovými pásmy)- extreme tiredness or other physical effects after traveling on a long-haul flight crossing multiply time zones.
47. Landing Fee (Poplatky za přistání)- each airport charges a fee to the airline for landing their aircraft. The airline charges a small fee to the passenger to cover the cost of this landing fee.
48. Long Haul Flight (Lety na dlouhou vzdálenost)- a flight of considerable distance and time – often with the passengers suffering some significant jet lag along the way.
49. Low Cost Airline (Nízkonákladová letecká společnost)- an airline that offers lower ticket fares but also fewer comforts on a flight such as meals. The business model has a base fare for travel but charges extra for addition services.
50. Major Airline (Velká letecká společnost)- a schedule airline that is of large size.
51. Non-stop Flight (Přímý let)- a flight that goes directly from one destination to another without landing en-route.

52. Open-door Policy (Politika otevřených dveří)- a culture within a business that allows employees the ability to communicate directly with management, the doors are always open for any discussion.
53. Operating Cost (Náklady spojené s provozem)- the money or expenses required covering the daily operation of a business to remain in existence.
54. Origin (Místo odletu)- the initial starting place of the flight as shown on the ticket.
55. Over-booking (Přeprodání letenek - je prodáno více letenek, než jaká je kapacita letadla)- a condition that exists when more seats have been booked on a flight than seats allowable for sale.
56. Owner (Majitel WestJet akcií)- a WestJetter that has purchased into the Employee Share Purchase Plan.
57. Passenger Load Factor (Obsazenost letadel)- a measurement of how efficient an airline is in filling seats or how full the aircraft are within a company's route network.
58. Personal Protective Equipment (Ochranné prostředky)- the equipment or safety device to shield someone from danger. An example would be a mask or gloves.
59. PNR- Passenger Name Record (Seznam cestujících)- a record of each passenger's travel requirements which contains all information necessary to enable reservations to be processed and controlled by the booking and participating airlines. The basic record may contain one or more passengers.
60. Profit (Profit, zisk)- the sum of money a company makes after payment of its obliged expenses.

61. Profit Share (Rozdělení zisku společnosti mezi zaměstnance)- the company sharing a portion of its bi-annual profit to its employees.
62. Recruitment (Přijímací řízení)- the process of actively hiring employee's to fill company positions.
63. Refund (Proplacení)- the repayment to the passenger of all or a portion of a fare, rate or charge for unused carriage or service.
64. Reservation Support Desk (Centrum pro rezervace letenek)- the Contact Centre's more specific area for dealing with guests reservations that require special attention such as traveling with a wheelchair.
65. Revenue Passenger Kilometer (Mile) (Počet cestujících na palubě)- a measurement of how productive an airline is. A formula of how many passengers are on board divided by the distance flown.
66. Route (Trasa)- a flight between two cities.
67. Safety Device (Bezpečnostní prostředek)- an item to prevent accident or injury such as a seatbelt.
68. Scheduled Flight (Pravidelná linka)- a flight operating at a specified time and route on a regular basis.
69. Seat Map (Umístění sedadel)- a display which indicates availability status and/or characteristics of specific seats for a given flight and date. This typically contains information about class compartments, location of movie screens as well as, an indication of which seats have been reserved assigned including advance boarding pass issued and which are still available.
70. Short-haul Flight (Let na krátkou vzdálenost)- one that is brief in terms of distance travelled and time in the air. This is the chosen market of most of the low-cost carriers.

71. Slot Time (Slot - čas, kdy letadlo opouští stojánku na letišti)- the scheduled time of arrival or departure available or allocated to an aircraft movement on a specific date at an airport.
72. Tariff (Ceník)- the fees imposed on an airline ticket for travel.
73. Town-hall Meetings (Setkání zaměstnanců)- a staff meeting or company meeting of all employees.
74. Travel credits (Letecké mile)- money on file with an airline towards future travel.
75. WestJetter (Zaměstnanec WestJet)- a WestJet employee.
76. WestJet Encore (WestJet Encore - odvětví WestJet)- the feeder airline for WestJet Airlines.
77. WestJet Vacations (WestJet Vacations - část firmy, která se stará o hotely, dopravu apod)- the area of WestJet that deals with hotels, cruises and other vacation packages along with airfares for guests.

21. CONCLUSION

WestJet is well on its way to becoming the most caring airline in the world. The company communicates and follows through on every aspect of putting the customer first. It is consistent on delivering its promises to the guests who travel, interact or even do business with the company.

The company is not shy about its differentiating factor and the key to its great success, the WestJet customer service experience. The company has consistently remained profitable even with soaring operating costs. It has managed the increasing costs of business yet never touched the most notable factor of guest experience.

The competitors fly airplanes of similar size, if not the same model charging even the same ticket fare. The airline industry has become what some think as a business commodity yet WestJet does not agree. It has proven that its longtime honesty, truthfulness and caring customer service approach will win over that next traveller. It comes down to that memorable experience from last time that creates a long lasting mental image which spurs the traveller to choose WestJet over its competitors.

Over the years WestJet has maintained the almost impossible task of bold, corporate culture focusing on great guest experience. The company has grown significantly yet preserved these original ideas even with nearly 10,000 employees. The company has remained firm with its principles that guide the relationship between employee and leadership as well as the relationship between WestJet and the customer. The company has been able to demonstrate that there is a direct relationship between the company and how they treat their employees that then becomes a relationship between how the employees interact with the customer. The business model must align from the top down.

The relationship between WestJet's leadership and the employees has remained important. As the airline has grown the senior management

have consistently remained involved in meeting with employees including the new hires. The relationship also carries over to the company's various award and recognition programs. The leadership is able to see those going above and beyond as well as reward those who embrace the WestJet culture. The rewards are not necessarily of financial gain or monetary gain but rather recognition for the culture you support.

There is no greater reward or recognition than the company's ownership program. Each WestJetter is able to contribute up to 20% of their salary towards shares in the company of which the company will match up to that 20%. It really brings new meaning to employee owned, while providing each employee with a direct vested interest in the companies success. It has even played a role in the marketing for the company. Who better than an owner to providing excellent customer service. The employees are even rewarded twice a year during profitability. The company shares a portion of its profits and divides it amongst the employees. There is no better incentive than that to succeed each and everyday.

It all starts at the beginning, the initial hiring of a future employee, a future WestJetter. These individuals need to embrace the corporate culture but also have the power to continue and shape the customer experience. The difficult screening process means that only a few will ever make it through. In the end, the culture is the deciding factor on the true fit of the individual. Those who do not fit in, stand out. A strong brand or culture attracts like-minded people. It becomes self-sustaining and the differentiating factors for a company like WestJet.

The company has plans to continue to grow, and as it does, it can focus more on the growth knowing the customer service experience will remain the same. WestJet truly has the concept of a caring experience understood, remaining different and successful with its customer service.

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24. ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis was to analyze the customer service and business relationship of a highly recognized Canadian airline.

The thesis focused on the unique culture, employee empowerment and customer loyalty. The research gives attention to various influential employee positions within the company and their impact on customer service. This was followed by the company's creative roll in gaining and maintaining customer satisfaction. An interview with a company employee brings a first-hand account to finalize the research provided.

The reader will understand the unique and different approach to customer service that WestJet has applied to its daily operations. This caring experience of customer service would apply to so many other types of businesses yet WestJet is the only one to succeed.

25. RÉSUMÉ

Cílem práce bylo analyzovat obchodní vztah k zákazníkovi, stejně jako péči o něj. Soustředila jsem se na unikátní obchodní praktiky, přínos zaměstnanců a loajalitu zákazníků. V praktické části jsem se zabývala tím, jak zaměstnanci na různých pozicích ovlivňují zákaznický servis. Upozornila jsem na překvapující kreativitu společnosti, která umožňuje vytvořit unikátní prostředí pro péči o zákazníka a jeho spokojenost. Rozhovor se zaměstnankyní WestJet mi umožnil přesvědčit se, jak je teorie uplatňována v praxi.

Čtenář bude moci porozumět unikátnímu přístupu k péči o zákazníky, který WestJet uplatňuje při každodenním provozu. Tato strategie zákaznického servisu by se dala uplatnit ve velkém množství společností z různých odvětví, zatím ale pouze WestJet zůstává jedinou úspěšnou firmou s tímto modelem péče o zákazníka.

Guest Experience Playbook



26. APPENDIX 1

What WestJet's doing for guest experience

Creating clear and consistent standards and promises so the customer service and experiences delivered are consistent.

Creating a framework that gives every WestJet what they need to effectively fulfill their role.

Giving WestJetters and guests tools that will improve the travel experience.

Providing frontline WestJetters with a consistent approach to recovery. Identify what we are each empowered to do and how we should approach it.

Although the word remarkable was first used in 1604, it wasn't used to describe airline employees until 1996. Okay, that may not be entirely true. What is true, though, is that remarkable simply means "something likely to be noticed."

So, although it may sound like we're asking a lot when we ask you to be remarkable, what we're really asking you to do is be yourselves by continuing to do the things you already do – things that are out of the ordinary and, therefore, recognized by guests. In other words, we don't have to move mountains for a guest – we simply have to be noteworthy every time.

We've even tested this theory with our guests. When we ask what makes a remarkable travel experience, guests mention great communication, a friendly smile and a caring attitude. Sound familiar?

This is why using CARE to describe what WestJetters do is perfect. It's actionable, grounded in what we do, achievable and understood by WestJetters and guests alike. And, most importantly, it's who we've been since day one.

Every WestJetter plays a role in creating remarkable experiences

WestJet's goal to create a remarkable experience doesn't stop with frontline WestJetters. Sure, it's WestJetters on the frontline who have direct contact with guests, but a great guest experience includes the complete travel experience.

From ensuring every aircraft is properly and safely maintained to getting guest bags to their destination on time and in the same condition they departed. Creating self-serve and web options that meet guests' needs to preparing the financial and regulatory reports required by government and investors. The list goes on and on. WestJetters in offices, airports and hangars across this airline contribute significantly to guest experience, perhaps without ever speaking directly to a guest.

And, since WestJet's success is built on caring for guests, the business and each other, a conversation about guest experience simply wouldn't be complete if we didn't mention the importance of ensuring internal guests – WestJetters – have remarkable experiences when they work with other WestJetters.

By keeping the three elements of great guest experience in mind, every WestJetter – regardless of role, team or location – can provide a stress-free and safe, friendly and caring experience for both internal and external guests. And, you'll do it all with a smile knowing that your hard work and passion has brought a smile to a guest's face.

Welcome to the Guest Experience Playbook

This playbook is a quick reference for every WestJetter about how to deliver guest experience and be remarkable everywhere we are.

It's no secret that WestJetters are the core of WestJet's success and, across this great airline, we're focussed on doing everything possible to help WestJetters shine.

Whether you're a TAC agent carefully and quickly loading guest bags, an aircraft maintenance engineer ensuring every aircraft is ready for flight, a WI destination experience rep taking care of guests on vacation, a revenue analyst setting prices that ensure WestJet makes money and guests get value for their dollar, a network planning team member selecting destinations and routes that make sense for our guests, a flight attendant sharing the on-board safety information with a smile or, well, you get the point. The list goes on and on. We all have a role to play in delivering a remarkable guest experience.

Making guests smile, presenting a friendly and caring attitude and ensuring the WestJet experience is stress free and safe is only consistently possible because of the combined efforts of all WestJetters. Just as a puzzle is only complete when the last piece is in place, our company is only successful because each and every WestJetter cares.

Caring for our guests, our business and our people

Since WestJet first took to the skies in 1996, the word "care" has held two distinct meanings across the WestJet world.

- We care for each other – our people. Our people take care of our guests. And, our guests take care of our business.
- CARE is an acronym for create a remarkable experience. It's what we do each day we come to work.

We have the privilege of interacting with and delivering a remarkable experience for more than 15 million guests each year. Thousands of them tell us wonderful stories about WestJetters who've made their travel experiences memorable. This is what sets us apart from the others.

Building on the momentum

WestJet repeatedly scores ahead of our competition in many key metrics, including Canada's preferred airline, satisfaction, intent to fly with us again, and referring our airline to friends and relatives. We're recognized nationally as a top employer and, according to a survey done in mid-2012, WestJet Vacations has the highest guest satisfaction among the largest tour operators in Canada.

It's not enough to sit on top, satisfied with what we've achieved. We need to make it difficult – impossible, even – for the competition to beat us. After all, that's what winners do – they try harder. That's exactly what we're going to do. I have no doubt we have the people and processes needed to build on the momentum we've had since day one. Our goal as we continue to grow is to provide a consistent and remarkable experience every step of the way. I hope this book serves as a fun reminder of how to do just that.

While our products and services may change as we introduce WestJet Encore and many other exciting initiatives, the one constant will be WestJetters, each one of you. And, that's something the competition will have a tough time duplicating.

Over the next few pages, we'll review what remarkable looks like across WestJet's world. We'll also examine how you can bring the best of who you are to your role while consistently delivering a remarkable WestJet experience. And, for those times when things don't go quite right, we'll look at one of the tools available to every WestJetter to help resolve guest issues.

If you have suggestions for improving the WestJet guest experience, please let your leader or a member of the Guest Experience team know.

Sincerely,



Gregg Saretsky
President and CEO
WestJet

Here are some typical situations you may encounter and suggested ways to solve them based on prior years of guest recovery at WestJet. Keep in mind this is only a guideline and items are listed briefly and generically, the goal is to 'restore the guest back to good' whenever reasonably possible:

Aircraft was not well groomed / not clean	Apology - \$0 to \$100 Travel Bank Credit
Allergies onboard (Pets, nuts, etc.)	Apology - \$0 to \$150 Travel Bank Credit
Buy on Board products not available or lack of quality	\$25 Travel Bank Credit or refund amount paid for product
Dependents and Parents not seated together on flight	Apology - \$0 to \$150 Travel Bank Credit
Disturbance of other guests on flight (intoxicated, unruly, odour, misbehaved children)	Apology - \$0 to \$200 Travel Bank Credit
Dry Cleaning: Drink and Food Spills	Double amount on receipt for dry cleaning to Travel Bank Credit or refund amount paid for dry cleaning
WS damages personal property (Laptop, book, phone, etc.)	Double repair/replacement cost to BT OR reimburse receipts to CC
WestJetter did not help with kids or carry-on baggage	Apology - \$0 to \$100 Travel Bank Credit
PPV Movie not working	Apology - \$10 Travel Bank Credit or Refund amount paid for movie
Pre-Reserved Seating not available	Apology - Double amount paid for seat to Travel Bank Credit or refund amount paid for seat
Satellite TV not working	Apology - \$10 Travel Bank Credit
Scent sensitive guest is bothered by WS'ers perfume/cologne	Apology
Seat - sitting next to a larger guest	Half the base segment to Travel Bank Credit (EFT will determine)
Seating was damaged or worn out - uncomfortable flight	Apology - \$0 to \$50 Travel Bank Credit
Tourist Card: Ran out onboard and had to purchase own	Apology - \$25 to \$50 Travel Bank Credit
Lavatory on-board inoperable	Apology - \$25 to \$50 Travel Bank Credit