

The JetBlue Story: Customer Service in an Industry Americans Hate

Do Airlines Care About Customer Service?

Delayed flights. Lost luggage. Cutting-it-way-too-close layovers. Whether you're a seasoned traveller or a first-time flyer, taking flight is often stressful. But, that stress is amplified when your experience goes south and airline staff members aren't interested in making it any better. In the U.S., airlines aren't exactly known for their warm-and-fuzzy customer service. It's easy to feel abandoned or dismissed by an airline who places blame elsewhere instead of working with customers to actively solve problems. Unfortunately, for many customers, that's the reality of the service experience.

But wait! There is a silver lining in the dreary clouds of airline customer service after all. And it comes in the form of a JetBlue airplane with a friendly service team.

JetBlue was born with different in mind.

JetBlue founder and former CEO, David Neeleman, set out to create an airline that was truly different from the rest – one that revolved around customer service. He explained the idea that sparked the company's stellar service-based model:

"We asked ourselves, 'Could we become the best customer service airline out there?'" he said. "Then we thought, 'Wait a second. Airline customer service – that's like an oxymoron. They don't go together.'"

JetBlue Airways has nabbed a top spot in the J.D. Power Customer Satisfaction rankings for over a decade. And, in 2018, J.D. Power ranked JetBlue as the low-cost carrier with the best customer service experience. Plus, they were among the best when it comes to overall customer satisfaction, placing second in two categories. Their recent ranking score marked a nine-point year-over-year improvement.

JetBlue's story of customer service success is pretty remarkable, given that airlines rank right alongside cable and insurance companies as the most hated industries in the U.S.

Flying isn't cheap, it's stressful, and even with careful attention to detail, a lot can go wrong. Often times, flyers are on edge before they even step foot in the airport. That means JetBlue surely deals with their fair share of frustrated customers, mishaps, and complex issues, many of which are out of their control. (Hello, thunderbolt and lightning very, very frightening.) Despite all the challenges they face, JetBlue consistently earns praise about their service from the same consumers who are conditioned to hate them.

Want more customers to sing your praises? See how our true omni-channel platform improves CSAT rates and reduces wait times. Request a demo.

The magic lies in the little things.

Like Zappos, JetBlue empowers their service team to be responsive and creative when they help customers. They've eliminated strict protocols to inspire moments of incredible, heart-warming service.

Take the traveller who tweeted at JetBlue and casually mentioned he was bummed he wouldn't have time to grab Starbucks before catching his flight. The JetBlue social media team saw the tweet and sent a message to the airport customer service team. As the man took his seat on the plane, a JetBlue customer service rep handed him a Starbucks coffee. This was an incredible customer experience for the traveller, and it wouldn't have happened without a team of employees who are empowered to make snappy decisions that benefit customers. And for JetBlue, that tiny moment of joy for a customer meant public praise from the traveller on social media and weeks of positive publicity to follow.

As you can see from the assist by the social media team, all of JetBlue's employees who monitor support channels are encouraged to take individual situations into account rather than using policies to define every action.

In another save-the-day service scenario, a traveller ranted on Fodor's Travel Forum about a negative experience she had with Air Canada's customer support before switching to JetBlue. She was appalled at their refund policies and lack of empathy during a difficult time. She ended her post with a promise never to fly Air Canada again, and with praise for how JetBlue handled a similar issue.

Here's how JetBlue handled the situation.

She said, "When I called JetBlue to cancel my husband's flight and make a different reservation for me to get back home to care for him, JetBlue was considerate and applied the cost of his ticket (non-refundable) to my new reservation – that's the customer service I expect from a service provider."

Be kind, listen, and have fun.

Of course, situations come up where a Starbucks coffee or a waived flight fee won't do the trick. As an airline, flight schedules shift and things go wrong on a daily basis. But, JetBlue anticipates these difficult situations and trains their employees to be genuine and considerate from the first customer touchpoint.

They even shout out potential delays and important customer messages on social media.



They take a proactive approach to customer service with the goal to help customers before the frustration sets in. Agents are trained to take frustrated, angry

customers under their wing and deliver the best possible outcome. When agents handle interactions with a calm, personable tone, and when they listen and express genuine empathy, customers are less defensive.

Plus, JetBlue employees are renowned for being fun, sympathetic and caring. Travelers love interacting with them and rave about their experience with the crew on review sites.

Erika Anderson, a contributor to Forbes, wrote about an interaction with a JetBlue flight attendant. And, she marked it as the reason she looks for JetBlue flights, first.

“On a JetBlue flight tonight from New York to Burbank, I watched as the flight attendant was unfailingly kind and respectful to every passenger with whom she interacted during the six-hour flight. When she had to tell people to do something (for instance, getting me and the other passengers in the first row to put all our stuff up in the overheads), she did it with such an air of helpfulness (“I know this is a pain, but let’s work together to make it happen”) that no one minded at all. After we were underway, she handed me my computer bag and gave the woman next to me her purse, all without being asked and with a smile and a cheerful comment.

And this simple but critical difference goes right to the bottom line: because I’m nearly always treated well on JetBlue, I tell my assistant to look first for JetBlue flights whenever he’s making travel arrangements for me.”

Prioritize good customer service.

Perfect customer service doesn’t exist. But, JetBlue comes close. They excel at customer service because they make it a priority, even when competitors don’t. That customer-focus also gives employees a larger purpose and makes for a happier company internally.

In an industry that’s not so keen on putting customers before profits, JetBlue customer service agents, flight attendants and pilots are inspired to be spontaneous and personable. They feel empowered to make a difference every day. Even a small gesture like a cup of coffee is enough to make a customer’s day.

Regardless of your industry, your revenue, or your budget, every company can afford small, memorable moments that make customers happy.

JetBlue Becomes Only Airline With Free, High-Speed Wi-Fi at Every Seat

Fast and always-free Fly-Fi® keeps customers connected on the ground and in the air, from departure gate to arrival gate

Airline creates an experience like your living room in the sky with free movies, video on demand, Amazon Video streaming, chatting, DIRECTV®, all-you-can-eat snacks, the most legroom in coach (a)

“JetBlue, the airline that changed in-flight entertainment forever when it first put live television at every seat, today announced its latest onboard enhancement: always-free and speedy Wi-Fi connectivity on every aircraft from the departure gate to the arrival gate (b).”

A promotional graphic for JetBlue's Fly-Fi service. The background is a dark blue image of an airplane's interior, showing rows of seats with entertainment screens. The text is white and yellow. At the top, it says "MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. AT 35,000 FEET." Below that, a line of text states: "The only airline with free, high-speed Wi-Fi, DIRECTV® and movies at every seat, on every plane." There are two columns of bullet points. The left column lists: "Email, surf, stream, tweet & shop from the moment we push back from the gate until we reach the arrival gate.", "Free movies on all aircraft.", "36 channels of free DIRECTV® on personal seatback screens on all E190s & A320s.", and "100+ channels of free DIRECTV® & video on demand on large, state-of-the-art touchscreens on all A321s." The right column lists: "100+ channels of free SiriusXM Radio at every seat.", "Access The Hub—with or without Fly-Fi®—for even more TV shows, music videos, books & content.", and "Stream your favorite TV shows & movies from Amazon Video. Plus, shop Amazon.com in the air (or on the ground) & earn 3 TrueBlue points for every eligible dollar spent." At the bottom left, there is small legal text. At the bottom right, the JetBlue logo and "Fly-Fi" text are shown next to a Wi-Fi symbol.

**MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
AT 35,000 FEET.**

The only airline with free, high-speed Wi-Fi, DIRECTV® and movies at every seat, on every plane.

- Email, surf, stream, tweet & shop from the moment we push back from the gate until we reach the arrival gate.*
- Free movies on all aircraft.
- 36 channels of free DIRECTV® on personal seatback screens on all E190s & A320s.
- 100+ channels of free DIRECTV® & video on demand on large, state-of-the-art touchscreens on all A321s.
- 100+ channels of free SiriusXM Radio at every seat.**
- Access The Hub—with or without Fly-Fi®—for even more TV shows, music videos, books & content.
- Stream your favorite TV shows & movies from Amazon Video. Plus, shop Amazon.com in the air (or on the ground) & earn 3 TrueBlue points for every eligible dollar spent.***

©2014 JetBlue Airways Corporation. Fly-Fi is not available on flights operating outside of the continental U.S. For flights originating outside of the continental U.S., Fly-Fi will be available only for the first 90 minutes of the enroute time.
*The number of devices per passenger is not available on flights outside of the continental U.S.
**The order to earn TrueBlue points for shopping on Amazon, you need to sign into your TrueBlue account and use your Amazon link. Shop online or you can earn 3 TrueBlue points for every \$1 spent on Amazon on any eligible item. To see list of domestic flights from earning points, click here: <http://bit.ly/trueblueamazon>. Points will be posted at least 60 days after the date is shipped.

jetBlue
Fly-Fi

JetBlue's Fly-Fi®, which clocks in at broadband speeds beating sluggish and pricey Wi-Fi offerings onboard other carriers, keeps customers connected with an Internet experience similar to what they have at home, including the ability to stream video and use multiple devices at once. The service enables JetBlue to deliver Amazon Video streaming entertainment to customers onboard to their personal devices, as well as web surfing and chatting on favorite messaging apps.

First introduced in December 2013 on a single aircraft, JetBlue has expanded Fly-Fi, recently completing installation on its entire fleet of 227 Airbus A320s, A321s and Embraer 190s. During this time, Fly-Fi has become one of JetBlue's most popular features, joining other customer-favorites like free DIRECTV® at every seat, all-you-can-eat name-brand snacks, and the most legroom in coach.

“It’s 2017 and our customers expect to be connected everywhere, whether that be from the comfort of their sofa or 35,000 feet above it.” said Jamie Perry, vice president of marketing, JetBlue. “That’s why we’re so proud that JetBlue is now the only airline to offer free, high-speed Wi-Fi, live TV and movies for all customers on every plane.”

Another First: Gate-to-Gate Connectivity

JetBlue continues to set its experience ahead of other airlines by becoming the first in the U.S. to offer gate-to-gate internet connectivity on every aircraft. Gate-to-gate Fly-Fi eliminates the need to wait until reaching cruising altitude to get connected. Instead,

customers can email, surf, stream, tweet and shop from the moment they board until they reach the arrival gate.

Endless In-Flight Entertainment on JetBlue

With access to fresh and free content in and out of Fly-Fi coverage areas, JetBlue's entertainment portal "The Hub" offers customers the ability to read, watch, buy and learn while onboard. The newest content partner in The Hub is Vox's premiere technology and culture platform, The Verge, which reaches people curious about the future.

Customers can also use Fly-Fi's high-speed connection for true Internet streaming of Amazon Video on their personal devices or shop on Amazon.com to earn three TrueBlue points for every dollar spent on every purchase.

Fly-Fi builds on JetBlue's existing in-flight offerings offered on seatback televisions and personal devices:

- 36 channels of free DIRECTV on E190 and A320 aircraft and 100-plus channels on A321 aircraft
- 100-plus channels of free SiriusXM fleet-wide
- Free Hollywood blockbusters on seatback televisions
- Newly added audio/visual on-demand (AVOD) on A321 touchscreens at every seat, allowing customers to choose and control playback of nearly 30 curated movie selections including the latest Hollywood blockbusters and JetBlue crewmember picks
- Curated video from Amazon, PureWow, and more on the JetBlue TV channel

Earn TrueBlue Loyalty Points for Shopping on Amazon

Amazon and JetBlue travelers can now earn more from the partnership that already allows customers to stream entertainment in the air. The generous shop-and-earn program for JetBlue's TrueBlue loyalty members offers three TrueBlue points per every eligible dollar spent to those who shop on Amazon.com — in the air or on the ground when using the unique JetBlue link at www.jetblue.com/amazon (c).

About JetBlue

JetBlue is New York's Hometown Airline® and a leading carrier in Boston, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood, Los Angeles (Long Beach), Orlando and San Juan. JetBlue carries more than 35 million customers a year to 100 cities in the U.S., Caribbean and Latin America with an average of 925 daily flights. For more information, please visit jetblue.com.

(a) JetBlue offers the most legroom in coach, based on average fleet-wide seat pitch for U.S. airlines. JetBlue also offers. "Seat technology has advanced," he said,

claiming that the new versions—they're covered in "e-leather," which is made from actual leather scraps but lighter than the real thing—are "safer, lighter, and more comfortable.

(b) Fly-Fi is not available on flights operating outside of the continental U.S. For flights originating outside of the continental U.S., Fly-Fi will be available once the aircraft returns to the coverage area.

(c) In order to earn TrueBlue points for shopping on Amazon, you need to sign into your TrueBlue account and use your unique link. Once signed in, you can earn 3 TrueBlue points for every \$1 spent on Amazon on any eligible item. To see list of items excluded from earning points, click here: [<https://trueblue.jetblue.com/web/trueblue/amazon>]. Points will be posted at least 60 days after the item is shipped.

(d) JetBlue is ramping up *the inflight connectivity and entertainment features* to the point where you might not even care about the comfort of the seat you're strapped into. And while the airline already has free high-speed Wi-Fi throughout the flight on much of its fleet, a lot will be different, such as new 10-inch, high-definition touch screens (up from the 6.5-inch screens today); in-flight streaming entertainment built on the Google Android platform, which lets you connect your personal device to the seatback screen, and more TV than any couch potato could manage—think 100 DirecTV channels, up from the current 36. Fliers can also begin streaming and downloading content even before the flight departs, from JetBlue's content portal, The Hub, with access to Amazon video, The Wall Street Journal, and other sources. Each seat will have a power port outlet.

Source of information:

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