

## **Case Study: Frontier Airlines - Operational and Customer Service Improvement for Profitability**

### **Background**

Frontier Airlines, a leading low-cost carrier, is facing challenges related to declining quality due to flight delays and customer service issues. To address these issues and improve profitability, the airline is conducting interviews to find a qualified candidate with expertise in operational efficiency and customer service enhancement. The following is a simulated interview session between an interviewer and a potential candidate.

### **Interviewer**

How familiar are you with the challenges currently faced by low-cost carriers in the aviation industry, particularly concerning delays and customer service issues?

### **Candidate:**

I understand that Frontier Airlines is currently grappling with challenges related to flight delays and customer service quality. These challenges can significantly impact both customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. In researching Frontier Airlines, I appreciate the company's commitment to affordability. I believe that aligning my values with the company's goals is essential in finding solutions that enhance customer experience without compromising cost-effectiveness.

### **Interviewer :**

From your perspective, what are common reasons behind flight delays in the airline industry, and how can these issues be addressed or mitigated? How would you approach streamlining operational processes to minimize delays and improve overall efficiency?

### **Candidate:**

- Operational Success Stories: In a previous role as Operations Manager at XYZ Airlines, I successfully implemented a real-time monitoring system for aircraft maintenance, reducing unscheduled maintenance and subsequently minimizing delays. This led to improved operational efficiency.

- Technology Integration: I firmly believe in leveraging technology to enhance operational processes. Implementing advanced scheduling software and predictive maintenance systems can significantly contribute to reducing delays.

### **Interviewer :**

What, in your view, are the key pain points for customers when it comes to airline services, and how would you address these concerns at Frontier Airlines? Can you propose innovative strategies to enhance the overall customer service experience, considering both pre-flight and in-flight services?

### **Candidate:**

- Customer Service Philosophy: My customer service philosophy revolves around transparency, communication, and personalized service. Creating a culture where employees are empowered to address customer concerns promptly can greatly enhance the overall experience.

- Handling Customer Complaints: When handling customer complaints, focus on swift resolution and proactive communication. Turning a negative experience into a positive one often involves empathetic listening and offering meaningful solutions.

**Interviewer:** How would you go about benchmarking Frontier Airlines against its competitors regarding operational efficiency and customer service quality? What strategies would you suggest for Frontier Airlines to differentiate itself in the market by offering superior customer experience and reliable services?

**Candidate:**

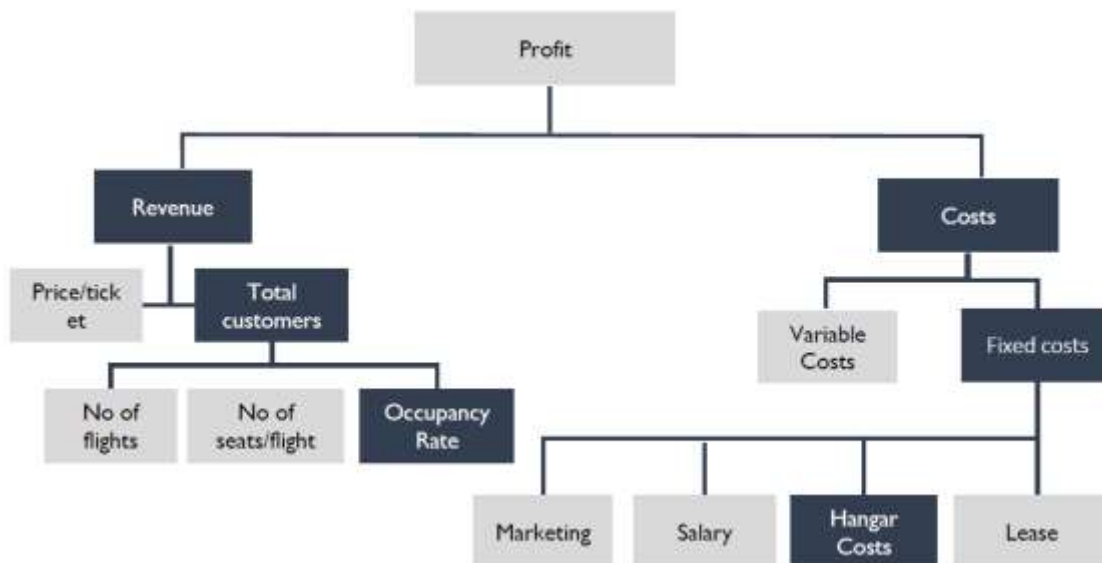
- Innovative Solutions: I introduced a mobile app at a previous airline that allowed passengers to receive real-time updates on flight status, gate changes, and baggage information. Such innovations not only improve customer satisfaction but also contribute to operational efficiency.

- Adaptability: Staying informed about industry trends and regulations is crucial. Implementing a continuous improvement process and regularly updating operational strategies ensures adaptability to the dynamic aviation landscape.

- Profitability Planning: A comprehensive long-term strategy for Frontier Airlines would involve a multi-faceted approach. This includes investing in employee training programs, implementing advanced technology solutions, and collaborating with airports to optimize ground operations.

- Measuring Success: Key performance indicators (KPIs) such as on-time performance, customer satisfaction scores, and operational costs would be regularly assessed. Frequent reviews would allow for adjustments to the strategy based on real-time data.

**Approach Framework:**



**Interviewer:**

Can you provide an overview of your experience in the aviation industry and any specific instances where you've dealt with operational challenges or improvements in customer service?

**Candidate:**

I have a background in aviation operations with a focus on optimizing customer experiences. In my previous role at XYZ Airlines, I led a project to streamline boarding processes, resulting in a 15% reduction in boarding times and improved customer satisfaction.

**Interviewer:**

Given the challenges Frontier Airlines is facing with delays and customer service, can you share your initial thoughts on what might be contributing to these issues?

**Candidate:**

Based on industry trends, potential factors could include inefficient turnaround times at airports, inadequate communication during delays, or perhaps issues with the scheduling system. Additionally, examining customer feedback and analyzing operational data could uncover specific pain points.

**Interviewer:**

How do you approach cultivating a culture of accountability and responsibility among airline staff to minimize errors and delays?

**Candidate:**

Creating a culture of accountability involves clear communication of expectations, regular training programs, and fostering an environment where employees feel empowered to report issues without fear of reprisal. Implementing real-time communication channels can also enhance coordination between ground staff and flight crews.

**Interviewer:**

In the context of Frontier Airlines, how would you leverage technology and data analytics to personalize services for passengers and enhance their overall experience?

**Candidate:**

Utilizing customer data, we can tailor services such as seat preferences, in-flight entertainment, and even personalized offers based on travel history. Implementing a customer feedback loop is crucial for continuous improvement and to address specific pain points reported by passengers.

**Interviewer:**

How would you systematically analyze customer feedback to identify areas of improvement and ensure Frontier Airlines not only meets but exceeds customer expectations?

**Candidate:**

A comprehensive approach involves categorizing feedback, identifying recurring themes, and prioritizing improvements based on impact and feasibility. Implementing post-travel surveys, social media monitoring, and analyzing online reviews can provide valuable insights into customer sentiment.

**Interviewer:**

How would you propose a long-term strategy for Frontier Airlines to address delays and improve customer service, considering the dynamic nature of the aviation industry?

**Candidate:**

A sustainable strategy would involve a phased approach, addressing immediate operational bottlenecks, investing in technology for real-time monitoring, and continuously adapting based on industry changes. Additionally, fostering a customer-centric culture and staying agile in response to feedback would be essential for long-term success.

**Recommendation:**

- Should start its own shuttle service
- Should collaborate with cab aggregators by providing added incentives and ensure taxis stay outside the airport
- Can bundle two services together –Air ticket price and transportation price and ensure passengers are picked up /dropped from respective locations

The candidate skipped to the cost side without deep diving into the revenue side problem. In this case, as there was a linkage between the two, it was easy to come back to the revenue side again, otherwise it could have been a problem. After diagnosis of the problem, the candidate should have explored the client's strategy of owning airports and its viability in the long run. This could have earned brownie points.

**Observation/Suggestions:**

- The candidate did a good job in figuring out the fundamentals in why the revenue has gone down. Also after the cost analysis, the candidate was able to further elaborate on the reasons why the revenue has gone down
- Need to understand the customer journey to figure out the reason behind lower occupancy rates
- Do not directly suggest to undo an action the client has taken, unless there is sufficient evidence to suggest the same

**What was done well :**

The candidate tried to start with an exhaustive list of revenue streams-tickets, cargo and hospitality. Usually, in such cases, candidates straight away start with revenue from tickets. To understand the reason behind the low occupancy rate, the candidate successfully understood the customer journey. Further, reaching the airport was seen from both the time and cost perspective. In each step, the candidate tried comparing the conditions with those of competitors. This helped in diagnosing the problem effectively.

**Conclusion :**

This case study scenario provides a simulated conversation between an interviewer and a candidate, exploring critical issues faced by Frontier Airlines and the candidate's potential solutions to enhance operational efficiency and customer service. The airline industry is highly competitive, and customer satisfaction is closely tied to operational efficiency. By addressing delays, improving customer service, and embracing technological advancements, Frontier Airlines can enhance its overall performance and remain competitive in the dynamic aviation landscape. Continuous monitoring of customer feedback and proactive measures to improve operational processes will be crucial for sustaining long-term success and profitability.