

Importance of Trust, Transparency to Airline Satisfaction Grows as Industry Confronts Pandemic Fears, J.D. Power Finds

Southwest Airlines Ranks Highest in Passenger Satisfaction for Long-Haul and Short-Haul Flights

TROY, Mich.: 27 May 2020 — North American airlines were headed into 2020 with some of the highest customer satisfaction scores ever recorded, thanks to heavy investment in newer aircraft, better in-flight services and improved customer service. Then COVID-19 hit. According to the J.D. Power 2020 North America Airline Satisfaction Study,SM released today, many of the core values that drove standout passenger experiences in the pre-pandemic environment will be even more important as the industry plots its recovery. Specifically, the industry will need to focus on restoring confidence, while continuing to improve on the operational side.

“Airline success in the post-COVID-19 era will hinge on a combination of building consumer confidence and operational flexibility with changing schedules and routes,” said **Michael Taylor, travel intelligence lead at J.D. Power**. “Airlines have a tremendous reputation for safety. That will be even more critical as passengers look to airlines for detailed and specific information about what’s being done to keep them safe.”

Following are some of the key findings of the 2020 study:

- **Value is a key differentiator for highest-performing airlines:** In the midst of the pandemic, many airlines have waived change and cancellation fees. These fees have a notable effect on customer perception of ticket value. When it comes to customer perception of value for money, the highest-performing airline rates 6.33 (on a 7-point scale) vs. an industry average of 5.68.
- **Passengers seek transparency/details on how airlines will protect them:** Based on additional J.D. Power research conducted April 17-19, leisure travelers list the following as the two most important actions that airlines and hotels can take to make them feel safer: informing travelers of specific cleaning/sanitization actions they are taking (38%) and provide daily updates on the state of the pandemic in the area they will be visiting (37%).
- **Improving staff scores will play an important role in recovery:** Passenger satisfaction scores related to courtesy/friendliness of crew and staff knowledge have been improving consistently during the past five years. As airline staff will play a key role in delivering passenger safety information and reassuring passengers of the steps the airline is taking to reduce exposure to COVID-19, airlines must strive to further improve these scores.
- **Getting basics right still matters:** While the travel industry is fixated on COVID-19-related issues, it remains important to get the basic operational details right. Currently, the most common reasons passengers cite for selecting an airline are that it offers a direct flight (55%); the passenger had a good past experience with that airline (47%); and the passenger is a rewards program member (42%). The most commonly cited reason given for not selecting a preferred airline is price (40%).

Study Rankings

For long-haul flights, **Southwest Airlines** ranks highest in customer satisfaction, with a score of 826 (on a 1,000-point scale). **JetBlue Airways** (823) ranks second and **Delta Air Lines** (810) ranks third.

For short-haul flights, Southwest Airlines rank highest in customer satisfaction, with a score of 839. JetBlue Airways (833) ranks second and **Alaska Airlines** (828) ranks third.

The North America Airline Satisfaction Study, now in its 16th year, measures passenger satisfaction with airline carriers in North America based on performance in eight factors (in alphabetical order): aircraft; baggage; boarding; check-in; cost and fees; flight crew; in-flight services; and reservation. The study measures passenger satisfaction among both business and leisure travelers and is based on responses from 10,100 passengers across two segments: long-haul flights and short-haul flights. Passengers needed to have flown on a major North American airline within the past month. The study was fielded from April 2019 through March 2020.

For more information about the North America Airline Satisfaction Study, visit <https://www.jdpower.com/business/resource/jd-power-north-america-airline-satisfaction-study>.

Join the conversation on social media using **#AirlineStudy** and follow J.D. Power on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

To view the online press release, please visit <http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2020051>.

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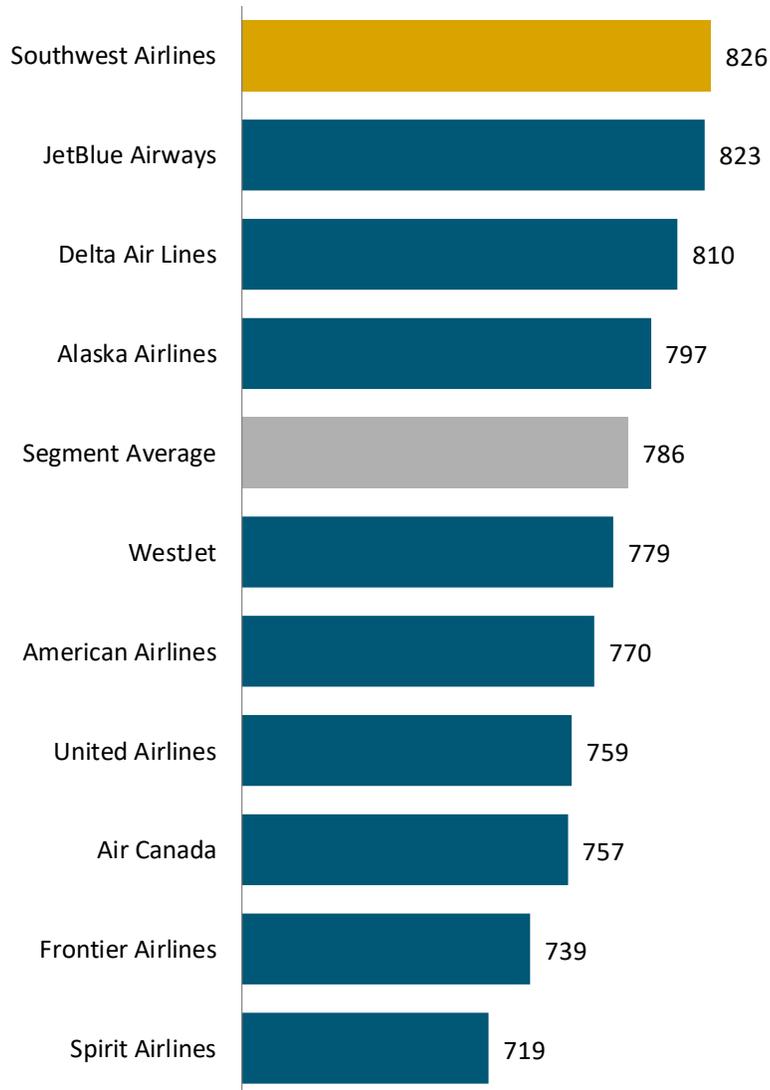
NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power 2020 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

Long-haul



Source: J.D. Power 2020 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

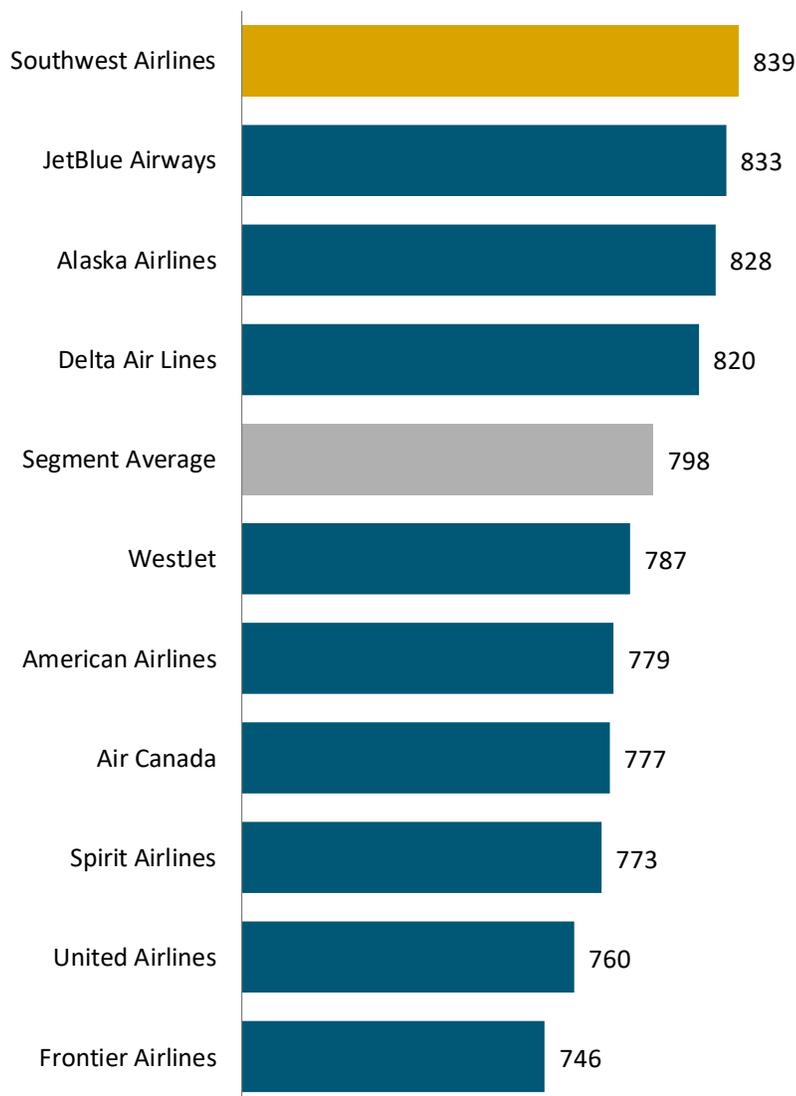
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J.D. Power 2020 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

Short-haul



Source: J.D. Power 2020 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

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