SOUTHWEST AIRLINES
NUTS ABOUT COMMUNICATION
Online
Where We’ve Been

April 06: The “Nuts About Southwest” Blog is launched, picking up where Airline left off.

February 07: A media buy is used to launch a Facebook page to host a basketball bracket game.

May 08: The Nuts About Southwest Blog get a makeover!

May 07: A Social Media integration team is created between Communications and Marketing.

Summer 07: Southwest begins a YouTube channel. And joins Twitter!

Aug 08: The Emerging Media Team is developed within Communications and includes 4 full-time Social Media employees.

July 09: The Social Media crisis response is tested when Flight 2294 makes an Emergency Landing.

Sept 09: The Emerging Media Team is converged with the PR and Employee Communication team

Oct. 09: Southwest Airlines streams a press conference announcing ECP service.

March 10: The Employee Blog launches.

May 08: The Nuts About Southwest Blog get a makeover!

Jan 11: Social Media Policy and Handbook are created.

June 11: Employee App created.

Oct. 09: Southwest Airlines streams a press conference announcing ECP service.

Jan 10: The Social Media Council and The Rapid Response teams are created.

May. 11: Social Media Customer Relations Specialists are hired to help manage online CR issues.
Southwest Airlines
Social Media Strategy:

Our Philosophy
- To provide Southwest Airlines Employees and Customers a voice.
- To provide outstanding Customer Service.
- To protect the livelihood of the Southwest brand across all media platforms.

Our Goals:
- Maintain the Southwest Airlines FUN-LUVing personality across all channels.
- Create outstanding multimedia content and distribute to everyone.
- Raise awareness of new products and services.
- Provide critical info to Customers and Employees crisis or emergencies.
Our Job Responsibilities

Primary:
LISTEN

Secondary:
ENGAGE & SHARE VIA ORGANIC CONVERSATIONS
Where We Are Now

Social Media is thriving at Southwest Airlines! We continue to stay ahead of our competitors while still maintaining our unique sense of simplicity.

Some of the sites we are actively participating in:
The Official Southwest Fan Page has more than **1.6 million** Facebook fans, more than any other airline!
Station Fan Pages:

- Allow interaction with the community.
- Permit conversation is in a controlled environment.
- Empower Employees to have a voice.
- Offer us power in numbers!

But…with guidelines!
We currently have about 30 stations using a Facebook Fan Page
DOT Figures

Fun & Personal Tone
Where does Social Media Belong?

• It is a media pitching tool
• News updates
• Customer service issues
• Policy changes
• Company messaging

= it is a Communications function with help from all over the company!
How Can We Stay Ahead?

To reshape our consumer-to-brand relationship, we should establish a new governance entity capable of:

- Identifying and executing strategic opportunities.
- Develop company-wide relationship building capability.
- Scale the success without interrupting the well-earned equity and momentum.

Customers do not care about departments, silos or turf. They want answers and solutions. We must organize ourselves behind the scenes to provide these two things wherever our customers are. In turn, we will win, we will build reputation, and will create brand advocates.

Responsibility:
- The channel “voices”
- Blog/community management
- Corporate Social Media strategy
- Employee Mobile Communication
- Crisis Comm/Rapid Response
- Business consulting
- Employee policy creation
- Conversation monitoring
- New platform tests

Responsibility:
- “Look and Feel” of channels
- Fan/Follower Acquisition
- Brand positioning and creative platform extensions
- Social experience definition
- Vendor recommendations
- Strategic partnership opportunities
- Paid media within the social space
- Revenue generating social initiatives

Responsibility:
- AOM messaging on social channels
- Rapid Response Team communication
- Customer Relations “voice” within social media channels
- Contact Resolution/TLC
- Business consulting
Every Employee Matters and Every Interaction Matters

- Our Employees are **ALWAYS ON**
- People are watching and with these new social media tools have the ability to immediately share their experiences online – whether Southwest is formally in the space or not

Singing Flight Attendant  Rapping Flight Attendant  Passenger Removal from SW Flight 1552
The Old Guidelines

• Very basic
• Left too much room for interpretation
• Employees wanted more freedom to communicate online
The New Guidelines

• Worked with legal and Employee resources teams.
• Benchmarked with leaders at other large companies.
• Process of reviews, revisions, and launch took six months.
1. FOLLOW SOUTHWEST STANDARDS (THE GOLDEN RULE)
Employees are responsible for the comments they make on the internet. Do not post materials that may reflect negatively on Southwest or its Leaders, Employees, or Customers. Any conduct that would be in violation of Company rules may be grounds for discipline or dismissal.

2. EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION
If Employees talk online about the Company or its services, it should be made clear they are Southwest Employees. Employees are to identify that they aren’t speaking on behalf of Southwest Airlines. Profiles should include a disclaimer similar to “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of Southwest Airlines’ Officers, Directors, or Employees.” Remember, that only officially-designated Employees are authorized to speak on behalf of the Company.
3. BE AN AMBASSADOR
Employees should strive to represent Southwest Airlines in the best way at all times. Though Employees may not be speaking on behalf of the Company, they are still representatives of Southwest Airlines.

4. SHHH - IT’S A SECRET!
Keep confidential information confidential. If secret information winds up in the wrong hands, Southwest’s Culture, reputation and livelihood are at risk. Company-related internet communication should only discuss publicly-known information. If Employees aren’t sure whether information is public, don’t make it public.
5. RESPECT THE PRIVACY OF OTHERS
The lines between public and private are not as defined in the internet space. Be careful when posting content that involves details of co-workers’ personal lives. Assume that everything Employees post online will stay there forever, for anyone to see.

6. COMPANY TRADEMARKS AND LOGOS
Southwest’s logos, trademarks, and copyrighted materials may not be used in any manner without the express written permission of the Southwest Airlines Licensing Department in Marketing.

7. FOLLOW THE RULES
Do not engage in illegal or unlawful activities. Even posting comments, pictures, videos or other information about participation in illegal activities is against the rules. Do not post or share copyrighted materials unless a license has been granted for the use of those materials.
Communicating the Policy

• Messages posted to our internal blog, SWALife
• Available for partial download on www.blogsouthwest.com/download
• Sent to our Senior Management Committee to share with teams
• Employees required to confirm they’ve read the policy
Key Learnings:

- Clearly outline your strategy and goals. Share with Employees.
- Understand your priorities.
- Force your teams to think outside of the Org Chart.
- Equip your Employees to understand and embrace Social Media.
Questions?

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