



Fly the Friendly Skies

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# ABOUT UNITED



## 1920's

Walter T. Varney starts Varney Air Lines in 1926 and Varney Speed Lines in 1934, airlines that would eventually become United and Continental Airlines.



## 1930s

Became the first airline to introduce female flight attendants, creating a new profession for women.

1936, United became the first airline to serve hot food mid-flight.

1937, "Flying Laboratory" allowed researchers to develop and improve technologies in the airplane environment and became the first airline to use computers to create flight plans.



## 1940's

During WWII woman worked in many areas in the aviation industry.



## 1950's

United introduced the male flight attendant with flights between Hawaii and the USA mainland.

1957, United used the first in-flight magazine called "Mainliner" and became the first airline to give airborne radar to the entire fleet.



## 1960's

Continental introduced live television to the airline industry. In the 707's in-flight lounge passengers could watch live TV while flying over major metropolitan areas.

1963, United lost a lengthy legal battle with Pilot Marlon DeWitt Green and was ordered to hire the first African American Pilot.



## 1970's

The to be president Jimmy Carter flew United doing his campaign tour.



## 1980's

Became the first airline to fly to all 50 states in the USA.



## 1990's

United founded the star alliance with Lufthansa, Air Canada, SAS and Thai International.



## 2010's

United introduced Polaris which is a pre-flight lounge experience, spacious on-board seating with thoughtful storage, amenities from exclusive partners, world-class dining, heightened comfort and privacy for restful sleep, and much more.

# MISSION, VISION & VALUES

## UNITING THE WORLD

**“Every day, we help unite the world by connecting people to the moments that matter most. This shared purpose drives us to be the best airline for our employees, customers and everyone we serve.”**

## WE FLY

### Right

On the ground and in the air, we hold ourselves to the highest standards in safety and reliability. We earn trust by doing things the right way and delivering on our commitments every day.

### Friendly

Warm and welcoming is who we are.

### Together

As a united United, we respect every voice, communicate openly and honestly, make decisions with facts and empathy, and celebrate our journey together.

### Above & Beyond

With an ambition to win, a commitment to excellence, and a passion for staying a step ahead, we are unmatched in our drive to be the best.

## VISION

United has committed themselves to have a global responsibility among all walks of life. They strive to pursue an active role by implementing programs and services to help protect the environment, show pride in our communities, celebrate diversity, and protect human rights and to become the leading airline to provide clean, safe, and reliable products.

United has been in the news a lot this past year for both good and bad reasons. The most obvious reason was from 2017 when a passenger was recorded being dragged off of their plane and went viral. After the incident United's stock market dropped 4% and lowered its value a billion dollars by noon. This incident created a permanent public perception of the brand. People are making jokes and participating in debates. The public now connects United with aggression, even after a year from the incident. On top of that, United had another large PR problem. A dog was killed on one of their flights recently when a flight attendant asked a family to place their dog in the overhead compartment. Upon landing, the family found their dog had died from suffocation. This news also received some backlash from the public when the story went viral.

Another large concern that has appeared in the news is family travel. United has now stated that if families are wanting to sit together on their flights they will have to pay extra. When President Scott Kirby was asked why this is his response was, "Look, when you go to a concert, do you think you should pay the same price to sit in the nosebleed seats or to sit up front?" In other words he is saying that United views giving families the ability to sit together as a premium experience, and if people want premium they should have to pay for it. It seems that United's goal is to push basic needs such as families sitting together or comfortable and reasonable legroom to the point of inconvenience. Then a price tag is placed onto the needs and wants of the very people who keep their company running.

Recently American Airlines has followed suit with its competitors and allowing some baggage to be free of charge. They decided that for anyone who travels with American the first bag will be free and after that the bags will have a charge.

But when United was asked if they would soon follow in the steps of it's competitors the response was no. They seem to be comfortable with where they are at.

As for good news, United's stock price has risen to record numbers. When looking into the reason for sudden stock price change I have found that United has started routes to smaller cities. Before, United was mainly keeping its ties with larger cities where corporations would frequently fly to do business. But by doing this they limited the number of places people could choose to fly with United. By reaching small cities United is now able to give people more choices between airlines and increases the chances that people may choose them. They are also the first airline to convert to the use of eco-friendly fuel. This shows that the airline is willing to use a more costly fuel source in order to reduce their carbon footprint.



## BRAND RECOGNITION

United has great brand recognition. All their marketing materials, voice and tone, touch-points follow the same standard which makes for great coherency. The way they market themselves as a brand is the same across all platforms. However, after the 2017 incident of dragging a passenger off of their planes their public perception has permanently changed. TV shows started to create jokes around how United treats their customers. After a year the public still makes the connection of violence with United's brand. So now the company is perceived as a company that doesn't care.

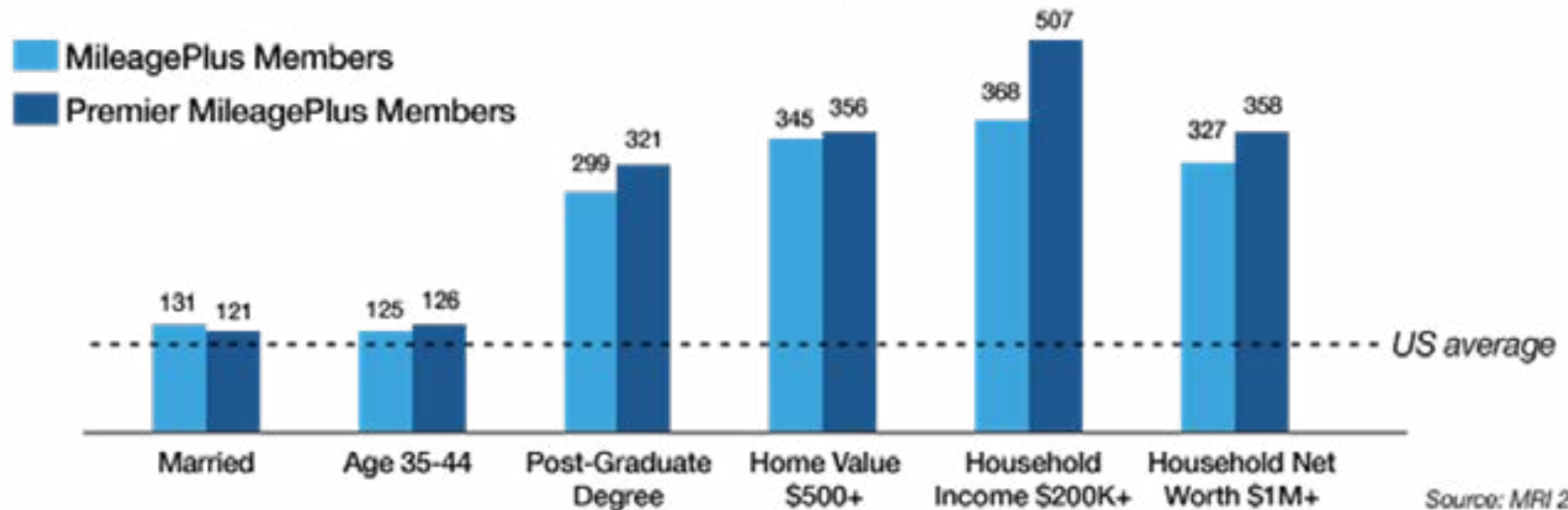
## SURVEY RESULTS

After running a survey with a total of 34 respondents it has been concluded that the number one deciding factor in choosing an airline is based off the ticket prices. I asked what their main reason for air travel was and 75% said vacation while 12% said they flew for work. The remaining 4% was split between family emergencies and special occasions. When asked what is the number one thing they believe airlines should work on 11 mentioned prices and baggage fees, 9 mentioned space and comfortability, 5 mentioning timeliness of planes, and with miscellaneous responses of cleanliness, pet travel, alcohol choices, in-flight entertainment, and safety. Out of the 34 respondents 41% said they flew once ever six months, 26% said they either fly once a year or once every two years, only 2% said they flew once a month and never flown at all.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

The chart shown below is the exact demographic graphic posted directed to United Airlines Website. This displays who United is valuing as their customers and as their target audience. The interesting thing is this demographic only comes from holders of United's MileagePlus cards not data of everyone who flies with United. This graphic shows that they view themselves as being above average with their customers being of a mature adult age range, married, educated, with lots of wealth with both passengers and corporations that choose to fly United.

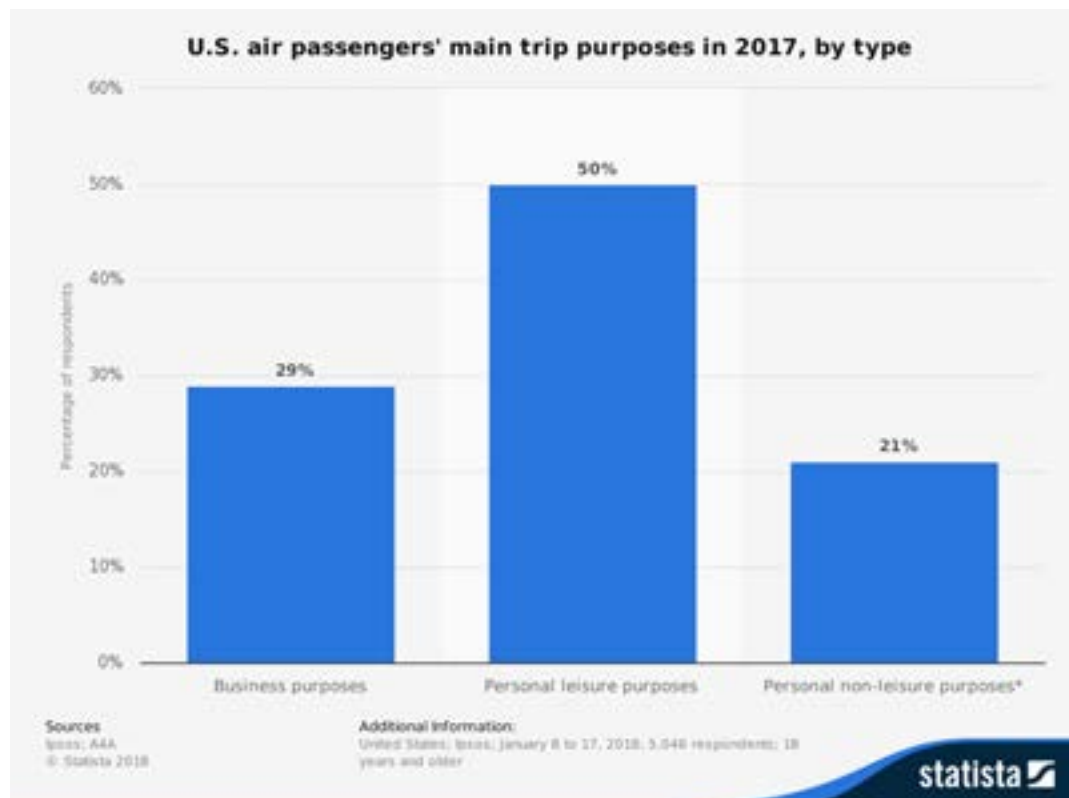
## United MileagePlus Member Demographics Index vs. US Population





# DEMOGRAPHICS

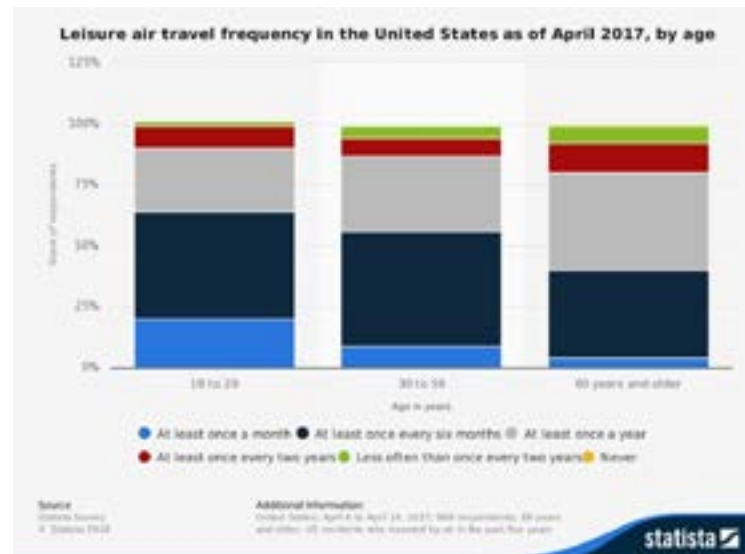
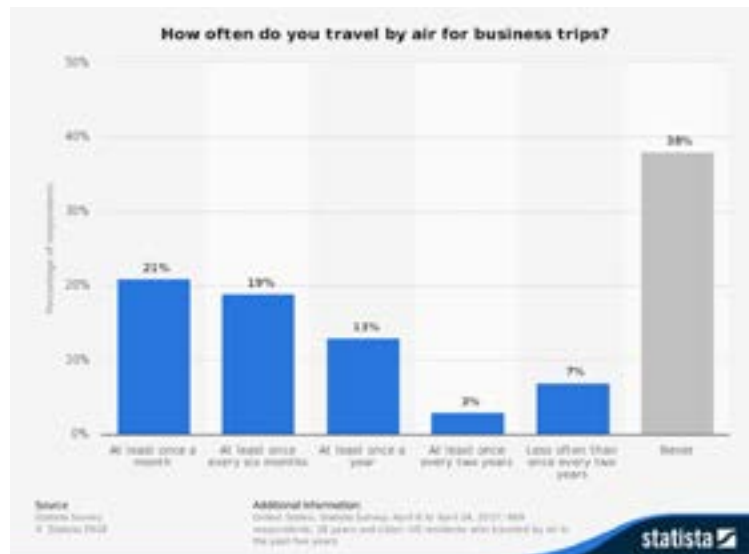
Taking the information from the last charge this demographic chart going into depth about the age ranges of people who fly in general and as to what the reason is for flight. With United deciding to target those who flight for business this graph show that out of 5,046 respondents ages 18 and older only 29% of them said they flew for business while 50% of them stating they flew for leisure time. This left the remaining 21% stating they flew for non-leisure purposes. This graphic is a demonstration on how small the demographic that United is actually targeting. With making they marketing and operation choices United starts to alienate the majority of fliers.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

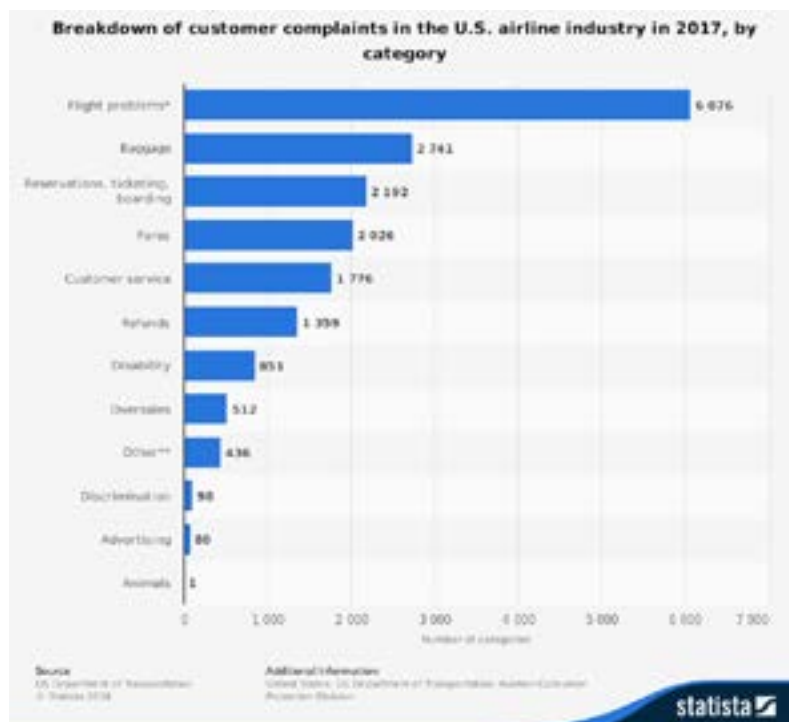
The two graphs below break down the information of fliers ever further. The first graph breaks down how often business fliers actually fly from a total of 969 respondents. To no surprise the majority at 38% said never, 21% said at least once a month, 19% once every six months, 13% once a year, 7% less than once every two years, and 3% stating at least once every two years. This brings to light that the targeted demographic United picked don't actually fly that often opposed to those who never fly for business at all.

Our second graph goes into depth about leisure time fliers by age and how often they travel. The age group of 30 to 59 shows that 47% flies once every six months with the 18 to 29 year olds at a close 44%. However the 18 to 29 age range has shown 20% of them fly once a month, making them the age range that flies more frequently and the 60 years olds or older fly the least with the majority stating they only fly once a year. This graph helps United re-target their audience to the demographics that actually fly the most and more often.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

The graph on this page doesn't go into depth about the types of fliers but about the top customer complaints fliers have about airlines. The largest being flight problems with a large gap between the other complaints. This should be a key sign to which experience they fliers enjoy the least and if United airlines is able to address this issue and make the flight problems reduced to below their competitors it could give them an edge. Flight problems unfortunately aren't 100% preventable but should be prevented as much as possible. That's why United should also focus on baggage complaints, fares, and reservations, ticketing, and boarding. If these three complaints are reduced to the likings of their costumers it will gain a significant increase in brand loyal costumers.







With their new advertising you can see that United is marketing the experiences that United connects people to. Instead of focusing on the in-flight experience they are showing the adventures that can be had. The people displayed in their ads (men) are wearing business clothes which is a visual hint to the type of person they would like to see flying with United. They also show the exclusive comfortability offered to the wealthy. They also address the needs that customers want but at an extra cost via Economy Plus.

# LANGUAGE **AUDIT**

## **VOICE & TONE**

United targets the well-off and wealthy corporations. Because of this United leans towards using tones that have a sense of education and class. When they word their news letters United makes sure to sound as professional as possible. I believe this is because they want to appeal to those individuals. If they sounded more down to earth and carefree they might not attract the people they hope to. United is fully aware that the wealthy are most likely people who have furthered their education, value the quality of things, believe that money isn't a problem, and like the sense of luxury. That is why United emphasizes their Polaris lounges available in airports and market their first class experiences as much as possible.

## **NAMING & TAG-LINES**

Fly The Friendly Skies tag-line was created after the infamous 2017 incident of viral video showed United Airlines dragging a passenger off of one of their planes because of over booking. This was to try and disconnect the notion of violence from their identity and to connect friendliness instead. However, it was not as successful as they had hoped.

## ATTRIBUTES

Environmentally aware, luxury, innovative, prideful, international, travel, business, data driven, sophistication, largest air travel service, educated, wealthy, modern, approachable, direct, efficient, professional, adventurous, and thoughtful.

United views themselves are well rounded individuals who are smart, educated, likable, popular, charming, They believe their company fits into the world of the wealth and riches. The corporations first choice for air travel. United wants to be the company that is seen as luxury airline fit for the wealthy.

## DESCRIPTORS

Data driven, all about the money, international and cargo airline, costumers come last, dull, boring, pricey, bully of the sky, aggressive, rude, disorganized, inconsiderate, little legroom, and responsive

The public however views United differently. For a company that wants to be seen as luxurious they colors they use are rather bland and boring. They aren't seen as kindhearted people for lots of encounters with staff is being perceived as rude, judgmental, and inconsiderate. Due to the stain left behind from the infamous dragging of a passenger people now make the connection of violence and aggression with United's brand.

# UNITED PERSONA

## RICHARD KNOX

Richard has attended Oxford university and graduated with a Masters in International Business. Landing a job and a large manufacturing company Richard devoted his entire life too his career. He worked his way up the chain of command and has become the CEO at the age of 57. Because his job requires large about of travel Richard never found himself settling down and getting married. The single life allows Richard to travel without feeling guilty about being away from home frequently and days at a time. Having to fly so often Richard prefers to fly in comfort and luxury, so he chooses to fly business or first class for the comfortable seating, spacious leg room, and doesn't mind spending extra cash for upgraded amenities. Richard flies united because in business/first class he feels like the pampered treatment and relaxing atmosphere.







## CYNTHIA JONES

Cynthia attended Southern Carolina University, graduating with a Bachelors in communications. After graduation she got married to her girlfriend of 5 years. 2 years after marriage Cynthia and her wife adopted a baby girl. Both her and her wife work for small yet successful business. However, much like the majority of the United States Cynthia doesn't find herself traveling for business often. In fact, she usually travels for vacation purposes. Her family chooses United airlines because the staff is always more than willing to help, super friendly and approachable, and go above and beyond to suit the needs of ever passenger. She loves the idea of picking their own seat that insures her family can sit together on the flight in basic economy for no extra fee. Sure United is a little more expensive compared to the lower ticketed competitors, but the slightly more expensive ticket allows her family to fly comfortably with reasonable leg room, in-flight entertainment to occupy her daughter, comfortable seating, and a great selection of food in basic economy! United makes her feel like she is flying business class without breaking the bank. It's affordable luxury and she love it!

# COMPETITIVE AUDIT

## UNITED AIRLINES

UNITED



UNITED  
EXPRESS



Tag-line: Fly the Friendly Skies

Architecture: United Express is a cargo line United Airlines owes.

Messaging: United Airlines is the friendliest airline to fly in the sky. They are trying to say that if you want a friendly experience on an airline United is the best choice.

Typography: Open Sans, Helvetica, Helvetica Neue, Arial, sans-serif

C: 86 M: 52: 0 K: 0  
Hex: #1572ba



C: 100 M: 86 Y: 43 K: 48  
Hex: #0b2343



C: 8 M: 28 Y: 96 K: 0  
Hex: #ecb72d



C: 100 M: 90 Y: 10 K: 0  
Hex: #25408f



### Strengths:

Luxury experience (Polaris), Innovative history (experience), offers military discount, large fleet, stock price has risen and expected to grow, travel demands, strong alliance with the Star Alliance (founder), 4 star On Time Arrival Rating (80.7%)

### Weaknesses:

Prices (higher end), brand identity, voice (employees), less comfortable, poor customer support/service, high baggage fees, low economy seating space, poor public perception, 30-32-inch legroom (offers more room for fee)

### Opportunities:

There is a larger market to target, environmentally aware, surfboard fee free, can make more leg room due to the large fleet they have, on board messaging, charging for carry-ons even though other airlines allow for personal and carry-on charge free, No pricing limited, Growing (reaching smaller towns and cities), High demand, offer more economy leg room

### Threats:

Weather, available docking/gate space, public perception, lots of delays, strong competition that offers cheaper flights, fuel costs



United Airlines images tends to be centered around mature adults. Not just in personality but in age as well. They show this adults as the ones who are enjoying the things United has to offer. Even the staff member like the flight attendants in the top right image seem to be of a matured adults age range. From the Polaris lounge United repeatedly. In the first images we see the same stereotypical image all airlines use to show locations they fly too and people taking in the scenery.

Another thing is that the majority of the images that displays people enjoying themselves on United Airlines are often placed in seating of upper class seating. These expensive amenities are shown as luxurious with the use of royal blue colors, and people in amazement of the Polaris lobby. They make it clear that business and corporations are more than welcome on their planes with the professional looking waiting area and showing a man working on a laptop.

# AMERICAN AIRLINES



American Airlines



American Airlines  
Cargo

**Tag-line:** Going For Great

**Architecture:** American Airlines Cargo

**Messaging:** American Airlines is the airline that strides for greatness. They want to care about people and commit to providing to good causes to better the lives of people who need it and support them. The value uniqueness and diversity celebrating people from all walks of life.

**Typography:** AmericanSans, Helvetica, Arial,sans-serif

C: 82 M: 50 Y: 0 K: 0  
Hex: #2e76bc



C: 66 M: 44 Y: 37 K: 7  
Hex: #627a88



C: 41 M: 29 Y: 28 K: 0  
Hex: #9da6ab



C: 11 M: 90 Y: 82 K: 2  
Hex: #d63e3c



## Strengths:

Now offered free first baggage, No baggage fee for first two bags, highly supports breast cancer awareness, open minded to changes

## Weaknesses:

Cannot copyright current logo (lack of creativity), 29-3-inch legroom (more reasonable room for fee), 3 star On Time Arrival Rating (79.4%), union workers negotiated about contracts with pay and medical insurance

## Opportunities:

No pricing limited, High demand, On board messaging, Treat elites and regular passengers as equals when it comes to delays

## Threats:

Weather, available docking/gate space, public perception, lots of delays, strong competition that offers cheaper flights, fuel costs



American Airline's imagery seems to be pretty diverse. The people don't appear to be stuck in an age range, economic class, business travel, or family travel. This helps to connect to different types of fliers that have the possibility of flying with American. The first image addresses legroom showing the woman comfortable and happy. The next image show a dad and two kids enjoying their free TV streaming, which is who would most likely enjoy this feature. The bottom right image shows young adults having a good time and enjoying each others company. While the next image shows an American staff member interacting with a child in a friendly manner hinting that American is family friendly.

# SOUTHWEST AIRLINES



**Tag-line:** Without a Heart it's Just a Machine

**Architecture:** none

**Messaging:** Is dedication to the highest quality of customer service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and company spirit

**Typography:** Arial, Helvetica, Southwest Sans

C: 84 M: 71 O K: 0  
Hex: #3555c6

C: 3 M: 100 Y: 99 K: 0  
Hex: #e81b22

C: 0 M: 31 Y: 99 K: 0  
Hex: #fdb813



## **Strengths:**

Low ticket prices, customer always comes first attitude, great public perspective, good brand identity (friendly and caring), offers 32-inches of legroom (economy average), open seating, offers on board messaging

## **Weaknesses:**

Less bells and whistles, 3 star On Time Arrival Rating (78%), Out of date planes, food quality, lots of mechanical problems, only coach seating

## **Opportunities:**

No pricing limited, High demand, technological advances

## **Threats:**

Weather, available docking/gate space, public perception, lots of delays, strong competition that offers cheaper flights, fuel costs



Southwest images were as expected. All of their imagery would show a happy and friendly experience no matter what. The slogan is Without a Heart it's just a Machine, and the imagery they choose help to reinforce just that. The top image shows a female flight attendant standing in from of Southwest's signature heart insignia while hugging a bear that is to be donated to children. The bottom left image shows a Southwest desk clerk interacting with a costumer in such a carefree yet relate able way. This two images are strong examples that display how they would like to be perceived as from the public. The bottom left image shows a family enjoying themselves on a beach that Southwest can provide transportation to. This is worthy of noting because the competitor don't really show family experiences. In fact, the majority of imagery from the other airlines are mainly of grown adults interacting with one another, staff, or technologies. The use of families in their images helps to differ them from their competitors and makes families feel more comfortable when picking Southwest.



# DELTA AIRLINES



**Tag-line:** Keep Climbing

**Architecture:** Delta Cargo

**Messaging:** What started as a humble, little aerial crop dusting operation called Huff Daland Dusters in 1924 has now grown into one of the world's largest global airlines, helping more than 160 million travelers get to the places they want to go to each year.

**Typography:** apple-system, BlinkMacSystemFont, Segoe UI, Roboto, Helvetica Neue, Arial,sans-serif

C: 90 M: 60 Y: 15 K: 2  
Hex: #1f659c

C: 6 M: 100 Y: 87 K: 0  
Hex: #e01933

C: 76 M: 67 Y: 61 K: 68  
Hex: #212529

C: 100 M: 87 Y: 33 K: 23  
Hex: #003366



## Strengths:

Target a great class market (middle/upper class), 4 star on time arrival rating (83.8%), few cancellations, offers on board messaging, free WiFi, Delta team brings home 7th annual Beat Readers' Choice Awards, great customer experiences, Delta Cargo innovating pet safety and comfort

## Weaknesses:

30-32-inch legroom (economy more room for fee), Viral video of poor customer service at baggage claim

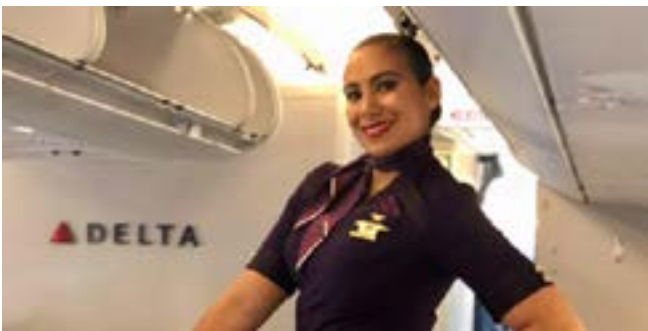
## Opportunities:

No pricing limited, High demand, offer more leg room for economy

## Threats:

Weather, available docking/gate space, public perception, lots of delays, strong competition that offers cheaper flights, fuel costs





Delta Airlines website has very particular images that are communicating to their audience in a very targeted way. The most noticeable motif in a large number of their images is the use of women. Delta uses women as the main focal point. With the presence of women in their imagery they are displaying their value of women in both in and out of the work field. Another motif worth mentioning is the displaying of working and leisure time in one image. As seen in the top image the focal point is the woman on a laptop and to the left of her you see another woman interacting with their touch screen displays. It can easily be said that this is a statement on technological advances on their aircraft but in the bottom image it becomes more obvious. We see a woman wearing a business suit working on a laptop and sitting next to her is a gentleman cuddled in a blanket sleeping. This references the two activities that can be done while flying with delta. Sleep comfortably with Delta or work while flying high with Delta. Either way they are selling two different experiences trying to connected to two different types of fliers.



# POSITIONING

The positioning is based on the current demographics wants and needs and which airlines provide the best choices for air travelers. The Y-axis shows comparisons based of of the ticket prices. Through research that has been found to be the number one deciding factor when people are choosing which airline to fly. The x-axis will compare their level of quality experience in economy and business class.

Southwest Airline as of right now provides the cheapest airfare while giving a family friendly atmosphere. They provide decent seats, no hidden fees, ability to change/cancel reservations without penalty, and free checked bags. Southwest does not offer seating selection on their flights. However they do offer options like skip the line boarding, guaranteed A1-15 boarding, premium drinks, and extra rapid rewards points when upgraded to business class.

Delta Airlines gives passengers new Studio streaming entertainment system and fleet wide WiFi. They also allow passangers to vote on twitter which in-flight movie to watch each season. Delta provides passangers with a choice giving the power to the customer. As for what they offer for cross all their seating choices unless you are paying for delta comfort you aren't gaining many enjoyable experiences. Even then the only differences between Delta Comfort and Economy seating is 4 inches of extra leg room, better snacks, seat selection, and priority boarding. But if one gets to choose what seat they want prior to booking why does boarding earlier matter much? The true perks are given to those of business class and higher.

American Airlines has risen up in its public perception. They respond to what costumer what had has realized the majority of fliers fly in economy. So in order to compete with lower priced airlines. American recently decided to allow economy passengers to bring larger baggage. They found by restricting bag sizes it alienated people prefer to book economy seating, and left only 20% interest in the fares. After the change they saw that 80% were not interested in the fares. American Airlines doesn't however offer free snacks, in-flight entertainment, or free WiFi to economy class. Those are only offered at main cabin seating and higher.

These three airlines have been trying to listen to what the customers want and they tend complain the most about. United however chooses to ignore the changes the other airlines are making and doesn't participate the changes. For example American airlines decided to allow the first baggage to be free of charge, after that then the fees will take place. They did this because they found one of the big things customer wanted to see changes was baggage fees. United however, chooses to ignore this want because they happy where they are at and do not plan on changing. Instead, they provide economy with little to no perks making it as bland as possible in hopes people will want to purchase. In economy the seating is pre-chosen, group and family seating together is now a perk, and standard carry-on baggage is allowed. United has decided that the basic things most other airlines offer are now a "perk" and should be charged as such.

# PROBLEM SOLVING

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

United itself isn't a bad company in terms of operations. The company seems to run along side its competitors well. It has become clear from the changing of the tag-line to the new marketing materials that United is trying to convince their customers that United is friendly. However, none of their marketing materials show kindness from United directly. We are presented with an experience that United can offer regardless of its on the plane or the destination they take you to. But this doesn't change how people are viewing the company's personality. In fact, these images don't show kindness. Therefore, the company needs to show more of how United is kind in their marketing materials in order to remove the stain of aggression painted onto their name. Another issue worth noting is the target audience. United targets a demographic that has more disposable income but tend to fly less. Which means they are limiting the appeal to a small number of people. Not only that, but the number one deciding factor people use to decide which airline to fly is price, and United is on the upper end of the price scale with both ticket costs and added fees.

## BRAND STRATEGY

United has started in the right direction with changing their tag-line to one they used in the past. The "Fly the Friendly Skies" tag-line was a used at a time where United marketed themselves as a home away from home. In order to change the public perception of the brand, United Airlines needs to anchor themselves to the word friendly and show people how they changed. United needs to do more with showing their customers that what they think and feel matter to them. That being said, I do believe that United should target the leisure travel demographic. These people are the ones who fly the most often, which could result in an increased profit margin. In order to appeal to these demographics United needs to become more affordable. The biggest thing to consider is possibly waiving the first baggage fee like all their competitors. People who are traveling for fun are more than likely spending a lot more money elsewhere. Meaning that if United makes themselves more convenient they will appeal to this demographic. In order to differentiate themselves from their competitors United can market themselves as a friendly, affordable luxury airline.

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