

Southwest Airlines Social Media

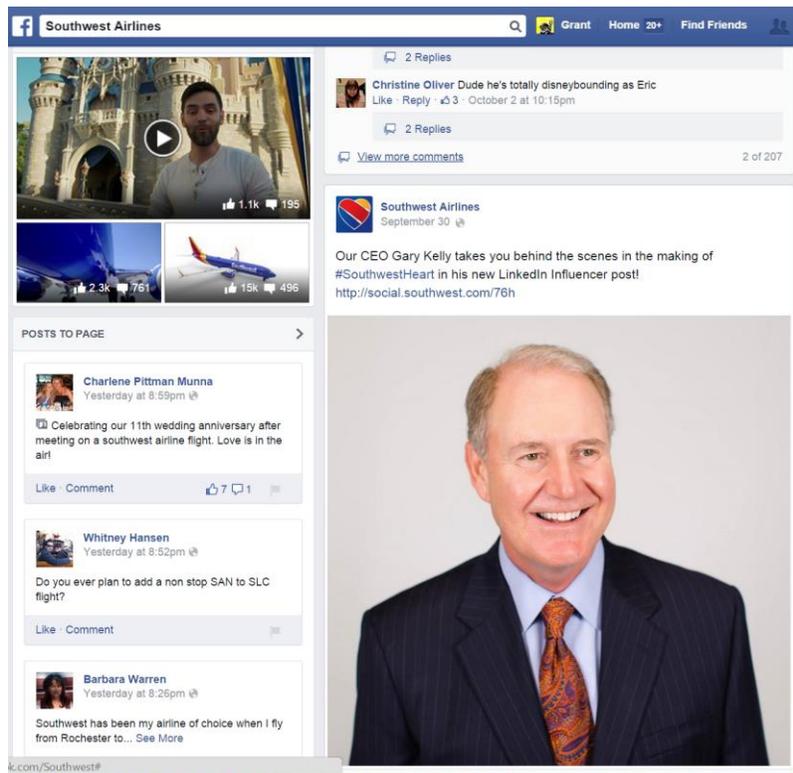
Introduction

<https://www.facebook.com/Southwest>

Southwest, Airlines is always on the leading edge of airline business, “In a glass-enclosed command center, nine Southwest employees are sitting in front of double monitors furiously tweeting and Facebooking” (Silverman, 2014). They have a reputation of customer service and utilize Facebook and Twitter heavily. There are several employees dedicated to monitoring media chatter for complaints and respond quickly. Their face book page is updated regularly as is their Twitter site:

<https://twitter.com/SouthwestAir> .

Facebook Strategy



One interesting link is the CEO's link to their Linked-In discussion on how they have evolved their brand image and new graphics for their aircraft and other updates they have made to their product. It is quite interesting to see links to discussions on their own methods of promotion as an item of promotion itself. Additionally, the Facebook page promoted a contest video for a family night at Disney's Cinderella castle.

Additional Social Media

Southwest utilizes social media extremely well. They are integrated across multiple social media platforms and as described above, they have many dedicated Southwest employees working on their social media presence and provide a variety of social media activities, especially in monitoring customer service and supplying rapid responses to customer concerns. On Facebook, they have almost daily posts about a variety of Southwest activities, contests, travel topics, and links to video presentations. The Facebook link to Linked-In article from the CEO, GHary Kelly is shown below:



Behind the Scenes: The Making of Southwest's New Look

September 26, 2014



5,494



326



107



Tweet 8



Share 15



+3



Share

1,017

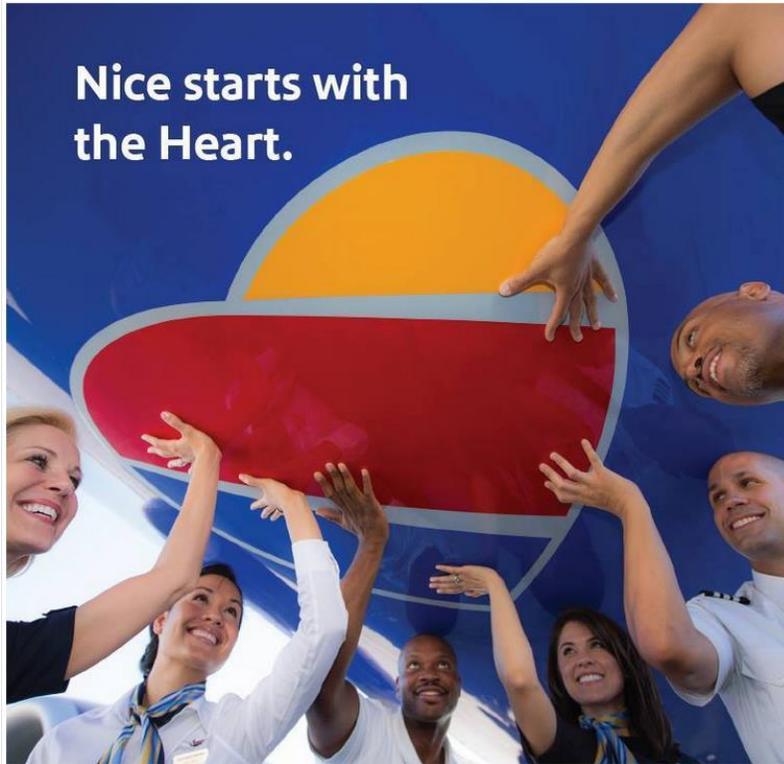


This post is part of a series in which Influencers go behind the scenes to explain in detail one aspect of their work. [Read all the stories here](#) and [write your own](#) (please include the hashtag #BehindTheScenes in the body of your post).

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140926223058-321194218-behind-the-scenes-the-making-of-southwest-s-new-look/>

Facebook Integration into Company Marketing

Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In – all the major social media platforms are integrated with the same Southwest messages. For years, Southwest has promoted *love* as a part of their marketing theme. Even their stock ticker is known as LUV. On Facebook, the theme continues:



On Twitter, #southwestheart where people express their anticipation of their upcoming flights, events they are looking forward to, and positive comments on Southwest – all of which helps put more positive spin on the airline – more powerful than traditional marketing because the responses are from customers. #southwestheart also takes one to the <http://www.southwest-heart.com/> link for even more promotion on Southwest's concern for the customer:



Areas for Improvement

There is little area for improvement – Southwest is one of the best at social media and promotion. They have many seamless links between social platforms and the promotions are well integrated and maintain a consistent theme. They obviously manage it well and are not just throwing a group of social media buffs at their product promotion, but rather have a highly tuned social media department coordinating and monitoring the effort. As recently as August 27, 2014, it was announced:

[Southwest Airlines LUV, +2.99%](#) last night unveiled a Listening Center devoted to engaging with Employees and Customers in real time. Located at Southwest Airlines Headquarters in Dallas, the Listening Center is the first of its kind in the domestic airline industry (PRNewswire, 2014)

The only additional promotional work on social media that may have some place in their overall marketing would be a regular anecdotal Southwest success story – something along the lines of certain issues that arose and how Southwest responded to resolve – both the good stories *and maybe even some of the not so good stories* – which would possibly add even more credibility to the brand.

Number of Fans/Friends

On Facebook, the primary Southwest page has ~ 4.5 million likes; 2.4 million visits. In comparison, Delta Airlines has only 1.3 million likes 2 million visits. While the number of visits are similar, Southwest has almost 4 times the number of likes.

Competitor Comparison

As digital marketing advisor Nate Riggs observed,

Even though we may not be able to accurately project what the monetary value of a Like, there is value present for each fan that expresses an intent to subscribe to the content shared on the Timeline (Riggs, 2012).

So while there is no precise dollar factor that can be associated with number of likes, the fan willingness to have the Southwest like on the timeline does provide great marketing value – for Southwest – that is 4 times the value over Delta.

Conclusion

Southwest Airlines has since its beginnings pursued airline business in a different way. They still do not have assigned seating, they stick with one plane, the Boeing 737 as their primary equipment (helps keep maintenance at a lower cost for stocking parts, training mechanics, familiarity of pilots, for instance). They also are not afraid to be a little on the edge all the time and take chances at innovations such as opening the first dedicating Listening Center to promote better understanding of both their customers and employees. Lastly, promoting Love as their ongoing campaign only helps with building fans and customers – people who get a real sense of a company that cares about each individual customer.

Reference

All social media reference links were provided in line with text

Riggs, N. (2012). Social subscribe – why facebook likes do matter. *Convince & Convert*.

Retrieved from <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/social-media-tools/intent-to-subscribe-why-your-facebook-page-needs-to-be-liked/>

Silverman, L. (2014, September 10). Airline social media 'command centers' direct complaint traffic. *NPR*. Retrieved from

<http://www.npr.org/2014/09/10/347468354/airline-social-media-command-centers-direct-complaint-traffic>

