

**J.D. Power & Associates Reports:
Airline Satisfaction Improves to the Highest Levels since 2006; Traditional Carriers Drive Gains,
While Low-Cost Carriers Continue to Lead Overall**

Alaska Airlines and JetBlue Airways Maintain the Highest Rankings in Their Respective Segments

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 15 May 2013 — Airline satisfaction has improved to its highest level since 2006, driven by gains made among traditional carriers, according to the J.D. Power & Associates 2013 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM released today.

Overall satisfaction improves to 695 (on a 1,000-point scale), a 14-point increase from 2012. Low-cost carriers continue to outperform traditional carriers, improving to 755, one point higher than in 2012. However, traditional carriers improve to 663—16 points higher than in 2012—the highest level in more than five years and a level of performance consistent with the period before the introduction of baggage and other fees.

The study measures passenger satisfaction with North America airline carriers based on performance in seven factors (in order of importance): cost & fees; in-flight services; boarding/deplaning/baggage; flight crew; aircraft; check-in; and reservation.

Satisfaction improves across all seven factors, with the largest year-over-year increases in the boarding/deplaning/baggage (+17 points), check-in (+15) and aircraft (+15) factors.

“Traditional carriers have improved significantly across all seven factors, and it is a positive sign to see them turn a corner and starting to rise again, even as there is still more opportunity to improve,” said Jessica McGregor, senior manager of the global travel and hospitality practice at J.D. Power & Associates. “While satisfaction with low-cost carriers improves by only one index point overall, greater gains in the rest of the experience are masked by lower passenger satisfaction with cost and fees.”

Baggage Fees Acceptance

Baggage fees continue to be a source of passenger dissatisfaction and to lead to lower satisfaction levels. The impact is less pronounced than in the past, however, as passengers are gradually more accepting of the fees. The gap in overall satisfaction between passengers who pay for baggage and those who do not pay narrows to 63 points in 2013, compared with a gap of 85 points in 2012 and 100 points in 2011. Among passengers who pay to check baggage, 37 percent indicate the fees are reasonable, an increase from 28 percent in 2012 and 18 percent in 2011.

“Charging for bags still has a pronounced negative impact on passenger satisfaction, but with each year, passengers are increasingly more accepting of carriers unbundling baggage and other fees,” said Ramez Faza, senior manager of the travel practice at J.D. Power & Associates.

KEY FINDINGS

- Overall passenger satisfaction with North American airlines improves to 695, which is up 14 points from 2012.
- More than one-third (36%) of passengers check in for their flight online, an increase from 34 percent in 2012.
- Check-in satisfaction is higher among passengers who check in online for their flight (837) than among those who check in at the airport via kiosk (805) or the ticket counter (801).

Technology has an Impact

An increasing percentage of passengers (36%) check in to their flights online, and 15 percent use a mobile device—more than double the 6 percent who used mobile devices two years ago. Check-in satisfaction among passengers who check in using a mobile device is 853. Check-in satisfaction is even higher when passengers use a mobile app to check in (866). In contrast, check-in satisfaction among passengers who check in at a kiosk is 805, and is 801 among those who use the main ticket counter. Wi-Fi on flights is also enhancing the passenger experience. Overall satisfaction among passengers who use Wi-Fi during their flight is 39 points higher than among those who do not use it.

The Power of People and the Value of a Genuine Smile

Despite the fact that passengers are using self-service options in increasing numbers, airline staff continues to impact passenger satisfaction. The industry is improving the customer experience, with both carrier segments achieving an eight-year high for passenger satisfaction with flight crews in 2013. Among passengers who are greeted with a smile by airline staff, even if only some of the time, satisfaction scores are 105 points higher than among those who never receive a smile. The gap doubles to 211 points higher among passengers who are greeted with a smile consistently, compared with those who do not receive a smile at all.

“Treating passengers as valued customers and guests—welcoming them with a genuine warm smile—is an important opportunity for airlines to achieve considerably higher levels of satisfaction,” said Faza. “With the increasing use of technology reducing some personal interactions in the reservations and check-in processes, making the most of the rest of the passenger interaction with airline staff is imperative.”

Traditional Carrier Rankings

Alaska Airlines ranks highest in the traditional carrier segment for a sixth consecutive year, with an index score of 717. Alaska Airlines, which improves by 39 points from 2012—the largest improvement among all carriers ranked in the study—performs particularly well in six of the seven factors: cost & fees; boarding/deplaning/baggage; aircraft; flight crew; check-in; and reservation.

Delta Air Lines moves up one rank position to second with a score of 682, improving by 23 points from 2012, with significant gains across all seven factors. Alaska Airlines and Delta Air Lines each improve significantly and perform well among traditional carriers in flight crew. Ranking third, Air Canada declines by six points to 671.

Low-Cost Carrier Rankings

JetBlue Airways ranks highest among low-cost carriers for an eight consecutive year, with a score of 787. This also marks the ninth consecutive year JetBlue has ranked highest in the study.¹ JetBlue, which improves by 11 index points on a year-over-year basis, performs particularly well in in-flight services and aircraft. Southwest Airlines, which improves in all of the factors except cost & fees, ranks second at 770, which remains on par with 2012.

¹ JetBlue ranked highest in the 2005 study, when all carriers were included in one segment.

Airlines Social Media Savvy

Airlines and companies in other industries are increasingly using social media channels to market to customers and to provide services and support. J.D. Power & Associates recently released its [2013 Social Media Benchmark Study](#),SM which evaluates performance and best practices of select companies and industries, including airline, from a customer perspective.

In the social media study, JetBlue Airways, Southwest Airlines and Virgin America perform particularly well in leveraging social media for marketing, while Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, Virgin America and WestJet perform particularly well in leveraging social media to service customers.

Consumer Tips

J.D. Power & Associates offers the following tips to consumers regarding mobile boarding passes:

- Download and utilize your airline's mobile app to provide an efficient, quick and personalized travel experience, including the ability to check in, select seats and receive a digital boarding pass.
- Some airlines offer a discount when you pre-pay for checked baggage when checking in online. This can save you money, as well as time, when you arrive at the airport.

The 2013 North America Airline Satisfaction Study measures passenger satisfaction among both business and leisure passengers of major carriers in North America. The study is based on responses from more than 11,800 passengers who flew on a major North America airline between April 2012 and March 2013. The study was fielded between May 2012 and March 2013.

About J.D. Power & Associates:

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power & Associates is a global marketing information services company providing performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information and ratings for on [airlines, hotels and rental car reviews and ratings](#), cars, retail banking, credit cards, insurance, cell phones, and more, please visit JDPower.com. J.D. Power & Associates is a business unit of McGraw Hill Financial.

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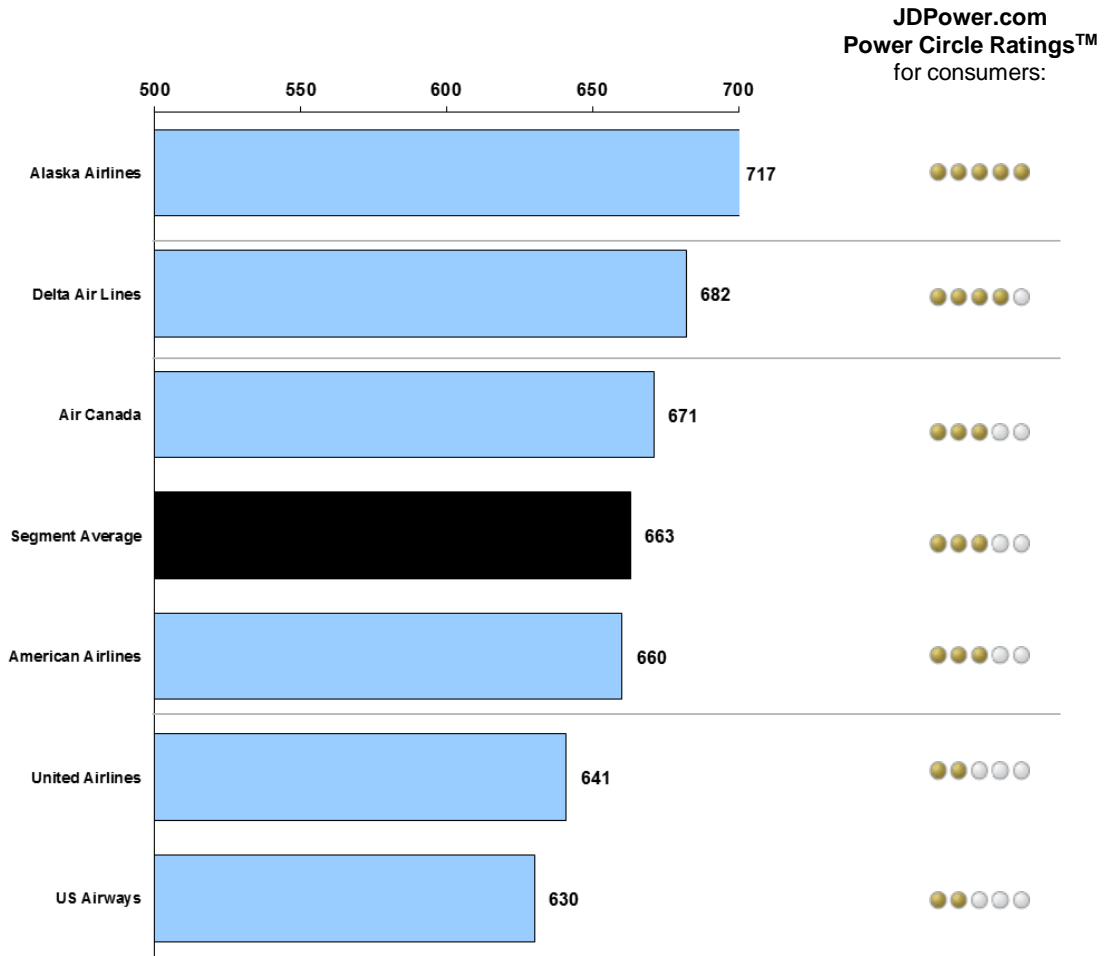
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NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power & Associates 2013 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Airline Satisfaction Index Scores

Traditional Carrier Segment (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

Source: J.D. Power & Associates 2013 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

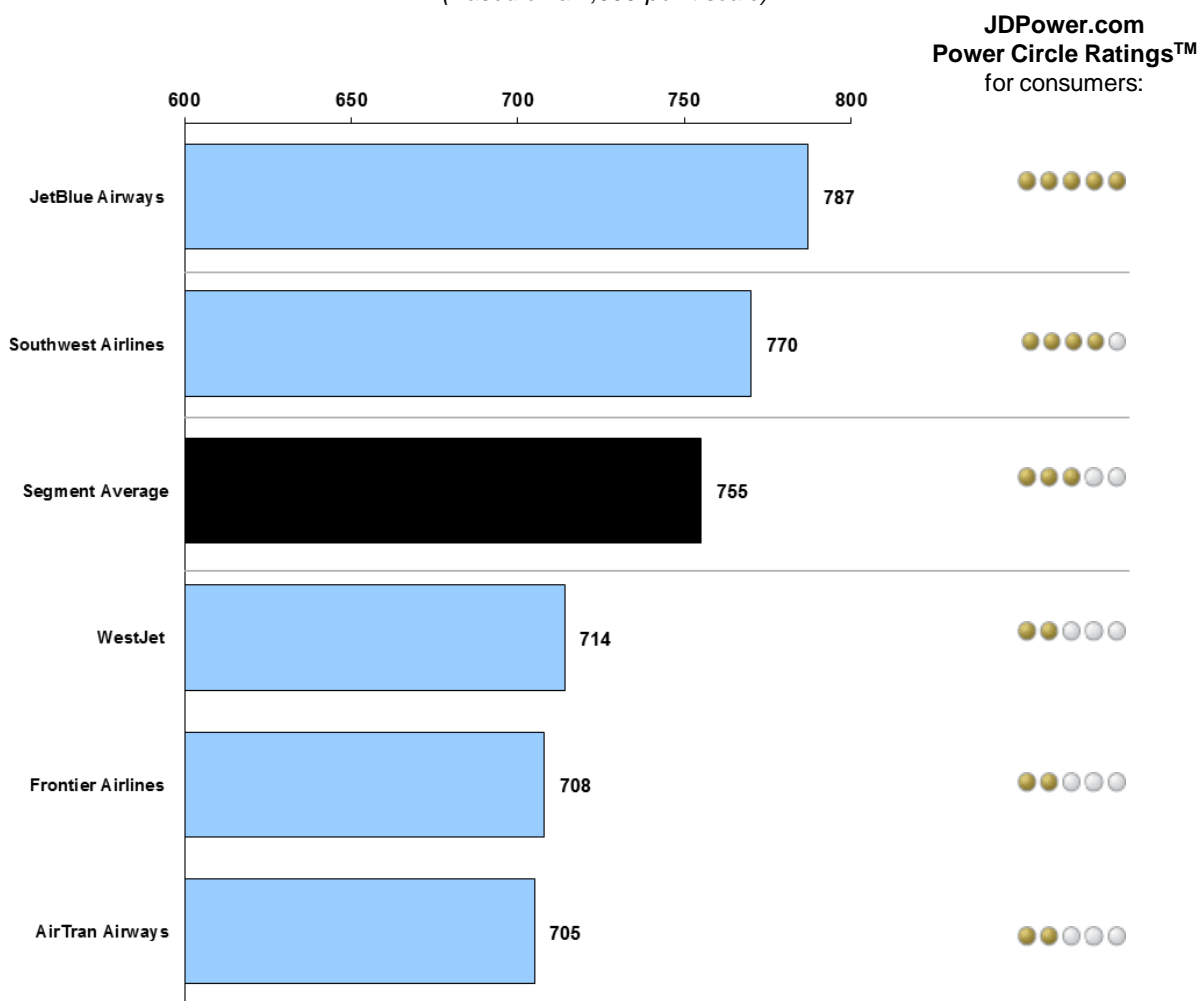
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Overall Airline Satisfaction Index Scores

Low-Cost Carrier Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: Southwest Airlines and AirTran Airways merged in April 2011, under Southwest Airlines. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved their Single Operating Certificate; however, Southwest and AirTran have not yet merged their operations/systems, and thus are evaluated and ranked separately.

Source: J.D. Power & Associates 2013 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

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