



# Servant Leadership at Southwest Airlines:

Putting Our People First

“People need to be reminded more than they need to be instructed.”

Dr. Samuel Johnson

# Southwest<sup>®</sup>



© Southwest Airlines

**1971**

3 Airplanes

3 Cities in Texas

12 Daily Flights

198 Employees

# 2014

700 Airplanes

97 Cities (U.S. and International)

3600 Daily Flights

46,000 Employees

#1 Domestic Market Share (25%)

42 Consecutive Years of Profitability

0 Involuntary Furloughs or Layoffs

# FORTUNE

## World's Most Admired Companies

1	Apple	
2	Amazon.com	
3	Google	
4	Berkshire Hathaway	
5	Starbucks	
6	Coca-Cola	
7	Walt Disney	
8	FedEx	
9	Southwest Airlines	
10	General Electric	

“We are in the  
Customer Service business.  
We just happen to fly airplanes.”

Colleen Barrett  
President Emeritus  
Southwest Airlines

“The business of business is People.”

Herb Kelleher  
Founder and Chairman Emeritus  
Southwest Airlines



Southwest is a Company of People,  
not a Company of planes.



“Without a heart,  
it’s just a machine.”



“Level Five Leaders  
embody a paradoxical mix of personal  
humility and professional will.”

Jim Collins  
Author, *Good to Great*

“Humility isn’t thinking less of yourself,  
it’s thinking of yourself less.”

C.S. Lewis

# Customer First Principles

1. When speaking to a Customer, give them your undivided attention.
2. When you're in a bad mood, make sure it doesn't show at work.
3. Smile every time you interact with a Customer both in person and on the phone.
4. Sincerely apologize when you've made a mistake.
5. Avoid technical jargon and use words familiar to the Customer.
6. Maintain eye contact and avoid doing things when talking with your Customers.
7. If you can't help a Customer, try to find someone who can.
8. Put myself in the Customer's place and see things from their perspective.
9. Work hard to exceed Customer expectations.
10. When it's really busy and you're feeling overwhelmed, tell yourself that if it weren't for the Customers, I wouldn't have a job.

# Employee First Principles

1. When speaking to an **Employee**, give them your undivided attention.
2. When you're in a bad mood, make sure it doesn't show at work.
3. Smile every time you interact with an **Employee** both in person and on the phone.
4. Sincerely apologize when you've made a mistake.
5. Avoid technical jargon and use words familiar to the **Employee**.
6. Maintain eye contact and avoid doing things when talking with your **Employees**.
7. If you can't help an **Employee**, try to find someone who can.
8. Put myself in the **Employee's** place and see things from their perspective.
9. Work hard to exceed **Employee** expectations.
10. When it's really busy and you're feeling overwhelmed, tell yourself that if it weren't for the **Employees**, I wouldn't have a job.