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Data: Corporate Traveler Experience

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Delta interview with Dave Holtz and Kristen Shovlin

Dave Holtz Senior Vice President
Operations and Customer Centre

Hi Dave! Please can you briefly introduce yourself, and your role at Delta Air Lines?

I oversee Delta's Operations and Customer Center and, along with my team of more than 300 professionals, coordinate Delta's worldwide operation. The Operations and Customer Center is the nerve center for our airline, bringing together a vast array of team members from across all the work groups that touch our operation, from airports to technical operations to flight control to reservations, and so many more. In the Operations and Customer Center, the world's most professional team of aviation experts are in place to make proactive and real-time decisions that have helped Delta achieve record-breaking operational reliability.

What has Delta put in place to improve operational reliability and mitigate the impact of flight disruption on your customers?

Delta continues to emphasize and leverage technology to drive customer-focused decisions across our operation to improve reliability. That means looking for opportunities across the travel journey to provide better flying experiences for our customers while empowering our employees with the tools and technology to provide the best service in the business. Innovations have helped us tackle the aviation industry's most complex and entrenched problems – including operational reliability. Specifically, we've taken a deep dive, cross-company look at irregular operations to find data-driven ways to reduce the impact of severe weather or other constraints. The results have been significant, allowing Delta to resume normal operations in less time than ever before—getting the airline and our customers moving as quickly as possible. At a more individual level, we also leverage technology to improve the ride for our customers. Earlier this year we unveiled the 2.0 version of Delta's Flight Weather Viewer, our proprietary app that provides Delta pilots with a real-time three dimensional graphic representation of where turbulence exists in the atmosphere on their route of flight. Using Big Data to deliver the virtual "sea state" of the atmosphere in real-time, the Delta-developed app allows our pilots to determine how the environment ahead will affect their specific aircraft, allowing them to adjust course more precisely and improve the experience for our customers and crew.

How is your approach different?

In the OCC, we live by the motto: "Every customer, every flight, every day." That means Delta's customers are at the heart of every decision we make about how to coordinate our global operation. We're focused on providing each of our more than 180 million annual customers with a safe and reliable experience while never letting up from our drive to innovate and continuously improve what we do. We were proud in 2017 to have been named the World's Most On-Time Airline by FlightGlobal, but we won't stop there, and so far we're on track in 2018 to best our 2017 performance. None of this would be possible without our employees -- we're lucky to have the best team in the business.

Kristen Shovlin Vice President Sales Operations and Development

Hi Kristen! Please can you briefly introduce yourself, and your role at Delta Air Lines?

As the head of Sales Operations and Development for Delta, my team is responsible for enhancing the B2B experience for Sales customers while driving sales strategy and market development. This encompasses many Global Sales and Sales Support functions, from our worldwide customer service centers, to strategic technology development group, to the contracting, performance and analytics teams.

How is Delta leveraging its investments in operational reliability to improve the corporate travel experience?

The central philosophy behind our decisions as a Global Sales team is "Listen, Act, Listen." That means we listen to what our customers tell us is important, we take action based on that input, and then we seek more feedback to make sure we got it right. We apply this lens to everything we do at Delta, including the processes and products we put into place regarding operational reliability and the corporate traveler. Based on customer feedback, in 2015, we launched the industry's first Operational Performance Commitment, providing Delta's corporate customers with a pledge to deliver superior operations and putting money behind the airline's performance. We've continued to evolve it ever since, and this year, Delta became the first airline to offer trip-level operational reporting metrics, providing corporate customers with account-specific reporting on the routes on which their travelers actually fly.

What's next for Delta in this area?

We'll keep listening to customers, and I expect you'll see us put a lot of focus onto creating more alignment between Delta and its major partners when it comes to the benefits we offer corporate travelers. We recently expanded our corporate traveler prioritization program, first launched in 2014, to include our partners at Air France-KLM. Global Corporate Priority aligns the most highly valued corporate traveler benefits, including priority service recovery in the event of irregular operations. We're exploring opportunities to expand this program in the future.



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