

Reputation Institute Releases in-depth Findings on the State of Corporate Reputations in the Airline Industry

*Southwest Airlines Secures Top Spot as Most Reputable U.S. Airline –
It's not all about service!*

New York, New York – July 14 – Reputation Institute, a leader in reputation management, released today an in-depth study on consumer perceptions of the nation's airlines based, in part, on findings from their annual Global Pulse study. Consumer favorite, Southwest Airlines, had the highest reputation among the largest U.S. airline carriers included in the study, followed closely by JetBlue Airways and Continental Airlines.

As a whole, the airline industry has a below average reputation in the U.S. market place, with four of the nine carriers measured showing weak reputation standings - scores below 60. Further results from the study shed light on what drives the public's perceptions of airlines in the midst of growing reports of industry mismanagement, poor service amenities and rising costs.

What Drives Reputation

Using Reputation Institute's model, the emotional appeal a company commands in the public's eye, its reputation, is driven by perceptions of the company's strength around seven rational dimensions: product/services, innovation, workplace, citizenship, governance, leadership, and financial performance. In the airline industry the most influential dimension of reputation with the American general public is products/services, accounting for 19% of reputation. Growing in importance with the public are governance and workplace issues. Combined, perceptions of these two dimensions explain 30% of reputation for the industry.

"The poor reputations of U.S. airlines today is clearly a reflection of their difficulty to rate well on dimension level issues" said Kasper Nielsen, Managing Partner at Reputation Institute. "It isn't surprising to see Southwest rise to the top as they have been able to maintain their image as a well-run low-cost carrier with a happy workforce" he added.

The study revealed that on average only 35% of the U.S. public would recommend their carrier to others. Nielsen further suggested, “Increased attention to the critical areas of reputation in conjunction with a targeted reputation management effort may help airlines win greater support with the public.”

The top rankings for U.S airlines are as follows:

	<u>Company</u>	<u>Pulse Score</u>
1	Southwest Airlines	67.72
2	JetBlue Airways	65.92
3	Continental Airlines	61.98
4	American Airlines	60.67
5	AirTran	60.47
6	Delta Air Lines	59.52
7	United Airlines	58.35
8	Northwest Airlines	58.20
9	US Airways	56.10

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Survey Methodology

This study was conducted online in the U.S. between February and March of 2008 in conjunction with Reputation Institute's Global Pulse 2008. 2008 is Reputation Institute's third year conducting the Global Pulse study, the largest study of corporate reputation in the world measuring over 1,000 companies in 27 countries annually. This year over 200 U.S. companies were measured using the RepTrak™ tool , providing detailed information on the power and drivers of their reputations in the marketplace. A Pulse score is a measure of corporate reputation calculated by averaging perceptions of 4 indicators of trust, esteem, admiration, and good feeling obtained from a representative sample of at least 100 local respondents who were familiar with the company. Scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 100, Pulse scores that differ by more than +/-0.5 are significantly different at the 95% confidence level. Scores can be categorized using the below key:

Excellent/Top Tier	above 80
Strong/Robust	70 – 79
Average/Moderate	60 – 69
Weak/Vulnerable	40 – 59
Poor/Lowest Tier	below 40

About Reputation Institute

Reputation Institute is a private advisory and research firm specialized in corporate reputation management. With offices and associates in more than 20 countries, Reputation Institute provides knowledge-based consulting services to some of the most respected companies worldwide. Our consulting teams regularly help global clients assess, value and act on their reputations by providing strategic analysis and direction, as well as relevant assistance in developing and implementing reputation measurement and management systems. Reputation Institute also identifies best practices from original research, and we share our cutting-edge findings with clients and members through engagements, seminars, conferences, and publications. The *Global Pulse* is Reputation Institute's flagship research study conducted annually with some 60,000 consumers in 27 countries from which emerge detailed ratings of the reputations of the world's 1000 largest companies. Each year, the results of this study are featured in leading business publications around the world. Visit www.ReputationInstitute.com to learn more about us.