

**Attentive Flight Crews, Flexible Fares and Charges during Pandemic Drive Record High Customer Satisfaction with North America Airlines, J.D. Power Finds**Delta Air Lines Ranks Highest in Passenger Satisfaction

**TROY, Mich.: 12 May 2021 (Updated 19 May 2021)** – Despite the North America airline industry losing more than \$40 billion in revenue as passenger volume dropped 60% in 2020, airline passengers say their level of satisfaction is higher. According to the J.D. Power 2021 North America Airline Satisfaction Study,<sup>SM</sup> released today, the elimination of many charges and fees, increased attentiveness of flight crews and ticket flexibility help the industry achieve new heights as passenger satisfaction climbs 28 points to 820 (on a 1,000-point scale) year over year.

“The airline industry adapted to a most unusual year by simplifying ticketing processes, waiving change fees and baggage fees which were key to persuading people to fly during the pandemic,” said **Michael Taylor, travel intelligence lead at J.D. Power**. “Airline personnel rose to meet the challenges of a drastically altered travel environment. Maintaining that level of flexibility and recognition of individual passenger needs will be a strategic advantage for airlines that want to set themselves apart in passenger satisfaction as travel volumes start to recover.”

Following are some of the key findings of the 2021 study:

- **Flight crews stepped up during pandemic:** Overall passenger satisfaction with flight crews increases 25 points as flight attendants and pilots were tasked with explaining and enforcing many new health and safety measures during the pandemic. Delta, this year’s highest-ranked airline, scores particularly well on the flight crew factor, outperforming its closest competitor by 11 points. All told, Delta was the top performer in four of the eight factors evaluated in the study.
- **Removal of change fees scores points with passengers:** Most major airlines introduced travel waivers during the pandemic that allowed passengers to change or cancel tickets without typical penalties. Passengers responded favorably, driving a 48-point increase in customer satisfaction with cost and fees.
- **Empty middle seats signaled airline concern for passengers:** All North America airlines earned generally high marks from passengers when they were asked to rate their airline’s response to COVID-19. Additional safety measures, such as keeping middle seats empty, enforcement of mask requirements and allowing worried travelers to alter their itineraries all helped to reinforce this positive sentiment.

**Study Ranking**

**Delta Air Lines** ranks highest in customer satisfaction, with a score of 860. This is the first time Delta Air Lines has ranked highest since 1995. **Southwest Airlines** (856) ranks second and **JetBlue Airways** (849) ranks third.

The North America Airline Satisfaction Study measures passenger satisfaction with airline carriers in North America based on performance in eight factors (in alphabetical order): aircraft; baggage; boarding; check-in; cost and fees; flight crew; in-flight services; and reservation. The study measures passenger satisfaction

among both business and leisure travelers and is based on responses from 2,309 passengers. Passengers needed to have flown on a major North America airline within the past month of completing a survey. The study was fielded from August 2020 through March 2021.

For more information about the North America Airline Satisfaction Study, visit <https://www.jdpower.com/business/resource/jd-power-north-america-airline-satisfaction-study>.

Join the conversation on social media using **#AirlineStudy** and follow J.D. Power on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

To view the online press release, please visit <http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2021046>.

#### **About J.D. Power**

**J.D. Power** is a global leader in consumer insights, advisory services and data and analytics. A pioneer in the use of big data, artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic modeling capabilities to understand consumer behavior, J.D. Power has been delivering incisive industry intelligence on customer interactions with brands and products for more than 50 years. The world's leading businesses across major industries rely on J.D. Power to guide their customer-facing strategies.

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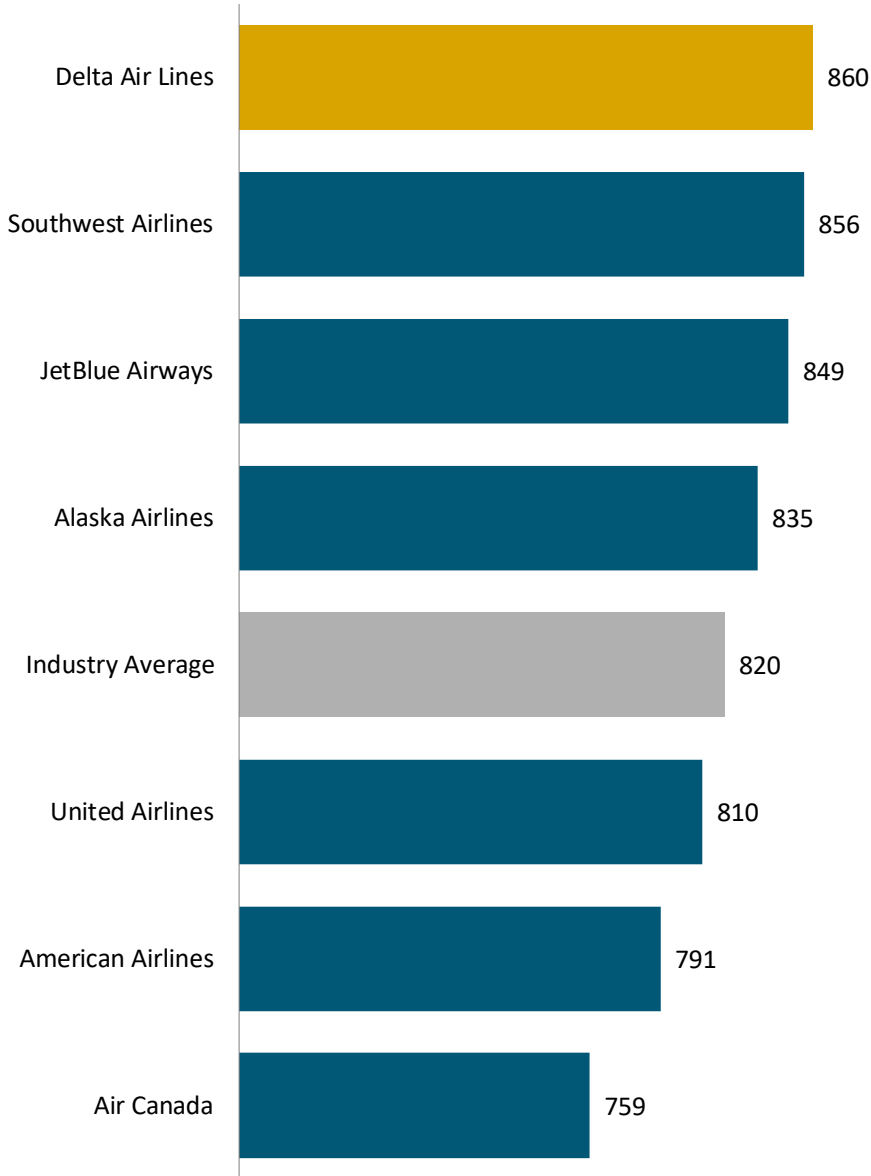
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NOTE: One chart follows.

# J.D. Power 2021 North America Airline Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>

## Overall Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Source: J.D. Power 2021 North America Airline Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>

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