



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports: Customer Satisfaction with Airlines Increases for a Second Consecutive Year, But Gains Are Tempered By Dissatisfaction with Costs and Fees among Traditional Network Carriers

Alaska Airlines and JetBlue Airways Each Rank Highest in Customer Satisfaction With Airlines in Their Respective Segments

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif.: 8 June 2011 — Although customer satisfaction with airlines has improved for a second consecutive year, dissatisfaction with cost and fees continues to persist, impeding the return of traditional network carriers to pre-recessionary satisfaction levels, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM released today.

The study finds that overall customer satisfaction with airlines in 2011 has improved to an average of 683 on a 1,000-point scale, increasing by 10 points from 2010. Among low-cost carriers, satisfaction averages 751 in 2011—achieving a five-year high. However, customer satisfaction with traditional network carriers averages 651—16 points lower than the 2007 average of 667.

For both segments, satisfaction has improved from 2010 in nearly all areas of the customer experience, with the exception of cost and fees. Compared with 2010, satisfaction with base fares has declined across every airline. However, satisfaction with costs and fees has improved among low-cost carriers, as a whole, to 725 in 2011 from 723 in 2010. This improvement is driven by increased satisfaction in aspects of the cost and fees measure not related to base fares, particularly among carriers that do not charge for baggage fees for the first checked bag. Traditional network carriers have not fared as well, declining from 582 in 2010 to a new low of 555 in 2011. Only Air Canada and Southwest Airlines have improved in the cost and fees factor from 2010.

As more travelers return to the skies, many airlines have raised fares from the lower rates charged during the recession. Additional fees for food, beverages, baggage, priority boarding and seat upgrades continue to weigh on satisfaction as carriers seek more ways to diversify and grow revenue, helping the industry return to profitability.

In 2011, passengers of both low-cost and traditional network carriers express the highest levels of satisfaction with the check-in and reservation processes since 2006.

“Despite initial declines in satisfaction with increased automation of check-in and reservations, passengers have adjusted their expectations during the past several years and now appear more satisfied with the convenience and speed that technology has enabled, while airlines benefit from reduced costs and greater efficiencies in these areas,” said Stuart Greif, vice president and general manager of the global travel and hospitality practice at J.D. Power and Associates.

The study measures overall customer satisfaction based on performance in seven measures (in order of importance): cost and fees; in-flight services; flight crew; aircraft; boarding/deplaning/baggage; check-in; and reservation. Carriers are ranked in two segments: [traditional network](#) and [low-cost](#). Traditional network carriers are generally defined as airlines that operate multicabin aircraft and use multiple airport hubs, while low-cost carriers are airlines that operate single-cabin aircraft with typically lower fares.

Traditional Network Carrier Rankings

Alaska Airlines ranks highest in the traditional network carrier segment for a fourth consecutive year and performs particularly well in four of the seven measures: flight crew; boarding/deplaning/baggage; check-in; and reservation. Air Canada improves significantly from 2010 to rank second in the segment, while Continental

Airlines ranks third. Air Canada performs particularly well in the aircraft, in-flight services and cost and fees measures.

Low-Cost Carrier Rankings

For a sixth consecutive year, JetBlue Airways ranks highest in the low-cost carrier segment. JetBlue Airways performs particularly well in two of the seven measures: aircraft and in-flight services. Southwest Airlines improves considerably from 2010 to rank second in the segment. Southwest performs well in satisfaction with the reservation, check-in, boarding/deplaning/baggage and cost and fees measures.

J.D. Power and Associates offers the following tips to consumers:

- Many airlines provide apps for mobile devices that allow users to check in for a flight and find out about flight status or cancellations. Check to see if the carrier you plan to fly with offers these apps, which may help expedite your trip even before you get to the airport.
- When booking a flight, realize that your base fare is likely not the only cost you will be charged. Many airlines also include fuel surcharges and may charge fees for seat selection, baggage, entertainment and food and beverages. Compare the total of all of these fees before booking a flight to ensure that you are getting the best deal possible.

The 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction Study measures customer satisfaction among both business and leisure passengers of major North America carriers. The study is based on responses from more than 13,500 passengers who flew on a major North America airline between July 2010 and April 2011. The study was fielded between August 2010 and April 2011.

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company providing forecasting, 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 on [car reviews and ratings](#), [car insurance](#), [health insurance](#), [cell phone ratings](#), and more, please visit JDPower.com. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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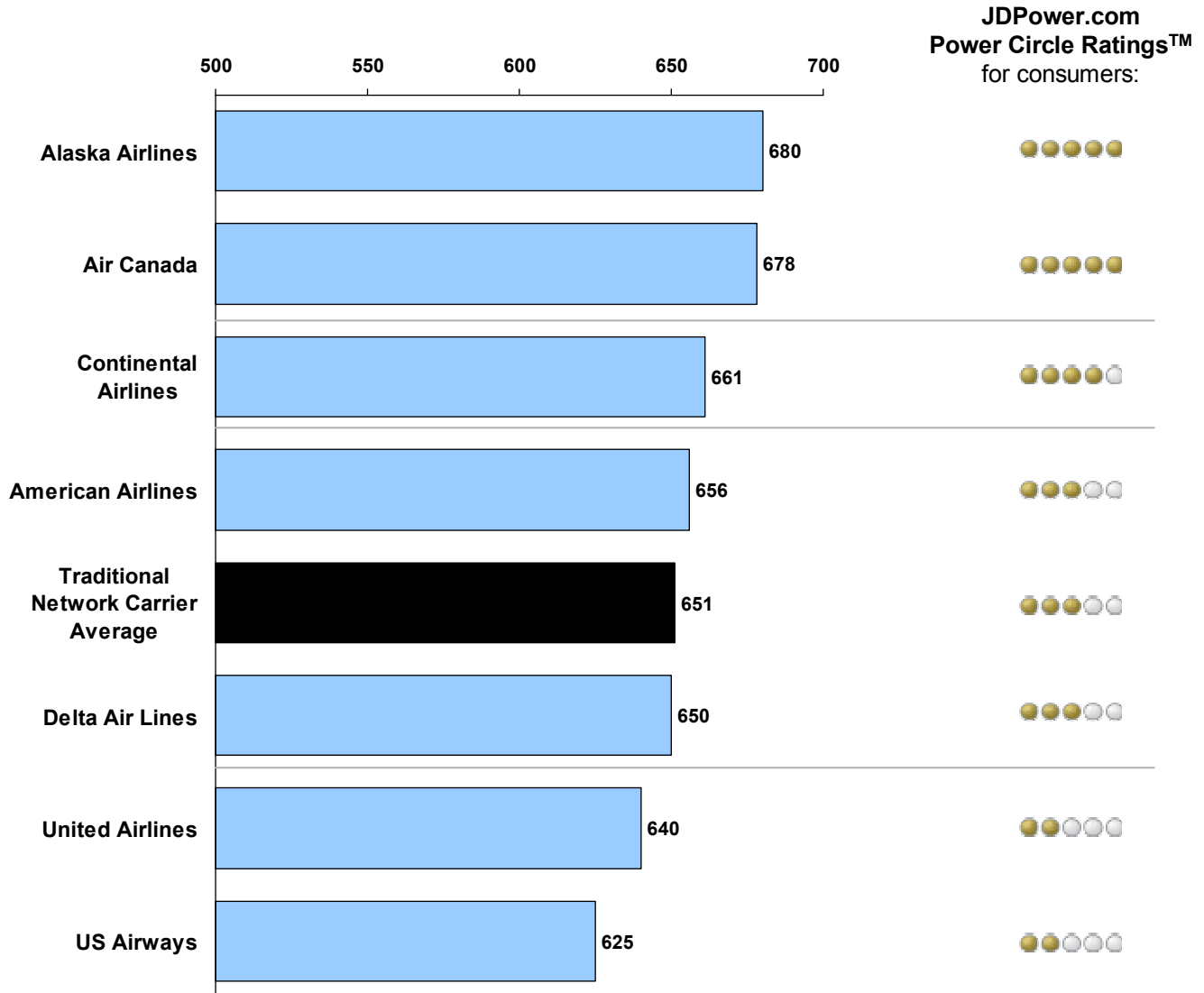
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NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Airline Satisfaction Index Scores Traditional Network Carrier Segment (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: United Airlines and Continental Airlines merged October 1, 2010, under United Continental Holdings, Inc. However, since they continue to operate as individually-branded carriers as they await Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval of a Single Operating Certificate, United and Continental are both included in the study and evaluated separately.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM



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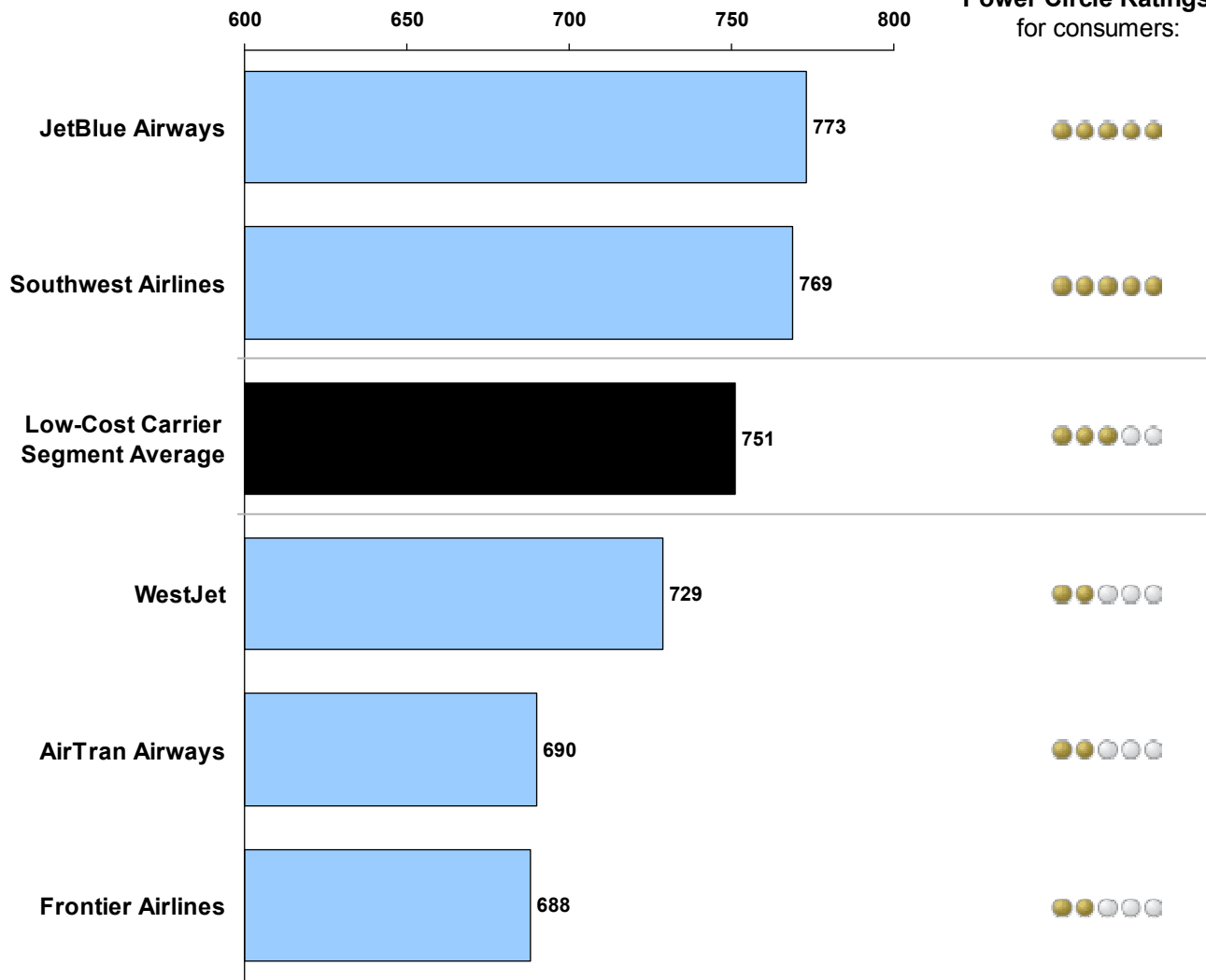
J.D. Power and Associates 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Overall Airline Satisfaction Index Scores

Low-Cost Carrier Segment

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)

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for consumers:



Note: On April 13, 2010, it was announced that Frontier Airlines and Midwest Airlines would be merged, with operations continuing under the Frontier brand. Since the merger was announced prior to the study fielding period, evaluations for both Frontier and Midwest are included in the results for Frontier Airlines.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2011 North America Airline Satisfaction StudySM

Power Circle Ratings Legend

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

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