



Stanford eCorner

Training Employees: Defining Organizational Culture

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Neeleman talks about how he tells his employees a simple formula for success: Show up to work, on time, with a good attitude. Take care of your fellow workers. If you set that expectation level, and are consistent, and model the behavior you expect, the employees then model it for each other, he adds. Neeleman also tells the story of the Southwest pilots who were fired for flying naked in the cockpit.



Transcript

I tell our people all the time the frontline people that are really doing it everyday that are really making it happen and that worry about job security, I give them a simple formula. I say okay, here's your formula. Show up to work on time, sober, because sometimes people forget about that. Pilots in particular. No, not pilots but some other airlines with your clothes on I should say. I was with Jim Parker yesterday, the CEO of Southwest at this thing in Las Vegas and I said, were they really naked in the cockpit? You've read about this. Two Southwest pilots were fired because they were without their clothes in the cockpit. He goes no, they weren't naked, they had their neckties on. So they did have some form of clothing. I said, well, I can be fired from that it seems like.

So show up to work on time, sober with a good attitude, take care of your coworkers, of you fellow crew members and go take care of our customers. That's all you have to do. I set that expectation level and from day one, we go in orientation and I'm there on the first day and Dave Barger, our president and CEO, is there on the first day. We talk about the company culture and we talk about all the things that we do at JetBlue to make your life a lot easier and we talk about the pay and we talk about the benefits. I teach airline economics. That's my course. I talk to them about revenues and how we have the best load factors in the industry and why we do in this is because we take care of our customers. It's because 60% of our new customers come just by word of mouth, 20% come to us by advertising. We spend \$30 million a year on advertising. We get three times more by word of mouth.

I talk to them about cost and how we keep our cost low by better utilizing you and explain to them it's not on your backs. We did not build this company on your backs because we value you and we can't expect to pay you less and say take care of the customers damn it or you're going to get fired and expect that that's really going to happen. You have to really do it through example and take care of people.