

When the Sh Hits the Fan.**

**Crisis Management in a Live Setting:
The Southwest Airlines Way**

Linda Rutherford | Southwest Airlines
Vice President & Chief Communications Officer



The Social Shake-Up
May 22-24, 2017 | Atlanta

www.socialshakeupshow.com

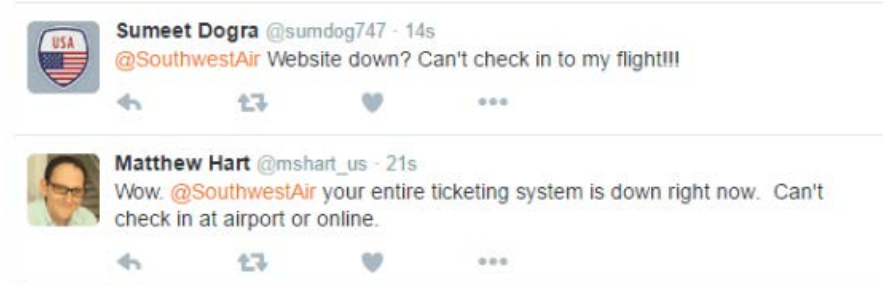
#shakeupshow

@speakertwitterhandle

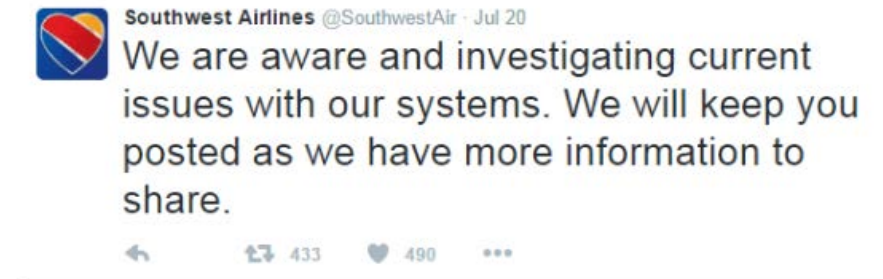
The External Response Begins Immediately

- Social conversations quickly indicated Customers were experiencing technical issues on Southwest.com.
- Within minutes, a holding statement was posted to Twitter acknowledging the technical issues that Customers were experiencing.
- Our communication goals were to be:
 - Honest
 - Transparent
 - Quick
 - Genuine
 - Progressive
 - Omni-channel
 - Blend paid, shared, and owned Social spaces

1:45 p.m.



1:55 p.m.




Facebook Live

- With questions from the media pouring in, we turned to Facebook Live to triage the inquiries while reaching Customers at the same time.
- Live streams with both our Chief Communications Officer and Chief Operating Officer were honest, genuine, and used a progressive channel.
- The Results?
 - Sentiment became more positive
 - Feedback from the live stream funneled into other channels (insights into action)
 - Customers appreciated the information, transparency, and humility
 - We weren't reaching enough people who were affected by the outage (we fixed that by amplifying the second stream)




The Southwest Community

- The Southwest Airlines Community launched on July 20. It was meant to be a soft launch (but the universe had different plans).
- The Community ended up being the hub where we housed all our assets from various channels, including user generated content, which became crucial to our efforts.



Southwest Airlines
Published by Brooks Thomas [?] · July 21 at 7:02am · 🌐



An Update and an Apology on Systemwide Outages

Reminder: Customer rebooking options are available through Tuesday, July 26 at https://www.southwest.com/html/advisories/swa_travel_advisory_20166211469102736090.html

An updated message from Vice President, Chief Communication Officer Linda Rutherford (Friday, July 22 at 10:45 p.m. CDT):

Good evening,

...

[See More](#)

Takeaways

Every Channel is a Customer Service Channel.

Customers expect communication across the board, even operational updates on channels like Instagram and LinkedIn.

Recovery is a Delicate but Necessary Step.

Ease into a regular cadence with feel-good, universally appealing content. Experiment with geo-targeting to gauge sentiment and the environment of our audience.

Create Content for the Masses, Solve Problems for the Individual.

Listen to what Customers are saying to generalize issues in order to customize content that aims at self-service and self-education. Utilize and empower your Employees to solve more unique problems.

We quickly learned our brand is live, in real-time, with or without us. We need to be there to control it.

But don't sell your soul,
because without a Heart, it's
just a machine.

Questions?



Southwest