

# THE CORPORATE EXPERIENCE

IT BEGINS AND ENDS WITH YOU - THE FLIGHT DEPARTMENT.



Our company has had the distinct pleasure of selling three new aircraft recently to three different first time buyers. This was such an exciting opportunity for us. The companies in each case are product driven

sales companies. Each had a little different approach to basic servicing that supported the sales and growth potential of their products. Each independently realized that in order to keep their respective industry lead as well as take their company's growth to new heights something needed to change. Each within the confines of their own board

an aircraft sales professional to help develop collaboratively the mission profile, the budget and the strategy needed to complete the analysis for purchase.

By the way, the answer is not always new equipment and it may not even be purchasing. It may start with chartering at first or maybe a share of a fractional plane. It might be a partnership. The answer for the correct execution will and should be different for many.

## "THE EXPERIENCE"

As the title points out, the "Corporate Experience" begins not when the corporate customer walks into the corporate office, or when the customer walks out of the visited corporate office. It does not begin when the remote location employee or manager walks into or out of the corporate headquarters. It starts

using a Hawker. When loading the plane, after the bags are put into the forward baggage area and the webbing is put on, does the crew then slide the curtain over for a neater more decorative look? Is the passenger briefing thorough and elicits confidence? These are simple yet cultural details that begin the corporate experience on the right track.

These trips occur picking up customers and bringing them to the home office. Are the customer's sales representative on board? This can be a perfect opportunity to build a relationship during a non-threatening time. The time in flight can be a great foundation builder for new and expanded sales opportunities.

Personalized welcome aboard mementos, napkins with the visitor's logo as well as your corporate logo printed on them, catering that considers the special

## "THESE ARE SIMPLE YET CULTURAL DETAILS THAT BEGIN THE CORPORATE EXPERIENCE ON THE RIGHT TRACK"

rooms decided to take their product driven companies and wrap the products in a new level of service. They all felt that by creating new deliverables with products wrapped in service, they could expand market share as well as increase profits. That all sounds pretty simple. Or does it?

Each company as if reading or really writing the same book at the same time decided that the new level of service to be delivered was as much a corporate cultural change as a strategy change. Each began to look internally at their current method of meeting with clients, meeting with vendors and meeting with employees. All three decided to forego as a primary method of remote sales and management the use of web or telephonic meetings. They all three decided that the "back to basic" approach of meeting face to face was the true answer.

This article is about what happens when the solution is found, the cultural change begins and the flight department gets engaged. Each company approached us to help prepare the way. As I often say the backbone of any exercise starts the same way. Find and hire

when your flight crew lands at the airport. This is when the vital corporate experience begins. If the aircraft, (obviously a significant investment and no doubt one who's decision to buy had to cross many hurdles) is not considered the beginning and the end of the experience, one has missed the significance of this tool.

It starts with the look of the plane on the ramp. Is it pristine and clean? Has it been made ready for this important meeting? When the flight crew greets the passengers, is this a positive first impression? It's not important the crew be in suits. Often I see very professional crews greeting passengers in kakis and company polo shirts. It's not the outfit as much as it is the culture, the hospitality.

Often times this trip in a corporate aircraft may be a first for this customer or employee. Do not take this exciting - and maybe even a little frightening - experience for granted. Once inside is the plane looking it's best? Are the seat belts neatly laid out on the seats? Little things, sometimes so little the crew does not realize their importance is what really makes an impression. Here is an example

dietary needs of the customer are all experience driving factors. These factors create an extension of the experience. They expand the envelope and give you, with the flight crew an even more vital corporate role. A role that helps insure the success of the strategy to change and deliver a new corporate culture.

So remember there is a tremendous amount of responsibility placed on the flight crew when extending this new culture. Grasp it with both hands and your heart. Do not take the little things for granted. Work with corporate management to help them understand the many ways you and your flight department can be a vital part of this new culture. If you miss this opportunity to be the beginning and end of the experience, you will be writing yourself out of, not into, the picture.

Seize this cultural change moment. Get the flight department engaged. Utilize this significant asset, and fly it to a new level of corporate culture.

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