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**Principles of Leadership program overview**

The success and steady growth of JetBlue Airways has led to a large expansion of new associates across all departments of the airline. Being a relatively small company, JetBlue’s rapid growth has an exceptionally heavy impact on the corporate training branch of the airline, JetBlue University. One of the largest challenges that JetBlue University is currently confronted with is the instilment of JetBlue culture and principles of leadership (POL) during the new associate orientation. In attempt to better present this information to the new associates, JetBlue University is planning a new POL program. Designed and developed by JetBlue training specialist Lucy Learned, the POL program is intended to inform new-hires and existing associates about the Principles of Leadership that are the core of creating the JetBlue culture. The program is to be completed by new-hires within their first year of employment, but training is also open to existing associates on a volunteer basis.

The decision to implement the development of a Principles of Leadership training program is based on the following goals voiced by the JetBlue University:

* JetBlue’s “values of Safety, Caring, Integrity, Passion and Fun drive [their] work and the decisions that [they] and [their] most senior executives make every day” (“JetBlue: Inspiration starts here,” n.d.). In order to create the desired JetBlue environment, associates must be educated on how to implement these values and recognize appropriate tactics and situations to set them into action. This helps to guarantee that the values are universal and the customer experience is constant throughout all of JetBlue’s locations.
* JetBlue “embrace[s] five key principles of leadership to empower all crewmembers to make a difference by positively influencing others where they are…in the board room, at the gate, on the aircraft and everywhere in between” (“JetBlue: Inspiration starts here,” n.d.). The Principles of Leadership training program is going to be designed to introduce these five principles to associates to create a positive, inspirational and fulfilling work environment in every tier of the company. The empowerment of each individual employee aids to safeguard the workforce from a turnover, job dissatisfaction and negative peer-to-peer interactions.
* Reintroduce existing associates and team leaders to JetBlue’s culture and ensure that their daily practices are within the expectations of the company.

**Why is an evaluation needed?**

Understanding the success of a project is not just a matter of knowing that all of your associates have completed training. Because of JetBlue’s expansion and immediate need for associate training, decisions at this stage should be focused on improving the Principles of Leadership program rather than deciding whether it is a program worth continuing to pursue. In order to make judgements that will assist in formatting the training to be consistent with JetBlue’s business model, associate expectations, and core values, a formative evaluation should be performed. “Program managers or those who deliver a program can make changes to improve the program based on the evaluation results. [In the case of JetBlue University,] trainers [use] feedback from trainees to change training to improve its application on the job” (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen. 2003. p. 13). Without assurance that your associates were able fully engage in training and are ready to implement it into their job puts the company in a risky position.

In the formative evaluation process of the new Principles of Leadership training program, answers and insight to the following will be addressed:

* How can valuable data from associates be collected to improve training quality? An evaluation can identify areas that need improvement by measuring the various aspects of the program (Horton, 2001).
* Is the training leader using the most effective instructional methods for maintaining interest and imparting associates with JetBlue’s core values and attitudes (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006)?
* Is coordination and sequencing of the training logical and meet the needs of the associates in order for them to best adapt to JetBlue’s core values (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006)?
* Evaluations assist in encouraging participant’s learning. “The very process of evaluating learning focuses attention on results…[and] signals the importance of applying what was learned in training” (Horton, 2001. p. 2).
* An evaluation can assist in justifying the investment in the Principles of Leadership program. “An effective evaluation can prove that training is not a net expense but a strong contributor to profit” (Horton, 2001. p. 2). Exceptional results from your training program will produce JetBlue associates with positive attitudes and values, which will have an impact on customer satisfaction and company growth.

**Recommendations for the Evaluation**

Confirming the success of the Principles of Leadership training program will use a multistep process which Purdue Evaluation Associates is very familiar with implementing. We first recommend that the program participants be surveyed for their reaction to the program directly after completion. The surveys, which act as a “measure of customer satisfaction” (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006. p. 21), will ask various questions, include some relating to program content, instructor effectiveness, and participant understanding. Reactions will be recorded by use of a point scale, along with the option to provide comments. The use of a point scale allows us to numerically compare how effective aspects of the program are to a set of standards, or expectations, which will be determined in conjunction with JetBlue University before the process begins. Because the reactions are an immediate reflection of the associate’s experiences and satisfaction with the Principles of Leadership program, we will be able to gauge how effective the instruction was at reaching and motivating the associates. We will also survey the associates a second time two weeks after completion the Principles of Learning program to gauge their feedback after having gone back to performing their jobs.

The next part of the process involves measuring the comprehension of the associates in regard to JetBlue’s core values and principles of leadership. We recommend engaging the associates in brief assessment and role-play situations. By using these two tools, we will be able to assess “the extent to which participants [have changed] attitudes, improve[d] knowledge, and/or increase[d] skill as a result of attending the program” (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006. p. 22). Assessments will be the tool used to test a combination of attitudes and knowledge, while the role-play will take all three indicators into consideration by engaging associates in situations that will require use of program-learned material to successfully solve each problem. A successful measure of learning will display associates that have retained the information from the POL program and can apply to situations when necessary.

Following the assessment of knowledge comprehension will be the development of a measurement for determining changes in JetBlue’s associates’ behavior after completing the Principles of Leadership program. Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) state in order for a change in behavior to occur, a person must have the desire to change, know what to do and how to do it, be in the proper work environment, and be rewarded for changing (p. 23). Purdue Evaluation Associates recommends using observations, questionnaires and one-on-one interviews as the tools to determine if the conditions listed above have been met by the associates. Successful responses will describe the integration of knowledge from the POL program with how it has been applied to their behavior in the workplace. Finally, results will be tabulated by Purdue Evaluation Associates through additional surveys, interviews and performance monitoring of both associates and managers to determine if the Principles of Leadership are being carried through three months after completion of the program.

The evaluation as a whole will provide JetBlue University with the qualitative and quantitative data that will prove the effectiveness of the Principles of Leadership program, as well as provide suggestions to areas that may be lacking and could use improvement to ensure successful adaptation of the principles and core values by JetBlue Associates. The most important indicator will be based upon JetBlue’s customer satisfaction, which will be assessed through electronic surveys. The customer satisfaction survey will provide valuable insight into the end-user to understand how JetBlue’s principles of leadership and core values positively impact their experiences when flying and dealing with JetBlue associates and managers.

**Recommended Evaluation Framework**

To perform the evaluation, it is recommended that Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick’s (2006) four-level sequence be used. The four-levels of this sequence include: level 1 – reaction, level 2 – learning, level 3 – behavior, and level 4 – results. Each level will provide its own unique insight to JetBlue University’s Principles of Leadership program. Understand that while it may be a time-consuming process, “each level is important and has an impact on the next level. As you move from one level to the next…it provides more valuable information” (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006. p. 21). The information listed below provides an overview of how JetBlue’s unique needs fit into the four-level sequence. The following chart is a quick reference that communicates the framework for the evaluative process from start to finish, including intended methods for data collection. The structure that the four-levels provides ensures that data will be valuable and give insight as to whether changes should be made to the Principles of Learning program, associates are implementing what they have learned, and if the program ultimately assists in driving the mission of JetBlue to the end consumer.

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| **Level** | **Objective** | **Measured Success** | **Data Collection Method** | **Data Sources** | **Timing** |
| 1 | Evaluating reaction: Determine associates’ initial reactions to the POL program by having associates complete electronic surveys with the option to provide additional written comments. | Obtain an average of score of 4 out of 5 for each question to measure satisfaction with program implementation, content and perceived relevance. | Survey, Questionnaire | Associates | Immediately after and 14 days after program completion |
| 2 | Evaluating learning: Determine if associates learned JetBlue’s core values and POL. Assess if are they able to identify the new knowledge and practices through tests administered by evaluators and situational role-play between associates and managers. | Test scores of 80% or better to indicate a solid understanding of the content presented in the POL training. Successful role-play will find the associates/managers performing appropriately based on standards determined by JetBlue University. | Knowledge assessment, role-play simulations | Associates, Managers | During learning sessions, 14 days after program completion |
| 3 | Evaluating behavior: Determine how has the POL program affected associates job performance and behavior. Assure they are able to implement core values and POL into their work environments through observation and questionnaires. A discussion on development between evaluators and associates’ direct manager to gauge availability of support for associates to carry out POL. | Associates and managers create an environment where the POL can thrive. JetBlue University will assist in providing standards of practice to be used as the basis for measurement. | Skills observation, Questionnaire, Interview | Associates, Managers | 60 days upon completion of program |
| 4 | Evaluating Results: Determine the impact the POL program has had on JetBlue and how it contributed to accomplishing company goals. Measure the extent to which the applied POL have increased JetBlue’s customer satisfaction and employee performance through a series of surveys, interviews and performance monitoring between evaluators and associates, managers, and customers. | Successful results will provide qualitative and quantitative data that proves a favorable adoption of POL and core values by associates and managers. Satisfied customers will provide a rating of 80% or better through the electronic surveys. | Surveys, Interview, Questionnaire, Performance monitoring | Associates, Managers, Customers | 90 days upon completion of program |

Data Chart: Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006, “Evaluating a leadership training program,” p. 144-167.

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006, “Evaluating a performance improvement program,” p. 324.

References

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