



Friday, May 14, 2004

Dear All,

*"Are you a Mexi-can or a Mexi-can't?"*

-- Johnny Depp, from the movie *"Once Upon A Time in Mexico"*

There is an increasing level of frustration and an understandable helplessness being felt throughout the rank and file in the cockpits, cubicles, maintenance spaces, crew lounges and especially at home - at the dinner tables.

Don't lose faith.

Delta's pilots are ultimately going to do the right thing to help save Delta Air Lines from filing Chapter 11. The pilots would prefer to let ALPA be their voice -- but when the pilots perceive a glaring void in union leadership and misrepresentation of their wishes, they will force an election of new leaders who can get the job done. There are specific policies and procedures in ALPA's By-Laws to allow the democratic process to work - as it should and will.

Jerry has cleaned house and is trying to put the right people in the right places to lead the company. The pilots should expect and demand the same display of definitive leadership from their own union of representatives - ALPA.

In the interim, here's a humble suggestion for all to consider. Turn your anger, frustration and ill feelings into something positive - a "can do" attitude - which is more important than ever when we are at the low point in our history.

When was the last time we told a fellow Delta employee we appreciate what they do?

This is a simple, powerful action.

I don't know how many Delta employees this message will reach, but maybe it will travel far and wide. Please feel free to pass it on to everyone on your list.

An important contributor to the strength in leadership at Delta will come from the managers in the trenches - in the same manner the Staff Sergeants and Gunnys really run the Marine Corps - not the senior officers.

If you want to know how morale is, don't ask the Major or Lieutenant Colonel, check with the Lance Corporal or Sergeant.

At a time when we all feel beaten down and uncertain about the future, many of us can make an

important difference in daily attitudes if we communicate our appreciation to fellow workers and keep our head up.

Empower the managers, supervisors, directors, A-lines, pilots, and Chief pilots to take action, support their fellow employees, and make smart decisions. Their judgment must be endorsed at each higher level, so it will be respected at the lower levels. That's why they were selected in the first place.

This message is pointed towards anyone who is in a position of daily leadership at the company - from Jerry on down. Your example and tone matters. A lot. But it has to come from the right people who earn our trust -- with both actions and words.

One could list a hundred different ways to do this but I want to keep it short. Below are a few suggestions to think about and encourage action. But don't bother if you don't mean it. If that's the case, go to the bathroom and look in the mirror. Take a good - long - hard look. Pat yourself on the back for accepting the responsibility that goes with being a leader. Then go back out there and be one.

Express a genuine appreciation for their hard work. Not because they are due for an annual review - but because they deserve your support. Your efforts will mean magnitudes to many, many, many folks. A few words of recognition is all it takes sometimes - but we usually don't do it enough - at work or at home.

None of your actions need to be monetary, but in some cases it may be appropriate. If you want to take it a step further, here are a couple thoughts:

Write a note or find a card that says "thank you". Give someone a day off with pay. Let someone go early one day. Buy dinner for your crew. Send flowers to anyone deserving. Buy donuts for the early birds. Bring in a dish of good food to share. Give away tickets to a ballgame. Have lunch or pizza delivered. Send their wife/husband a note that says their spouse does a great job for Delta. Buy someone a plant for their spaces (and then hope it doesn't die). Authorize an S-1 pass. Give a book with a few words written on the inside. Tell someone they matter.

The years go by fast. It's our company. Try to make a difference.

Lead by example.

Now, if Jerry and a few members of the union would just meet for dinner, have a few beers, send each other flowers, and go to a ballgame together - we might make progress.

Self-serving agendas are destructive to any organization - large or small. More and more folks are asking each other - where's the leadership from either side to break the stalemate? Why does it seem so clear to the rest of us what needs to happen?

I'm still cautiously optimistic. But the sand in the hour glass is running south.

*"Time is fleeting. Madness - takes its toll."*

-- from the musical, *"The Rocky Horror Picture Show"*

Respectfully, Mike Stark

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