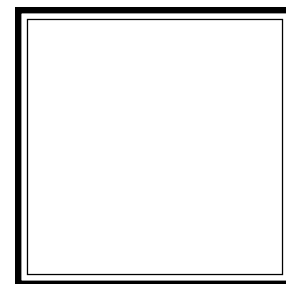


Communication and Other Problems



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It's been several months since I've had a chance to write an article for *US AIRWAVES*. It's not that there hasn't been anything to write about. The problem is that there has been so much to write about—so much so that it has consumed a tremendous amount of time. And as you know, your ALPA volunteers must take time out of their personal lives to do their ALPA work.

This is particularly hard when our management decides to attack our contractual rights such as your jumpseat benefits. Volunteer time gets used up as well as your dues money to get our Legal Department to fight for our benefits which have been paid for in our contract negotiations.

The attack on your jumpseat rights began in earnest when the Company made its preparations to change to the SABRE computer system. During this time our management assured the Jumpseat Committee that there would be no degradation in our jumpseat benefits. Not only that but that some things would actually work better under SABRE. Your Jumpseat Committee volunteered to help in any way needed to be sure this actually happened. Although offered several times, our help was never embraced.

As we know the switch to SABRE was less than satisfactory in just about every way, including jumpseat. Most of the jumpseat problems were rather small, but still significant and needed to be corrected. So began the year of despair, disillusion and determination.

Month after month went by without the Company addressing the concerns of this committee. Certainly there were more things to fix than just our jumpseat problems. But we do have a signed contract and it appeared there were plenty of resources available to correct the Company's concerns. They also had a year

to make sure our jumpseat rights were protected when the time came to make the switch.

Finally when there was no other alternative we were forced to file a grievance to compel the Company to devote the resources necessary to solve our jumpseat concerns. This is an expensive last resort. It is a sad event for a committee that has strived tirelessly to make our jumpseat policy work both for our pilots and our airline—a policy that has worked well for over 10 years with very little change. Only a determined management could throw a wrench into the mechanism of this policy and expect our pilot group to accept the broken results. Only a *more* determined pilot group could prevent that management from being successful.

In January I had a meeting with Captain Art Lunney, then our Senior Director of Flight Operations. Captain Lunney was very receptive to our jumpseat concerns and promised that he would try to correct that the ones he could. A few weeks later Captain Lunney retired without correcting any of our problems.

The weeks, and then months, went by without any meaningful attention from our management. Finally a grievance was filed and a hearing was set for June with Captain Greg Gibson, our V-P of Flight Operations.

At this hearing Captain Gibson was similarly receptive as Captain Lunney. Very shortly after this meeting the committee heard that Captain Gibson was going to direct Captain Jerry Fenzel, our Manager of Flight Operations, to meet with me to correct the numerous jumpseat problems.

This meeting occurred in July with Captain Fenzel stating that all of our concerns would be dealt with except for the new policy restricting the jumpseat to online pilots only on “weight restricted” flights. This change of policy was instituted the day we switched over to SABRE.

Coincidentally, this is American Airlines' policy.

We have very firm grounds to demand that our policy be returned to the way it was.

First of all our contract language guarantees our policy will be no more restrictive than what was in effect on January 1, 1989. At that time all jumpseat riders always went no matter the weight condition of the flight. Remember now, the Company just signed a new contract with us and had the opportunity to renegotiate that language if they wanted to go about changing it honestly.

Next, there is Letter of Agreement 1 of our contract. It has been in effect since February of 1986 and, among other things, guarantees that all our jumpseat riders will always be able to go when a flight has a weight problem. Again, an honorable management team would have used our most recent negotiations to make any proposal to "buy back" this benefit that our pilots have continued to pay for for almost fifteen years.

Finally there is past practice. Since we have enjoyed this benefit for many years it is not something the Company can just decide to change, even if we did not have the above two protections in our contract. Just changing our policy in the FOM does not wipe out your rights. Remember this if you have a "weight restricted" flight and a jumpseat rider from another airline.

Any one of the above is enough to guarantee our jumpseat rights when a flight is "weight restricted." But there should be one more—respect. Respect for the hard-working pilots of this Company. No matter how much I may dislike it, I deliver what has been agreed to in our contract. And like many of us there is a lot in it that I don't like. Too bad. I'll hope to get more the next time. The same thing goes for our jumpseat rights. I hope we can get more in our next contract, but until then I will respect the rules the way they are. Shouldn't the Company do the same?

Now back to our story...

In the past, a part of the FAA-required training for new hires has been riding on jumpseats observing actual line flights. This has always been done with the new hires having to ride space available even though the observation was required.

The FAA no longer requires this observation time. Curiously, our management still encourages our new hires to attempt some jumpseat observation and had been scheduling them us-

ing positive space jumpseat reservations and therefore bumping our pilots off jumpseats and preventing others from reserving these flights.

At the jumpseat grievance hearing in June, I made it clear to Captain Gibson that this policy was unacceptable and that new hires should have to reserve their jumpseats themselves through the jumpseat IVR reservations system, just like all other US Airways pilots. This would give them the same priority, A-1.

In July, Captain Fenzel informed me that our management agreed and new hires would book their own jumpseats. This had been communicated to the Training Department.

In August, I received a copy of a letter from Captain Gibson to Captain Doug Mowery, our Grievance Committee Chairman, detailing the status of our jumpseat grievance. For the first part of the grievance Captain Gibson denied the ability to take jumpseat riders from other carriers when the flight is "weight restricted." This was no surprise. It had been consistent since December when our management unilaterally instituted this change to our policy.

The next part of the grievance letter informed us that our management would now attempt to not bump our pilots off jumpseats when they schedule new hires for their observation flights. This was a blind-sided shot from our management. It was completely unacceptable and contrary to every previous communication I had had with our management.

I concluded there was a serious communication problem either within our management, between myself and management, between myself and the MEC or between the MEC and management and requested someone higher up than myself to attempt to correct this.

When our MEC Chairman inquired, our management told him that I had been the one who misunderstood. The bubble burst since there had been another ALPA official present to back up my understanding. Next, our management attempted to deny our pilots their rights because they have a large number of new hires and want to institute this program. Sorry, but that isn't a reason to break a contract. And if this was so important why was I repeatedly told I was right and that it had already been stopped?

So even after filing, and winning, a grievance I find at least one of our problems still being illegally continued by the Company.

Do you sense a little frustration on my part? There's still more...

One of the smaller problems our pilots have had since the change to SABRE is the fact that

“Curiously, our management still encourages our new hires to attempt some jumpseat observation and had been scheduling them using positive space jumpseat reservations and therefore bumping our pilots off jumpseats and preventing others from reserving these flights.”

“Ever since my first complaint about this to our management in December they have consistently agreed that this boarding pass is not required.”

SABRE is programmed to print a boarding pass for jumpseat riders. Again, this is American Airlines’ policy and our Company didn’t reprogram this for us. It has caused confusion among many of our gate agents who had been told by their American Airlines instructors that this boarding pass was required. It may be at AA, but not AAA!

Ever since my first complaint about this to our management in December they have consistently agreed that this boarding pass is not required. Even so, as you might guess, they have dragged their feet on correcting it and I had to specifically include it in our grievance. Remember now that in June Captain Gibson directed Captain Fenzel to fix this as part of our winning this in the grievance. And in July in my meeting with Captain Fenzel he reaffirmed that it was going to be corrected. And in August Captain Gibson sent the letter granting us this and the other fixes....

In September, after numerous hours of work by your ALPA volunteers and even more numerous inconveniences to our pilots, what do we hear from the Company: They offer to allow our pilots to ride jumpseats without a SABRE

printed boarding pass if we will drop our grievance on the “weight restricted” flight issue!

We don’t have enough pilots, flight attendants, mechanics, maintenance hangars or parts to operate the airline. I no longer wonder why. Our management is too consumed with playing games. I’d like to believe that I could have done some very positive work for our pilot group *and* my company with the many hours I’ve spent in these games.

Here was another example of a problem that had been grieved and won and still the Company, months later, has not corrected it and then tries to barter the correction of it for something else. Remember, these problems have been ongoing since last December!

Where do we go from here? That’s for you to decide. Let your ALPA reps know what importance you place on your jumpseat benefits. They determine the direction your Jumpseat Committee takes. And your determination is the power that makes things happen.



Here is a list of some of the jumpseat problems the Company agreed to correct months ago:

- The incorrect message SABRE sends the gate that no jumpseat riders are allowed when a flight is “weight restricted.” (This has caused many of *our* pilots to have problems.)
- The jumpseat reservations system sometimes allows multiple primary bookings.
- The jumpseat reservations system sometimes puts the same pilot in both the primary and alternate position.
- A Positive Space jumpseat reservation does not preclude someone from booking a primary reservation.
- The confusing prompts for booking a flight that flies past midnight.
- Stop SABRE from printing a “boarding pass” for jumpseat riders.
- Program SABRE to print the jumpseat reservations on the flight release.
- Program SABRE to display on a dedicated screen the jumpseat reservations to eliminate the confusion about positive space cabin reservations.
- New hire pilots are to book their observation flights themselves through the reservation IVR system and will have an A1 priority.