

# Executive Summary of Flight Attendant Survey

---

**Hart Research** conducted the survey

- Survey was conducted April 22 – May 8, 2014
- Very significant sample size completed survey
- Survey focus: Reasons why TA failed to ratify
- Survey respondents closely matched demographics of FA group
- Low job satisfaction was evident in the vast majority of survey takers
- Results did not yield great surprises: Pay and Sick Leave (SL) topped list of reasons
- While Pay and SL were top reasons, strong dissatisfaction with other provisions was strongly held
- An approximate '70% NO vote rate' was represented in all pay steps
- Hot buttons included 480 changes, Open Time, JA, insurance premium liability, attendance policy, management flying and no increase to the 401(k) match
- Trust of management a serious concern
- Flight Attendants see AFA relationship with management as too close/ aligned
- Strong sentiment that expectations were held in check at management's request during the 2006 Agreement and Extension Agreement. Flight Attendants feel they were promised that they would be rewarded once the company was "out of the financial tunnel"
- No single smoking gun issue. Rather a collection of significant concerns by the membership

# Executive Summary of Flight Attendant Survey

---

**Hart Research** conducted the survey

Survey Dates: April 22 – May 8, 2014

Significant sample size completed survey

## **Survey Background**

After the failure of the December Tentative Agreement reached between Alaska Airlines and the AFA, AFA retained Hart Research Group to conduct a scientific survey of the flight attendant group. Hart is a well-regarded and established independent polling company. Hart and the AFA Negotiating Committee worked together to structure a survey which would highlight the fundamental reasons the TA failed to pass, help establish bargaining priorities for a second round of mediation, and assess the membership's satisfaction with AFA and management in addition to the normal demographic information.

## **About the Survey**

AFA members had the option of participating in a confidential phone survey or one online. Each flight attendant was assigned a unique identifier code to use in completing the survey to ensure the survey was only completed once. After the survey results were amassed, Hart weighted the results to provide an accurate and unbiased assessment of the attitudes of the flight attendants regarding the failed TA specifically, and work life in general. However, the overwhelming number of responses required minimal weighting. The survey was completely confidential and AFA does not know how any specific member responded.

## **Survey Respondents**

Remarkably, the respondent population quite closely matched the flight attendant demographics in the areas of reserve/line holder - senior/junior - high/mid/low time fliers - male/female - Yes/No voters, and was proportionate to the base populations. A significant sample size completed the survey prompts which translated into an extraordinarily high percentage for such an exercise.

## **Survey Results:**

### **Broad Point**

Hart was surprised by the very low 'job satisfaction' numbers and posited that there was a direct correlation between that and expectations: Since workers were starting from a 'less happy place,' it would take more to *make them feel adequately compensated for their work*. Surprisingly, an approximate 70% NO vote rate held steady across all pay steps, even steps 5,6,7 and 8, which saw the largest increases.

# Executive Summary of Flight Attendant Survey

---

## Top Issues

For the most part, the survey results did not yield any great surprises. Overwhelmingly, Pay was at the top of the list for reasons driving the NO vote. Sick Leave being tied to the 480 TFP threshold and the split banks, as well as the continuous occurrence restriction were the second most significant generators of discontent.

Not much farther down the list, issues with the insurance premium increases, all 480 TFP changes, attendance policy alterations, management flying, specific open time and JA changes, management flying, no 401(k) increase and a signing bonus which many considered insufficient all combined to rally the vast majority of flight attendants to vote NO.

Particular to the JA and Open time sections, the TA provisions were not rejected wholesale. The flight attendants voiced discontent with the OT Quartile System and how the various LOAs interacted if the LOA TA provision was canceled by management one year from implementation. Rather, they preferred going back to the system in place today if the new system was rejected by management. The survey found that this was driven by the flight attendants' distrust of management and the thought that negotiations on a replacement system would drag on. The new JA provisions in the TA were conditionally acceptable as long as the JA trips were offered in premium OT prior to JA assignment, there was some limited immunity from JA (as opposed to today's complete possibility) and there was some protection for those who had been JA'd.

## Issues of Trust and Communication

Interestingly, the group overwhelmingly trusts AFA to represent their interests while a fewer than a quarter trust Inflight management or top airline executives to be their champions. The large majority of respondents indicated that they relied on e-mails (*Negotiations Updates*) from the union for accurate information pertaining to contract negotiations and TA specifics. Many of those individuals voted Yes on the TA. However, a sizable minority indicated that they relied on TA Talk and other non-union sponsored outlets for most of their information and the vast majority of those individuals voted No on the TA.

## Conclusion

The survey results indicated there was no single 'smoking gun.' Rather, the vast majority of voters found a couple of items highly objectionable and then also indicated that additional provisions contributed to the negative vote. Prevalent among almost all voters in the mid to upper years of seniority was the overwhelming sentiment that they had held expectations in check during the company's financially struggling years and the promised payoff had not been honored.

AFA has invested considerable resources into this costly project. Nothing less than a scientific survey done by an independent firm would have been appropriate at this precipitous juncture. This venture was undertaken to ensure best practices in our initiative of achieving TA2 with the most accurate information possible.

# Executive Summary of Flight Attendant Survey

---