

Chicago



Rome

Boarding Pass



Delta Airlines

“Protected Together, Connected Together”
Crisis Communication



Passenger Name:
John Doe

Flight:
A1234

Seat:
1A

Gate:
A 12

Date:
April 2nd, 2025



Presented by Kelsey, Theresa, and Janine

COMM 210

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Did anyone fly during
Covid 19?



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Introduction



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What is crisis communication?

Managing or releasing information in a way that could save a company's reputation in times of unexpected events, emergencies, or global issues.

Communication

Trust

Reputation



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Delta Airlines

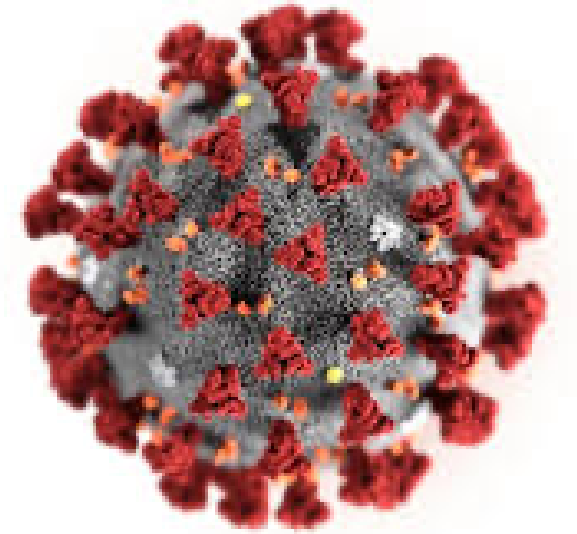
- Major American airline
- Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia
- Global, extensive, strong customer service
- Found in 1925 as Huff Daland Dusters
- 325 destinations in 52 countries on six continents.
- Top U.S. airline by the Wall Street Journal
- Mission Statement: Purpose-driven brand, connect people to opportunities, lowering carbon footprint, furthering an equitable work environment, diversity and inclusion.





The Crisis

- Covid was completely sweeping the globe and airlines were essentially hopeless in keeping their business afloat.
- Delta decided to stop flights to China.
- Information was changing too quickly.
- People were panicking about travel plans.
- All airlines were stopping all flights to Europe.
- Revenues were down 95% in two weeks for Delta.



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SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Delta is a well known airline
- Everyone in the world was mitigating the same crisis
- Known for strong customer service
- Have the resources to pour into cleaning and advertising.

Opportunities

- Showcase that Delta goes above and beyond for public safety
- Gain revenue from still operating through the pandemic
- Get more people who want to work for such a caring brand
- Media coverage and awareness

Weaknesses

- The pandemic halts almost everyone
- People are scared of flying
- Employees may not want to get vaccinated
- People may want a vaccine mandate to fly.

Threats

- The pandemic getting worse with new strains
- Other airlines doing more to combat the pandemic
- They could receive backlash for vaccinating
- They could lose employees.



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The Campaign

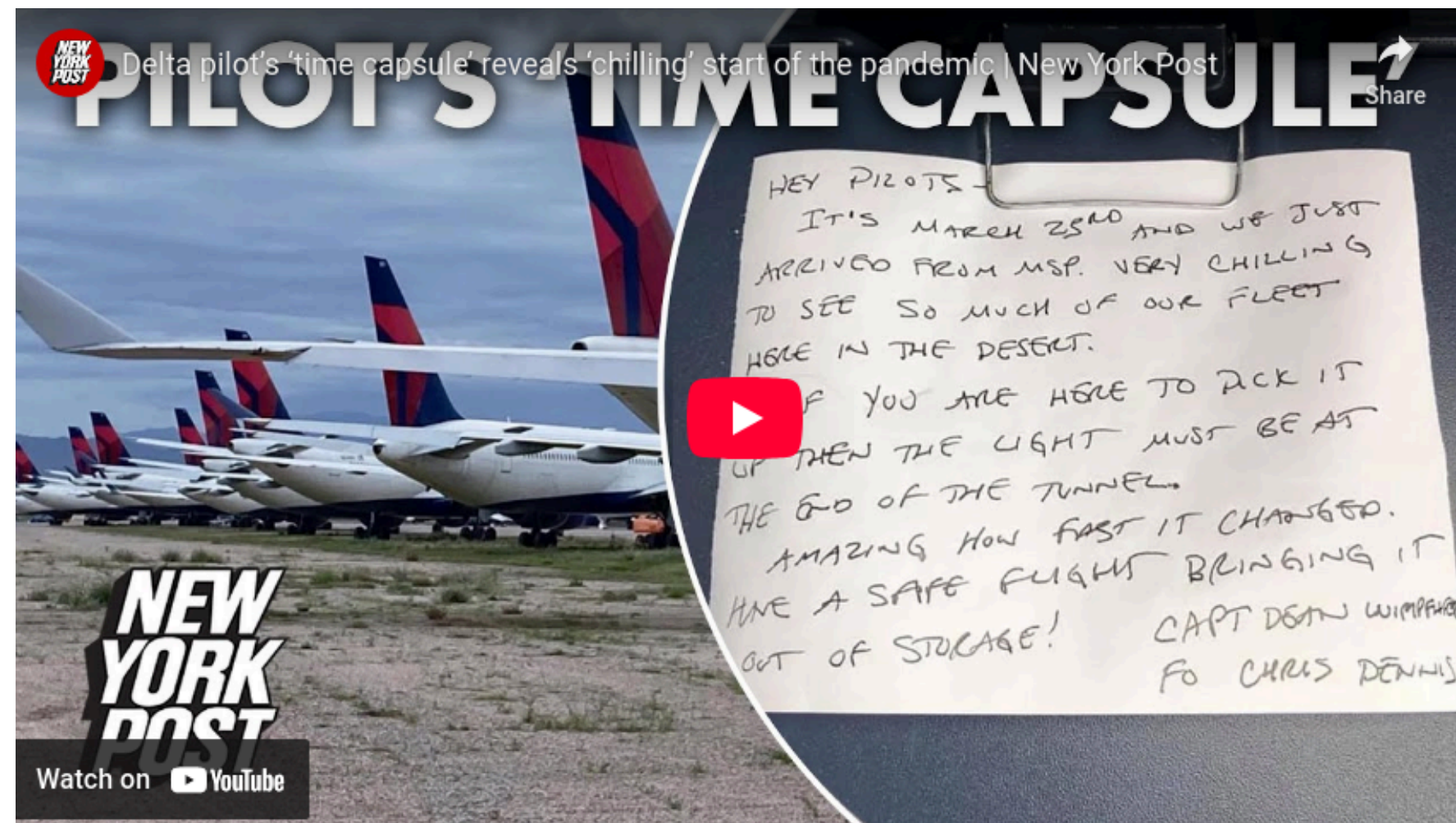


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Why the Campaign: Background



- Showcase family dynamic of Delta
- They wanted to “put our finger on the pulse of the employees.”
- Delta did not want to mandate the vaccine
- Only 50% of Delta employees were willing to receive the vaccine



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Main Themes of Campaign

Public Health

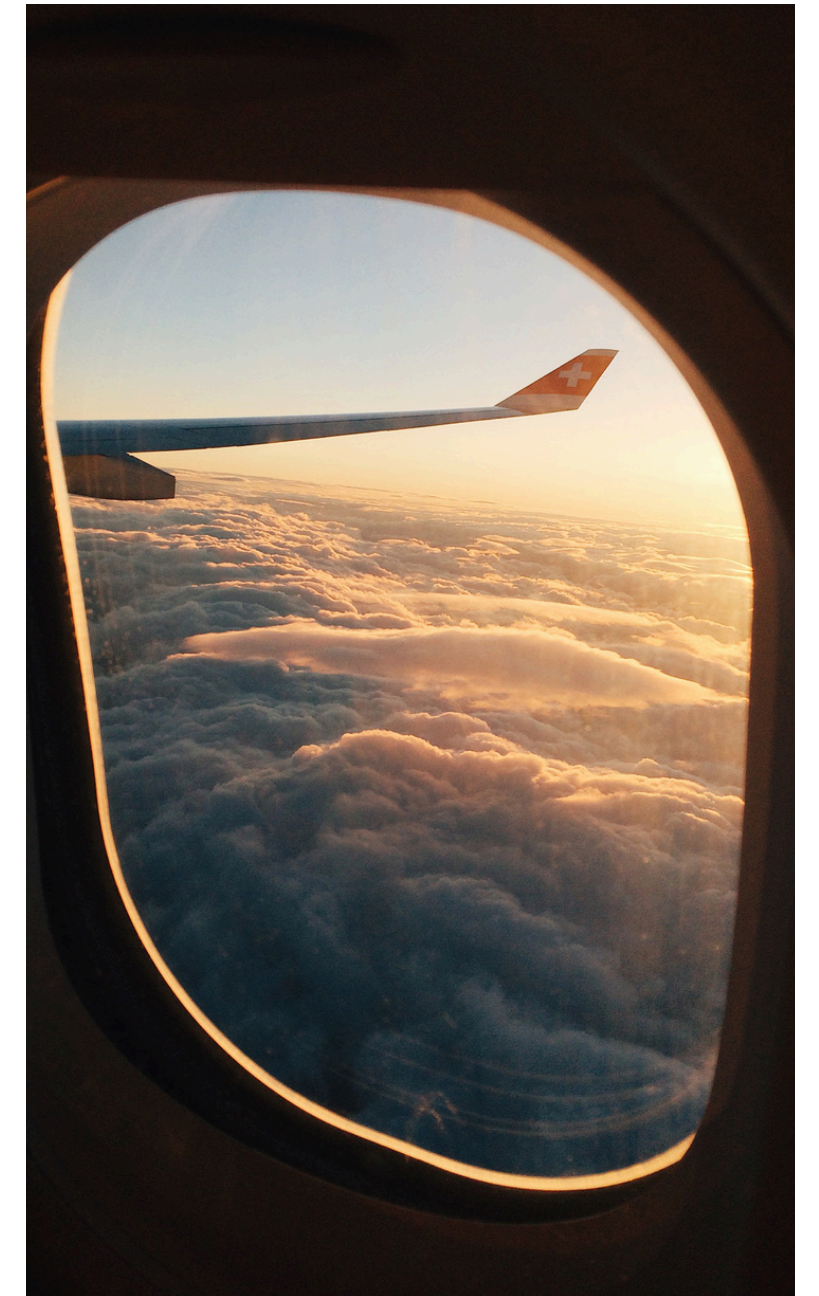
Employee relations

Mitigate global health crisis

Positive work environment

Structure: Company Relations and Media Coverage

Gain attention about why Delta is doing more than other airlines **and** build a stronger sense of community and trust within Delta's workers.





Strategic Planning

1. Goals

- Enhance passenger safety

2. Strategies

- Delta implemented various measures
- Delta provided updates on travel requirements
- Delta unveiled an AI-powered travel journey.

3. Objectives

- Ensure that in addition to having great flight experience, and passengers feel safe
- Be perceived as a top brand who cares about the health and safety of their passengers.

4. Tactics

- Free COVID testing for employees during this process
- Encouraged employees to get vaccinated
- Kept planes at 60% capacity while competitors were filling the planes.
- Taking further precautions at the gate and while boarding
- Cleaning the plane between each flight





Strategic Planning

1. Goals

- Putting people before profit

2. Strategies

- Flexibility with cancellations
- Easy refunds
- Minimize disruptions to customers' travel plans
- Provide information about all safety protocols/enforcement

3. Objectives

- Ensure customers feel safe and confident in flying with Delta during the pandemic
- Position Delta as a responsible corporate entity that cares about its passengers' well-being
- Retain loyal customers and attract new ones by offering flexible travel options, customer support, and transparency during challenging times

4. Tactics

- Clear Communication of COVID-19 Measures
- Launch a social media campaign focused on the concept. Delta could run a series of videos featuring real-life stories of customers or frontline workers who have benefited from the airline's safety measures and support during the pandemic





Targets

Employees: They wanted to make their employees feel like a family within Delta and they wanted them to feel safe to come to work everyday.

The public: They wanted everyone in the entire world to feel like Delta was the right choice for airline and that they would be safe flying during a pandemic with them. Particularly, they wanted to target individuals who may have had flight anxiety during the global crisis.





Implementation

- Testing sites
- Vaccination sites in airport break rooms
- Conducted surveys
- Produced commercials
- Conducted communication and research
- Found employees needed to feel safe getting the vaccine
- Changed existing procedures that no longer applied
- Wrote, approved, and issued communications within a matter of hours



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Advertising and Supplementary Materials

Covid 19 When you think of an airline

<https://www.ispot.tv/ad/qY1D/delta-air-lines-change>

- “The Steepest Climb: How Delta Air Lines Navigated the Global Pandemic
- Available for viewing on Delta’s In-Flight Entertainment
- Produced and directed by award-winning documentarian Josh Seftel of Smartypants Pictures
- Behind-the-scenes story of the company’s response to the COVID-19 crisis, including heartfelt testimonials.

 Keep Climbing



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The Results





Results: Measuring Effectiveness, Outcome, and Impact

- Delta maintained open, two-way communication with employees through weekly town hall meetings led by CEO Ed Bastian and other leaders. These sessions provided updates and addressed employee concerns, fostering trust and encouraging vaccination.
- The company introduced various incentives, including cash and travel prizes, to motivate employees to get vaccinated.
- By implementing these strategies, Delta successfully vaccinated over 95% of its workforce, significantly reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission among employees and passengers.
- Delta honored its commitment not to mandate vaccinations, ensuring no employees were terminated for remaining unvaccinated.
- The voluntary approach, combined with incentives and surcharges, preserved employee morale and trust, avoiding the potential negative impact of strict mandates.
- Achieving a high vaccination rate contributed to safer working conditions and reassured customers of Delta's commitment to health and safety.

Delta Air Lines' multifaceted approach, emphasizing transparent communication, accessibility, and a balance of incentives and surcharges, effectively increased employee vaccination rates while maintaining positive employee relations and operational stability.



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Conclusion





What We Would Change

Because vaccination kind of became a political debate, we may suggest Delta didn't lean so hard into making a vaccinated team part of their brand identity.

We also suggest that Delta put out more signage or advertising rather than just TV commercials to really get their changes across because we do not believe this to be a very well know campaign.





Newest Developments

- Covid-19 vaccination no longer required to fly with delta airlines
- Delta's fast-response allowed for minimal financial damage, with loser lower than other industry averages
- Their post current crisis: crash
 - February 17
 - all 76 passengers safely evacuated
 - ground crews maintained and put out the fire
 - money given to those in the crash (\$30,000/passenger, medical bills covered)
- Named "Top U.S. Airline Company" by fortune in 2023 and 2024
- "First/Business and Premium Economy Passenger Satisfaction" in the J.D. Power North America Airline Satisfaction Study





Questions for class

1. Did covid 19 affect your flying plans?
2. What were your opinions about Delta Airlines prior to this presentation?
3. Are you more or less likely to choose Delta over other airlines? If not what airlines do you prefer and why?
4. Do you think Delta effectively handled Covid 19 to the point they stood out?
5. Were you aware of Deltas vaccination rates?
6. Is sickness still a factor for traveling to you?



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