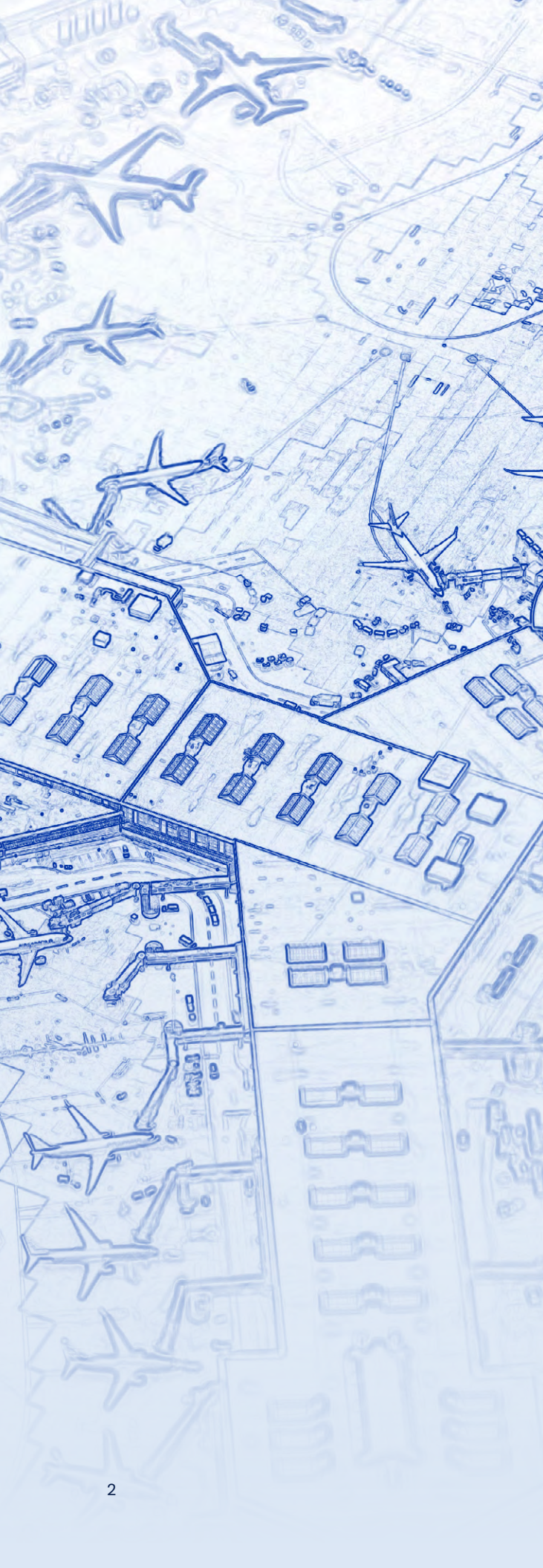




Looking [↑]Up

The State of Airline Customer Satisfaction in 2025



For airlines, 2025 promises to be a pivotal year of recovery and expansion.

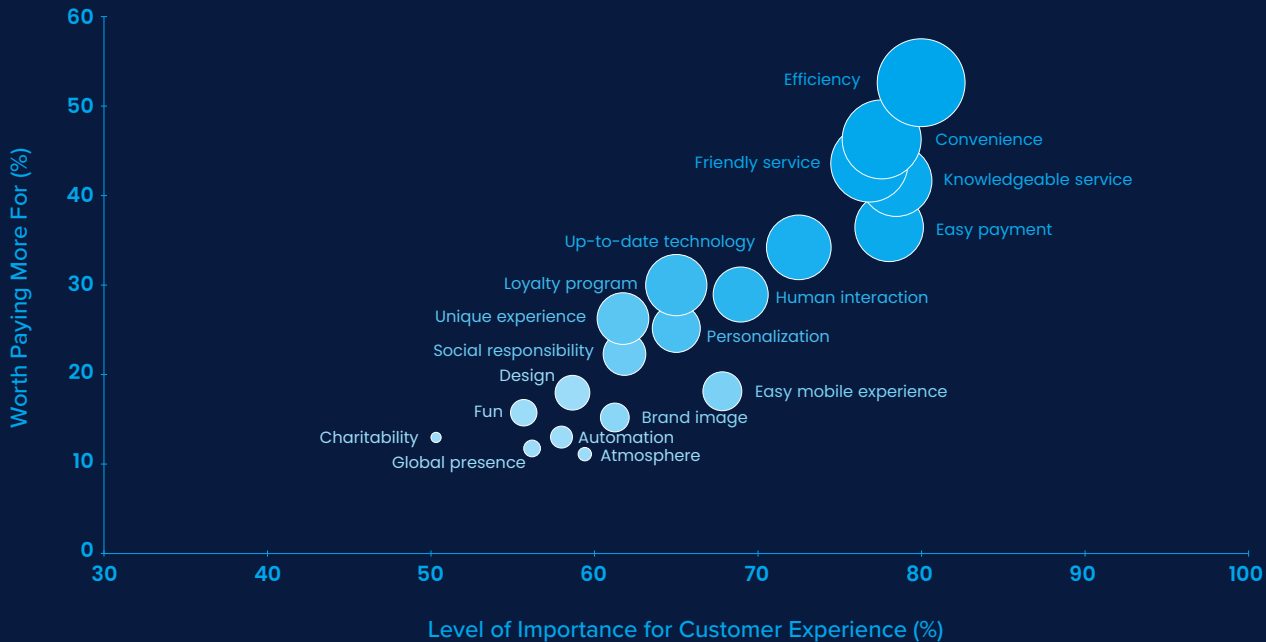
With global **travel expected to reach 9.7 billion passengers predicted in 2025**, the aviation industry is witnessing robust recovery and growth—even surpassing pre-pandemic vitality.

In June, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) revised its **profitability projections for the airline industry for 2024**, forecasting record-breaking levels of air travel. The IATA also predicted **that industry revenues hit an unprecedented \$996 billion in 2024**, marking a historic high for the sector.

The strong growth outlook reflects both the increased demand for leisure and business travel, as well as the expansion of airline capacity to meet this demand. Key regions, including North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific, are expected to see the greatest upticks in air traffic.

While the forecasted surge in passenger numbers and revenue highlights the sector's resilience and adaptability in the face of previous challenges—including the COVID-19 pandemic and economic fluctuations—is the passenger experience keeping pace?

What People Value Most in Their Customer Experience



The Current State of General Customer Satisfaction

A recent survey from **PwC's Consumer Intelligence research** found that nearly 80% of customers look for efficiency, convenience, knowledgeable and friendly service, and easy payment options when they fly. While technology advancements like website design and loyalty programs are important, these are not meaningful if speed, convenience, and a good customer experience are neglected.

The Current State of Customer Satisfaction for Airlines

There are ways airlines can set themselves apart and improve customer satisfaction. First, it's important to know what customers are looking for that can differentiate the customer experience. The airline industry's rebound from the disruptions caused by the pandemic have highlighted new strengths and areas for improvement when it comes to the passenger experience.

Source: PwC's | Consumer Intelligence Research Study 2023

Airline customer satisfaction is at an all time high for cabin cleanliness and courteous customer service.

Airlines have placed greater emphasis on maintaining hygienic environments and training staff to deliver exceptional service. This focus on health and customer care has contributed to a positive flying experience for many passengers, helping restore confidence in air travel.

In fact, the **American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)** reports that overall customer satisfaction is currently at an all-time high for airlines in key

areas such as cabin cleanliness and courteous customer service.

"Airline customer satisfaction has soared to new levels, achieving scores higher than those seen even before the pandemic disrupted travel."

– Forrest Morgeson, Associate Professor of Marketing at Michigan State University and Research Emeritus at the ACSI

Airlines are setting themselves apart with friendly staff.

Airlines can't control every aspect of the air travel experience, such as weather delays or air traffic, but they can significantly influence customer satisfaction through their staff.

The **J.D. Power 2024 North America Airline Satisfaction Survey** highlights the positive, lasting impact that well-trained and friendly staff can have on passengers. By focusing on excellent customer service, airlines can differentiate themselves in a competitive market.

"There are many aspects to the overall air travel experience that airlines cannot control, but one area in which they can profoundly influence is the positive effect that airline staff has on passengers."

– Michael Taylor, Senior Managing Director of Travel, Hospitality, Retail and Customer Service For J.D. Power

Attentive, professional staff create happier, more loyal customers, especially as travelers grow more cautious with strained wallets.

There's still a gap between customer expectations and what airlines deliver.

Despite improvements in some areas, there still remains a large gap between customer expectations and what airlines deliver. While passengers appreciate friendly staff and clean cabins, they still expect more in terms of personalized service and operational efficiency.

PwC's Consumer Intelligence research finds the largest gap between experience and expectations for the airline industry—33%— particularly in areas such as timeliness, in-flight comfort, and communication regarding delays or disruptions.

Why does closing the gap between experience and expectation matter?

Airlines that offer an exceptional custom experience can command up to a 10% price premium, reflecting consumers' willingness to pay more for better experiences.

This premium is not just about the immediate financial gain but also fostering increased customer loyalty, which is critical in a highly competitive industry.

PwC's research also finds that loyalty is fragile. One in three consumers will abandon a brand they love after a single bad experience, underscoring the importance of consistently delivering high-quality service to maintain customer trust and long-term profitability.

10% more

is what airline passengers are willing to pay for a better experience.

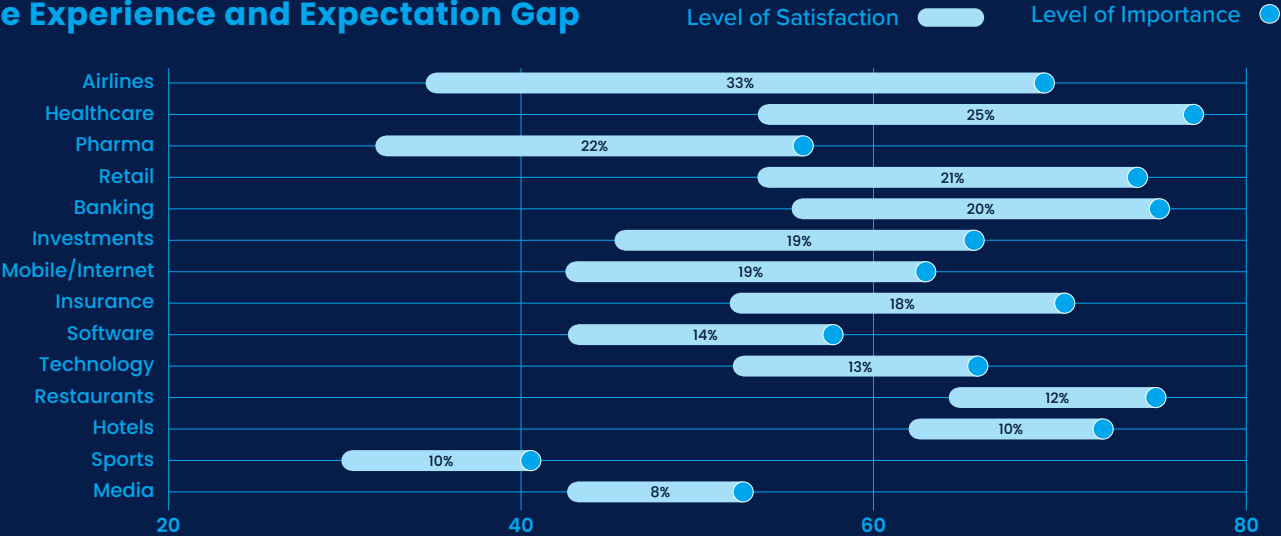
1 in 3 consumers

will abandon a brand they love after just one bad experience.

A 33% expectation gap

makes airlines the top outlier in consumer dissatisfaction.

The Experience and Expectation Gap



The expectation: Speed, convenience, and helpful staff

More than 70% of consumers value speed, convenience, and helpful employees, according to **PwC's Consumer Intelligence research**.

While passengers increasingly value meaningful connections with staff, whether during booking, check-in, or in-flight service, technology must be working in the background to make these interactions truly seamless.

By integrating advanced tools across multiple platforms, airlines can empower their employees to focus on delivering personalized service, while technology manages operational details. This approach ensures smooth, efficient interactions across all touchpoints, enhancing the overall customer journey—whether online, at the airport, or in the air—by combining human engagement with smart technological solutions.

TA Connections' Solution

TA Inflight:

Arm crew teams with deep passenger insights to deliver personalized service

TA Inflight provides information like birthday dates, customer loyalty programs, first time and frequent flier information for a more personal inflight service.

TA Disruption Hub:

Turn difficult experiences like flight disruptions into an opportunity to build trust

TA Disruption Hub automatically provides a comprehensive and actionable resolution plan to both passengers and agents when a disruption occurs—based on the airline's criteria for customer satisfaction and cost, and the country's regulatory requirements.

See how one airline dramatically improved the passenger experience with TA Disruption Hub.



The expectation: Competitive prices

When it comes to choosing a flight, price remains the most important consideration for consumers. 46% of respondents ranked price as their top priority when booking a flight according to the 2024 **Airlines For America Consumer Survey**—but the gap between stated preferences and actual behavior suggests that even more passengers prioritize cost.

The survey asked customers to rate the importance of prices and fees when selecting an airline, and 88% of respondents ranked cost as “very important” or “somewhat important.”

This strong emphasis on affordability is also reflected in investor behavior. Low-cost, budget-friendly airlines have become increasingly popular in recent IPOs and market start-ups, as the demand for economical travel options grows. Investors recognize that consumers are more likely to choose airlines that offer competitive pricing, especially in an industry where cost can be a key differentiator.

Price sensitivity remains a driving force in both consumer choice and industry dynamics. Airlines must find ways to offer value while keeping fares low, as this will likely continue to be a critical factor in maintaining a competitive edge in the market.

TA Connections' Solution

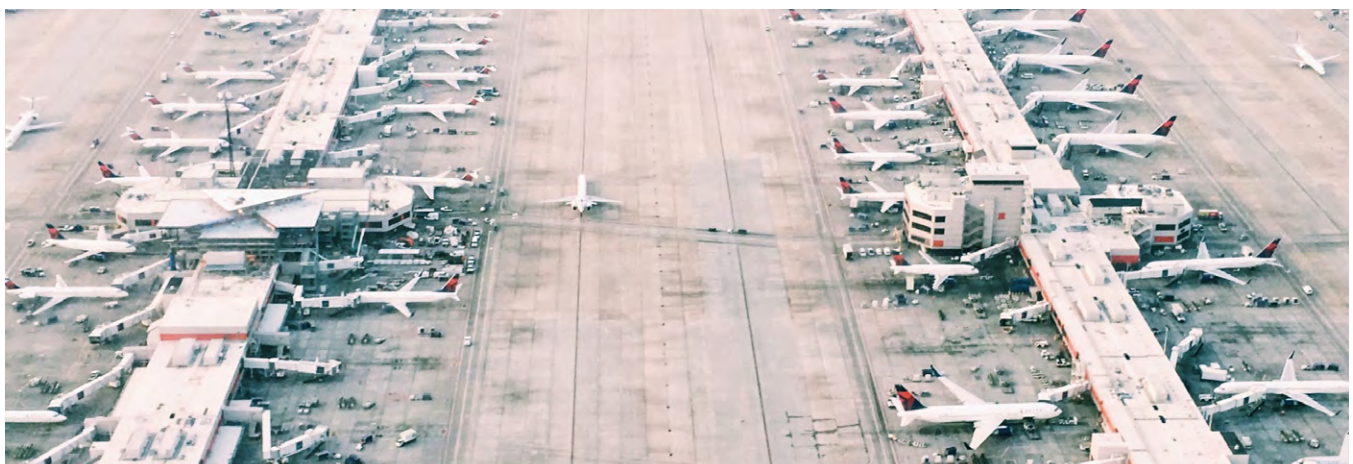
TA Disruption Hub and TA Digital Hub: While Price is Important, Brand Trust Also Matters

70% of passengers report checking only one or two websites before booking a flight. This behavior may stem from the time investment required for extensive shopping, but more likely reflects consumer trust in familiar brands.

As customers gain confidence in certain airlines or platforms, they make faster decisions with fewer comparisons, even in price-sensitive markets.

TA Disruption Hub monitors flight operations, detects disruptions early, and communicates complete resolution plans to passengers—often before they’re aware of an issue—turning potential negatives into positives.

TA Digital Hub (TA Inflight, TA Ramp, and TA Airport) enhances the entire passenger journey—from faster check-ins with roaming agents, to personalized in-flight service, to seamless baggage delivery—building stronger trust in your airline.



The expectation: Seamless resolution during flight disruptions

Flight disruptions are a leading cause of customer dissatisfaction, accounting for nearly 36% of negative reviews on TripAdvisor, a sharp rise from 20% in 2019. Nearly one in three reviews mentioned frustrations with delayed, canceled, or missed flights, underscoring the increasing impact of these issues on travelers. While disruptions are sometimes unavoidable, how airlines respond can make a significant difference.

Prompt communication, alternative solutions, and proactive customer care during disruptions can transform a negative situation into a positive customer experience, setting an airline apart from its competitors.

With flight disruptions at a 20-year high, airlines face growing pressure to manage these challenges effectively.

TA Connections' Solution

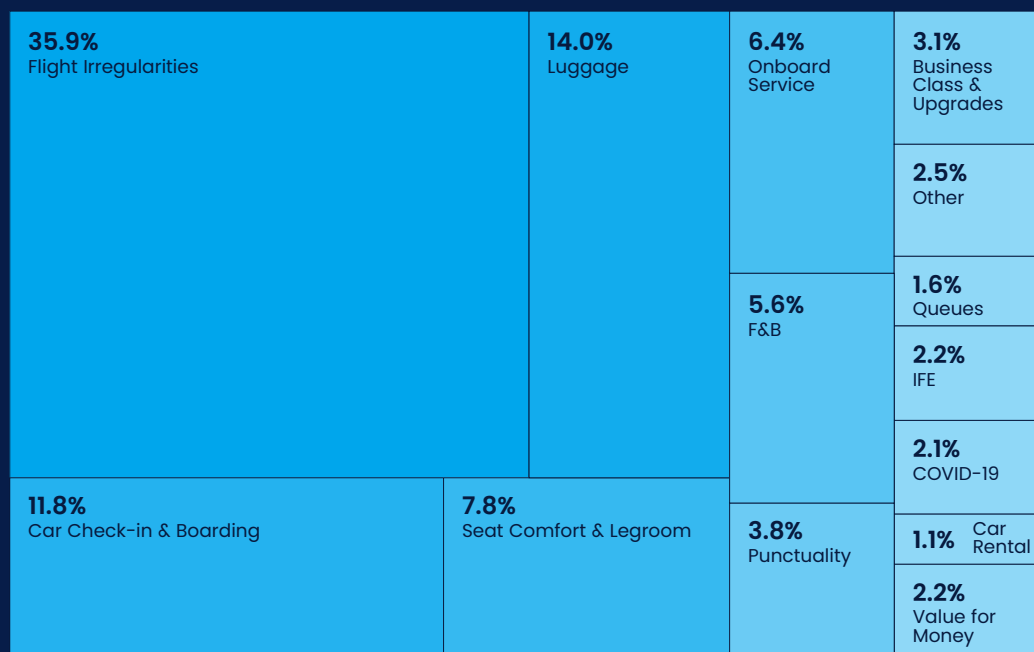
TA Disruption Hub: Proactive, automated passenger disruption handling

The TA Disruption Hub streamlines flight disruption management by proactively reviewing day-of-operations and flight plans months ahead for potential ticketing or disruption issues.

The solution formulates a comprehensive plan for managing disruption events, including flight rebooking, hotel and transportation arrangements, meal vouchers, and more. Plans are relayed directly to passengers through a white-labeled service, ensuring that communication comes from a trusted source during times of uncertainty. This speedy, proactive disruption management not only enhances the passenger experience but also reinforces brand loyalty amidst challenging circumstances.



Share of All Airline Reviews on Tripadvisor by Topic



Source: Lufthansa Innovation Hub Analysis, TNMT.com, Tripadvisor, Quid Discover

The expectation: Seamless baggage handling

According to **SITA's 2023 Baggage IT Insights report**, the rate of mishandled baggage has risen to 7.6 per 1,000 passengers, up from 5.6 in 2019. This increase highlights ongoing challenges in baggage handling processes within the airline industry, exacerbated by the complexities of post-pandemic travel.

As passenger volumes increase, airlines are facing heightened pressure to improve operational efficiency and enhance the customer experience. Addressing the rise in mishandled baggage is crucial for airlines to rebuild trust and ensure passenger satisfaction, making investments in technology and staff training more vital than ever.

TA Connections' Solution

TA Ramp: Keep track of bags to keep operations seamless

TA Ramp offers a digital and mobile platform designed to enhance baggage tracking by integrating with weight and balance systems to minimize errors. The platform alerts both staff and passengers if checked bags are not loaded onto a flight. Additionally, it notifies passengers immediately upon deplaning at which carousel to find their bags, along with key next steps in the event of lost luggage.

By digitizing ramp operations, TA Ramp improves the efficiency of every flight departure and significantly reduces the number of passengers experiencing baggage loss, enhancing overall travel satisfaction.



The expectation: Seamless check in and boarding

As travel rebounded post-pandemic, check-in and boarding processes emerged as significant pain points, leading to longer lines at check-in counters and boarding gates.

SITA's research highlights these issues, revealing that long wait times and congestion at airports are major sources of traveler anxiety. Notably, 17% of passengers identified these delays as a significant concern.

This increasing pressure on airport operations underscores the need for enhanced efficiency and streamlined processes to improve the overall travel experience. Addressing these challenges is crucial for restoring passenger confidence and ensuring smoother, more enjoyable journeys as travel continues to recover.

TA Connections' Solution

TA Airport: Mobilize airport agents to service passengers from any location

With TA Airport, airlines can deploy digital and contactless touchpoints, allowing customer service representatives to assist passengers directly in their locations. This approach helps to reduce lines and wait times by facilitating check-ins and offering solutions via mobile tablets, ensuring a more personalized and efficient customer service experience throughout the airport.



Outperform the Competition by Prioritizing the Passenger Experience

In an increasingly competitive market, prioritizing customer satisfaction is of the utmost importance for airlines. Investing in customer experience not only fosters loyalty but also translates into substantial financial benefits.

According to PwC's research, delivering exceptional customer experiences can enhance passengers' willingness to pay for airline tickets by up to 10%.

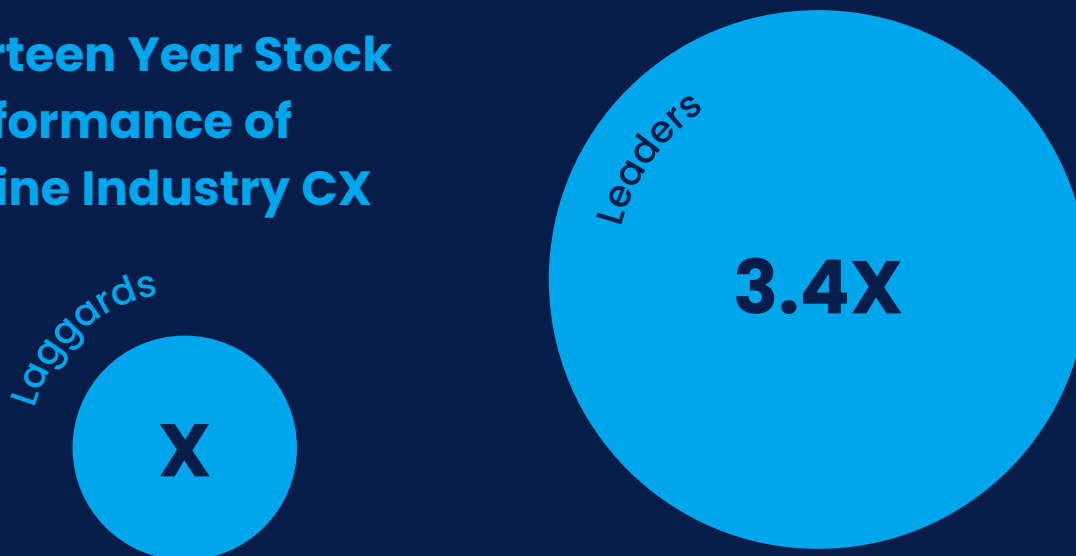
Further, airlines that prioritize customer engagement, invest in service quality, and adapt to passenger needs stand to gain a competitive edge, driving both revenue growth and shareholder value.

From 2011 to 2023, the cumulative total return of customer experience leaders in the airline industry was over three times greater than that of those lagging in customer experience.

Source: **The Airline Customer Experience ROI Study by Waterhouse Consulting**

Airlines with leading customer service experience yield 3.4X ROI over laggards

Thirteen Year Stock Performance of Airline Industry CX



Source: 2024 Watermark Consulting | 2024 Airline Customer Experience ROI Study
<https://watermarkconsult.net/blog/2021/10/18/airline-customer-experience-roi-study/>

As the aviation landscape continues to evolve, airlines must recognize that superior customer experiences are not just a luxury but a necessity for long-term success in the market.

Focus on flight. Leave the rest to us.

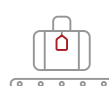
At TA Connections, we know the back-end work of airline operations is just that: work. We automate many details—from payments to ticketing to disrupted passenger and crew lodging—so you can focus on what’s truly at the heart of your business: flight.

With **TA Connections’ powerful platforms**, we keep your flight crews mobile, your airline nimble, and your processes efficient.

Partner with TA Connections

TA Connections’ automated, end-to-end solutions for crews, displaced passengers, and airline operations are transforming aviation operations. Find out how we can help you control cost, simplify processes, and improve customer loyalty.

Request a Custom Demo



Sources:

“IATA raises 2023 profit expectations for airlines to \$23bn and sees small rise for 2024,” FlightGlobal (December 2023).

2023 Baggage IT Insights, SITA.

“Why the airline industry must prioritize customer satisfaction,” TNMT (May 2024).

J.D. Power 2024 North America Airline Satisfaction Study (May 2024).

Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI) Travel Study 2023–2024 (April 2024).

“Flying High: How Airlines Are Soaring To New Heights In Passenger Satisfaction,” Forbes (June 2024).

Customer Intelligence Series: Experience Is Everything, PwC.

“A new deep dive into passenger frustration with airlines,” TMNT (December 2023).

TAConnections

Get Connected | taconnections.com