



March 2007

A publication of
Success Handler, LLC
www.successhandler.com
coach@successhandler.com



David Handler is founder of [Success Handler](#), a professional business coaching organization. With him as your coach, you'll explore the business and personal dreams you desire. Much like sports coaches with athletes, David will show you how to soar to new heights as a franchisee, franchisor or small business owner.



Preparing To Fly by The Coach, David Handler

Once upon a time, a company I co-founded became the official travel service of Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex, and I made frequent trips to Orlando. Speaking with Walt Disney World cast members one day, I learned a key role for those who work in the theme parks is to keep attractions running. Whenever Pirates of the Caribbean or Space Mountain encounter technical difficulties an "all hands on deck" call goes out – Code 101 – and designated people quickly take action to ensure minimal downtime.

These memories came flooding back on Valentine's Day when the severe ice storm hit the east coast – and one of my favorite companies failed to deliver on its sparkling reputation. JetBlue was unable to handle the enormous task of rescheduling and rerouting stranded customers. Passengers on nine flights were forced to sit on the tarmac at JFK for up to 10 hours with minimal food, non-working restrooms and, in some cases, no heat. Operational challenges spiraled out of control, and over a five-day period JetBlue cancelled more than 1,000 flights. "I don't blame our customers for being upset," said CEO and founder David Neeleman, who estimates the events cost the airline at least \$30 million.

Unexpected occurrences happen in every industry, and you'll have to deal with them in your franchise business. An important step in overcoming difficult situations is to apologize. Following JetBlue's stumble, Neeleman quickly accepted responsibility in network television interviews, and made a damage-control appearance on David Letterman the night after being the subject of several jokes.

"I continually recall our conversations on how to best handle situations. Know that your help reaches beyond a set time of coaching."

- Teresa K, Texas

"Awesome newsletter message and fantastic analogy – Love it! Great job."

- Lori K, Minnesota

[Read more testimonials](#)

Together we will achieve your destiny.©

.....

Learning Online

This month's session of *The Franchise Formula Internet Seminars*, which I co-host with Kim Ellis of Bison Advertising, focuses on how to conduct a successful Webinar. Based on the overflowing attendance at the two Roundtables I led at IFA, this is a timely topic. If you're a franchisor looking to start using Webinars, be sure to join us on Tuesday, March 20th, at 1:00 p.m. EDT.

[Register](#)

.....

JetBlue Redux

Last year, I wrote about JetBlue in two issues of *The Franchisee Focus*. To revisit my first-hand JetBlue Experience, check out the [July](#) and [September](#) issues.

.....

[Contact Us](#)

.....

Being a JetBlue frequent flyer club member, I received an e-mail from the airline. The first line read, "We are sorry and embarrassed." It continued by admitting the company violated their core values: "JetBlue was founded on the promise of bringing humanity back to air travel and making the experience of flying happier and easier....We know we failed to deliver on that promise."

Neeleman quickly went into recovery mode to fix the holes in JetBlue's system. Some of the changes introduced to handle emergency situations are: hiring more telephone operators to assist customers with online rebookings; creating a corps of trained and accredited corporate workers to help out at JFK; enhancing software to track the location of pilots and flight attendants; and, issuing a Customer Bill of Rights with guaranteed remedies for specific delays and cancellations. "I wish we could have simulated this on a computer program instead of living it real-time," said Neeleman. "We learned some huge lessons. They will be ingrained in us for a long, long time."

As the owner of a franchise business, you're the person responsible for thinking about what could happen...running those if/then scenarios in your mind. Are you living the Boy Scout Motto: Be Prepared? Do your employees know what to do, how to respond, what to say...when things inevitably go wrong?

In the past few weeks, realizing I was going to write this article about JetBlue's challenges, I paid close attention to how employees of franchised businesses treated me. Some of their responses suggested a definite lack of preparedness:

> "We no longer offer that item," said the employee. Why is it still on the menu, I asked. "Dunno, that's just what the manager told me to say." (Counter employee of a fast food franchise)

> "Sorry, no one showed me how to do that," said the employee. So what happens now, I asked. "You'll need to come back another time." (Clerk at an automotive franchise)

> I'm calling because the same charge appears twice on my credit card statement, I said. "Oh, we do that sometime," replied the employee. Really, and how do you fix it, I asked. "Call your credit card company." (CSR for a pet franchise)

Pay attention to how you're treated in the next few weeks and you may experience encounters like these. When employees don't know how to respond to something as simple as a request for a credit card



Blue Days Ahead Icy Times at Airline

The cover story of the March 5th issue of Business Week is "Customer Service Champs." The top three are USAA, Four Seasons and Cadillac. Listed fourth, but scratched out and removed from the list, is JetBlue. It will take a while for the airline to earn back trust. I'm betting David Neeleman and team figure it out. "When it comes to customer service, these people rewrote the book," said Michael Boyd, president of an aviation consulting firm. "It's just their operational systems haven't been very robust. But they'll fix that. I'll bank on it." Me, too.

.....

Would you or someone you know benefit from professional coaching? [Success Handler](#) shows clients how to explore the outcomes they desire most. As our client, you will discover the path to your success. Ready to start?

refund, what do they say when faced with a major situation? The question is: If these are happening with employees of other franchise businesses, are they happening with yours?

To assure customers that JetBlue learned from this "big wake-up call," David Neeleman posted a video on YouTube, promising to fix things within 30 days. "This is the most difficult time in our history," he said. "I ask for your forgiveness and your trust, and we will show you that we will be an even better company." Be prepared. Be committed. During the next 30 days make sure the employees of your franchise business know how to act and react, especially when things aren't going as planned. Your customers will indeed trust you, even during the toughest of times.

.....

Cab Riding In Chicago

Last summer I took Cab. No. 4525 from downtown Chicago to O'Hare. Posted in clear view for all riders to see was a "Passenger Bill of Rights and Responsibilities." I wrote them down, never dreaming they'd come in handy for an article about JetBlue.

Passengers have eight rights, including to: direct the destination and route used; request the driver not use the cell phone; travel without the radio playing; and, refuse to tip if the above are not complied with. Similarly, among the five responsibilities passengers have are to: treat your driver with respect and courtesy; promptly pay your fare when reaching your destination; and, buckle your seat belts.

Thinking back, this struck me as an excellent way to establish the two-way commitment between company and customer. Would your franchise business benefit from a similar approach?

.....

[Visit Our Web Site](#)

.....

[View A Print Version](#)

.....

[Send This To A Friend](#)

Give us a call
(281.251.3200) or [send us](#)
an e-mail.

.....

To read previous issues of
The Franchisee Focus™ –
which has subscribers in
13 countries (USA,
Canada, England,
Australia, South Africa,
Norway, Egypt, Saudi
Arabia, Kuwait, India,
China, Taiwan, South
Korea) – visit [www.
successhandler.com](http://www.successhandler.com) and
look in Archives.

.....

We encourage you to
[share](#) *The Franchisee
Focus* with friends or
[forward](#) it to business
associates, as long as it is
kept intact and sent in its
entirety – including
subscription and copyright
information.

For an e-mail subscription,
please [visit our Web site](#)
and register in the
Subscribe area.

If you no longer wish to
receive this E-Newsletter,
please use the link at the
bottom of this message.

.....

Expertise On A Local Level

On Saturday, my hometown paper, the Houston Chronicle, featured a story on a local restaurateur who's franchising his concept. Yours truly served as the industry expert, offering advice to him and other new franchisors. [Here's the link](#), if you would like to read more.

.....

We will never release, sell or give a subscriber's name or e-mail address to any other party or organization. Our subscribers will only receive e-mail messages that contain requested information, new articles or services announcements.

.....

Copyright © 2007 Success Handler, LLC.
All rights reserved.