

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES HEART REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

MEASUREMENT REPORT

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GOALS AND BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Southwest Airlines' vision is "to become the world's most loved, most flown, and most profitable airline." To do this, Southwest remains true to its mission which is to be dedicated "to the highest quality of Customer Service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and Company Spirit."

In the Southwest Heart rebranding campaign, there were three main business goals and objectives the effort hoped to achieve:

- Build on brand momentum
- Reinforce that the core of the brand remains the same
- Provide a platform to expand and deepen relationships with customers

To do this, a variety of different communication and public relations tactics were implemented to ensure that these goals would be met and exceeded. We looked at a variety of internal and external factors including news and social media mentions and employee engagement to measure our efforts and their efficacy.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our target audience for the Southwest Heart rebranding campaign included:

- Southwest employees
- Customers including business travelers, budget/ leisure travelers, and frequent flyers
- Corporate partners including hotel, rental car, dining, etc.
- Shareholders and investors
- Press/ media

All of these individuals experience the Southwest brand in a different way, but it was important for us to ensure that everyone understood the "heart" of the campaign and the reasoning behind the rebranding.

KEY METRICS

To measure our success in the Heart rebranding campaign, we measured and monitored a variety of different metrics to provide us the best insights. We looked at external channels such as traditional news including television broadcasting, social media channels, and internal Southwest owned channels.

For external channels, we looked at social media conversation and engagement, news and social media sentiment, the volume of coverage, engagement on Southwest owned social media channels, and key message mentions in media. We also measured link click-through rate from our social media platforms and the revenue generated from those clicks. Additionally, we monitored usage of our new mobile application and the number of bookings occurring directly from the app.

For our internal channels such as our SWA Life blog, we measured employee engagement on posts, the sentiment in comments, and the overall volume of traffic to the blog and each post.

It is also important to note that while the Heart rebranding remained our priority, we were aware and monitoring other events occurring in the airline industry at the same time such as Frontier airlines rebranding efforts and July 2014 on-time performance rankings. These events can play a role in the overall “chatter” about the Southwest brand and the trend of news and social media mentions throughout the campaign.

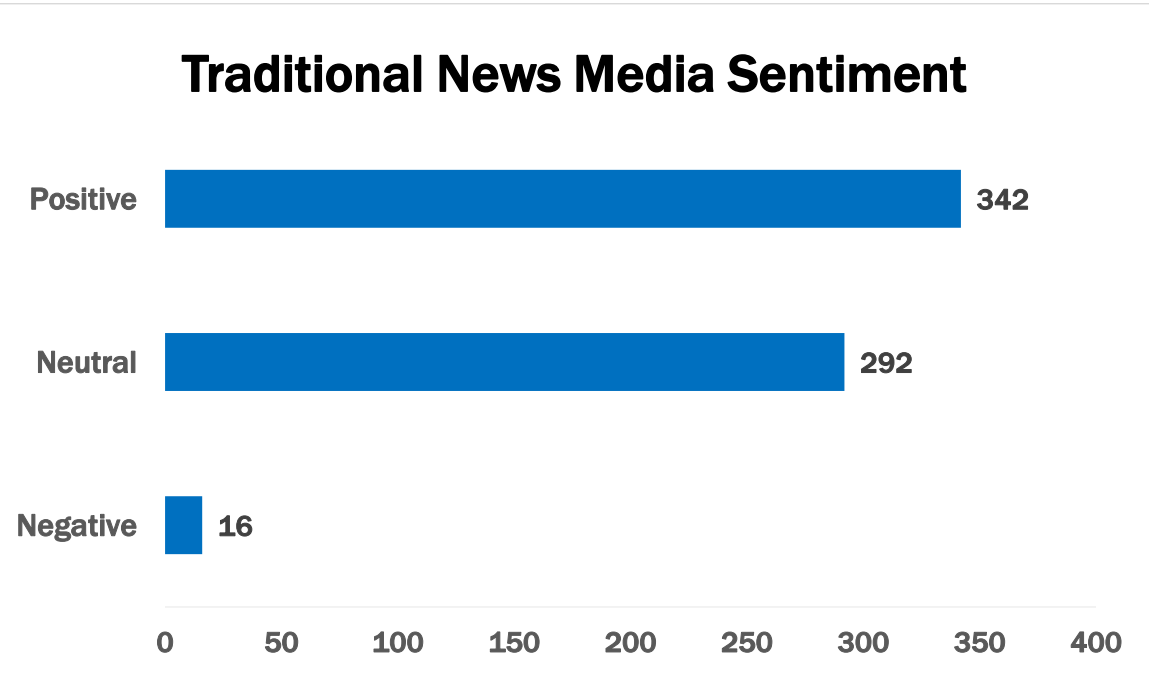


MEDIA COVERAGE

It is important to note that our data analysis and mining through the news and social media mentions was done by a combination of human and automated sifting. Due to the sheer volume of mentions, it is difficult to truly measure 100% whether the sentiment was positive, negative, or neutral. However, we feel confident that the data represented below is an accurate representation of the media coverage and provides a good insight into our efforts.

Traditional News Media Coverage

- During the first week of the campaign (September 8-12, 2014), there were 650 news mentions referring to the new branding.
- A majority of coverage was on launch day (September 8th) and the day following. Coverage noticeably dropped off in the days following.



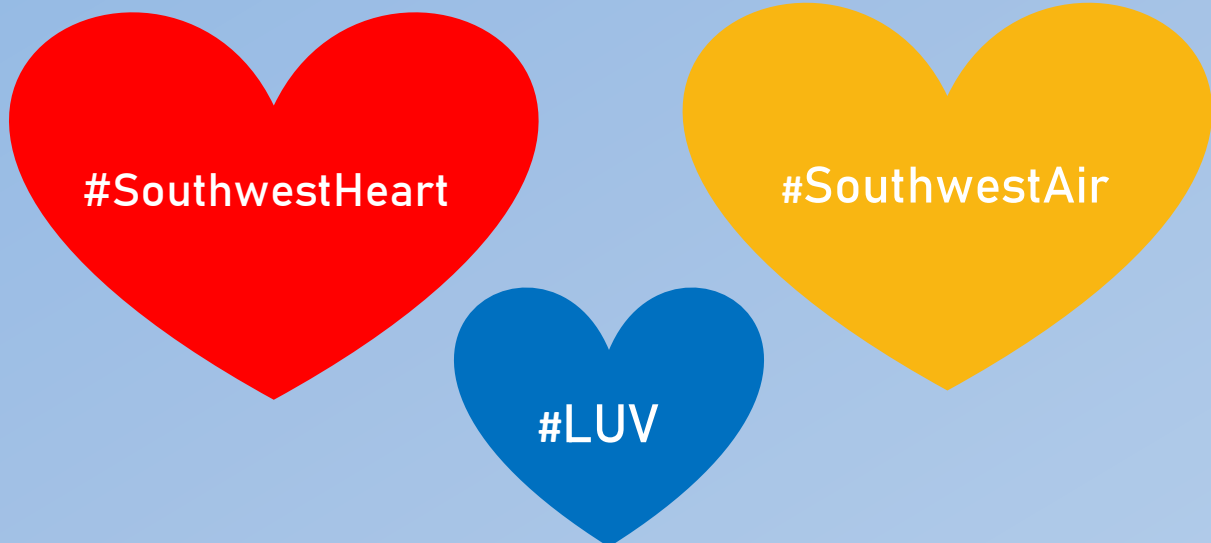
- News coverage was mostly neutral to positive in sentiment.
- There were 587 rebranding mentions broadcast television, mostly on local television stations and their affiliates.



Social Media Coverage and Conversation

- During the first three days of the campaign (September 8-10, 2014), there were 4,814 mentions on social media, primarily on Facebook and Twitter.
- Like the news coverage, most of the sentiment was neutral to positive in tone.

Top Three Hashtags Used on Twitter



- Many comments and posts shared by others included Southwest produced video and links, expanding our reach.
- Our most used social media platforms to promote the Heart rebranding campaign were Facebook and Twitter.

Internal SWA Channels and Engagement with Employees

- On the SWALife blog, two articles were published on September 8th; “Gary’s Newline: Introducing Our Bold, New Look” and “Revealing Our Heart to the World.”
- Our magazine, Southwest: The Magazine, published, [Straight from the Heart](#) in our September 2014 issue to further explain the ideas behind the rebranding efforts.



Straight from the Heart

Our look has changed. But one thing's been the same since the beginning.

Something very important started brewing at Southwest Airlines headquarters last summer. The airline's merger with AirTran Airways was midway through completion, international service was on the horizon, and the end was near for the Wright Amendment, which sets restrictions on direct flights from Dallas Love Field, Southwest's home airport.

"With so much of Southwest's focus firmly set on the future, it was a natural time to look at our visual identity," says Bob Jordan, Southwest's Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer.

The task given to Lippincott, a brand strategy and design consultancy, was monumental: distill more than 40 years into one modern, impactful look that represents the exciting future of a one-of-a-kind airline.

"The job wasn't to change who we are," says Kevin Krone, Southwest's Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. "We already know who we are. The job was to keep the elements of Southwest that our Employees and Customers love and to bring them to the forefront, modernizing them for our future growth."

"A lot of it was simplifying; getting back to what is true to our core," Krone says. "We had to pare down until we got to something that was simple, clear, and fresh, yet still reflected our personality."

For 15 months, more than 100 people spent countless hours on the project, designing, holding focus groups with Customers and Employees, and analyzing data. Little by little, a new look emerged, centered around something that has defined the Company since day one: heart.

"We explored numerous options and always came back to the vibrant, iconic heart as the only symbol that sums up our unique brand," says Vanessa Pearce, Manager of Brand Identity at Southwest. "Southwest Employees are humble,

BEHIND THE SCENES The mission of Southwest's new look: to represent the Company's innovative future while showing that its essential character hasn't changed. At the center of the look is a vibrant heart.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN KELLER

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News Media Headlines

[Here it is: Southwest confirms new look for its planes](#) (Sept. 8, 2014) - USA Today

[Southwest Airlines Hopes Consumers “Heart” Its New Look](#) (Sept. 8, 2014) – Consumerist

[Southwest Airlines gets a new look](#) (Sept. 9, 2014) – CBS News

News Media Excerpts

"With all these exciting changes happening, we thought it was time for a new visual expression of our brand — one that marries our past to our present and sets the course for where we're headed in the future," Southwest CEO Gary Kelly says in a statement announcing the new look. (USA Today)

"We're 43 years old. We're from Dallas. It's time for a face lift," said Bob Jordan, executive vice president and chief commercial officer. "Southwest always strives to stand out in a sky of sameness. ... We have a bold new look to continue the legacy of standing out and being different in the way we express ourselves." (Houston Chronicle)

Social Media Excerpts

Cortigiana_Eva (Twitter): I understand why @SouthwestAir new App Icon is a heart! Love the new features. Thank you! <http://t.co/xHFMnyJrWU>

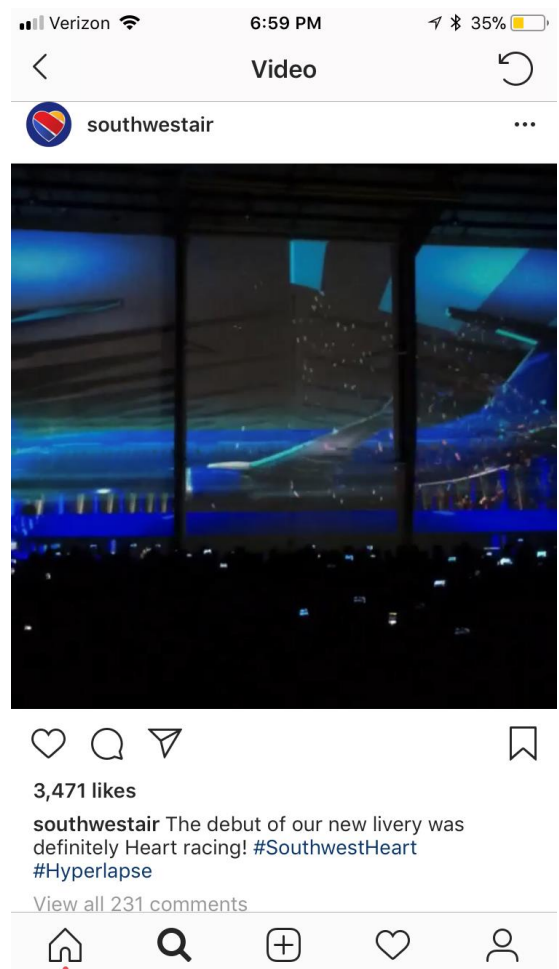
VMediaPro (Twitter): I love the new @SouthwestAir look! The colors are bright and the heart is warm! It makes me smile! #SouthwestHeart

Wfaashelly (Twitter): @SouthwestAir love the new ad about 'having heart' this is a smart campaign.

Lee Moarn (Facebook): This is awesome! From the landing to departing and taking off again great footage! That's my airline, SWA!

Square 205 (Facebook): We're really digging the re-brand by everyone's favorite airline, Southwest Airlines. Language like ""Without a Heart, it's just a machine"" gives their brand a voice supported by their identity that fits

Southwest Social Media Postings



METHODOLOGIES AND TRANSPARENCY TABLE

To measure our rebranding campaign, we used new methodologies to help us gain a better picture of our efforts. We first took a look at social media engagement by measuring the number of likes, views, shares, comments, retweets, etc. our campaign received, especially during the first week. This helped us understand how our customers and fans are interacting and engaging with Southwest owned social media channels. In measuring our social media engagement, we also measured employee engagement and sentiment from an internal business standpoint. Our employees' opinions were important to measure because we gained initial reaction about the rebranding from individuals who interact with our brand every day.

It was also important for us to measure the media quality index on a 5-point scale. This allowed us to measure the sentiment of all media mentions Southwest received in regards to the rebranding campaign. This provided further insights into our campaign performance and gave us valuable information that will help us in the future for any rebranding campaign.



Southwest Heart Rebranding Campaign	
Timeframe Analyzed:	September 4, 2014 - December 28, 2014
Research Lead:	Katy Sputo
Channels Analyzed:	<i>Social Media</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YouTube <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External blogs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forums
	<i>News Coverage</i> Online, print, broadcast <i>Internal Communication</i> Southwest blog page/video views, blog comments
Content Sources/ Data Analysis Tools:	Google Analytics, Radian6, Sprinklr, Critical Mention, Facebook Analytics, Twitter Analytics, YouTube Analytics, Cision
Search language(s):	English
Analysis Depth/ Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Automated <input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative sample <input type="checkbox"/> All content reviewed
Sentiment Coding:	<input type="checkbox"/> Automated <input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input type="checkbox"/> Manual sampling: __% <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> At entity level <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraph/doc level <input type="checkbox"/> 3-point scale <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5-point scale <input type="checkbox"/> Other scale
Spam Filtering:	<input type="checkbox"/> Automated <input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Includes press releases <input type="checkbox"/> Excludes press releases
Metric Calculations and Sources:	<i>Reach:</i> Daily unique visits/views for SWA URL's and mentions in key news media via data analysis tools to measure a media quality index score. <i>Engagement/ Conversation:</i> SWA owned social media channel metrics from specific channel analytics and comments on SWA blogs <i>Opinion/ Advocacy:</i> Human reading and coding
Search Parameters	Social Media: (Topic Profile: Southwest Airlines) AND "rebranding" OR "heart rebranding" OR "new logo" OR "rebranding launch" OR "launch event" OR "launch day" OR "rebranding launch day" OR "new livery" News Coverage: (Topic Profile: Southwest Airlines) AND "rebranding" OR "heart rebranding" OR "new logo" OR "new livery"



COMPARISONS AND CORRELATIONS

During our Southwest Heart rebranding, Frontier Airlines also underwent rebranding of their own. While our efforts and goals were different, it is important to compare our two efforts to gather insights.

Frontier's rebranding had a goal to appeal to legacy and millennial travelers with their fresh new branding but also drawing elements from their older designs. This nod to the past pays homage to the continued growth of the brand while remembering what started them in the beginning. Frontier also wants to redefine themselves as the ultra-low cost carrier in the U.S.

The Southwest Heart rebranding is a complete redesign of the brand's logos, while still maintaining true to the Southwest values, visions, and goals. We wish to appeal to all travelers. While we may not have the cheapest rates, we also offer plenty of amenities that other airlines, such as Frontier, do not offer such as two free checked bags and free onboard snacks. We put customer service at the forefront of what we do as a company and continue to honor our promise.

There were a few correlations we saw as a result of the Southwest campaign. The first was the usage of our new mobile application. As travelers installed the app to their mobile phones, we saw an increase in flight bookings and an overall increase in sales. On the social media side, we saw an increase in social mentions and overall engagement rates across all platforms once the rebranding was announced.

These comparisons and correlations tied to our overall progress in our business goals and we gained many key insights and takeaways (both explained in more detail in the next sections).

PROGRESS TO GOALS

The Southwest Heart rebranding campaign overall was successful in retaining what makes Southwest special; connecting people to what is important in their lives through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel. In our rebranding campaign, we had three main business goals that we hoped to achieve and were successful in doing so.

- **Build on brand momentum**

This was a big year for Southwest and building brand momentum. Not only did we have the Heart rebranding, but the Wright Amendment was repealed, our integration with AirTran is near completion, and [we added new international routes](#). We were effective with our rebranding launch party which maximized brand exposure through media mentions. This led to a jump in discussions online and in the media about Southwest. We saw an increase in our fan followings on all social media platforms and an increase in usage of our mobile application. Building our brand momentum is always an ongoing goal, but the Heart rebranding campaign was a huge step in the right direction to make us the most loved and most flown airline in the world.

- **Reinforce that the core of the brand remains the same**

One of the most important goals for the campaign was to ensure that core or the “heart” of Southwest remains the same. We wanted to proudly show our name for everyone to see and remain distinctive in the air, but we also wanted to ensure to our customers that our service to them is unwavering. This is a goal that we were successful in achieving through our public relations efforts. Overall discussion online on our social media platforms reaffirms this.

- **Provide a platform to expand and deepen our relationships with customers**

Perhaps the most important goal of ours was and continues to be, to deepen and expand our relationships with our customers. With the Heart rebranding campaign and the integration with AirTran, we had the huge opportunity to welcome a new community of loyal customers to the Southwest brand. We

gained more customers through these initiatives and deepened our relationships with current customers through the redesign of our Rapid Rewards program. Social media continues to grow in popularity and has allowed us to “break down the wall” and have a two-way conversation with our fans and customers about their likes, dislikes, and concerns. The Heart rebranding campaign was a huge step towards our goal in expanding and developing our relationships with our customers and this relationship will only continue to grow.

KEY INSIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS

What went right? The overall opinion from employees, stakeholders, and our customers is positive about the new livery and experience Southwest offers through this rebranding. Southwest has a more uniform look and over the next 6-7 years, as we continue to update our planes, airports, and employee uniforms, the look will come together even more. The bright colors, fresh logo, and rebranded in-flight provisional materials bring the entire rebranding together and the look was highly spoken about in news and on social media. The updated website and new mobile application make booking with Southwest easier for our customers and make it convenient for travelers to book “on the go” and the launch of the mobile boarding pass makes it easier for our customers to board our aircraft. With the mobile boarding pass, our redesigned Rapid Rewards program was highly appreciated by our frequent flyers.

We were, and continue to be, successful in keeping in align with our vision of being the “world’s most loved, most flown, and most profitable airline.” We maintained our high level of customer satisfaction, being ranked number two among U.S. airlines according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index and the only commercial airlines to make the top ten list of FORTUNE World’s Most Admired Companies list in 2014.

What can we make better? Despite the overall positive sentiment the campaign received, there were a number of comments and complaints about the campaign. Some individuals, namely on social media, expressed frustration that the

rebranding was not practical. One person noted on Facebook that *“employees haven't had a raise in many years and every department have been in contract negotiations for years...”* and others expressed frustration that Southwest should be focusing on making tickets cheaper and sticking to flight schedules, not spending money on new paint for planes. While these comments were in the minority, they do raise the question, *“what should we do to improve customer satisfaction?”*

For any future rebranding campaign, we should look at how we present it to our customers and employees. There will always be a certain level of resistance, but it is important to continue to reiterate that we are committed to being the friendliness and most customer service driven airline in the world. For future campaigns, we will do more surveys and evaluations with our customers and employees to see what we can do to better serve them.



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