

234

Volume 24, Number 9, September 2019

# PARKING TODAY

[www.parkingtoday.com](http://www.parkingtoday.com)

**Airports are Partners First,  
Competitors Second**

*Parking Spot CEO  
Jeff Foland  
Page 26*

TPS Parking Mana  
USDOT 918843  
LLC





## Thoughts from the Flight Deck

**JEFF PINYOT**

Jeff is President of ECO Parking Technologies. Contact him at [Jspinyot@ecoparkingtech.com](mailto:Jspinyot@ecoparkingtech.com) or (317) 501-2892.

“ Our past doesn't have to be dragged beside us with our name tags on it. ”

In a world of perks, few are more valuable for a traveling business person than A-List on Southwest Airlines. It doesn't seem possible that one airline could do virtually everything right, while others seem to muddle along.

Who would have thought that my 5:15 AM flight from Indy to LA would have 150 people in line to check bags at the ticket counter? No concern to me, I've earned A-List with Southwest and I get a Disney Fast Pass straight to the front of the line. I just ignore the jealous and angry glares from the line of infrequent Spring Break flyers.

I've earned this position from my loyalty to one airline, my regular lack of sleep, and dedication to flying cross country more often than a human should while serving the parking industry.

Southwest does so much right. Even if you don't have status, everyone is treated as an equal. Set an alarm for exactly 23 hours and 59 minutes ahead of your scheduled flight to "Check In" and get your boarding position. Time is of the essence. No matter what you paid, you get a shot at choosing a good seat...a seat that you needn't pay extra for. A-Listers will typically board from Group A position 16 to 30 whether you checked in ahead of time or not, but always in Group A.

My son and his fiancé were about to make flight reservations to Miami on Allegiant Airlines the other night. Cagney, Christopher's fiancé, shared that the price quoted was amazing. I asked her if they planned on sitting or standing. She looked at me like I was out of my mind. I suggested she go on line and look at the upgrade costs, in black and white.

Seat choices on Allegiant are about \$20 each way. Overhead luggage is \$50 a piece at the ticket counter. Checked baggage is \$50 for the first one at the counter but watch out...only 40 pounds allowed or you get hit with a \$75 extra fee (all other airlines have a 50-pound limit). I was surprised that they didn't have a "landing fee."

I have a friend who flies Allegiant. He layers piles of clothes on his body to save luggage costs. Did I forget to mention that he is a cheap friend? After all the extra add-ons, Southwest was cheaper. She also didn't know that there were only two flights per week to Miami from Indianapolis on Allegiant. If there were any flight issues, they wouldn't be able to get onto their cruise ship, and they would have to wait days until the next flight.

As an A-Lister, I regularly get free drink coupons that I dole out to my neighbors on the plane. I'm barely a drinker, and who drinks at 5:15 AM? Everyone gets two checked bags at no extra charge. Oh, and free movies and entertainment are all part of the package.

It does seem goofy to line up, and if you're like me, I never have been able to figure out

the numbering system. But, have you noticed? Southwest Airlines flights load so much faster than other domestic carriers. You may not run into Gwyneth Paltrow, no longer consciously uncoupled, on a Southwest flight, but if you board early, you can pick a spacious exit row. Why does a Southwest flight load faster? It's the bags. The overheads are never full on a Southwest flight, even when all the seats are taken, they are below, for free.

I was dumbfounded once, on another airline, when I attempted to check two bags. One bag weighed 54 pounds and the other 40 pounds. They made me move four pounds from one bag to the other or pay an overweight fee. Don't tell this engineer that it's a balance issue. I won't comment on the imbalance of weight in my seating row alone.

Southwest does business right. I got to thinking. Wouldn't all businesses thrive if we had the same attitude towards our customers as Southwest Airlines and we made our business easy to work with the way they do?

- **Nothing hidden, everything is up front.** That means we admit what we don't do well, and we celebrate what we do well. We don't pretend to be something we aren't.
  - **We get to check our burdens for free.** We don't have to lug them around for everyone to see and try to cram our burdens into our overheads. We get to put our ugliness and weight below us, safe and out of sight to pick up later. Our past doesn't have to be dragged beside us with our name tags on it. If we are lucky, someone will grab our bag by mistake, all of our burdens do look alike...better check the name tag.
  - **Everyone is treated equally no matter how big of a deal you think you are in real life.** Imagine a world of true equal opportunity.
  - **Quick and orderly loading, no tolerance for cutting in line.** Follow instructions for smooth business sailing.
  - **Free drink coupons.** Lavish generosity on your clients.
  - **Funny Flight Attendants.** Laughter is good medicine and good for the soul.
  - **Impeccable safety record.** Careful attention to detail, and taking great care of your business.
  - **Great Destinations.** Is your business going somewhere good, or do you need to reroute your business destination?
  - **Companion fares.** A thank you that you can share. Include your loved ones in your business life.
- Here's to hoping your business takes off!