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WestJet gets the jet-set experience



In spring 2019, **WESTJET AIRLINES** unveiled its new Dreamliner service to the world. The name "Dreamliner" says it all. Business class customers can expect exceptional travel comfort and an elevated level of pampering on board. It's a cosmopolitan extension of the quintessential Canadian experience that's been synonymous with WestJet for 20 years.

“It's just such a natural, symbiotic relationship. SAIT is the best in Canada and has a worldwide reputation. WestJet wants to be the best in Canada. We want to be recognized worldwide for what we're doing. Why not team up with somebody who's already there!”

Louis Saint-Cyr
Vice President of Guest Experience, WestJet

Transitioning this decidedly casual, value-based airline to a more **sophisticated but every bit as sincere luxury experience** would require equipping the in-service flight crews with a whole new skill set. WestJet's decision to partner with SAIT for training was characteristically innovative and strategic. Doing things differently is part of the WestJet brand.

“We really wanted to go outside of the airline industry in terms of **developing our service standards,**” says Louis Saint-Cyr, WestJet's Vice President of Guest Experience. “We needed to trigger our people emotionally to see that, ‘Wow, something's different here and we have to be different as an airline.’”

Working with SAIT, an “industry agnostic” training partner would provide that wow-factor along with the refined expertise the company had envisioned.

The custom five-day program immersed WestJet's trainers in the experience of **world-class service delivery,** helping them understand what it looks like, how it feels and how to bring that feeling to life for their guests.

As professional trainers themselves, participants knew they would ultimately have to translate everything they were learning to the in-flight crews. “They would be rolling out something that will fundamentally change the airline,” said Saint-Cyr. How the customized training program was delivered was as much of a focus as what it entailed.

An early takeaway for WestJet's senior management team was the need to start at the beginning. “You can't assume that people are showing up with the same level of skills,” said Saint-Cyr. “Assuming could inadvertently leave people behind and that would deteriorate the quality of your program.”

“SAIT got it right from the beginning,” said Saint-Cyr. “I think the program is based on a lot of fundamentals.”

From the initial engagement, to table settings to wine service and beyond, **the quality of service delivery is in the details.** “Had we done this by ourselves, we probably would have skipped over some of the basics because we would have assumed.”

The success of this recent training partnership between WestJet and SAIT has the two organizations excited about **future collaboration.**

AT SAIT WE PROMISE TO GIVE OUR STUDENTS AND OUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS OUR VERY BEST.