

Southwest is NOT hiring in 2021!

- Southwest will call back 2500 pilots on extended leave prior to new hiring
- Survive. Bring planes and pilots back as business allows. No stated timeline.
- Sustainability first, "World Domination" next
- Destination 225°
- Hospitality is their core...followed by safety, reliability, and low cost

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 NGPA's Brian Gambino (President), Troy Merritt (NGPA Vice President), and Natascha Fuller (NGPA Women's Co-Chair and Southwest Airlines First Officer) met with Southwest's Dave Retnam (Senior Manager Flight Operations/Chief Pilot) and Captain Kristian Brandstetter (Manager of Pilot Hiring and Flight Operations). While all parties are ecstatic to celebrate Southwest's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year, admittedly, celebrations have been somewhat muted.

There are currently 9,000 pilots on their seniority list, though more than 2,500 voluntarily took an extended leave and 600 took a voluntary separation to preserve the company. Some pilots are starting to return, but all 2500 will be given an opportunity to come back as flying increases and before the company will contemplate hiring. Survival first. People and planes next. They currently have around 200 airplanes parked and there are no plans to hire pilots in 2021.

Pre-pandemic, Southwest was operating more than 4,000 flights to more than 100 cities in their point-to-point network and transporting over 500,000 passengers. Today, they are operating about half of their flights to more cities (111) and transporting half the passengers, per Dave Retnam. Their goals for 2021 are: focus on running on-time, improve customer service in existing markets, target/improve service in other markets to increase customer confidence, stabilize debt and lower daily cash burn, and pay back their existing obligations.

They began the pandemic in the best financial position and plan to end that way as well. While working to have pilots trained and re-integrate the 737 Max, they will park some of their older airplanes and evaluate/dedicate planes to new and existing markets, and work on an overall five-year strategy to not only survive, but thrive. They will strengthen their assets and dedicate service to underserved cities and customers. The company has ambitious plans to become the "World's Most Loved" air carrier, emphasis on "world," through humility, compassion, and heart in addition to maintaining their status as the largest domestic carrier with greatest passenger volumes.

Kristian Brandstetter discussed Southwest's pathway program Destination 225° that literally translates to "journey's end" and Southwest. This pathway may be of interest to new or seasoned aviators. There are four program pathways, and it was designed to bring pilots to the team and lessen demand on the traditional hiring process. You can find more information here: [careers.southwestair.com/D225](https://careers.southwestair.com/D225) If you plan to head to a Southwest hiring event, plan to meet Kristian in person...and be yourself! Per Kristian, canned answers will be met with an in-depth interrogation.

Finally, the hiring team announced they are using this time to make their process more efficient and provide a better experience for applicants. While nothing has been implemented thus far, all changes will be communicated through their newsletters or website. They continuously reiterated their commitments to the company, employees, and customers. Their people are their greatest asset, hospitality is at their core, and they want authentically fun team members to join their team. While they have no specific hiring requirements, they are always looking at the overall applicant. What are you bringing to the table? What airplanes have you flown and where? If you don't have experience in one area (eg. leadership), is it compensated for in another area? What else is in your background? Do you have a warrior spirit, servant's heart, and fun loving attitude? While they don't require a type rating or bachelor's degree, it may help you stand out on paper.

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