

Airlines	72	69	69	67	65	63	63	61	66	67	66	66	65	-1.5%	-9.7%
All Others	NM	70	74	70	62	67	63	64	72	74	73	74	74	0.0%	5.7%
Southwest Airlines Co.	78	76	76	76	74	72	70	70	74	75	73	74	74	0.0%	-5.1%
Continental Airlines, Inc.	67	64	66	64	66	64	62	67	68	68	67	70	67	-4.3%	0.0%
Delta Air Lines, Inc.	77	72	67	69	65	68	66	61	66	67	67	65	64	-1.5%	-16.9%
United Airlines (UAL Corporation)	71	67	70	68	65	62	62	59	64	63	64	61	63	3.3%	-11.3%
American Airlines (AMR Corporation)	70	71	71	62	67	64	63	62	63	67	66	64	62	-3.1%	-11.4%
US Airways Group, Inc.	72	67	66	68	65	61	62	60	63	64	62	57	62	8.8%	-13.9%
Northwest Airlines Corporation	69	71	67	64	63	53	62	56	65	64	64	64	61	-4.7%	-11.6%

Airlines descend in satisfaction survey

Travelers give carriers lowest average score since 2001

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By ERIC TORBENSON / The Dallas Morning News

Travelers pick airlines based on fare and schedule more than all other factors, but the latest results from the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index suggest carriers are slipping in the eyes of fliers.

The survey showed that several carriers had lower ratings in the first quarter of this year than during the same time last year. The average score of 65 was the industry's lowest since 2001, according to the university.

Airline industry turmoil could be behind the lower figures.

The industry has lost more than \$40 billion since 2000, and carriers have cut thousands of employees.

As the industry has recovered in the last two years, flight delays have risen along with the rate of baggage complaints and overall customer complaints, according to research kept by the Department of Transportation.

Average fares are rising sharply as carriers raise prices to offset higher jet fuel expenses, which could also play into satisfaction levels. The rock-bottom fares found on most carriers in 2002 are mostly gone.

Dallas-based Southwest Airlines Co., which has topped the survey for each of its 13 years, held its rank.

But Fort Worth-based American Airlines Inc. saw its rating fall to 62 points from 64 a year earlier.

US Airways' ranking improved to 62 from 57 as the carrier merged with America West Airlines Inc.

The index's "other" airline category includes smaller low-cost carriers such as JetBlue Airways Corp., which consistently ranks as highly as Southwest in other consumer satisfaction surveys.

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