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|  Publisher: | The McGraw-Hill Companies  |
| Date of Publication: | 2003 |
| Number of pages: | 319 |
| Book Club rating: | 3.0 /5.0 |
| Reviewed by: | Grace Skaff |

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***Plot Summary:***

In an industry with losses in the billions, Southwest Airlines has an unbroken string of 31 consecutive years of profitability. The Southwest Airlines Way examines how the company uses high-performance relationships to create enormous competitive advantage in motivation, teamwork, and coordination among employees. It then goes further to show how any company can foster these powerful cooperative relationships and explains how to:

* Lead with credibility and caring
* Invest in frontline leaders
* Hire and train for relational competence
* Use conflicts to build relationships
* Make unions its partners, not its adversaries
* Build relationships with its suppliers

Full of frontline tales of Southwest's innovative management style, this compelling book explains how Southwest's relentless focus on high-performance relationships and its people-management practices the key to its unparalleled success in the airline industry have been. It reveals how any organization willing to invest the time and effort can learn from Southwest's management style by creating shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect among management, employees, and suppliers. This is the secret of how Southwest consistently outperforms its competitors in the high-pressure, time sensitive airline industry.

***Book Club Meeting Discussion: First zoom meeting!***

Discussion topics from the roundtable:

* What we liked:
* Powerful mission statement that everyone knows and lived by
* Strong identifiable brand and culture.
* Like the flexible work assignment, everyone jumps in and help- no finger pointing.
* Committed to not doing layoff! is very unusual in competitive industry.
* Most felt like they would fly Southwest because it is reliable and treat well its customers.
* Recommended to colleagues struggling with accountability and communication.
* Vey likeable company and most would prefer flying Southwest over AA or Frontier.
* What we did not like:
* It read like an agile project management textbook.
* Although very well researched; It was a hard read and felt repetitious.

***Personal Comments:*** (approximately 200 words)

I felt the book read too much like a textbook than an amazing exciting story about Southwest Airline. It was not a very compelling read or a page turner. What I liked about this book is the key message about Southwest Airline Way in building key relationships that made the company remarkable and profitable for over 35 years. Jody is an assistant professor of management and a researcher and was using factual data and stories from her interviews and observations to teach managers how to be leaders. The book has 3 parts: Part 1- High Performance relationships- the key to Southwest’s success. Part 2- Ten Southwest practices for building High Performance Relationships. Part 3- Building high performance relationships and keeping them. What resonated with me are the 10 practices that represent Southwest’s competitive advantage and can be the foundation for any company who wants to be an industry leader:

1. Lead with credibility and caring
2. Invest in frontline leadership
3. Hire and train for relational competence
4. Use conflicts to build relationships
5. Bridge the work/family divide
6. Create boundary spanners
7. Avoid finger pointing – Measure performance broadly
8. Keeps jobs flexible at the boundaries
9. Make unions your partners, not adversaries
10. Build relationships with your suppliers

In the words of Jody Gittell “The Southwest Airlines Way involves more than pursuing a particular market strategy. For the Southwest’s leaders, taking care of business literally means taking care of relationships” ….it is “the foundation of competitive advantage, through good times and bad.”