

Thousands to receive customer service training

Before the integration with USAir is completed next spring, almost every employee at Piedmont will have undergone some kind of training in preparation for the transition to USAir policies and procedures. Starting in November, more than 3,200 flight attendants and 9,200 station personnel will begin their respective training at locations throughout the system.

It's a monumental task.

That task is the joint responsibility of designated personnel in Piedmont's flight attendant training and station training departments and USAir's customer service training department which handles both flight attendants and station personnel. In addition, temporary training instructors are being appointed from within both companies to handle the vast number of employees in areas such as gate ticketing.

The training will be conducted by teams of two comprised of one Piedmont and one USAir instructor.

USAir's training personnel have been operating at full speed since 1986 when the acquisition of Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) was announced.

"We started meeting with the Piedmont training personnel in March of this year. However, we've been working together so much recently we feel we're already merged," said Marcia Rice, USAir's director-customer service training.

The two airlines are aiming for a mirror image date of February 1 so the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) can begin its inspections in anticipation of the actual merger date.

"To reach that goal, we're starting the flight attendant training November 1," said Charlie Cross, Piedmont's director-flight attendant training.

Flight attendants will receive three days—or modules—of classroom training, one day to be held in November and the second in December or January. The procedures taught during the first two modules dealing with such topics as basic indoctrination, emergency procedures, and aircraft transition, will be inspected by the FAA. The third module, to be conducted after February 1, will deal with inflight services such as meals, beverages, and announcements.

"We are committed to deliver the training as close to the mirror image date as possible," said Rice, "and we'll delay the training if the date changes. When the merger date with PSA was delayed, we had to provide recurrent training. We'd like to avoid that."

Training for the 9,200 station personnel—gate ticketing agents, air cargo agents, operations agents and ramp agents—will consist of a combination of prerequisit self-study packets, computer-based lessons, and classroom training specially designed to meet the needs of the agents in the four areas.

Classroom training will be conducted in BWI, CLT, INT, PIT, and SYR and will vary in duration according to the position. The 450 air cargo agents will be required to attend only one day of training sometime in March because of the similarity of procedures for the two carriers.

Scheduled to start in November, the training



USAir Flight Attendants (left) Tim Donnally and Phil Quattrone and Piedmont Flight Attendant Margie Hill are just three of the instructors who will be responsible for conducting merger training for the flight attendants.

for the operations agents, however, will require four consecutive days of classroom training due to the complexity of the position. The 750 operations agents who provide information effecting the gross take-off weight of the aircraft must be trained by the mirror image February 1 date.

The 4,000 ramp agents will begin training on such topics as ramp safety and equipment operations in November. The 4,000 ticket counter and gate agents will start receiving their three-day classroom training in January.

Each classroom will be equipped with CRTs, ticket/boarding pass printers and hard copy printers.

"The DATAMAX ticket/boarding pass printer currently being used by USAir is an example of some of the new equipment which will be phased into several test stations starting in October," said Sky Day, Piedmont's director-training stations.

The printers will initially allow Piedmont ticket agents to generate a ticket through the CARE-system but print it out through the DATAMAX system using formats and ticket stock virtually identical to USAir's. All of the printers will be installed and operational by the merger date.

"Eventually, the system will be switched to USAir's PACER system," Day said.

Agents will be taught PACER partially through USAir's computer-based training program, EAGLE. Comparable to Piedmont's SCHOLAR TEACH, EAGLE simulates every-day situations, such as building a passenger name record (PNR), generating a ticket, and booking or canceling a seat assignment. The program requires the agent to type in the exact format thus providing the opportunity to practice in a controlled environment without affecting the live system.

"In common cities, Piedmont agents who have completed the self-study, classroom, and computer-based training will have an opportunity to co-mingle—put their training to use by actual hands-on experience on the USAir equipment," said Day. "That certainly can help us prepare for the merger date."

Each Piedmont station will have at least one designated station training coordinator who will undergo the training for each position and then return to the station to make sure the agents are using their training correctly. The coordinators will also be responsible for maintaining the training records which must be made available for FAA inspection.

"We have a great deal of training to accomplish by the merger date," said Rice, "however, as one of our video tapes states... 'We can build this dream together.'"



First SYR-TPA nonstop service begins Dec. 1

Piedmont will begin daily nonstop round-trip service between Syracuse, NY, and Tampa, FL, with continuing one-stop service to Ft. Lauderdale, FL, December 1.

The flights, an extension of an existing Ottawa-Syracuse service, will also provide convenient same-plane service between the Canadian city and both Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale, via our hub at Syracuse.

Flight 1877 will originate at Ottawa International Airport daily at 6:15 a.m., and arrive at Syracuse at 7 a.m. The new service will then depart at the hub at 7:35 a.m., arrive nonstop at Tampa International Airport at 10:16 a.m., and continue on to Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport at 11 a.m., for an 11:50 a.m. arrival there.

The new Northbound service, Flight 1968, will depart Ft. Lauderdale daily at 12:30 p.m., and arrive at Tampa at 1:20 p.m. The flight will then depart Tampa at 2 p.m., arrive at Syracuse at 4:40 p.m., and continue on from the hub at 5:22 p.m., and arrive at Ottawa 6:05 p.m.

The additional jet service between Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale will become the eighth Florida Shuttle flight in that market when it begins on December 1.

All new flights will be operated with 110-seat Boeing 737-200 twinjets, offering First Class and coach accommodations.

On the December 1 schedule, Piedmont will offer 58 daily jet departures from Syracuse: 40 from Tampa; 23 from Fort Lauderdale; and four from Ottawa.



Cameramen tape USAir customer service agent Janet Plummer in Pittsburgh for videos to be used for the merger training.