

# Southwest Airlines announces leadership changes

DALLAS – [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) (NYSE: LUV) today announced the promotion of Senior Vice President and Chief Communications Officer [Linda Rutherford](#) to Executive Vice President People & Communications, effective immediately. This news follows [last week's announcement of Leadership Plans for 2022](#). Rutherford will succeed [Bob Jordan](#) in what was the Executive Vice President Corporate Services role, as he pivots to making the CEO transition as smooth as possible and spending time with Employees across the Company.

Rutherford will report directly to Jordan and will continue to serve as the Chief Communications Officer for the Company. She will continue to oversee Communications & Outreach and Culture & Engagement, while adding Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DE&I), People, and Southwest Airlines University to her responsibilities. Reporting to Rutherford in her new role will be Vice President and Chief People Officer Julie Weber, Managing Director Communications & Outreach Laurie Barnett, Managing Director Culture & Engagement Whitney Eichinger, Vice President Southwest Airlines University Elizabeth Bryant, and Director DE&I Raquel Daniels.

Rutherford is approaching 30 years at Southwest after joining the Company in 1992. In recent years, she has helped build enterprise change agility, continued the strategic implementation of programming and incentives aimed at nurturing our Corporate Culture, led Enterprise efforts to develop and implement an Employee Experience roadmap, championed the enterprise social business strategy, devised relevant programming for Employee engagement, and evolved multi-channel communications support system for multiple stakeholders internally and externally. She guided the Company's response effort at the Enterprise level to the COVID-19 pandemic and the death of the Company's beloved Founder Herb Kelleher.

"Linda is an innovative Leader who challenges Southwest to continually evolve how we engage and champion our Employees and Communities, and she consistently delivers on our Southwest Purpose, to connect People to what's important in their lives with friendly, reliable and low-cost air travel," said Bob Jordan, EVP and incoming CEO.

The carrier also announced Leadership changes in Operational and Commercial Departments.

Managing Director Tony Roach is promoted to Vice President Customer Experience & Customer Relations. In February 2021, Customer Relations/Rapid Rewards began reporting to Tony Roach,

and Tony's promotion, effective immediately, is indicative of the significant role that Customer Experience has come to play at Southwest Airlines, coupled with the critical role that Customer Relations has played for Southwest for more than 40 years. Roach's focus will be strengthening efforts to improve Customer Satisfaction, mitigating Customer complaints, and addressing Customers' needs proactively. Roach's department will also have an increased focus on partnering with operating Teams to enhance the cabin experience and in airports, building out more self-service for Customers, and managing the enterprise Customer portfolio and Customer Design Team forum. Roach will continue to report to Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Ryan Green.

Anthony Gregory, former Vice President Ground Operations, has accepted a new leadership position outside of Southwest. Southwest is tremendously grateful for his 14 years of service, and the Company wishes him the best on his new endeavor.

Chris Johnson, who was promoted to Vice President Ground Operations in February, will immediately assume responsibility for all of Ground Operations and Provisioning, and will report directly to Senior Vice President Operations & Hospitality, Steve Goldberg. As the airline has added new cities to the Southwest network, Johnson's focus has been on supporting new Stations, Leaders, and Teams. Johnson's experience has no doubt guided him in his journey. He started as a Ramp Agent in Detroit in 1993, and has held Leadership roles as Ramp Supervisor in Columbus, Manager in Orlando, Assistant Station Leader in Oakland, Station Leader in Birmingham, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Phoenix, Station Director, Senior Station Director, and Senior Director of Labor Relations.

"I am thrilled for Linda, Tony, and Chris as they step into these roles, bringing a combined 78 years of Southwest knowledge and dedicated service to these positions," said Southwest Airlines Chairman and CEO Gary Kelly. "As we move into our next 50 years, we are so fortunate to have such a strong Leadership Team to guide the next chapter of Southwest Airlines."

#### ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

In its 51st year of service, Dallas-based [Southwest Airlines Co.](#) continues to differentiate itself from other air carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by more than 56,000 Employees to a Customer base that topped 130 million Passengers in 2019. Southwest has a robust network of point-to-point service with a strong presence across top leisure and business markets. In peak travel seasons during 2019, Southwest operated more than 4,000 weekday departures among a network of 101 destinations in the United States and 10 additional countries. In 2020, the carrier added service to Hilo, Hawaii; Cozumel, Mexico; Miami; Palm Springs, Calif.; Steamboat Springs; and Montrose (Telluride/Crested Butte), Colo. Thus far in 2021, Southwest has initiated service to Chicago (O'Hare) and Sarasota/ Bradenton, both on Feb. 14; Savannah/Hilton Head and Colorado

Springs, Colo., both on March 11; Houston (Bush) and Santa Barbara, Calif., both on April 12; Fresno, Calif., on April 25; Destin/Fort Walton Beach on May 6; Myrtle Beach S.C., on May 23; Bozeman, Mont., on May 27; and Jackson, Miss., on June 6. The airline will begin service to Eugene, Ore., on Aug. 29; Bellingham, Wash., on Nov. 7; and Syracuse, NY, on Nov. 14.

The carrier issued its [Southwest® Promise](#) in May 2020 to highlight new and round-the-clock efforts to support its Customers and Employees well-being and comfort. Among the changes are enhanced cleaning efforts at airports and onboard aircraft, along with a federal mandate requiring every person to wear a mask at all times throughout each flight. Additional details about the Southwest Promise are available at [Southwest.com/Promise](#).

Southwest coined [Transparency®](#) to describe its purposed philosophy of treating Customers honestly and fairly, and low fares actually staying low. Southwest is the only major U.S. airline to offer bags fly free® to everyone (first and second checked pieces of luggage, size and weight limits apply, some carriers offer free checked bags on select routes or in qualified circumstances). Southwest does not charge change fees, though fare differences might apply.

Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for a triple bottom line approach that contributes to the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities they serve, and an overall commitment to efficiency and the planet. Learn more about how the carrier gives back to communities across the world by visiting [Southwest.com/citizenship](#).

Book Southwest Airlines' low fares online at [Southwest.com](#) or by phone at 1-800-I-FLY-SWA®.

#### Media Contacts:

Visit the Southwest Newsroom at [swamedia.com](#) for multimedia assets and other Company news.

Media Relations Team: (214) 792-4847, option 1

###

#### ABOUT SOUTHWEST AIRLINES CO.

[Southwest Airlines Co.](#) operates one of the world's most admired and awarded airlines, offering its one-of-a-kind value and Hospitality at 121 airports across 12 countries. Southwest took flight in 1971 to democratize the sky through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel and now carries more air travelers flying nonstop within the United States than any other airline (fn. 1). By empowering its more than 73,000 (fn. 2) People to deliver unparalleled Hospitality, the maverick airline cherishes a passionate loyalty among more than 134 million Customers carried in 2025. Southwest leverages a

unique legacy and mission to serve communities around the world including harnessing the power of its People and Purpose to put communities at the Heart of its success. Learn more by visiting [Southwest.com/citizenship](https://Southwest.com/citizenship).

1. Based on U.S. Dept. of Transportation quarterly Airline Origin & Destination Survey as of Q4 2025
2. Fulltime-equivalent active Employees as of March 31, 2026

Media Contacts:

Visit the Southwest Newsroom at [swamedia.com](https://swamedia.com) for multimedia assets and other Company news.

###