

# From New Hire to Innovation Champion: A Journey to Success at Southwest Airlines

Everyone takes a unique path to Southwest Airlines, including Alex Dressler. He originally heard about the Associate Software Engineer role at Southwest Airlines from his wife, a current Associate Software Engineer at Southwest. Read on to learn more about how he grew a career he loves at Southwest and the cool experiences he's had along the way.



I arrived at Southwest Airlines in an unusual way, on a path that has led to the most amazing opportunities and friendships.

Let's backtrack a few years: I attended school in Provo, Utah, and studied Information Systems at Brigham Young University (BYU). About a year before graduation, I accepted an offer at a major tech company, and my wife and I moved to Dallas. With her degree in Bioinformatics, my wife researched the best companies in Dallas and began applying to some of them. Although she

interviewed with several companies, she realized that Southwest Airlines was the best place for her, and she began her role as an Associate Software Engineer soon after.

After a year and a half at my job, I was no longer passionate about my work. My wife and I would chat after work, and often the conversations would lead to how much she loved working at Southwest. When she mentioned a future job opening, I jumped at the chance, updated my resume, and sent in my application. During the on-site interviews, I felt right at home, and I knew I had found my ideal match in both an employer and Company Culture. Soon after I interviewed with Southwest, I accepted a position as an Associate Software Engineer.

Immediately, I felt a change in how I thought about work—I loved what I did, and had amazing opportunities right out of the gate. Four months into my role, the Technology Department announced an Innovation Challenge. They asked all Employees to submit innovative ideas that would help the group achieve our low-cost goals. That's another great thing at Southwest: the Company's philosophy that good ideas can come from anyone!

I submitted an idea to establish an annual hackathon to foster innovation and find unique solutions to department-wide problems. To my surprise, the judges chose my submission as one of five finalists out of over 100 submissions!

As a finalist, I received the opportunity to work with our Innovation Team to further develop my idea. A few weeks later, I presented the idea to our Senior Leadership in Technology. It was incredible to receive this opportunity only four months into my career at Southwest. My ideas were heard—not only by my Leader, but by all of the Technology Leaders as well. After our presentation, they announced my hackathon idea as the winner, and allotted us funding and time to make my idea reality.



At Southwest, you can always find ways to work on side projects that interest you. I have represented Southwest at university hackathons and traveled for recruiting events. Both my Leader and my wife's Leader have been incredibly supportive in our individual endeavors to grow personally and professionally. We are encouraged to learn about any part of the Company that interests us.

I also have to mention the awesome benefits that come with working at Southwest, including travel perks! My wife and I have an opportunity to travel whenever, and with both of our families located throughout the U.S., we take full advantage of our travel benefits. We frequently visit the West Coast and have plans to take some trips to the East Coast come spring. We also have a daughter now—she has already flown five times, and she is only five months old!

Lastly, at Southwest, we really pride ourselves on our Culture. Not only are the People fun and hardworking, they are also compassionate and kind. We've experienced an outpouring of love both during hard times—when my grandfather passed away—and the good times—when our daughter was born.

I would highly recommend a career at Southwest Airlines. It is an awesome place to work with a Culture you will not find anywhere else. It has been an incredible ride so far and I cannot wait for many more years to come."



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