

**Mr. Abe and Mr. Marshall
Preview of the New Service**

While this sample is from some time ago, it demonstrates my ability to combine an executive speech with audience response and an on-stage demo of the airline's new meal service. For comedic effect, I had a stewardess serve one meal after another to two volunteers on stage. (The presentation was a hit.)

Mr. Abe:

Thank you, Mr. Kimura.

Some time ago, JAL's management reached an important decision. "What we need," they said, "are more customer complaints."

Why? Because complaints tell us when passengers are dissatisfied. Complaints help us improve.

The fact is, among dissatisfied customers, only 4% will *tell* you they are unhappy. The other 96 will not complain. They'll simply change companies and give the *competition* a chance.

Well, we wanted to give our customers a chance. We put passenger comment cards in our in-flight magazines. We conducted in-flight surveys. We even introduced a toll-free "Hello Line" and invited our customers to express their views.

The passengers did what we hoped they would do ... they complained.

I should mention that they paid us many complements as well. They liked our attentive service. They noticed our on-time performance. We learned that we were doing many things correctly, and that our customers appreciated it.

But we also learned that there was room for improvement. Some customers felt other airlines treated them better. They said ANA had better service, as did Singapore Airlines, even *Northwest!* I don't believe that, but that's how people felt.

We took a look. In C-Class, we were serving drinks in plastic cups. The other airlines were using glassware. Our passengers took their meals on bare tables. The other airlines had table cloths. Our menu was pretty much the same day after day. Other airlines varied theirs.

We vowed to change that. But was there anything else we should change, too? We asked the people who know best: our passengers and our employees. We distributed surveys and conducted discussion groups. We asked, "What would you do if you could make any change you wished?"

Many of you in this room contributed to that process. It is impressive how creative people can be. Here are some of the more wild suggestions we got. A transparent roof so passengers could see the stars. A sauna in the cabin. Wall-to-wall mirrors in the rest rooms.

Other ideas were more practical: a lower serving wagon so First-Class passengers could better see the selections. A reduced-calorie menu, a choice of entrees in Y-Class, hot desserts to add variety.

There were over 1,000 ideas in all ... 1,000 possible ways to improve our service. And it was imperative that we adopt some of them.

Why? We had learned that our Business Class passengers were especially unhappy. But this is an area that will be the battleground for air travel in the 1990s. JAL's business class couldn't be anything less than the best.

What's more, if we were going to change, we wanted it to be a *dramatic* change. Our service had been very much the same for 20 years. We wanted passengers to *notice* the new JAL, to *feel* the new direction we were taking ...

(Mr. Marshall)

So what did we do? We brought in Landor Associates, a design firm in San Francisco. These people have designed the interiors of many noteworthy places. They helped us synthesize our ideas.

How can a design firm contribute to JAL's success? Let's try this simple experiment. Look at these objects, and tell me *when* you think they were made.

The first is a car. Vote "one" if you think this car was built in the 1950s. Vote "two" if you think it was built in the 60s, the 70s and so on.

When was this car made?

1. In the 1950s
2. In the 1960s
3. In the 1970s
4. In the 1980s

Well, you seemed to have no difficulty with that. This is a [YEAR AND MAKE OF CAR]. It was very sleek and modern for its time.

Now, when was this calculator made? See if you can tell.

When was this
calculator made?

1. In the 1950s
2. In the 1960s
3. In the 1970s
4. In the 1980s

This tells us something, doesn't it? Each age has its own look, character and feel. And over time, that character changes. What once looked modern becomes outdated. It is the job of the design firm to keep us looking modern

Now, think of that moment that every one of us has. When you step through the boarding door of an aircraft, turn, and see the long interior of the cabin. Like the objects we just looked at, you immediately *sense* if you are in an old plane or a new one. You *sense* if this is a modern company -- or an old-fashioned one.

We took a good look at our cabin interiors. They were designed in the 1970s, when our first jumbo jets came into service. Here is how our stewardesses looked in the 1970s. Here are some other things that were in fashion at the time.

Technology and tastes have changed since then. Our designers suggested new, more durable fabrics. And they suggested a more contemporary, coordinated color scheme.

Let's all try our hands in an exercise at aesthetic appreciation. Here are some color schemes for the interior of a flight cabin. Please vote for the one you find most pleasing.

Which color scheme do
you find most pleasing?

1. [Old JAL color scheme]
2. [A currently popular color scheme]
3. [The new JAL color scheme]

Perhaps you have seen enough of the first color scheme. It is the one our planes have been using for 20 years.¹ The next two are more modern. But our designers considered something else in making their recommendation.

Do you ever wonder how all your kitchen appliances seem to match, even when they come from different manufacturers? In the 1960s, everything was avocado green and sandstone yellow. Today's modern appliances are white, black, or bright red. Is it all a coincidence?

It isn't. It takes cooperation and coordination. Somewhere, right now, design committees are comparing notes on what color schemes will be in style years from now. This helps us know what will seem old-fashioned by then. And what will still look new.

We took this into account. Selection number two may be popular today. But color scheme number three should look modern at least through the year 2000. The colors range from deep purple, to mauve, to pink, to grey. Each of the three service classes is distinguished by its own variation of that color scheme.

After we redesigned the interior, we looked at improving comfort. In the 747-400s, the new *First Class* seats offer a full 59-inch seat pitch. They have lumbar support and headrests, and operate automatically with the push of a button.

Each seat has its own 5-inch color video monitor, with a choice of four video programs. On selected flights without personal video service, we will offer the Sony Video Walkman, free of charge.

Our new *Executive Class* will be available on almost all 747s. Here we have a very dramatic change. We've gone from eight- to seven-abreast seating. That gives each passenger about 20% more space. The seat pitch is a full 40 inches, up from 37. Lumbar supports, cushioned leg rests and wing backs add to the comfort.

As in first class, each Executive Class 747-400 seat has its own 5-inch video monitor.

¹ Or: "Choice number one is our old and familiar color scheme. I can understand why many of you are comfortable with it."

We made a small change in *Economy Class*. But it will be good news for the cost-conscious traveller. We are no longer charging for drinks or headsets.

Finally, we addressed a critical part of the flight experience: meal service. Rather than tell you about it, I'd like to conduct a demonstration. Let's look at the changes in Executive Class. May I have two volunteers to play the role of Executive-Class passengers?

We'll conduct a brief casting session. What are your names, please? Where do you work and what do you do there? Thank you, Mr. [NAME-ONE] and Mr. [NAME-TWO]. I will have to consult my producers. (To audience) should they get the part?

1. Yes
2. No

Very good, this could be your big break. Kindly take your seats in our newly redesigned Executive Class section. Imagine that these chairs are the new Executive-Class models, with lumbar supports and cushioned leg rests. Your cabin attendant today is [ATTENDANT]. May we have a round of applause for her?

Are you both comfortable? Did you imagine that 20% more passenger space would make such a big difference?

[Attendant] will begin with a glass of welcome champagne in our newly re-designed champagne glass. Let's drink a toast to the new JAL.

Very well. We had lunch half an hour ago, but Mr. [NAME-TWO] still looks a little hungry. Shall we begin the in-flight meal service?

We'll start with the main tray. In the past, the hors d'oeuvres and main trays were served in quick succession. This created a lot of hustle and bustle.

Now, we have changed the meal structure to main and dessert trays. This gives us a much calmer atmosphere. Note that [Attendant] is covering your tables with a high-quality disposable table cloth.

Mr. [NAME-ONE] could have ordered a Western-style entree. Instead, he requested our new "jubako" service. It starts with a grilled fish or meat appetizer, brazed vegetables and vinegared salad. Then, rice and clear soup, and a main entree of swordfish, salmon, yellowtail or fillet of beef. (To Mr.

[NAME-ONE]) how do you like it? "Jubako"-style meals are now available on all our principal routes.

I see Mr. [NAME-TWO] has requested our new "Healthy Menu." This is a special meal of between 700 and 1,000 calories. Perhaps he is watching his waistline.

As our two passengers enjoy their meal, they notice our new, redesigned table setting. It includes real glassware made by Sasaki Glass, and Noritake china with lavender-grey brush strokes near the rim.

Can you hold up some of the silver-plated cutlery for us? JAL's new corporate logo is embossed on the handles. Even the napkin rings and salt shakers have been completely redesigned.

By the way, I invite you to see the complete collection of new china, glassware and cutlery. It's on display in the [LOCATION]. You'll notice that it manages to blend Japanese and Western aesthetics. It's elegant, yet modern.

Now it's time for dessert. It consists of freshly prepared fruits and a box of selected chocolates.

Did you enjoy dessert? Yes? You *still* look hungry, Mr. [NAME-TWO], so let's go to the supplementary foods between meals. These are for people who want extra snacks on long flights. Or for those who prefer to spread their intake over smaller portions. The snacks may include rice balls, cup of noodles, sandwiches, or cheese with crackers.

Now that you are satiated, [Attendant] has a Sony Video Walkman for Mr. [NAME-ONE]. Mr. [NAME-TWO] would prefer to have a nap. Our new blanket is thinner and less bulky. It's also longer to help keep his ankles warm.

Before he naps, Mr. [NAME-TWO] may want to put up our new "Do Not Disturb" sign. Can you hold it up please? One sticker says, "Please do not disturb." Fortunately, there is another sticker that says, "Please wake me at meal times."

Thank you, Mr. [NAME-ONE and NAME-TWO]. Thank you, [ATTENDANT]. Let's give them a big hand.

(Mr. Abe)

We had a specific goal in mind as we redesigned each class of service. We wanted JAL's First Class to be the most elegant and luxurious of its kind. We would work to the *passenger's* schedule, letting them take meals on *their* rhythm.

Our Executive Class would offer elegance, luxury and spaciousness for the frequent traveller. In Y-Class, we'd emphasize speed and a festive atmosphere.

All of these changes are outlined in a policy manual which we sent and asked you to read earlier this month. It looks like this (hold a sample book up). Now it's time for another audience-participation question. How many of you read it?

Did you read the policy manual?

1. Yes
2. No

(Audience laughter) Hmm. Perhaps we'll skip this question. Hopefully, this demonstration has inspired you to read it.

With this complete redesign, you can more confidently promote JAL. Of the many suggested improvements, we put 80 into practice. That's an impressive step forward.

And we didn't stop with our airplanes. We're also planning to renovate five American Region terminals. Look for changes in the Eastern Terminal at JFK, in Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta and Honolulu. The new terminals will be even easier to get around in. They'll be more modern and convenient for passengers.

We have a new look. We have better service. This puts us back where we belong, among the best in the industry.

But the new facilities are just the setting. They are the backdrop against which you perform. They were created for just one purpose: to support you in caring for the passenger.

So *use* these tools to help passengers enjoy their flight. Give them a *reason* to come back to JAL. And while the passengers sit back to relax, we must pay even closer attention.

That makes *your* role doubly important. Because you have a tremendous advantage. You are the ones who see our customers day in and day out. You see them at check-in. You talk to them on the phone. You know what makes them happy, and what's causing irritation. You are the forward line, our best source of information.

And so, I have a request of you. Please tell us what our passengers are saying. If they like something, we'll be delighted to hear it. If something should change, we want to know. No need to be formal. Just write your comment on a slip of paper. Send it to PSZ, attention, "Passenger Services." We will take it from there.

Meanwhile, we will continue to distribute our comment cards. We will continue our toll-free "Hello Line." We will continue to interview crew and customers, this next time in September.

When we do, we hope to get more feedback. And if we're *lucky*, more complaints.

Thank you.

We have new and superior service. Now someone must ask customers to try it. That is the job of Mr. Tokuno, our Director of Advertising and Promotion. It is my honor now to introduce him.