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A Public Agenda Holiday Feature on Travel Civility For Release AMs - December 17, 2003

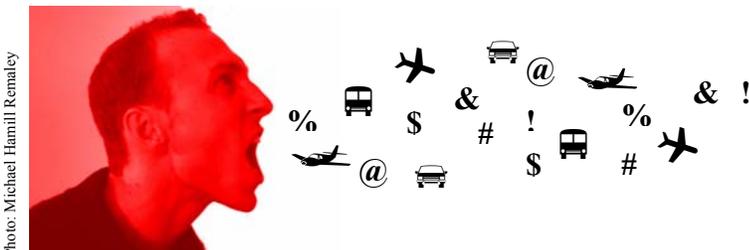


Photo: Michael Hamill Remaley

Push Comes to Shove: Passengers and Travel Workers Call Rudeness a Real Problem

Both admit to being part of the problem; for the travel industry as well as travelers, there are lessons to be learned

Are you dreading the snarl, shout and shove of holiday travel? You aren't alone. New research points to rudeness and bad behavior as major sources of stress and aggravation for both passengers and transportation workers. As Americans take to the air and the road, chances are that rude and disrespectful behavior will be pumping up tension and tempers this holiday season.

An informal canvass of travel industry workers conducted by the nonpartisan opinion organization **Public Agenda**, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, and a survey of passengers conducted by the online travel site **Travelocity** together suggest that stressful travel conditions, a general decline in values and parents who don't control their children are sore spots for Americans on the move.

How badly are we behaving? Of those responding to the Public Agenda and Travelocity feedback polls:

- ▶ 65% of passengers say rudeness is a serious problem in travel these days, and 52% of travelers say rudeness is a major cause of stress. 54% of travel employees say passenger rudeness is a top cause of their on-the-job stress and tension.
- ▶ Nearly half (49%) of travel workers say they have personally seen a situation where disrespectful behavior threatened to escalate into physical confrontation. And an additional 19% say disrespect had led to a situation actually getting physical.
- ▶ 62% of travel personnel say they sometimes or often see their fellow workers being rude, and another 50% admit that they have lost patience and been impolite to passengers themselves. But when this happens, 56% say it is typically because employees were provoked and treated badly by passengers. While most passengers give travel personnel high marks for overall courtesy, 67% say that when they have a run-in with rude travel employees, they are likely to be rude in return.



► Nevertheless, 62% of transportation employees say rude and disrespectful behavior is “mostly limited to a few people,” and 45% say they are often treated with courtesy and respect.

According to **Public Agenda President Ruth Wooden**, “Incivility is not just a minor daily irritant. In a national study Public Agenda conducted in 2002,* we found that 79% of Americans say lack of respect and courtesy is a serious problem. And where do we see some of the worst behavior in everyday life? Where do we see good people go bad? Too often we see it - or cause it ourselves - when we travel. Bad manners and rude behavior can make modern travel a trying and sometimes unpleasant experience.”

“It’s important to keep in mind that 35% of the travelers surveyed said they don’t find rudeness to be a serious problem,” says **Amy Ziff, Editor-at-Large at Travelocity**. “However as a travel company, we think this is a great opportunity for people to learn from their behavior and the behavior of others. The vast majority of travelers say they shrug rude encounters off quickly, but a simple ‘excuse me’ or a smile can also go a long way.”

Crowds, Long Lines, Unruly Children

Both travel workers and passengers see two trends in travel incivility – a general loss of respect and the practical effects of working and traveling under tough conditions.

Passengers (52%) and travel workers (69%) say a decline in values and morality leads people to be less polite and respectful, and 63% of passengers and 72% of travel workers say the problem is caused by too many parents “failing to teach respect to their kids.”

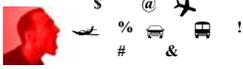
Travel conditions, too, are taking their toll. About 7 in 10 (69%) travel workers cite “stress due to lack of adequate staff and resources” as a major source of rudeness, and most (66%) acknowledge that crowds and long lines lead people to lose their cool. 51% of travel workers say that things are so hectic and people so rushed that they forget to be polite.

Parents may not want to hear this, but topping passengers’ list of rude behaviors is “uncontrolled children” (80%). 80% also point to passengers who kick the back of the seat in front, followed by swearing (67%), loud talking (66%) and littering (55%).

Travelers’ Opinions Count

The Public Agenda and Travelocity research points to consequences for rude behavior that go beyond hot words and high blood pressure. Of the passengers responding to Travelocity, 50% say that they have stopped doing business with a carrier where they have encountered rude personnel. 36% say they have complained to management and 37% say they have written a letter. 72% say they have told their story to friends.

Although a serious issue for the travel industry, fewer than half (46%) of travel employees responding to Public Agenda report that they have received training in how to deal with rude or disrespectful passengers. Of those who have received special training, only 9% call it very



effective; 43% say it has been somewhat effective, and 45% say it has either been not too effective or not effective at all.

It's Contagious

According to Ruth Wooden, "From this informal research, we see that passengers and travel workers are very aware that courtesy and manners are a two-way street. Passengers expect, appreciate and generally receive courteous treatment. But when treated badly, they are likely to respond in kind by being rude themselves. And they are also likely to complain, tell their friends and avoid the offending carrier.

While travel workers often feel provoked by rude and unreasonable passengers, nearly half of travel workers say they sometimes see other employees being disrespectful to passengers and 16% say they see this often.

It is also clear that rudeness is contagious. In *Aggravating Circumstances* we found that nearly 7 in 10 Americans say they are less likely to be nice when they have to deal with someone who is rude and impolite. But far more (92%) said that respect and courtesy are contagious too; the more people engage in civil behavior, the more it flourishes. In the end, this may make travel a more civil, less dehumanizing experience for all of us."

About the Travel and Civility Research

The Public Agenda Feedback Poll of travel industry workers represents the views of 875 airline, bus, train and highway workers who decided to answer the survey and cannot be assumed to represent the views of the general population of people who work in the travel industry. The sample was a nonrandom and self-selected pool of employees who chose to complete the questionnaire.

The Travelocity poll represents the responses of 1,009 Travelocity members who have traveled in the last 12 months.

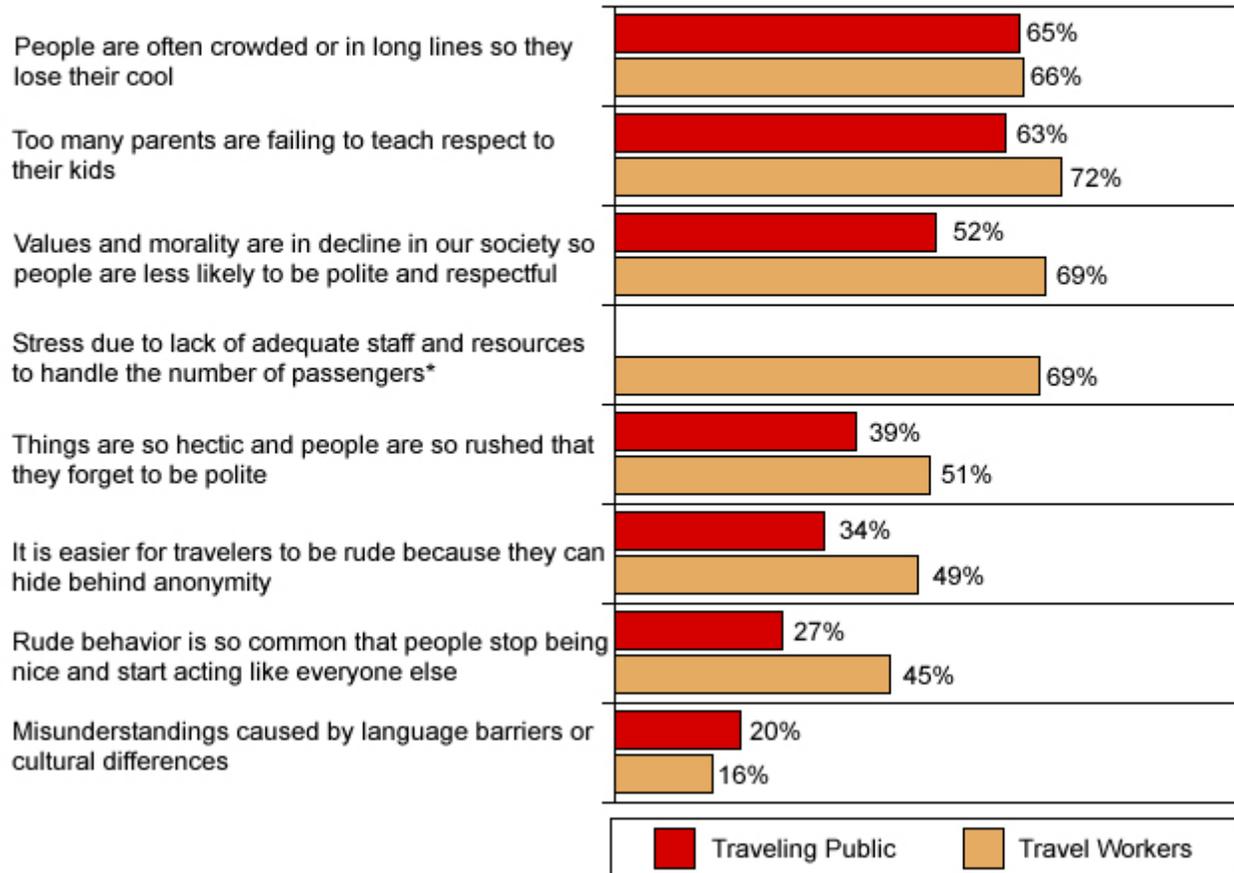
*This new research is based on the landmark public opinion study *Aggravating Circumstances: A Status Report on Rudeness in America*. The 2002 report on Americans' views on rudeness and civility was conducted by Public Agenda with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Note to Journalists: For a downloadable copy of this feature and accompanying graphics, go to http://www.publicagenda.org/press/press_release_detail.cfm?list=56



What causes rude behavior?

The percentage of travelers and travel workers who say the following is a "major cause" of rude and disrespectful behavior:



Note: *Asked only of travel workers

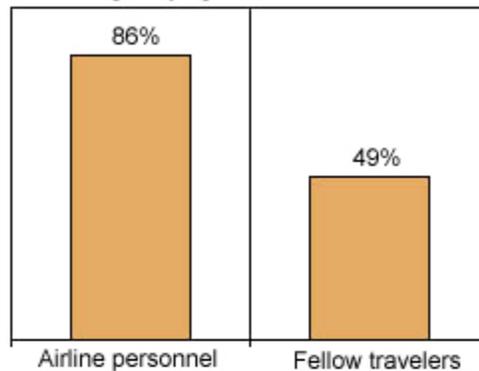


Who's ruder, travelers or travel workers?

Travelers are more likely to say they receive courteous treatment from travel workers compared to fellow travelers

In general, how likely are you to be treated with courtesy and respect by the following groups of people?

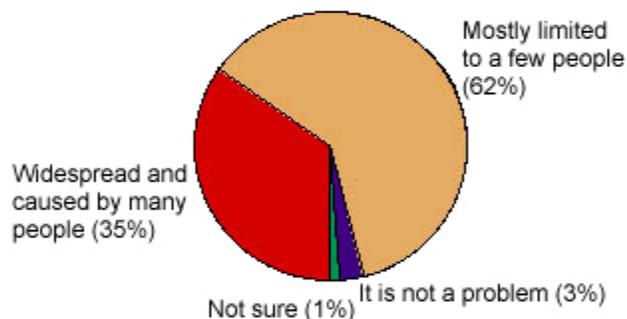
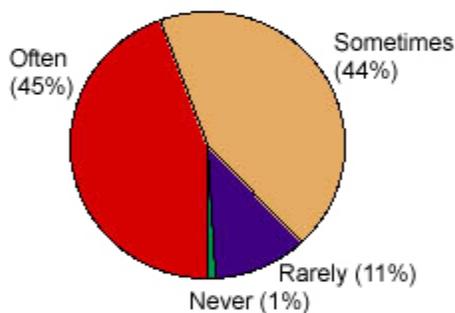
Percentage saying: "all" or "most" of the time



Travel workers say they often get respect and that bad behavior is limited to a few

How often are you treated with courtesy and respect by passengers?

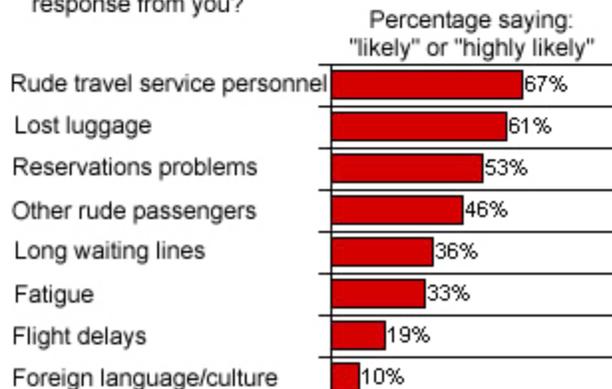
Would you say that the problem of rude and disrespectful passengers is:



Consequences for the travel industry

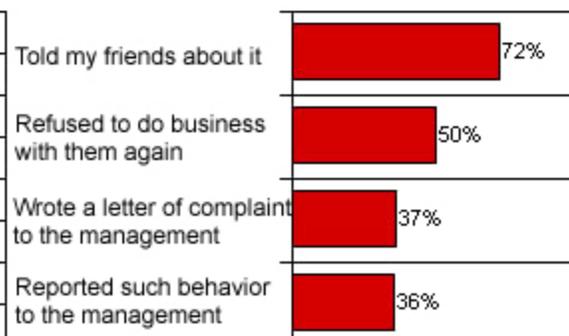
Rude service is most likely to provoke a rude response from travelers

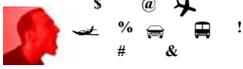
How likely are the following factors to elicit a rude response from you?



And, travelers spread the word when treated rudely

Which of the following have you done after being treated rudely by travel service personnel?





ABOUT PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a nonprofit organization dedicated to nonpartisan public policy research. Founded in 1975 by former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Daniel Yankelovich, the social scientist and author, Public Agenda is well respected for its influential public opinion polls and balanced citizen education materials. Its mission is to inform leaders about the public's views and to educate citizens about government policy.

ABOUT TRAVELOCITY

Travelocity, a Sabre Holdings™ company, pioneered the online travel space and continues to be the most popular travel service on the Web, giving consumers access to hundreds of airlines, thousands of hotels and cruises, last-minute and vacation packages, and best-in-class car rental companies, all backed by 1,000 customer service representatives staffed to provide 24-hour assistance. With 41 million members, Travelocity is the sixth largest travel agency in the United States. It has been recognized worldwide for its leadership in the online travel space, and it operates or powers Web sites in five languages across four continents. Additional information about Travelocity can be found on the Web at <http://www.travelocity.com>.

Travelocity is a registered service mark of Travelocity.com LP. Sabre Holdings Corporation (NYSE: TSG) is a world leader in travel commerce, retailing travel products and providing distribution and technology solutions for the travel industry. More information about Sabre Holdings is available at <http://www.sabre-holdings.com>.

To learn more about civility or to download a free copy of *Aggravating Circumstances: A Status Report on Rudeness in America*, go to:

www.publicagenda.org



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