Newsroom Audit

This is an audit of the Southwest Airlines Newsroom. The site is located at

http://www.swamedia.com/.

Access to Site

A link to the newsroom for Southwest Airlines is located in the footer of the

homepage. The link is labeled "Press Room" and is nestled under the "About Southwest"

category header. The specific URL for the Southwest Press Room is www.swamedia.com. A

suggestion might be to rename the URL as www.news.southwest.com. The Press Room can

be found at the top of the list when searching most search engines with key words such as:

Southwest Airlines, media, press room, press release, etc.

Content Featured at the Site

The content featured on southwest.com is simple, concise and clean. While there is a

lot of content, it is organized in an easy-to-read format. The current and newest releases

are featured at the top and the archives can be accessed when clicking the bottom right

button. The website offers a search field for visitors to the search the entire newsroom,

which offers the best method for user experience.

There is also an "In the News" section that highlights and links to published articles

about Southwest Airlines. The latest stories are closest to the top. The most recent stories

of the current month are the only stories of focus. It may be helpful to search previous

stories if a user is interested.

Photography and Graphic Downloads at the Site

The website hosts a photo gallery with the most recent photos at the top of the list. Older

photos can be found by clicking the arrow button and tabbing through the previous pages,

which may not offer the best user experience. Newsroom visitors may use the site's search field if they know specific, key words to describe the photo they are looking for.

The photos may be downloaded as a high resolution JPEG, or for web quality; however, the photos are password protected for these specific files. This may slow down journalists' work if they have not made prior arrangements to obtain credentials for this site. A visitor may register for access by clicking the "Not Registered?" link.

Visitors are also offered the opportunity to immediately share the photo, and the associated story, on social media channels. Twitter, Google +, Reddit, Facebook and LinkedIn are among these networks. The final method of sharing photos is the option to copy the html code to the location of the photo, and embed the code to a visitor's website of choice. If the visitor is looking to download more than one item, he or she has the ability to click the shopping cart icon and save the image for later making this a very convenient user experience.

Logos are not in the photos section, but rather in a section of their own with the same options previously mentioned. The Southwest Airlines logo is available in full color or black and white.

Audio and/or Video Material at the Site

The site offers a full video gallery and is set up similar to that of the photo gallery. Visitors may watch the full video of choice within the gallery, and are provided a summary of individual videos to review before watching the full video. Additionally, there the site offers B-Roll gallery, which mirrors the layout of the video gallery. This feature may be convenient and save journalists time.

Additional Information at the Site

Full media kits, facts sheets, backgrounders, awards, company history and blog can be found at the newsroom. Most of this information is readily accessible, but some of it requires credentials to download full details. If a visitor has previously obtained credentials, this information could be convenient through this method of communication.

Readership Aids

The site features a "Love Southwest" section of navigation, which offers users the opportunity to access and subscribe to the company's news feeds, channels and email alerts. This navigation remains consistent when accessing different material throughout the site. Additional news feed buttons are available for individual stories, photos and videos.

Navigation of the Site

While the site contains a large amount of content, it is organized and easy to navigate. Many sections offer navigation, but none of the variations are conflicting. The top of the site offers navigation to frequently used topics and the side offers a category and sub-category structure.

Overall Evaluation of this Online Newsroom

Overall, the site offers a very organized, clear and concise content and imagery. Other than a few minor considerations mentioned above, the site is well built. The Southwest Airlines Newsroom could be used as a model for other corporate communication teams.