NEW UNITED CHIEF MUNOZ READY TO ‘ACT’

News / Airlines, Personalities

United Airlines new chief Oscar **Munoz** will act soon to address some of the issues that he is hearing about from employees and customers, says the carrier’s chief revenue officer Jim Compton.

“You’re going to see him act,” says Compton on the sidelines of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers Fall Conference in New York today. “Some things you’ll hear about shortly and some will be a cadence.”

Munoz only stepped into the president and chief executive role in September following the resignation of Jeff Smisek following an internal probe over his interactions with Newark Liberty International airport operator the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ).

Munoz immediately launched a listening tour that will eventually take him to airports across United’s system to meet with employees and customers to get their feedback on how to improve the carrier.

Munoz (left) meeting with a ramp employee

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United Airlines

While he has only granted three media interviews since taking the job, the new chief has released a few letters to United employees and the public acknowledging the carrier's shortcomings following its merger withContinental Airlines in 2010 and vowing to do better.

"We haven't lived up to your expectations or to the promise and potential of that day," said Munoz, referring to the merger in a letter published in newspapers across the USA on 1 October. "That's going to change. We are committed to re-earning your trust. We want to be the first choice for every trip you take. We want to be an amazing place to work. And we want to be a great neighbour."

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United employees have so far responded well to Munoz's energy, says Compton who reports directly to the new chief.

"The employees love his energy," Compton says. "He's saying that he's listening and getting feedback from the employees about how United can be an even greater airline and he is committed to following-up on that feedback."

Compton says Munoz has a strong grasp of both consumer business from his experience working at Pepsi and Coca Cola and operational issues from his time at the railroad CSX – experience that he is expected to bring to United.

"I don't want to speak for him but it's clear that it is an effort that takes everybody and that's the piece he's going to be pushing," says Compton. "He's famous for saying let's be part of something great together."

Munoz still faces challenges. He faces split flight attendant ranks with subsidiary-United and subsidiary-Continental staff working under separate contracts with their own respective grievances, as well as an operational and financial performance that while improving still lags its peers American Airlines and Delta Air Lines.

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