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Strong Leadership Needed to Address Continuing Airline Woes

NORTHERN VIRGINIA— Lost luggage, delayed or cancelled flights, and security breaches—airline industry leaders say that these consumer frustrations are due to weather, increased traffic, and just plain human error. Dr. Byron Cherry, author of *Are We Safer Now? Airline Security in a Post 9/11 Society*, says poor leadership is to blame.

"Research supports the fact that leadership is the single most critical factor in the success of an organization," states Cherry. "The research I conducted for this book shows that the airline industry has been taken over by the very industry it regulates. Thus, airline safety and security has become more precarious for consumers," Cherry continued.

So, in light of the recent reports and the long-term trend of declining consumer satisfaction, what should consumers expect from the people in charge of the airline industry? "First and foremost," Cherry states, "travelers want to feel a sense of security and be safe at the same time when they travel. As I continue to study this industry, consumers look to leaders of these organizations to actually lead. Passengers want honest, forthright answers to their questions, and they want to feel valued."

Research has also shown that travelers want consistent and standardized safety and security measures across the United States. In other words, they want to see the same level of security in large airports as well as small airports. "This isn't happening right now," said Cherry. "The recent reports about baggage handlers and flight attendants passing through security with prohibited items proves that security measures are not the same for all persons at all locations," he continued. Cherry believes that until industry leaders take a step back, address the weaknesses in the industry, and focus on a win-win for both passengers and the airline industry, security and safety issues will continue and customer satisfaction and trust in the industry will plummet. Some airlines are already experiencing this lack of customer trust in the form of empty seats on their planes. This trend will continue if **consumers do not see change within the industry soon.**

***Company Information:* Dr. Byron Cherry is a national speaker on the topic of leadership. In addition to his book, *Are We Safer Now? Airline Security in a Post 9/11 Society*, he has authored and co-authored numerous articles on airline security and safety. He is also an adjunct professor at Regent University, Troy University, and LeTourneau University where he teaches on the subjects of leadership, strategy, and organizational theory and management. Dr. Cherry can be reached at info@byroncherry.com, or at 210-323-9961.**

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