



ESG CONSULTING

Religious Freedom and Pluralism Consultation EMBRACING RELIGIOUS INCLUSIVITY AT DELTA

Presented to:

DELTA AIR LINES

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Impact of Religious Inclusivity in the Workplace	5
Religious Impact at American Airlines	6
Three Key Recommendations for Advancing Religious Inclusion at Delta	8
1. Establish a Faith & Belief Inclusion Group.....	8
2. Host an Annual Interfaith Dialogue or Faith-in-the-Workplace Event	9
3. Launch an Annual REDI-Aligned Religious Inclusion Survey	Error!
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Concluding Remarks.....	9

Executive Summary

This report explores a case study based on the REDI Index and its top-performing companies, including Delta's competitor, American Airlines.

- Impact of Religious Inclusivity in the Workplace
- Religious Impact at American Airlines
- Three Key Recommendations for Delta

Impact of Religious Inclusivity in the Workplace

Pew Research Center recently conducted a religious landscape study, asking 35,000 Americans about their beliefs, affiliations, practices, demographics, and political views.

Religious Affiliation of Americans

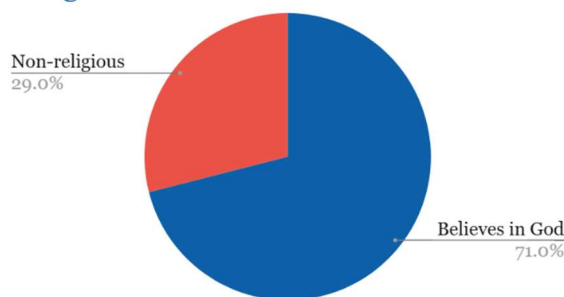


Figure 1: Percent of Americans who are religious

Figure 1 shows the results of this study: 71% of Americans believe in God in some way. In other words, almost 3 out of 4 of your employees likely believe in God (Pew Research Center, 2024). For religious employees, having a supportive work environment can make all the difference in the world, increasing productivity, engagement, trust of fellow employees, and work satisfaction.

Religious Impact at American Airlines

By integrating religious inclusivity into its diversity strategy, American Airlines has created a workplace culture where all employees feel valued and respected. The company's commitment to religious diversity not only enhances employee satisfaction and retention but also strengthens its overall organizational performance. A diverse and inclusive workforce brings varied perspectives and insights, which in turn fosters innovation and supports American Airlines' ongoing success in a competitive industry.

Three Key Recommendations for Delta

Delta's leadership consistently affirms that its greatest competitive advantage lies in its people, culture, and service. Here are three key ways Delta can advance its religious inclusivity and support everyone it serves.

1. Establish a faith and belief inclusion group
2. Host an annual interfaith event
3. Launch an annual religious inclusion survey

Concluding Remarks

While Delta has made meaningful strides in DEI across race, gender, and accessibility, religion remains underrepresented. By expanding DEI to include belief, Delta has a timely opportunity to lead with clarity and conviction.

Our three key recommendations are culture-shaping investment opportunities. With executive support and intentional design, Delta can build a workplace where employees of all beliefs feel seen, supported, and empowered.



Embracing Religious Inclusivity at Delta Air Lines

By ESG Consulting

Introduction

Rather than adopting the traditional restaurant strategy of being open seven days a week, Chick-fil-A is famously closed on Sunday. In 2024, Chick-fil-A generated \$22.7 billion in sales. A quick calculation reveals that over 365 days Chick-fil-A generates an average of \$62 million in revenue every day.

Chick-fil-A faces pressure from fans, shareholders, and even New York legislators to open on Sunday. Despite the criticism, Chick-fil-A has remained true to its policy and still has ranked as America's favorite fast-food restaurant for last 10 years.

Chick-fil-A's commitment to close on Sunday generates more long-term benefits that outweigh its short-term losses. Its policy strengthens its brand image, increases customer loyalty, and improves employee morale and retention. Similarly, ESG consulting firmly believes that Delta

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."
-First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

Air Lines will significantly benefit by increasing its focus on religious inclusivity.

Religious freedom has long stood as a cornerstone of American identity, enshrined in the Constitution as a right to be protected, not ignored. Yet in the modern workplace, religion is often the last aspect of identity to be acknowledged within Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategies. The Corporate Religious Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (REDI) Index exists to help companies recognize that respecting faith and belief in the workplace is not only a matter of principle, but a matter of performance.

Despite Delta Air Lines' strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), religious identity remains one of the least acknowledged aspects of its DEI strategy. In a workplace where employees are increasingly seeking a sense of belonging tied to all parts of their identity, this gap presents both a cultural and operational risk. To mitigate such risks, Delta should integrate religious inclusivity into its DEI strategy by establishing a faith and belief inclusion group, hosting an annual interfaith event, and launching an annual religious inclusion survey.

Overview

- Impact of Religious Inclusivity in the Workplace
- Religious Impact at American Airlines
- Three Key Recommendations for Delta
 - Establish a Faith & Belief Inclusion Group
 - Host an Annual Interfaith Dialogue or Faith-in-the-Workplace Event
 - Launch an Annual REDI-Aligned Religious Inclusion Survey



Impact of Religious Inclusivity in the Workplace

In an increasingly religiously diverse country, significant research has been conducted investigating how religiosity

impacts all areas of life including professional, family, and health aspects.

For religious employees, having a supportive work environment can make all the difference in the world, increasing productivity, engagement, trust of fellow employees, and work satisfaction.



To determine the religious makeup of America, Pew Research Center recently conducted a religious landscape study involving 35,000 Americans in all 50 states. Pew asked questions about beliefs, affiliations, practices, demographics, and political views as a part of this research.

Religious Affiliation of Americans

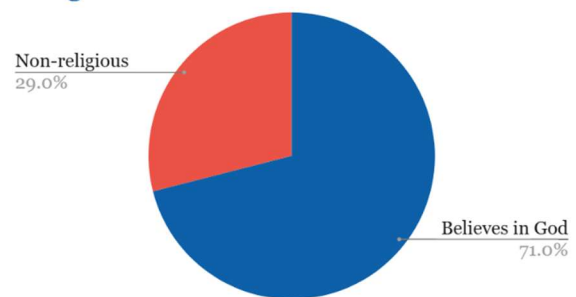


Figure 1: Percent of Americans who are religious, according to Pew Research

Figure 1 shows the results of this study and reveals that 71% of Americans believe in God in some way. In other words, almost three out of four of your employees is likely

to believe in God. This study also asserts that 90% of those with a strong belief in God say that religion is somewhat or very important in their lives (Pew Research Center, 2024).

While religion can be a divisive topic that we tend to shy away from, particularly in the workplace, the data shows that it is a central part of most Americans' lives. The ability to appropriately encourage and support religious employees can therefore turn religion from a risk to an asset in the workplace.



An article published in 2022 by Augustana College articulates the benefits of religious diversity in professional settings. Supporting employees in their faith increases employee resilience and responsiveness, creates a more open company culture, and helps employees manage stress and well-being. In addition to promoting inclusivity, diversity of religion in the workplace is crucial to high-quality service, especially for sectors with "a diverse client or customer base," such as Delta. Companies that employ people with a variety of religious backgrounds are better able to serve a more diverse clientele (Kestner-Ricketts, 2022).

It is crucial to sustain a workplace where employees are both respected for and supported in their religiosity. Promoting a healthy culture of religious pluralism will

enhance the benefits of diversity in your company.

Religious Impact at American Airlines

American Airlines' efforts in religious inclusion have earned the company top recognition in the Corporate Religious Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI) Index. The REDI Index evaluates companies based on their support for religious diversity, and American Airlines has consistently ranked as one of the top performers. This recognition highlights the company's success integrating religious inclusivity into its broader diversity and inclusion strategy, setting a high standard for other organizations to follow (REDI Index, 2024).



American Airlines is a leader in creating faith-based Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRGs), providing a space for employees to connect based on their religious backgrounds.

The airline supports 20 EBRGs, including groups for Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Along with these EBRGs for three major world religions, American Airlines also has an employee resource group called Bridges, which helps connect individuals from various religions. Figure 3 represents the EBRGs at both American Airlines and Delta Air Lines.

Airlines and Their EBRGs

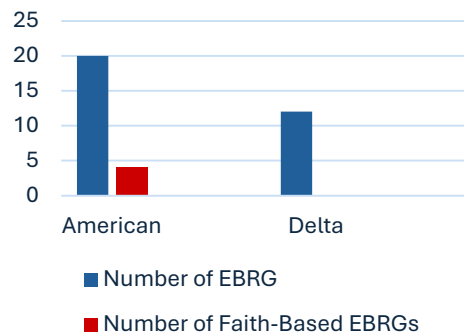


Figure 3: American and Delta's EBRGs

As seen in Figure 3, American Airlines not only has more Employee Business Resource Groups than Delta, but also four religious groups where Delta has none. American Airlines has the most faith-based ERGB's in the industry, providing resources for employees from a variety of religious backgrounds.

These faith-based groups foster dialogue and community, helping employees share experiences and advocate for greater religious inclusion in the workplace. The company's commitment to these groups is evident in its efforts to create an environment where faith is not only accepted but celebrated.

American Airlines takes pride in fostering interfaith understanding through programs such as "Abraham's Tent." This initiative brings together employees from different religious backgrounds—Christian, Jewish, and Muslim—to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Interfaith events like Abraham's Tent help promote mutual respect, breaking down barriers and building bridges among people of various faiths. Through such programs, American Airlines ensures that its employees can learn from one another and work together with a sense of shared purpose and understanding.

Recognizing the importance of supporting employees' spiritual well-being, American Airlines also offers chaplaincy services. The company's chaplaincy team, including professionals like Fr. Greg McBryer, provides confidential counseling and spiritual support to employees.



This holistic approach to employee care ensures that their religious and emotional needs are met, helping them thrive both personally and professionally.

American Airlines goes above and beyond to accommodate the religious practices of its employees. The company has implemented policies that allow for flexible scheduling, enabling employees to observe their religious holidays, rituals, and holy days without conflict.

In addition to flexible hours, American provides prayer spaces at its headquarters, ensuring employees have a quiet, respectful area for worship during the workday. These

practices demonstrate the company's commitment to respecting and supporting religious diversity.

At the heart of American Airlines' religious inclusivity efforts is the active advocacy of its leadership. Chief Diversity Officer Cedric Rockamore and other senior leaders at the company regularly champion the importance of religious diversity in the workplace. Their leadership sets the tone for the company's commitment to fostering an environment where all employees can bring their authentic selves to work, regardless of their religious beliefs.

By integrating religious inclusivity into its diversity strategy, American Airlines has created a workplace culture where all employees feel valued and respected. The company's commitment to religious diversity not only enhances employee satisfaction and retention but also strengthens its overall organizational performance. A diverse and inclusive workforce brings varied perspectives and insights, which in turn fosters innovation and supports American Airlines' ongoing success in a competitive industry.

Three Key Recommendations for Advancing Religious Inclusion at Delta



Delta's leadership consistently affirms that its greatest competitive advantage lies in its people and culture. In a world where workplace belonging is increasingly tied to

identity, Delta has a timely opportunity to lead in how it supports its workers.

Based on our research about the impact of religious inclusivity on individuals, as well as our findings from American Airlines, we have identified several key actions Delta can implement to improve its religious inclusivity. Things like prayer rooms, company events celebrating religious holidays, offering kosher meals on planes, and implementing leadership trainings on religious inclusivity are simple ways Delta can improve its REDI Index rating. In addition, we identified three keyways Delta can advance its religious inclusivity and support everyone it serves.

Establish a Faith and Belief Inclusion Group



Creating a REDI-style ERBG centered on faith and belief offers a respectful, inclusive space for employees to connect across spiritual and philosophical differences. This group would:

- Promote interfaith understanding
- Enhance Delta's culture of empathy and openness
- Signal to employees that their full selves are welcome at work

Business Value: Higher employee engagement, lower attrition, and deeper team cohesion across geographies and roles.

Host an Annual Interfaith Dialogue or Faith-in-the-Workplace Event

Delta can further normalize respectful conversations around belief by hosting an annual interfaith dialogue or creating designated spaces for employees to discuss how faith intersects with work. These forums could be led by employees and supported by leadership, allowing a safe, voluntary way to:

- Foster storytelling and connection
- Encourage education and curiosity around diverse beliefs
- Build bridges across roles, departments, and worldviews

Business Value: Strengthens culture, builds trust, and enhances Delta's identity as a values-driven employer.



The image shows a screenshot of a survey form titled "RELIGIOUS INCLUSION SURVEY" with the Delta logo at the top. The text reads: "We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that respects all religious beliefs. Please provide your feedback in this short survey." The survey consists of four questions: 1. "What is your religion?" with radio button options for Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism. 2. "Do you feel respected and valued for your religious beliefs at work?" with radio button options for Yes and Not sure. 3. "Are there improvements we could make to better accommodate your religious practices?" followed by a text input field. 4. "Please share any additional comments or suggestions." followed by a larger text input field.

Launch an Annual REDI-Aligned Religious Inclusion Survey

Implementing an annual survey dedicated to religious accommodation and inclusion allows Delta to:

- Measure progress and identify improvement areas
- Tailor policy changes based on employee feedback

- Demonstrate a commitment to data-driven inclusion

Business Value: Enables smarter decisions, reduces oversight risks, and equips leaders with actionable insights.

Concluding Remarks

Delta Air Lines is a company grounded in connection, powered by people, and driven by purpose. As stated in Delta's 2024 10-K, "our people and culture are our strongest competitive advantage" (Delta Air Lines, *Form 10-K*, 9). To live that mission fully, Delta must ensure its culture reflects *all* aspects of employee identity. Companies like Chick-fil-A, which closes every Sunday for religious reasons, continue to lead in sales and customer loyalty, showing that honoring belief systems can strengthen both culture and performance.

This report began with a reminder from the U.S. Constitution: Religious freedom is a foundational right. Yet in the modern workplace, faith remains the most overlooked dimension of diversity. While Delta has made meaningful progress in DEI across race, gender, and accessibility, religious inclusion has yet to receive the same attention.



Our research shows that when employees feel supported in their faith, outcomes improve across the board. Trust,

productivity, job satisfaction, and well-being all rise.

American Airlines serves as a compelling model to follow. Their top ranking in the REDI Index reflects years of intentional investment in programs like faith-based resource groups, interfaith events, prayer accommodations, and spiritual care services. These efforts have strengthened company culture and built deeper employee loyalty.

Uneven DEI initiatives are vulnerable to customer and employee backlash. To help Delta avoid these operational and cultural risks, we urge management at Delta to carry out our three key recommendations. Each recommendation is a strategic opportunity to enhance Delta's culture and reinforce its people-first identity. With executive support and intentional design, Delta can further

build a workplace where employees of all beliefs feel seen, supported, and empowered

Now is the moment to show that Delta truly believes people are its greatest asset by making space for the beliefs that make them who they are.



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