

FLYING HIGH



Monarch Airlines was formed in 1967 and began commercial operations on 5 April 1968 with a charter flight from Luton to Madrid using a second hand Bristol 175 Britannia 300 turbo-prop plane. Based at Luton and flying from half a dozen UK airports, it now operates scheduled flights to over 50 destinations, mainly around the Mediterranean. Monarch also flies long haul to Orlando, Tobago and Goa and medium haul to the Canaries, Egypt and The Gambia.

In 1972, the airline carried 500,000 passengers in one year for the first time, a million in 1981 and two million in 1988. In 2008 the airline reversed its emphasis on charter flights and 80% of its flights are now scheduled. In 2013 it carried over six million passengers per annum and had 3,300 employees employed across the airline, tour operator and engineering divisions. Monarch were also a finalist for the 2014 TTG awards 'Airline of the year'.

Ask a group of people who have taken a flight in the last 3 months to tell you about their experience and you'll no doubt get a real mixed bag of responses, from exceptional to truly dreadful and everything in between.

So how do individual airlines compare? What things do some airlines do very well, and others do really badly, and why? This was something Monarch Airlines were keen to understand. Monarch Airlines have their own Customer Satisfaction Survey, asking customers to rate their satisfaction on a 10-point numerical scale for 26 individual criteria. They ask customers about everything from searching for flights through to post-flight customer service follow-up.

Monarch also use Feefo to ask customers to rate their experience. This is a two stage process and customers can rate their booking experience and their flight experience so Monarch get a clear picture of how

they perform on the ground and in the air. Monarch currently obtains 80,000 reviews and maintain a 92% satisfaction rating.

Whilst Monarch have an extremely clear picture of what customers think of them, they were unsure as to how non-customers perceive competitor airlines. Therefore the research objective was to understand how satisfied non-customers are with competing airlines across the same 26 customer requirements measured in the Monarch customer satisfaction surveys.

Utilising the TLF Panel, we sourced a representative sample of 1000 UK adults who had taken a flight in the last 12 months, and asked them to rate their last experience. After asking which airline they flew with and when, respondents were asked to score their satisfaction with the airline across all 26 criteria.

From the sample, some airlines obviously featured more prominently than others. BA, easyJet, RyanAir, Thomas Cook, Thomson and Virgin all obtaining larger sample sizes. Other less popular airlines obtained smaller sample sizes. A number of respondents also cited Monarch as the airline they most recently flew with.

In addition to obtaining numerical satisfaction scores, respondents also provided detailed text comments to describe their

experience of dealing with that particular airline. One thing people are very happy to talk about is a good or bad experience with an airline!

The satisfaction scores for competitor airlines allowed Monarch to overlay this data onto their own, producing 'Customer Journey Maps' for different airlines, and see exactly where competitors under and over perform compared with Monarch.

The final report and analysis was produced quickly – within 3 weeks of initial project discussions. It provided Monarch with some vital insight into how they perform and are perceived by customers compared with competitors.



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