

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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To the Judges:

On the Saturday of Christmas weekend, it looked like a typical winter storm was affecting air travel and all airlines across the board.

The Wall Street Journal quickly revealed that Southwest Airlines was hit harder than any other airline—and was in full-scale crisis.

Days before other competitors, the Journal saw that Southwest was at the heart of the news. Reporter Alison Sider gained access to internal company memos to reveal what was going wrong, talked with customers and employees ranging from executives to those on the front line, and landed an exclusive interview with the CEO.

Ms. Sider then offered the first in-depth look into how Southwest relies on a system called SkySolver to reassign crews after a disruption—and how its breakdown left crews awaiting assignments for eight hours or more while flights, and passengers, were stuck.

Journal columnist Dawn Gilbertson combed every corner of Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport to show the fallout for consumers. She delivered video footage of unclaimed baggage and then bought an airline ticket to venture beyond security and find other trouble spots.

Competitors have cited the Journal in their own coverage. A Southwest employee wrote in to say that the Journal's coverage of the meltdown was "the most comprehensive, accurate, and consolidated analysis of the disaster," a sentiment the employee said was shared by colleagues.

A stranded passenger wrote in a letter: "We had our flight on Christmas Eve canceled and this has been the best information we have received yet regarding what happened."

We are proud to nominate this work.

Sincerely,

Joanna Chung
Chicago Bureau Chief
The Wall Street Journal

Articles

[**How Southwest Airlines Melted Down**](#)