

## It's time to fly



ORD at 5:30am is a pretty quiet place. Around 6:15 things start to get hopping. Interesting watching a place come to life before your eyes.

Last night I got on a train at 9pm and headed for the airport. Right now I'm in Chicago, waiting for a 7am flight (5am back home) to take me back after spending here, sampling everything possible from the chocolate food group (dark sweet decaf mocha, chocolate croissant & chocolate muffin) before boarding my flight back.

Do I like flying through space in a narrow metal tube in a seat designed to precisely not fit my 6' frame? Do I feel rested after three hours of on-again off-again sleep, trying not to spill my legs out into the aisle? Heck no! So why do it? Why fly four hours to a distant airport, only to get off and back onto the next plane home?

Yeah, still trying to figure that one out myself. I actually have a perfectly rational reason for doing so, but it's the intangibles that make the difference. For example, I have virtually zero uninterrupted time to think when home or at work. My creative efforts are often as fitful as my attempts to sleep on a plane. But once I'm "airside" (behind security) I'm in an entirely different world where I actually have time to sit and think things through, whether it be marketing or product decisions or wondering about my place in the world.

There's also the fun of people watching and picking up on how to deal with unhappy customers. There's a lot to be learned in that regard, because the sample size (number of people with problems) is so large! Mostly what you recognize is that stressed out angry people have more issues than those cheerfully, or at least not angrily, asking for help.

But the "rational" reason I'm standing in line to get on a plane, again, is because airlines like United set up programs for customers who hit certain benchmarks (miles flown) and the benefits of those programs outweigh the cost and, er, suffering. So when they had a promotion for flying round trips to Chicago with double the normal mileage credit, and I found a relatively low cost fare at the last minute (less than a day before!), I bit and traded a nights' sleep in a comfy bed at home for 8 hours in the air. I don't expect any sane person to understand. --Mike--