Nice flight back from DC; the Captain can make a difference

UA 647, IAD-SFO 3/26 (evening flight). The Captain came out and introduced himself, briefed first class on the flight plan and how things would go, asked for questions, and thanked them for their business. (I wasn't in first but saw this from the first row in coach).

A few minutes later he did the same on the intercom, and made it a point to mention the excellent flight crew that was working with him. You really got the feeling everyone was part of a tightly-knit crew that was friendly and helpful.

And that's how the flight went. Despite a 40 minute delay on the ground, which we were appropriately updated on, as well as explanations for what we might have heard on Channel 9 (did I mention that he was a big fan of Channel 9, United's audio channel carrying air traffic control communications, and made a sales pitch about flying United because it was the only airline offering the service?), people felt pretty good. He even mentioned that, during the delay, he had to keep the seat belt sign on and we could be moving at any moment so he'd prefer it if we could wait to use the lav, but if we couldn't, he understood, and the plane would sit tight until everyone was seated. Never head that before.

It was a great flight, everyone seemed pretty darned content at least, maybe even happy, even towards the back. The captain had set a tone that carried through. So I asked the flight attendant sitting across from me in the jump seat how many time she'd flown with him, what his name was... she had never flown with him before, first name Bruce, from Walnut Creek, not sure of last name. I seriously thought this was a crew where everyone knew everyone. It really felt that way.

This Captain probably did more to get people to answer "Yes, I'm likely to recommend flying United to a friend" than multi-million-dollar cabin upgrades and commercials. If anyone recognizes the captain from the photo, I'd love to send United a note on him. Already did for the FA. --Mike--