



National
Transportation
Safety Board

Safety Leadership

Robert L. Sumwalt, III

A few observations

- “Good” can be “bad.”
 - With good safety performance, people/organizations can easily become complacent.
- To counter this complacency, there must be a leadership obsession with continuous improvement.
- Don’t ever believe that a lack of accidents means you are “safe.”

- Courtesy of Jim Schultz



It was the best of times, it was the worst of times

Before Merger	After Merger
Niche carrier	Increased competition
Profitability	Financial losses
Quick upgrades	Stagnation and downgrades
Massive hiring	Massive furloughs
Big expansion	Reduced/eliminated service
High morale	Very low morale
High expectations	Lost hope
Excitement	Depression
Good safety record	5 in 5 (7 in 5)

5 in 5



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Can this happen here?

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

- Peter Drucker

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As flight operations leaders, your role is to provide safety leadership to ensure accidents don't happen on your watch.

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What is Leadership?

**“Leadership is about influence.
Nothing more. Nothing less.”**

- John Maxwell

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As flight operations leaders, you not only have the ability to influence safety, you have the obligation to do so, as well.

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How do influence safety?

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Five Safety Leadership Tenets

1. Embrace Quest for Safety Culture
2. Practice Servant Leadership
3. Foster Standardization and Discipline
4. Promote Open Communications and Reporting
5. Cultivate Just Culture

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Safety Culture

“Safety culture is the core values and behaviors resulting from a collective commitment by leaders and individuals to emphasize safety over competing goals to ensure protection of people and the environment.”

Source: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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Safety Culture



Doing the right things, even when no one is watching.

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Do you have a good safety culture?

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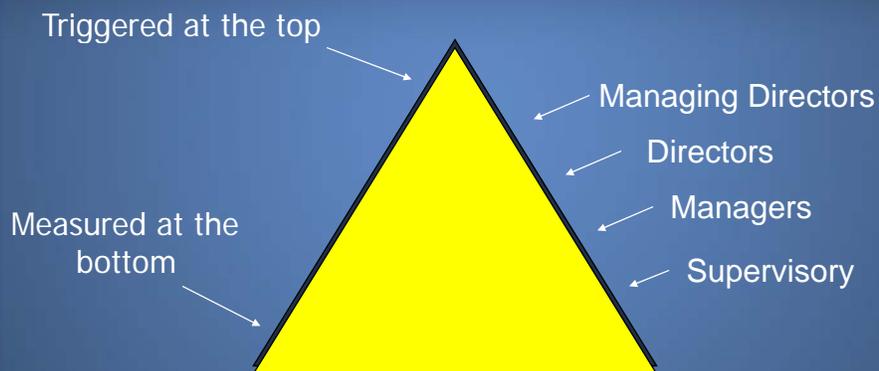
Do you have a good safety culture?

- “... it is worth pointing out that if you are convinced that your organization has a good safety culture, you are almost certainly mistaken.”
- “... a safety culture is something that is striven for but rarely attained...”
- “... the process is more important than the product.”
 - James Reason, “Managing the Risks of Organizational Accidents.”

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Safety Culture is:



Safety culture starts at the top of the organization and permeates the entire organization.

How leaders influence safety

“The safety behaviors and attitudes of individuals are influenced by their perceptions and expectations about safety in their work environment, and they pattern their safety behaviors to meet demonstrated priorities of organizational leaders, regardless of stated policies.”

- D. Zohar, as cited in NTSB accident report

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Servant leadership

- Effective leaders realize that their role is to support those who work on their team.
- Never forget where you came from.

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SOPs are Critical

- The NTSB has found problems with SOPs as a consistent theme with many aircraft accidents.
 - Organizations lack adequate SOPs standards
 - Organizations don't adhere to their SOPs
 - Flight crew intentionally disregard SOPs

Lautman-Gallimore Study

- Found that having a strong commitment to standardization and discipline were among the “key elements of safe operations” observed in a Boeing study.
- “Cockpit procedural language is tightly controlled to maintain consistency and to avoid confusion from non-standard callouts Callouts and responses are done verbatim.”

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WHY SOPS ARE CRITICAL

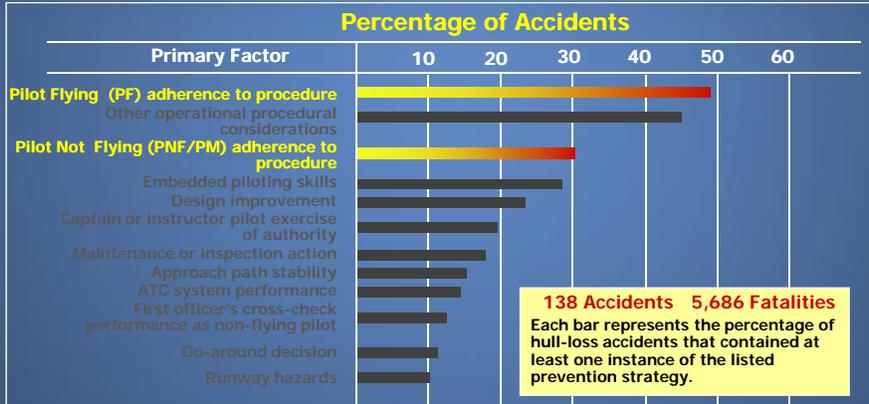
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Accident Prevention Strategies

Source: Boeing study of accident prevention strategies

Hull-loss Accidents over 10 Year Period



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Things to think about

- Do you have clearly defined, well thought-out SOPs?
- If so, do you insist on rigorous adherence to those procedures?
- How do you measure adherence?
- Do you reward the right kinds of behavior?



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Intentional non-compliance



What is the attitude here?

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Intentional non-compliance leads to other problems

- LOSA data revealed that, compared to crews who followed SOPs, crewmembers who intentionally deviated from procedures:
 - averaged making 3 times more errors
 - mismanaged more errors
 - found themselves in more undesired aircraft situations

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Recommendations for

FOSTERING STANDARDIZATION AND DISCIPLINE

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Begin by:

- Realizing that well-designed SOPs are essential for safety
- Making a strong commitment for procedural compliance to be a core value of the organization
 - simply having the procedures is not enough
 - religiously following them – and insisting they be followed – must be a way of doing business

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Then

- Go through all manuals, checklists, and procedures
- Change those that that don't work, are not clear, are outdated, and/or are not followed



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If people aren't following it...

CHECKLIST

Shoulder HarnessesSECURED
Take Off Briefing.....COMPLETE
Transponder

change it.

CHECKLIST

Shoulder HarnessesFASTENED
Take Off Briefing.....COMPLETE
TransponderON

CHECKLIST

Shoulder HarnessesON
Take Off Briefing.....COMPLETE
TransponderON



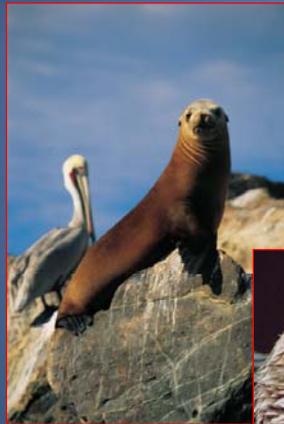
Establishing a culture of procedural compliance

- Procedures must not be developed in a vacuum - they must have the input of those who are expected to use them.
- Also, it is critical that crewmembers understand the reason for the procedures.
- Avoid seals, sea otters, and walrus.
- Avoid “Normalization of deviance.”
- Avoid selective compliance.

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Seals, sea otters, and walrus



South



Seals, sea otters, and walruses



Deepwater Horizon

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Seals, sea otters, and walruses

BP Spill Response Plan for Deepwater Horizon at that Location:

- Listed a wildlife specialist at University of Miami
 - He left University of Miami 20 years earlier
 - Died 4 years before the plan was even *published*
- Listed incorrect names and phone numbers for marine life specialists in Texas
- Listed spill response companies that no longer existed
- Listed instructions for how to deal with seals, sea otters, and walruses
 - None of these mammals even live in the Gulf of Mexico

Avoid seals, sea otters, and walruses

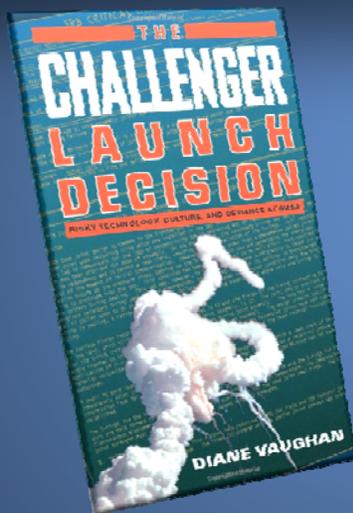
In other words...

Make sure your procedures reflect the way you intend to operate, and then operate that way.

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Avoid “Normalization of Deviance”



- Normalization of Deviance: When not following procedures and taking “short cuts” and becomes an accepted practice.

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Avoid Selective Compliance



- “That is a stupid rule.”
- “I don’t have to comply with that one.”

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Pinnacle Airlines Flight 3701 Jefferson City, Missouri



- When investigators asked the chief pilot how they ensured that crews following SOPs during repositioning flights, the company's chief pilot stated:

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Pinnacle Airlines Flight 3701 Jefferson City, Missouri



- “Same way I do any flight being conducted to SOP. We look at the reports. We look at the numbers, you know, did they leave on time, did they not leave on time, and if anyone is on the jump seat doing a check. That’s the only way I know if any flight I have is being conducted per SOP.”

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How do you stay informed?

- Internal safety audits
- External safety audits
- Confidential incident reporting systems
- Employee feedback
- MBWA (Management By Walking Around)

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Keeping Fingers on the Pulse

- How do you detect and correct performance deficiencies before an accident?
- How do you keep your finger on the pulse of your operations?
- Do you have multiple data sources?



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Employees



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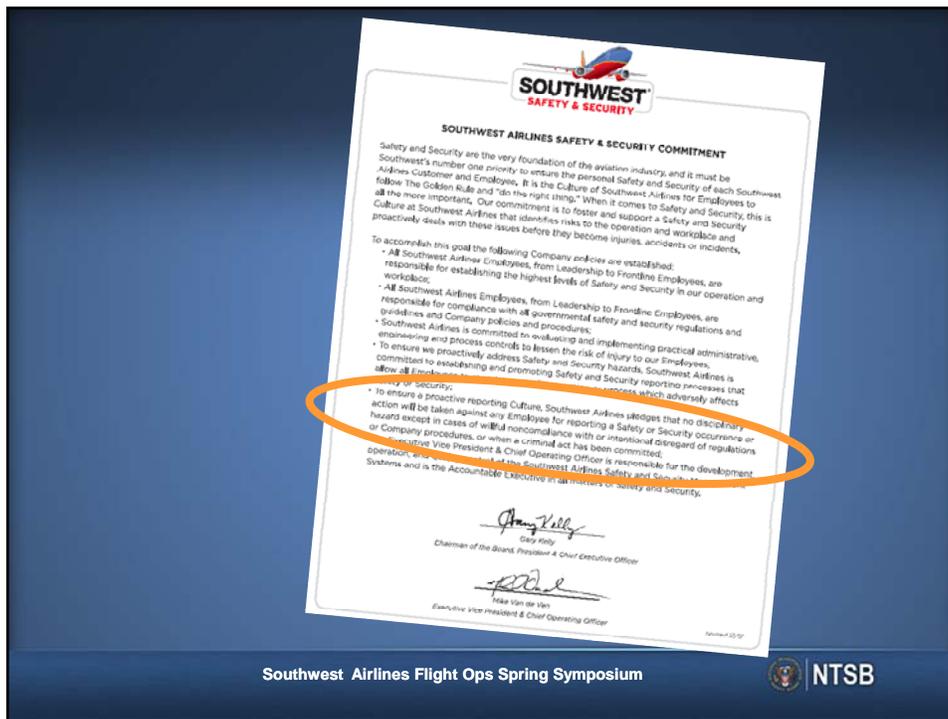


Are employees comfortable reporting?

- Employees are open to report safety problems, if they receive assurances that:
 - The information will be acted upon
 - Data are kept confidential or de-identified
 - They will not be punished or ridiculed for reporting
 - Non-reprisal policy signed by CEO

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Just Culture

“An atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged, even rewarded, for providing essential safety-related information, but in which they are also clear about where the line must be drawn between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.”

- James Reason, Ph.D.

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