



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

The Critical Role of Safety Leadership

Robert L. Sumwalt

Houston Transportation Safety Day

What does safety have to do with leadership, anyway?

- Recalled 14 million cars this year
 - More than total number of cars produced last year.



- \$35 million penalty
 - Single highest civil penalty resulting from an automobile recall.



- Recalls cost GM \$1.9 Billion
- Secretary Foxx recently referred to GM's broken safety culture

General Motors Company GM

33.94 +0.31 (0.92%)

1d 1w 1m 3m **6m** 1y 2y



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For Immediate Release: Friday, May 16, 2011

GM Signs Consent Order with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

DETROIT - General Motors Co. (NYSE: GM) has come to an agreement with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for failing to report in a timely manner the ignition switch defect. As part of this agreement, GM will pay a \$35 million fine.

"We have learned a great deal from this recall. We will now focus on the goal of becoming an industry leader in safety," said GM CEO Mary Barra. "We will emerge from this situation a stronger company."

Working with NHTSA, GM has already begun reviewing processes and policies to avoid future recalls of this nature.



BARRA

We have learned a great deal from this recall. We will now focus on the goal of becoming an industry leader in safety.

Under the Chevrolet, Cadillac, Buick, GMC, Hummer, Infiniti, Opel, Vauxhall and other brands. More information on the company and its subsidiaries, including quality and global leader in vehicle safety, security and information services, can be found at <http://www.gm.com>



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What is Leadership?

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

- John Maxwell



Safety Leadership



Your job as leaders of the Houston's transportation community is to use your influence to ensure this doesn't happen on your watch.



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Failure of Leadership

“The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the breakaway of the *Carnival Triumph* from its moorings and the subsequent collision with the dredge *Wheeler* and the towing vessel *Noon Wednesday* was the successive failure of multiple mooring bollards, which were known by BAE Systems to be in poor condition with an undetermined mooring load capability.”



Three leadership questions

- 1) Are you on the right track?
- 2) Is safety the top priority of your organization?
- 3) Do you have a good safety culture?



Three leadership questions

- 1) Are you on the right track?
- 2) Is safety the top priority of your organization?
- 3) Do you have a good safety culture?



It appears you're on the right track.

“Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.”

- Will Rogers



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A Word of Caution:

**NEVER EVER BELIEVE GOOD
NEWS**



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Monday's Headlines
January 12, 2009



Friday's Headlines
January 16, 2009



4 Weeks Later
February 12, 2009

“Good can be Bad”

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

- Courtesy of Jim Schultz



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Three leadership questions

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Priority or Core Value?

- Is safety a priority or a core value?



Three leadership questions

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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.”



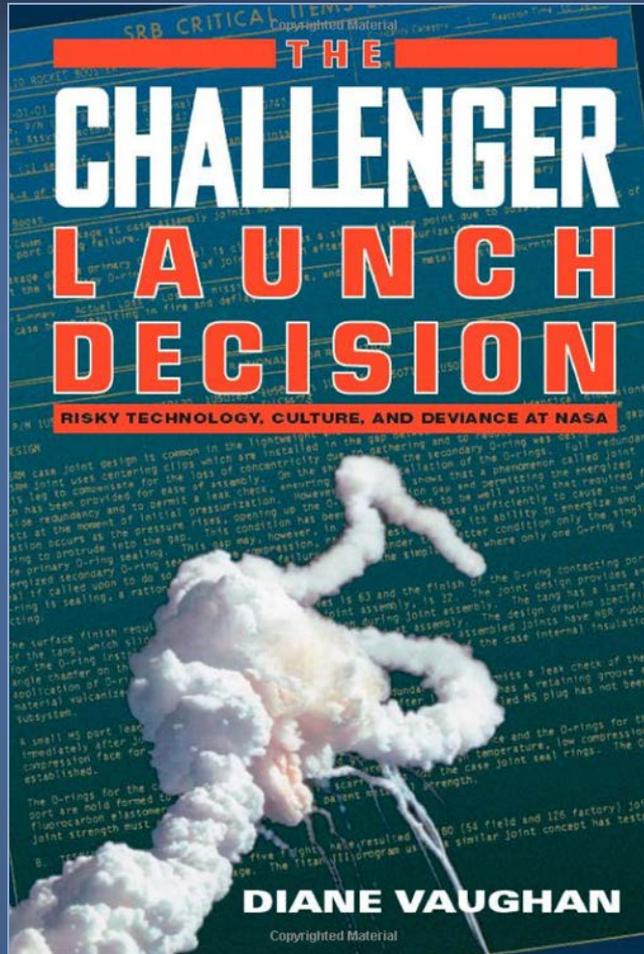
Influencing Safety :

LEADERSHIP PROCESSES

- *Avoid*
- *Be*
- *Create*
- *Demonstrate*



Avoid “Normalization of Deviance”



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

Avoid: Selective Compliance



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



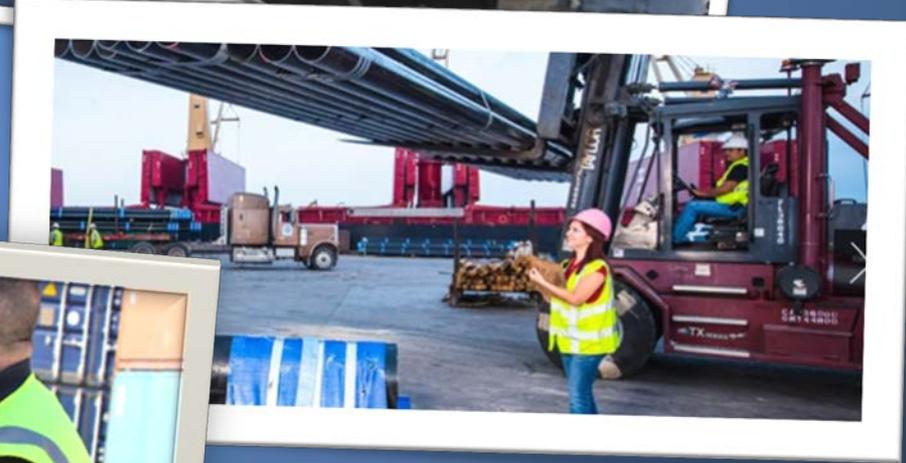
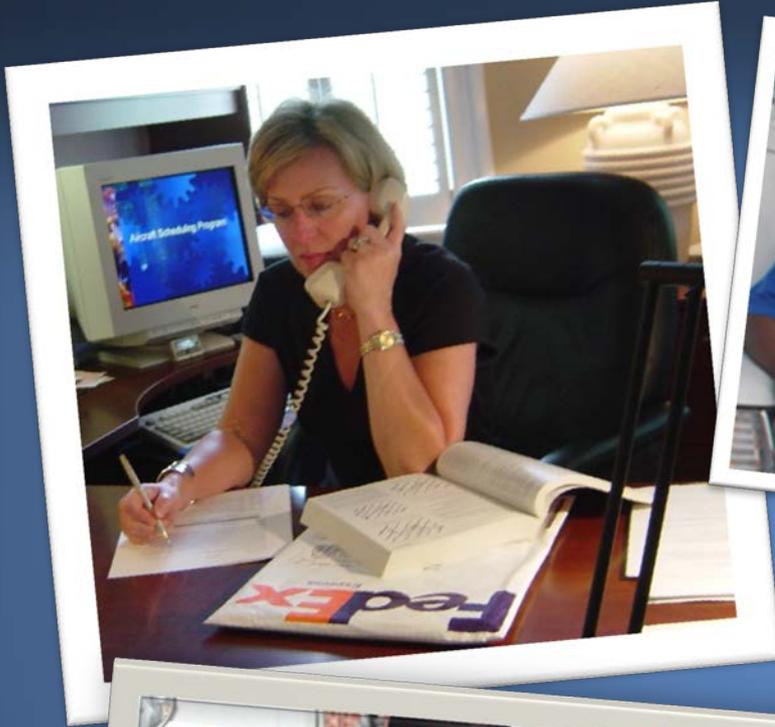
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Be informed

- How do you detect and correct performance deficiencies before an accident?
- How do you know what is going on in your operations?
- Do you have multiple data sources?



Employees



Create: Just Culture

- Employees realize they will be treated fairly
 - Not all errors and unsafe acts will be punished (if the error was unintentional)
 - Those who act recklessly or take deliberate and unjustifiable risks will be punished



Demonstrate: Safety in all that you do.

“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.”

- Dov Zohar, as cited in NTSB accident report

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The Moral Compass



Do the Right Thing



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