National Transportation Safety Board

The Critical Role of Leaders

Creating a Future of Safety
in Latin American and Caribbean Airlines

Robert L. Sumwalt, III

Three leadership questions

1) Are you on the right track?

2) Is safety the top priority of your airline?

3) Do you have a good safety culture?

Safety Leadership

- Your job as leaders of Latin American and Caribbean airlines is to ensure this doesn't happen on your watch.

LatAm: The Good News

Slides courtesy of Gabriel Acosta

"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

A Word of Caution:

NEVER EVER BELIEVE GOOD NEWS

Monday's Headlines
January

Friday's Headlines
January 16, 2009

4 Weeks Later
February 12, 2009

RASC-PA Focus Areas

Working Groups

- CFIT
- Loss of Control In-Flight
- Runway Excursions

Special Projects and Areas of Discussion

- Use of Standard ICAO Phraseology
- Bird Strike Risk Reduction
- Data Sharing
- Fatigue
- SMS
- Unstabilized Approaches

RASG-PA Initiatives & Accomplishments

Slides courtesy of Gabriel Acosta

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

Three leadership questions

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You May be Asking:

WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?

Creating Future of Safety

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

- Peter Drucker

Creating a Future of Safety Culture:

SAFETY CULTURE

Priority or Core Value?

"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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- "… 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."

Three leadership questions

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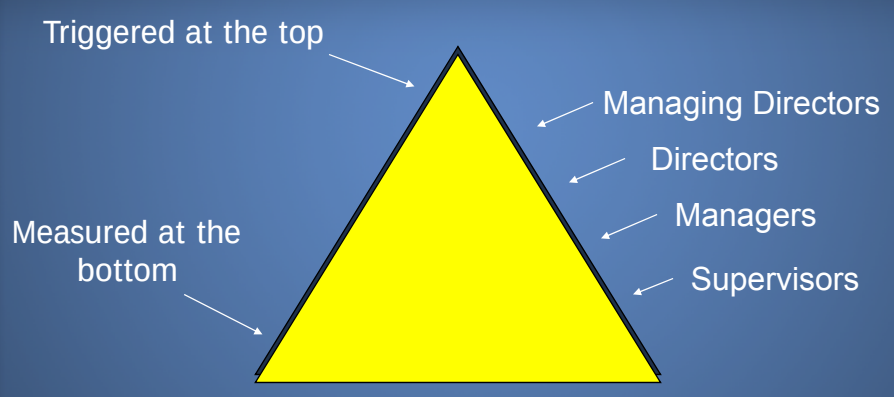
Roadmap to Safety Culture

1. Demonstrate Management Commitment
2. Promote Open Communications and Reporting
3. Cultivate Just Culture and Trust

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."

- Dov Zohar, as cited in NTSB accident report

Employee Comments

- "Sometimes I feel safety is priority one as long as it's convenient."
- "[Management] pays lip service to safety. On time performance & budgets take precedence over safety."
- "It's all about on time performance and safety rules are thrown out the window to keep on time performance. Management has no clue."

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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?

Employees

Are employees comfortable reporting?

- They 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

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"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

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5 in 5

Ensuring Safety

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