National Transportation Safety Board

Professionalism in Business Aviation

Robert L. Sumwalt

NBAA International Operators Conference

Are your customers getting what they expect?

Thomson, GA
February 20, 2013

Accident aircraft prior to N-number change to N777VG.

Google earth
1993
Imagery Date: 1/29/2015 33°31'35.58" N 82°30'06.95" W elev 490 ft eye alt 8059 ft

NTSB

28
1993
Google earth
Imagery Date: 1/29/2015 33°31'41.29" N 82°30'08.01" W

NTSB

With anti-skid failure, the required landing distance exceed the available runway length at Thomson.

Probable Cause

"The pilot's failure to follow airplane flight manual procedures for an antiskid failure in flight and his failure to immediately retract the lift dump after he elected to attempt a go-around on the runway."

"Contributing to the accident were the pilot's lack of systems knowledge and his fatigue due to acute sleep loss and his ineffective use of time between flights to obtain sleep."

Pilot activities

Night before trip		
	Went to bed	2100
Day of trip		
	Woke up	0200
	Departed home	0230
	Arrived airport	0330
	Departed for Nashville	0406
	Arrived Nashville	0459*
	Lunch	1500 – 1630*
	Passengers arrived	1918*
	Takeoff Nashville	1927*
	Crash at Thomson, GA	2005

* Times converted to EST

NTSB

Pilot activities

Night before trip		
	Went to bed	2100
	5 hours	
Day of trip		
	Woke up	0200
	Departed home	0230
	Arrived airport	0330
	Departed for Nashville	0406
	Arrived Nashville	0459*
	Lunch **14 hours**	1500 – 1630*
	Passengers arrived	1918*
	Takeoff Nashville	1927*
	Crash at Thomson, GA	2005

* Times converted to EST

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Time	Cell phone activity
0808	Phone call - outgoing
0813	Phone call - outgoing
0902	Phone call - outgoing
1002	Text message - outgoing
1005	Text message - outgoing
1016	Text message - outgoing
1121	Text message - outgoing
1138	Phone call - outgoing
1234	Phone call - outgoing
1251	Phone call - outgoing
1300	Phone call - outgoing
1315	Phone call - outgoing
1317	Phone call - outgoing
1324	Phone call - outgoing
1330	Phone call - outgoing
1332	Phone call - outgoing
1404	Text message - outgoing
1432	Phone call - outgoing
1501	Phone call - outgoing
1503	Phone call - outgoing
1642	Phone call - outgoing

1 Incoming call

2 Incoming calls

2 Incoming calls

2 Incoming calls

2 Incoming calls

1 Incoming call

1 Incoming call

Are your customers getting what they expect?

Different Expectations

- There is sometimes a “disconnect” between the expectations of the “customer” and what they are actually getting.

What do your customers want?

- **World class**
  - Top 3 - 5 percent of the industry
  - Organization thrives in seeking to be the very best
- **Best practices**
  - Adopts and implements procedures above and beyond regulatory requirements
- **Basic regulatory compliance**
  - Meets spirit of regulations, but no higher
- **Sub-standard performance**
  - non-adherence to regulations, cutting corners are the norm

Adopted from Pete Agur

What are they getting?

- **World class**
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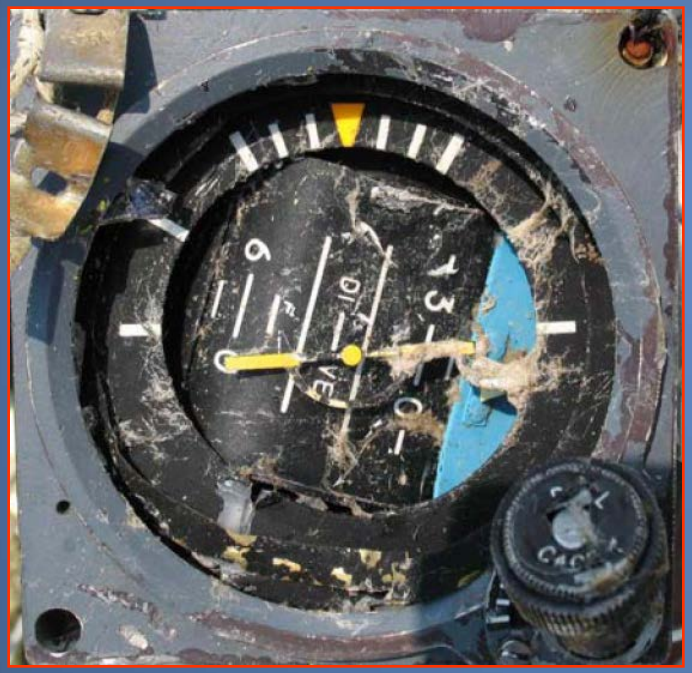
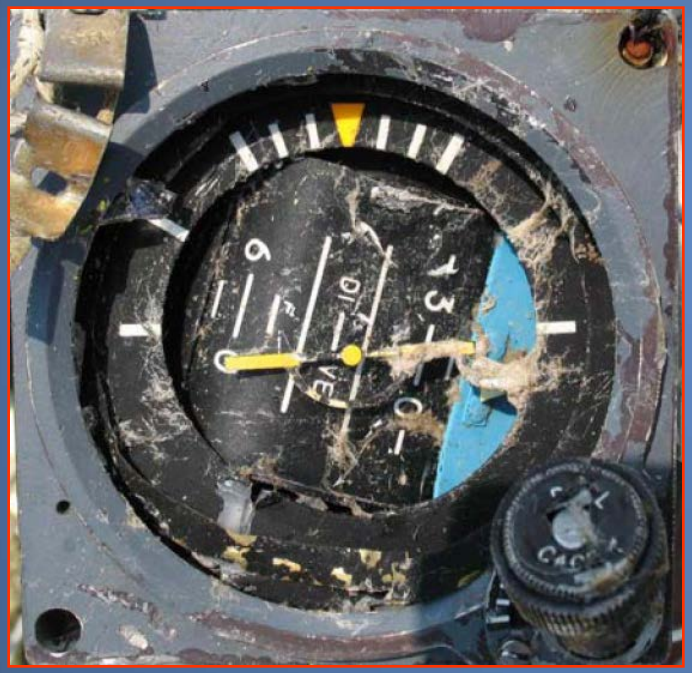


What is the attitude of your business aviation operation?

June 4, 2007
6 Fatalities



GALAXY
AVIATION
N550BP

What the investigation found

Captain/chief pilot/check airman

- had prior certificate revocation
- routinely failed to comply with procedures and regulations
- falsified training records

NTSB Finding

- “The pilots’ lack of discipline, in-depth systems knowledge, and adherence to procedures contributed to their inability to cope with anomalies experienced during the accident flight.”

The customer

- Had contracted with this Part 135 operator for 19 years.
- Wanted safe transport for medical personnel, patients, and transport organs.

October 25, 2002

Is this what the customer expected?

- Company check airman: rated company's standardization as "6" (on 1-10 scale)
- Company pilot: "Fair to good"
- Lead ground instructor: "Fair"
  - Suspected that some pilots were following SOPs while others were not
  - Aware that some pilots used their own checklists, instead of company checklists
- Another pilot: never seen any standardized callouts documented in any company manual
  - To compensate, she used callouts she used at another company

Manteo, NC October 1, 2010

"The pilot told NTSB investigators that the company advised him that they had no immediate need for an airplane and they did not intend to buy a replacement."

“When asked about the flight department's standard operating procedures (SOPs), the chief pilot advised that they did not have any...”

“... the flight department had started out as just one pilot and one airplane, and that they now had five pilots and two airplanes...”

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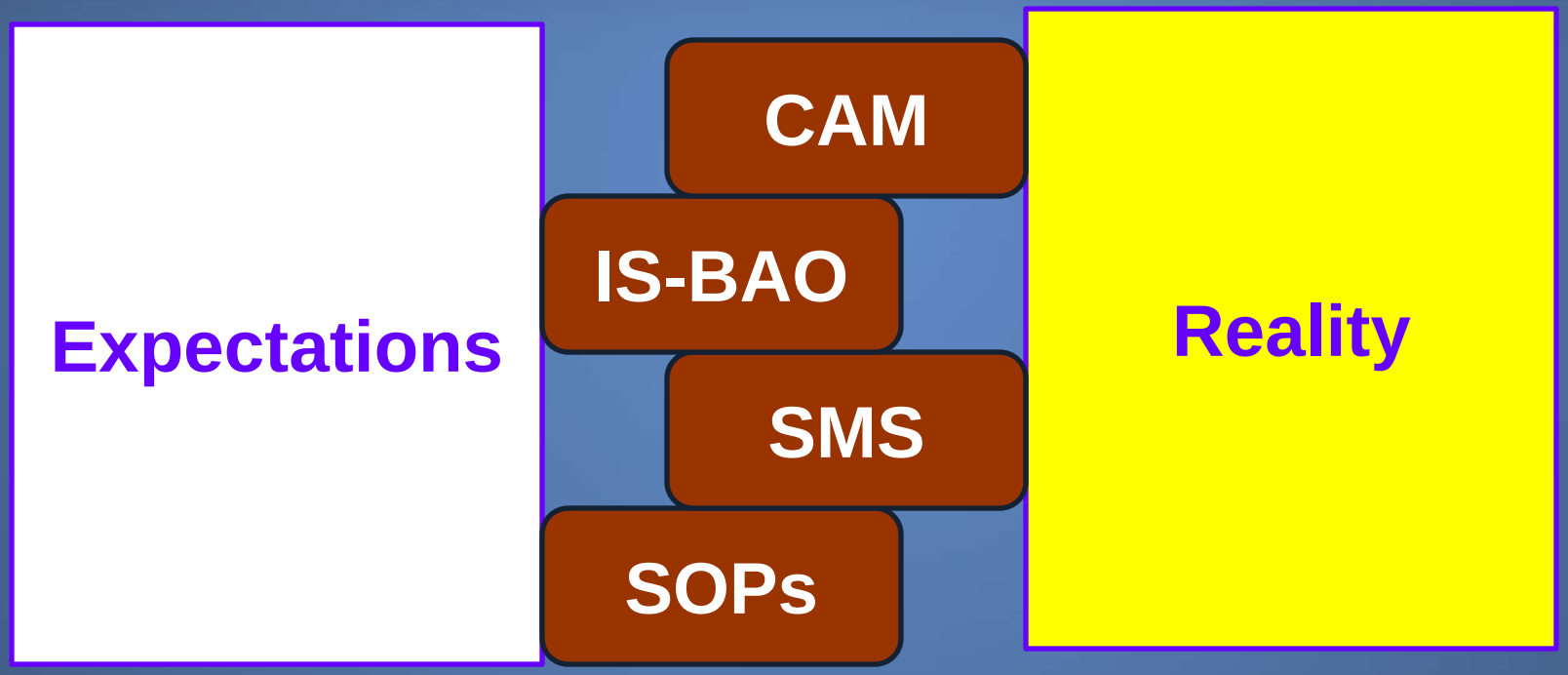
What do customers want?

- Flexibility
- Convenience
- Privacy
- Prestige
- Safety – is safety assumed??

Closing the Expectation Gap



To close the expectation gap requires:

L eadership

C ompliance

R isk Appreciation

Leadership

"Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion."

-- Jack Welch

Be the best!

Make money, go fishing every day.

What is your vision?

World class

GOOD SAFETY CULTURE

“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 Culture of Compliance

- Internal company policies, procedures, rules
- Ethical principles
- Company code of conduct
- Federal, state, and local laws and ordinances
- Industry best practices
- Financial guidelines and principles
- Etc.

A commitment to doing things right. Always.

Avoid Selective Compliance

- "That is a stupid rule."
- "I don't have to comply with that one."

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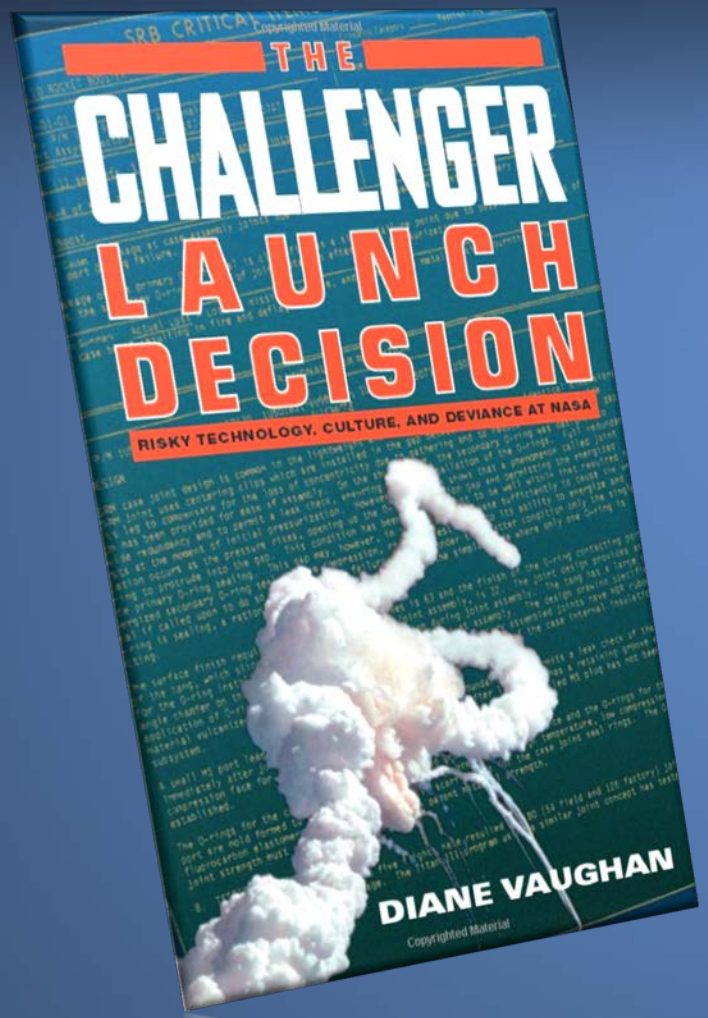
Avoid "Normalization of Deviance"



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

Continuous Learning and Appreciation of Risks

- Organizations with a healthy safety focus are constantly learning.
- They actively seek ways to improve safety.
- They learn from their mistakes and those of others.
- Information regarding prior incidents and accidents is shared openly and not suppressed.
- They are ever mindful of risks and are looking for ways to mitigate those risks.

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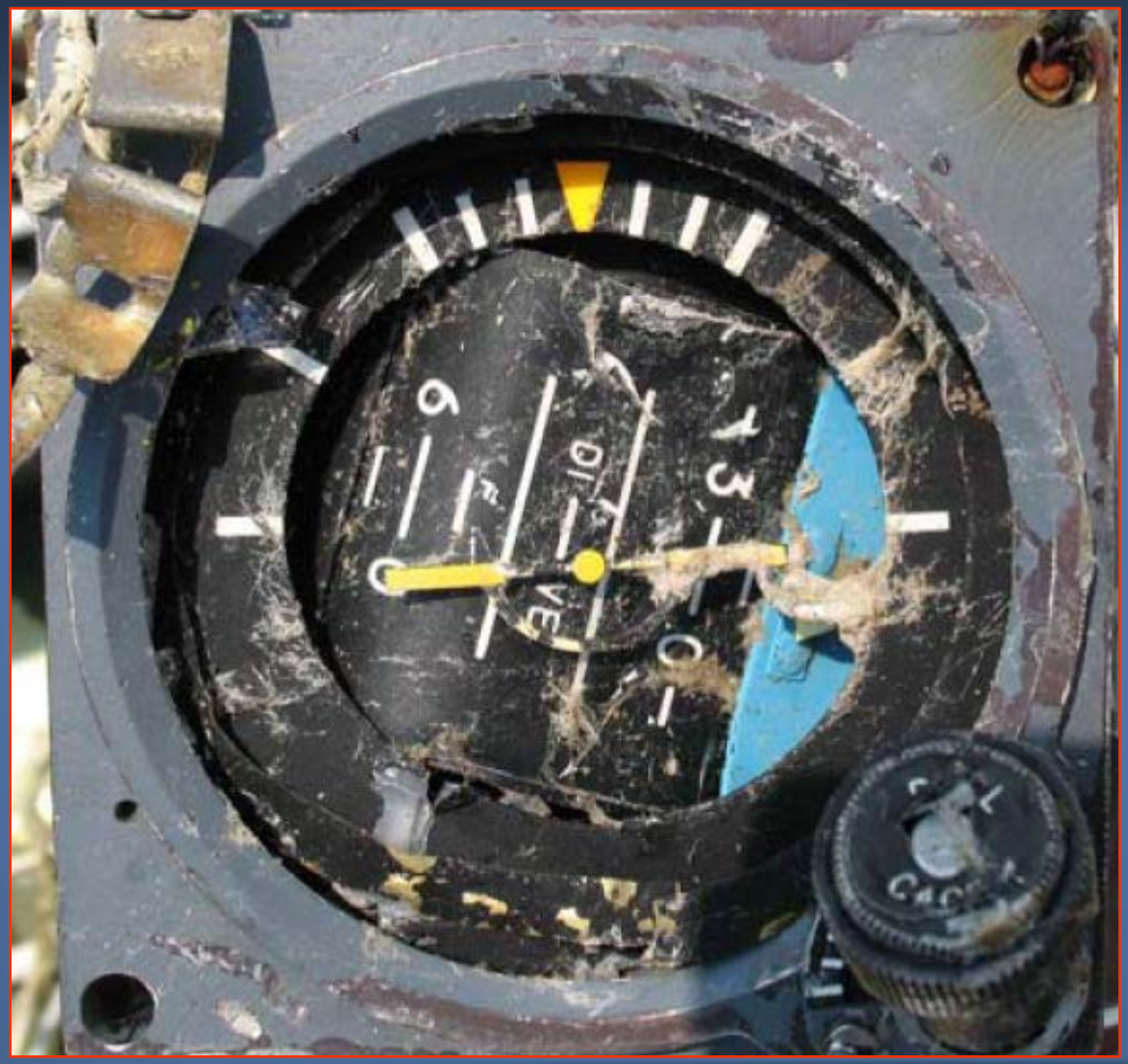
In Summary

- The people that pay for your services are expecting and counting on a professionally-managed operation.
- What are they getting?


9
10
13
VE
10

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