

CAPTAIN'S ROLE
in
ENSURING
PROFESSIONALISM

If professionalism is the “way” a pilot does his/her job, then professionalism must be a function of behavior. Therefore, we need to look for patterns in those behaviors because all behavior has consequences.

Evolution of CRM/TEM

- When the aviation industry began to notice a trend in airplane crashes--causes were lack of “social” competencies NOT technical competencies.
- Appropriately, we sought out members of the psychology community.
- Tried to transfer traditional organizational development training to aviation.
- Too much, too fast, lack of relevancy.
- Result: Hot Tub Harmony! Too touchy-feely!

The Limits of Expertise

- We are terrific at finding out “what” happened following accidents and incidents.
- What we need to do is to focus more on the “why” it happened.

Doing What's Appropriate

- CRM/TEM is not about being NICE, it's about being appropriate!
- When you lose an engine on takeoff, you want a totally ego-centric individual who's highly technically competent to do the right thing.
- However, when that same Captain wants to drift below minimums to “take a peek” during a low-vis approach, it requires an intervention on the part of a highly socially competent

When the “Right Stuff” becomes the “Wrong Stuff”

- “Personality Paradox”: Those same qualities and traits that make up the right stuff become the wrong stuff when overdone.
- Personality and behavioral style may have roots in brain wiring.
- Personality traits for pilots are predictable and predispose us to preferential patterns of behavior.

When the “Right Stuff” becomes the “Wrong Stuff” (cont)

- BUT, how we behave is as much a choice as choosing which hand we write with.
- Brain science has demonstrated that neuroplasticity makes it possible to actually rewire our own brains.
- Consequently, I can CHOOSE to write with my non-preferred hand, BUT changing requires an enormous amount of intrinsic motivation and commitment.

Pilots and Change

- We don't like change!
(Unless we can control it!)
- We do like change if it benefits us.

Your Brain

Left Hemisphere

- ego-centric
- direct
- demanding
- calculated risk-taker
- decisive
- self-assured
- competitive
- realistic
- weighs pro's & cons
- sequential

- perfectionist
- accurate
- fact-finder
- diplomatic
- conventional
- courteous
- careful
- restrained
- "own person"
- self-righteous

Right Hemisphere

- enthusiastic
- persuasive
- trusting
- observing
- discriminating
- reflective
- "big picture"
- context vs. content
- empathic
- convincing

- passive
- predictable
- team person
- deliberate
- amiable
- stable
- relaxed
- non-demonstrative
- complacent
- loyal

Pilot's Brain

Left Hemisphere

- ego-centric
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Right Hemisphere

See MEL for
effects on
performance!

Notes on Behavioral Style

- Transcends gender -- female pilots “wired” similar to male counterparts.
- No “right” way to behave -- just different ways.
- Validated by current brain science using MRI and fMRI technology.

Owner's Manual for Pilots

- “Problem pilots”-- those perceived to have the “wrong stuff” or even “NO stuff.” I worked with the King of the “No-fly” list.
- Collaborated to build a personal owner's manual to understand how they tick, how others tick, and what ticks them off.
- “Is this guy for real?”
- Legacy of “no-fly” list—consequences of “friends” who have never flown with subject pilot.

Notes on Behavior Markers

- They're not just for “problem pilots”
- Behavior is contextual not quantitative.
- Communication skills, decision-making, monitoring skills, team building, and maintenance rely significantly on “right-brain” function.
- Efforts to “measure” it are largely quantitative, i.e., left brain. Lack of “hard” markers does not justify lack of accountability.

Notes on Behavior Markers (cont)

- Accountability is the yardstick for measurement.
- Failure to impose accountability not only undermines safety, but sabotages morale: “One bad apple spoils the bushel.
- Takes courage on the part of management--and pilot’s unions--requires not only management buy in but full participation.

Tools

- State of the art personality inventory that is self-administered and scored using online software.
- High validity and reliability.
- Certification available to organizations for cost effectiveness and organizational buy in.
- Goal is to provide insights that will permit a dialogue using a common, non-judgmental language among people.
- Creates safe environment for feedback.

Metamessages

- The “message within the message.”
- Often unintentional. “Nice landing.”
- Delivered interpersonally as well as organizationally.
- My “open door” policy might not produce any customers if my personal style is unwelcoming despite my best intentions.
- Pilots sometimes misinterpret inquiries investigating irregularities as “inquisitions.”

NextGen CRM/TEM

- No longer can we excuse personal discomfort as a reason to NOT develop competency in “soft skills.”
- Professionalism has nothing to do with being nice--it’s about using the most appropriate behavior to accomplish the task at hand.
- Relying upon left-brain skills is still 100% necessary—it’s just not sufficient.