



# National Transportation Safety Board

## The Critical Role of Safety Leadership

AOPL-API Leadership Meeting

Robert Sumwalt  
October 25, 2018

# NTSB Recommendation to API

“Facilitate the development  
of a management  
system standard specific to  
the pipeline industry ...”

**CLOSED - EXCEEDS RECOMMENDED ACTION**



# Why SMS?

- SMS is a business approach to managing safety.
- Organizations manages and value safety, just as they manage and value other vital business functions.
  - **Finance:** CFO, General Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP), procedures, controls, audits, accountability

# Near Santa Fe, NM

June 2009



# Roswell, NM

April 2011



A photograph of an airport scene. In the foreground, a large, light-colored air traffic control tower stands prominently. The tower has a dark, multi-story section and a glass-enclosed observation deck at the top. To the right of the tower, a runway or taxiway is visible, with several aircraft parked or taxiing in the distance. The sky is clear and blue. A blue banner with yellow text is overlaid on the image, partially obscuring the tower and the runway.

**“Gulfstream’s focus on meeting the G650’s planned certification date caused schedule-related pressure that was not adequately counterbalanced by robust organizational processes to prevent, identify, and correct the company’s key engineering oversight errors.”**

# Gulfstream Managers Blamed for Fatal Crash on Test Flight

by Alan Levin

October 11, 2012 — 12:00 AM EDT



■ An artist's rendering of a General Dynamics Corp. Gulfstream G650. Source: Business Wire via Bloomberg

Pressure to speed flight tests of a new model of General Dynamics Corp.'s Gulfstream business jet so it could win U.S. certification for sale was blamed by a U.S. safety agency for crash that killed four employees.

The National Transportation Safety Board yesterday ruled that Gulfstream management was responsible for the accident that sent a G650, which costs \$65 million and has the longest range of any private aircraft, sliding off a Roswell, New Mexico, runway in flames on April 2, 2011.

Could this be you?

BloombergBusiness | News | Markets | Insights | Video

# Your Company's Management Blamed for Fatal Pipeline Accident

October 11, 2012 — 12:00 AM EDT



Your company sued for millions. Company declares bankruptcy, ceases operations.

Business jet so it could win U.S. certification for sale was blamed by a U.S. safety agency for crash that killed four employees.

The National Transportation Safety Board yesterday ruled that Colibri management was responsible for the accident that sent a Cessna, which costs \$45 million and has the longest range of any private aircraft, sliding off a Roswell, New Mexico, runway in flames on April 3, 2011.



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

- Peter Drucker

# Creating a Future of Safety: Three Leadership Questions

1. How strong is our safety culture?
2. Are we really living our values?
3. Are we truly providing safety leadership?

Creating a Future of Safety

# HOW STRONG IS OUR SAFETY CULTURE?

# Safety Culture is:

“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.”

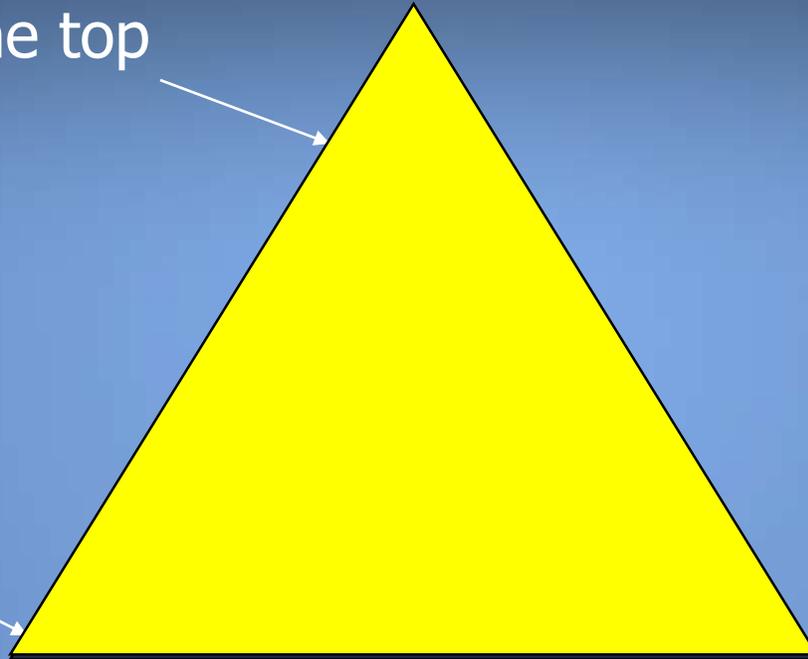
Source: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

# Safety Culture is:

Triggered at the top



Measured at the bottom



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

**Do you have a good safety culture?**

# 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.”

Creating a Future of Safety

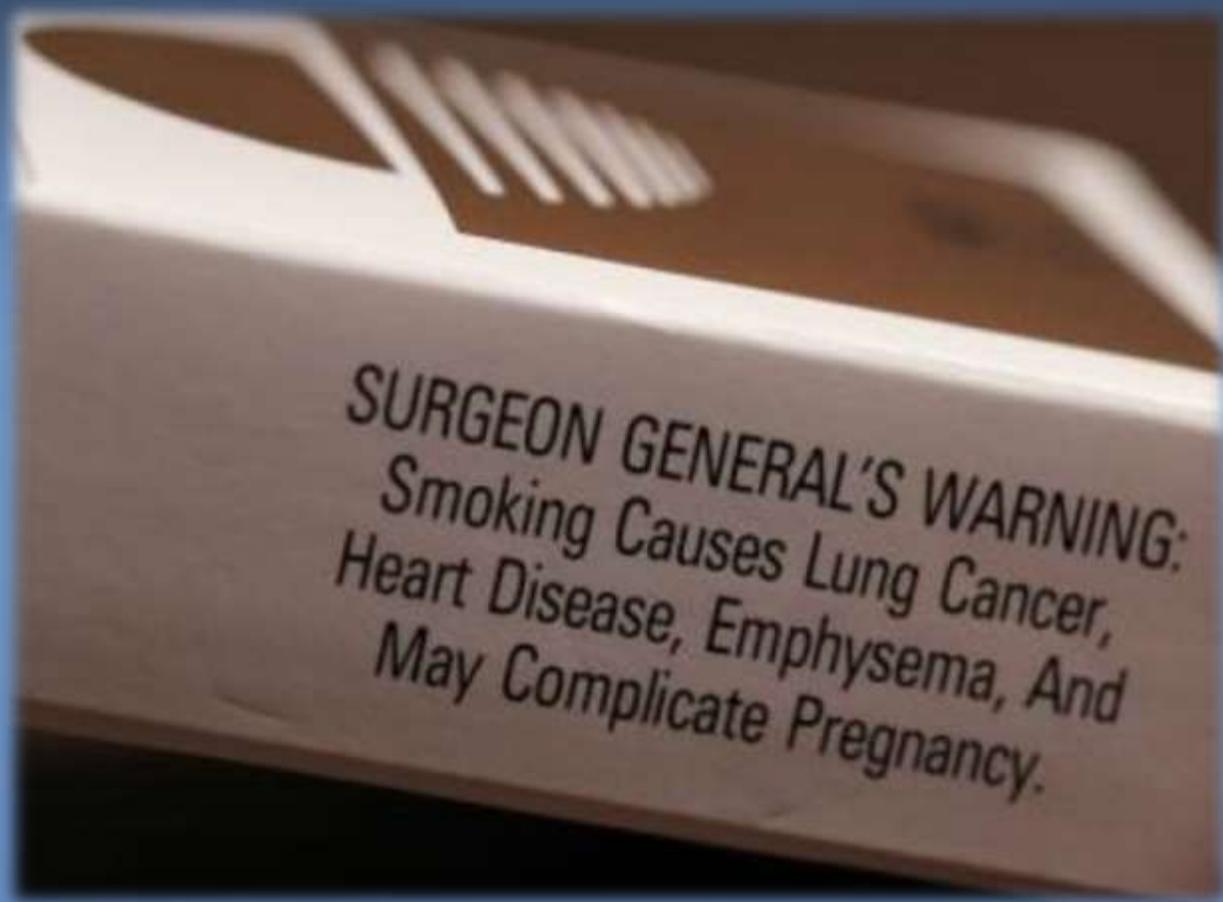
**ARE WE REALLY LIVING OUR VALUES?**

# Values

- Is safety the top priority of your organization?
- Don't make it a priority – make it a core value.

# Living the Values

- In a successful organization, everything you do is run through the filter of your core values to make sure you are being true to them.
- And, most importantly, you must live those values.



**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:**  
Smoking Causes Lung Cancer,  
Heart Disease, Emphysema, And  
May Complicate Pregnancy.





# CVS Stops Tobacco Sales



“The sale of tobacco products is inconsistent with our purpose – helping people on their path to better health.”

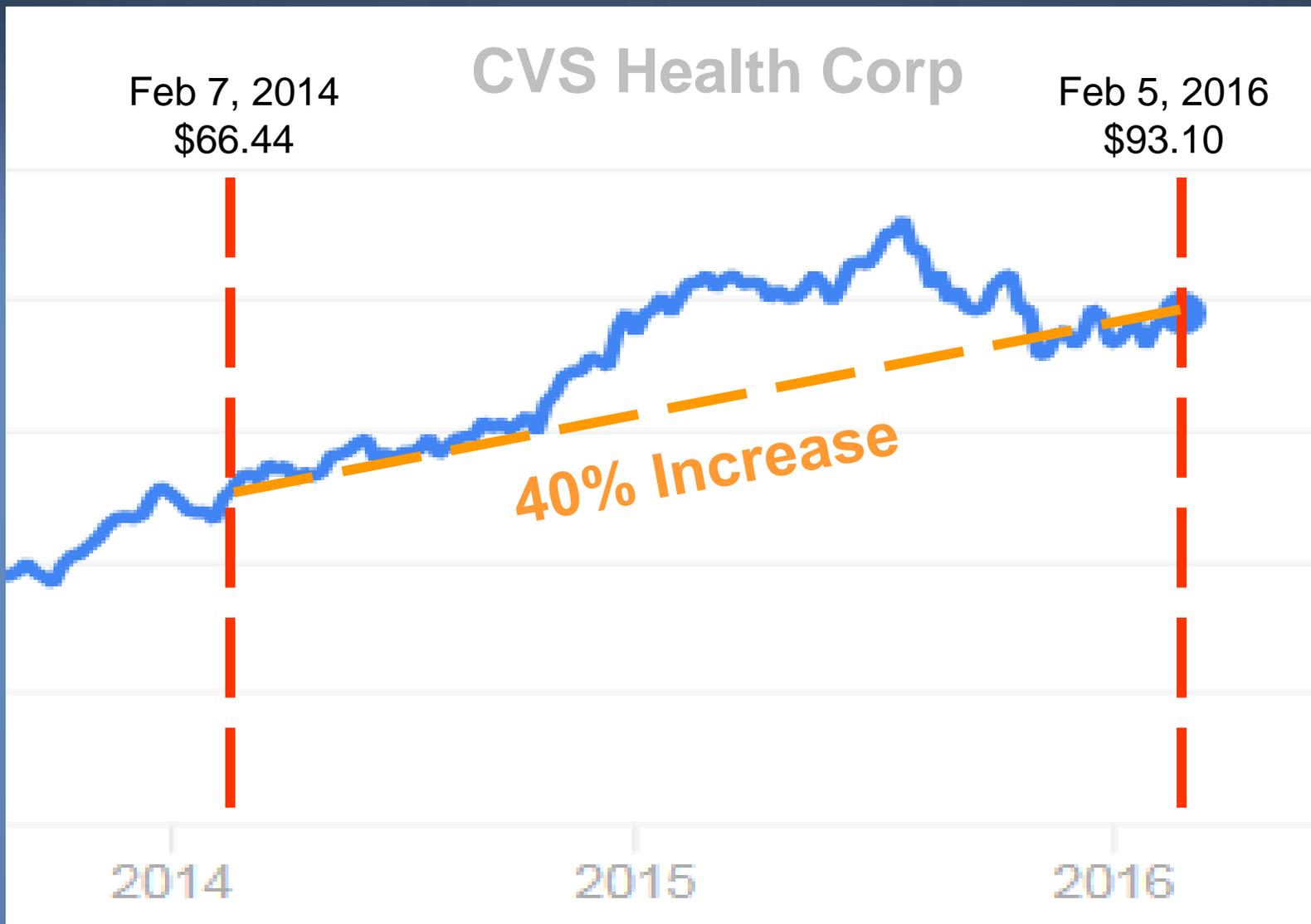
- Larry J. Merlo, CEO, CVS Health

“This move is clearly in-line with their stated purpose and values, a move we don’t see often enough today in corporate America. Relying on a strong foundation of values is often what sets market leaders apart from the pack.”

- Michael Woody, Ph.D. for Fox Business

“Think of values as the core guiding principles that act as the foundation of your organization. These principles should guide every decision and serve as your fallback in times of uncertainty.”

- Michael Woody, Ph.D. for Fox Business

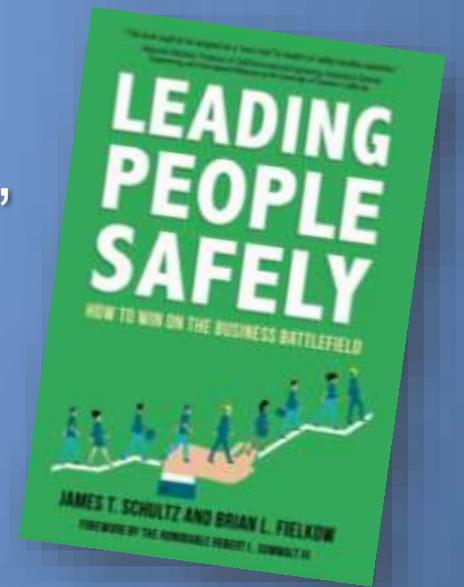


“Organizations with strong leaders are those organizations that ensure their values are aligned and lived throughout the organization.”

“They do the right things by caring for the safety and health of their employees and customers.”

“Because of their commitment to values and caring, they have greater potential to perform well financially.”

- “Leading People Safely,” p. xxvi



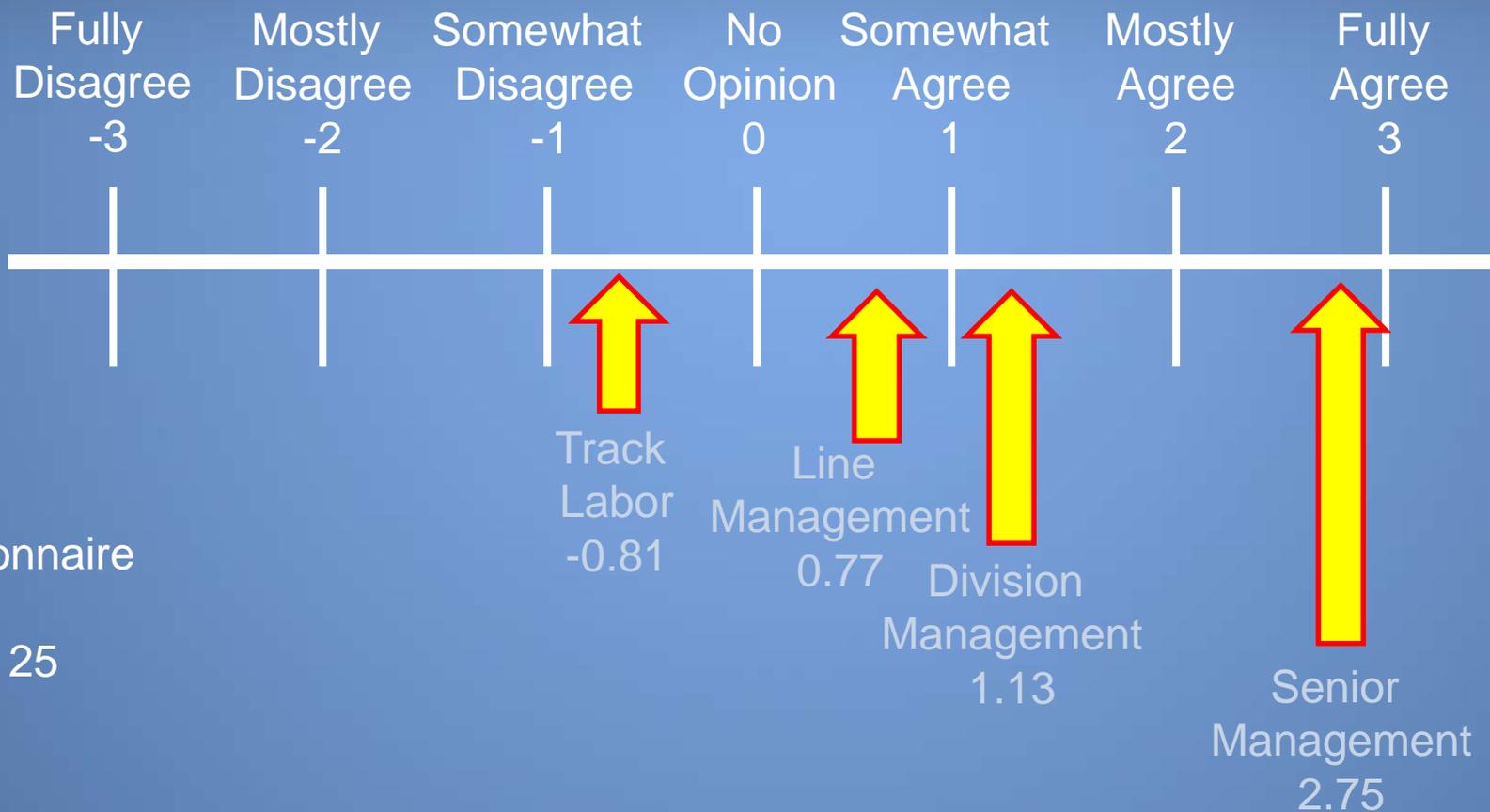
Creating a Future of Safety

**ARE WE TRULY PROVIDING SAFETY  
LEADERSHIP?**

# Metro-North Railroad



Metro North management is committed to workplace safety and participates regularly in safety events.



NTSB questionnaire  
n = 156  
Management 25  
Labor 131

Management does not pressure staff to maintain service or operations, potentially at cost of safety.



# Employee Comments

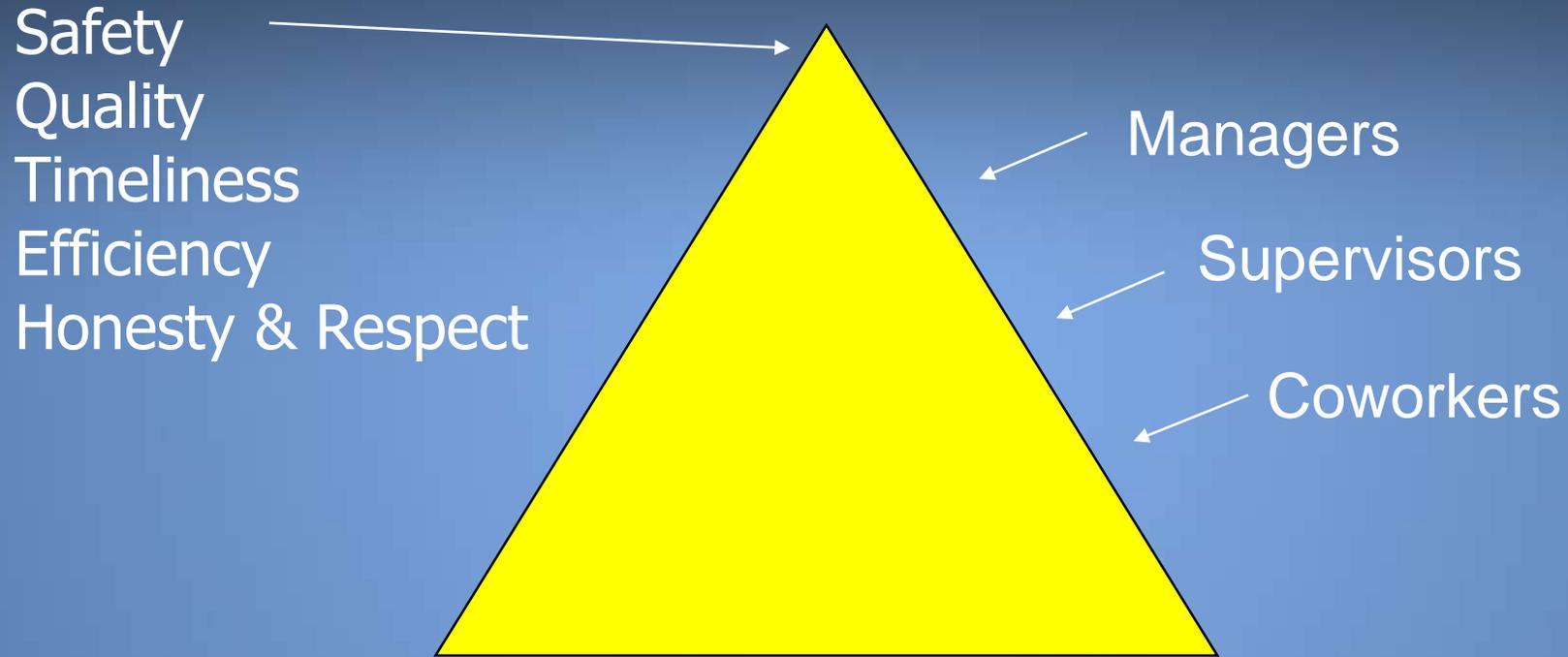
- “Sometimes I feel safety is priority one as long as it's convenient.”
- “Metro-North pays lip service to safety. On time performance & budgets take precedence over safety.”
- “The railroad only cares about the on-time performance.”
- “It’s all about on-time performance and safety rules are thrown out the window to keep on time performance.”
- Management has no clue.”

# 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

# Sometimes the Message gets Distorted



MOST IMPORTANT – Output!!!!

Cut corners to save money

Fear of retribution

Get job done at all costs

Unfair discipline

Work sucks

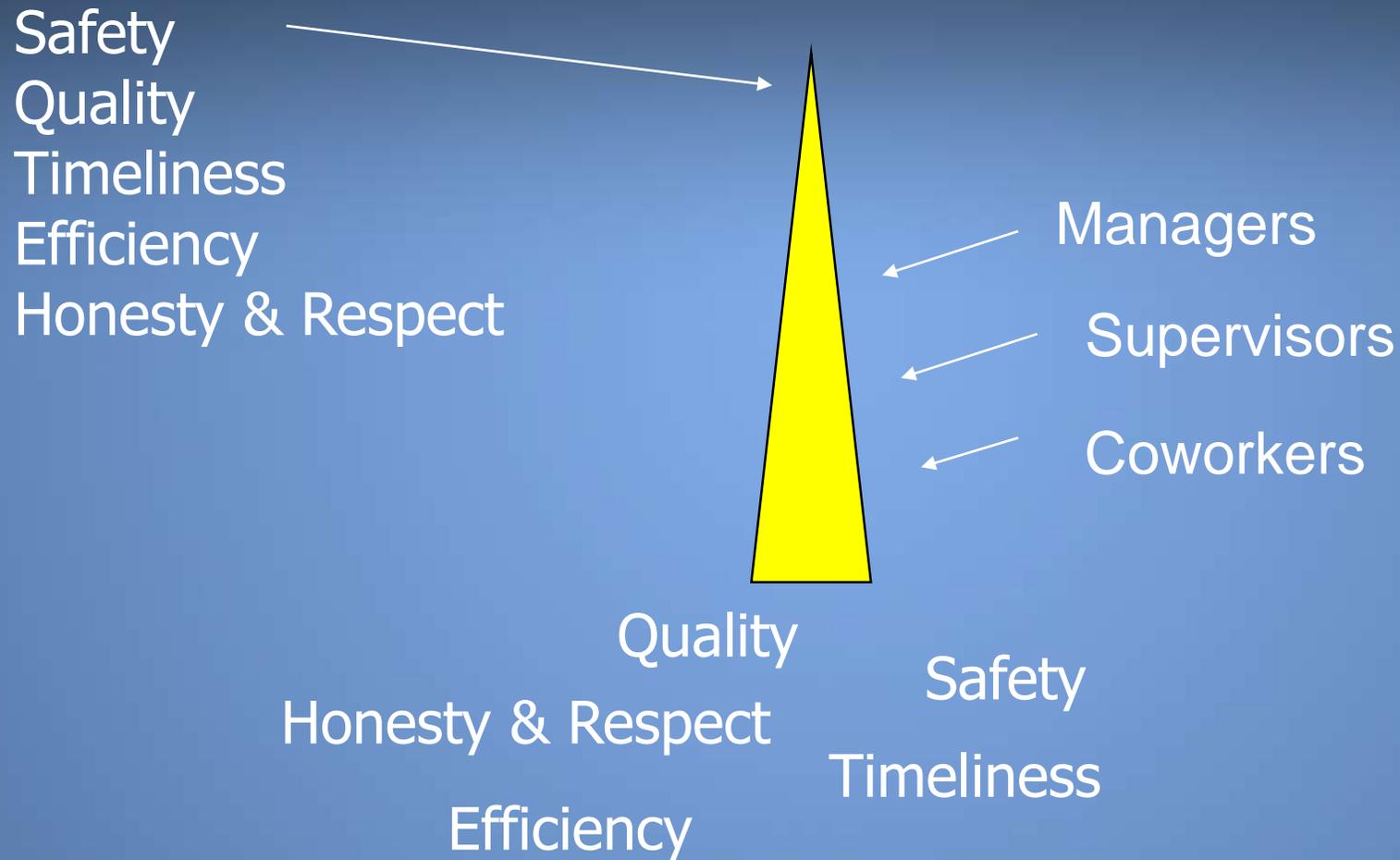
Call in sick for extra vacation day

## WORD OF THE DAY

Thursday, October 25, 2018

**align-ment** *noun* \ə-'līn-mənt\  
Where the leaders and front line employees, and everyone in between, share and practice the same values.

# Alignment



# Are you on the right track?

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

- Will Rogers

# “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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