

Lessons from the Ashes: The Critical Role of Leadership in Promoting Transportation Safety



Robert Sumwalt

August 21, 2006



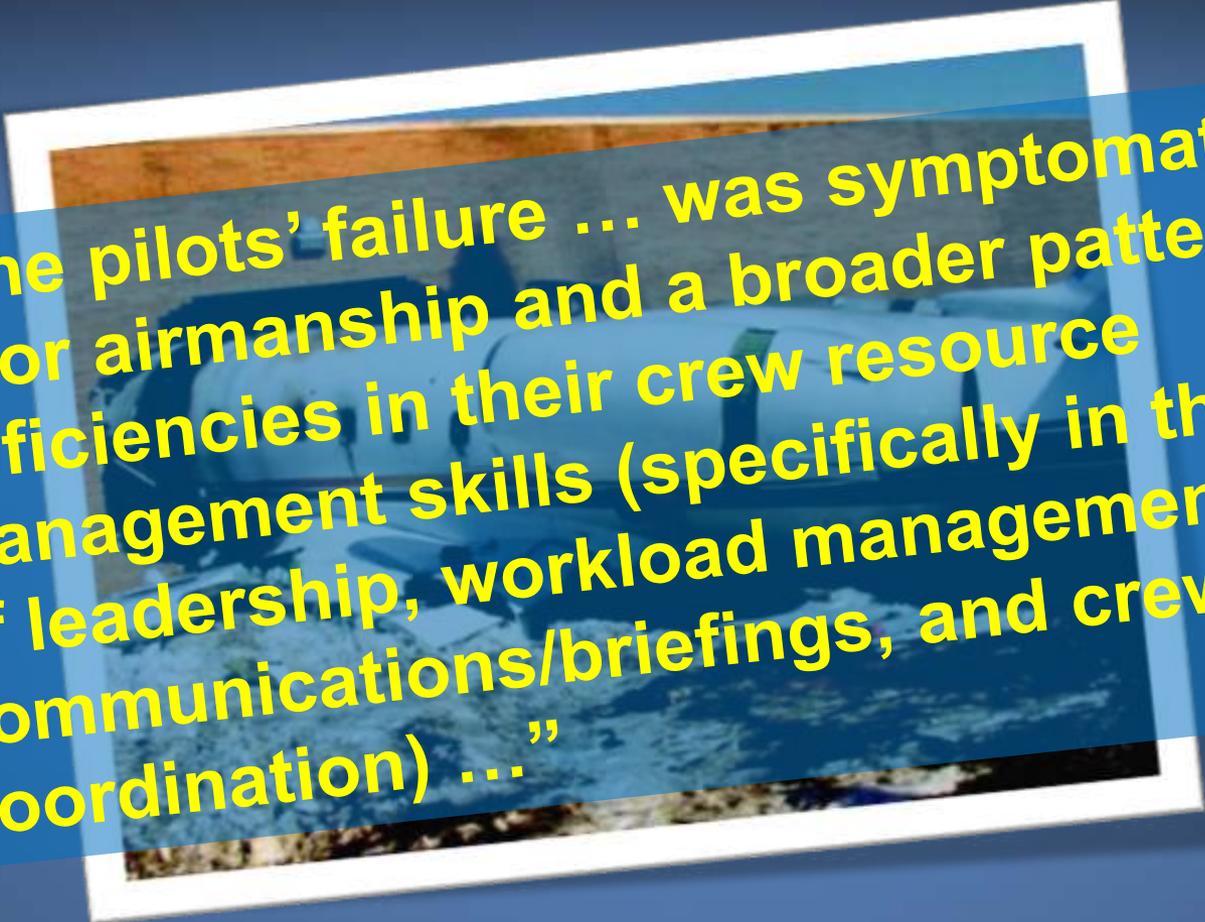
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In the past decade...

... what have I learned?



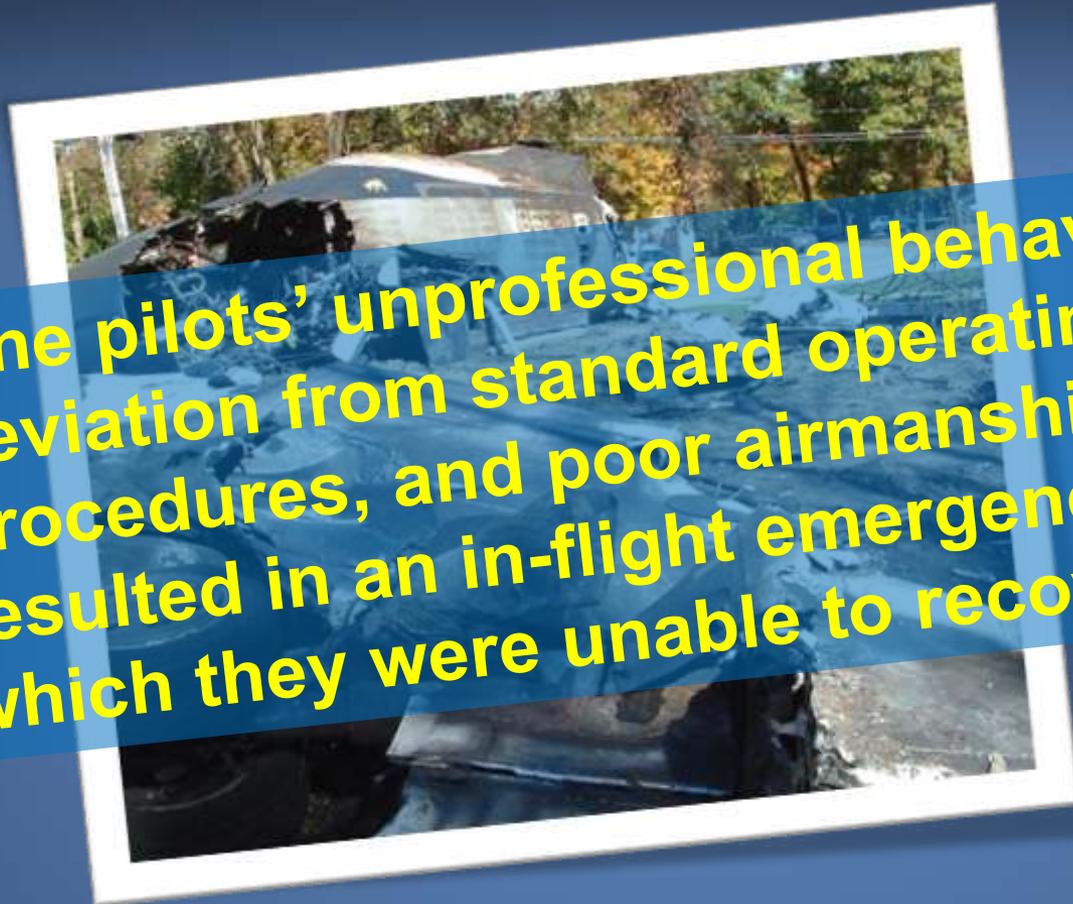
Failed Leadership



“The pilots’ failure ... was symptomatic of poor airmanship and a broader pattern of deficiencies in their crew resource management skills (specifically in the areas of leadership, workload management, communications/briefings, and crew coordination) ...”



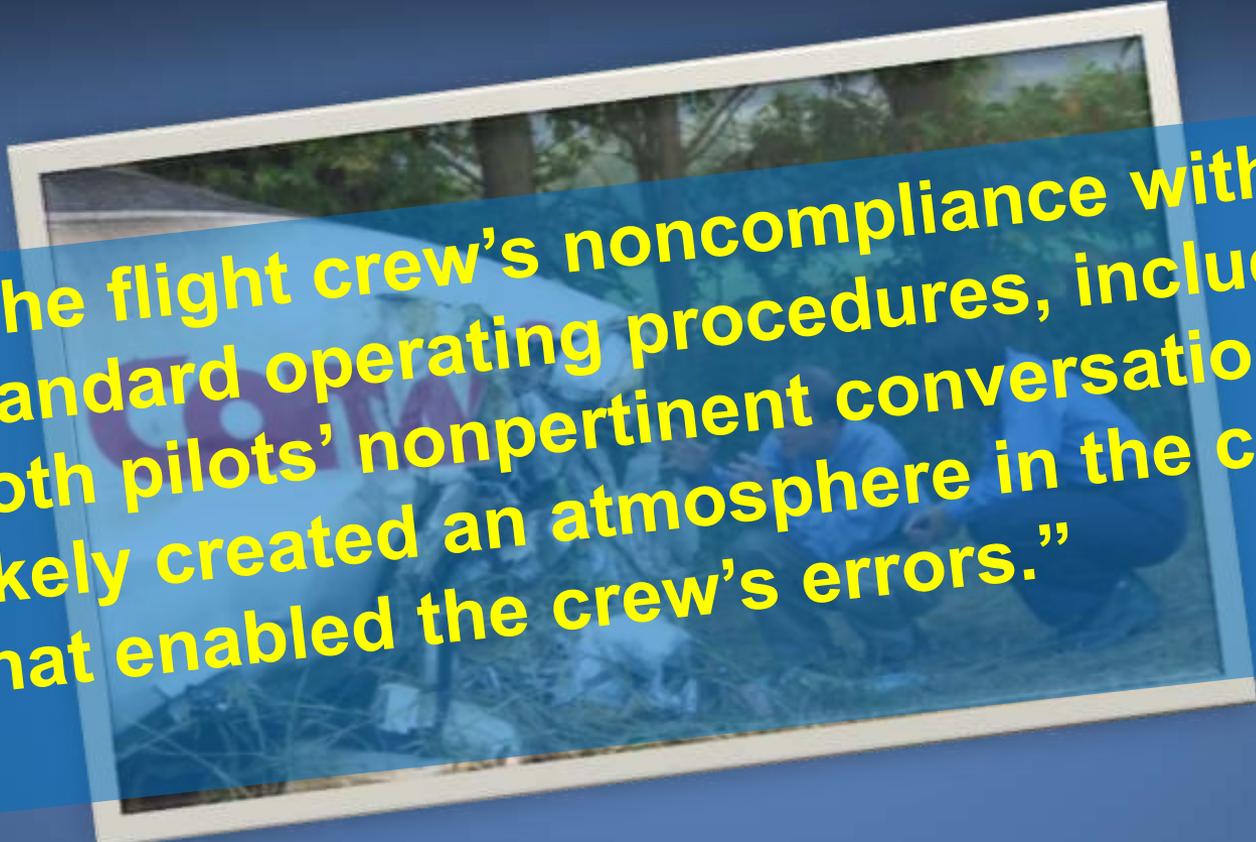
Failed Leadership



“the pilots’ unprofessional behavior, deviation from standard operating procedures, and poor airmanship, which resulted in an in-flight emergency from which they were unable to recover.”



Failed Leadership

A photograph of a crash site, showing a white aircraft fuselage and debris on a grassy field. The image is tilted and has a blue semi-transparent overlay with yellow text. The text reads: "The flight crew's noncompliance with standard operating procedures, including ... both pilots' nonpertinent conversation, most likely created an atmosphere in the cockpit that enabled the crew's errors."

“The flight crew’s noncompliance with standard operating procedures, including ... both pilots’ nonpertinent conversation, most likely created an atmosphere in the cockpit that enabled the crew’s errors.”



Failed Leadership

“The flight crewmembers’ unprofessional behavior, including their nonadherence to sterile cockpit procedures ... which distracted them from their primary flight-related duties and led to their failure to correctly set and verify the flaps;

... the flight crewmembers’ lack of checklist discipline.”

Failed Leadership

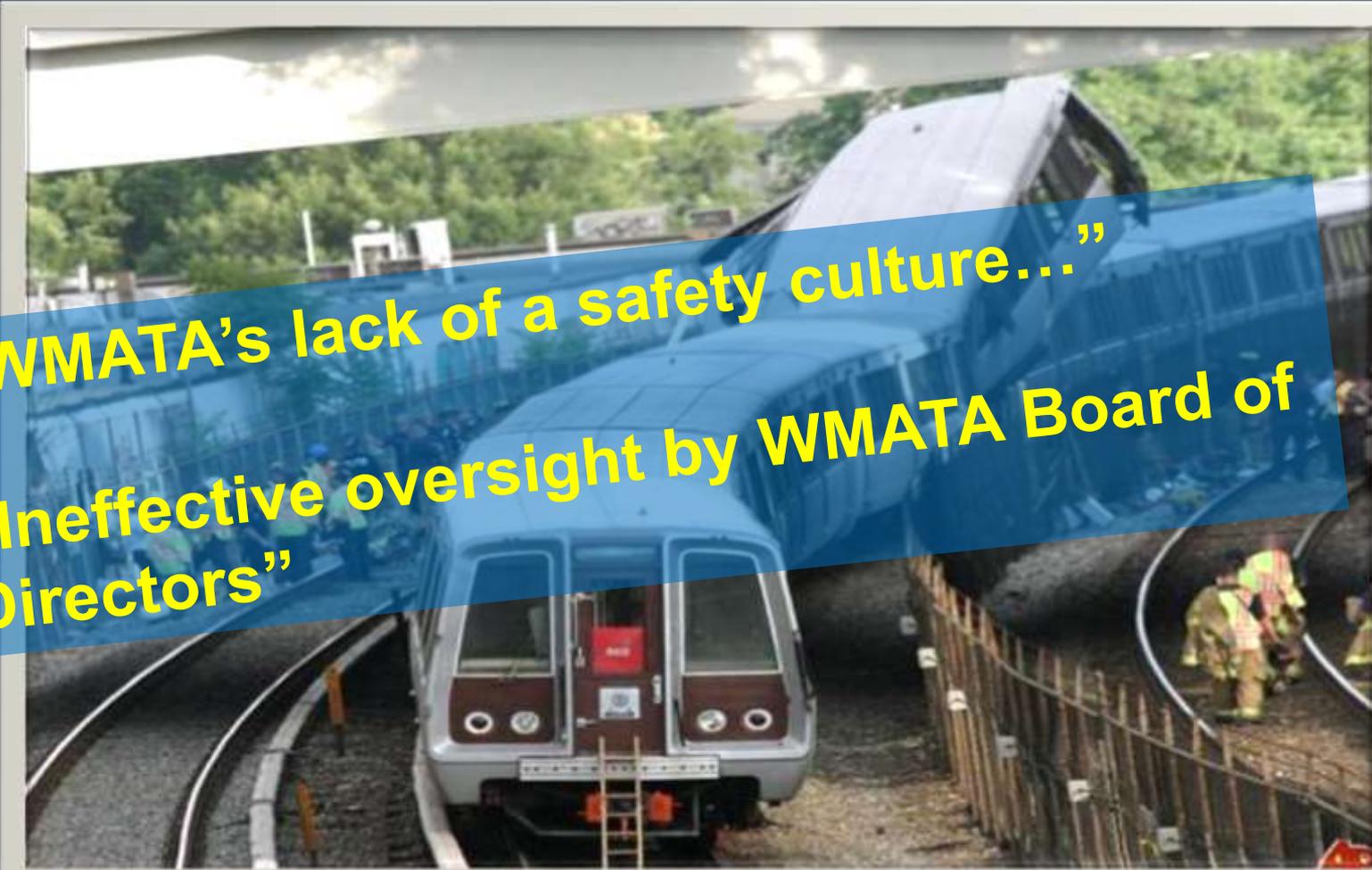
“The captain’s failure to effectively manage the flight ...”



Failed Leadership

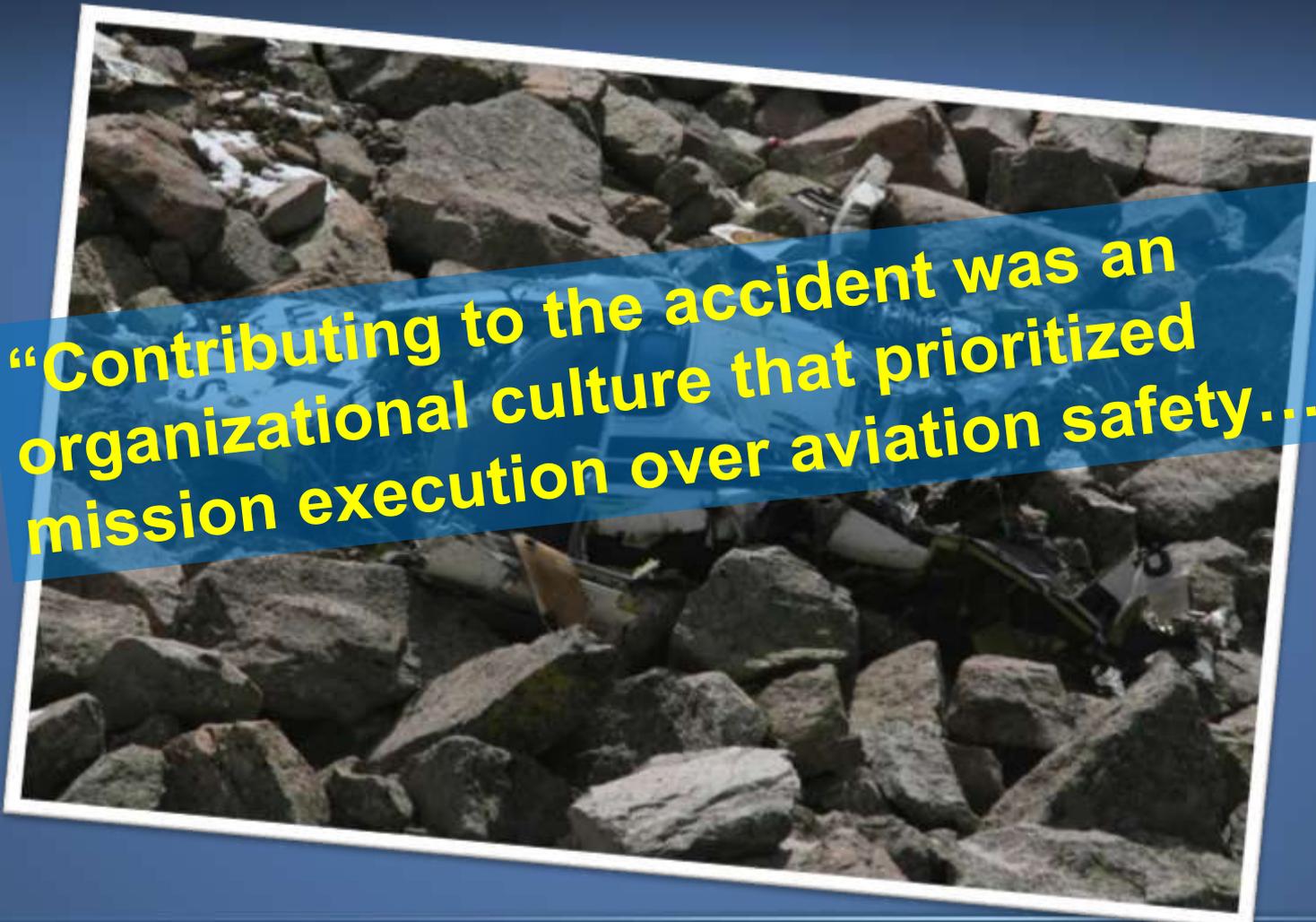
“WMATA’s lack of a safety culture...”

“Ineffective oversight by WMATA Board of Directors”



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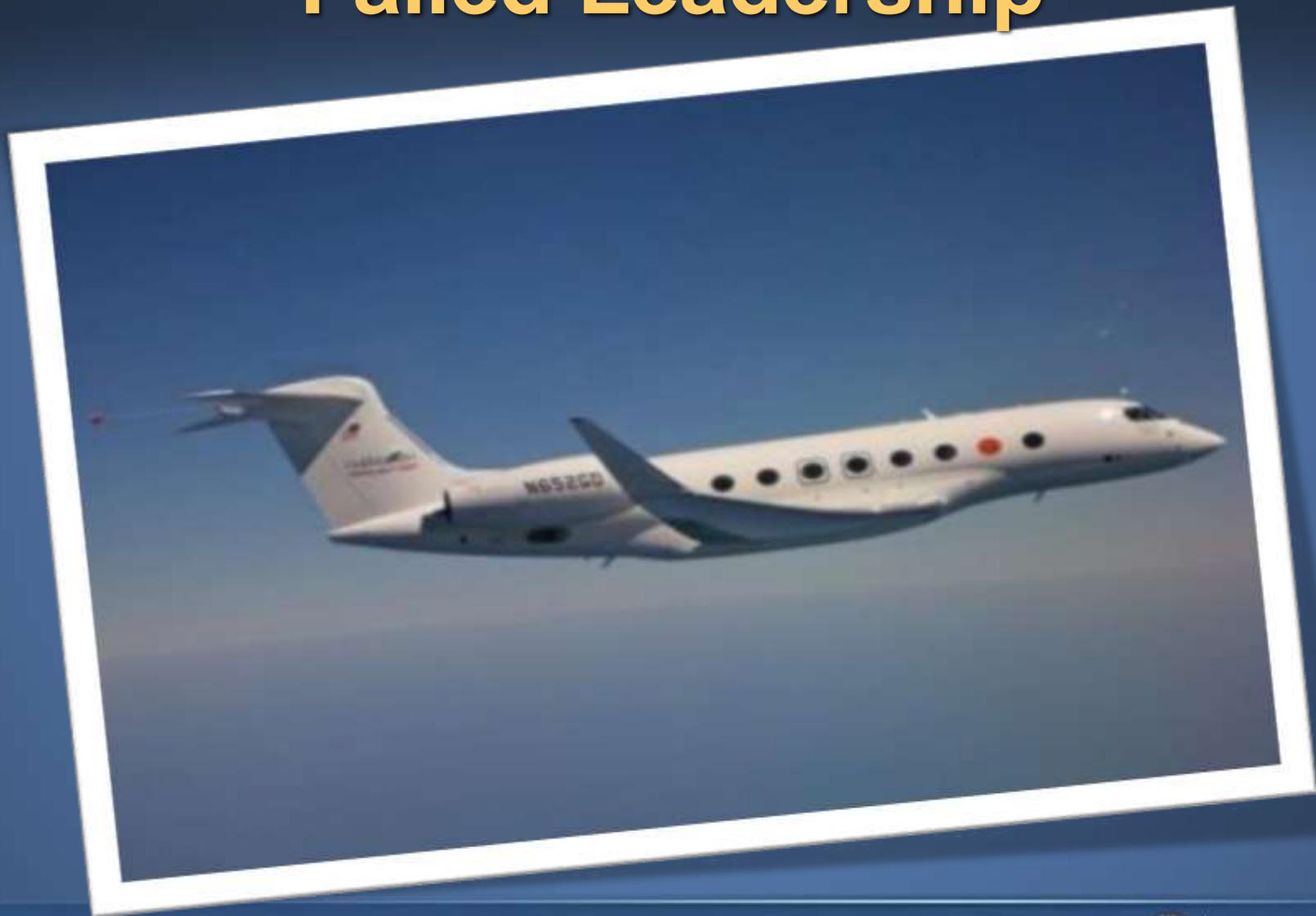
Failed Leadership

A photograph showing the wreckage of an aircraft on a rocky, uneven terrain. The wreckage is partially obscured by a blue banner with yellow text. The banner reads: "Contributing to the accident was an organizational culture that prioritized mission execution over aviation safety..."

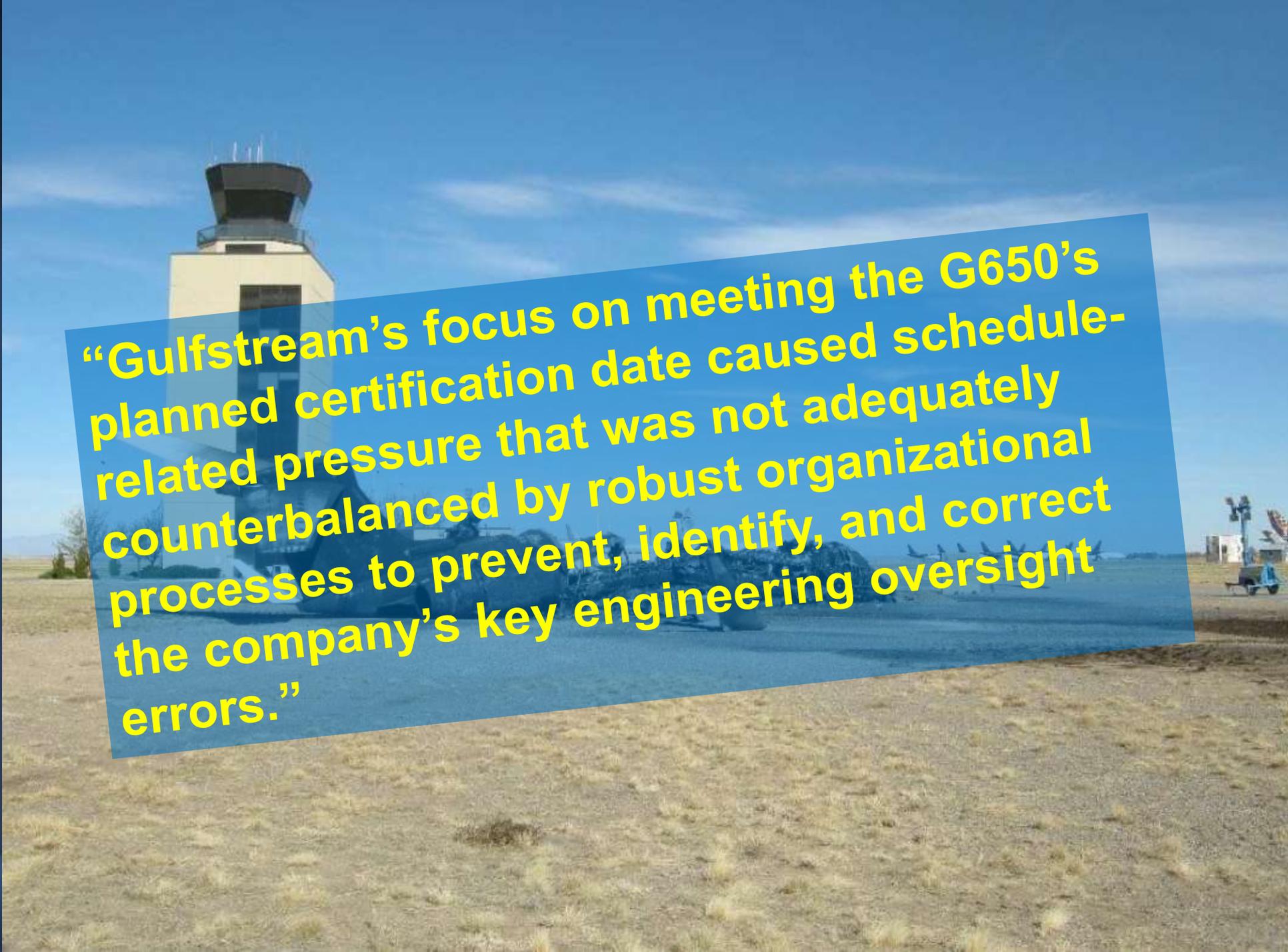
“Contributing to the accident was an organizational culture that prioritized mission execution over aviation safety...”



Failed Leadership



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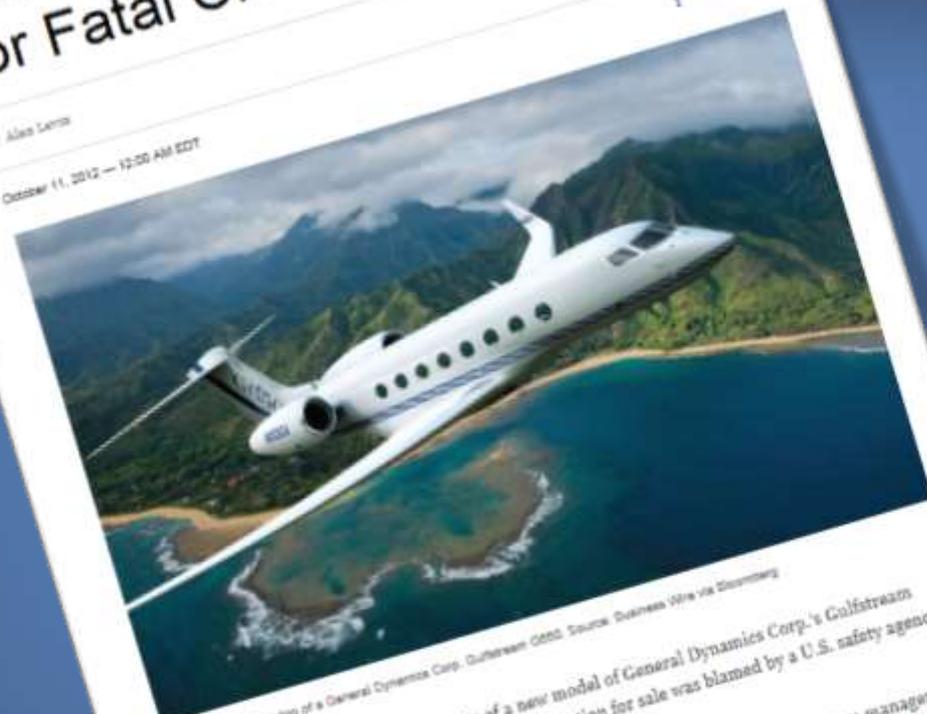
A photograph of an airport scene. In the foreground, there is a dry, grassy field. In the middle ground, an air traffic control tower stands prominently. The background shows a clear blue sky with some light clouds and a tarmac area with several aircraft parked. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the image, containing yellow text.

“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 1, 2011.

What is Leadership?

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

- John Maxwell



Robert's 1st Essential Leadership Trait:

**LEADERS CREATE A VISION
AND LIVE THEIR VALUES**



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

- Jack Welch



The Leader's Role

- As a leader, your role is to ensure that your organization has safety as a core value and then, most importantly, you do everything you can to live those values.



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





CVS Stops Tobacco Sales



This move will cost CVS an estimated \$2 BILLION in revenue

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

- Larry J. Merlo, CEO, CVS Health



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“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



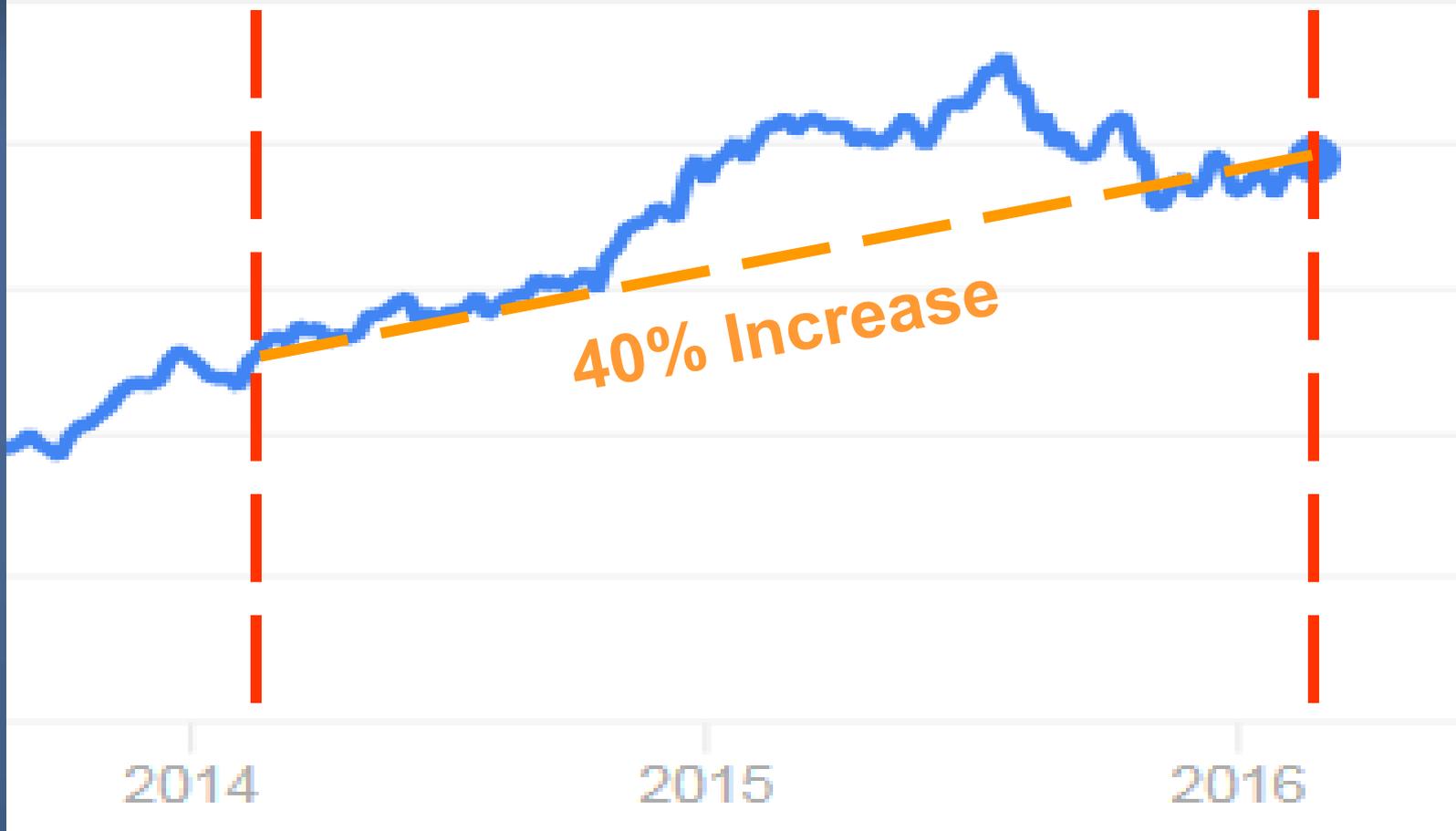
“Think of values as the core guiding principles that act as the foundation of your organization. These principles should guide every decision and serve as your fallback in times of uncertainty.”

- Michael Woody, Ph.D. for Fox Business

CVS Health Corp

Feb 7, 2014
\$66.44

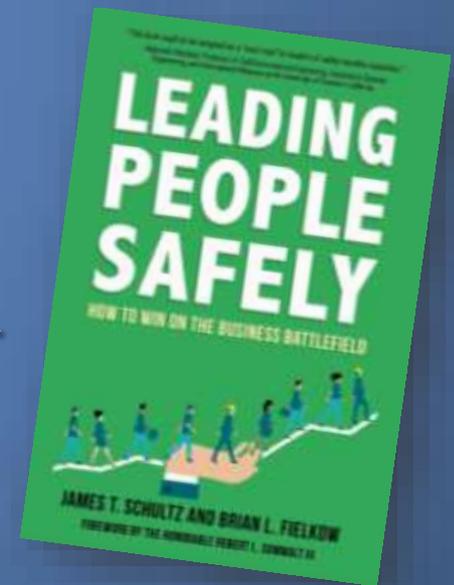
Feb 5, 2016
\$93.10



“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

Robert's 2nd Essential Leadership Trait:

LEADERS FOCUS ON THE TEAM



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The performance of the team – good or bad – is directly related to the effectiveness of its leader.

Effective teamwork doesn't just happen—
it takes effort by everyone, but especially
by the leader."

Dr Robert Ginnett



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Servant Leadership

Effective leaders realize their role is to support those who work on their team.

Robert's 3rd Essential Leadership Trait:

**LEADERS HAVE COURAGE
AND ARE FAIR**



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*“Leaders have the
courage to stand
alone.”*

- Hon. Andy Card
Former Sec. of Transportation
Former White House Chief of Staff

Highly Effective Leaders

- Can be counted on to stand up for their employees and support them when they are right.



Fair and Just

- Employees know they will be treated fairly.
 - If you are trying to do the right thing and commit an error, you will not be punished or ridiculed.
 - If you act recklessly or take deliberate and unjustifiable risks, you can expect consequences.



Robert's 4th Essential Leadership Trait:

**LEADERS POSITIVELY
INFLUENCE SAFETY**



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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



National Transportation Safety Board