

Risk Culture in Commercial Air Transport

This preliminary concept is based on some of the 'Safety Culture' models well-known and applied in aviation. It aims to add a new dimension to the existing safety culture framework based on the 'Risk Culture' guidance material produced by Institute of Risk Management (IRM), which was developed to supplement ISO 31000 *Risk management*.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT IS THE KEY TO MANAGING RISK

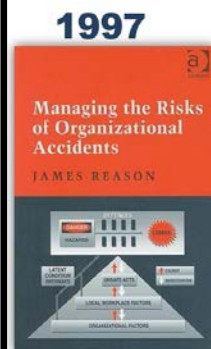
www.riskculture.org



Everyday, difficult risk decisions have to be made by pilots, engineers, technicians & their managers due to various factors encouraging them to accept some level of risk in their operational environment. This study does not aim to apportion blame to frontline operators and it aims to identify those factors which encourage risk-taking behaviour and enable proactive implementation of a 'Just Culture' in organisations.

"CULTURE: the unwritten rules of the social game"
Professor Emeritus Geert Hofstede

"engineering a safety culture"
(an informed culture)



1997
just culture
reporting culture
learning culture
flexible culture



2016 - *risk culture?*

"Risk Management: It's not rocket science. It's much more complicated than that."

Professor Emeritus John Adams

"Warm-blooded, passionate, inherently social beings though we think we are, humans are presented in this context as hedonic calculators calmly seeking to pursue private interests. We are said to be risk-averse, but, alas, so inefficient in handling information that we are unintentional risk-takers; basically we are fools."

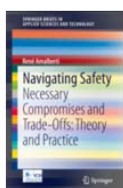
Dame Mary Douglas

does 'compensation culture' lead to 'risk blindness' in society?



"Safety is a paradox; people demand safety once they have taken risks."

René Amalberti



In 2016, Future Sky Safety conducted a survey 'European pilots' perceptions of safety culture in European Aviation'. Over 500 pilots clearly stated that they have to take risks that make them feel uncomfortable about safety. Unfortunately the survey didn't provide any insight what kind of risks respondents take. **WE REALLY NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT THESE RISKS ARE!**

1st Risk Culture Survey Results

OPERATIONAL TARGETS & RISK TAKING

6 out of **10**

ONLY 2 out of **10**

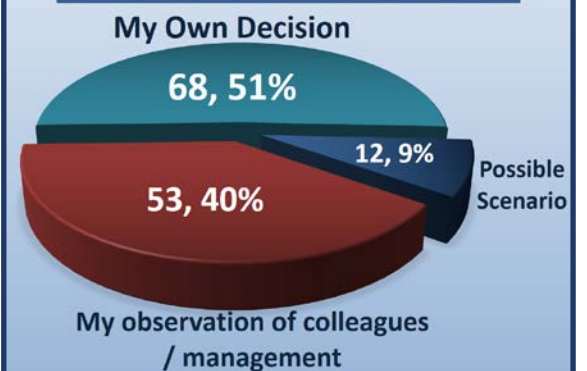
'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' that

'Disagreed' or 'Strongly Disagreed' that

Operational targets (such as 'on-time performance', 'availability', 'technical dispatch reliability') can encourage pilots, engineers & their managers to take **SIGNIFICANT** risks potentially impacting on flight safety.

29 year-old First Officer: *"Destination (second main base of operator) had strong headwinds but runway in use was covered by low clouds on final. After one unsuccessful attempt we diverted to alternate (main base). Upon arrival to alternate, the company had already placed a flight plan to return back to destination. 4 flights in total had diverted. All were "pushed" to try again even though there was no clear improvement. After waiting for 2 hours we departed again. Only way to land was by executing a circling approach with 20kts tailwind and breaking off at less than 1000ft and turning base at 3 miles. This was at night and in a mountainous area. All 4 flights attempted the procedure. Some made it on the first try, some felt "forced" to try again and again until they made it on 3rd attempt."*

RISK DECISION MAKER



POTENTIAL FACTORS ENCOURAGING RISK TAKING



Organisational factors i.e. safety culture, leadership's attitude towards risk
Individual traits i.e. 'can do' attitude or 'thrill seeking'
Industry level factors i.e. policies, growth in the industry, competition
Legal factors i.e. litigation, unrealistic expectations about passenger rights legislation
Media's attitude i.e. victimisation of individuals who make mistakes

46 Year-old Maintenance Engineer: *"An engineer made the decision to cut a fire detection wire to prevent false alarms in the flight deck. The pilots and engineering management were also aware of the decision. The decision was made to enable an aircraft to return to the home base the same day, to avoid an overnight stay for the flight crew and to avoid looking bad to the customer. Significant pressure was put on the engineer by the operations manager for the airline. The LAME has since left the industry to avoid being put in the same position again."*

28-year-old First Officer: *"I was just finished with line training, and flying out of a city far from my hometown. It was an early morning departure, and with the low salary only being paid per block hour, and I had to endure all expenses for accommodation, I could only afford to sleep at a hostel. The hostel had very thin walls and you could hear other people having sex during the late night hours in other rooms. I woke up having only slept 4 hours, but could not report unfit, as this would result in me losing money on the trip from my home country as a whole. This at a time when all cash reserves were exhausted."*

Risk Decisions – Classification

