

Aviation Human Factors Industry News

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From the sands of Kitty Hawk, the tradition lives on.

Hello all,

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In this weeks edition of *Aviation Human Factors Industry News* you will read the following stories:

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Spanair Maintenance Workers to Face Trial in Crash, Efe Says

A Spanish judge decided to send [two plane-maintenance workers to trial](#) over the 2008 crash of a Madrid-to-Canary Islands Spanair SA flight that killed 154 people and injured 18, Efe reported, citing a court ruling. The men, who are charged with [negligent homicide and negligent injury](#), should [have done further studies on the airplane's faulty equipment and not have cleared it for takeoff](#), Judge Juan

Javier Perez said yesterday, the newswire said, citing the concluding report of the Madrid court's investigation into the crash. Perez dismissed charges against a maintenance supervisor and Spanair's divisional chiefs for maintenance and quality, Efe said. The judge allowed civil complaints to remain in effect against the Barcelona-based airline and insurer Mapfre SA, the newswire said.

Spanair declined to comment immediately on the report. Phone calls to Mapfre's press department weren't answered.



Learjet Got Wires Crossed, Says FAA

[Swapped fire extinguishing wires](#) in certain Learjet Model 60 planes may cause the fire extinguishing agent to go to an engine that is not on fire, leaving an actual engine fire unextinguished, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The agency says the problem was noted in two planes, and the Federal is proposing that all Learjet Inc. Model 60 airplanes with serial numbers 60-002 through 60-366, inclusive, be inspected for crossed fire extinguisher leads.



The leads may be improperly identified or missing labels, according to the FAA's proposed airworthiness directive to remedy the situation.

The inspection and any repairs must be performed at the plane's next auxiliary power unit removal, or within 300 flight hours after the effective date of the airworthiness directive, whichever occurs first. The effective date of the directive would be after the comment period on the rule, which ends Jan. 17.

Circuit-breaker at heart of LOT 767 gear-up landing probe

Investigation into the LOT Boeing 767-300 gear-up landing at Warsaw are focusing on the [role of circuit-breakers](#), after the twinjet's undercarriage failed to deploy following a hydraulic leak. The aircraft had departed Newark, bound for Warsaw, on 1 November when, during flap and gear retraction, the engine indication and crew alerting system (EICAS) warned of a malfunction in the central hydraulic system, which was suffering a loss of pressure.

[Having opted to continue the flight](#) to the Polish capital, the LOT crew carried out a quick-reference handbook procedure which included use of alternate landing-gear extension.

But the gear failed to extend and the aircraft was vectored to a holding pattern while combat aircraft were sent to observe the state of the undercarriage. The crew attempted to use gravity extension to lower the gear but this was unsuccessful, and diminishing fuel levels forced the crew to consider a gear-up landing.

The 767 landed on Runway 33 with its gear retracted, about 1h 15min after declaring the initial emergency. It came to a halt around 2,000m along the strip, where Runway 33 and Runway 29 intersect.

Preliminary inspection of the aircraft traced the central hydraulic system problem to a fluid leak from a damaged hose in the starboard main landing-gear.



But it also revealed that while the individual circuit-breaker for the alternate landing-gear extension motor was 'on', an [overarching battery bus circuit-breaker](#) - which protects several systems including the alternate landing-gear extension motor - [was 'off'](#).

Polish investigation authority PKBWL said this 'off' position "was not recorded or indicated" either by the EICAS or the flight-data recorder of the 767.

Suspicion over the role of the circuit-breaker in the accident heightened during a test carried out as the aircraft was being recovered from the runway using cranes and air-bags.

After connecting a ground-power unit to the 767, and switching the battery bus circuit-breaker on, investigators [successfully](#) used the alternate landing-gear extension system to lower the undercarriage - enabling the aircraft to be towed to LOT's technical facilities.

"Functional tests of the entire electrical installation of the alternate landing-gear extension system are being conducted," said PKBWL.

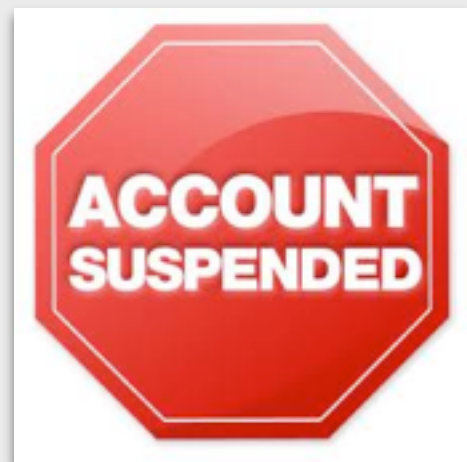
None of the 221 passengers and 10 crew members was injured.

Air France suspends aircraft maintenance at Xiamen Taikoo

According to a recent announcement made by Air France CEO Alexandre de Juniac in Beijing on 2nd December, Air France has [suspended its aircraft maintenance](#) at the Xiamen-based Taikoo (Xiamen) Aircraft Engineering Co.Ltd after the 'missing screws' incident, reports Zaobao.com.

An Airbus SAS A340 operated by Air France-KLM Group was reported stopping in Boston in mid-November after undergoing an overhaul at Xiamen Taikoo because [30 screws were found to be missing](#) from a protective panel.

Taikoo spokesman confirmed the incident and said an internal investigation has been launched to identify the cause of the incident.



The aircraft involved in the incident was the second A340 that had undergone comprehensive maintenance at Xiamen Taikoo this year. An Air France official said such overhaul occurs every six years and takes more than a month, costing "several million dollars".

Juniac said Xiamen Taikoo services "between five and seven planes per year" for Air France. Other customers that have their aircraft serviced at Xiamen Taikoo include British Airways, American Airlines, JAL, Emirates, Korean Air and Lufthansa.

China Eastern Airlines to improve English after safety breach

A China Eastern Airlines pilot took off from Japan's Osaka airport **without clearance**

A Chinese airline has promised to **improve its crews' English skills** after one of its flights took off from a Japanese airport without authorization. China Eastern Airlines did not say what caused the error, but pledged to "further improve the English **communication skills** of our flight crews to assure flight safety", suggesting it may have been a misunderstanding.



The airline also said it was cooperating with an investigation by Japanese authorities into the recent incident, in which its pilot took off from Japan's Osaka airport without clearance from air traffic controllers.

"Eastern Airlines will fully cooperate with the investigation and will fully uphold the principle of safety first and operate in accordance with the law," the airline said.

The plane, which was carrying 245 passengers, took off without incident and landed safely in Shanghai, the China Daily reported.

The latest incident comes after the privately-owned Chinese airline Juneyao said in August one of its pilots had **refused to give up his landing slot** to a passenger plane that issued a distress call to say it was running out of fuel.

The pilot of the Qatar plane had alerted air traffic control in the eastern Chinese city of Hongqiao that it had just five minutes' worth of fuel left after it was diverted from Shanghai.

China's civil aviation authority said at the time those responsible would be "severely punished".

China Eastern officials were unavailable for comment.

Incident: British Airways B744 enroute on Nov 11th 2011, mobile phone caught fire after being crushed

A British Airways Boeing 747-400, registration G-CIVW performing flight BA-12 (departing Nov 10th) from Singapore (Singapore) to London Heathrow, EN (UK), was enroute when a mobile phone, [that had been crushed when a passenger's seat was reclined, caught fire](#). Cabin crew was able to extinguish the fire before any further serious damage occurred. The aircraft continued to London for a safe landing.

The United Kingdom's Civil Aviation Authority briefly mentioned the incident in their [Christmas Warning](#) regarding postings gifts containing hazardous goods and told The Aviation Herald, that "thermal runaway [of a Lithium Ion battery, editorial note] is a distinct possibility but has not been conclusively established".

The CAA said in their Christmas warning: "When installed correctly, lithium batteries are unlikely to cause a problem, but they do pose a serious risk of short circuiting - which can lead to a fire - [if packed loose](#). Overheating can also occur if the device in which they are installed activates inadvertently in-flight. Lithium batteries, even when contained in equipment, are not permitted in airmail and, since letters and parcels sent in the post will often be carried on aircraft even for relatively short domestic journeys (particularly 'next day' services), such items are not permitted at all by Royal Mail. Counterfeit batteries, without the necessary inbuilt safety features, are also a serious and growing concern."



Fashion Model Mangled by Airplane Propeller is Among Hundreds Injured in Aviation

Model and fashion editor Lauren Scruggs was horribly maimed last weekend when she walked into a spinning airplane propeller. The 23-year-old beauty had just deplaned after an airborne Christmas lights tour. Propellers can rotate so fast they are invisible.

She is among the hundreds of people injured every year in aviation accidents.

Scruggs survived but lost her left hand, much of her face, and may lose vision in her left eye. She's been unable to say what happened. If the pilot has, his statement's not been released. It's speculated that after deplaning and walking away from the plane, Scruggs went back towards it for some reason.



Aviation experts have weighed in on the circumstances, to the extent known. They said it's standard and in fact critical that this plane's engines should have been shut down and the propeller stopped, before allowing a passenger to get on or off the plane. If that were not the case, this pilot made a grievously negligent mistake.

Yet for now Scruggs' parents say they don't blame the pilot, who was Scruggs' friend.

2011 safest year for air travel since 1945

Accidents and fatalities decreased globally this year, except in Russia, according to IATA

It was the best year (so far) for air safety since IATA began recording accidents and incidents..



The first 11 months of 2011 was the safest period to travel by plane since 1945, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

"As of the end of November, global safety performance (for Western-built jets) is at the best level recorded, and is 49 percent better than the same time last year," said Gunther Matschnigg, senior vice president for safety, operations and infrastructure for IATA.

This makes [2011 the safest year for air travel](#) since the International Civil Aviation Organization began collecting data in 1945. IATA has calculated and published global airline safety records based on ICAO data since 2000.

The number of fatal accidents fell to 22 from 23 last year. The number of passenger and crew fatalities also declined, down to 486 compared to last year's 786 deaths.

Globally, the accident rate was 2.16 per million take-offs in the first 11 months of 2011 and across all regions accident rates have fallen except in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region -- comprised of Russia and former Soviet republics.

The accident rate in the CIS region increased from 7.15 per million take-offs in 2010 to 11.07 per million take-offs this year.

In North America, accident rates fell to 1.18 per million from 1.51 in 2010. In the Asia-Pacific region, the rate fell to 1.39 from 2.51, and for Europe the figure fell to 1.39 from 1.59.

According to an IATA study conducted in 2010, there is no particularly common type of plane accident that occurs.

[The five most common types of accidents are](#): runway excursions when the jet goes off the runway; a gear-up landing or a gear collapse; loss of in-flight control; ground damage; and in-flight damage, the IATA reported.

The IATA has 240 member airlines from 118 countries, which make up 84 percent of all air traffic in the world.

FAA Misses Deadline On Fatigue Rules

Another deadline passed recently without the FAA acting to finalize new rules aimed at [pilot fatigue](#), and that brought ire from family members of the victims of Continental Flight 3407. The concerned parties have organized into the Families of Continental Flight 3407, an action group formed in remembrance of relatives lost to that 2009 crash, and to see through what they believe are [necessary changes](#) in regulation. The FAA's original deadline for the pilot fatigue rules was Aug. 1. It was later moved to Nov. 30. The agency says it is "working aggressively" to complete the new final version of the fatigue rules "as well as separate rules that address pilot qualifications and training." The agency has met organized opposition in the past. Comments from one of the family members suggest he believes there may be more corrupt motives in the mix.



Scott Maurer lost his daughter in the crash of Flight 3407. He told the Buffalo News that cargo carriers' desire that the FAA develop separate rest requirements for their pilots mean they "are putting profits ahead of safety" and delaying the process. Investigators blamed the crash on pilot error. The investigation found that [neither pilot on the flight deck had slept in a bed the night before the accident flight](#). The aircraft, a Bombardier Q400 Dash 8-400 operated as Colgan Air (Continental Express), stalled in weather, at night, and crashed while approaching the airport at Buffalo, N.Y. All 49 aboard died, as did one on the ground. Rest rules proposed by the FAA in September 2010 were met with a critical letter from the Air Transport Association. According to the ATA, the rules would cost billions and kill tens of thousands of jobs in the airline industry. The Buffalo News concluded its report with the words of local politician, Brian Higgins. "I understand they want to get it right, but part of getting it right is getting it done."

Southwest Airlines to equip ramp workers with wireless headsets to boost safety

Southwest Airlines ground crew members test the wireless headsets earlier this year. The headsets will be put into use in February. Airport ramp areas are noisy, bustling places as planes, baggage carts and fuel trucks come and go.

To make potentially dangerous situations safer, Southwest

Airlines will be the first U.S.

airline to equip ramp employees with wireless headsets so the ground crew and pilots can coordinate the process of pushing back planes from concourse gates.



In February, the headset system will be rolled out at Southwest's 420 gates nationwide. The hands-free devices should be installed in Denver as early as mid-January.

"This will be such a great tool for these guys," said Marc Stank, Southwest's senior manager of safety, standards and regulatory compliance. "This adds another level of safety."

Accidents involving planes being pushed back - either hitting a person or a pricey plane - happen but are not common.

Built by Flightcom of Portland, Ore., the wireless system connects the wing walkers - the people who look out for obstacles while they accompany the aircraft as it pushes back from the gate - with the driver of the "mule" or tractor that pushes the plane's nose. All three ground- crew members can hear the pilot, Stank said.

Currently, Southwest uses a system of one headset worn by the pushback driver that plugs into the aircraft. The wing walkers use only hand signals to communicate.

"It is limited now. The pushback driver may see a threat, such as a vehicle coming around the corner, that the wing walker can't see," Stank said. Southwest declined to say how much it is spending to roll out the new system.

The system was tested last February at New York City's LaGuardia Airport in its congested operations, Chicago's Midway Airport for inclement weather and San Diego for the closeness of a ramp to runways and military operations.

Testing resulted in longer-lasting batteries and the ability to plug in the cases where the headsets are stored instead of the individual headsets. The cases then can be wheeled out to the gate.

Stank said the headsets have a 1,600-foot range, "essentially the plane footprint." During testing, there was no problem with interference and no "bleed-over" from headsets nearby.

Bombardier Safety Standdown Speakers Put Premium on Professionalism

The business aviation accident rate "will go up **400 percent over the next 10 years**" without significant upgrades to pilot training, according to **human-factors expert Dr. Tony Kern**. A former B-1B bomber instructor pilot, Kern made his remarks in October at Bombardier's 15th annual Safety Standdown in Wichita. said a perfect safety storm looms for a variety of reasons, including the **failure of human-factors training** to keep pace with advances in aviation technology, a new generation of pilots coming on line with "differing values with regard to entitlement and compliance" and "poaching" of experienced business aviation pilots and maintenance technicians by the airlines. "**We've been drinking from the same human-factors training pool for 30 years,**" Kern said. While he praised the proliferation of safety management systems (SMS), he said their adaptation absent a correlating change in a flight department's culture could do more harm than good. "**Habits are better than rules,**" Kern said.



This year's Standdown attracted 468 attendees, down from a peak of 590 in 2008, who heard from a wide variety of experts, including three current members of the NTSB and high-ranking FAA officials. Fifty-two percent of the participants were attending their first Bombardier standdown.

They included pilots, mechanics, schedulers and aviation executives from a broad range of private and public aircraft operators who fly a diverse collection of turbine aircraft from various OEMs—including Bombardier. This year, almost all the breakout sessions stressed the role of [personal accountability](#) in fostering correct decision-making as part of developing and maintaining an [overall safety culture](#) and further promoting professionalism. Accident case studies—mainly from the regional airlines—were presented and discussed as a means of illustrating the panelists’ points, as were studies and empirical data from the FAA, NTSB and NASA.

Read the Full Report

PDF

[AIN 2011 Bombardier Safety Standdown Report](#)

Instinct, an enemy in disaster

The sinking sensation of an airplane in a stall is not one that many pilots forget. “The feeling in your stomach is very uncomfortable – it’s scary,” said Jean-Pierre Otelli, a veteran flight instructor, acrobatic pilot and author of a series of books on aviation safety.

What is harder to remember, in the heat of the moment, [is the proper way to regain control of the aircraft](#).

In the months since French accident investigators published a report in July on the 2009 stall and crash of an Air France jet over the Atlantic, there has been much debate within the industry about why the pilots failed to take appropriate action in the four minutes it took the plane to plummet from 11,500 meters, or feet, before hitting the water and killing all 228 people aboard.



But the increasing prominence of [human error as a factor](#) in fatal crashes like Air France Flight 447 – and like the 2009 Colgan Air crash near Buffalo, New York, that killed 50 – is a [distressing phenomenon](#) that some safety experts say regulators are only beginning to address.

“[You have to overcome what your instinct tells you to do,](#)” said Otelli, whose book ‘Pilot Errors, Volume 5’ was the first to publish the unedited transcript of the Flight 447 cockpit voice recordings. For the hundreds of pilots he has trained to recognize and recover from an aerodynamic stall, Otelli said, “the first reaction of all of them is to pull back on the control stick” and drive the plane’s nose higher – a move that only exacerbates the problem. “[It’s a reflex that’s almost uncontrollable,](#)” he said.

Learning to overcome that impulse, and instead to maneuver the nose toward the ground to regain speed, takes repeated practice and forms part of the initial training of every licensed pilot.

The French Bureau of Investigations and Analysis found that the two co-pilots in the Air France crash [had not been trained to fly in manual mode at high altitude](#) or to recognize the approach to, and recovery from, a high-altitude stall. The crew’s captain, a 25-year veteran, had received such training only early in his career. Many airlines have since added these and other upset-recovery techniques to in-house training programs, but no national regulator has mandated regular refresher training.

“Unfortunately, it took these accidents to get the attention of the mainstream aviation community, the regulators and the public,” Sunjoo Advani, an aerospace engineer who runs IDT, a flight simulator developer in the Netherlands, said of the Air France and Colgan Air disasters.

Loss of control in flight is rare. It accounted for only about five per cent of all aircraft accidents and incidents in the past 10 years globally, according to statistics compiled by the European Aviation Safety Agency, and nearly one-third of those incidents involved an aerodynamic stall. But when it does occur, [it is almost always catastrophic](#): Of the 101 accidents attributed to loss of control from 2001 to 2010, 80 per cent were fatal. Of all air passenger deaths over the past decade, 25 per cent were the result of a loss of control.

Regulators say one of the reasons [human error](#) now figures more predominantly in the accident statistics is that the aircraft made today are equipped with technology designed to prevent pilots from inadvertently putting their aircraft in danger and to alert them to potential hazards. The introduction of advanced ground proximity warning systems, for example, has sharply reduced the number of jetliners that crashes into mountainsides – a leading cause of aviation fatalities 20 years ago. To be sure, [pilots are not always the first link](#) in the chain of a loss-of-control accident.

The initial triggers can vary considerably, including factors like equipment failure, an encounter with severe weather or even an improper loading of the cargo hold.

In the United States, the National Transportation Safety Board made a number of recommendations aimed at minimizing loss-of-control accidents as long ago as 2004, including more realistic stall training for pilots and improvements to simulator scenarios. The Federal Aviation Administration proposed a broad overhaul of pilot training standards in January 2009 and this year revised the plan to include new requirements for recurrent training on how to recognize and recover from stalls and other upsets. Those changes are still being reviewed by Congress, however, and have not been approved.

Critics said they welcomed the regulators' recognition of the problem, but faulted them for not acting more swiftly to amend pilot training standards.

What Really Happened Aboard Air France 447

Popular Mechanics

Two years after the Airbus 330 plunged into the Atlantic Ocean, Air France 447's flight-data recorders finally turned up. The revelations from the pilot transcript paint a surprising picture of chaos in the cockpit, and confusion between the pilots that led to the crash.

For more than two years, the disappearance of Air France Flight 447 over the mid-Atlantic in the early hours of June 1, 2009, remained one of aviation's great mysteries. How could a technologically state-of-the art airliner simply vanish?

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/aviation/crashes/what-really-happened-aboard-air-france-447-6611877>

New Technology Promises Icing, Corrosion Protection

A new product scheduled to come on the market early next year promises to provide a durable coating on metal surfaces that can make them **repel water**, providing resistance to icing and corrosion. The coating, called **NeverWet**, is a super-hydrophobic material that causes water and heavy oils to bead up and glide away. "Any object coated with our NeverWet coating literally cannot be touched by liquid," says the Ross Nanotechnology website. "Any liquid placed on this coating is repelled and simply rolls off without touching the underlying surface. Not only is this amazing to see, but it solves a myriad of problems." Although the company hasn't suggested the product has aviation applications, the **GA community has already taken note** -- EAA **said** the possibilities seem "endless," from keeping wings clean and ice-free to reducing friction for seaplanes.



The product is long-lasting and easy to apply, according to the company. It also can be used on electronic devices to make them waterproof. In one video posted on the company website, an iPhone 3G is coated in NeverWet and submerged. The phone continues to operate for 30 minutes, but an untreated phone, according to the video, would stop working in less than 60 seconds. The company says it was working to find a better way to reduce corrosion on steel products, and accidentally "hit upon a slick product that's led to a whole new business."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7is6r6zXFDc>

<http://www.neverwet.com>

How to honor your workers' dignity

People in leadership positions need to be educated in [all matters related to dignity](#), both the human vulnerability to being violated and the remarkable effect it has on people when they feel seen, heard, understood and acknowledged as worthy. The emotional impact of treating someone well and honoring the person's dignity has benefits that are incalculable everywhere people cluster — in families, communities, workplaces, churches and nations. It's the easiest and fastest way to bring out the best in people. The opposite is equally true: Treat people as if they don't matter, and watch how fast a destructive, if not violent, emotional storm erupts. Leading with dignity means leaders recognize this and willingly embody what it looks like to treat others well, to know what to do with people when they have been violated and to know what steps to take when they have violated them.



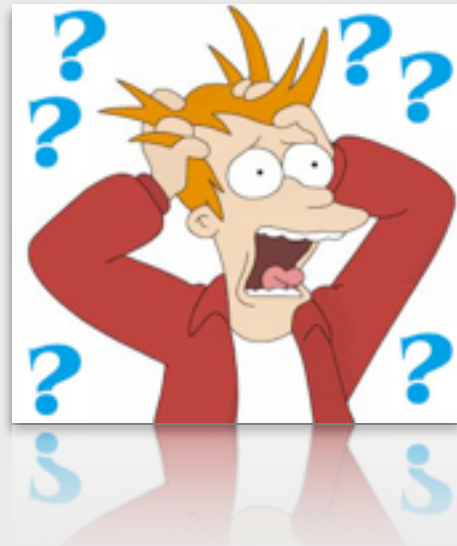
Here are five steps that leaders can take to create a culture of dignity.

- [Commit to learning](#) about the role dignity plays in establishing a healthy and productive work environment.
- [Be aware of the power](#) you have to affect others. Know that if you treat them with dignity, it will strengthen your relationship — and that treating people badly will have immediate negative consequences. Leaders set the tone in the work culture.
- [Make an effort](#) to honor the dignity of your employees, in everyday interactions and in policies you create, using the 10 elements of dignity as a guide: accepting identity, recognition, acknowledgment, inclusion, safety, fairness, independence, understanding, benefit of the doubt and accountability.
- [Create a culture](#) in which people feel safe to speak up about dignity violations they are experiencing. Invite them to talk to you regularly about ways that you or company policies might be harming them. Inherent in hierarchical structure is the possibility that leaders are insulated from taking responsibility for their hurtful behavior, and those experiencing violations from them do not feel safe to speak up for fear of retribution.

- **Take action to address** the situation when it is reported to you that other managers are violating the dignity of others. Make it company policy to take responsibility for the harm one causes others. No one is immune to accountability.

Phrases that Irk Safety Trainers

Is your pet peeve the phrase “**It’s never happened here.**?” We run loaders with split rims and I have researched and have read articles where the split rims have blown apart while being inflated. We train out operators to stand to the side and use an air hose extension while inflating a tire. I have fought with our Mobile Shop supervisor for years about the need for a safety cage that would go around the tire while being inflated to contain a split rim malfunction. I have shown them numerous incident photos and documentation of split rim malfunctions, but their answer always is “**It’s never happened here.**”



Captain Denny: The 'Sully Sullenberger' of Pilot Service

Think that airline employees are blasé about their jobs? Well, you haven’t met United Airlines pilot Captain Denny Flanagan (or Captain Denny as he is known). **What a different world it would be if every airline employee were like him.**

Like the icon of airline safety --US Airways pilot Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger who safely landed his plane on the Hudson River in New York City without injury--Captain Denny is likened to the Sullenberger of **airline service.**



Going above and beyond the call of duty, he personally calls parents of unaccompanied minors to tell them their child is okay, and does the same with pets owners who have animals on board. He makes himself available to customers waiting to board, while passing out coffee.

It's no wonder he's [become a celebrity](#) among United Airlines crew and passengers. This guy talks the talk and walks the walk. And yes, he's human. Even he sometimes forgets to turn off the fasten seat belt sign.

Airfarewatchdog interviewed him between flights in [Chicago](#).

Q: What is your typical flight day like?

A: Well, [each flight begins with the crew brief](#). I see this as an integral part of what I do. It is my opportunity to [connect with the crew](#) and instill within them my ethos for flying. I put my hand to my heart and thank them for the great job they do taking care of our customers. I remind them that they spend more time with our customers than any other employee group. Flight attendants are rarely thanked enough for the great job that they do, and they often seem touched to be reminded from the captain how much we appreciate what they do.

Q: There was a lot of talk with the recent merger between Continental and United that got down to the nitty gritty. Even down to the way that the airlines board pets in the cargo compartment. You have an interesting story there, tell us about it.

A: Well, I recognize that pets undergo a traumatic experience when traveling in the cargo section. So if we have time, I will go down to the ramp and take a picture of the pet and show it to their owners to let them know that they are ok. Another pilot I know takes the carry on pets for a walk around the aircraft because they have been cooped up for quite awhile.

Q: You are famous for some of the unorthodox things that you do when flying. You are a modest person, but tell us about some of those things.

A: Well, it always bothers me when I see wheelchair passengers awaiting someone to push them up the jetway. So I always take the opportunity to push them through the terminal and show them how much we appreciate them. Also, unaccompanied minors are another major concern of mine. If I have kids flying alone, I will actually call their parents to let them know the flight attendants are taking great care of them. People are often not sure what to say when they answer the phone, but I know that I would want someone to do that for my child. I hate watching parents struggle with all of their gear and waiting for their strollers to arrive. Usually my first officer or myself will go retrieve the stroller so the family can have a seamless travel experience.

Q: You have a thing with business cards. Please explain.

A: Quite a few pilots write thank you notes to our business travelers. Additionally I write to our pass traveling employees in first class and [customers in the middle](#)

[seats of coach](#) if time permits. I select the customers in the middle seats because when the flight attendant delivers the card from the captain the people sitting on either side of them wonder who this important person must be and are more willing to share the arm rest.

Q: What do you think of the airline industry today?

A: I have tremendous hope for our business. There are so many opportunities to connect with people and make a real difference. Captain Sullenberger of US Airways who safely landed his Airbus A320 in the Hudson River truly brought home to a lot of people how much trust they can instill in pilots. He set an example showing that thinking outside of the box can lead to tremendous success. He showed pilots that we can safely land a plane in the water; [we are always learning from each other](#). I hope that I can encourage others to follow some of the practices that I do. Traveling is an amazing experience, and we should be ambassadors for that.

Q: Let's face it. Sometimes luck just is not on the traveler's side. Do you still have the motivation and the opportunity to do some of the things you do with passengers during delays and cancellations?

A: This is the chance for the airline and crewmembers to shine. When there is a delay, whether it be due to air traffic control, maintenance or weather, there is not much we can do. However, we can take control of the situation by giving passengers as much information as possible. I always like to buy doughnuts or other treats for passengers if there is an opportunity. Sometimes, I even have a ["coffee with the captain"](#) session where I walk around the gate area serving coffee and answering questions that passengers may have. When people feel like they are being listened to and taken care of, they take the delay in stride. Luckily, my company reimburses us for these types of good deed offerings, and they actually encourage it.

Q: Why do you do what you do? Are you trying to change the airline industry for the better?

A: I strongly believe that every customer deserves a good travel experience whether they travel with me or on another carrier. They deserve a safe and comfortable ride. As pilots, we have an opportunity to improve the travel experience of our customers and if a pilot from another carrier sees me serving coffee during a delay and likes the idea, that's great. By demonstrating to flight attendants and other pilots that [they can do these small things and make a big difference, perhaps it will make a change](#).

I am also a board director for the [Captain Jason Dahl Scholarship Fund](#), which helps to fund aviation scholarships. Captain Dahl was at the controls of Flight 93 on September 11, 2001 when he tragically lost his life. Last year we gave out \$15,000 to young men and women interested in an aviation career.

Happy Holidays

