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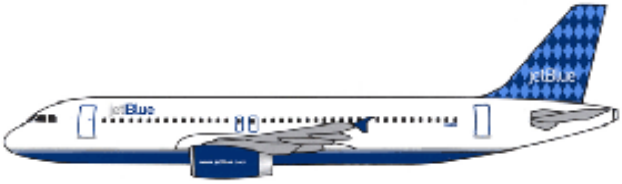

Aviation Human Factors Industry News

October 27, 2008

Vol. IV. Issue 42

FAA Creates 'Lessons Learned' Online Database

Pilots, Others Encouraged To Review Lessons From The Past.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has established a one-of-a-kind online safety library that teaches "lessons learned" from some of the world's most historically significant transport airplane accidents... especially how that knowledge can help maintain today's aviation safety record.

"Why study aircraft accidents that happened as long as 40 years ago?" the agency asks, rhetorically. "The FAA believes many of the lessons learned from these tragedies are timeless, and are relevant to today's aviation community. By learning from the past, aviation professionals can use that knowledge to recognize key factors, and potentially prevent another accident from occurring under similar circumstances, or for similar reasons, in the future.

"The FAA's Lessons Learned library, in its initial release, lists 11 major airplane accidents that made an impact on the way the aviation industry and the FAA conduct business today. The FAA's goal is to stock the library with 40 more historically significant accidents by the end of 2009."

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The 11 selected accidents now in the library are:

Braniff L-188 (Electra) in Texas (September 29, 1959)
Northwest L-188 (Electra) in Indiana (March 17, 1960)
United Viscount 745D in Maryland (November 23, 1962)
United 727 near Los Angeles (January 18, 1969)
Eastern L-1011 in Florida (December 29, 1972)
Continental DC-10 at LAX (March 1, 1978)
Air Florida 737 at Washington, D.C. (January 13, 1982)
British Airtours B737 at Manchester, UK (August 22, 1985)
USAir 737 in Pennsylvania (September 8, 1994)
ValuJet DC-9 in Florida (May 11, 1996)
China Airlines 747 near Taipei (May 25, 2002)

Each accident entry features the accident investigation findings, resulting safety recommendations and subsequent regulatory and policy changes, if any. The entry also includes sections on the unsafe conditions that existed, precursors that pointed to an impending accident, and the basic safety assumptions made during the airplanes' design, or that led to the airplanes' continued operation.

Most important, the lessons learned from the investigation are explained in detail, and grouped into relevant technical areas and common themes, such as organizational lapses, human error, flawed assumptions, preexisting failures and unintended consequences of design choices.

"The FAA believes that the Lessons Learned library can help foster a culture in which aviation professionals capture and use day-to-day information from certification, maintenance, and operational activities to improve safety," the agency notes. "The expected benefits from examining the library include more consistent safety decisions and fewer safety problems caused by breakdowns in communication between design, maintenance and operational organizations."

http://accidents-ll.faa.gov

It's also available from a link on the FAA home page (www.faa.gov) under the news headlines.

Regional Jet, Maintenance Truck Collide At ORD; 3 Injured

Two Reported In "Good" Condition, One "Critical"

A pre-dawn collision of a regional jet and a maintenance truck on a runway at Chicago O'Hare International Airport has left three people hospitalized.

The Associated Press reports two mechanics and no passengers were aboard the United Express jet, operated by SkyWest Airlines. Chicago Fire Department Chief Joe Roccasalva said the plane was traveling from a hangar to a gate at O'Hare with it collided with the truck around 5 a.m. on Oct. 18, 2008

The driver of the truck was extricated from the city vehicle and transported in critical condition to Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge. The two mechanics from the plane were transported in good condition to Resurrection Medical Center in Chicago, Roccasalva said.

Chicago Department of Aviation spokeswoman Karen Pride said a runway at O'Hare was closed for almost two hours due to the incident, but flight operations were not affected.

United Airlines spokeswoman Megan McCarthy said United planned to work with SkyWest to determine what caused the collision. "We will conduct a full investigation," she said.

Officials reviewed United surveillance footage, but due to the morning darkness and lights on the runway, they "could not find who was responsible for the accident," SkyWest spokeswoman Nicole Drew said. The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board were also investigating the incident, she added.

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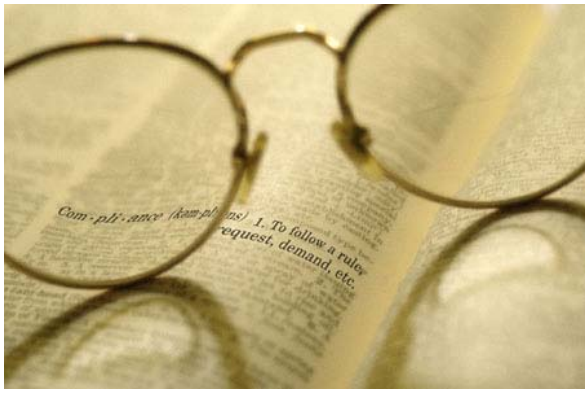
Compliance Matters



How important is it to be accurate in your paperwork? Ask the former CEO and Chief Mechanic of B&C Flight Management, William M. Sexton. Sexton pleaded guilty to making a false logbook entry and was charged with making a false logbook entry regarding the installation of a static defect correction module in a Gates Learjet 25B in April 2004.

The office of Inspector General (OIG) also alleged that from 1998 until 2004 Sexton had falsified engine logbooks and other maintenance records by misrepresenting aircraft hours, inspection, and reparirs to avoid costly mandatory maintenance.

Sexton's sentencing is scheduled for November 10, 2008. He may find that he is facing jail time for his fraud, based on another recent fraud case.

Pilots James Davis pleaded guilty to making a fraudulent statement on the FAA application for his Airmen Medical Certificate. An investigation b the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) OIG revealed that Davis had provided a false social security number and date of birth on his application, as well as falsely reported that he had not history of convictions.

Davis was sentenced to 16 months of imprisonment and 36 months supervised release. Davis' plea agreement required him to surrender to the FAA his Private Pilot Certificate and to agree not to apply for any type of FAA certificate for the remainder of his life.

In a third case announced this summer, DOT/OIG revealed that the owner and operator of Engine Air Inc., Richard Hammond, had lost his A&P certificate but nonetheless continued to overhaul engines. He approved the engines for return to service and was accused of falsification of engine repair documents. Hammond pleaded guilty to falsifying maintenance records for the overhaul of aircraft engines. His sentencing has not yet been scheduled.

NTSB: Aviation Fatalities Down

According to preliminary figures released last Thursday, overall transportation fatalities in the United States fell 4 percent year over year from 2006 to 2007 and did include a larger reduction in aviation fatalities. Aviation deaths, specifically, decreased from 784 to 545, with general aviation as the segment's largest contributor.

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In 2007, nearly 90 percent of aviation deaths were attributed to general aviation accidents. For 2006, 703 of the 784 deaths were attributed to general aviation. For 2007, the numbers show 491 of 545 deaths attributed to GA. The numbers were delivered independent of total hours flown. Overall, there were 43,193 transportation fatalities recorded in 2007 versus 45,085 in 2006. Highway fatalities, the segment that accounts for nearly 95 percent of all transportation deaths, also dipped in 2007 from the previous year. Within that category, however, motorcycle fatalities were marked by a 6 percent increase -- the single largest increase in any specific category across all the included modes of transportation.

Nose wheel mishap: DGCA suspends maintenance engineer

NEW DELHI: A day after a Go Air flight from Mumbai to Delhi made a miraculous landing at Delhi's IGI airport after losing a nose wheel during take-off, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) suspended a lady assistant maintenance engineer at Mumbai who had carried out work on the nose wheel before the aircraft left for Delhi.

According to sources, the engineer has one year of experience and a probe is still on to ascertain whether the specified process of supervision and certification of work done on the aircraft was followed or not. Go Air officials maintained silence on the issue and were not available for comments.

Said DGCA chief Kanu Gohain: "The AMC was suspended on the basis of a report on the nose wheel. The investigations are still on but it has been ascertained prima facie that perfunctory work was carried out on the nose wheel."

A passenger had told Times City on Thursday, after the flight had landed in Delhi, that they had seen people working on the aircraft just before it took off. "We saw some people work at the nose wheel so it is quite possible that they were responsible for the incident," said A P Ghogre, a passenger.

Rare flight deck death highlights dangers

Sailors act as "prop safeties" as a C-2A Greyhound from the "Providers" of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 30 performs pre-flight checks on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier John C. Stennis. Stennis is conducting fleet replacement squadron carrier qualifications off the coast of California.

The death of a sailor on the Dwight D. Eisenhower flight deck the night of Oct. 4 was a tragic yet thankfully rare event.

With thousands of launches and recoveries from U.S. aircraft carriers around the clock and around the globe, Navy records show the loss of Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) 2nd Class (AW) Robert Lemar Robinson at sea off Cherry Point, N.C., is one of few to have occurred in the incredibly hostile work environment.

The investigation of his death is ongoing, and no details have been released except that he was hit by an F/A-18F Super Hornet during a catapult strike during night flight operations. The Eisenhower returned to Norfolk on Oct. 9.

Robinson, 31, joined the Navy in 1998, is from Detroit and leaves behind three children. He previously served on the carrier Enterprise.

Sailors who work on flight decks say the job demands constant vigilance — for good reason.

"I've got 19 years of flight deck experience, and I'm never comfortable on the flight deck," said a senior chief ABH, who now works at Naval Air Forces Atlantic and asked not to be named because of the sensitivity in the community of the Eisenhower mishap.

That lack of comfort saves lives.

Robinson is the 35th sailor to die during aircraft carrier flight deck operations since 1980, according to data provided by the Naval Safety Center. That's two more than the number of sailors who died in motorcycle accidents in fiscal 2008 alone. Another seven flight deck sailors have suffered "permanent total disability" since 1980.

The records cover only "Class A" mishaps, which involve loss of life or permanent disability involving sailors who are physically on the flight deck. So the data doesn't cover personnel killed or injured in plane crashes, nor do they cover mishaps in which sailors are injured but are able to recover.

Most injuries or deaths have occurred when sailors have been hit by maneuvering aircraft, pulled into jet intakes, struck by launching aircraft or turning propellers, or blown overboard by jet exhaust. Those dangers come with the everyday work of flight deck crews.

KNOWING, FACING THE RISKS

The senior chief ABH who spent almost his entire career on flight decks said sailors fresh to the carrier aren't allowed on the flight deck their first two or three weeks. They must prove they are qualified to be there and must watch flight operations from Vulture's Row on the island for three full days and nights.

"That's how that safety record is maintained," he said.

A limited-duty officer lieutenant commander with 25 years in the fleet who also works at Naval Air Forces Atlantic and also asked not to be named said new sailors are also provided with a mentor, or "sponsor," of higher rank. "They are paired up with someone who has been onboard much longer," he said.

"The flight deck is not a place to play around," he added.

A third person with carrier experience, this one a former first class aviation boatswain's mate (launching and recovery equipment) who did three carrier tours, said the new sailors must get accustomed to life on the flight deck, and the more senior sailors are constantly ensuring safe operations.

"When you first come to the ship, [flight deck leading petty officers] show you where you can go and where you can't," he said. "Everybody is responsible for everybody else. You have to work as a team and take care of each other."

There are a few cardinal rules, he said. The main one: Never be in the wrong place, whether that's on the wrong side of a line or too close to moving aircraft.

"Never walk between a scupper and a plane. You never put yourself in a position where you can't get away from a bird," he said. "You don't take unnecessary risks. ... No one goes up there thinking they're Iron Man."

The ABE1, who worked around the catapults, said a lot of safety relies on the practiced orchestration of the flight crew and the muscle memory that comes with repetition. Luckily, he said he never saw any mishaps in his three tours. But danger was always close.

"You know an accident can happen at any time, you just don't know when," he said. "When you put a bird on a cat, a lot can happen."

Flight Deck

Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Lemar Robinson died Saturday on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower after being struck by a plane during flight operations.

Navy officials released Robinson's name Monday but offered no details of the incident, which is under investigation.

Lt. Courtney Hillson, a spokeswoman for the Navy's 2nd Fleet, said Robinson was struck at 8:16 p.m. and was pronounced dead 16 minutes later. Robinson was 31. He is survived by his mother and three children, Hillson said.

A native of Detroit, Robinson joined the Navy in 1998 and was assigned to the Eisenhower in January. As an aviation boatswain's mate in the carrier's air department, he was responsible for handling and moving aircraft on the flight deck.

The Ike has been at sea since Sept. 16, conducting routine training operations. On Saturday, it was off the coast of North Carolina.

Flight operations ceased for a time after the incident, but planes resumed flying onto and off the carrier late Sunday morning, Hillson said. The carrier remains at sea and will hold a memorial service for Robinson on Wednesday.

The Navy often refers to a carrier's flight deck as one of the most dangerous places in the world. Catapults on the 4.5-acre steel deck can launch as many as four planes a minute, while arresting wires simultaneously recover incoming aircraft.

In July, Petty Officer 3rd Class Daniel R. Verbeke, an aviation boatswain's mate, died from injuries he sustained on the deck of the carrier Theodore Roosevelt in 2005.

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CALLBACK ASRS

From NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System

The "Dirty Dozen" in ASRS Maintenance Reporting

"The Perils of Pressure"

Aviation maintenance personnel are often assigned tasks on multiple aircraft during a single shift, and are under continual pressure to return aircraft to flight status. Several incidents reported to ASRS highlight the need for technicians to slow down and take the time to do the job right, the first time.

A lead technician succumbed to a "dirty dozen" maintenance error factor while servicing a BE1900:

Pressure: Multi-tasking and high workload

- **I did not properly secure the altimeter into place. This happened because I was working 3 different things at the time, while answering questions that my junior employees had, pulling me off the current task to instruct them on how to do things…I changed [the] First Officer's altimeter on aircraft air carrier 'X.' It was not secured properly, and the altimeter fell out of the instrument panel on takeoff roll. The pilots pushed it back into place, no damage occurred to the altimeter, and outstation maintenance re-secured it into place.**

A B767-300 technician experienced a maintenance discrepancy that is frequently reported to the ASRS. The responsible "dirty dozen" factor:

Pressure: Rushing to complete the task

- **Aircraft came in with a pilot write-up, which was also a repeat of nose shimmy on takeoff and wheel retraction. Before the previous flight leg the right nose tire was changed…It came down to replacing the left nose tire in order to more evenly match-up tire wear and tread. The tire was changed in accordance with the Aircraft Maintenance Manual (AMM).**

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- **The flight was nearing departure time and obviously rushed, I inadvertently forgot to reinstall the nose tire assembly washer. In [my] years as a certified Airframe and Powerplant mechanic, I've never made such as serious mistake and in the future will slow down so as not to repeat this mistake again.**

In the past two years, ASRS has received at least 16 reports of B767-300 nose gear washers not being installed. These aircraft have two types of axle washers. One type is internally threaded and the other is externally threaded. The externally threaded washers are the ones that are usually forgotten during nose tire installation.

The AirSafe.com News

Complacency and the Qantas A330 Accident of 7 October 2008

The accident earlier this month involving a Qantas Airbus A330 on a flight from Singapore to Perth seriously injured several passengers, but didn't result in any fatalities. While the event drew substantial news media attention in Australia and Asia, there was very little mention of it by major US media. This is very likely another example of how when it comes to airline events, it's difficult to get the attention of the US public, or of the policy makers in the US, if no one is killed.

My belief was that there would have been more media attention in the US if there had been at least one recent fatal event involving a US airline. While researching recent fatal US events, I found that the most recent passenger fatality on a US airliner was in August 2006. Looking back further, I realized that the US airline industry had quietly passed a milestone. The 26-month period between the last fatal US event and the date of this recording on October 21st, 2008 is the longest period without a passenger fatality on a US airliner since airlines in the US first began using jet aircraft in 1958.

One could argue that there's a certain amount of public complacency about airline safety when there are no major accidents. Looking through my archives, I found that this wasn't the first time I'd dealt with this subject. In late May 2004, the US airline industry was in the midst of another fatality-free period. At the time, it had been nearly 17 months since the last fatal US airline event. That month, I was interviewed as part of a National Public Radio program on airline safety that discussed some of the reasons for that absence of fatal events.

Five months after the show aired, a regional airliner crashed in Missouri, killing both crew members and 11 of the 13 passengers, bringing to an end a 21-month period with no US passenger fatalities.

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Currently, the US airline industry has gone 26 months without a passenger fatality. This current fatality-free period is a sign that in spite of all the problems faced the industry, that the risk faced by passengers continues to decline.

Although this record is a positive sign for the industry, the recent Qantas event demonstrated that no airline, even one with no passenger fatalities in its history, is immune from accidents.

I'd like to remind the AirSafe.com audience that however good the system may be, there's always room for improvement. One way to improve things is to learn from those rare events such as what happened with Qantas earlier this month.

American Airlines safety program ends amid bickering with pilots

A lauded safety program at American Airlines has ended amid bickering between the airline and its pilots, a development that an airline official called "sad and incomprehensible."

The Aviation Safety Action Partnership was a joint program run by the airline, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Allied Pilots Association. Launched in 1994, it allowed pilots to report safety-related incidents for investigation without fear of discipline from American or the FAA. Aviation experts have praised it as an effective way to identify potentially dangerous safety lapses that otherwise might go unreported.

The program expired last Monday after American and the union failed to negotiate its renewal. Each side is blaming the other for the failure to keep the partnership alive.

"The APA's willingness to discard a 14-year program that has done so much for our pilots, our airline and our industry is impossible to understand," American spokeswoman Tami McLallen said.

Billy Nolen, an American pilot who works for airline management, said in a message to pilots that the program's lapse was "sad and incomprehensible." Airline officials say the union had made unreasonable demands for additional immunity under the plan.

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Union officials, meanwhile, alleged that the airline had begun to use the program to punish pilots, and they chafed against a proposal they say would have allowed the airline to label pilots as "reckless."

"Management, in this case, flight department management, has lost the trust of its pilots," union leaders said in an e-mail to pilots. "It is that simple."

American still has ASAP programs for flight attendants and ground workers. Pilots who wish to report safety incidents can still do so confidentially to the airline's safety department, American officials said. Pilots can also report safety cases under a system operated by NASA.

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Federal Aviation Administration

New York Flight Standards District Office

Twenty First Annual

Aviation Safety-Education Seminar

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Opening

Steve Shataka, Aviation Safety Inspector – FAA

Master Minimum Equipment List (MMEL)

Harald Zimmerer, Aviation Safety Inspector - FAA

Airline Developed Minimum Equipment Lists (MEL)

Frank Buratti – jetBlue Airways

Break and Refreshments

Common Misconceptions' of Lubrication

Stephen Sunseri – Exxon Mobile Aviation Lubricants

Human Factors / Improper Maintenance

Steve Shataka – FAA

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NTSB: Fuel Contaminated with Water in Fatal PCB Plane Crash

A newly released report shows a pilot who lost his life in a plane crash in November may have smoked cocaine within an hour of the crash.

Robert Gans, 57, died in November 2007 when his Mooney M-20, plane lost power and crashed into the water off Panama City Beach.

The 21 year old passenger, Jennifer Messer, was injured.

A report from the National Transportation Safety Board shows the plane's mechanic drained water out of the plane's fuel tanks for 45 minute before the flight and asked for more time before the plane took off.

Investigators found extensive water contamination of the fuel.

The NTSB says toxicology reports on Gans are consistent with regular cocaine use and that he likely smoked the drug within an hour of the accident.

Planes Have Retired Numbers

In sports, there is a tradition that players do not use the numbers of former players or coaches who have significantly contributed to the teams in the past — so-called ``retired numbers.''

Some of these numbers include 4 previously owned by Henry Louis Gehrig of the New York Yankees; 23 by Michael Jordan; 32 by Earvin ``Magic'' Johnson; 10 by ``Pele'' Edson Arantes do Nasscimento and by Diego Armando Maradona; 18 by Sun Dong-yol of the Kia Tigers; and 21 by Park Cheol-soon of Doosan.

In aircraft registration, there exist retired numbers, also.

Aviation rules oblige every aircraft to have a national code and four-digit registration number.

South Korea's national code is HL. The first number is decided according to the type of engine the aircraft uses — 1 and 2 for a piston engine, 5 for a turboprop engine, and 7 for a jet engine, to name a few. The second number indicates how many engines it uses.

For example, HL7459 means a South Korean jet plane with four engines. The last two numbers, 59, are serial numbers.

Designating retired numbers is not a rule or obligation, but the 10 numbers below are not used traditionally, as they belonged to planes involved in tragic accidents.

HL106: A DC-3RL aircraft, operated by Korean National Airlines, the predecessor of Korean Air, was carrying 31 passengers and three crewmembers from Busan to Seoul on Feb. 16 in 1958 when North Korean spies hijacked it. It was the first hijacking in Korea. The kidnapped people were later returned to the South.

HL5208: A Korean Air plane with 47 passengers and four crewmembers was hijacked on its way from Gangneung to Seoul on Dec. 11, 1969. Some of the hostages were later returned.

HL7429: A Korean Air jetliner, from Paris to Seoul, violated the Soviet Union's territorial airspace due to a navigation malfunction on April 20, 1978. It was attacked by the Soviet air force and forced to make an emergency landing at Imandra Lake, killing two passengers out of a total 109.

HL7445: On Nov. 19 in 1980, a Korean Air jumbo jet B747 from Los Angeles to Seoul was completely destroyed by fire after failing to make a proper landing. Sixteen people among the 198 onboard were killed.

HL7442: A Korean Air flight from New York to Seoul was attacked by the Soviet air force in the skies above Sakhalin and crashed on Sept. 1, 1983. All 269 passengers, including a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, died.

HL7339: On Dec. 23 in 1983, a Korean Air freighter from Anchorage to Los Angeles collided with South Central Air's Piper 31 when taking off. All aboard were killed.

HL7406: The famous KE858 flight destroyed by bombs set up by North Korean spies, including Kim Hyon-hee. On Nov. 29, 1987, the spies blew up the Korean Air plane traveling from Baghdad to Seoul, killing all 115 people onboard.

HL7328: On July 27 in 1989, a Korean Air plane traveling from Jordan to Libya crashed at Tripoli Airport due to poor visibility, killing 80 and injuring about 140.

HL7229: An Asiana Airlines flight from Seoul to Mokpo crashed near Mokpo Airport on July 26, 1993, killing 68 among the 106 people onboard.

HL7468: A Korean Air plane carrying 254 people from Seoul to Guam crashed at Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport on Aug. 6 in 1997, killing 228.

Armless Pilot Proves Her Capabilities

Jessica Cox, of Tucson, Ariz., was born without arms, but she hasn't let that define her role in life, and last week she scored a first when she earned her Sport Pilot certificate using only her feet to manipulate the controls of an Ercoupe.

"I highly encourage people with disabilities to consider flying," Cox said. "It helps reverse the stereotype that people with disabilities are powerless into the belief that they are powerful and capable of setting high goals and achieving them." Cox, who is 25, won an Able Flight scholarship and trained with instructor Parrish Traweek in his Ercoupe 415C.

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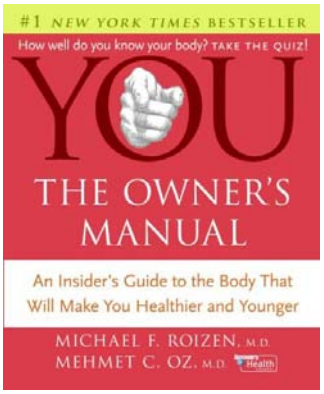
"What is most incredible about Able Flight is the relentless faith and support not only from the board but also from the other pilots who have succeeded in the program," Cox said. "Thank you, Able Flight, for helping me make history as the first licensed pilot to fly with only her feet!" Since the Ercoupe design has no rudder pedals, no special modifications were required for Cox to fly it.

The rudder and aileron systems are linked, and both are controlled with a single control yoke. The yoke also controls nosewheel steering on the ground. Cox also drives a car and types on a computer using her feet. She works as a motivational speaker and is writing a book about her life.

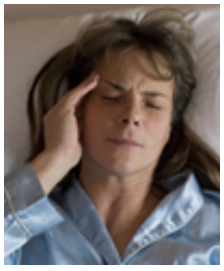
You: The Owner's Manual



The human body has been described as the most complex machine ever created which has scared many of us away from trying to learn about how and why the body works. But having those answers is the best way to understand how to make our bodies feel and function better. So how can those of us who don't want to spend 39 years in medical school get smarter about how our bodies work?

In You: The Owner's Manual, Dr. Michael F. Roizen and Dr. Mehmet Oz teach about the structure and function of the body in a simple, understandable style. The book does not aim to be an encyclopedia, rather it is an entertaining guide to the human body. In addition, it includes tips and techniques for keeping your body feeling young, such as a 10 day menu that is focused on making you feeling younger.

Economic Stress Takes Toll on Emotional, Physical Health



Over half of Americans are experiencing anger, fatigue and sleeplessness in response to recent economic stress, according to survey results reported by *USA Today*. The findings, taken from a series of online surveys conducted by the American Psychological Association, also show that almost half of Americans are self-medicating or overeating unhealthy foods in response to stress from money matters and the economy. Chronic stress has been known to weaken the immune system and cause sleep problems.

According to the findings, people reporting sleeplessness increased from 48 percent in 2007 to 52 percent in 2008. "People who are under considerable stress can have insomnia," Neil B. Kavey, MD, director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, told the National Sleep Foundation's sleep*matters* in 2001. "Stress causes insomnia by making it difficult to fall asleep and to stay asleep, and by affecting the quality of your sleep.

Stress causes hyperarousal, which can upset the balance between sleep and wakefulness

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

More Americans this year than last reported signs of stress from worrying about the economy:

Irritability or anger

> 2008: 60%

> 2007: 50%

Fatigue

>2008: 53%

>2007: 51%

Sleeplessness

> 2008: 52%

>2007: 48%

Overeating/unhealthy eating

>2008: 48%

>2007: 43%

Source: Harris Interactive surveys for American Psychological Association

Keeping Your Workforce Motivated in Hard Times

Job dissatisfaction is a major challenge even when times are good. And right now times are far from good. Are the bad times affecting your workforce? Are they affecting you?

How Economic Recession Feeds Psychological Depression If you're from Western Canada where the economy is booming, you can skip this story.

But across most of the rest of the globe, the economic situation is ugly. And it's not just the stock markets and the banks. People's spirits are also taking a beating.

The impact of the psychological damage is showing up in the workplace. Anxiety and fear over job security is often followed by low productivity, high absenteeism, apathy, turnover and reduced revenue, says consultant Linda Dominguez. "Performance declines with fear and individuals feel that no matter how well they do, they can't control whether they'll keep their job."

"When you're feeling lousy, you're preoccupied with feeling lousy and the energy is missing," observes Judith Bardwick, PhD, author of a book with a revealing title: *One Foot Out the Door: How to Combat the Psychological Recession That's Alienating Employees and Hurting American Business*. "From a national point-of-view, the feeling is that the American dream is over."

Taking Steps to Reduce Anxiety

While there's only so much you can do to alleviate workers' financial hardships and concerns over job security, there are steps you can take to make workers feel better about their situation. During tough economic times, workers feel vulnerable and look to their managers for direction and stability. As a manager, it's important to understand that workers are taking their cues from you and use this as an opportunity to gain their trust.

Communicate Openly: "One thing a manager can offer is a promise of open communication on a 'need-to-know' basis," says Arlene Hirsch, a career and psychological counselor in Chicago. "For example, if there's something happening that directly affects workers' future with the company, you can tell them as soon as possible."

Recognize Individual Positives: Another step a manager can take to alleviate anxiety is to let individuals know the value they bring to the organization. Although it's not a promise of job security, hearing your boss articulate your qualities is very reassuring and can help enhance productivity.

Recognize Organizational Positives: Celebrating organizational successes is especially crucial during hard times. If a department exceeds objectives, treat everyone to lunch and feature their story on the company intranet. This will serve as an example to others, promote positive organizational storytelling and motivate the overall worker base. In behavioral terms, it models the behavior of others.

Enhance Support: You should also provide additional support to help workers develop into even more valuable assets within the organization. By continuing to train, mentor and support the people who work for and with you, you let them know that they continue to be valued members of your team. Many, if not most workers need that sense of empowerment to be successful.

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Build Teams: You can develop mutual respect and trust by having your workers work together on real problem-solving assignments, suggests Dominguez. "Being part of a team that shares a common goal and fate makes workers feel more optimistic and secure." Of course, teams also tend to be more effective than individuals in solving real problems.

Conclusion

The most important thing a manager or any other leader can do in hard times is stay cool and, at least outwardly, confident. I've seen executives and managers who were able to maintain highly productive teams through tough times simply by keeping their own cool and composure. I've also seen executives and manager's who couldn't handle the pressure and, consequently, saw their teams fall apart. Remember that hard times are part of business and of life. How individuals respond to the test is what separates success from failure.

Wishing you career success in both the good times and the bad times,

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