Cultural Awareness

Single Pilot Safety Standdown

EMBRAER

NBAA
INTRODUCTION

1. Culture & CRM
2. Culture, defined
3. Study models
4. Assessing U.S. culture
5. Applicability
6. Closing
“CRM builds on managing resources (procedures, machine interface, and the crew themselves) to identify their vulnerabilities and strengths, aiming at building a safe and efficient operation.”
Not your usual 30K ft view...

1,341,120ft view
(that’s 254 miles, btw)
KEEP CALM AND LET THE BRAZILIAN GUY HANDLE IT
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CULTURAL AWARENESS, FINE... BUT WHY IN AVIATION SAFETY ?!
“Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster.”

Dr. Geert Hofstede
Helios Airways Flight 522 crashed into a mountain on 14 August 2005 at 12:04 pm EEST, north of Marathon and Varnavas, near the community of Grammatiko, 40 km (25 mi) from Athens, Greece. A lack of oxygen incapacitated the crew, leading to the aircraft's eventual crash after running out of fuel. All 115 passengers and 6 crew on board the aircraft were killed.
HELIOS AIRWAYS FLIGHT 522
In its final report on the accident, the Hellenic Air Accident Investigation and Aviation Safety Board said the crew had failed to recognize that the cabin pressurization mode selector was in the wrong position. Further findings:

- **Poor CRM** before takeoff and during climb;
- Different **nationalities** and primary **languages** (Captain: German; First Officer: Cypriot); contributed to **poor communication** during confusing, high-stress event (stressors reduce ability to exchange information);
- First officer had a history of not following checklist SOPs;
- Captain was considered brusque and distant by both pilots and cabin crewmembers;
- “**barriers of personality conflict, language, cultural traits and the captain’s weak advocacy of good teamwork were all exacerbated by the airline’s lackluster CRM program**” (David M. Bjellos)
WHY THIS DIGEST IS IMPORTANT

CULTURAL MEDIATORS: AN INDISPENSABLE COMPONENT

4.17 Some people are more suited to understanding cultural interfaces than others. Of particular importance are those people who have lived and worked effectively in two or more cultures and are able to explain the practices and logic of one culture to members of another culture in a way that makes sense to both sides. These cultural mediators act as bridges between cultures. Such people exist in aviation coincidentally, but more are needed. To that end, the design of programmes to specifically develop more cultural mediators is suggested as a solution. These programmes, in the form of internships and exchange programmes, may be introduced within airlines, airline alliances, research institutions, civil aviation authorities, accident investigation services, and manufacturers. There are existing programmes similar to those advocated here, but they are initiatives of specific organizations rather than a concentrated, industry-wide endeavour. Making cultural interfaces an explicit (not implicit), often discussed topic would be part of these programmes. Some interfaces need to be challenged, and that will only come with increased confidence and understanding on both sides. Hence, any programmes, exchanges or internships that would accelerate the number of cultural mediators in aviation would be very welcome.
CRM CANNOT DISSOCIATE CULTURE FROM THE HUMAN ELEMENT