

Charting
A Wiser
Course



How Aviation
Can Address the
Human Side of Change

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WITH JOSEPH E. SHACKFORD

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Testimonials

“*Charting A Wiser Course* is an important dialogue that needs to happen through all layers of the aviation industry.

As an experienced practitioner of the old traditional, and often-confrontational, methods and behaviors of negotiation, I could be used as an example to show that you can teach an old dog new tricks.

I’ve had the valuable opportunity to utilize the tools and experience the benefits of this common-sense approach to decision-making and agreement-shaping in labor/management negotiations when an interest-based concept was new to the industry. Unequivocally, with true commitment from both sides, more elegant solutions can be crafted when both sides cooperatively work to solve each other’s problems.

I’ve also learned valuable lessons from mistakes along the way of trying to pioneer sea changes in behaviors and attitudes in an industry entrenched in the old ways of doing business. But the good news is that those mistakes need not be repeated.

Imagine where aviation can take us if we all work to design a new set of wings for the Phoenix.

Charting A Wiser Course can help us do just that.

Denise Hedges
Former President
Association of Professional
Flight Attendants (1992-2000)

“In the new global economy, it is clear that we need new tools to conduct business. The concept of winners and losers in negotiations must be modified to achieve a win for all parties, or we ultimately suffer losses in common. The principles and examples cited by the authors show that this can be achieved utilizing alternate currencies and genuine concern for each other’s goals. It is clear that integrity and cooperation can help us reach the ultimate solution. We may not find all the answers in this book, but it will help us move in the right direction.”

Steve Tosi
President
Magellan USA

“Kaye gets it exactly right. Today’s business leader is confronted daily by opportunities disguised as threats. The leader typically chooses ‘perfectly rational but equally wrong’ actions, resulting in alienating customers, suppliers, employees, and, eventually, shareholders. Since 1994, when I first participated in the Negotiating Solutions workshop, Kaye has challenged us to consider that business leaders can and must change their assumptions and behaviors to uncover the abounding opportunities. She makes it clear that creating trust through integrity, and developing a profound understanding of needs, can expose opportunities and build durable, mutually profitable, relationships. By focusing their energies on changing not the masses but their own assumptions, leaders can enable new behaviors and results. It is an extremely rewarding, and surprisingly easy, journey, once you know the way. Kaye is an able and experienced guide.”

Jon H. Stevens
Vice President, Logistics Services
SKF

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Introduction

It was not accidental that the September 11th terrorists targeted our core institutions of aviation, finance, and defense. The aviation industry has been in a sickening flat spin ever since. The global economy needs our industry to survive, stabilize, and rebuild. Our various businesses and people have their own passionately personal reasons to wish for the same outcome.

The task before us is gargantuan.

The good news - if you can call it that - is that much of the mess we're currently in is of our own making. If we created it, we can change it.

Throughout the industry businesses are reworking strategy, markets, products, and organizational structure. They have laid off appalling numbers of people. They are simultaneously implementing major change initiatives - lean applied to the manufacturing floor and business processes, Six Sigma, value-streaming, supply-chain management, and others. They are seeking to implement massive changes in how they work in the marketplace with suppliers, customers, and partners. And they're also

trying to change dramatically the working relationships between management and employee groups.

But there's one key element that no one is paying sufficient attention to. Without it, these other efforts won't succeed.

To chart a wiser course in aviation (and in our other infrastructure industries*), one that will let us achieve our objectives, we must address this element as well.

What's encouraging is that businesses can start to address this critical element now without massive expenditure of resources.

Implemented wisely, this element will immediately start to provide them with better results, and will make more attainable the rest of the work they need to do. It will also give their people some respite, improvement, and hope, even as they're working to identify and shift towards the large strategic changes more appropriate to today's environment.

It has to do not with the *content* side of change, but with the *process* side of change, with what Douglas McGregor called "the human side of enterprise."¹ It has to do with how we do what we do with one another.

So what is this key element? It is a mind-change about the nature of reality. I intend to make a case that the environments in which we must now be effective, and our own strategic objectives, have changed so much that *we literally can't achieve those objectives using our current behaviors.*

*Though the examples I use are from the industry I know best, our students from other industries suggest the logic is as compelling and important for their industries as it is for mine.

I then will describe why we must, and how we can, align our behaviors with our objectives so we can accomplish the monumental task of rebuilding our businesses and industry.

Aligning your behaviors with your objectives sounds like a simple thing to do. In actuality, accomplishing widespread and lasting behavior change across an organization or an industry is hard. Perhaps because it seems that this should be simple, until now management has given it short shrift. It certainly has not been included in business plans and measurements.

Those who have addressed it at all have sought to get people to change behaviors through managerial pronouncements, mission and value statements, intentions, and exhorting them to try harder.

Sometimes they invested in skills training.
Nothing really changed.

The challenge is even more daunting because the very folks who need to establish, lead, and manage this paradigm-shifting change are precisely those people *least* prepared by training, inclination, or prior experience to do the job. They are the operations managers and leaders of their businesses. They didn't earn advanced degrees in organizational behavior or human psychology. Their degrees are in aeronautical engineering or mechanical engineering or finance or marketing or business administration. Or they have Airframe & Powerplant licenses. Or they came up through the ranks.

Many of them have few skills at, and little interest in, what tends to be dismissed as the "touchy-feely" side of business. This touchy-feely stuff has just never seemed that important.

Yet if their businesses don't effect corporate-wide behavioral change at the paradigm-shift level, the Herculean change efforts they're now attempting will fail.

Union leaders traditionally focus on preserving jobs and improving the conditions of employment. Operations managers usually look to their human resources and employee relations people to take care of "that stuff." This might be all right when union leaders and managers are operating within an existing paradigm. But it's not all right when they need to change the paradigm. In the midst of the rest of the upheavals, this, too, has to be their responsibility.

I think I can transfer to you the concepts and tools so that you can take this on wisely. I invite you on a journey with me to understand why it's necessary, why it's harder than it looks, and how it can be done.

If this book does what I expect, you should have a better appreciation for where we came from, what we learned, and what we've somehow forgotten. You'll understand better how our past is sabotaging our present. You'll have more clarity about how to move forward, an understanding of some of the roadblocks and quagmires, and you'll have the mental resources to begin. The book won't get you all the way there, but it should give you the concepts you need to prepare the rest of your plan in ways appropriate to your particular responsibilities.

The path I propose to take you on is sometimes a bit convoluted and theoretical. Much of it comes from life in the trenches; I hope it resonates with your own experience and causes you to smile or groan in recognition. It may put together for you elements you've known about but may not have linked before.