



SM4 Safety

Planning • Prevention • Response • Recovery

A Safety Manager's Mantra: Share Selflessly and Steal Shamelessly



By: Mark Myers

Senior Safety Manager, Baldwin Aviation Inc.

I have been fortunate to have advanced my safety management career while working for one of the nation's commercial airlines during their pre-911 era. While carriers competed for market share and routes in the public eye, behind the scenes, their quality and safety departments collaboratively led the development of many of the SMS tools, processes and oversight programs that we utilize today.

There was always a safety manager's mantra of "Share selflessly and steal shamelessly," as each carrier stated they could not meet their safety goals alone. I believe that this code of conduct was key for the airlines in "flattening the curve" and achieving an 80% reduction in projected fatal accident rates over two decades of unprecedented growth.

Applying a Proven Approach to a New Challenge

This mantra remains valuable as we work to operate in today's COVID-19 environment. The global impact of the crisis on the aviation industry is fluid and evolving by the minute. As we work to flatten the shape of a pandemic curve, our economic recovery curve shape should have been a "V," could be a "U," feels like a "Z" and is spun like a Nike "Swoosh."

Regardless of curve shapes, we are witnessing crisis innovation and collaborative efforts driving change around the globe. Clusters of established firms (large and small), startups, cross-industry front runners and universities are transferring their knowledge, technology and results to accelerate the development of a COVID-19 vaccine. Other firms have built thousands of ventilators and millions of respirators, designed new ways to collaborate, and established a culture of breakthrough thinking and entrepreneurship. "Share selflessly and steal shamelessly" promotes this culture.

How Aviation Should Innovate in Response to COVID-19

Our industry needs to be buoyed using the same style of crisis innovation tools while companies balance the speed and safety of their individual response. Our innovation management challenge includes:



SM4 Safety

Planning • Prevention • Response • Recovery

- Each company reevaluating its mission and vision with increased demands on strategic planning
- Being nimble and able to change tactics while being fully adept in their prioritization, regulation and control
- Demanding an increase in real-time analytics capabilities in support of our decision making
- Redefining employee engagement and change management plans without jeopardizing employee safety

Balancing the speed and safety of innovation requires 1) active doses of benchmarking, 2) improved knowledge promotion and 3) making the innovation engine work.

1. **Safety Benchmarking** – The qualities of stealing shamelessly and giving credit to those who have already figured it out. Traditionally, benchmarking has been described as a practice that promotes imitation¹. However, in a safety management context, this may be one of the fastest ways to determine who has solutions to safety challenges and how they arrived at them! Baldwin hosts weekly Safety Chats with its entire client base of safety managers and corporate leaders. These meetings allow you to chat with a diverse group of professionals who "practice being humble enough to admit that someone else is better at something, and wise enough to try and learn how to match or even surpass them at it."²
2. **Knowledge Promotion** - The qualities of sharing selflessly while reducing your risk and speeding up time to implement. Companies that practice ethical benchmarking follow codes of conduct with principles of exchange, legality, confidentiality, use and preparation. This allows you and your safety team the freedom to acquire the kind of knowledge that will help you adopt, adapt and apply the explicit safety management detail that is built on your current knowledge base. Working with organizations such as Baldwin, you have the opportunity to grow relationships with peers and tap into their tacit knowledge of how they continually do what is right for their passenger, patient, employee or client. Baldwin can also provide detailed SMS policy guidance that can help you frame how you can ethically benchmark as a part of your SMS safety assurance policy and process.
3. **Innovation Engine**³ - The quality and strategic advantage to think "beyond" the box. Many people get stuck, and complacent, looking to their peers and competitors for new ideas, when they should really be looking outside their industry to achieve breakthrough thinking. The current crisis presents us with unique conditions that allow innovators to think more freely in order to create rapid, impactful change. Baldwin can deploy safety and quality resources to help establish a viable innovation system as part of your safety assurance process. This allows you to think big, start small and scale fast.



SM4 Safety

Planning • Prevention • Response • Recovery

So, keep the mantra going - steal, test, fail, fix, share, innovate and move forward!

References

¹ Russell T. Westcott, The Certified Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence Handbook - Fourth Edition, (Milwaukee: American Society for Quality, Quality Press, 2014), pp. 297-301.

² Kidschun, Florian, Global Benchmarking Network. Modena, Mark -Benchmarking Quote. 2020.

<https://www.globalbenchmarking.org/>

³ Scott D. Anthony, David S. Duncan, Pontus M.A. Siren, "Build an Innovation Engine in 90 Days." Harvard Business Review, summary - (December 2014 Issue).



Baldwin Aviation Inc.

Customized Safety/Quality Management programs and related business solutions developed by experienced and credentialed safety professionals include training, manual management and SMS implementation/software. Based on ICAO and other international standards and regulations, Baldwin's programs support Business Aviation, Charter, MRO, Ground Operations and Handling, FBO, Airport, Medical Transport, UAS and Regional Airlines by providing scalable/flexible software, an outstanding customer experience, and our Commitment to Excellence.

<http://www.baldwinaaviation.com/>