



## Miraculous Outcome Of Flight 1549 Offers Critical Lesson To Management

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DURHAM, N.H. – The nation has been mesmerized by the miraculous outcome of U.S. Airways Flight 1549. According to a decision sciences professor, the split-second decisions made by the pilot and other rescuers that resulted in no loss of life after the plane ditched in the Hudson River provide a critical lesson to top management at companies and organizations everywhere.

According to Barry Shore, professor of decision sciences at the University of New Hampshire, the most important factors in the successful outcome of Thursday's crisis were training and skills of those involved with the rescue effort that allowed them to quickly weigh their options and make the best decisions possible. It is a lesson to companies and organizations everywhere about how solid, focused training of personnel can have a substantial impact on the success of an organization.

"Training strategy is critical to its success. Top management must determine what is important. What is the basic message that needs to be delivered and what are the relevant and core skills that need to be emphasized? What are the shared skills that will clearly establish the kind of corporate culture that will help the organization achieve its goals?" Shore says. "Without a clear training strategy, a company is usually left with a collection of unrelated and scattered programs, cobbled together without clear focus."

In the case of Flight 1549, Shore says because everyone had been trained extensively, decisions that normally take longer to make were made in an instant.

"Decisions like this, or indeed any personal or management decision, involve several steps, including the collection of data, identification of alternatives, assessment of risks, selection of the most appropriate alternative, and execution of the steps necessary to succeed in reaching the goal. But in most situations, decision makers have time before they move from one decision step to the next," he says.

In the case of Flight 1549, the pilots had flown simulators and practiced emergency procedures. Flight attendants were well trained on evacuation procedures, and the ferry captains regularly went through emergency procedures. Firefighters, police and emergency medical responders were prepared to deal with a myriad of injuries resulting from a jetliner crash.

"Often, we leave training sessions with the feeling that they may not even be relevant to the challenges we think we will face in the future. Perhaps this explains why most of us pay no attention when the flight attendants review the emergency procedures before each flight," Shore says.

"To be productive, training must be constantly reinforced. What we learn that we 'should' do must become part of what we 'actually' do. We should be able to draw on these lessons in the blink of the eye. Success in execution requires continuous reinforcement," the professor says. "As we have been reminded in this miraculous outcome on the Hudson River, training is serious business. Leave it to chance or abandon training because people claim to be bored and the organization may miss the opportunity to build a focused team capable of moving from good to great."

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