

ARG/US®

PRISM

A member of the SGS Group

NEWSLETTER

December 2024 | Volume XXIV | Issue XII

SAFETYWIRE



**In Multi-generational
Workplace, Communication
Is Key**

Page 2

**5 Dos and
Don'ts:
Compliance with
SOPs**

Page 6

Mentoring

Page 7

**Safety Manager's Corner:
PRISM – 2024 in Review**

Page 9

In Multi-generational Workplace, Communication Is Key

(Source: Kerry Lynch, AIN, November 19, 2024)

The workplace is increasingly complex and spans multiple generations, but bridging the gap between them is critical to a company's culture and therefore its safety mission, panelists agreed during Bombardier's Safety Standdown last week in Wichita. "We recognize that having five generations in the workforce, it adds complexity—it adds tremendous complexity sometimes," said Jennifer Pickerel, president of Aviation Personnel International, who moderated the panel on Thursday morning.

However, Pickerel suggested that workers "flip that paradigm" as they look at the various generations. "We've never had a broader skill set in the workforce. We've never had this many talented, passionate, skilled professionals in our workforce."

She pointed to other discussions during Safety Standdown surrounding the critical role communications plays in safety. "The safety of our industry and our community literally hinges on our ability to effectively communicate with each other," Pickerel said.

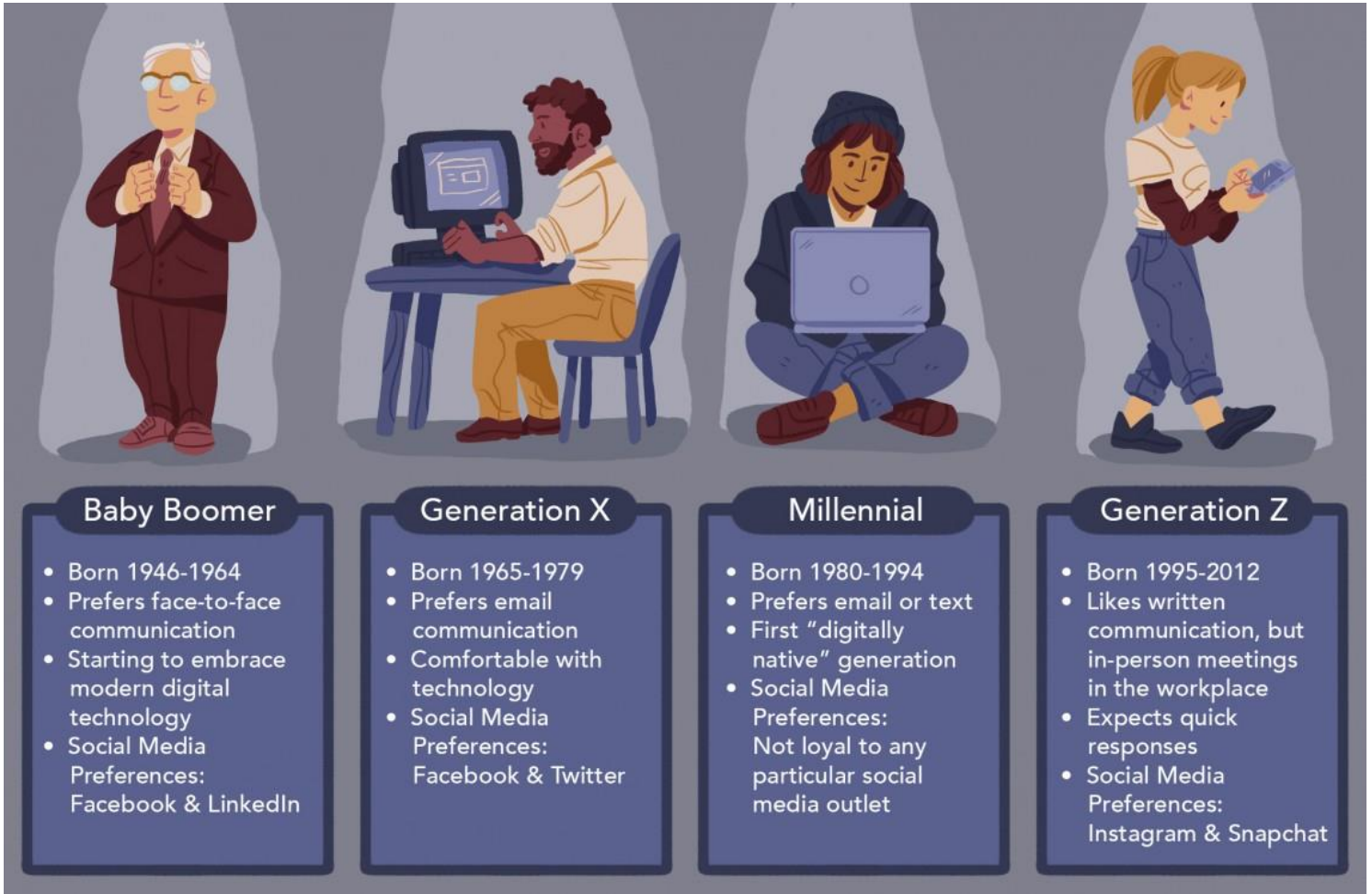
But for communication to be effective, it has to be quality and respectful, she said, and posited: "What might be possible if we turn to each other as resources, if we assume good intent, if we elevate our influence by leading by example, and—in the words of Ted Lasso—if we are curious and not judgmental?"

Pickerel opened the panel by discussing the different generations and the attributes they are often believed to bring:

- Traditionalist, those born in 1945 or before who prefer face-to-face encounters, have a strong work ethic, are loyal to a company, respect authority, and value teamwork and structure
- Boomer, those born between 1946 and 1964 who are optimistic, competitive, vie for career advancement and recognition for achievement, are workaholics, and value teamwork
- Generation X, who were born between 1965 and 1980 and are independent, self-reliant, skeptical, prioritize flexibility and work-life balance, and are known as the latchkey generation
- Millennial, born between 1981 and 2000, are tech savvy, collaborative, prioritize opportunities, and value purpose, career development, and meaning in their work
- Generation Z, born between 2001 and 2020, "digital natives" and highly adaptive to technology, entrepreneurial, socially conscious, and prioritize diversity and inclusion in the workplace

A survey of the Day 3 Safety Standdown audience revealed a cross-section of four of those generations—no one appeared to claim to be a traditionalist—with Generation X and Millennial attendees representing a majority of attendees.

Pickerel brought together a panel with members from various generations to provide insight into views from their generational standpoint. Despite their differing backgrounds, common themes of communication, knowledge transfer, and respect emerged.



Brandon NeSmith, a captain with the Coca-Cola Bottling Consolidated Co., pointed to the perceptions between the generations: Millennials may be viewed as more concerned about themselves and Boomers may be seen as very mission-focused.

Calling himself an "old millennial," NeSmith noted how important appreciation is between the generations. Not only can it be a key retention tool, but it also fosters collaboration between the generations. "It helps bridge the gap, especially from a younger person, showing appreciation to an older person."

This includes admitting when you don't know everything. "The one thing I can do is show appreciation to being surrounded by other people who have expertise and defer to them...It tremendously bridges the gap," he said. "When someone from my generation doesn't show that type of appreciation, it's not very well received."

Also, he added, communications go a long way simply through taking an interest in somebody and respecting their time, showing you are not just concerned about yourself—"doing some of that additional stuff, going that extra mile, that blends across all of the generations."

Work-life balance remains important, but there has to be an earnest desire to contribute, NeSmith said. He noted that this becomes especially notable as benefits are changing in a competitive workplace.

“One of the bones of contention, when I was first hired with this particular company, is that I was gifted—right off the bat from being hired—three weeks vacation,” he said, noting that the older generations “thought that was just preposterous. They had worked for years and years and years to get that amount of vacation. And I didn’t ask for that at the time.”

Pickerel agreed, noting that 25 years ago, three weeks of vacation may not even have been a thought. “But as things evolve and it becomes more competitive, we know we’re in a pilot shortage, a maintenance shortage, those things have to be increased not to the fault of the people who are receiving them.”

Martin “Marty” Grier, director of maintenance for The Home Depot aviation department who is chair of Safety Standdown’s Advisory Committee and described himself as a Boomer, also agreed with NeSmith. “It all starts with the leadership, the communication you have with your team, and the transparency you’re willing to share with them,” Grier said. “They have to be on board, then they have to understand the market you’re working with.”

He noted the market has been up and down and “all over the place” in the years he’s been in the industry. “Right now, we’re all aware of the fact that the industry is starving for new talent and so supply-demand rules...Over the last two years, it’s just been an off-the-charts dynamic,” he said. “If I include my team in understanding that I may have to provide a little more incentive to this person to come on board our company, they’re much more likely to understand and support that.”

He also stressed the importance of culture in all of this. “If you have a good culture, and I’ve been very happy to say we’ve had a great culture, people don’t leave,” Grier said. Even if turnover is low, “you still have to stay in tune with the market.”

As far as bringing in younger people, Grier noted the importance of knowledge transfer. “Probably one of the stereotypes of Boomers is that we want to keep [or] retain our knowledge and not share it necessarily, because I think sometimes people are threatened by younger, more energetic people,” he said, but added, “We all have something to offer. And so I think it’s critical that you cultivate that attitude, that it’s a top-down, bottom-up everybody working together to build the team and to share knowledge.”

He added that as a Boomer, “I want the energy, the questions, and the ideas from the younger generations to incorporate into our operation...Everybody can bring ideas.”

The older generations need to transfer knowledge as they exit the industry, he said, noting that the industry is seeing a wealth of knowledge leave. “I see it a lot of the MROs where we go. Now you have this unbalanced situation where you have so many lesser experienced [workers] and it’s producing conditions and quality escapes. So how do we manage all that?”

Mentorship is one of the key paths for that knowledge transfer, said Emma Rasmussen, a Robertson Fellow & Safety Science graduate student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. “I think one of the most valuable things to my aviation career and my personal life is having really fantastic mentors, people who are 50-plus years older than me,” Rasmussen said. “And I think it’s really important for the younger generations to find those mentors.”

To have that exchange of information is one of the best ways for younger workers to show respect toward the generations that come before them, Rasmussen added, noting that in her experience, older generations are anxious to show their airplanes and take people flying once they see an interest in aviation.

“The biggest way that we can close the gap between the generations is to pay respect to the older generations, but also uplift the new generations that are entering the workforce.”

She noted accusations of Generation Z being lazy or entitled and having it easy, but added, “Every generation has its own unique challenges that we all just don’t understand unless we’ve been through them.”

She said one thing she appreciates about her generation is the open-mindedness. “I feel like I can bring my most authentic self to the table, and if we’re going to make our industry stronger and better for the future and leave it better than we found it, I think we have to bring our most authentic selves to the table.”

Rasmussen also pointed out that her generation is extremely safety-conscious, a point that Pickerel agreed upon. Generation Z workers grew up with seat belts and bike helmets, unlike the older generations.

Meanwhile, Cullen Gahagan, a 26-year-old who joined the corporate world as a pilot and director of operations for CSM Companies after a little more than a year with an airline, discussed how technology plays into it, especially since younger generations are more adaptable to a digital cockpit whereas older generations may have more stick-and-rudder skills.

“Really, it comes down to training,” Gahagan said, noting that it doesn’t matter whether a person grew up with typewriters or computers. “Obviously, you have the older generations where those people had been flying with the steam gauges for years and years and now have had to transition into a glass cockpit and use heads-up displays and all the bells and whistles,” he said. “That’s been a transition.”

Now, students learn in a glass cockpit. “When you get a type rating now on autopilot, you don’t learn the stick-and-rudder skills,” he added. “I think that trying to find a balance between the two for both generations, whether you’re learning initially in the new stuff or learning as a transition in the new stuff, is important.”

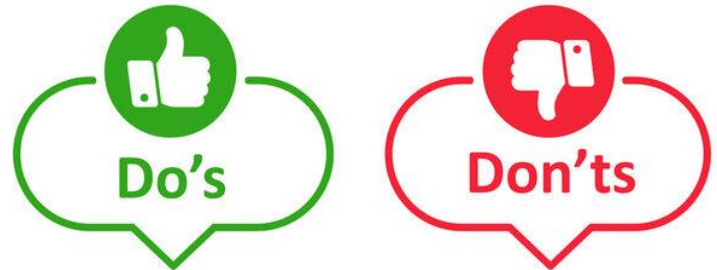
Pilots need those initial basic skills but also must be able to manage the technological advancements. “It’s important to approach training from a fundamental standpoint first—learn the airplane, how to fly it, how it feels, how it works, what its limitations are—but then welcome the technology.”

Gahagan also reiterated the views of the other panelists. He noted that, as a younger person, “Sometimes we’re intimidated to stand up because you guys have a ton of experience. But I want to learn from that experience and that gap is just bridged by communication.”

5 Dos and Don'ts: Compliance with SOPs- Avoid the “this is how we’ve always done it” mindset.

(Source: Andrew Parker; POWER UP Magazine)

Do you have your own way of doing things in the hangar? A mindset of following internal norms instead of standard operating procedures (SOPs) can be a liability in aircraft maintenance. Numerous accident reports document how deviations from the rules enabled those tragedies to take place. Follow the suggestions below to strengthen your safety culture.



1 DO turn near misses into learning opportunities. “A near miss is a gift. It’s telling you something is wrong,” says Mark Tyler, VP and general manager at Precision Aviation Services. “If you have a near miss, discuss it. Use it as a chance to make corrections.”

2 DON'T let pressure affect your decision-making. Maintenance technicians can't let the pressure to get an aircraft in the air lead to assumptions about safety, says Tyler, who cites the time he and a pilot had to abort a flight because a brand-new oil-filter O-ring was defective. “I looked at the O-ring when I put it on, but I hadn't inspected it,” Tyler recalls. “Once you deviate from a standard and nothing goes wrong, and then you do it again, you've normalized the deviation and that becomes the new norm.”

3 DO say something if you see something wrong. “If it doesn't look right, if it doesn't feel right, talk to someone,” says Tyler. “Be the greasy wheel. Silence is considered agreement or acceptance.”

4 DON'T get into the habit of bending the rules. “You must be disciplined. You can't just fly by the wind,” Tyler says. “I like to say that discipline equals victory.”

5 DO maintain a just culture within your team. Company leaders should foster a culture in which maintenance technicians feel they can freely talk about mistakes, discuss rules and norms, and share their viewpoints about the safest and most logical ways to return an aircraft to service.

Mentoring

(Source: Tim Tucker; USHST Fall 2024 Newsletter)



When it comes to mentoring and the incredible impact it has on safety in our industry, I feel fortunate to have benefitted, early on in my career, from a structure that heavily relied on a mentoring system, albeit in an informal way. I graduated from US Army flight training in 1971 with a whopping 210 flight hours and was immediately sent to Vietnam.

From a helicopter pilot's perspective, Vietnam was quite a bit different than the recent Middle East conflicts in that the helicopter units stayed in-country for the entire war and the pilots cycled through on a yearly basis. So at any given time a helicopter unit consisted of some pilots nearing the end of their cycle, some in the middle and "newbies" that had just arrived. I flew the UH-1 – Huey which the Army used with a two-pilot crew, a perfect "mentoring" environment.

Interestingly, the only real gauge for pilot experience was not flight hours that we commonly use today, or years flying, or even rank (remember this is the Army) but, rather, time in months (not flight hours) in Vietnam, flying combat missions. The system was built on the "old guys" mentoring the "new guys" on the intricacies of a combat assault, an emergency extraction or simply the importance of delivering turkey dinners on Christmas day.

Newbies were assigned an aircraft commander (AC) with substantial time in-country as a mentor which lasted until the newbie became a PIC. Since the unit's aircraft commanders (one step up from a PIC)) were always changing with pilots going home and PICs being elevated to AC, I had three mentors during my first three months in Vietnam and I can honestly say I would not be here today without the lessons instilled by these incredibly supportive men. Not just how to keep my head down when the bullets are flying, but insights I have applied and passed along my entire flying career.

A few come to mind:

CW2 Steve Robertson (we called him Robbie) would question me at slow times during a mission about limitations, emergency procedures, what would you do if this happened or that happened, all of which was a real pain in the ass and embarrassing when I didn't know the answer. He stressed that in the middle of an emergency you aren't able to "look things up" so at the end of each flight during the two minute cool-down or after a quick post flight Robbie would say "Tucker, you get paid once a month – read your flight manual once a month" I wish I had a dollar for every time I've repeated that phrase.

WO1 Rich Madore, my first mentor, really helped in that strange adjustment from a flight school environment to a combat environment. He emphasized that in combat and I think this is true in many flight situations, indecision can get you killed. I clearly remember his voice in my helmet roaring "It doesn't matter what you do – just do something!" It's certainly still true that in an emergency the "deer in the headlights" syndrome can be deadly.

Finally, Robbie again, after a night flight to meet my monthly requirement, he warned me, "Currency is not proficiency, promise me to RTB (Army talk for return to base) before sunset". Boy, does that statement still ring true today.

I would strongly encourage senior pilots out there to recognize the importance of this mentoring responsibility. The foundation of a good "Safety Culture" within any company begins with the attitude of its senior pilots and mentoring the new guys or girls is the best way to insure these values are maintained and passed along.

It's not just the techniques or skills of flying the helicopter in a new job, although that's certainly a part of it, but mentoring is just as important in helping younger pilots deal with the emotional extremes inherent to many jobs in the helicopter world. Whether it's adjusting to the life and death ordeals a new EMS pilot is forced to confront or coping with the loneliness of a 3 week on – 1 week off schedule in a remote location – Mentoring can be key to adapting. It sure helped me!!

SAFETY MANAGER'S CORNER

2024 in Review

As the end of the year approaches, it provides us an opportunity to look back and reflect on an incredible year. 2024 was a year filled with major milestones and many changes for PRISM. After officially working through the launch of PRISM SMS we successfully migrated all of our customers from PRISM ARMOR to PRISM SMS. This was a major endeavor, and we want to thank you for your help in completing this milestone; we could not have done it without you.



Since the release of PRISM SMS, we have already completed forty-eight feature requests based on customer feedback. We sincerely appreciate your input so please continue to provide your feedback and feature requests so we can add them to our development priorities. Just like with any SMS, continuous improvement remains extremely important to the PRISM SMS team.

As we look forward to 2025, our focus will move to integrations and continuing to add features requested by customers. Also, starting in January we will use this Safety Manager's Corner to highlight specific features in PRISM SMS.

As a subscriber to PRISM SMS, we appreciate the opportunity to earn your business and work with the industry to improve safety in every aspect. We are excited for the new year and look forward to working with all of you.

Happy holidays to everyone!



PRISM

A member of the SGS Group

Quote of the Month

Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.

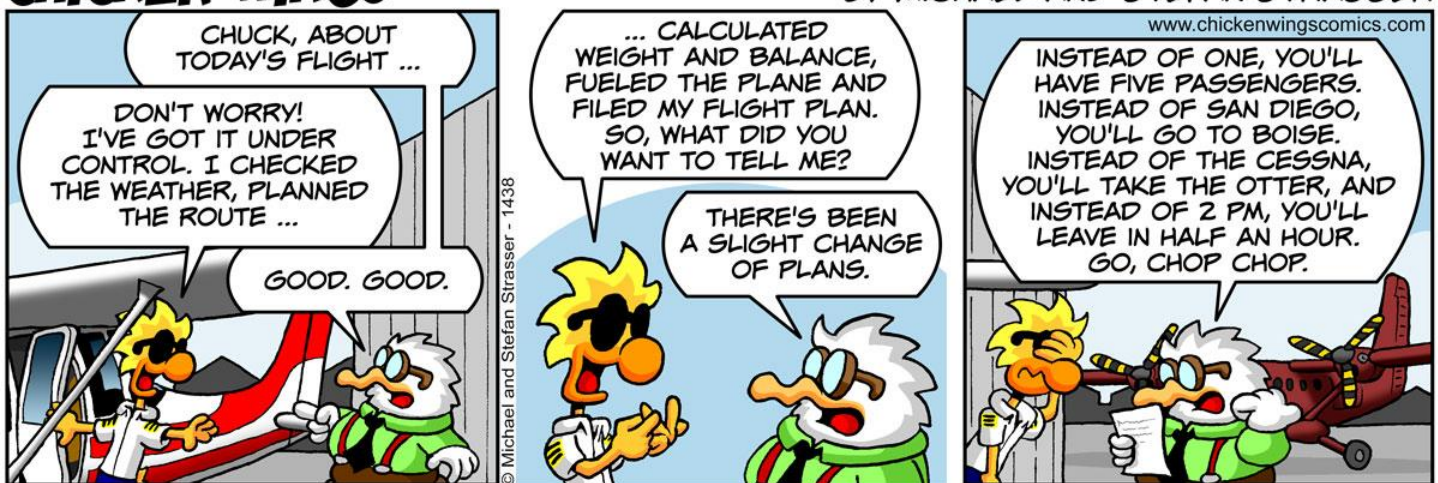
BY: Ferris Bueller



It sure sounds like Ferris understands the old axiom "Attention to detail." Not only can life move fast in everyday circumstances, in aviation situations it can not only move fast but also spin out of control. We've all found ourselves in a corner, wondering "How did I get here?" Often it occurs when you are dragged along for the ride rather than influencing the direction of things through meticulous actions and keen situational awareness. Preparation is always a major influence when it comes to staying on top of things and bringing your "A game" into the tasks at hand. Identifying the normal and managing the abnormal or unexpected effectively ensures successful outcomes. Ignorance is bliss and if the details escape you then the picture is incomplete, and whatever you are missing is likely of extreme importance. Take the time and be methodical, not to fault but rather to efficiency and awareness.

CHICKEN WINGS®

BY MICHAEL AND STEFAN STRASSER



Jenna Albrecht

Jenna.albrecht@prism.aero

Director, SMS Services

Wayne Ehlke

Wayne.Ehlke@prism.aero

Safety Analyst, SMS Services

UPCOMING COURSES

January 14-15, 2025—PROS Course

Risk-Based IOSA Training

Virtual

March 11-12, 2025—PROS Course

Risk-Based IOSA Training

Virtual

April 7-11, 2025—PROS Course

ALAT Training

Denver, CO

April 8-10, 2025—PRISM Course

Safety Management

System (SMS)

Denver, CO

Go to [Upcoming Training Classes](#) to register.



6021 S. Syracuse Way, Ste 302

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

www.argus.aero

