



Death of the Company Flight Safety Magazine?

I first must applaud the Flight Safety Foundation and those contributors who have helped *AeroSafety World* become the best flight safety publication anywhere. I was pleased to see that you are now offering ASW free of charge via the FSF Web site. This is an important step to enhancing the safety awareness of everyone in our industry.

Sadly, I believe that if certain disturbing trends continue, ASW may eventually be the only significant flight safety magazine left. While browsing a Web site that is popular with aviation professionals, I recently spotted the following comment:

“I am a pilot manager of a large airline. I have contributed here many times, but I am posting this thread under a new username to ensure the anonymity of [myself] and my airline.

“I recently spent a great deal of time putting together an in-house, pilot-orientated flight safety magazine containing the usual collection of [statistics], featured incidents and advice. The top brass have vetoed publication of the magazine because of concerns about its contents getting into the public domain and any possible adverse publicity.”

As a specialist in flight safety for an airline operator, I have faced similar resistance from senior management when attempting to publish a flight safety magazine which, among other things,

included the results of our investigations into events that occurred in our operation. A recent media blitz which attempted to raise concerns about the safety of the industry in general, and of one major carrier in particular, has made the situation even worse. The media reports were filled with accusations without the benefit of clear evidentiary support. Their only source of information was a government-run database of incident reports which does not provide consistent feedback as to the results of investigations. Nowhere did the reporters mention the excellent safety record of the industry or of the targeted carrier in particular.

The readership was not told of the benefits gained from any of the investigations into these events. When challenged on the legitimacy of their reports, the reporters defended themselves by saying that the public has a right to know. Should that not mean that the public also has a right to know the whole story?

Media reports such as these only put pressure on our industry to keep our incident reports underground, so that corporate images can be protected from an overly litigious consumer base and an insatiable media need for “news.”

Flight safety publications have often mentioned the saying, “Learn from the mistakes of others, as you’ll never live long enough to make them all yourself.” In the face of ever-increasing pressure on senior managers to keep their skeletons

in the closet, the availability of safety information will only diminish.

I encourage my fellow safety professionals to ensure that everyone within your organization subscribes to the online version of ASW and reports safety issues to organizations such as the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration Aviation Safety Reporting System or operator organizations that guarantee confidentiality.

Name and airline affiliation withheld by request

Editorial note: Letters intended for publication must include the writer’s name and affiliation. In keeping with the Foundation’s support of confidentiality in reporting safety issues, we will publish letters anonymously when circumstances warrant.



AeroSafety World encourages comments from readers, and will assume that letters and e-mails are meant for publication unless otherwise stated. Correspondence is subject to editing for length and clarity.

Write to J.A. Donoghue, director of publications, Flight Safety Foundation, 601 Madison St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-1756 USA, or e-mail <donoghue@flightsafety.org>.

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