European Regions Airlines Safety Performance Survey
Creating and Managing Safety Culture

This survey was conducted among 50 ERA aviation safety professionals and presented in Madrid at the ERA General Assembly 2016
Acknowledgements

Baines Simmons and ERA would like to thank all ERA members for their participation and generous contribution to this safety survey.

Their willingness, openness and candour have enabled us to compile this first-ever European Regional Airlines industry report into the current perceptions around safety culture and performance.

Disclaimer

Baines Simmons has prepared this report for ERA members and other interested parties for the intended purpose of sharing knowledge and perceptions on the current status of the European Regional Airlines safety culture and performance.

Baines Simmons has made every reasonable effort to ensure an accurate assessment of the survey results has been performed. The report has been prepared in good faith on the basis of information gathered and without any independent verification. Any recommendations, opinions or findings stated in this report are based on the survey data. Any changes in such circumstances and facts upon which this survey is based may adversely affect the opinions and findings contained in this report.

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About the Survey

Baines Simmons would like to thank both ERA for inviting us to conduct this safety performance survey and the members of ERA who contributed to completing this questionnaire.

Between 1 August and 31 September 2016, 35 European regional airlines completed the Baines Simmons / ERA Safety Performance Survey; the survey was open to two groups, CEOs/Accountable Managers and Safety Managers. Responses were collected from:

- 35 CEOs
- 15 Safety Managers

Safety performance is a measure of your organisation’s effectiveness in managing operational risk in order to maintain your safety standards, approvals, and to inform your enterprise business risk decisions.

The survey questions were grouped according to the 4 components of the ICAO SMS framework, commonly referred to as the 4 Pillars of Safety. This ensured the scope of the survey covered the full spectrum of the overarching industry standard for safety management. Moreover, the questions were also aligned to the Baines Simmons SMARRT MAP™, a high fidelity, proven, model of safety performance, enabling the results to be analysed against known performance indicators and a large database of measured industry performance.

This report draws on the survey data to reveal the perception of key safety challenges and opportunities facing ERA members. It also includes some examples of good practice. The report offers valuable context; however, without a more detailed and personalised diagnostic you will not be able to compare your own practices against industry peers, and highlight areas for focus.

The survey results were based on the ERA members’ personal perceptions of their organisations and the current status of safety culture.

We hope you find the report interesting and stimulating, and we welcome your feedback on its findings.

Ian Holder
Principal Consultant
Survey Questions at a Glance

The survey asked individuals to rate their organisation against key safety performance questions on a scale of 1 to 10. It also gave the opportunity for comment on each question. The questions were:

**ICAO Pillar: Safety Policy**

1. How confident are you that your management team are ensuring people always have the time, competence and tools to follow the rules?
2. How much time do your management team dedicate to improving the safety culture in your organisation?
3. How well do your management team understand and follow your Safety Management System Manual?

**ICAO Pillar: Safety Risk Management**

4. How good are your people at reporting when they make an error if the organisation would not have found out otherwise?
5. How good is your organisation at documenting, prioritising and controlling the real operational risks it faces – even if nothing has gone wrong yet?

**ICAO Pillar: Safety Assurance**

6. How often are commercial decisions that involve operations made following a process of operational risk assessment using measured facts?
7. How confident are you that you have an accurate picture of how well safety management is being performed in your organisation?

**ICAO Pillar: Safety Promotion**

8. How true is this statement: Everyone in our organisation has been trained in safety culture and their safety performance is reviewed at least annually?
9. How effective are your safety communications at improving safety reporting?
Summary of Key Finding

The chart below shows the overall confidence the 2 groups surveyed had in their organisation’s performance against the 9 survey questions:

There was a consistent difference in reporting of performance between Accountable Managers and their Safety Managers, with Accountable Managers reporting an average confidence of 79% across the 4 pillars, whilst Safety Managers reported an average of just 61%, with only a 44% confidence in their organisation’s ability to make effective risk based decisions.

Analysis

The differing results from the 2 groups in this survey demonstrates the perception based rather than evidence based nature of the responses and, whilst Accountable Managers recognised that improvements could be made, their perception was one of far greater confidence in their organisation’s ability to manage operational risks than that of their Safety Managers.

Unfortunately, perceptions can be tainted by the context information is presented in, for example: all aviation organisations have to balance production with protection, but we have seen many organisations where the senior leadership view of safety performance has been inflated by a management team whose own performance targets have been biased towards production. Safety Managers, with their oblique and specialist view of an organisation’s safety performance, often have a greater insight into the ‘lived reality’ of risk management in an organisation, but struggle to convincingly articulate this.

Clearly, there is a need to resolve this disparity and that requires a move away from a perception based view of how well an organisation is managing safety to an evidence based approach; indeed this is a regulatory requirement for most ERA members and regulators will increasingly be expecting to be provided with such evidence as the industry moves towards performance based oversight.

1 Managing the Risks of Organisational Accidents, Professor James Reason – Dec 1997
2 AMC/GM TO ANNEX III (PART-ORO) Issue 2; AMC1 ORO.GEN.200(i)(1)
An evidence based approach to assuring safety performance can seem daunting or even intangible; however, by constructing a matrix of performance indicators against the component parts of a management system for safety, including culture, and having trained persons to conduct assessments, it can reveal the reality an organisation faces.

However, this approach commonly reveals a reality that differs from firmly held beliefs, especially in an industry that has previously had considerable success with a reactive ‘back of the boat’ approach to safety, rather than a ‘front of the boat’ risk-based approach. This jarring of evidence with perception frequently leads to cognitive dissonance, where the evidence is denied to maintain an internal sense of consistency, a well documented human response to such information3.

Organisations that have employed an evidence based approach to measuring safety management performance, and have defended against the self-harming threat of cognitive dissonance, are now reaping the return on investment of well founded risk management improvement programs. These organisations are now having fewer scenarios that cause harm, be that financial, reputational, material or personnel, and are more agile in seeking new opportunities.

ICAO Pillar: Safety Policy

Q1 How confident are you that your management team are ensuring people always have the time, competence and tools to follow the rules?

Concerns are probably cut, but as long as nothing goes wrong, that’s OK

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Certain, even if it takes longer or costs more

- 80%

Commentary

“People always try and do rather than stop”

“Not being compliant does have an impact on the bottom line”

Analysis

Business Leaders believe their people should have the resource to complete given tasks within the regulations; however, the ‘lived’ reality may be different. Violations of regulations are often committed because individuals believe that is what is expected of them to get the job done.

Q2 How much time do your management team dedicate to improving the safety culture in your organisation?

Very Little

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The same as the time they spend on managing costs

- 79%

Commentary

“As an ACMI provider to mainstream airlines, the effectiveness of our safety system has become almost a marketing tool. Without an effective safety system that permeates throughout the operation and that is visible to our clients, we would not gain the wet lease contracts we pursue”

Analysis

Safety Managers do not perceive the same management commitment to balancing production with protection as business leaders. The business benefits of effective safety management is well recognised, but how well are managers being performance managed for their contribution?
**Q3** How well do your management team understand and follow your Safety Management System Manual?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The SMS manual is for the safety department</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
<td>The SMS manual is our prime management manual and all managers are measured for performance against it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commentary**

“We have an integrated system; however managers focus on Ops manuals first”

“They know it extensively, and we update the management team on a regular basis”

“They never read it”

**Analysis**

Current and upcoming EASA regulations call for an integrated management system approach to safety, not the traditional ‘add-on’ system owned by the Safety Manager. Business Leaders believe we are well down this path, but Safety Managers are still perceiving challenges and, in some cases, feel isolated from the business goals.
ICAO Pillar: Safety Risk Management

Q4 How good are your people at reporting when they make an error if the organisation would not have found out otherwise?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very - they understand it

Commentary
“We have very active reporting and a number of reports are near miss
or I have made an error type reports”
“We have a culture of no blame”
“They do not trust in management”

Analysis
Some regional organisations perceive better reporting rates than
the wider industry, but there is still work required to fully imbed the
requirements of EU 376/2014, particularly the need for a Just Culture
to drive organisational learning, rather than a ‘no-blame’ culture.

Q5 How good is your organisation at documenting, prioritising and controlling the real operational risks it faces - even if nothing has gone wrong yet?

I have not seen a risk register 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 We know the risks and how effectively we are controlling them day to day

Commentary
“We perform a lot of risk assessments, but you can always do more!
It is important to evaluate the importance of any given risk and not
overload managers with too many”
“We document hazard identification, identify mitigating actions and actively perform risk management, monitoring and documenting it”
“Hardly doing anything about what is going wrong”

Analysis
Organisations are conducting formal risk assessments, possibly
more than is required, but there is concern, particularly amongst
Safety Managers, that these are not always resulting in effective risk
management strategies.
ICAO Pillar: Safety Assurance

Q6  How often are commercial decisions that involve operations made following a process of operational risk assessment using measured facts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>CEOs/Accountable Managers</th>
<th>Safety Managers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commentary**

“I would say close to always. We really succeed with a safety culture where everyone is observant and aware of the need of a risk assessment - and we document it!”

“A lot - operational risk is essentially commercial and reputational risk”

“Sometimes difficult to have measured facts related to risk”

“Safety is completely ignored”

**Analysis**

There is considerable disparity of opinion on the effectiveness of change management. Safety assurance requires engagement from all levels of an organisation to ensure the real risks are recognised, can be managed in the real world to be measurably ALARP, and their effect on ROI assessed before sound commercial decisions can be made.

Q7  How confident are you that you have an accurate picture of how well safety management is being performed in your organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>CEOs/Accountable Managers</th>
<th>Safety Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not very</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commentary**

“We measure reporting, Safety Action Groups meetings, investigation dwell time, unwanted events etc. measures of how well safety is managed is difficult to pin point”

“It really boils down to having faith in the system and culture in the company”

“I am very confident, and I say this because I spend a lot of time, and I am really getting involved in the safety management on an everyday basis”

**Analysis**

Both groups reported reasonable confidence in their view of the performance of the management of safety; however, they have reported very different perceptions in all other areas. As the industry moves to PBO, it will be essential to resolve this with an evidence based approach to assuring safety performance.
ICAO Pillar: Safety Promotion

Q8 How true is this statement: Everyone in our organisation has been trained in safety culture and their safety performance is reviewed at least annually?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely

Commentary

“Certainly operational staff and key management. But not so much other clerical or administrative staff”

“It is an integrated part of our continuous training for both flying crew and the administration. One example: the whole administration attended a fatigue risk management course. Safety is a part of every employees annual review - Flight deck - Cabin and administration”

“Good on training less good on evaluating safety in specific performance evaluation”

Analysis

Operational training is well established and regulated for. Safety management training, especially cultural change programs, are more sporadic, but deliver clear business gains when implemented effectively; especially when personnel are performance managed with clear safety objectives.

Q9 How effective are your safety communications at improving safety reporting?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Completely

Commentary

“Safety is briefed at all team meetings at organisation and department levels. Increased reporting is encouraged and celebrated as being a good thing”

“We are on a regular basis sending out safety promotion information every week and we try to cover areas from the Industry, areas from the Hazard Log, and areas from incident reports”

Analysis

A reporting culture can only be sustained by constantly demonstrating to staff the value of their reports, through various means of engagement. The survey results indicate that many ERA members are seeing the benefits of safety communications, but more could be done to truly inform the organisational risk picture.
In Summary

This survey highlighted a difference in perception of safety performance between business leaders and their safety specialists. There are business gains to be made from well targeted management of safety improvements, but these can only be achieved by first recognising the current reality.

Request a personalised report

To complete the survey and find out how your practices and performance compare with your group of industry peers, please contact ian.holder@bainessimmons.com

Talk to one of our experts

To discuss any issues raised in this report or to find out how we can help organisations measure and improve their safety culture and performance, please get in touch with our team of organisational safety specialists.

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A model for understanding effective safety management performance

Clarity on what drives and influences the safety management system performance is essential for a performance aspiring organisation. High safety performance is secured through an organisational commitment to operate effective safety performance enablers that power the capability to operate effective safety management systems.

**SMARRT MAP™** is an Organisational Safety Performance model that illustrates the relationship between the four core safety management systems and five key performance enablers. It is people- and system-centric and focussed on the ‘human in the system’.

### Key Management Systems

**The Regulatory Compliance management system** allows an organisation to meet its legal and regulatory obligations in the most effective and efficient manner. When optimised for performance, it tells you not just if you are compliant, but how well you comply with the regulations. It is therefore the bedrock of organisational performance.

**The Compliance Monitoring management system** enables an organisation to independently audit and provide stakeholder confidence that it meets the applicable rules, regulations and standards. In so doing, it complements the organisation’s safety risk management system by assuring it is operating suitably and that safety interventions and risk mitigations generated are proven to be effective.

**The HF&EM management system** enables an organisation to optimise human performance in the workplace. Based on a comprehensive understanding of Human Factors principles, it manages an organisation’s ability to identify error-promoting conditions and proactively manage human error to enhance organisational safety performance.

**The Safety Risk management system** enables an organisation to manage risk and provide an appropriate level of protection through hazard identification, assessment, treatment and monitoring of risk. It provides a proactive and predictive risk-based decision-making capability that enables an organisation to successfully navigate the commercial/production challenge of balancing financial and safety goals.

### Key Performance Enablers

**Active Leadership** is the spark which ignites safety management people, processes, procedures and tools to deliver results. It influences people to be fully and willingly committed to a series of safe behaviours and values to meet an organisation’s commonly agreed safety vision and objectives.

**Managed Competence** is an organisation’s ability to develop, manage and continuously improve people with the appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude to effectively perform their safety-related role in line with the overall business and safety strategy.

By having a **Supportive Capability**, an organisation has appropriate facilities, infrastructure, functions, processes and support services to enable it to achieve its desired level of safety performance in line with its strategic business objectives.

**Proactive Culture** encompasses an organisation’s commonly held perceptions and beliefs regarding safety and has the potential to significantly influence people’s behaviour. It is founded upon a Just Culture in which individuals freely and openly share safety-related information in an atmosphere of trust, born from a sense of justice.

**Robust Assurance** is the fundamental safeguard which provides the confidence levels that all the management systems are operating effectively as safety protection barriers. It is managed through a strong assurance programme of reliable processes that are capable of evaluating, reporting and managing assurance activities.
Baines Simmons is a specialist consultancy in aviation regulations, compliance and safety management and partner with the world’s leading civil and defence aviation organisations to improve safety performance.

As trusted advisors to businesses, armed forces, governments and regulators across all sectors of aviation, Baines Simmons help to advance best practice, shape safety thinking and drive continuous improvement to safety performance through consulting, training and outsourced services.

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European Regions Airline Association (ERA) is a non-profit trade association representing the European aviation industry, founded in 1980. Its membership includes 52 airlines and 144 associate and affiliate members who jointly cover the entire spectrum of the aviation sector - airlines, airports, manufacturers and suppliers.

ERA works on behalf of its members to represent their interests before Europe’s major regulatory bodies. The association also brings members together to exchange information and learn from each other through meeting at different events and forums.

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