

## Smart Strategies

### Solutions for Workplace Challenges

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I hope you are finding ways to enjoy the snow and not battling it. I don't even want to think about those of you in the warm and sunny parts of the country. While I enjoy the snow and I'm OK with the cold, round about February it starts getting a little old... and we've got at least 2 more months to go.

In this issue is an article about leadership and team work, an update on what's new with us, and a couple of thought provoking quotes.

If you have suggestions for topics you'd like to see us address in the newsletter in 2011, drop me a line - [alan@krsol.com](mailto:alan@krsol.com)



Alan Krieger

*Feel free to forward this to friends and colleagues.*

## A New Approach to Teamwork and Team Leadership

I do a lot of work with leadership teams in hospitals. For them, unlike for most of us, their work really is life and death. If they don't get it right, people can die. Hospitals have been learning from another industry where mistakes can lead to death - the airline industry.

Airlines have developed a new approach to training their crews and you'll see in a minute how it applies to hospitals, and to almost every other organization. Several accidents were investigated where it turned out the cabin crew knew something was seriously wrong and failed to alert the cockpit crew about it. In one case a passenger who was also a pilot alerted the cabin crew and their response was "I'm sure our pilot is aware of the situation." The pilot



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**News from Krieger Solutions, LLC**



**Wisdom to Contemplate**

*"There is more to life than increasing its speed."*

wasn't aware and in both cases, planes crashed.

What was the key lesson learned? Pilots mostly had a military background and believed in the chain of command and respect for superiors. Some pilots took this to the extreme and were very rude to any crew member who thought they knew enough to tell the pilot anything about flying a plane... so the crew members avoided that. Unfortunately, it turned out that the pilot doesn't always know everything, and hearing from the crew can be essential.

The new crew training design focuses on the need for a strong team with open communication and respect. The good news for passengers is that the culture in the airlines has changed, and these problems no longer occur.

The obvious corollary is the operating room in a hospital where there is a lot of stress and pressure. Traditionally, many surgeons saw themselves as the senior officer of the team and didn't want anyone telling them how to do their job. Trained nurses often can see things the surgeon can't in the middle of an operation, but they were often discouraged from speaking up by the negative reactions of surgeons.

Hospitals have been working on culture change to parallel the airlines, not just in the operating room, but throughout the hospital. They are encouraging doctors to take the time to listen to other staff and encouraging the other staff to speak up if they have concerns. Not only does this reduce errors, it also builds a stronger team in which team members support each other and look out for each other.

All organizations have some senior managers who believe they know everything they need to know and don't want input from the people who report to them. As with hospitals and airlines, this can lead to serious problems and missed signals. Another, equally important benefit of good listening is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, employees expect to be treated with more respect and be more empowered. Forgoing this collaborative style for the old style of "my way or the highway" leads to employee dissatisfaction, poor performance and turnover.

Your organization is at risk and in need of change if you have leaders who stifle communication and won't accept input or critical feedback. It's difficult to confront these leaders, but you might want to share with them the story of the airlines and the hard lessons they learned.

If anyone has experienced this drop me a line and let me

Mahatma Gandhi

*"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you are probably Right!"*

Henry Ford

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## News from Krieger Solutions, LLC

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You may also reprint any of these articles as long as you include the following in the reprint and send a copy to me at [alan@krsol.com](mailto:alan@krsol.com):

**"Reprinted from 'Smart Strategies - Solutions to Workplace Challenges', a newsletter from Krieger Solutions, LLC.  
[www.kriegersolutions.com](http://www.kriegersolutions.com)"**

Our first public webinar on Leading and Managing in Difficult Times is coming up on February 9, at 10 a.m. There is no charge to participate in this webinar. We have a good crowd signed up, but there's room for a few more. In these difficult times, we're all under pressure to do more with less and leaders often respond in an autocratic manner. They feel desperate and don't see other approaches. They often end up like the pilots and surgeons in the earlier story, isolated and making mistakes.

This webinar will present three critical strategies to keep your team engaged and flying straight. To sign up, or for more information, contact Pam, our Office Manager at [Pam@krsol.com](mailto:Pam@krsol.com)

The old expression "It's lonely at the top" is very often very true. There are just some things leaders can't share with their staff or their colleagues. There are challenges that they need to keep confidential and private. I remember feeling that way when I was an Executive Director.

I would like to encourage those of you who are leading your team during these troubled times to consider working with a coach. It's great to have an outside perspective and someone who is there for you and only you. There are a wide range of coaching styles, so check out several coaches and find one who will work for you.

I've recently expanded my executive coaching services and I'd be happy to talk with you about my approach. Give me a call if you'd like to explore this further. 518-895-2939.

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subscribing and for  
any comments  
you send.**

*Alan*

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