

Leadership & Disaster

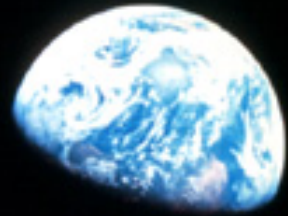


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What Leads to Disaster ?



A photograph taken from space showing the Earth's horizon on the left, with a thin layer of white clouds and a blue atmosphere. The rest of the background is black, with the Moon visible as a dark, cratered sphere in the lower right quadrant. The text "Failure of imagination" is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

Failure of
imagination

It never occurred to anyone
that in a 100% O₂
environment at
sea level, even
metal burns



It never occurred to anyone that
leaking O-rings
would cause
damage





It never occurred to anyone that foam could damage the orbiter

A photograph of the Space Shuttle Columbia in orbit over Earth. The Earth's surface is visible on the left, showing white clouds and blue oceans. The shuttle is a bright white streak against the blue background. In the dark space on the right, the Moon is visible as a dark, cratered sphere. The text "Failure of Leadership" is written in white on the right side of the image.

Failure of Leadership

- Space Shuttle is operational
- Faster, Better, Cheaper



Failure of Leadership

- Streamlining & downsizing convey a message that *efficiency* is the important goal
- Asking employees to work overtime suggests *schedule* is the important goal

A background image showing a view of Earth from space on the left, with a thin blue atmosphere and white clouds. On the right, the dark surface of the Moon is visible against the blackness of space. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Failure of Communication

- Engineers to middle management
- Middle management to leadership

2 Accidents: 1 Cause?

- Challenger
 - Why did NASA continue to fly with known O-ring problems?
 - Why did managers decide to launch in such cold despite concerns of engineers?
- Columbia
 - Why did NASA continue to fly with known foam debris problems?
 - Why did managers decide the debris strike was not a threat despite concerns of engineers?



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Improved Leadership

- Tell the truth
- Tell it all
- Tell it now
- I'm the spear catcher
 - We have success as a team,
we fail as a team





A Ship in Harbor
is Safe... but that is not what
ships are for.

John Shedd



The future
of
Leadership?