
MRO: Doing More With Less

Aligning Your People' Behaviors with
Your Organization's Objectives

by Kaye M. Shackford

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Almost everyone in Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul today faces an endless challenge to find ways to do more and more with less and less.

And yet, most aviation companies haven't touched one key element of the cost of doing business. When people assume they can't change something – or when they don't have the concepts, models or words that let them get their minds around it – that opportunity becomes invisible to them. Precisely because it's been invisible and largely untouched, this element - which has to do with the human side of change, with how we do what we do with one another - can result in great gains in productivity and effectiveness.

The best piece of advice I can give to help you do more with less is this:

Align your people's behaviors with your organization's objectives.

You may not be aware that your people's current behaviors are *not* aligned with your objectives. In most cases, they're actually working at cross-purposes to those objectives.

I want to demonstrate this to you, show you what may be a better way and briefly explain how you can move toward that better way.

I've got fifteen minutes to share what took me thirty years to understand, design and confirm, so if you want to learn more, please talk with me further. And then ask me to put you in touch with people in roles like yours - and companies like yours - who are achieving dramatic results using these concepts.

I want to take you through a small exercise on business environments, strategic objectives and behaviors. I'll show you how to do it here and then invite you to try it back at work.

We start with two concepts.

Here's the first: *The purpose of our behaviors is to achieve our objectives in a particular environment.*

We do things to get what we want and need for ourselves and for those we represent. But as a species we get taught much of how to behave and what to do by the communities we find ourselves in. So a lot of what we do in organizations we learned from others, who learned from still others, about *how to be effective in an environment that presumably existed when those behaviors were first codified.*

And here's the second: *Negotiation underlies most of our behaviors at work.* Whenever you're seeking to solve problems, make decisions, shape solutions or reach agreements with people over whom you don't have direct control - in what's called a mixed-motive environment - you're negotiating.

A mixed-motive environment is a situation where some of your interests overlap with those of the other person and some don't...and of those that don't, some may be in direct conflict.

How many of you, every day, have to solve problems, shape solutions and reach agreements? How many of you must do this in a mixed-motive environment? And how many of you must do this with others over whom you don't have direct control – employees and employee groups, peers, bosses, regulators, customers, suppliers and partners?

The truth is, we're all negotiators.

And an observation: *Sometimes our environments and our objectives change so much the very behaviors that were the basis for our success are now working at cross purposes with our own intentions.*

I suggest to you that now is such a time.

When we realize that negotiation underlies our behaviors, the findings of the Harvard Project on Negotiation can be used to identify the pattern of those behaviors. We can then place them side-by-side with our objectives and ask a simple question: *Can we achieve our objectives using these behaviors?*

Here are two sets of objectives. The first reflects sample objectives from a variety of aviation maintenance organizations. The second reflects classic principles of Lean/Six Sigma.

Some MRO Objectives:

- Become #1 in the eyes of our customers
 - in safety, compliance and quality.
 - in aircraft appearance and on-time availability.
- Operate as a team-based, decision-making organization.
- Improve working relationship and trust between management and employee groups.
- Use collective knowledge and commitment to achieve operational excellence.
- Streamline operations and infrastructure to contain the cost of maintenance.
- Continuously improve our operations and business processes, applying lean principles in a volatile environment.
- Keep jobs in-house by reducing maintenance CASM (cost per available seat mile) to that of the external MROs.
- Enhance our safety and compliance culture; improve our relationships with regulators.
- Align supplier and inventory functions with lean product delivery system.
- Leverage our services capability to increase company revenue.
- Link suppliers with customers in alliances profitable to us.

Lean/Six Sigma Principles:

- Define value from the customer's perspective.
- Initiate work to the needs/specs of the customer.
- Identify value streams for products and services.
- Create a system where value is continually added.
- Clear away obstacles that block or don't add value.
- Relentlessly reduce waste.
- Have an intolerance for errors.
- Strive for perfection in all elements.
- Involve everyone as an owner (who knows where great ideas lie?).

Now let's add our behaviors. The Harvard Project calls our current model *Positional*

Negotiation. I take a position more extreme than I'm willing to settle for and so do you. Then through a series of tactics, measures and countermeasures, we ratchet in toward the middle.

In one version of this model – *Hard* Positional Negotiation – the premise is that the pie is fixed, negotiation is about claiming value, and my job is to get more than you. They identified these elements:

Participants are adversaries.

- The goal is winning.
- Demand concessions to continue the relationship.
- Be hard on the people and the problem.
- Distrust others.
- Dig in to our position.
- Make threats.
- Mislead as to our bottom line.
- Demand one-sided gains.
- Search for the single answer - the one we can accept.
- Insist on our position.
- Apply pressure.

When we operate in the marketplace, we're comfortable enough with negotiation being a game whose purpose is winning. When we operate internally, we may use other words. But most of us learned that our job is to get our job done, meet our measurements and get our people to do what we want. And since we truly believe that our position is the right one, the best one, our job is getting others to fall in line with us, like it, hopefully, or not.

The words may be gentler; but the underlying assumptions are the same.

Some of us play a "nicer" version of the game. It's called *Soft* Positional Negotiation.

- Behave as if we're friends.
- The goal is agreement.
- Make concessions to improve the friendship.
- Be soft on both the people and the problem.
- Trust others, hoping that reciprocity will cause them to be trustworthy.
- Change position easily.
- Make offers.
- Disclose our bottom line.
- Accept one-sided losses.
- Seek the single answer - the one they'll accept.
- Readily yield to pressure.

Positional Negotiation

Soft Positional

- > Participants are friends.
- > The goal is agreement.
- > Make concessions to cultivate the relationship.
- > Be soft on the people & the problem.
- > Trust others.
- > Change your position easily.
- > Make offers.
- > Disclose your bottom line.
- > Accept one-sided losses.
- > Search for a single answer - theirs.
- > Insist on agreement.
- > Yield to pressure.

Hard Positional

- > Participants are adversaries.
- > The goal is winning.
- > Demand concessions to maintain the relationship.
- > Be hard on the people & the problem.
- > Distrust others.
- > Dig in to your position.
- > Make threats.
- > Mislead as to your bottom line.
- > Demand one-sided gains.
- > Search for a single answer - yours.
- > Insist on *your* position.
- > Apply pressure.

You can see it's the flip side of the same game.

Game theory says that a hard game dominates a soft one. Given the choice of being the "beater" or the "beatee," most of us in aviation play the Hard Positional game. We didn't invent it. But we're very good at it.

Now, back to our core concepts: The purpose of our behaviors is to achieve our objectives...

Does this compute?

Behaviors

- > Participants are adversaries.
- > The goal is winning.
- > Demand concessions to maintain the relationship.
- > Be hard on the people & the problem.
- > Distrust others.
- > Dig in to your position.
- > Make threats.
- > Mislead as to your bottom line.
- > Demand one-sided gains.
- > Search for a single answer - yours.
- > Insist on your position.
- > Apply pressure.

Objectives

- > Become #1 in safety, compliance, quality, aircraft appearance & on-time availability.
- > Operate as a team-based organization.
- > Improve working relationship between management & employee groups.
- > Use collective knowledge & commitment to achieve operational excellence.
- > Streamline operations & infrastructure to contain the cost of maintenance.
- > Apply lean principles in a volatile environment.
- > Reduce maintenance CASM to preserve jobs.
- > Enhance our safety & compliance culture.
- > Align supplier & inventory functions with lean product delivery system.
- > Use services capability to increase revenue.
- > Link suppliers with customers in profitable alliances.

Does this compute?

Behaviors

- > Participants are adversaries.
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- > Apply pressure.

Principles of Lean

- > Define value from the customer's perspective.
- > Initiate work to the needs/specs of the customer.
- > Identify value streams for products & services.
- > Create a system where value is continually added.
- > Clear away obstacles that block or don't add value.
- > Relentlessly reduce waste.
- > Have an intolerance for errors.
- > Strive for perfection in all elements.
- > Involve everyone as an owner (who knows where great ideas lie?)

If this strikes you as seriously dysfunctional, I agree. It's like trying to get from Dallas to Fort Worth by way of Cape Horn.

When we ask that operational question - "Can you achieve these objectives using these behaviors?" - I think the honest answer is, "You can get part way there." Managers and employees regularly do incredibly difficult things. But the rest of the answer is, "You can't get all the way there."

I invite you to do this experiment using your own organization's objectives back at work. On a back page of this reprint is a sheet that looks like this:

My Organization's Strategic Objectives

Behaviors

- > Participants are adversaries.
- > The goal is winning.
- > Demand concessions to maintain the relationship.
- > Be hard on the people & the problem.
- > Distrust others.
- > Dig in to your position.
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Objectives

- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____
- > _____

I hope your next question might be: "Is there a better way?"

That same project at Harvard suggests that the pie is not fixed and negotiation really is not about beating the other guy.

Rather, it's about solving problems, realizing opportunities and shaping solutions to satisfy your constituents' - and your counterparts' - interests and needs better than any alternative reasonably available to you or them, and doing so in such a way that you and your counterparts look forward to solving problems and shaping solutions together again.

Their researchers laid out the old options against these criteria. Soft positional or hard positional negotiation - which game should you play?

Some of you may remember a movie called *War Games*, in which a computer played endless sessions of Tic Tac Toe and nuclear war scenarios. Finally it learns. In both cases, the only way to win is not to play.

Which game should you play? Neither, they said. Change the game.

In interest-based negotiation:

- Participants are problem-solvers.

- The goal is a wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably.
- Separate the people from the problem.
- Be hard on the problem, unconditionally constructive with the people.
- Be wholly trustworthy.
- Get below positions to the motivating interests.
- Avoid having a bottom line.
- Multiply options for mutual gain.
- Insist on objective criteria.
- Reason and be open to reason.
- Yield to principle, not to pressure.

Here are those objectives and these behaviors...

How About This Instead?	
Behaviors	Objectives
➤ Participants are problem solvers.	➤ Become #1 in safety, compliance, quality, aircraft appearance & on-time availability.
➤ The goal is a wise outcome reached amicably and efficiently.	➤ Operate as a team-based organization.
➤ Separate the people from the problem.	➤ Improve working relationship between management & employee groups.
➤ Be hard on the problem, unconditionally constructive with the people.	➤ Use collective knowledge & commitment to achieve operational excellence.
➤ Be wholly trustworthy.	➤ Streamline operations & infrastructure to contain the cost of maintenance.
➤ Get below positions to the motivating interests.	➤ Apply lean principles in a volatile environment.
➤ Avoid having a bottom line.	➤ Reduce maintenance CASM to that of the external MROs (in order to preserve jobs).
➤ Multiply options for mutual gain.	➤ Enhance our safety & compliance culture.
➤ Insist on objective criteria.	➤ Align supplier & inventory functions with lean product delivery system.
➤ Reason and be open to reason.	➤ Leverage our services capability to increase company revenue.
➤ Yield to principle, not to pressure.	➤ Link suppliers with customers in alliances profitable to us.

...and those principles of Lean and these behaviors...

How About This Instead?	
Behaviors	Principles of Lean
➤ Participants are problem solvers.	➤ Define value from the customer's perspective.
➤ The goal is a wise outcome reached amicably and efficiently.	➤ Initiate work to the needs/specs of the customer.
➤ Separate the people from the problem.	➤ Identify value streams for products & services.
➤ Be hard on the problem, unconditionally constructive with the people.	➤ Create a system where value is continually added.
➤ Be wholly trustworthy.	➤ Clear away obstacles that block or don't add value.
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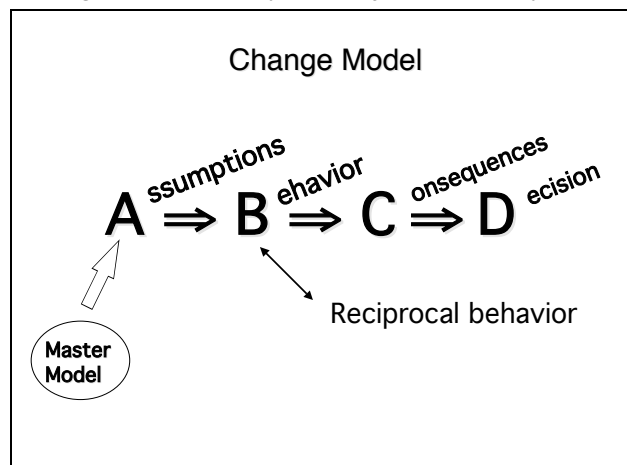
Some of you will question whether your people really do use hard positional behaviors. We certainly *talk* enough about collaborating with employees, customers, suppliers and partners. Sixteen years of helping thousands of your colleagues make this mind change – from first line supervisors to master black belts to vice

presidents of Maintenance & Engineering and their staffs – leaves me convinced that Positional Negotiation is indeed our current model, even though almost everyone knows that what we're doing is nuts.

So, how do we change our behaviors?

But should you ask the next question – “How do we build these skills in our people so we're more likely to achieve our objectives?” – skills training can't do it. Skills training can improve behaviors within an existing model. But when the model itself is no longer sufficient, skills training won't change people's behaviors.

Changing the invisible model that drives our assumptions and behaviors seems to require highly experiential, immersion education to the paradigm-shift level. If in the past you've sent your people to skills training as part of your culture change initiatives – at great expense and time off job – and nothing much seemed to change, let me show you a major reason why:



Years ago, a colleague showed me this model for behavior change. We start with our *Master Model* – our paradigm – for how to make the world work.

Our master model drives our *Assumptions*, which include our vocabulary and our metaphors – the images we use to define reality. Bill Moyers says that when we get our metaphors right, we tend to do the right things.

Our assumptions drive our *Behaviors*.

Our behaviors tend to elicit *Reciprocal Behaviors* – not always, but they tend to.

And these behaviors have certain *Consequences*.

The model says that if we don't like the consequences, if they no longer serve us well, we can make a *Decision* to change. Usually, when we decide to change, we try to change our *Behaviors*.

This is the province of skills training, good intentions and trying.

No matter how well intended we are about changing, if our underlying master model can no longer solve the problems we need to solve or realize the opportunities we need to realize, skills training won't change anything. The model will pull us back into old familiar assumptions and behaviors. This is really important to understand.

We have to go all the way back and change the master model, which drives different assumptions, results in different behaviors, elicits different reciprocal behaviors, and...you get the idea.

So that's the concept behind a paradigm shift – small changes in our perceptions lead to small changes in our assumptions, which lead to *significant* changes in our behaviors and *very* significant changes in our results.

The good news is that when you do make that mind shift, your assumptions change and your behaviors change, and you can do with relative ease and simplicity things that felt like pulling teeth before. Years after attending our workshops, graduates continue to create value with their counterparts and craft far better solutions for their constituents. So we know it can be done.

But if you decide your company and your networks need to make this change, hundreds or thousands of people will need to be trained. It seems overwhelming, and our minds tend to reject it as unrealistic.

I think it depends on whether you intend to achieve your objectives.

If so, there are two choices. Train your people and change your model and succeed. Or try very hard...and fall short.

So how can this paradigm-shift training be made widely available? Inside your own organizations and in your networks, it can if you decide to give it the same attention you're giving to Lean/Six Sigma.

And there are parallels.

If Lean/Six Sigma lets you streamline and integrate your *operations* processes, interest-based negotiation lets you streamline and integrate your *communications* and joint *decision-making* processes. Both are critical to your success. And neither can be achieved just through managerial pronouncements, good intentions or trying.

Again, if you want to learn more, ask me to put you in touch with some of your industry colleagues who are using these concepts.

Here are some stories they could tell you:

An airline maintenance manager on the company team that meets with union representatives on First Step grievances could tell you how, instead of sending 90% or more of the grievances up to Headquarters, almost all were being settled or withdrawn at First Step. When asked what was going on, he said, "I think maybe we're listening differently."

The GM for Safety and Security for another major airline could tell you how they worked collaboratively with employees and OSHA personnel to implement a comprehensive employee safety program. Over a three-year period, costs for workers' comp and medical claims decreased from \$7 million a year to \$2 million a year. They experienced a 30% per year *decrease* in costs while the industry was experiencing a 10-25% *increase*.

A UTC purchasing manager could tell you how they regressed a five year, \$200 million contract 4-5% a year with a big-spend, sole-source supplier who also happened to be a major competitor. Counterparts from both companies focused on both sides' interests and needs, using divergent thinking, to identify substantive, procedural and contractual elements that were better for one without being worse for the other.

And an airline maintenance manager can tell you how they reduced the turn time on the JT8D200 series of engines from 81 days to 34 days by learning to be hard on the opportunity, the problem and the data, and unconditionally constructive with the people.

For now, catch me and we'll talk further.

Thank you for your attention.

Kaye Shackford, Vice President of The Mattford Group and author of "Charting A Wiser Course: How Aviation Can Address the Human Side of Change," can be reached through www.negotiationsolutions.com. Her book can be previewed at www.chartingawisercourse.com and other aviation web sites.

My Organization's Strategic Objectives

Behaviors

Objectives

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