

## SPOTLIGHT

# How to Shape a Strong Safety Culture

**Koh Jia Le**

*Deputy Manager*

*(Safety Monitoring and Assurance Branch)*

How would you describe your workforce's attitude towards safety? Do your colleagues embrace organisational values and proactively act in the interest of safety? Or do they merely follow procedures without understanding the rationale behind them? These questions help you to understand perceptions and attitudes towards safety. More importantly, they provide the first step towards building a strong safety culture in your organisation.

### Do the Right Things Even When No One is Watching

"What is a safety culture?", you may ask. Some describe safety culture as the heart driving the success of a safety management system (SMS) – giving SMS its energy, dynamism, and continuous push for improvement. For some others, they deem SMS as the means to achieve aviation safety, and safety culture as the commitment. No matter the definition, it is clear that for an SMS to be effective, it has to be reinforced and complemented by a strong safety culture in the organisation.

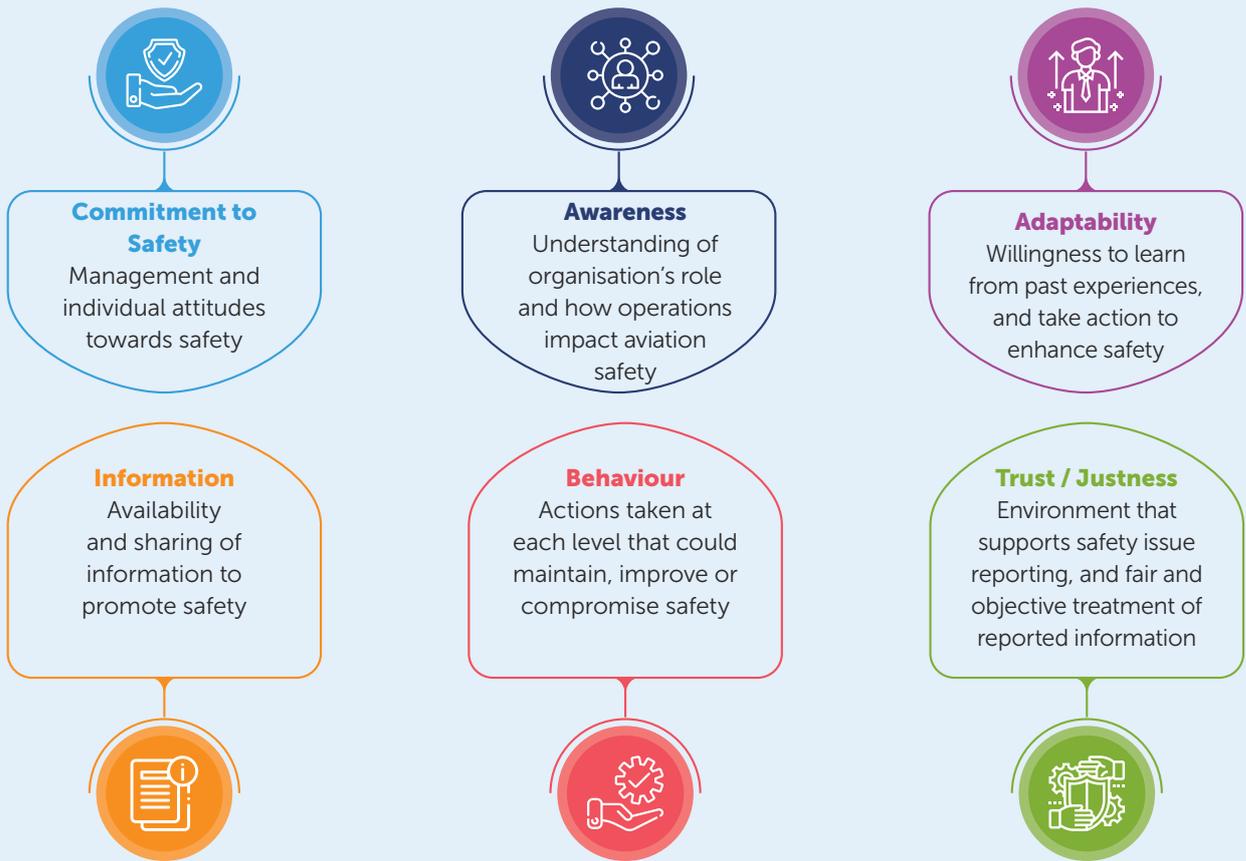
An organisation's safety culture is reflected in the actions and decisions of its individuals and teams. It is embodied in the employees' safety and

risk behaviour when no one is watching, and operational circumstances are challenging. In an organisation with a strong positive safety culture, every person takes ownership of their safety responsibilities, raising safety concerns and taking actions to prevent incidents or accidents.

### Enhance Your Organisation's Safety Culture with Regular Assessments

*The Industry Safety Culture Evaluation Tool and Guidance* document published by the Safety Management International Collaboration Group (SM ICG) is a useful reference which helps organisations define their safety culture according to six key characteristics. The document also provides guidance for conducting

## Six Elements of Safety Culture



Adapted from ICAO Doc 9859, *Safety Management Manual (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)* and the *SM ICG Industry Safety Culture Evaluation Tool and Guidance*.

a qualitative safety culture assessment – from planning to execution, useful interview questions for management and employees in a safety culture assessment, and how the responses may be evaluated.

An organisation's safety culture is organic and constantly evolves; the industry and its risk factors also change over time. Hence, organisations are encouraged to conduct safety culture assessments periodically, across different levels and functions, to understand individual and group sentiments on safety. Information and insights obtained from such assessments can help organisations identify strengths and weaknesses in their safety

cultures, and devise ways to enhance their existing culture.

### Build Positive Safety Culture as an Aviation Community

Trust and having a just culture is a key characteristic of a positive safety culture. That is why CAAS has taken steps to foster a stronger reporting culture within the aviation sector by encouraging safety information collection and sharing. Building upon voluntary information

sharing agreements with Singapore Airlines, Scoot and Jetstar Asia last year, CAAS will be launching our voluntary reporting system *Tell Sarah* this year.

In addition, CAAS is looking to conduct a safety culture survey involving major aviation service providers in the near future, to understand safety culture at a macro level and forge desired safety cultural attributes as one aviation community.

Access the *Industry Safety Culture Evaluation Tool and Guidance* here!



Find out more about the SM ICG and access its products here!

