



## WHY LEADERSHIP?

As you advance and fly larger aircraft, you will be attending ground school and flight training sessions to learn new aircraft systems and procedures. Eventually, more will be expected of you than basic airmanship and an ability to handle in-flight emergencies. **Managing your crewmembers and passengers, as well as challenging situations, requires leadership.**

The 99s Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative aims to accelerate the advancement of women in all pilot professions, facilitate mentoring among women pilot professionals, and enhance our leadership role in the aviation community. By undertaking **Leadership Activities** in the PPLI, you will **develop your leadership, managerial, and organizational skills while making a contribution to the aviation community.** Along with mentoring, your leadership development is essential to the program. It is key to your future success as a professional pilot.

## WATCH A CAPTAIN AT WORK

When four aircraft were hijacked on September 11, 2001, the FAA made the decision to direct all airborne aircraft to immediately land. All flights inbound to the United States were diverted to land at the nearest suitable airport. At this time, Captain Beverley Bass was acting as a check pilot for a first officer's initial operating experience on American Airlines Flight 49, service from Paris to Dallas-Fort Worth on a Boeing 777. Here is the experience of **Captain Bass** in her own words:



[Email dated Sept 12th]

*We were over the middle of the North Atlantic on our way home from Paris when we heard the dreadful news on the airwaves. Our flight was ordered to land at the nearest airport, which happened to be Gander, Newfoundland in a very sparse area of northern Canada.*

*We had to jettison some of our precious fuel to avoid an overweight landing and we then became the 35th jumbo jet to invade the small town -- population 10,000. By the time all was said and done, there were 45 jets wedged in on the tarmac with a total of 11,500 passengers and crew. We had been airborne for 6 hours and 40 minutes. By the time we deplaned, we had been on the tarmac for almost 30 hours. As you can well imagine, we were out of food, water and all necessities.*

*The Newfoundlanders have opened their homes, closed their schools and cooked food for the flood of people. The crewmembers are spread out at the three motels in town and the people are at the Salvation Army camp, school gyms, and various other locations.*

2

[Email dated Sept 13th]

*All captains attended a mandatory briefing with the Canadian Authorities late last evening to discuss the plan that was in effect to move the airplanes out of here. As you can well imagine, very stringent security measures are being taken and the process is going to take a significant amount of time. The airplanes are wedged in like sardines and just moving them is going to be a task in itself. Each aircraft must taxi under its own power, as there isn't a tug on the entire airport.*

*Three of our flight attendants and I went to brief our passengers on the status of our situation. It was quite a sight to see the floor covered with cots, sleeping bags, blankets, pillows and air mattresses. Downstairs was lined with tables, where all 155 people were dining on beans, homemade bread and donut holes.*



*I have just learned that we are expecting to depart at 7am Friday morning. It is imperative that we get out soon, as there is now significant weather on its way. They are expecting 50-knot winds by Saturday. That will cripple us once again if we are not out of here. Every single passenger will be strip-searched prior to boarding and the aircraft will have had a thorough search and inspection for anything out of the ordinary. I will sign off for now and hope my next communication with you will be from U.S. soil.*

[They flew to Dallas-Fort Worth the next day, Friday.]

## ATTRIBUTES OF A PROFESSIONAL PILOT LEADER

While her flight lasted less than seven hours, Captain Bass was ultimately responsible for her aircraft, crew, and passengers continuously for **four days**. For her exemplary leadership during that ordeal, Captain Bass received commendations from the City of Gander and American Airlines. Click [here](#) to read more of her incredible story! Also, a phenomenal musical, called "[Come from Away](#)"<sup>3</sup> has been created, based on actual interviews from Captain Bass (pictured right in 2016 with her blazer<sup>4</sup>) and others. If you find yourself in Toronto or New York, don't miss out on seeing it in person.



Most of us will never have a situation as challenging as that. But, even a routine diversion - due to weather or a medical emergency - will require you to put your leadership skills to use.

### A professional pilot leader...

- **Contributes** to the success of the team, no matter her position. Follows the direction of team leaders and when necessary, acts independently.
- **Prioritizes the team** and reexamines priorities. Handles the situation immediately at hand, while thinking ahead to the next steps and final outcome.
- **Manages a crew** of perhaps a dozen people and as many as several hundred passengers. Develops and motivates individuals on her team, trusting in their abilities, delegating tasks, and guiding them to success. Gives feedback that includes correcting improper behavior and reinforcing appropriate behavior.
- **Solicits input from others** in the decision-making process. Asks questions to clarify. Listens to and considers all feedback, ranging from crew reports, air traffic control advisories, and noises or smells in the aircraft. Involves the team members in the decision-making process. Finds a consensus, when appropriate.
- **Displays confidence** in herself and is not afraid to exercise the authority of her position. Takes responsibility for making decisions. Sticks to decisions or reconsiders as conditions warrant. Recognizes the contributions of others, shares the glory, and makes appropriate expressions of gratitude and appreciation.
- **Strives to learn** and grow from her successes, as well as her errors.
- **Upholds the highest standards** of her profession and encourages others to do the same. A role model of leadership that inspires others to follow her lead, and emulate to her.

## BE A CAPTAIN - STARTING NOW

The first step is a "mind shift." You are ultimately responsible for the flight when you are pilot-in-command or even on your first solo. As such, the PPLI reinforces that you are in command of your career and your life by calling you "Captain." Others will assist and guide you, but **you are responsible for your progress and success.**

This "**captain mindset**" also applies to student pilots and co-pilots. Imagine wearing the captain's hat in a variety of situations, until that mode of thought becomes second nature to you. To begin, simply observe other leaders' decision-making processes. Notice the outcome of different approaches and reflect by thinking, "I like how she handled that" and "I'll never do it that way."