

Tapping Diverse Talent in Aviation Culture, Gender and Diversity

Edited by Mary Ann Turney

A plenitude of examples of how diversity among aviation professionals can lead to confusion is portrayed in this book. Some differences seem quite obvious, for instance the different use of the English language by people of different geographical backgrounds. This book makes it clear that differences do not merely exist at the superficial level of theoretically using a language; the comprehension of a language is affected by much more, such as underlying cultural values. These values not only influence communication across cultures; it also influences communication between men and women.

By Amrita Bose

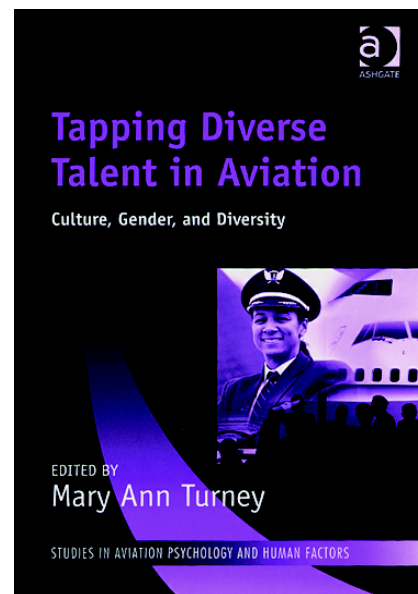
'Tapping diverse talent in aviation' is part of a series of books published by Ashgate that covers issues in aviation operations and training. Therefore this particular book might not be very appealing to those Airlines readers with a preference for business, economics and numbers, as some chapters discuss particular subtle aspects of communications. However some parts of the book are of interest to anyone trying to get more insight in communication and cultural differences and to gain more insight in daily life in which we all encounter people of different cultures and gender.

The book is divided in three parts, although these parts must not be seen strictly separate from each other; the underlying cultural values are manifested in different facets, ranging from the way of picking up education to using language accordingly. The first part contains a more conceptual view of diversity, discussing why aviation professionals cannot be viewed as all the same. Part two entails the subject of language specifically, commencing with a chapter on ICAO proficiency requirements, but also including chapters on for instance humour and non verbal communication.

Part three contains papers on the aviation industry culture and environment. A written debate on

safety in the cockpit in mono-cultural versus multi-cultural crew truly illustrates the issue of diversity. The debater 'propagating' safety in the former crew uses arguments predominantly based on studies. The opposing debater argues predominantly according to experience. The debate structure makes chapter interesting. A suggestion is to start this book by reading the debate; many aspects of diversity pass the revue. Furthermore, this part also includes a chapter on ergonomics, which is of course a facet that can not be overlooked within the subject of diversity. It is very relevant that a pilot should be able to comfortably reach for all the instruments in the cockpit. However this chapter seemed a bit out of line with the general subjects discussed. Part three is concluded with a model useful for training and education in a diverse aviation setting.

Overall the subject of diversity as discussed in this book is particularly of interest for those involved in training or managing airline personnel. There are many practical examples illustrating how diversity is manifested. Dealing with other cultures is a part of (international) airline operation. Think of communications with air traffic control or communications among subcultures within the airline.



I sometimes had the feeling to be reading the same thing but only slightly different, although the content covers the several levels of diversity quite good. Sometimes a more individualistic approach was given, other times a more general group perspective was discussed. It is worthwhile to realise that sometimes differences are personal and sometimes differences are more culturally driven!

About the editor

Mary Ann Turney is Associate Professor at the college of Technology and Applied Science, Arizona State University. She teaches courses in aviation and human factors. She is also involved in research related to human factors, crew resource management diversity, and retention of women in aviation (p. Xiv, 2004, Turney).

A brief background of the nineteen authors of the papers that are assembled in this book can be found in the book itself.

About the reviewer

Amrita Bose has been a general editor for Airlines since September 2001 and was a board member of Aeries for the academic year 2002-2003. Amrita Bose graduated from the University of Amsterdam in September 2003 and holds a Master of Science in International Communication. See also <http://www.aerlines.nl/bios/abose.htm>.

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