

The Checklist Manifesto

Atul Gawande

46 - the checklist was given to the people with the least power/influence

75 - "The trouble wasn't a lack of sympathy among top officials. It was a lack of understanding that, in the face of an extraordinarily complex problem, power needed to be pushed out of the center as far as possible. Everyone was waiting for the cavalry, but a centrally run, government-controlled solution was not going to be possible."

76 - Walmart to the rescue. Lee Scott, Walmart CEO: ""A lot of you are going to have to make decisions above your level. Make the best decision that you can with the information that's available to you at the time, and, above all, do the right thing."

79 - "reliable management of complexity"

80 - Famous Van Halen story: "As Roth explained in his memoir, *Crazy from the Heat*, "Van Halen was the first band to take huge productions into tertiary, third-level markets. We'd pull up with nine eighteen-wheeler trucks, full of gear, where the standard was three trucks, max.

And there were many, many technical errors-whether it was the girders couldn't support the weight, or the flooring would sink in, or the doors weren't big enough to move the gear through. The contract rider read like a version of the Chinese Yellow Pages because there was so much equipment, and so many human beings to make it function." So just as a little test, buried somewhere in the middle of the rider, would be article 126, the no-brown-M&M's clause. "When I would walk backstage, if I saw a brown M&M in that bowl," he wrote, "well, we'd line-check the entire production. Guaranteed you're going to arrive at a technical error. ... Guaranteed you'd run into a problem." These weren't trifles, the radio story pointed out. The mistakes could be life-threatening. In Colorado, the band found the local promoters had failed to read the weight requirements and the staging would have fallen through the arena floor."

103 - Don't do nothing: "The most common obstacle to effective teams, it turns out, is not the occasional fire-breathing, scalpel-flinging, terror-inducing surgeon, though some do exist. (One favorite example: Several years ago, when I was in training, a senior surgeon grew incensed with one of my fellow residents for questioning the operative plan and commanded him to leave the table and stand in the corner until he was sorry. When he refused, the surgeon threw him out of the room and tried to get him suspended for insubordination.) No, the more familiar and widely dangerous issue is a kind of silent disengagement, the consequence of specialized technicians sticking narrowly to their domains. "That's not my problem" is possibly the worst thing people can think, whether they are starting an operation, taxiing an airplane full of passengers down a runway, or building a thousand-foot-tall skyscraper. But in medi-cine, we see it all the time. I've seen it in my own operating room."

120 - "Good checklists, on the other hand, are precise. They are efficient, to the point, and easy to use even in the most difficult situations. They do not try to spell out everything— a checklist cannot fly a plane. Instead, they provide reminders of only the most critical and important steps-the ones that even the highly skilled professionals using them could miss. Good checklists are, above all, practical."

132 - "we rarely investigate our failures"

168 - Checklists "improve outcomes with no increase in skill." In other words, the least skilled member of a team can still be helpful with a checklist. [Apply this to stage crew]

171 - How investors choose entrepreneurs: "You would think that this would be whether the entrepreneur's idea is actually a good one. But finding a good idea is apparently not all that hard. Finding an entrepreneur who can execute a good idea is a different matter entirely. One needs a person who can take an idea from proposal

a different matter entirely. One needs a person who can take an idea from proposal to reality, work the long hours, build a team, handle the pressures and setbacks, manage technical and people problems alike, and stick with the effort for years on end without getting distracted or going insane. Such people are rare and extremely hard to spot."

177 - Checklists free your attention: "The fear people have about the idea of adherence to protocol is rigidity. They imagine mindless automatons, heads down in a checklist, incapable of looking out their windshield and coping with the real world in front of them. But what you find, when a checklist is well made, is exactly the opposite. The checklist gets the dumb stuff out of the way, the routines your brain shouldn't have to occupy itself with (Are the elevator controls set? Did the patient get her antibiotics on time? Did the managers sell all their shares? Is everyone on the same page here?), and lets it rise above to focus on the hard stuff (Where should we land?)."

185 - Don't just study successes. Study failures. [eg, why do independent films fail?]

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