

NASA's Culture as a Barrier to Learning

The Normalization of Deviance in Healthcare Delivery


CaseISM.com



NASA's Culture as a Barrier to Learning


The Normalization of Deviance in Healthcare Delivery

CaseISM.com

The background is a dark blue space scene with a light blue circle in the center. To the right, a portion of a rocket is visible, showing a white nose cone with two circular windows and an orange section below. The text is centered within the teal circle.

“What we find out from [a] comparison between Columbia and Challenger is that NASA as an organization did not learn from its previous mistakes and it did not properly address all of the factors that the presidential commission identified.”

CaseISM.com

A large light blue circle is centered on a dark blue background. Inside the circle, there is a dark blue rectangular box containing text. To the right of the circle, there are two light blue, pill-shaped decorative elements. The background also features several small, glowing white dots.

A subtle process, often unnoticed by participants in it, which results in outcomes which are, in retrospect, clearly outside the formal rules governing the process.

CaseISM.com

Normalization is a widespread phenomenon in many parts of modern life: NASA, policing, health care, schools, prisons, foster care, social work, September 11, Abu Ghraib, and the 2008 financial crisis.

CaseISM.com

Factors at work in NASA:

- Inherently risky technology
- Missed signals
- Scarcity and competition
- Elite bargaining
- Patterns of information (“structural secrecy”)
- Organizational and technological complexity
- Complex culture
- And more...

What is Culture?

- “A **process of reality construction** that allows people to **see and understand** particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways.” (Morgan, 2006, p. 134)
- “The culture of a group can now be defined as a **pattern of shared basic assumptions learned** by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to **perceive, think, and feel** in relation to those problems.” (Schein, 2010, p. 18)
- Organizational culture refers to the **basic values, norms, beliefs, and practices** that characterize the functioning of a particular institution. At the most basic level, organizational culture defines the **assumptions** that employees make as they carry out their work; it defines “**the way we do things here.**” (Gehman et al., 2003, p. 101)

The Complexity of Culture



CaseISM.com

- An organization's culture is a **powerful force** that persists through reorganizations and the departure of key personnel (Gehman et al., 2003, p.101).
- Culture creates within us **mindsets** and **frames of reference** (Schein, 2010, p.14).
- **Culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual.** We can see the behavior that results, but we often cannot see the forces underneath that cause certain kinds of behavior (Schein, 2010, p.14).

CaseISM.com