

CHECKLISTS

Bottom line, checklists work, save time, and improve results.

Atul Gawande wrote *The Checklist Manifesto - How to get things Right*. Here is a quotation from the book: "Despite showing (hospital) staff members of the benefits of using the checklist, 20% resisted, stating that it was not easy to use, it took too long, and felt it had not improved the safety of care. Yet, when asked an additional question - would you want the checklist to be used if you were having an operation - a full 93% said yes." WOW!

The airline industry has used checklists for years. The best and most experienced pilots believe in and use them. If they do, shouldn't we?

Anything you do, deserves to be done well, and doing your best is easier with a checklist.

A checklist does many things:

- It gives you a track to run on***
- It keeps you in focus***
- It makes sure you don't forget a step***
- It covers the critical factors of success***
- It eliminates guess work***
- It guides you in time of stress***
- It builds your confidence***
- It supports your knowledge and learning***
- It keeps everyone together as a team***

A checklist is critical when we are learning. Then, when we know it all, it is critical as that is when, knowing so much and being so experienced, we get careless and then make mistakes. The checklist supports us wherever we are in the process of learning and doing.

No one is above a checklist.

A checklist is not cast in stone. Change it, improve it, modify it as needed. But, use it. If it is wrong, change it. If it does not apply; make one that does. The process of making a list makes us focus on what has to be done, what is important in the process, and what is critical in the process. Just making the checklist improves our performance dramatically.

Create a checklist and then test it. Use it, see the results, and measure the results. Does it prevent errors? Does it create a better outcome? Does it keep you on track? Does it help? Does it save time? Test the benefits, modify, and test again. Then, once perfected, keep an eye out for future improvements. Continual improvement should be one of the goals.

If you are perfect, never forget, and are infallible, you do not need a checklist. Have you ever forgotten something? Have you ever missed a step and had to back track? If so, wouldn't it be easier to use a checklist? If you haven't tried a checklist, you don't know. Try it, you'll like it. A checklist is a sign of strength and organization.

Peace of mind and a quiet nights sleep are the result of a checklist. When we don't have a list, when it's not written, it's roaming around in our mind, and comes to our attention at the worst of times, like the middle of the night. "Did I do X? Was I supposed to call? Is it due tomorrow morning?" are just a few of those thoughts that wake us up and shake us up.

A checklist provides peace of mind. It is knowing you have covered the bases, knowing nothing has been left out. We all lose focus, we all get distracted. So, why not use a tool to be sure we do what has to be done.