

Case Study: The Failure of Boeing 737 Max

The Boeing 737 MAX crisis serves as a powerful lesson on the dangers of prioritizing speed and cost over safety and thorough planning. By applying Caroline Miller's BRIDGE methodology—covering brainstorming, relationships, investments, decision-making, good grit, and excellence—this case study explores how Boeing could have avoided the tragic consequences. It highlights how a more balanced approach to innovation, safety, and collaboration could have prevented both the technical failures and loss of lives that followed.

Was it Learning Goal or Performance Goal in terms of The Failure of Boeing 737 MAX?

The Boeing 737 MAX crisis represents a performance goal, as Boeing prioritized market competition, profits, and meeting deadlines over learning and improving safety, ultimately leading to the aircraft's failure.

BRIDGE Methodology To avoid a disaster like the Failure of Boeing 737 MAX:

1. Brainstorming:

- Boeing's focus during brainstorming was too narrow, concentrating on modifying the existing 737 airframe to compete with Airbus. They failed to explore alternative designs or address long-term risks.
- A more thorough brainstorming process, involving a wide range of experts, should have been conducted. They should have explored how the new engine placement might affect flight control and the necessary pilot training for handling the new systems like MCAS.

2. Relationships:

- Boeing's internal communication between engineers and management was weak, and their external relationships with the FAA and airlines suffered due to lack of transparency.
- Boeing should have fostered better collaboration across departments and maintained open communication with external stakeholders. Transparency with the FAA and airlines regarding MCAS and required pilot training would have strengthened trust and support systems.

3. Investments:

- Boeing's investments were skewed towards cost-saving measures and speeding up delivery, leading to underinvestment in pilot training and safety testing.
- They should have allocated more resources to thorough testing of MCAS under all flight conditions and invested in comprehensive pilot training. Proper financial investment in safety protocols would have ensured system redundancy and safer aircraft operation.

4. Decision-Making:

- Boeing made poor decisions that prioritized market competition over safety, avoiding necessary pilot training to minimize costs and fast-tracking development.
- Decision-making should have been more balanced, focusing on long-term safety rather than short-term profits. Collaborative decisions involving engineers, pilots, and regulators could have ensured proper training and safer system implementation.

5. Good Grit:

- Boeing demonstrated persistence, but it was misguided, as they prioritized market pressures over reassessing safety after red flags were raised.
- Good grit would have involved showing resilience by pausing and reassessing strategies when problems arose, such as after the first crash. Boeing should have learned from the setbacks and made necessary safety adjustments, instead of continuing with flawed decisions.

6. Excellence:

- Boeing compromised excellence by prioritizing speed and cost savings over maintaining their high standards of safety and reliability.
- Boeing should have focused on excellence through stringent safety and operational standards. Thorough testing, safety checks, and training would have preserved their reputation for quality and ensured long-term success by aligning with industry standards for safety and innovation.

Summary:

The Boeing 737 MAX crisis illustrates the consequences of prioritizing profits and market competition over safety and proper planning. By applying Caroline Miller's BRIDGE methodology, this case study shows how Boeing could have avoided its failure. A more thorough brainstorming process, stronger relationships with regulators and internal teams, better investments in safety testing and pilot training, and more thoughtful decision-making could have prevented the issues that led to two fatal crashes. Boeing's persistence, or "grit," was misdirected towards rushing the product to market rather than reassessing safety concerns. Ultimately, their lack of focus on excellence and safety compromised both the company's reputation and the lives of passengers. This case highlights the importance of balancing business goals with safety and integrity.