Living The *Titanic*: Leadership flaws causing titanic disasters

Raed H. Charafeddine
Living the *Titanic*

Boarding the *Titanic* Centennial Memorial Cruise was a formidable occasion for us. Emotions tugging in different directions: visualizing the promised glory, yet realizing the tragic reality. Our trip was a blend of joy for being together joining in a unique experience and melancholy for those who suffered the pain and anguish in the dark, cold ocean. It was a momentous opportunity to relax, bond, learn, and reflect.

Razan, Layan, and Raed Charafeddine
April 8 – 19, 2012
The Atlantic Ocean
April 2012
Our Ship – The Balmoral
Our Itinerary Map

[Map showing various locations and routes, including New York, Oak Bluffs, St. Pierre, Titanic Site, Halifax, Cobh, Southampton, and Cherbourg. The map also shows the locations of Holiday 1 and Holiday 2.]
Route Taken by the Titanic During her First (and Last) Voyage

Map showing the course from Southampton to New York, via Cherbourg and Queenstown, the route taken by the Titanic. The point where the collision occurred is shown by a cross. The deep black line is continued to Halifax, to which port the Titanic was steaming when she sunk.
Our Itinerary

- **Sunday, April 8**: 16:10 sailing from Southampton, UK
- **Monday, April 9**: 18:00 - 23:30 Cobh, Ireland. This was *RMS Titanic* last port of call.
- **Saturday, April 14**: 11:35 pm – 02:30 am of Sunday, April 15
  *Titanic* Memorial Service right on the top of the wreckage site in the Atlantic Ocean (41.46 N, 50.14 W.)
- **Monday, April 17**: 18:00 till 18:00 Tuesday, April 17, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- **Halifax** the final resting place for 150 people who perished in the disaster as recovery efforts was coordinated from Halifax and several vessels were dispatched to search for vessels. They were able to recover 306 bodies from the waters. However, 116 of those were buried at sea as some were badly disfigured and the vessels were not equipped to handle that many corpses.
- **Thursday, April 19**: 08:00 am Final Port – New York City.
April 2012
April 2012
April 2012
The Cruise

Fun, classy, glitzy, glamorous, for sure, but we had our share – a night to remember.
The night of April 8 – 9, 2012

BEAUFORT FORCE 11
WIND SPEED: 56-63 KNOTS

SEA: WAVE HEIGHT 11.5-16M (37-52FT), EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH WAVES, SMALL-MEDIUM SIZED SHIPS MAY BE LOST TO VIEW BEHIND THE WAVES. SEA COMPLETELY COVERED WITH LONG WHITE PATCHES OF FOAM LYING ALONG WIND DIRECTION. EVERYWHERE, THE EDGES OF WAVE CRESTS ARE BLOWN INTO FROTH.
Why the *Titanic*
The Times of the *Titanic*

- Globalization at the turn of the 20th century involved increasing transfers of commodities, people, capital, and ideas between and within continents.

- In addition, peace between the main powers between 1871 and 1914 promoted trade.
At the turn of the 20th century Britain had no serious international military rival other than Russia. Unchallenged at sea, Britain adopted the role of global policeman, a state of affairs later known as the *Pax Britanica*.

Early on in the 20th Century the British Empire held sway over 458 million people, one-fifth of the world population at the time.

The Empire covered more than 33,700,000 km², almost a quarter of the Earth’s total land area.

Its political, legal, linguistic, and cultural legacy is widespread.

At the peak of its power it was often said that “the sun never sets on the British Empire” – from Canada to South Africa and from Australia to India.

British imperial strength was underpinned by the steamship and the telegraph, new technologies invented in the second half of the 19th century, allowed it to control and defend the empire.
The Times of The Titanic - US

- The beginning of the 20th Century witnessed industrialization and a resulting surge of immigration.
- The US became the world’s dominant economic, industrial, and agricultural power.
- The average annual income of nonfarm workers grew by 75% from 1865 and 1900, and then grew another 33% by 1918.
- Unprecedented wave of European immigration, 27.5 million (over 1.6% of the world population of 1.7 Bn in 1900)
- New arrivals between 1865 and 1918 provided the needed labor force and the population base for the fast-growing urban America.
That’s what brought about the **Titanic**

- *Titanic* was an eloquent testimony to the progress of mankind, as shown in the conquest of mind over matter as marked high in the achievement on the advent of the 20th century.

- Her registered size and tonnage made her, for a short time, the largest ship in the world - in fact the largest moving object yet created.

- It was claimed by its liner (White Star) to be the safest and most luxurious vessel.
Titanic comparative size

RMS Titanic  Person  Car  Bus  Airbus A380  Queen Mary 2
Images of the *Titanic*
Images of the Titanic
Images of the Titanic
Images of the *Titanic*

- **Titanic 1st Class Hallway**
- **Titanic Promenade Deck**
Images of the *Titanic*

The First Class dining salon located amidships on the D Deck (Saloon deck) could seat up to 250 per sitting.

Titanic's Turkish bath located on F deck (Middle deck) starboard beside the 2nd funnel.
The grand staircase between the boat deck and A deck (Promenade deck).

The dome of the grand staircase on the boat deck just forward of the second funnel.
The Final Fateful Hours
I. Struck

Sunday, April 14, 1912

11:40 pm  High in the crow’s nest on the forward mast, lookout Frederick Fleet peers into the darkness. There is nothing but a glass-like sea and a sky filled with stars. Suddenly, he sees a dark object looming ahead and instinctively rings the crow’s nest bell. He picks up the telephone and calls the bridge. A calm voice at the other end asks, “What did you see?” “Iceberg right ahead!” yells Fleet. In less than 30 seconds, disaster will strike. Within ten minutes, six watertight compartments will flood, sealing the ship’s fate.

11:50 pm  The ship’s post office on G Deck forward now stands in two feet of water. Five postal clerks struggle to transfer bags of mail to the boat deck for loading in the lifeboats.

Midnight  Thomas Andrews, Harland and Wolff’s managing director- intimately acquainted with the Titanic’s design- says the ship has only a couple of hours to live.
I. Struck

Monday, April 15, 1912

12:02 a.m. Captain Smith orders Chief Officer Henry Wilde, 39, and Second Officer Charles Lightoller, 38, to uncover the lifeboats and prepare for loading.

12:10 (or 12:14 am in another source) Captain Smith informs First Wireless Operator Jack Phillips: “We’ve struck an iceberg,” and asks him to send a distress call CQD. Cape Race, Newfoundland hears MGY (Titanic’s call letters) giving her position.

12:25 a.m. Harold Cottam, Carpathia’s wireless operator receives “Come at once. We have struck a berg. It’s a CQD OM. Position 41.46 N, 50.14 W.” He immediately notifies Captain Arthur Rostron, commander of the Cunard liner, which is headed to the Mediterranean with 743 passengers. He calculates Titanic is 58 miles away and orders the crew to change course and prepare the ship for survivors. The vessel’s normal running speed 12.5 knots steams to an incredible 17.5 knots.
II. To the Boats

Monday, April 15, 1912

12:45 a.m.  On the starboard side forward, the first lifeboat, Boat No. 7 is lowered only half-full with 32 passengers. *Titanic* sends the new international code for distress, SOS, to *Olympic* Fourth Officer Joseph Boxhall, 28, fires the first distress rocket at 12:47 a.m. Seven more will be discharged at five to ten-minute intervals. The last rocket is fired at 1:40 a.m.

12:50 a.m.  *Titanic* calls CQD, “I require immediate assistance. Position 41.46 N, 50.14 W.” Received by the White Star liner *Celtic*.

1:25 a.m.  *Titanic* and *Olympic* work together. 1:27 a.m. MGY (*Titanic*) says, “We are putting the women off in the boats.”

1:30 a.m.  Boat No. 15, the last lifeboat on the starboard side aft, is lowered, and filled mainly with Third Class passengers and eleven crewmen.

1:45 a.m.  Last signal *Carpathia* hears from *Titanic*: “Engine room full up to boilers.”

1:50 a.m.  Boat No. 4, the last lifeboat on the port side forward, is launched.
II. To the Boats

Monday, April 15, 1912

2:00 a.m. White Star Line President J. Bruce Ismay is ordered into Collapsible Boat C by the officer in charge. It is lowered into the water only two-thirds full. Virginian hears Titanic calling very faintly her power greatly reduced.

2:05 a.m. Collapsible Boat D with 44 passengers is the last boat launched. There are still about 1,500 onboard Titanic as water pours over the forward section of A Deck. People head to the stern, which is rising out of the water.

2:15 a.m. Father Thomas Byles gives confession to passengers on the aft boat deck.

2:17 a.m. Virginian hears Titanic’s CQD but is unable to read it. Titanic’s signals end abruptly.

2:18 a.m. The lights flickers and go out. Titanic splits in two between the third and fourth funnel. A section of the stern falls back then rises again. The bow breaks off, and the stern begins to fill and descend.
III. Titanic Gone

Monday, April 15, 1912

2:20 a.m. The flooded stern disappears beneath the ocean surface. Olympic asks if [Virginian] has heard anything from MGY.

“No,” it replies.

2:21 a.m. About 50 people in the 28-degree water are near Collapsible A and B that floated off as the bridge went under. Twenty survivors climb into partially submerged A, and about 30 get on top of overturned B.

2:25 a.m. Most people in the water are numb and short of breath. In five minutes the average person will be shivering uncontrollably and running on pure instinct, unable to speak or think. In thirty minutes, they will succumb. These assumptions are based on medical reports on hypothermia. Water temperature below freezing, though it was described as calm as a pond.

2:28 a.m. Titanic’s bow lands upright on the bottom and sinks 20 to 25 feet into the mud.

2:30 a.m. About this time the stern lands one third of a mile away from the bow.
IV. Rescue

Monday, April 15, 1912

2:45 a.m. On board Carpathia, rockets are fired every fifteen minutes.

3:00 a.m. Fifth Officer Harold Lowe, 29, in charge of boat 14 and after securing his passengers, he rowed back to search for other survivors. He found four people barely clinging to life. Three lived to tell their stories. Officers and crew gather boats together. Fourteen people are taken off Collapsible C. Boat No. 4 and 12 rescue twenty-eight passengers from Collapsible C.

3:30 a.m. Survivors in lifeboats huddle together for warmth; they see rockets for the first time as Carpathia approaches the ice field.

4:00 a.m. Carpathia stops engines at the approximate site of the sinking.

4:10 a.m. Boat No. 2 arrives. Fourth Officer Boxhall informs Captain Rostron that Titanic sank at 2:20 a.m.
IV. Rescue

Monday, April 15, 1912

6:30 a.m. Collapsible C with J. Bruce Ismay arrive.

8:30 a.m. Boat No. 12 is the last lifeboat to arrive alongside Carpathia. Officer Lightoller is the last survivor to come onboard.

8:50 a.m. Carpathia leaves for New York with 706 survivors.

9:00 a.m. A memorial service is held on Carpathia as she passes where Titanic sank. About this time, J. Bruce Ismay sends a wireless to White Star Line’s New York office. “Deeply regret to advise you Titanic sank this morning after collision with iceberg, resulting in serious loss of life. Full particulars later.”
**IV. Rescue**

**Thursday, April 18** Three Days Later - Arrive At New York.

**8:40 p.m.**  *Carpathia* arrives in New York Harbor.

**9:30 p.m.**  At Cunard Pier 54, *Carpathia* is tied up, and her gangway is lowered.

**Friday, April 26**

The Cable ship *Mackay-Bennet* returns to Halifax after spending five days with the grim task of looking for bodies. She was able to recover 306 bodies, 116 were buried at sea.

**Saturday, May 4**

*Mackay-Bennet* was relieved by Minia, another Halifax-based cable ship. After eight days of searching she was able to find 17 bodies, two of which were buried at sea.
... And Where did the Iceberg come from?

Heavy snow fall in the Arctic in the winter of 1910/1911, followed by a warmer than usual Arctic summer in 1911 and a mild winter in 1911/12, resulted in much larger quantities of ice than usual drifting south in the freezing waters of Labrador current, which was flowing faster than usual that year with high volumes of melt-water from the Arctic.

Source: Texas State University
Why Care?

- Discounting near misses, disregarding mishaps, and ignoring early warning signals caused the crisis.

- *Titanic*, The “unsinkable” largest moving object ever built by man, sank in only two hours and 40 minutes after hitting the iceberg.
Britain was in the midst of a coal strike. With the *Titanic*, consuming 650 tons of coal each day, White Star had to cancel the sailing of *Oceanic* and *Adriatic* and transfer their coal, crew, and passengers to *Titanic*.

The miners’ strike had only just ended on April 6. With the general shortage of coal, the quality of available coal was much to be desired.
Early Warning Signals

- *Titanic* was on fire as early as Tuesday, April 2\textsuperscript{nd}, when it was still in Belfast, in the coal bunker between No. 5 and No. 6 boiler rooms. The crew began to extinguish the fire by raking the burning coal out of the bunker during their first watch after leaving Southampton on Wednesday, April 10, 1912, but the fire was not completely extinguished until Saturday, April 13.
Does that mean anything?

- Departing on April 10, 1912, *Titanic* nearly collided with another ship, The SS *New York*, near the dock in Southampton due to its great suction power.

- On June 21, 1911, *Olympic*, *Titanic*’s sister ship, nearly sank the tug *Hollenbeck* by suction when it was caught in the ship’s backwash in New York.
Why not?

- Comfort first, safety later! *Titanic’s* original project plan included a configuration of 48 lifeboats, sufficient to accommodate all her passengers and crew. Alternatively, 16 were only mounted. After all, *Titanic* was a lifeboat in itself. Besides, additional lifeboats would unnecessarily clutter the promenade area.

- *Titanic* was trying to beat *Olympic’s* maiden voyage crossing time and arrive in New York on Tuesday night, instead of Wednesday morning as advertised.
Iceberg Alley

- The *Titanic* received six (or seven) warning of ice on the day of the collision.

- Captain Smith handed White Star Chairman Joseph Bruce Ismay the *Baltic* Ice warning telegram, which the latter kept in his pocket for five hours on the day of *Titanic*’s collision.

- Though it was hard to see the iceberg, they could actually smell it as early as 9 p.m.

- *Titanic* traveling at a speed of 21- 22.5 knots, did not allow for time to react.
The external Communication New Marconi wireless telegraphy system onboard *Titanic* was new and too cutting-edge to be effective.

The wireless operators were preoccupied with transmitting passenger messages. They were employed by the Marconi company, not by White Star Line. There was little established coordination or procedure, and no incentives for the radio room and the bridge to handle ice warnings cooperatively.

The internal Communication was poor - people who heard murmurs of emergency dismissed them.

No formal ship-wide announcement was made.
Leader - less

- No search lights were used for the lookout in the moonless ice field ocean.

- Captain Smith cancelled a lifeboat drill planned for Sunday, April 14.

- The binoculars in the crow’s nest were locked.

- The lookouts were denied binoculars by their officers.

- Crew were not trained on all aspect of the ship.
Captain E. J. Smith

The accident prone skipper, Captain Smith, known as the ‘Millionaire’s Captain’, for his reputation as an experienced and debonair commander of transatlantic liners and because of the class’ reputation for comfort.

Titanic, at over 45,000 GRT, were nearly twice the size of Smith’s previous command, the 24,541 GRT Adriatic, which Smith had captained since her maiden voyage in 1907. These giant new Olympic class liners had handling characteristics with which no one at the time was familiar, not even Captain Smith.
Why believed to be Unsinkable?

This belief stemmed from *Titanic* being designed to float with any two of her watertight compartments flooded, or all of her forward three, as no-one could imagine anything worse than a breach of two compartments through a collision on a bulkhead.

“I cannot imagine any condition which could cause a ship to founder. I cannot conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that”

Captain E.J. Smith
Titanic Staircase – direction determined Fate
“Women and Children First”

Those passengers who went to the right of the stairway were helped by First Officer William Murdoch who was executing the instructions of First then boarded the men later.
“Women and Children Only”

Those who choose to take the left side of the staircase to the lifeboats were helped by Second Officer Charles Lightoller who understood the instructions as Only. He allowed no men into the lifeboats despite the availability of tens of empty spaces. Accordingly, 200 – 250 lives could have been saved.
<table>
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<th>Passenger Category</th>
<th>Percent Saved</th>
<th>Percent Lost</th>
<th>Number Saved</th>
<th>Number Lost</th>
<th>Number aboard</th>
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<td><strong>68.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>711</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,513</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,224</strong></td>
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</table>

Source: British Parliamentary Papers, Shipping Casualties (Loss of the Steamship "Titanic"), 1912, cmd. 6352, 'Report of a Formal Investigation into the circumstances attending the foundering on the 15th April, 1912, of the British Steamship "Titanic," of Liverpool, after striking ice in or near Latitude 41° 46' N., Longitude 50° 14' W., North Atlantic Ocean, whereby loss of life ensued.' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1912), page 42


Titanic Leadership Lessons

1. Understand the environment
   Slower speed could have prevented the accident.

2. Leadership is always responsible
   As leaders are responsible for everything the organization does, or fails to do, Leadership should be there at all times. Leadership was in short supply when needed most – in emergencies.

3. Size doesn’t matter
   The iceberg that the Titanic stuck didn’t even come up as high as the bridge of the ship. And the holes were actually quite small – six cuts measuring a little over three square feet.
Titanic Leadership Lessons

4. *It is not a lack of confidence to have a backup plan*
   Titanic was “unsinkable” so why have a plan?! So with everything else in our lives!

5. *Communicate, Communicate, Communicate*
   External and internal communication were challenged.

6. *If training is expensive, think about ignorance*
   Titanic crew stood unfamiliar with the procedures to evacuate the ship and launch the lifeboats.
7. Having the appropriate equipment is not a luxury
   Simply – keep enough lifeboats!

8. Looking back is not always bad
   Major changes in maritime law were implemented.

9. Don’t Let the Band Play
   Airing confidence is a must do, giving an illusion that there is no crisis caused great losses.
Titanic Leadership Lessons

10. *Look below the Surface*
   The greatest dangers as well as opportunities lie deep below the surface. Only about ten percent of the iceberg’s mass is above water. Even a ship the size of the *Titanic* couldn’t push the mass of 90% below the water.

11. *Look beyond the horizon*
   Need to always be on the lookout for changing trends, needs, storms, and icebergs.

12. *Early bird gets the worm*
   Early activation of action or detection of the problem could have filled in the “half full” lifeboats.
13. *Technology do not replace personal intuition*

When technology fails leadership prevails. The danger is not in machines replacing people, rather in people acting like machines.

14. *Biggest in not always best*

Larger organizations are less flexible and more cumbersome to steer, to adapt or change course.

15. *Never sacrifice common sense for notoriety or pressure*

Leaders must take time to think and be bold when the decision could bring harm to many.
16. *Keep Moving*
Putting the engines in reverse and turning away from the iceberg may have saved the *Titanic’s* fate. If the captain had maintained the ship’s speed or even accelerated, he might have avoided hitting the iceberg altogether.

17. *High cost does not necessarily mean reliability*
Absolutely no money was spared on the construction of the *Titanic*, yet that did save her.

18. *Moving targets can (and most often) hurt the original goal*
Luxury was the *Titanic's* selling point, not speed.
Titanic can be more than a memory!

Sombre….Wreath are a tribute to loved ones in Titanic tragedy.
April, 2012
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Thank You

Questions?
Answers?
Comments?
Suggestions?