

FC5301

Posted on 29.01.2024 by Steve Forward

Category: [Flight Crew \(Commercial\)](#)

Report Title Breakdown in CRM

Initial Report

I [the FO] arrived at the stand after being called from standby, went onboard the aircraft and couldn't find the Captain who was in the toilets with their headphones listening to some music. The Captain didn't speak to me and went downstairs with the same headphones on their ears. The Captain didn't mention who would be PF or PM for the leg and so I followed them to ask for clarification, which was that I would be PM. After completing the turnaround, I went upstairs and sat in the cockpit waiting for the Captain to come onto the flight deck to perform the briefing.

On the next leg, it was my turn to be PF. Flight time was short so, once at cruising altitude and approaching Top Of Descent, I followed the SOP and decide to give control to the Captain so as to start preparing the aircraft for the approach and my brief. Whilst giving my brief, the Captain called for the descent checklist (this checklist should be completed after the briefing and when the PF has the flight controls back). I asked the Captain to stop and listen to the brief but they carried on. After performing my brief, I took back control and requested the descent checklist. Descent was commenced at a normal speed according to the SOPs but then the Captain decided to act as if they were PF and select a speed that I didn't want to fly (320kt). When I refused the speed change and asked him to slow down because of turbulence building up and high ground near our destination, the Captain argued. I asked the Captain to let me fly a normal speed, but they refused and mentioned that they wanted to be on the ground as fast as possible. During the descent the Captain was changing vertical modes without asking me and we ended up high on the profile while approaching the destination. I wanted to slow down but the Captain refused, saying that we could make it but, on reaching 6nm, the aircraft was still fast (200kt instead of being at 160kt) and, whilst on the ILS, I started to use the speed brakes and asked him to select the gear down (to create drag so as to reduce the speed). The captain refused and told me that it was absolutely fine to be at 6nm with a speed of 200kt. In the end, the aircraft was fully configured and stabilised at the landing gate.

I thought about submitting an ASR about this flight but didn't because I had been involved in an incident some weeks before which had undermined my confidence in the reporting system.

Comment

This report describes some worrying CRM breaches that go counter to most accepted current

practices. Bearing in mind that we only have one side of this story (the reporter did not respond to our request for us to contact the company), this report seems to indicate that, although we have come a long way in CRM terms over the years, there is still work to do. The Captain may well have had good reasons for expediting the approach, and was likely well-experienced in handling such, but there is no excuse for not communicating with the FO with more empathy and in a more collegiate manner throughout the 2 flights. FOs may well be inexperienced and rely on SOPs as the handrail that helps them build their skills: every Captain has a duty to nurture such FOs, even if they are not Training Captains, and they should adhere to SOPs unless there are sound reasons for deviating from them.

The reporter's reluctance to submit an ASR is also a concern. They clearly had an unhappy experience from the previous incident and this looks like it caused them to question the 'Just Culture' of the company concerned. People may react in different ways to investigation outcomes, but it's a hallmark of best-practice SMSs that they promote a Learning and Just Culture that gives employees confidence to report. Circumstances in this incident are difficult because there are overt criticisms of another crew member but without a report, no corrective measures will be taken if appropriate and that Captain may well not appreciate that their attitude and actions were not conducive to good CRM.



