

Remain Outraged!

Paul Rinaldi, Executive Vice President



Reading Marty Levitt's "Confessions of a Union Buster" led to me having my very own Christmas epiphany. I thought to myself, I have got to get this message out to every NATCA member – we have to explain the battle that we're in, we have to explain what's going on. This book's message really helped me to visualize this union's role in the FAA's war against us. This book is the FAA's playbook! You need to know one thing – "Our Collective Spirit is their Enemy!"

This fight is born out of management's obsession to control us. Their obsession to control us is derived from their arrogance, their ignorance, their fear, their greed and their ego.

The FAA will lie, cheat, steal, distort, and manipulate – whatever they can do to break our collective spirit, so then we no longer speak as one collective voice of fifteen thousand strong.

Their number one tool in breaking unions is to stall and delay. By ignoring law, rule, regulation, congressional letters, and inquiries from the media, they stall this process in order to weaken and fracture us. They want to plant a seed in your head, making you ask: What good is my union? Why is my union not fixing this problem? Time is only on their side if we let it be!

One of the first steps Levitt would do when he was hired to break a union was to take the entire management team off site and preach to them on why they must bring this war to the union. Well, in August 2006, the FAA took every manager, every supervisor, every staff manager, Ops manager and deputy (if they were serving a managing position in the system, they pulled them out of the facilities) and ordered them to attend the brainwashing camp in St. Louis prior to imposing the white book. They made them sign a piece of paper saying they'd do it and adhere to the IWR. They prom-

ised them that they would be backed up to the highest level as long as they followed every aspect of the white book. These meetings were set up to bring this war to you – it's amazing how right this book is, word for word.

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When we were our most productive, in the late 1990s and early 2000, we ran everything from the local level to the regional and national level. If equipment was being developed, the union developed it and it was functioning and installed on time. If procedures were being developed, the union developed those procedures and they worked and made the NAS more efficient and safer. Those middle managers looked around and said, "Huh, we have no value to our jobs – those air traffic controllers are doing our jobs." That's where this fight developed – their egos, they saw no value in their job so in order to give value to their jobs they devalued ours and raised themselves up. You are highly trained and highly skilled professionals – the best aviation professionals in the world, running the most complex, most efficient, safest air traffic control system (NAS) in the world and yet they bring you down to the level of someone pushing paper. That's insulting and you should remain outraged by that; don't ever allow them to devalue our profession.

It's in the book – "Devalue them so you have the higher level."

If you and I stay focused on our collective goals they can't beat us – and they know that. They will stop at nothing to divide us, but they haven't found a way yet! Levitt said that as we get closer and closer to beating the FAA, the attacks are going to intensify, get tougher and more

frequent. If we divide our collective spirit, they will chew us up and spit us out.

Though they will lie, cheat and steal to try to beat us, we'll tell the truth, take the righteous path and we'll still win. We have to hold on to the fact that we are right and they are wrong; we are good and they are bad.

Levitt writes about 200 unions that he fractured, split, divided, busted, but he also writes about the five unions that he could not break – each one followed five very important steps that Levitt passes on to his readers.

Step one: The union was ready for him – they were expecting Levitt and his rhetoric. They were prepared for the sneaky, deceitful, manipulative ways of management.

We, as a union, weren't ready for this war; we thought this couldn't happen to us but now that we are in it, we will win! We're ready now. We have their playbook and we know that it's all about control.

Step two: Stay strong. Don't split, fracture or divide – don't buy the FAA's rhetoric! Union Busters will plant rumors in our heads to divide us. A supervisor says to a FacRep, "I heard there's pretty nice offer at the national level; have you guys been briefed on it yet?" Those rumors lead people to think the union isn't doing anything.

Don't let them put the union on the defensive. Don't put your FacRep, your RVP, or your leadership on defense – know that we are doing everything that we possibly can to beat the FAA and that we will continue doing it. Collectively we move forward, separately we fail.

Step three: You can't beat the union if they get you on the defensive. Levitt wrote that if he was attacked he wouldn't respond because if he ever got to the point of defending himself he'd lose. The

"Remain Outraged!" continued on page 7

“Remain Outraged!” continued from page 3:

FAA is now to the point of defending itself – every day to the flying public, the media, to Congress and in hearings. The FAA is wrong and every one realizes we’re right. The Agency has the lowest approval rating ever and nobody supports them – even the Republicans are turning their backs on them. Whether it’s the Southwest inspection situation, the American Airlines maintenance gaffes or elevated delays, the FAA is wrong and their incompetence is finally showing. They are on the defensive and we must try to keep that going for as long as possible. What we need now is for people to know and keep in their hearts the fact that this union is right and the FAA is wrong.

Step four: Stay focused on our collective goal – to obtain a fair, collective and ratified bargaining agreement through a fair and binding arbitration process and to be treated fairly at work and paid properly as the highly trained highly skilled professionals that we are! They never wanted to negotiate with us – they said, “You will take this or we will wait this out, submit it to Congress and they will impose it on you.”

Step five: Remain outraged at managements’ arrogance, ignorance, fear, greed and egos! You need to remain outraged that they are firing our probation members for no reason; remain outraged that they tell you how to dress, when and if you can eat, and that they change schedules without any notice; remain outraged that management continues to get pay raises and we get nothing; remain outraged that they continue to rise to the highest level of their incompetence!

This war isn’t about you and it isn’t about me – it’s about our profession and our families. It’s about the flying public and running the safest, most efficient air traffic control system in the world. When you put all that together, losing is not an option. We will never accept the terms of agreement of that white book – ever. We did not negotiate it, we did not vote on it and therefore, we will not accept it.

I leave you with Marty Levitt’s best piece of advice, not to lose sight that war has been declared on our union: “...You have to stay focused on what the true and real issues are...you have to maintain your unity – you keep that together, especially that unity, and there isn’t a union buster out there that can beat you.”

Undivided!
Undefeated!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul M. Hinder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".