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A Desperate Plea To The Charter Industry: *Wake Up!*

As the owner of several businesses including a Part 135 operation and software company that serves a number of highly regulated industries, I was disappointed by the sudden suspension and ultimate revocation of AMI's Part 135 certificate. My disappointment was not aimed at AMI or the FAA, but the reaction of our industry, which I would characterize as dangerously misguided.

Yes, there will be debate over the AMI story for years to come. Unfortunately, the primary discussions will be focused on individual facets of the story, such as the foreign ownership issue, but not the root cause. When boiled up to a higher level, there is a far more troubling question to be answered by our industry and its leadership. AMI is generally regarded as one of the safest air charter companies in the industry. It has earned high standards ratings from both AR/GUS and Wyvern, companies with long-standing records for approving safety and procedures above and beyond FAA requirements. So how could a company with such a strong safety history be stripped of its certificate?

AMI, and virtually every charter and flight department in this industry, ***generally assume that being safe is being compliant.*** Nothing can be further from the truth.

We live in a regulated industry. From economic authority to operational specifications to security requirements, we are mandated to comply with an increasing set of standards and *verify our compliance.* It's not enough to be safe - we have to prove we are safe. And if you believe it will get easier, think again. As an active member of other regulated markets, I can attest that our restrictions in aviation are relatively loose compared to other industries. Think it's tough in our FAA world? Spend a day in an FDA-regulated company of any size. You'll see that we actually have it easy.

So my plea to the charter industry is simple — *wake up!* A stellar safety record does not guarantee compliance. And compliance audits will be more commonplace going forward. For all the technology the charter industry employs to operate our aircraft safely, we are awash in paper and inadequate processes when it comes to actually running our businesses efficiently and effectively.

Whether through ignorance or arrogance, the charter industry refuses to accept that safety and compliance are inextricably tied. Safety does not equal compliance. If the charter industry wants to 'get it,' we have to realize that we need to have both. Unless we make real changes, it's only going to get worse.

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