

# SCRM skills for strategic planners

 By [Sid Peimer](#)

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Not many people die from a direct result of being in advertising. It's just not that dangerous (stress and the resulting heart failure aside). Flying a plane is different. We rely on the pilot's competence to get us there - alive. And, if there's more than one pilot, we expect them to work as a team.

Enter CRM - crew resource management - where pilots are taught to work together, especially when things go wrong. For those planes where there's a single pilot, there's SCRM (single crew resource management) - because how you manage yourself is equally important.

## Refreshing reminder

When we're up there flying through our PowerPoint presentation, we're very much on our own, and the lessons from SCRM are a refreshing reminder that we're actually doing something important: taking our audience safely from Point A to Point B in our presentation.

There are 5Ps to SCRM:

### 1. The Plan

How many of us just set out and present? We seldom even consider alternative routes to take in case of 'bad weather'. I'm not even sure a feature exists in PowerPoint where you can follow a 'Plan B' if you see the current route's not working. It's probably not there, because we've never demanded it - we just head straight irrespective of inclement weather en route.

### 2. The Plane

I'm not sure what those little rust bits are that you see on aircraft wings; however, airplanes are safe, because they are maintained. Presenting when you're fresh is completely different to when you're exhausted, despondent, a little frightened and somewhat unsure.

Many of us have the best intentions of a 'balanced lifestyle', that is, until the first crisis hits and we just start coping. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could take the completed presentation and just go over each slide and savour what's in it before you present - actually think about it? Slowly. Taking a hard copy to a quiet place before the presentation can make all the difference.

### 3. The Pilot

The major cause of accidents is not the ability of the pilot to actually fly - the vast majority of fatal accidents are due to a lack of situational awareness and poor decision-making (thankfully absent from Capt Sullenberger's mindset after the recent landing of his Airbus on the Hudson River).

You don't need to be really good at constructing a brand essence or even a creative platform - you need to be good at telling a clear story. That's what gets the audience safely to point B.

### 4. The Passengers

Our clients are the passengers we convey from point A to point B with our story. Do we really know what keeps them up at night? Are we really addressing the problem at hand? However, we sometimes drone on for hours, as if people actually wanted to hear our presentation over anything else - presenters can be incredibly insensitive to the audience in front of them when they're showing how much they understand the market.

## 5. The Programming

The GPS and autopilot require significant degrees of programming, and they can assist the pilot tremendously. But sometimes they fail. We spend so much time 'tweaking' the presentation that we fail to realise why we're there - to tell a story.

We are not there to deliver the presentation - the presentation is there to deliver us. And we deliver the story.

## ABOUT SID PEIMER

Sid Peimer is a frequent fryer, who often cooks up ways of enhancing strategy. He is the strategic director of [www.behp.co.za](http://www.behp.co.za) and the mayor of [www.stratplanning.com](http://www.stratplanning.com).

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