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# **THE CHECKLIST MANIFESTO**

## **How to Get Things Right**

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The Web site for this book is at [www.thechecklistmanifesto.com](http://www.thechecklistmanifesto.com).

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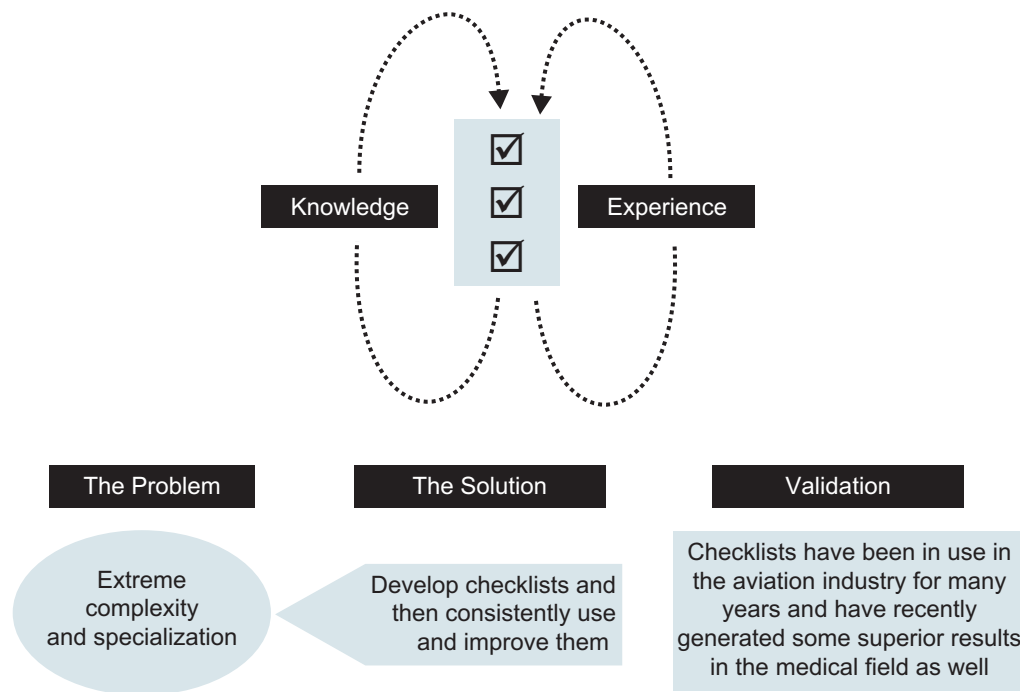
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**MAIN IDEA**

In complex situations – such as those which arise in almost every profession and industry today – the solutions to problems are technical and demanding. There are often a variety of different ways to solve a problem. It's all too easy to get so caught up dealing with all these complexities that the most obvious and common sense immediate solutions are not tried first. To overcome this problem, take a leaf from the commercial aviation industry and develop checklists people can use to make sure every base is covered quickly and concisely. Checklists are a forgotten or ignored business tool. It's time for them to come in from the cold.

*“Here, then, is our situation at the start of the twenty-first century: We have accumulated stupendous know-how. We have put it in the hands of some of the most highly trained, highly skilled, and hardworking people in our society. And with it, they have accomplished extraordinary things. Nonetheless, that know-how is often unmanageable. Avoidable failures are common and persistent, not to mention demoralizing and frustrating, across many fields – from medicine to finance, business to government. And the reason is increasingly evident: the volume and complexity of what we know has exceeded our individual ability to deliver its benefits correctly, safely, or reliably. Knowledge has both saved us and burdened us. That means we need a different strategy for overcoming failure, one that builds on experience and takes advantage of the knowledge people have but somehow also makes up for our human inadequacies. And there is such a strategy – though it will seem almost ridiculous in its simplicity, maybe even crazy to those of us who have spent years carefully developing ever more advanced skills and technologies. It is a checklist.”*

– Atul Gawande



**The Problem** . . . . . Pages 2 - 3

Modern medical care is a good example of how professional fields of expertise have developed in recent years with the coming of the information revolution. Today's medical practitioners are extremely educated and superbly experienced in their areas of expertise, but that increase in specialization is bringing about some unintended consequences. Everyone is getting so busy in their respective areas of expertise some basic and preventable patients deaths are occurring.

**The Solution** . . . . . Pages 3 - 5

Many industries today have entered what could be termed their own “B-17 phases”. Large and growing chunks of what software designers, financial managers, firefighters, police officers and doctors do are now much too complex to be carried out from memory alone. The solution is to follow commercial aviation’s lead and integrate the more systematic use of checklists into day-to-day operations.

**Validation** . . . . . Pages 6 - 8

Checklists may seem like a ridiculously simple concept in a complex world but the evidence is they work. Good checklists get the routine and obvious tasks out of your mind so you can instead focus on the hard stuff. They have been shown to work in venture capital investment just as effectively as they work in commercial aviation and medicine. Chances are they will work their magic in every industry imaginable – and will work even better in the future as everything gets progressively more complex.

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