

The Lesson of LEM

During the race to land Americans on the moon, the company responsible for building the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM) discovered that the LEM's landing gear tended to collapse during simulated landings. Engineers believed they had designed a more-than-adequate safety margin, and were puzzled by the repeated failures.

Then one night while reviewing his work, an engineer realized he had made a mistake in his calculations – an error that was causing the expensive problem. Nervously, he went to his supervisor the next morning to explain the situation. To his surprise, the supervisor wasn't angry. Instead, he thanked the engineer for finding the error and bringing it to the company's attention.

By expressing appreciation instead of placing blame, the supervisor was letting his entire team know that he wanted them focused on solving problems as quickly as possible, not covering them up or making excuses.

He knew that even when millions of dollars are at stake, all stakeholders are best served through open and honest communication.

At Life Care Centers of America, Century Park and Life Care at Home, much more than dollars are on the line, because we are dealing with the wellbeing of our residents. When mistakes happen – and they will – acknowledging and rectifying them immediately must be our practice, accomplished in a spirit of professionalism and teamwork.

--Beecher Hunter