

Do you have Apollo 13 creativity?



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“Houston, we’ve had a problem.”

Who doesn’t remember the famous words transmitted from Apollo 13 to the Houston Space Station after an explosion ruptured the service module’s oxygen tank No. 2 and blew the cover off bay No. 4. Three astronauts — James Lovell, Fred Haise Jr. and John Swigert Jr. — were stranded 207,000 miles from Earth April 13, 1970, with three hours of oxygen and 15 minutes of electrical power for a three-day journey.

Getting home safely required a host of creative solutions.

The world watched and listened from their living rooms as three astronauts kept their cool and thousands of technicians, scientists and astronauts on the ground got creative to find the solutions using materials at hand that would bring the three men home.

There wasn’t one big fix, but a series, which included transferring to the lunar module and shutting down the command module to reserve its batteries, oxygen and water for a hopeful reentry and landing; bringing the alignment in the lunar module into correspondence with the command module; and changing the trajectory of their path to get them home more quickly.

The flight team relayed what they were experiencing, while ground teams worked to solve problems before they got bigger. Both monitored gauges and sensors to anticipate additional problems.

A lesser-known fact, the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution April 14 urging businesses and media to pause at 9 p.m. local time to “permit persons to join in prayer for the safety of the astronauts.” Nations around the world offered assistance.

It took calm. It took knowledge ... communication ... inspiration ... creativity ... faith. Three astronauts splashed down in the Pacific Ocean 142 hours, 54 minutes and 41 seconds after launch.

We shouldn’t wait for the stakes to be so high to look for creative solutions to problems at home on our farms and ranches. Neither should we think that only those problems seen by the world, or industry for that matter, are the ones that require a solution. This issue is designed to help.

Whether you recognize it or not, your operation is on a journey. The Apollo 13 crew and its support team give us a model for designing a successful one.



- ▶ Have a plan.
- ▶ Establish benchmarks.
- ▶ Monitor the gauges.
- ▶ Anticipate problems.
- ▶ Keep calm in the face of problems.
- ▶ Communicate — listen and provide input.
- ▶ Use all available resources.
- ▶ Don’t waste time dreaming of using what’s unavailable.
- ▶ Pray.
- ▶ Have faith.

Do you have a map of where you want your operation to go, or are you lost in space? |

Inform your ground team

Solving problems is most successful with a team effort. For us to better assist you, we’d like your input. Please take a moment to fill out the survey polybagged with this issue. Better yet, scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/ABBreadership22> to fill the survey out online.

Your responses will ensure we provide the information you need, how and when you need it. We’ll send the first 250 respondents a Black Book and enter all into a drawing for two \$500 gift cards.



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