

TURNING PAGES

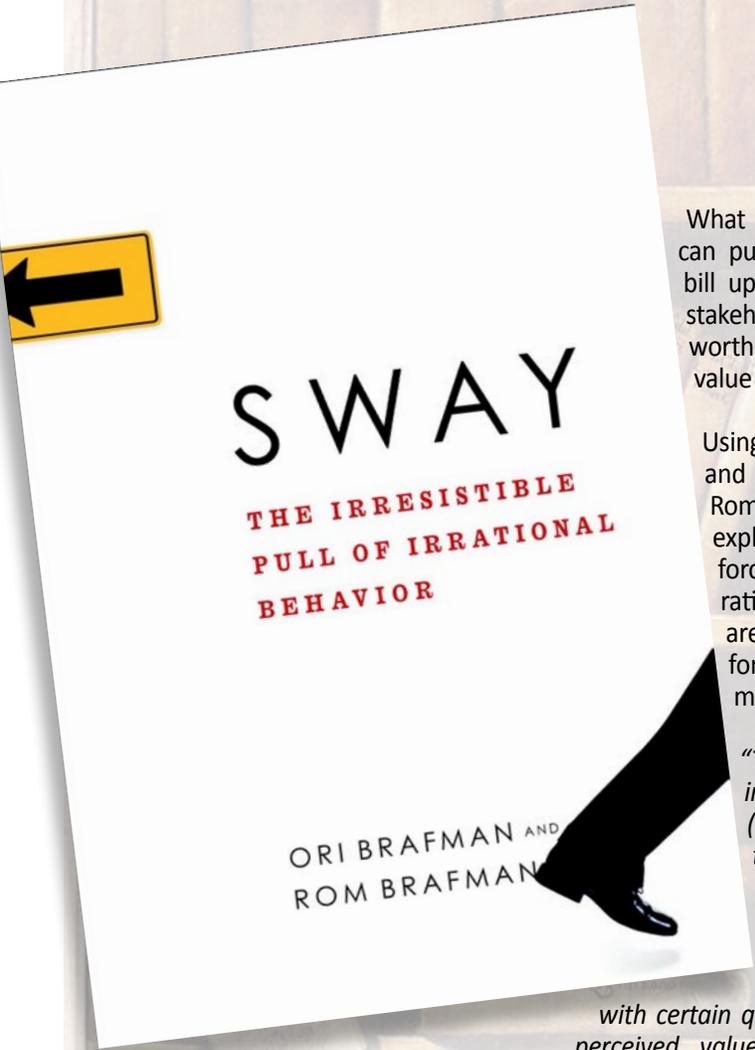
~ book reviews of interest to the aviation professional

Sway:

The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior.

By Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman. New York: The Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., 2009. Available in hardcover, paperback, and Kindle formats at <http://www.amazon.com/Sway-Irresistible-Pull-Irrational-Behavior/dp/0385530609>. 206 pp.

A book review by MAJ Jason A. King



SWAY

THE IRRESISTIBLE
PULL OF IRRATIONAL
BEHAVIOR

ORI BRAFMAN AND
ROM BRAFMAN

What force of human nature can push the value of a \$20 bill up to \$200 even though stakeholders know it's only worth \$20? Where does value really come from?

Using the above illustrations and many more, Ori and Rom Brafman expertly explore the psychological forces that overturn rational thinking, why we are susceptible to these forces, and how we can mitigate their pull.

"These hidden forces include loss aversion (our tendency to go to great lengths to avoid possible losses), value attribution (our inclination to imbue a person or thing

with certain qualities based on initial perceived value), and the diagnosis bias (our blindness to all evidence that contradicts our initial assessment of a person or a situation)."

- Ori and Rom Brafman

The goal of proposed changes in the Army aviation training philosophy is to leverage technology so pilots can more rapidly ascend the levels of learning from rote memorization to full correlation. As Army aviation leadership researches the potential of these training philosophies, there will be conflict and constructive criticism within the generating and operating forces. The concepts carefully illustrated by the Brafman brothers

have current and relevant application to opinions on the recommended changes. The first step in leveraging technology is to ensure we are making the right changes.

To do so, "Sway" would have us ask a few questions. What elements of the Army aviation training culture are valued most? How hard have organizations and individuals worked to attain excellence within these training requirements? The answers to these questions will give leaders an indication of the level of loss aversion they will encounter from the force. To circumvent the aversion to loss, we must make a conscious effort to set aside the hubris associated with accomplished excellence. Then, as a force we will be able to ascertain the current value of each individual training requirement, determine if the assumptions supporting those requirements are valid, identify where technology can be leveraged, and assess new values accordingly.

As changes are recommended and deliberated, all stake holders must be aware of and internally assess the forces of loss aversion, value attribution, and diagnosis bias. Marginal conflict is good and preferred within any organization but failure to have awareness of the forces outlined above inadvertently leads to subversive behavior that contributes to delays, poor use of intellectual capital, wasted financial resource, and in extreme cases, the loss of life. In short, to resist the pull of irrational behavior Army aviation must acknowledge the past, accurately assess the present, and leverage the future.

On March 27th, 1977 at Los Rodeos Airport in the Tenerife Canary Islands, the pilot of KLM Flight 4805 collided with Pan Am flight 1736 killing 583 people. What caused the Captain (a seasoned pilot and the Safety Officer for the airline) to make a fatal error?

Why did the French audience of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" intentionally mislead a game contestant when he used his lifeline? What shared value is it that makes groups unite with no overt collaboration?

