

Living The *Titanic*: Leadership flaws causing titanic disasters

Raed H. Charafeddine*

May 21, 2012



*** First Vice-Governor - Banque du Liban.**

Living the *Titanic*

Boarding the *Titanic* Centennial Memorial Cruise was a formidable occasion for us. Emotions tugging in different directions: visualizing the promised glory, yet realizing the tragic reality. Our trip was a blend of joy for being together joining in a unique experience and melancholy for those who suffered the pain and anguish in the dark, cold ocean. It was a momentous opportunity to relax, bond, learn, and reflect.

Razan, Layan, and Raed Charafeddine
April 8 – 19, 2012
The Atlantic Ocean



April 2012

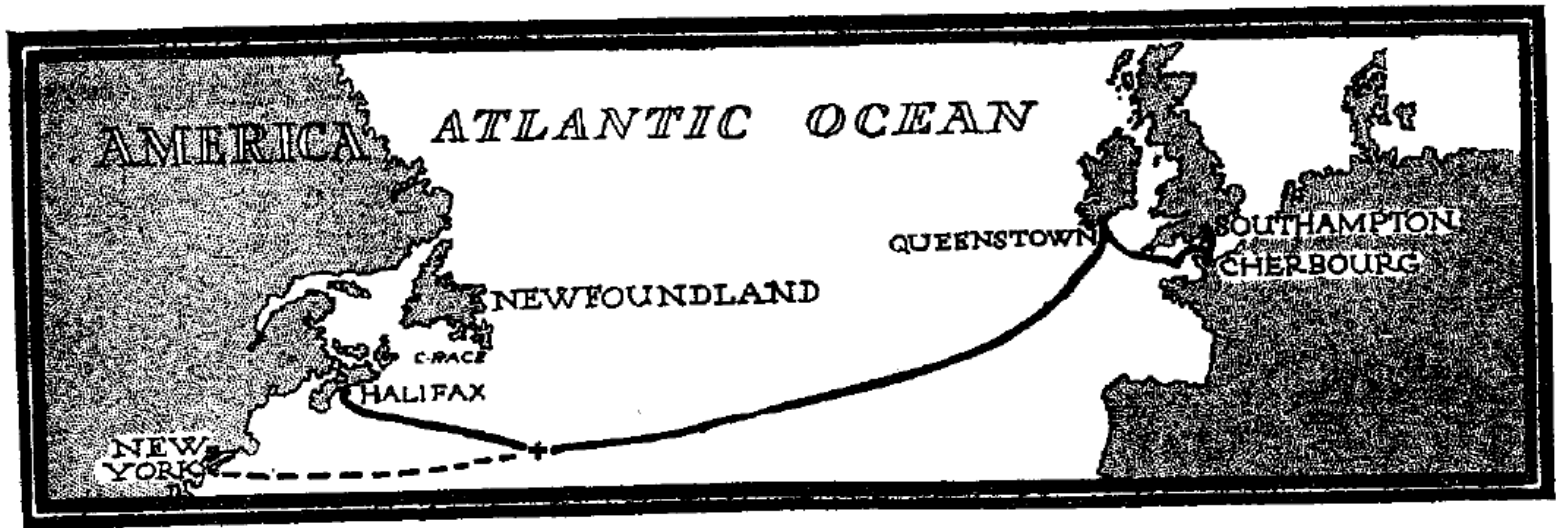
Our Ship – The Balmoral



Our Itinerary Map



Route Taken by the *Titanic* During her First (and Last) Voyage



Map showing the course from Southampton to New York, via Cherbourg and Queenstown, the route taken by the *Titanic*. The point where the collision occurred is shown by a cross. The deep black line is continued to Halifax, to which port the *Titanic* was steaming when she sunk.

Our Itinerary

- Sunday, April 8 16:10 sailing from Southampton, UK
- Monday, April 9 18:00 - 23:30 Cobh, Ireland. This was *RMS Titanic* last port of call.
- Saturday, April 14 11:35 pm – 02:30 am of Sunday, April 15
Titanic Memorial Service right on the top of the wreckage site in the Atlantic Ocean (41.46 N, 50.14 W.)
- Monday, April 17 18:00 till 18:00 Tuesday, April 17, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Halifax the final resting place for 150 people who perished in the disaster as recovery efforts was coordinated from Halifax and several vessels were dispatched to search for vessels. They were able to recover 306 bodies from the waters. However, 116 of those were buried at sea as some were badly disfigured and the vessels were not equipped to handle that many corpses.
- Thursday, April 19 08:00 am Final Port – New York City.

100th Anniversary Voyage



Titanic Memorial Cruise

April 2012

Titanic Memorial Cruise 100th Anniversary Voyage



April 2012



April 2012

Our Cruise

Fun, classy, glitzy, glamorous, for sure, but we had our share – a night to remember.



The night of April 8 – 9, 2012



BEAUFORT FORCE 11
WIND SPEED: 56-63 KNOTS

SEA: WAVE HEIGHT 11.5-16M (37-52FT), EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH WAVES, SMALL-MEDIUM SIZED SHIPS MAY BE LOST TO VIEW BEHIND THE WAVES. SEA COMPLETELY COVERED WITH LONG WHITE PATCHES OF FOAM LYING ALONG WIND DIRECTION. EVERYWHERE, THE EDGES OF WAVE CRESTS ARE BLOWN INTO FROTH.



Why the *Titanic*?

The Times of the *Titanic*

- Globalization at the turn of the 20th century involved increasing transfers of commodities, people, capital, and ideas between and within continents.
- In addition, peace between the main powers between 1871 and 1914 promoted trade.

The Times of The *Titanic* - UK

- At the turn of the 20th century Britain had no serious international military rival other than Russia. Unchallenged at sea, Britain adopted the role of global policeman, a state of affairs later known as the *Pax Britannica*.
- Early on in the 20th Century the British Empire held sway over 458 million people, one-fifth of the world population at the time.
- The Empire covered more than 33,700,000 km², almost a quarter of the Earth's total land area.
- Its political, legal, linguistic, and cultural legacy is widespread.
- At the peak of its power it was often said that “the sun never sets on the British Empire” – from Canada to South Africa and from Australia to India
- British imperial strength was underpinned by the steamship and the telegraph, new technologies invented in the second half of the 19th century, allowed it to control and defend the empire.

The Times of The *Titanic* - US

- The beginning of the 20th Century witnessed industrialization and a resulting surge of immigration.
- The US became the world's dominant economic, industrial, and agricultural power.
- The average annual income of nonfarm workers grew by 75% from 1865 and 1900, and then grew another 33% by 1918.
- Unprecedented wave of European immigration, 27.5 million (over 1.6% of the world population of 1.7 Bn in 1900)
- New arrivals between 1865 and 1918 provided the needed labor force and the population base for the fast -growing urban America.

That's what brought about the *Titanic*

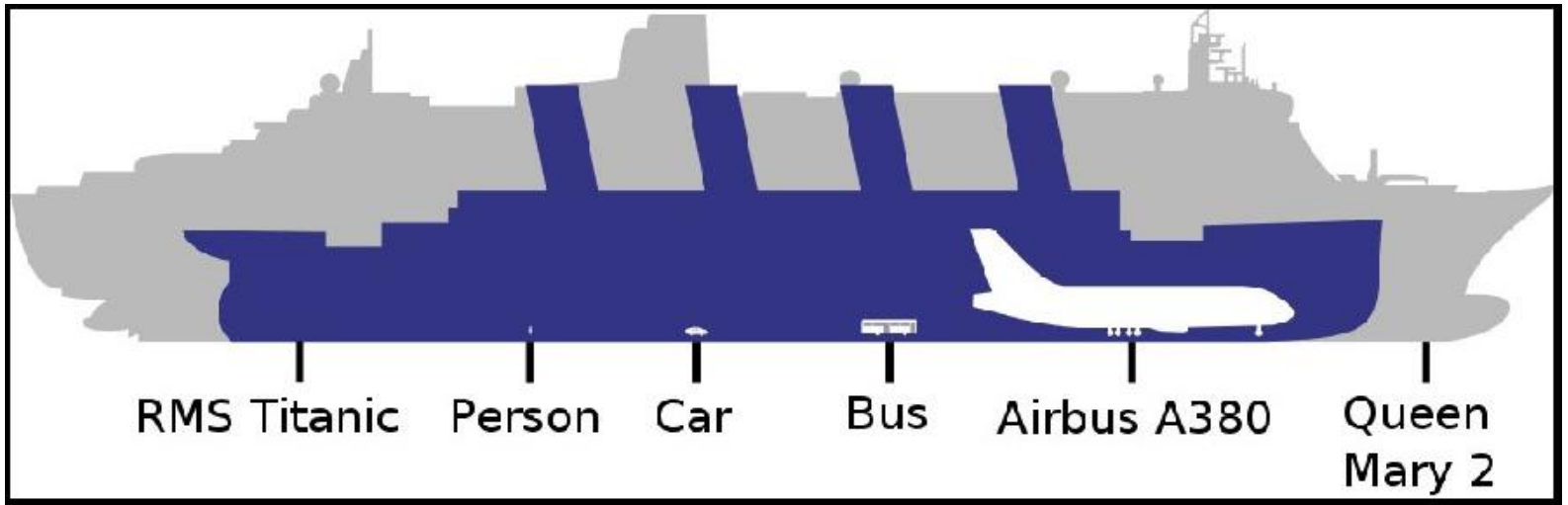
- *Titanic* was an eloquent testimony to the progress of mankind, as shown in the conquest of mind over matter as marked high in the achievement on the advent of the 20th century.
- Her registered size and tonnage made her, for a short time, the largest ship in the world- in fact the largest moving object yet created.
- It was claimed by its liner (White Star) to be the safest and most luxurious vessel.



Titanic – The Ship



Titanic comparative size



Images of the *Titanic*



Images of the *Titanic*



Images of the *Titanic*



Images of the *Titanic*



Titanic 1st Class Hallway

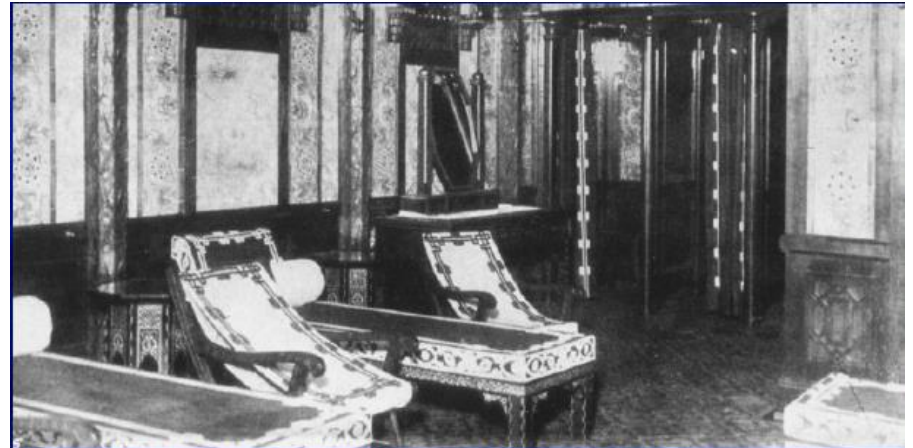


Titanic Promenade Deck

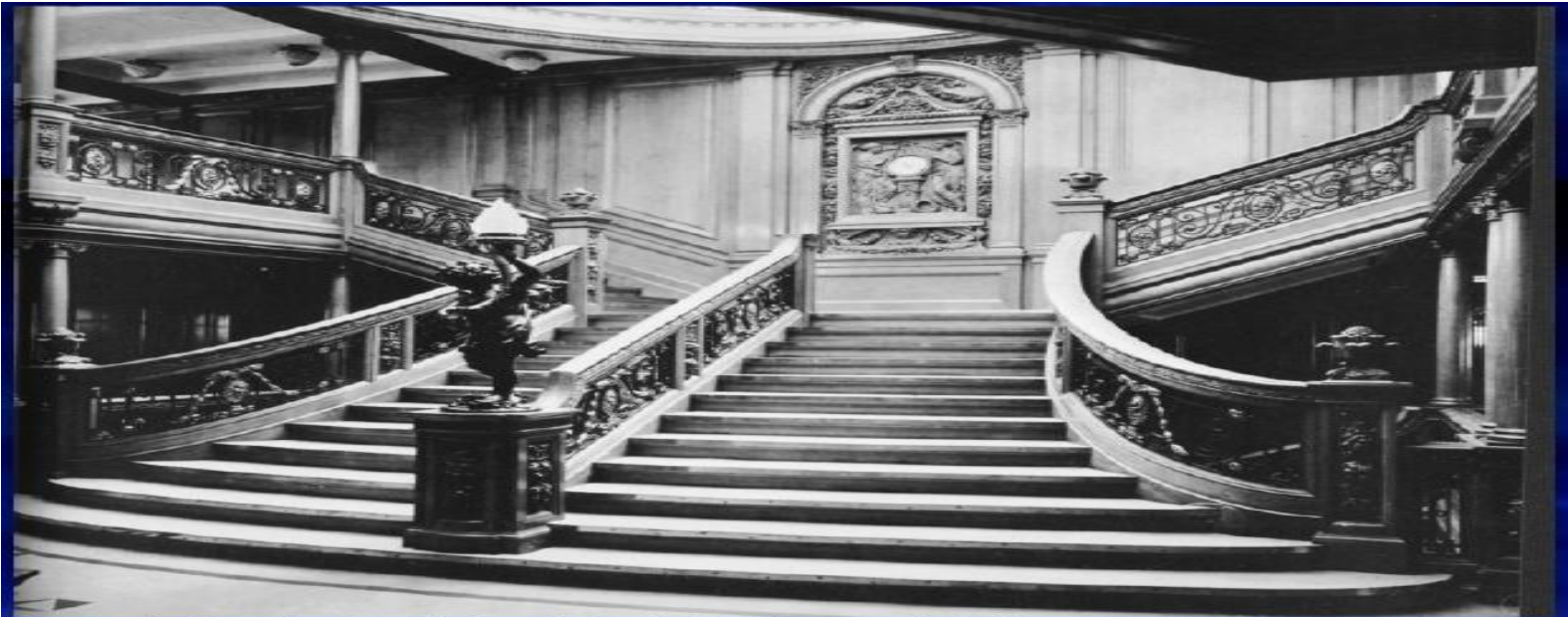
Images of the *Titanic*



The first Class dining salon located amidships on the D deck (Saloon deck) could seat up to 550 per sitting.



Titanic's Turkish bath located on F deck (Middle deck) starboard beside the 2nd funnel.



The grand staircase between the boat deck and A deck (Promenade deck).

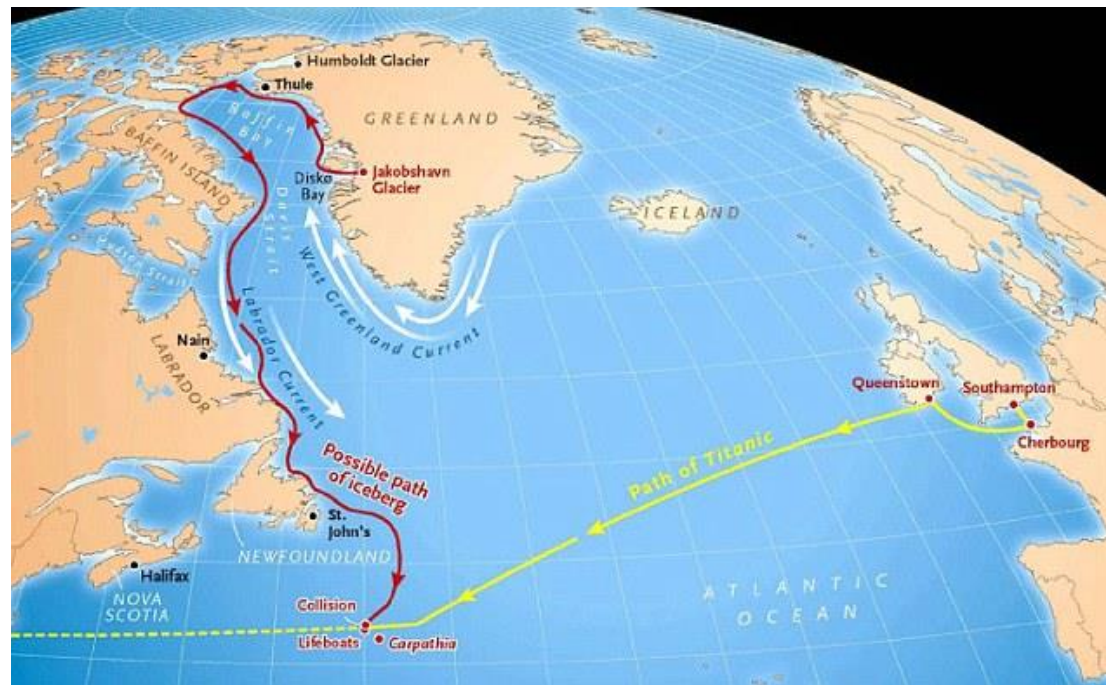


The dome of the grand staircase on the boat deck just forward of the second funnel.



... And Where did the Iceberg come from?

Heavy snow fall in the Arctic in the winter of 1910/1911, followed by a warmer than usual Arctic summer in 1911 and a mild winter in 1911/12, resulted in much larger quantities of ice than usual drifting south in the freezing waters of Labrador current, which was flowing faster than usual that year with high volumes of melt-water from the Arctic.



One possible path taken by the iceberg that sank Titanic 100 years ago.

Source: Texas State University

Why Care?

- Discounting near misses, disregarding mishaps, and ignoring early warning signals caused the crisis.
- *Titanic*, The “unsinkable” largest moving object ever built by man, sank in only two hours and 40 minutes after hitting the iceberg.

Not a Good Start

- Britain was in the midst of a coal strike. With the *Titanic*, consuming 650 tons of coal each day, White Star had to cancel the sailing of *Oceanic* and *Adriatic* and transfer their coal, crew, and passengers to *Titanic*.
- The miners' strike had only just ended on April 6. With the general shortage of coal, the quality of available coal was much to be desired.



Early Warning Signals

- *Titanic* was on fire as early as Tuesday, April 2nd, when it was still in Belfast, in the coal bunker between No. 5 and No. 6 boiler rooms. The crew began to extinguish the fire by raking the burning coal out of the bunker during their first watch after leaving Southampton on Wednesday, April 10, 1912, but the fire was not completely extinguished until Saturday, April 13.

Does this mean anything?

- Departing on April 10, 1912, *Titanic* nearly collided with another ship, The *SS New York*, near the dock in Southampton due to its great suction power.
- On June 21, 1911, *Olympic*, *Titanic*'s sister ship, nearly sank the tug *Hollenbeck* by suction when it was caught in the ship's backwash in New York.



Why not?

- Comfort first, safety later! *Titanic's* original project plan included a configuration of 48 lifeboats, sufficient to accommodate all her passengers and crew. Alternatively, 16 were only mounted. After all, *Titanic* was a **lifeboat in itself**. Besides, additional lifeboats would unnecessarily clutter the promenade area.
- *Titanic* was trying to beat *Olympic's* maiden voyage crossing time and arrive in New York on Tuesday night, instead of Wednesday morning as advertized.

Iceberg Alley

- The *Titanic* received six (or seven) warning of ice on the day of the collision.
- Captain Smith handed White Star Chairman Joseph Bruce Ismay the *Baltic* Ice warning telegram, which the latter kept in his pocket for five hours on the day of *Titanic's* collision
- *Titanic* traveling at a speed of 21- 22.5 knots, did not allow for time to react.



Communication - less

- The external Communication New Marconi wireless telegraphy system onboard *Titanic* was new and too cutting-edge to be effective.
- The wireless operators were preoccupied with transmitting passenger messages. They were employed by the Marconi company, not by White Star Line. There was little established coordination or procedure, and no incentives for the radio room and the bridge to handle ice warnings cooperatively.
- The internal Communication was poor - people who heard murmurs of emergency dismissed them.
- No formal ship-wide announcement was made.

Leader - less

- No search lights were used for the lookout in the moonless ice field ocean.
- Captain Smith cancelled a lifeboat drill planned for Sunday, April 14.
- The binoculars in the crow's nest were locked.
- The lookouts were denied binoculars by their officers.
- Crew were not trained on all aspect of the ship.

Captain E. J. Smith



The accident prone skipper, Captain Smith, known as the 'Millionaire's Captain' for his reputation as an experienced and debonair commander of transatlantic liners and because of the class' reputation for comfort.

Titanic, at over 45,000 GRT, were nearly twice the size of Smith's previous command, the 24,541 GRT *Adriatic*, which Smith had captained since her maiden voyage in 1907. These giant new Olympic class liners had handling characteristics with which no one at the time was familiar, not even Captain Smith.

Why believed to be Unsinkable?

This belief stemmed from *Titanic* being designed to float with any two of her watertight compartments flooded, or all of her forward three, as no-one could imagine anything worse than a breach of two compartments through a collision on a bulkhead.

“I cannot imagine any condition which could cause a ship to founder. I cannot conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that”

Captain E.J. Smith

***Titanic* Staircase – direction determined Fate**



“Women and Children First”



Those passengers who went to the right of the stairway were helped by First Officer William Murdoch who was executing the instructions of **First** then boarded the men later.

“Women and Children Only”



Those who choose to take the left side of the staircase to the lifeboats were helped by Second Officer Charles Lightoller who understood the instructions as **Only**. He allowed no men into the lifeboats despite the availability of tens of empty spaces. Accordingly, 200 – 250 lives could have been saved.

Titanic Disaster -- Official Casualty Figures

Passenger Category	Percent Saved	Percent Lost	Number Saved	Number Lost	Number aboard
Children, First Class	100.00	0.00	6	0	6
Children, Second Class	100.00	0.00	24	0	24
Women, First Class	97.22	2.78	140	4	144
Women, Crew	86.96	13.04	20	3	23
Women, Second Class	86.02	13.98	80	13	93
Women, Third Class	46.06	53.94	76	89	165
Children, Third Class	34.18	65.82	27	52	79
Men, First Class	32.57	67.43	57	118	175
Men, Crew	21.69	78.31	192	693	885
Men, Third Class	16.23	83.77	75	387	462
Men, Second Class	8.33	91.67	14	154	168
Total	31.97	68.03	711	1,513	2,224

Source: British Parliamentary Papers, Shipping Casualties (Loss of the Steamship "Titanic"), 1912, cmd. 6352, 'Report of a Formal Investigation into the circumstances attending the foundering on the 15th April, 1912, of the British Steamship "Titanic," of Liverpool, after striking ice in or near Latitude 41° 46' N., Longitude 50° 14' W., North Atlantic Ocean, whereby loss of life ensued.' (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1912), page 42

Titanic Leadership Lessons

1. Understand the environment

Slower speed could have prevented the accident.

2. Leadership is always responsible

As leaders are responsible for everything the organization does, or fails to do, Leadership should be there at all times. Leadership was in short supply when needed most – in emergencies.

3. Size doesn't matter

The iceberg that the *Titanic* stuck didn't even come up as high as the bridge of the ship. And the holes were actually quite small – six cuts measuring a little over three square feet.

Titanic Leadership Lessons

4. It is not a lack of confidence to have a backup plan

Titanic was “unsinkable” so why have a plan?! So with everything else in our lives!

5. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

External and internal communication were challenged.

6. If training is expensive, think about the cost of ignorance

Titanic crew stood unfamiliar with the procedures to evacuate the ship and launch the lifeboats.

Titanic Leadership Lessons

7. *Having the appropriate equipment is not a luxury*

Simply – keep enough lifeboats!

8. *Looking back is not always bad*

Major changes in maritime law were implemented.

9. *Don't Let the Band Play*

Airing confidence is a must do, giving an illusion that there is no crisis caused great losses.

Titanic Leadership Lessons

10. Look below the Surface

The greatest dangers as well as opportunities lie deep below the surface. Only about ten percent of the iceberg's mass is above water. Even a ship the size of the *Titanic* couldn't push the mass of 90% below the water.

11. Look beyond the horizon

Need to always be on the look out for changing trends, needs, storms, and icebergs.

12. Early bird gets the worm

Early activation of action or detection of the problem could have filled in the “half full” lifeboats.

Titanic Leadership Lessons

13. Technology do not replace personal intuition

When technology fails leadership prevails. The danger is not in machines replacing people, rather in people acting like machines.

14. Biggest in not always best

Larger organizations are less flexible and more cumbersome to steer, to adapt or change course.

15. Never sacrifice common sense for notoriety or pressure

Leaders must take time to think and be bold when the decision could bring harm to many.

Titanic Leadership Lessons

16. Keep Moving

Putting the engines in reverse and turning away from the iceberg may have saved the *Titanic's* fate. If the captain had maintained the ship's speed or even accelerated, he might have avoided hitting the iceberg altogether.

17. High cost does not necessarily mean reliability

Absolutely no money was spared on the construction of the *Titanic*, yet that did not save her.

18. Moving targets can (and most often) hurt the original goal

Luxury was the *Titanic's* selling point, not speed.

***Titanic* can be more than a memory!**



Sombre....Wreath are a tribute to loved ones in *Titanic* tragedy – 02:30 on April 14, 2012

April, 2012

References

- Bonchek, Mark, *Business Lessons from Titanic (in 3D)*, Harvard Business Review, HBR Blog, 2012
- British Parliamentary Papers, Shipping Casualties (Loss of the Steamship “*Titanic*”)
- Florida Conference, *Leadership Lessons from a Sinking Titanic*, www.floridaconference.info
- Gosden, Martin, *Titanic lessons in project leadership*, Tulimar Colmenares, 2013
- Landesberg, Phil, *Back to the Future – Titanic Lessons in Leadership*, Miles2Go Seminars and Consulting
- Nguyen, Steve, *Leadership Lessons from the Titanic*, www.workplacepsychology.net, 2010.
- Patterson, Michael, *5 leadership lessons from the Titanic*, Ragan article, 2012
- Ribeiro, Pedro, *Sinking the Unsinkable: Lessons for Leadership*, Ask Magazine, 2012
- Scrivener, Graham, *Titanic provides training and management lessons for modern business leaders*, Hrmagazine.co.uk, 2012
- Smith, Gregory, *The Sinking of the Titanic: An Analogy of Failed Leadership* www.chartcourse.com, 2007
- Texas State University, Jayme Blaschke, *The iceberg’s accomplice: Did the moon sink the Titanic?*, <http://www.txstate.edu>, 2012

Thank You



**Questions?
Answers?
Comments?
Suggestions?**