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MAINTAINING LEGITIMACY  
THROUGH PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONAL DISCOURSE:  
CRISIS AND COMMUNICATION IN THE U.S. AIRLINE INDUSTRY

by

Joseph Eric Massey

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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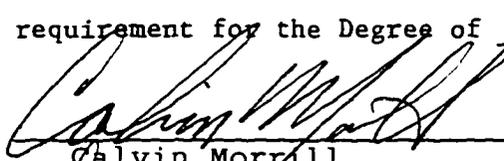
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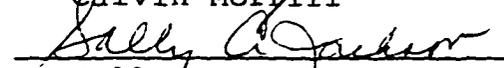
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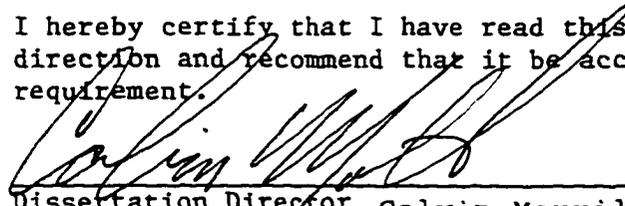
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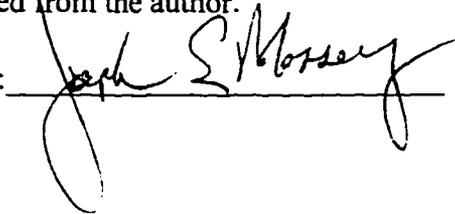
  
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SIGNED: 

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to B.J. Brown.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	9
ABSTRACT .....	10
1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES .....	12
Image Management Theory and Legitimacy .....	16
Individual-level Image Management .....	16
Summary .....	21
Corporate Image Management .....	22
Legitimacy .....	25
Crisis Management .....	26
Summary .....	28
Niche-Width Dynamics .....	29
2. METHOD .....	36
Overview of Study .....	36
Development of Experimental Materials .....	37
Message Replications .....	41
Selection of Messages for Main Investigation .....	43
Participants .....	43
Experimental Design .....	44
Procedures .....	44

TABLE OF CONTENTS - *Continued*

The Main Investigation .....	45
Participants .....	45
Experimental Design .....	45
Procedures .....	45
Dependent Measures .....	51
Co-Variates .....	52
3. RESULTS .....	53
Manipulation Checks .....	53
Preliminary Analyses .....	55
Co-Variates .....	55
Hypotheses .....	56
Hypothesis 1: The Effects of Message Consistency on Organizational Legitimacy .....	56
Hypothesis 2: The Effects of Niche-Width on Organizational Legitimacy .....	59
Hypothesis 3: The Combination of Message Consistency and Niche-Width .....	59
4. DISCUSSION .....	64
Summary of Research Findings .....	64
Organizational Image Management .....	65
Niche-Width Dynamics .....	67

TABLE OF CONTENTS - *Continued*

Niche-Width and Message Consistency .....	68
Organizational Legitimacy .....	68
Crisis-Response Strategies .....	70
Limitations .....	71
Conclusion .....	73
APPENDIX A: CODEBOOK FOR MANIPULATION CHECK .....	76
APPENDIX B: MEASURES FOR MANIPULATION CHECK--SAMPLE	
QUESTIONNAIRE .....	77
APPENDIX C: MESSAGES FOR MANIPULATION CHECK .....	81
APPENDIX D: CODEBOOK FOR MAIN INVESTIGATION .....	97
APPENDIX E: MEASURES FOR MAIN INVESTIGATION--SAMPLE	
QUESTIONNAIRE--GENERALIST NICHE .....	98
APPENDIX F: MEASURES FOR MAIN INVESTIGATION--SAMPLE	
QUESTIONNAIRE--SPECIALIST NICHE .....	106
APPENDIX G: MESSAGES FOR MAIN INVESTIGATION .....	114
REFERENCES .....	146

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: Generalist and Specialist Commercial Air Carriers in the United States	
Airline Industry .....	49
TABLE 2: Message Means for Manipulation Check .....	54
TABLE 3: Type (consistent/inconsistent) Means by Message .....	57
TABLE 4: Niche-Width (Generalist/Specialist) Means by Message .....	58
TABLE 5: Message Consistency by Niche-Width Matrix .....	62

## ABSTRACT

Organizations are beginning to realize the importance of consistent communication with their constituencies. Several organizations have experienced negative consequences for producing inconsistent messages to their publics. This dissertation provides an investigation of the effects of message consistency on perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Legitimacy is the perception that an organization is good and has a right to continue operations. Legitimacy is viewed as an important variable in the study of organizations, since organizations that are not perceived as being legitimate face internal and external threats that could lead to the demise of the organization.

Image management theory, crisis management theory, and niche-width theory are relied on in this investigation to examine the effects of message consistency on organizational legitimacy. Image management theory holds that organizations have images in much the same way that people do, and it is therefore incumbent on organizations to engage in strategic communication behaviors designed to influence perceptions of their image. The end goal of image management is the production and maintenance of legitimate organizational status.

During crisis events organizational image is threatened, and therefore at no time is the legitimacy of the organization more salient. Crisis management theory provides the explanatory calculus and the context in which to study consistent discourse and perceptions of legitimacy.

Finally, niche-width theory argues that different organizational forms are developed in response to different environmental conditions. Two particular types of organizations, generalists and specialists, are found in most organizational fields. Generalist organizations are ones that have many resources and are equipped to deal with much variety in their environment. Specialist organizations, on the other hand, have few resources, and are better equipped to deal with particular aspects of their environment. Niche-width theory is incorporated into the dissertation to determine whether the type of organization (specialist vs. generalist) affects perceptions of organizational legitimacy.

These theories provide the foundation for the empirical investigation in this dissertation. Several hypotheses were generated from these theories. Support was found for all but one hypothesis. Results suggest that organizations experiencing crisis should produce consistent messages to both internal and external publics to be perceived as being legitimate.

## CHAPTER 1

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The latter part of the twentieth century may well be remembered as an era of organizational cover-ups, with the Watergate burglary and tobacco industry scandal as historical bookends. In 1972, several men burglarized the Democratic Party Headquarters at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. who were subsequently apprehended by the police. As the criminal investigation wore on, numerous links emerged between the burglars and high political officials in the Republican Party and the U.S. government. In several public speeches and news releases during 1973, President Richard Nixon denied the political undertones of the burglary and that he knew anything about it. During the Congressional hearings into the burglary and associated actions, Nixon's top lieutenants revealed under oath that he not only knew about the burglaries, but handpicked some of the principals who did the job.

Twenty-one years after Nixon denied knowledge of the Watergate burglary, seven top executives from the tobacco industry stood before a Congressional investigation committee and testified under oath that to their knowledge nicotine was nonaddictive and the health risks associated with smoking resulted from individual choices by smokers, rather than chemical dependency. In the wake of this hearing, several former tobacco industry employees turned whistle blowers by providing evidence that the industry manipulated nicotine levels in cigarettes over several decades. This evidence suggested

that industry executives lied to Congress about their knowledge of the addictive nature of nicotine. Perhaps the most damning evidence to date has been presented by Harriet Heep, former girlfriend of Ronald Tamol, Director of Research and Brand Development for Philip Morris. She turned over to federal investigators eight boxes of documents Tamol stored in her basement that substantiate Philip Morris' knowing manipulation of nicotine levels to keep smokers addicted. One of the documents, a memo outlining concerns about research and development on new types of cigarettes, states that the company needed to "determine the minimum nicotine drop to keep normal smokers hooked" (Dodds Frank, 1996, p. 1).

These two cases raise broad questions about how contradictory organizational communication affects organizational images during crisis events, particularly when the public becomes aware of hidden, backstage organizational action that logically contradicts official narratives of frontstage organizational action. Students of corporate image management and crisis communication traditionally focus on "crisis-response" messages that organizations use to bolster their image in the aftermath of unanticipated, threatening events (Coombs, 1995). But the reality of organizational communication is rarely so simple. Crisis-response messages do not end the messages that organizations produce in response to a crisis. The capture of the Watergate burglars and the questioning of top tobacco executives by a Congressional committee provoked numerous crisis-response messages intended to save the name of organizations and individuals in

question. Nixon and other officials denied knowledge of Watergate, its importance as a political event, and their linkage to it. Tobacco executives denied their knowledge of the addictive nature of nicotine and the health risks of smoking. In both cases, subsequent messages contradicted intentional crisis-response messages and potentially threatened the organizations and individuals attempting to salvage their images. Contradictory organizational messages thus present an unsolved puzzle for corporate image management theory and its application to real-world organizational communication. This study begins to solve that puzzle by using an experimental design within the theoretical contexts of image management theory and the problem of perceived organizational legitimacy.

At a more abstract level, the study takes seriously the idea that organizations are open systems that share interdependent relationships with constituencies in the larger environment in which they operate (Morgan, 1996). Like living organisms, organizations must interact with their environment to survive. Whereas living organisms need water, food, shelter, and mates for procreation and companionship, organizations need capital, human resources, and physical resources of all sorts.

But organizations also require other, less tangible resources that can only be obtained from the environment. This includes perceptions on the part of environmental representatives that the organization is trustworthy, honest, good, credible, and legitimate. The Watergate and tobacco industry cases demonstrate the importance of creating and

maintaining the perception of legitimacy, that an individual organization's actions are good, and that they can be trusted to be honest with the public.

Bedeian (1989) defines legitimacy as the belief among stakeholders that an organization is good and has a right to continue operations. Organizations that are not perceived in this way can experience what Caillouet (1991) calls a crisis of legitimacy, which can negatively impinge upon the organization or result in failure. A crisis of legitimacy occurs when an organization fails to fulfill expectations for appropriate action (Seeger, 1986).

Therefore, it is incumbent upon organizations to gain and maintain legitimacy. But legitimacy is a status conferred upon organizations--it is not something they can simply claim for themselves. It is therefore transient in nature, so that an organization may be perceived as being legitimate to a point, and then perceptions may change so that the organization is perceived as being illegitimate. Additionally, what is perceived as being legitimate behavior by environmental representatives changes as the socio-cultural context changes. The tobacco industry case highlights this. Only recently has the United States culture become so virulently anti-tobacco, with cigarette smoking banned from most public buildings and meeting places, and anti-tobacco groups forming all over the country.

The problem of legitimacy in organization-environment relationships highlights the role of organizational communication with relevant constituencies. Organizations must engage in strategic communication behaviors designed to influence stakeholder

perceptions that the organization is legitimate. Organizations that do not successfully influence stakeholder perceptions of the organization's legitimacy may not survive.

In the remainder of this chapter, I build a rationale for several hypotheses about the effects of contradictory organizational communication on public perceptions of organizational legitimacy. First, I review image management theory at the individual and organizational levels of analysis. Next, I discuss organizational legitimacy and how organizational crises pose particular problems for the maintenance of legitimacy. I then consider an organization environmental condition under which efforts to maintain organizational legitimacy varies, drawing on concepts from organizational ecology. Finally, I advance several hypotheses derived from the literature review.

#### Image Management Theory and Legitimacy

Given the focus in this manuscript on the strategic communication behaviors organizations engage in to influence stakeholder perceptions, it is appropriate to examine the literature on image management. Image management is defined as the communication and other behaviors individuals and organizations engage in to create particular impressions of themselves. Since most of the work on image management has been at the individual level, that literature will be reviewed first, then the literature on organizational image management will be examined.

#### Individual-level Image Management

At the individual level, the theory has focused on what people do to influence the impressions others form of them. Tedeschi and Norman (1985) argue that modern life

demands that people seek out the assistance of others in order to satisfy their individual goals and needs. People are more or less successful at influencing others to assist them in the satisfaction of goals and needs. A major factor that determines whether people will be successful at influencing others is whether that person has created a positive image for himself or herself (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1985). If a communicator is able to create a positive image, others will (a) trust them more, (b) accept and believe more readily their accounts, communications, and claims; (3) harm them less; and (4) reward them more (Tedeschi & Reiss, 1981; c.f., Giles & Street, 1985).

Various theories have been created that describe and predict the relationship between image management and its effects on a myriad of variables, including persuasion, liking, attraction, and so on. One of the most well-known theories, and one of the very first theories of image management was put forth by Erving Goffman. Goffman provided a theoretical foundation in his profound work on image management (Goffman, 1959, 1961a, 1961b, 1963, 1969, 1971). In his oft cited "dramaturgical metaphor", Goffman borrows from the theater to explain human interaction. Using terms from the actual theater, Goffman argues that individual actors enact performances for audiences in regions referred to as the stage. A performance is "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (1959, p. 22). As in the real theater, performances occur on stage. Goffman argues that the front stage is "where a particular performance is or may be in progress," and the back stage is "where action

occurs that is related to the performance but inconsistent with the appearance fostered by the performance" (p. 134).

But front and back stage, or regions, should not be thought of as fixed geographical locations. Rather, they are relative to one another, where front defines back and back defines front. Furthermore, a location that may at times serve as a front stage, may at other serve as a backstage area. Goffman clarifies the notion of front and backstage: "It must be kept in mind that in speaking of front and back regions we speak from the reference point of a particular performance, and we speak of the function that the place happens to serve at that time for the given performance" (p. 128). The key in understanding the difference between the front and back stages is the activity that takes place there. According to Goffman,

When one's activity occurs in the presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression, are suppressed. It is clear that accentuated facts make their appearance in what I have called a front region; it should be just as clear that there may be another region--a "back region" or "backstage"--where the suppressed facts make an appearance (pp. 111-112).

The suppressed facts that Goffman speaks of are inconsistent with the accentuated facts of the front stage. He states that "a back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance

is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (p. 112).

The reason that people will accentuate certain facts about themselves and suppress others is that people are compelled to present an idealized image of themselves to others. He states that "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behavior as a whole" (1959, p. 35). Idealized impressions are created by accentuating certain facts and suppressing others.

The notion of idealized impressions highlights the importance of creating a consistent image. To create an idealized impression, or in other words, to create a legitimate image, then, an individual must be perceived as being consistent in his or her behavior. Behavior that is inconsistent with the individual's performance will produce a less than idealized impression. "If an individual is to give expression to ideal standards during his performance, then he will have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards" (1959, p. 41).

And the effects of inconsistencies in any one performance can be wide-ranging, so that one inconsistent performance may render all other performances by the individual unsuccessful. As Goffman (1959, p. 65) states

A false impression maintained by an individual in any one of his routines may be a threat to the whole relationship or role of which the routine is only one part, for a discreditable disclosure in one area of an individual's activity will throw doubt on the

many areas of activity in which he may have nothing to conceal.

So the image that an individual fosters for himself or herself is very fragile, susceptible to irretrievable damage. And the damage is usually a loss of reputation. "At any moment in their performance an event may occur to...contradict what they have openly avowed, bringing them...sometimes permanent loss of reputation" (Goffman, 1959, p. 59).

Because of the potential damage to an individual's reputation, Goffman argues that audience segregation is a must for the successful performance of idealized images. Through audience segregation performers ensure that audiences that see one of their performances will not be the same as those who see them in another performance. If individuals observe a performance that was not intended for them, they may become skeptical of that performance, and of any performance that has been or will be intended for them.

For this reason, back regions are usually off limits to audience members, since back regions are where behaviors are enacted that contradict front region performances. Goffman argues that performers must therefore control access to the backstage, and that if access to the backstage is not controlled, then "dramaturgical trouble" will result (p. 134). "When audience segregation fails and an outsider happens upon a performance that was not meant for him, difficult problems in impression management arise" (p. 139).

Goffman argues that errors, mistakes, and secrets are often concealed, so that "an impression of infallibility, so important in many presentations, is maintained" (p. 43). If

concealment of errors, mistakes, and secrets is maintained, and the ideal impression is achieved, then "an impression of legitimacy is thus created" (p. 48).

As mentioned previously, in order to be perceived as being honest, credible, good, and legitimate, individuals must be consistent in their performances. To achieve consistency, performers must segregate audiences so that access to performances is given only to those intended to see the performance, and access to the backstage must be restricted. A further requirement for successful fostering of an idealized impression, or a legitimate image, is information control. The audience must not be allowed to gain access to destructive information about the performer, or about the situation. In short, the performer must be able to keep secrets about him or herself from the audience. Goffman argues that dark secrets, in particular, must be concealed from the audience. In his discussion of teams, Goffman argues that dark secrets "consist of facts about a team which it knows and conceals and which are incompatible with the image of self that the team attempts to maintain before its audience" (p. 141). It is assumed that all performers will have certain secrets--certain facts about themselves that they do not want others to know. Keeping those secrets secret is a requirement for successful performances.

Summary. This section has outlined individual-level image management literature. Erving Goffman's work on impression management in particular was reviewed. His work describes human interaction through the dramaturgical metaphor, and provides a rich description of individuals as actors engaging in performances. His work also provides

requirements for the successful performance of idealized impressions. The requirements of audience segregation, backstage control, and information control all highlight the necessity of maintaining consistency with various audiences. To be successful, performers must follow the requirements and be perceived as being consistent.

Although Goffman restricted his work on impression management to individual actors, the application of his work to corporate communication practices is also fruitful, since corporate actors (e.g., organizations, c.f., Coleman, 1986, on the notion of corporations as actors) also engage in performances for multiple audiences, and must determine which particular role(s) should be enacted with each particular audience (Albert & Whetten, 1985). And although work which links impression management and corporate communication practice is scant (see for example, Scott & Meyer, 1991, Watkins-Allen, & Caillouet, 1994), empirical researchers suggest that corporate actors do indeed utilize many of the same kinds of message strategies that individuals do to manage the impressions that others form of them (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992, Watkins-Allen, & Caillouet, 1994). In the next section work on corporate image management will be reviewed.

### Corporate Image Management

Like individual-level image management, corporate image management involves the use of such strategies as ingratiation, accounts, and apologies to establish and maintain a particular corporate image (Coleman, 1990). According to Cheney & Christensen, image management "means that the organization attempts to both "read" the premises and

attitudes of its audience *and* work to shape them, often *in advance* of any specific crisis or issue debate" (p. 18). Image management is therefore proactive, with proactivity here referring to "a more or less unspecified set of non-defensive or non-reactive practices by way of which organizations handle their relations with the external world" (Cheney & Christensen, p. 18).

Corporate image management has its historical roots in public relations, which began in the late nineteenth century as a response by many organizations to the unfavorable public opinion they were experiencing (Cheney & Vibbert, 1987). The railroads provide a prime example of organizations which were faced with the need to foster a more favorable public image. As Cheney & Vibbert (1987, p. 167) state:

The railroads occupied an unparalleled role in late nineteenth-century American life; they were a source of social and technical marvel among the American population. Additionally, they functioned as an important communicative link that joined Americans of distant locations in ways not before possible. The railroads were the most visible manifestation of American corporate life during this time; with their economic and social visibility came a public airing of their activities. Among those activities...were kickbacks, payoffs, and a host of other deeds that held them in unfavorable light. The railroads, then, were a first and unsurprising locus of public relations.

The initial goal of public relations, which can be defined as "the art of adjusting organizations to environments and environments to organizations" (Cralle & Vibbert,

1986, p. 394), was therefore to defend the public actions of organizations (Cheney & Vibbert, 1987). But in the 1970s many organizations began to utilize public relations for a quite different purpose. Rather than simply *responding* to public opinion, organizations began to *shape* it. Through public relations communication, corporate actors attempt to control the image internal and external constituencies develop of the organization (Cheney & Vibbert, 1987). To that end, today's organization must continually "assess what it is, what it wants to be, and how the environment could be altered to [its] advantage" (Cable & Vibbert, 1987, p. 10). As Cheney & Christensen put it

"Much advertising...reflects the fact that contemporary organizations, with regular intervals, feel the need to remind their various audiences--including their own employees--that they are still part of the corporate landscape; that their actions are legitimate and their business sound...In this way, organizations are enacting self-enhancing rituals much more important than the concrete messages themselves." (p. 23-24)

Cheney and Christensen's argument suggests that there are at least two reasons organizations engage in image management. The first is that organizations must attempt to differentiate themselves from the rest of the pack. But differentiation is difficult, if not impossible (Cheney & Christensen). That does not mean, however, that organizations do not try. Cheney and Christensen argue that corporate image management is increasingly "organized with the major purpose of establishing, developing and celebrating the organization as a distinct and recognizable entity in time and space" (p. 12-13). The

second reason organizations must engage in image management is to maintain the perception on the part of both internal and external constituencies that the organization is legitimate.

### Legitimacy

In the broadest sense, legitimacy can be defined as "the degree of cultural support for an organization" (Meyer & Scott, 1983, p. 201). To achieve legitimacy then, organizations must develop congruence between their own actions and the values of the larger environment in which they do business (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). By environment, I mean the aggregate of organizations and clients/customers in which an organization does business, and also the cultural system in which that aggregate is located. Therefore, when an organization's value system is congruent with the value system of the environment in which it is embedded, then that organization is legitimate.

Legitimacy thus carries a normative dimension in that an organization is perceived as being "good" or has a "right" to continue operations (Bedeian, 1989). A completely legitimated organization, then, is one "about which no question could be raised" (Meyer & Scott, p. 201). Meyer and Scott (1983) put forth a continuum of organizational legitimacy, allowing one to imagine organizations that are completely legitimate to organizations which are completely illegitimate. Completely legitimate organizations have no threat of external (or internal) evaluation, while completely illegitimate organizations continually face these threats both internally and externally.

I have defined legitimacy as congruence with the values of the society in which an

organization is embedded, and the role of organizational communication is to achieve that congruence. Notice then, that the perspective taken here is a rhetorical one, where organizational communication is seen as cultural performance (Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983)-- the goal of which is to align the organization with the dominate symbols, and therefore values, of society. This distinguishes the current research from other, more technically oriented perspectives of organizing, such as economics, where the goal of organizing is assumed to be the achievement of some type of efficiency.

### Crisis Management

At perhaps no time is an organization's legitimate status more salient than during crisis, since a crisis threatens the image of the organization (Barton, 1993; Coombs, 1995). While organizational crises take many forms, certain features of crises remain constant. Specifically, a crisis involves a threat to the organization, the element of surprise, and a short decision time. Barton defines crisis as "a major unpredictable event that has potentially negative results" (1983, p. 2). And Weick argues that crises are "low probability/high consequence events" that can threaten the organization and its goals (1988, p. 305). Given the severity of organizational crisis, more and more practitioners and scholars have sought to provide insights into the effective management of crisis. Crises cannot be entirely avoided, but they can be contained (Barton, 1993).

A main focus of crisis management research has been on what to do before, during, and after a crisis. Pre-crisis planning has received a bulk of the attention, but researchers

have also investigated what organizations do during and after the crisis, with much advice offered on what *should* be done by organizations in these turbulent times. As Coombs (1995) has pointed out, however, less attention has been paid to the actual messages organizations produce after crisis events. These messages are referred to by Coombs as crisis-response strategies, and are goal-directed in that they are produced to attempt to save face for the organization experiencing a crisis, since crisis situations are face-threatening incidents (Benoit, 1995).

Here again, ideas from corporate image management overlap usefully with Goffman's work on individual image management. Individuals confronted with the possibility that their "face" (a normatively derived image) will be compromised by problematic events engage in "face-work...actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face" (Goffman, 1955, p. 216). Crisis response strategies therefore can be seen as a type of face work in which organizational communication is intended to save face; literally, save the organization's good name. As illustrated in the introduction to this chapter, the last twenty-five years has witnessed many notable cases in which intentional, organizational face work has been contradicted by subsequent messages (leaks, disclosures, and whistle blowing) from the organization backstage. Virtually unknown is how these messages affect the efficacy of face-work messages to maintain legitimate organizational images, whether such contradictions affect actions taken by relevant constituencies toward the organizations in question, and the organization environment conditions that may affect these processes.

Summary. In this section, image management literature, and crisis management literature has been reviewed. Several assumptions follow from this review, and are relied on in the development of hypotheses for the investigation. First, organizations, like individuals, will engage in strategic communication behaviors to cultivate and maintain particular images of themselves in the eyes of their various audiences (stakeholders). Second, actors, corporate or individual, must present consistent images of themselves. Consistent image management leads to successful performances, inconsistent image management leads to unsuccessful performances. This assumption comes primarily from the work of Goffman, who argues that individuals must present consistent images to be successful. Third, if audiences are able to view both frontstage and backstage behaviors, then the performance will typically be unsuccessful, since backstage behavior is inconsistent with frontstage behavior. At the organizational level, knowledge of backstage regions by outsiders will typically occur through unintentional messages. Goffman's notions of front stage and back stage are relied on in this assumption, which suggests that because of the nature of back stage behavior, organizations should segregate their audiences so that audiences only see performances designed for their consumption. Fourth, organizations will attempt to create and maintain legitimate images with their stakeholders. And finally, in the aftermath of crisis, organizations will engage in strategic communication behaviors designed to influence target perceptions of the organization's legitimacy. Based upon these assumptions and the discussion of image management, the

following hypothesis is forwarded:

H1: Message consistency will influence perceptions of organizational legitimacy, such that organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages will be perceived as being more legitimate than organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages.

Message consistency here refers to the consistency between front stage and back stage behaviors. When front and back stage are consistent with one another, legitimacy will be enhanced, but when front and back stage are inconsistent with one another, legitimacy will diminish.

An intriguing but unanswered question concerning organizational legitimacy is whether particular features or characteristics of organizations will affect perceptions of legitimacy. Certainly different industries and market niches are perceived differently. Banks have a different status than automobile parts stores, the medical field is perceived differently than the casino industry and so on. One interesting issue concerns different types of organizations within an industry or organizational field. Are different types of organizations within an industry perceived differently? That question is addressed in the next section.

#### Niche-Width Dynamics

Organizational ecologists have identified an important variable in the study of organizational types--niche width (Baum & Oliver, 1991; Brittain, 1994; Carroll, 1985; Freeman & Hannan, 1983; Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Singh, Tucker, & Meinhard, 1988;

Singh, Tucker & Meinhard, 1991). The niche of any particular population "consists of combinations of resource abundances and constraints in which members can arise and persist" (Hannan & Freeman, 1989, p. 50). One could think of resource abundances as available or potential resources for the production of goods or services, while potential constraints include what is referred to as the carrying capacity of an environment, which refers to the "numbers that can be sustained in a particular environment" (Hannan & Carroll, 1992, p. 29).

Populations therefore vary in niche size, or in the terminology of organizational ecology, they vary in niche width. As Hannan and Carroll (1992, p. 159) state:

In ecological terms, the level of specialism in a population is a matter of *niche width*.

When the niche is broadly based and organizational populations can survive on a variety of different resources, the population is composed of generalists. When organizations of a particular form depend on a narrow range of resources, they constitute a specialist population.

An organization's niche-width is therefore defined in terms of specialism or generalism. Specialist organizations are better suited to particular features of the environment, while generalist organizations have characteristics that are adapted to a wider range of environmental conditions. According to Tucker, Singh, and Meinhard (1990), "specialists operate in single domains and have narrow niches; generalists operate in multiple domains and have broad niches" (p. 155). Because specialists appeal to a narrower aspect of the environment, their organizational structures will be simpler, in

relation to generalists, which have more complex organizational structures, designed to facilitate interaction with a more diverse environment.

The question addressed here is whether specialist organizations and generalist organizations are perceived differently in their environment. No research to date has empirically examined the relationship between niche-width and organizational legitimacy. But there is literature that speaks to the issue, and from that literature, an argument can be formulated that suggests that generalist organizations are perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations.

First of all, Stinchcombe (1965) argued that younger organizations experience what he referred to as a liability of newness. The liability of newness leads to greater death rates among newer organizations than older ones. This is because, he argued, newer organizations have not developed the kind of cooperative relationships necessary for success, and have low levels of legitimacy. Singh, Tucker, and House (1986) found empirical support for the claim that there is a liability of newness, and they found that this was due to reduced rates of legitimacy. Other research has found that there is a liability of smallness (Freeman, Carroll, & Hannan, 1983). This research found that smaller organizations experience greater death rates than bigger organizations.

Hannan and Carroll argue that "processes of legitimation and competition frequently interact with processes of niche width" (1992, p. 48), but do not hypothesize exactly what the relationship is like. One could speculate, as Hannan and Carroll (1992) have, that the

liabilities of newness and smallness are particularly relevant to specialist organizations, since specialist organizations are typically smaller and their forms are newer, and have "not (yet) been legitimated" (p. 36). I argue that there is enough theoretical evidence to conclude that organizational legitimacy is influenced by niche width. The following hypothesis is provided to test the relationship between organizational legitimacy and niche width.

H2: Generalist organizations are perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations.

So far, hypotheses regarding message consistency and niche width have been created separately. But the discussion of message consistency and niche width and their possible effects on perceptions of organizational legitimacy suggest other relationships that may also be hypothesized. Specifically, the integration of the theoretical work on image management and on niche width leads to a question of how these ideas relate to one another, and how the combination of these two organizational phenomena affect perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Are generalist organizations that produce consistent messages in their front and backstage communication behavior perceived as being more or less legitimate than specialist organizations that produce consistent messages? And, are generalist organizations that produce inconsistent messages perceived as being more or less legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent messages and so on.

I provide here several hypotheses to test the relationship between message consistency and niche width. They all rest on the assumption that organizational communication behavior overrides the niche width of an organization. There are at least two reasons for this assumption. First, this research, in keeping with organizational communication research generally, takes on a message-centered approach to the study of organizations. Organizations are created and maintained through internal and external communication processes. Without these communication processes, the technical and economic activities of organizations would be impossible. As Cooren and Taylor (1997) put it, "in the absence of communication there would be no 'organization'" (p. 221).

Second, given the kind of legitimacy relied on in this investigation, which is a perception on the part of environmental representatives of the "goodness" of an organization, the messages produced by an organization are predictably more important than structural characteristics of the organization. That is to say, when evaluating an organization in regards to its qualities of goodness, honesty, trustworthiness, and credibility, the focus will be on the actions of the organization, and in particular on the communicative actions of the organization.

With these assumptions in mind, the following hypotheses are forwarded:

H3: Message consistency and niche-width, when combined, produce the following hypotheses:

- a. Generalist organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages will

- be perceived as being more legitimate than generalist organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages.
- b. Specialist organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages will be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages.
  - c. Generalist organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages will be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages
  - d. Generalist organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages will be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages.
  - e. A linear relationship exists, such that generalist organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages will be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce consistent crisis-response messages, will be perceived as being more legitimate than generalist organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages, will be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent crisis-response messages.

These hypotheses are derived from the synthesis of the theory and research in crisis management, image management, and concepts drawn from organizational ecology.

They predict testable relationships between message consistency, niche width, and organizational legitimacy. The next chapter will describe the methodology used to test these hypotheses.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHOD

#### Overview of Study

The design of this study allowed for the manipulation of message consistency and an organization environment condition that could affect the efficacy of crisis-response messages--niche width. Participants in the study responded to a questionnaire that contained message pairs attributed to a United States based commercial air carrier (See Appendices E, F, G). The hypothetical message pairs were produced by the airline in response to an incident that occurred during the airline's operations. The pairs were either consistent with one another or inconsistent with one another. One message was an internal document and one was an external document. The internal document, which was an e-mail message from the organization's CEO, represented the back stage, while the external document, a news release, represented the front stage.

To manipulate niche width, the commercial air carrier was described as being either a generalist or a specialist organization. Additionally, following the advice from Jackson and Jacobs (1983), four messages were produced for the instantiation of the treatment variables. The manipulation of these variables resulted in 16 different possible conditions to which participants were randomly assigned.

After reading the message pairs, participants responded to a set of questions designed to test the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables of interest. Specifically, questionnaire items enabled the effects of message consistency and niche

width on organizational legitimacy to be tested.

In order to measure the effects of consistent and inconsistent message pairs on organizational legitimacy, it was first necessary to develop messages that varied in consistency. The specific nature of this process will be discussed in the next section.

#### Development of Experimental Materials

The task presented to subjects in the main study involved reading pairs of messages produced by an organization that had experienced a crisis event, and responding to a series of items designed to test the effects of these message pairs, and of their knowledge of the organization itself, on the dependent measures. The development of the materials involved two steps: the creation of representative messages as context for the manipulations, and the identification of key words and phrases within the messages that signified the manipulation of message strategy consistency.

Topics and content for the experimental messages were generated by examining news releases, in-flight magazines, employee newsletters, and organizational web pages on the Internet of several United States commercial air carriers. The United States airline industry was chosen for two reasons. First, the airline industry provides a good context for crisis-response strategies, since airline accidents are typically severe, involve injury or human loss, and receive national (and frequently international) media coverage. Moreover, there have been a number of accidents over the last several years. According to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), from 1982-1995 there were 310 accidents involving U.S. based air carriers, with 1,642 persons dying as a result (NTSB).

How airlines respond to these crises is critical for their survival, as recent industry crises demonstrate. Three examples provide support for this claim: The bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, the crash of TWA Flight 800 in 1996, and the ValuJet crash in the Everglades, Florida, in 1996.

On the evening of December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 exploded and crashed to the ground in Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 259 people on board, and 11 people on the ground. Many of the passengers who died on the flight which was en route from London to New York City were American. Pan Am was at that time one of the largest and most well-known airlines in the world. The cause of the crash was identified as a bomb that was placed in checked baggage. Lax security put in place by then CEO Martin Shugrue allowed the bomb on the flight. Shugrue never accepted responsibility for that, and as a result, family members of victims and others are still outraged.

In 1991, Pan Am declared bankruptcy and ceased operations. In 1992 a jury awarded almost \$20 million to victims' families. Financial problems stemming from the crash are what led to the demise of the company. According to Evan Perez, Associated Press Writer, Pan Am was "forced to fold" in 1991 "in the wake of the 1988 bombing of Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people" (Perez, 1996, p. 1). In 1996 Pan Am began minimal operations again, under the direction of Shugrue. But not without protest. Many families and friends of the victims are outraged that Shugrue would even attempt to re-start the airline. According to Rosemary West, who lost a 20-year old step daughter in the crash, "We're certainly not going to make it easy for Pan Am to fly"

(Victim's Families Outraged, 1996, p. 1).

The second example is the crash of TWA Flight 800, which exploded 13 minutes after take-off from New York's JFK airport, July 17, 1996, killing all 230 people aboard. Although TWA has a good reputation as a dependable company, the response to the crash caused problems for TWA. TWA was slow in releasing the list of victims' names to the public, leaving families in limbo. Their poor handling of the incident overall led the Mayor of New York to publicly lambast the company. Also, the poor response led to internal re-organization. According to *The Public Relations Strategist*, "When 230 people died after TWA Flight 800 exploded over Long Island, the company badly fumbled the crisis response and the CEO ultimately lost his job" ("Rebounding from Tragedy," 1997, p. 6).

The final example is the ValuJet crash that occurred on May 11, 1996, in the Florida Everglades. A fire broke out on the flight shortly after take-off from Miami International Airport, causing the plane to crash, and all 110 people on board to die. The airline had been criticized for its old aircraft, and a number of incidents including a hard landing in Nashville, and overrunning a runway at Washington National in 1996 (Zengerle, 1997, p. 1). But in the wake of the tragedy, then President, and current CEO Lewis Jordan responded with honesty about the accident and concern for the victims. Because of his response, ValuJet has survived. According to *The Public Relations Strategist*, "Through it all and continuing to the present, ValuJet's Jordan has continually expressed a sincere concern for the families touched by the tragedy and a steadfast resolve that ValuJet, as an

airline would overcome its awful diversity. And thus far, despite significant odds against it, ValuJet has returned to the skies and is, slowly but steadily, increasing its routes and regaining customer confidence" ("Rebounding from Tragedy", 1997, p. 7). What the ValuJet, TWA, and PanAm examples demonstrate is the importance placed on airline disasters by the general public and the media, and the importance of a proper response on the part of the airline.

The second reason for choosing the airline industry is that it is an industry where organizational legitimacy is of paramount concern. Legitimacy concerns are different for different kinds of organizations. As Seeger states, "those institutions highly dependent upon favorable environmental relations are likely to emphasize legitimation strategies" (1986, p. 148). When aboard an airplane at 30,000 feet, an individual wants to feel confident in the organization operating the aircraft, so that the passenger can be relatively certain that the plane will not crash and that the passenger will not die. In other industries, the dry cleaning industry for example, while legitimacy is important (e.g., a customer wants to feel confident that their clothes will be treated well and will be returned on-time, clean, and in the same condition they were in when they were left at the cleaners), I argue that it is not as important as in the airline industry. A commercial airliner must be perceived to be legitimate in order to survive.

This brings up an issue of the kind of legitimacy I am talking about here. In various literatures there are at least three identifiable kinds of legitimacy discussed. First there is the cognitive type of legitimacy that was developed primarily in organizational ecology.

This is equated with taken-for-grantedness, or "whether people take a particular organizational form for granted" (Carroll & Hannan, 1989, p. 546). The second type of legitimacy found in the literature is what may be called sociocultural-legal, developed by institutionalists. Institutionalists argue that "conformity to social norms of the external institutional environment gives an organization legitimacy" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott & Meyer, 1991). Organizations are therefore compelled to institute the programs and policies that have been institutionalized in society if they wish to be legitimated. The kind of legitimacy relied on here could be labeled normative/ethical. This type of legitimacy is defined as the perception that an organization is good and has a right to continue operations (c.f., Bedeian, 1989). Notice here that legitimacy is a perceived quality of organizations. This type of legitimacy is particularly important for organizations like airlines, where the perception that the organization is good, safe, honest, and credible are of paramount concern.

### Message Replications

Rather than instantiating the contrast in treatments within a single message, multiple instantiations of the treatment contrast were used. The argument for doing this is that when using only a single message to test the effects of the treatment variables, one cannot be certain if the effects that obtain are due to the manipulation of these variables or some other feature of the message itself. When a replicated design is employed that allows for multiple instantiations of the treatment contrast, it is possible to measure this kind of

message-to-message variability.

This issue is of course at the heart of a long-standing debate in message effects research (see Jackson & Jacobs, 1983, Jackson, O'Keefe, & Jacobs, 1988; Burgoon, Hall, & Pfau, 1991; Jackson, Brashers, & Massey, 1992; Jackson, 1992). Several researchers have suggested that message-to-message variability is negligible, at best, and that researchers should therefore assume uniform variability and should use single-message designs (e.g., Hunter, Hamilton, & Allen, 1989). As has been demonstrated empirically (Jackson & Jacobs, 1987), however, there is too much evidence of message-by-treatment interactions to permit researchers to assert with confidence that treatment effects will not vary across messages (Jackson, O'Keefe, Jacobs, & Brashers, 1989). Given the uncertainty of the assumptions of single-message designs, then, designs which incorporate multiple instantiations of the treatment effect are preferred, since only by using multiple messages can researchers attempt to estimate message-to-message variability.

Known as treatment-by-replication designs, these designs differ from the single-message design only in that multiple kernel messages are produced. The same type of control procedures are used when the treatment variables are applied to the kernel messages (i.e., identification of treatment spaces and insertion of treatment segments into those spaces). The argument for the use of treatment by replication designs rests on the assumption that "observed relationships between treatments and outcomes will vary with the specific message materials used to instantiate treatments, even when materials have

been controlled so far as current conceptualizations allow" (Jackson, 1994, p. 1).

Treatment-by-replication designs are superior to well controlled single-message designs because even when researchers control everything within their power, they cannot control the message content itself. Rather than allowing that source of uncontrolled variance into the design, researchers should adopt treatment-by-replication designs so that message variability is a controlled source of variation. This investigation relies on a treatment-by-replication design to test the effects of message strategy consistency and niche-width on organizational legitimacy.

#### Selection of Messages for Main Investigation

Eight messages were produced that are based on actual events that have occurred in the airline industry recently (see Appendix C for each message). To determine which of the eight messages should be used in the main investigation, a manipulation check was performed to determine which of the message pairs were judged by participants as being most consistent and inconsistent with one another in terms of their message strategy selection. The four messages that were judged as having the most variability between consistent and inconsistent version were selected for use in the main study.

#### Participants

Participants (N=320) were students enrolled in communication courses at a large western university and were offered extra course credit for their participation. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the 16 conditions produced by the 2 x 8 design, resulting in 20 participants per cell. In each condition participants were asked to

provide their ratings of the consistency of the message pair they had read.

### Experimental Design

A 2 (Message Strategy Consistency) x 8 (Message Replications) design was used to determine which of the message pairs were most consistent and most inconsistent. Each participant was randomly selected to one message condition, so that each participant responded only to one message pair that was either consistent or inconsistent. The manipulations to the messages had been conducted prior to the participants reading the messages, and the participants' job was to identify which message pairs exhibited the most variation from consistent to inconsistent version.

### Procedures

Participants were presented with messages attributed to an organization experiencing crisis, and were asked to read the messages that the organization had produced in response to the crisis. Their task was to rate the message pair they were exposed to on its consistency (see Appendix B).

## The Main Investigation

### Participants

Participants (N=320) were students enrolled in introduction to sociology courses at a large western university and were offered extra course credit for their participation. This particular course was chosen because it is a general education requirement and therefore attracts a broad-base of students from the university. The sample included 60% females, 40% males, was fairly homogeneous ethnically, with 92% Caucasian, 2% African-American, 2% native-American, 1% Asian-American, and 1.3% Hispanic. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 50 years and averaged 21 years of age.

### Experimental Design

A 2 (message strategy consistency) x 2 (niche-width) x 4 (message replications) design was used to test the hypotheses. The levels of the consistency variable are consistent and inconsistent, niche-width levels are generalist and specialist, and the message replications variable represents the four messages selected for use in the main investigation.

### Procedures

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the 16 conditions. Questionnaires were conducted in class. The first page of the questionnaire is a cover-page that served three functions. First, the cover page informed participants of what they were being asked to do, which was to read the messages and answer the questions that followed the messages. Participants were instructed to focus on the consistency of the message pairs as they read the messages, and particularly on what the subject of the messages was and who was

responsible for what had occurred.

The cover page also served to inform participants that what they were about to read were messages based on actual events that had occurred in the airline industry and that the messages were both produced by Pacific Airways (fictitious name attributed to each message) in response to an incident that had occurred during Pacific Airways' operations. Participants were informed that the first message was sent to the employees of Pacific Airways via electronic mail, and the second message was sent to the national media as a news release.

Finally, the cover page provided an opportunity for the manipulation of niche-width. This was done by describing Pacific Airway in one of two ways--as either a specialist or a generalist. The first, a specialist organization, was described as an organization that had been in operation for five years, one that had a limited route through the United States with no international service, a small fleet of aircraft, and being a low-fare carrier. The generalist organization was described as having been in operation for 49 years, with routes throughout the United States and internationally, having one of the largest fleets of any airliner in the world, and being a full-service carrier (one that provides in-flight entertainment and meal and beverage service).

The reasons for describing the specialist and generalist organizations in this way are two-fold. First, as Hannan and Freeman explain, generalist organizations are "organizations with many routines," where a "repertoire of routines is the set of collective actions that [an organization] can do" (1989, p. 76). Specialist organizations, on the other

hand, will “commit most of their resources to a few tactics for dealing with the environment,” and therefore “specialist organizations will appear to be leaner than generalists” (Hannan and Freeman, 1989, p. 106). Hannan and Freeman then state that “organizations and their designers face a classic problem: should they seek to become jacks-of-all-trades [generalists], or should they concentrate on developing one or a few capacities [specialists]?” (1989, p. 106). Specialists and generalists were classified as they were for theoretical reasons. Specialist organizations in the U.S. airline industry are “lean and mean”, while generalists are “jacks-of-all-trades”.

The second reason for describing the specialist and generalist carriers in this way is that according to research conducted on the U.S. airline industry, there are organizations that are “jacks-of-all-trades” and there are “lean and mean” organizations as well. This research has defined certain air carriers as specialists and certain carriers as generalists in niche-width terms (see Table 1). Specialist organizations are identified as those carriers which do not typically offer food-service in flight, do not have international service, do not offer first class seating, are young relative to the older, generalist organizations, do not offer in-flight entertainment, have a limited service route, have fewer aircraft than their generalist counterparts, do not typically offer airport club service, and have a small fleet variation. Examples of specialists in the U.S. airline industry include Alaska Airlines, America West, Reno Air, Southwest Airlines, and Western Pacific.

Generalist air carriers do typically offer food service, offer international flights, are older than their younger, specialist counterparts, provide in-flight entertainment, service a

large number of airports worldwide, have large fleets, offer airport club service, and have a large fleet variation. Examples of generalists in the U.S. airline industry include American Airlines, Continental, Delta, Northwest, TWA, United and USAir.

**TABLE 1**  
**Generalist and Specialist Commercial Air Carriers**  
**in the United States Airline Industry**

Carrier	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Alaska	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	1	1
America West	1	0	1	1	1	3	2	0	1
American	1	1	1	3	1	4	7	1	4
Continental	1	1	1	3	1	4	5	1	2
Delta	1	1	1	3	1	4	7	1	3
Northwest	1	1	1	3	1	5	5	1	2
Reno	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
Southwest	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	0	1
TWA	1	1	1	3	1	3	4	1	2
United	1	1	1	3	1	4	6	1	3
USAir	1	1	1	3	1	4	6	1	3
Western Pacific	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1

- A= Food service  
 B= International Flights (beyond Mexico/Canada)  
 C= First Class Seats  
 D= Age (0-15 years = 1, 16-25 = 2, 26-75 = 3)  
 E= In-flight Entertainment  
 F= Number of airports served (0-25 = 1, 26-50 = 2, 51-100 = 3, 101-200 = 4, 201-300 = 5)  
 G= Size of Fleet (0-25 = 1, 26-100 = 2, 101-200 = 3, 201-300 = 4, 301-400=5, 401-500 = 6, 501-1000 = 7)  
 H= Airport Club  
 I= Fleet Variation/Number of Different Types of Aircraft (0-5 = 1, 6-10 = 2, 11-15 = 3, 16-20 = 4)

\*Note: These data were obtained in a variety of ways, including phone conversations with reservation agents and headquarters department members, and also by referring to in-flight magazines and airline homepages on the world wide web. The data were obtained on or about October 13, 1995. American Airlines fleet size is based on May 5, 1997 data.

Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that by completing the questionnaire they were giving their consent that their responses to the questions could be used as data for the investigation. They were further instructed that their responses were entirely anonymous, and they were thanked for their participation.

The second page of the questionnaire contained questions about the participants' experiences with air travel. Specifically, the questions were designed to identify participants' experiences with the airline industry and to determine their attitudes regarding air travel. Once these questions had been answered, respondents were then instructed to proceed and to read the first message which was an e-mail that was sent by the CEO of Pacific Airways to the employees of Pacific Airways. After reading that message, participants were instructed to continue to the second message, which was a news release sent out to the national media. Both messages were produced in response to the same incident at Pacific Airways. In the news release format, it was possible to again manipulate niche-width by putting at the bottom of the page that Pacific Airways is either "the low-fare carrier," or "the full-service carrier," depending on the condition a respondent had been exposed to.

Once the participant had read the two messages they were then asked a series of questions that were designed to test whether they comprehended the content of the messages, and whether they had understood the manipulation of niche-width. After this

series of questions, participants were then asked a number of questions that were designed to assess the effects of the independent variables on the legitimacy dependent measure, as well as an honesty dependent measure and a consistency dependent measure. Additionally, a number of demographic items were included as co-variates in the analysis.

### Dependent Measures

The dependent measure in this investigation is the perception of organizational legitimacy. As mentioned previously, legitimacy has been defined in at least three ways in the literature. In this research, legitimacy is conceptualized as the perception that an organization is good, honest, credible, and has a right to continue operations. Several items were included on the questionnaire to operationalize this notion of legitimacy. Legitimacy was operationalized in this investigation through the following items, which are statements that are followed in the questionnaire by a 7-point Likert scale: Pacific Airways is a safe organization; Pacific Airways is a legitimate organization; Pacific Airways is a credible organization; Pacific Airways is a good organization; Pacific Airways should be allowed to fly passengers; Pacific Airways is a good organization; Pacific Airways should be allowed to continue operations.

Two other dependent measures were included in the analysis: message strategy consistency and honesty. First, to determine whether participants had judged the message strategies as being consistent or inconsistent from the first message to the second, a series

of items were included. These included statements like “The E-mail and the Press Release are consistent with one another,” “The E-mail and the Press Release are similar to one another,” “The E-mail and the Press Release are alike.” Second, to determine whether participants had judged Pacific Airways as being honest or dishonest, items were included to assess this. These items are “Pacific Airways is trying to cover something up,” “Pacific Airways is being honest about the incident,” “Pacific Airways is hiding something.”

#### Co-Variates

Several co-variates were also included on the questionnaire to determine whether they influenced perceptions of legitimacy in any way. These co-variates are: gender, age, ethnicity, income, whether the participant works/has worked for the airline industry, whether the participant has a pilot’s license, whether the participant has ever flown in a commercial airplane, and how risky the participant regards flying in commercial airplanes. These co-variates were selected to determine if certain characteristics might affect perceptions of legitimacy. A person's gender, age, ethnicity, and income were included for this reason. Also, experience with the airline industry might also have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy, so that if a person has worked for the airline industry, or not, whether the person has a private pilot's license, whether the person has flown in a commercial aircraft, and how risky the person believes flying is might all impact legitimacy perceptions.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

#### Manipulation Checks

A manipulation check was conducted initially to determine which of the eight messages produced had the largest amount of variation between the consistent and the inconsistent version. Four messages were selected from this analysis for the main investigation. Three items were used to determine consistency between the two types of messages): alike, similar, consistent (see Appendix E for sample questionnaire). The alike item read "The E-Mail and the News Release are alike." The similar item read "The E-Mail and the News Release are similar to one another." And the consistent item read "The E-Mail and the News Release are consistent with one another." All three items are on a 1 to 7 Likert-type scale, with 1 being Strongly Agree and 7 being Strongly Disagree. A higher mean indicates more inconsistency, a lower mean indicates more consistency.

An inter-item reliability analysis determined that reliability between the three measures was high ( $\alpha = .90$ ), so a test of significance was performed with the three items collapsed into one scale item for consistency. A significant main effect for type obtained,  $F(1,319) = 153.49, p < .05$ , indicating that type was statistically significant regardless of message. There was not a significant type by message interaction,  $F(7,313) = 1.11, p > .05$ . There was also a significant main effect for type on the honesty dependent measure,  $F(1,319) = 241.77, p < .05$ . The means for each message are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

## Message Means for Manipulation Check

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<u>Message #1: Pensacola</u>	<b>Alike</b>	<b>Consistent</b>	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Honest</b>
Consistent:	3.35	3.00	2.75	1.35
Inconsistent:	4.35	4.85	4.25	1.95
<u>Message #2: LAX</u>				
Consistent:	2.95	2.85	2.95	1.15
Inconsistent:	4.60	5.35	4.80	1.85
<u>Message #3: DFW</u>				
Consistent:	2.60	2.45	2.75	1.15
Inconsistent:	4.85	5.00	4.70	1.90
<u>Message #4: Chicago</u>				
Consistent:	3.90	3.40	3.55	1.15
Inconsistent:	4.90	5.15	4.95	1.80
<u>Message #5: New York</u>				
Consistent:	2.75	2.45	2.70	1.15
Inconsistent:	4.10	4.60	4.10	1.90
<u>Message #6: Las Vegas</u>				
Consistent:	3.10	3.20	3.10	1.40
Inconsistent:	4.35	4.90	4.20	1.75
<u>Message #7: Tucson</u>				
Consistent:	2.35	3.05	2.40	1.10
Inconsistent:	4.15	5.00	3.85	2.00
<u>Message #8: Iowa</u>				
Consistent:	2.80	2.50	2.60	1.15
Inconsistent:	4.50	4.65	4.80	1.65

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### Preliminary Analyses

Reliabilities for the items on the questionnaire that were used to operationalize the dependent measures were conducted. For consistency there were three items: similar, alike, consistent. The inter-item reliability for this was high ( $\alpha = .93$ ). For honesty there were also three items: cover-up, hiding something, and honest. The inter-item reliability for this was also high ( $\alpha = .87$ ). For the organizational legitimacy dependent variable there were six items: legitimate, good, safe, credible, ought to be allowed to continue operations, ought to be allowed to fly passengers. The inter-item reliability for this was high as well ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Because of the high inter-item reliabilities for each of these three dependent measure items, scales were collapsed into one item for each dependent measure, which was the mean of the items on the scale.

### Co-variates

Several co-variates were included in the analysis and were tested for their influence on the dependent measures. Participant age was not significant,  $F(3,285) = 1.09, p > .05$ . Participant education level was also not significant  $F(3,285) = 1.15, p = > .05$ . Participant ethnicity was significant,  $F(3,285) = 5.05, p = < .05$ . Participant gender was not significant,  $F(3,285) = .201, p = > .05$ . Participant income was not significant,  $F(3,285) = .828, p = > .05$ . Participants' perception of the general riskiness of flying on a commercial airplane was not significant,  $F(3,285) = 1.57, p = > .05$ . Participants' perception of the riskiness of flying on a low-fare (specialist) carrier was not significant,

$F(3,285) = 1.66, p = > .05$ . Participants' perception of the riskiness of flying on a full-service (generalist) carrier was not significant,  $F(3,285) = 1.18, p = > .05$ . Whether participants had a private pilot's license was not significant,  $F(3,285) = 2.17, p = > .05$ . Whether participants worked for the airline industry ( $n=10$ ) was significant  $F(3,285) = 3.98, p = < .05$ . Whether participants had flown in a commercial airplane was not significant,  $F(3,285) = .487, p = > .05$ .

### Hypotheses

#### Hypothesis 1: Message Consistency

The prediction that message consistency will influence perceptions of organizational legitimacy was tested with a 4 (message) x 2 (type: consistent/inconsistent) x 2 (niche-width) analysis of variance. Message, type and niche-width are between-subjects factors. Organizational legitimacy was the dependent measure for this hypothesis. In all tests of the hypotheses, replications were treated as a random factor. There was a significant main effect for type,  $F(1,3) = 44.72, p < .05$ . Means for type demonstrate that the difference was in the predicted direction (see Table 3). There was no message by type interaction,  $F(3,303) = 1.63, p > .05$ .

Although not included as factors in the hypothesis, the two other dependent measures, honesty and consistency, were also analyzed using the 4 (message) x 2 (consistency) x 2 (niche-width) analysis of variance. There was a significant main effect for type on the consistency dependent measure,  $F(1,3) = 211.64, p < .05$ . There was no

TABLE 3

Type (consistent/inconsistent) Means by Message

<u>Message #1: Tucson</u>	<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Legitimacy</b>
Consistent:	2.475	4.125	2.885
Inconsistent:	5.792	4.092	4.485
<u>Message #2: NYC</u>			
Consistent:	2.217	4.433	2.900
Inconsistent:	5.950	4.117	4.135
<u>Message #3: LAX</u>			
Consistent:	3.150	3.917	3.215
Inconsistent:	5.842	3.976	4.050
<u>Message #4: DFW</u>			
Consistent:	2.083	4.217	2.625
Inconsistent:	5.275	4.117	3.735

Note: These data are based on results from Likert scale items that range from 1 to 7, with 1 being Strongly Agree, and 7 being Strongly Disagree. A lower mean therefore indicates a more positive score on the item, while a higher mean indicates a more negative score on the item.

TABLE 4

## Niche-Width (Generalist/Specialist) Means by Message

<u>Message #1: Tucson</u>	<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Honesty</b>	<b>Legitimacy</b>
Generalist:	4.467	4.050	3.605
Specialist:	3.800	4.167	3.765
<u>Message #2: NYC</u>			
Generalist:	4.258	4.250	3.340
Specialist:	3.908	4.300	3.695
<u>Message #3: LAX</u>			
Generalist:	4.300	3.917	3.185
Specialist:	4.692	3.967	4.080
<u>Message #4: DFW</u>			
Generalist:	3.583	4.308	2.690
Specialist:	3.775	4.025	3.670

Note: These data are based on results from Likert scale items that range from 1 to 7, with 1 being Strongly Agree, and 7 being Strongly Disagree. A lower mean therefore indicates a more positive score on the item, while a higher mean indicates a more negative score on the item.

significant main effect for type on the honesty dependent measure,  $F(1,3) = 1.68, p > .05$ .

### Hypothesis 2: Niche-Width

The prediction that niche-width will influence perceptions of organizational legitimacy was tested with a 4 (message) x 2 (niche-width) x 2 (consistency) analysis of variance. Message, niche-width and consistency are between-subjects factors.

Organizational legitimacy was the dependent measure for this analysis. There was a main effect for niche,  $F(1,3) = 10.30, p < .05$ . Means for niche demonstrate that the difference was in the predicted direction (see Table 4). There was no niche by message interaction effect  $F(3,303) = 1.85, p > .05$ .

As was done for hypothesis one, analyses were performed for the other two dependent measures, even though these measures were not factors in the hypothesis. A 4 (message) x 2 (niche) x 2 (consistency) analysis of variance was conducted for both honesty and consistency. There was not a significant main effect for niche on the consistency dependent measure,  $F(1,3) = .03, p > .05$ . There also was no significant main effect for niche on the honesty dependent measure,  $F(1,3) = .0004, p > .05$ .

### Hypotheses 3: Message Consistency and Niche-Width

Five relationships between message consistency and niche-width were predicted. Hypothesis 3a predicted that generalist organizations that produce consistent messages would be perceived as being more legitimate than generalist organizations that produce inconsistent messages. An analysis was conducted with organizational legitimacy as the

dependent measure, and a significant effect was obtained  $t(158) = -7.161, p < .05$ .

Analyses were also conducted on the other two dependent measures, consistency and honesty. For the consistency measure a significant effect did obtain  $t(158) = -16.00, p < .05$ . No significant effect was obtained for the honesty measure,  $t(158) = 1.334, p > .05$ .

Hypothesis 3b predicted that specialist organizations that produce consistent messages would be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent messages. An analysis was conducted with organizational legitimacy as the dependent measure, and a significant effect was obtained,  $t(158) = -4.56, p < .05$ . For the consistency measure, there was also a significant effect,  $t(158) = -15.12, p < .05$ , but for the honesty measure there was no significant effect,  $t(158) = -.084, p > .05$ .

Hypothesis 3c predicted that generalist organizations that produce consistent messages would be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce consistent messages. A t-test was run with organizational legitimacy as the dependent measure, and a significant effect obtained  $t(158) = -4.45, p < .05$ . For the honesty measure, no significant effect was observed,  $t(158) = .809, p > .05$ . There was also no significant effect observed for the consistency measure,  $t(158) = .473, p > .05$ .

Hypothesis 3d predicted that generalist organizations that produce inconsistent messages would be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent messages. A t-test was run with organizational legitimacy as the

dependent measure, and no significant effect obtained  $t(158) = -1.584, p > .05$ . T-tests were also conducted on the honest and consistency measures. For the honesty measure no significant effect was observed,  $t(158) = -.447, p > .05$ . Neither was a significant effect observed for the consistency measure,  $t(158) = .577, p > .05$ .

Further analysis was conducted to determine if any of the five items on the legitimacy scale produced significant results. The first item, "Pacific Airlines is a legitimate organization" was analyzed and no significant result was observed,  $t(158) = -.466, p > .05$ . The second item, "Pacific Airlines is a good organization" also was analyzed and no significant result was observed,  $t(158) = -1.66, p > .05$ . The third item, "Pacific Airways is a safe organization" was analyzed and a significant result obtained,  $t(158) = -1.996, p < .05$ . The fourth item, "Pacific Airways is a credible organization" was analyzed with the t-test and no significant result was observed,  $t(158) = -1.546, p > .05$ . The fifth item, "Pacific Airways ought to be allowed to continue operations" was analyzed and a significant result was observed here also,  $t(158) = -2.169, p < .05$ . The final item, "Pacific Airways ought to be allowed to fly passengers" was analyzed and no significant effect was found  $t(158) = -.952, p > .05$ .

To further analyze the relationship between message consistency and niche-width, a linear analysis was performed. It may be helpful to represent the relationships between these two variables in a matrix. This matrix is presented in Table 5. The matrix contains the two independent variables included in the analysis, message consistency and

TABLE 5

## Message Consistency by Niche-Width Matrix

		<b>Message Consistency</b>	
		Consistent	Inconsistent
<b>Niche-Width</b>	Generalist	Cell #1	Cell #3
	Specialist	Cell #2	Cell #4

niche-width. Message consistency is a two-level variable, with consistent and inconsistent versions of the message pair. Niche-width is also a two-level variable, with messages attributed to either a specialist or a generalist organization. This results in four cells. Cell 1 contains generalist organizations producing consistent messages, cell 2 contains specialist organizations producing consistent messages, cell 3 contains generalist organizations producing inconsistent messages, and cell 4 contains specialist organizations producing inconsistent messages.

Hypothesis 3e predicts that there will be a linear relationship between these variables, so that cell 1 > cell 2 > cell 3 > cell 4 on the organizational legitimacy measure. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to test for linearity. A significant effect for the linear term was obtained,  $F(1,3) = 85.54, p < .05$ .

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary of Research Findings

The goal of this investigation was to address empirically the effects of message strategy selection and niche-width on perceptions of organizational legitimacy. The investigation has examined the role of both micro- (communication behavior) and macro-level (niche-width) phenomena and their effects on the public's perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Additionally this study provides one of the first attempts to operationalize the concept of organizational legitimacy relied on in this investigation. While other research has investigated the cognitive and sociocultural types of legitimacy, little research has investigated empirically the normative/ethical type of legitimacy investigated here. The study also provides a new way of operationalizing niche-width in the identification of specialist and generalist organizations.

Furthermore, while most research in crisis communication has focused on the external communication that organizations produce to respond to the crisis, this investigation has examined both internal and external crisis communication, and how communication with both internal and external audiences affects overall perceptions of organizational legitimacy.

The data provide support for all but one of the predicted relationships. Support was given to the hypotheses regarding the effects of message consistency, of niche-width, and

of five of the six predicted relationships between niche-width and message consistency and their effects on perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Overall, the results have significant implications for future research into organizational image management, organizational legitimacy, niche-width dynamics, niche-width and message consistency, and crisis response strategies.

#### Organizational Image Management

The data from this investigation demonstrate the importance of message strategy and selection, and how these choices affect public perceptions of the organization's image. Because of the number of publics any organization has, and given that these publics exist both internally and externally to the organization, a challenge faces the organization. The challenge lies in producing messages for target audiences and segregating audiences so that messages produced for specific audiences are not received by unintended audiences. The reason for this is that messages produced for one public are oftentimes different in content from messages produced for other publics. Organizations must either produce consistent messages for all publics, or segregate publics so that any one public can only receive the message(s) intended for that public (Cheney & Vibbert, 1987; Paonessa, 1984). But with the increased scrutiny of organizational activities, and with communications systems making access to information easier, this challenge becomes incredibly difficult for organizations to overcome.

According to the data from this investigation, organizations must produce consistent

messages to both internal and external publics in order to be perceived as being legitimate. Inconsistencies in the messages produced by an organization diminish perceptions of organizational legitimacy, while consistent messages enhance perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Organizations must either produce consistent messages, or prevent publics from viewing messages that were not intended for them. In Goffmanesque terms, backstage must be kept backstage.

The data also provide support for a relatively new approach in organizational communication--integrated communications (McElreath, 1997; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993; Tynan, 1994). Integrated communications, which is also known as integrated marketing communications, relationship marketing, and integrated corporate communication, is defined as "the consistent management of communication to an organization's various publics" (McElreath, 1997, p. 176). The organizational imperative is to integrate and coordinate the many different ways the organization communicates with its publics. Given the various ways that organizations communicate in modern societies, including news releases, teleconferences, e-mail, video news releases, the Internet, and others, it is becoming increasingly important that these activities be coordinated with one another so that a consistent image is produced by the organization. As the results of this investigation demonstrate, a lack of consistency will damage the organization's image.

### Niche-Width Dynamics

The data in this investigation also provide support for the predicted relationship between niche-width and organizational legitimacy. Generalist organizations are perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations. Based on analysis of the U.S. airline industry, generalist organizations were operationalized as being older than specialists, providing more diverse types of service, and having larger organizational sizes. These attributes affect perceptions of organizational legitimacy.

The study also provides support for the liability of newness (Stinchcombe, 1965). The liability of newness is the notion that younger organizations are at a greater risk for organizational death. Since the specialist organizations in this investigation are younger than generalist organizations, and the data support the claim that specialist organizations are perceived as being less legitimate than their generalist counterparts, there is evidence that a liability of newness does exist for specialist organizations. Furthermore, the link between the liability of newness and organizational legitimacy is addressed, and it appears that external legitimacy does indeed “underlie the liability of newness” (Singh, Tucker, & Meinhard, 1991, p. 414).

In addition to the liability of newness which afflicts specialist organizations, there appears to be an opposite sort of phenomenon occurring for generalist organizations. There is a sort of asset of oldness that is operating for generalist organizations that may provide these organizations with the ability to withstand crisis better than younger

organizations.

### Niche-Width and Message Consistency

Several hypotheses in the investigation predict relationships between niche width and message consistency. Overall the data support these predictions. Generalist organizations that produce consistent messages are perceived as being more legitimate than generalist organizations that produce inconsistent messages. Specialist organizations that produce consistent messages are perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent messages. And generalist organizations that produce consistent messages are perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce consistent messages. Generalist organizations that produce inconsistent messages were not perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent messages.

And the linear test demonstrated that generalist organizations that produce consistent messages are more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce consistent messages, are more legitimate than generalist organizations that produce inconsistent messages, are more legitimate than specialist organizations that produce inconsistent messages.

### Organizational Legitimacy

Organizational legitimacy is defined in various ways in the literature. For example, Hearit (1995) defines legitimacy as “the rhetorically constructed and publicly recognized

congruence between the values of a corporation and those of a larger social system in which it operates" (p. 2). Seeger defines legitimacy as "a social justification of both the institution and its activities" (1986, p. 148). Hannan and Carroll argue that a legitimate organization is one whose "structure and routines follow the dictates of the prevailing institutional rules" (1992, p. 33). Singh, Tucker, and Meinhard (1991) define organizational legitimacy as "having its [the organization's] actions endorsed by powerful external collective actors and developing strong relationships with external constituencies...It results from a congruence between societal values and organizational actions" (p. 398).

In this investigation, organizational legitimacy is conceptualized as the perception among stakeholders that an organization is good, credible, and has a right to continue operations. The focus in this conceptual definition is on public perceptions because organizations live and die by the grace of the public with which they share interdependent relationships. In other words, "increased legitimacy provides greater access to resources and thereby enhances organizational survival" (Singh, et al., p. 413).

The investigation provides a novel and sound operationalization of the concept of legitimacy, which is another contribution of the study. As Singh, et al., (1991) comment, legitimacy is of central concern to institutional theories, but very little empirical research has addressed organizational legitimacy. This investigation has analyzed the nature of organizational legitimacy and has hypothesized on the relationships between message

strategy and selection, niche width, and perceptions of legitimacy.

Six items were utilized to operationalize legitimacy: credibility, goodness, legitimacy, safe, ought to be allowed to fly, ought to be allowed to continue operations. While there was some variation in the effects of these various items, the reliability of this scale of legitimacy argues for its consistency from one item to another. Therefore, organizational legitimacy, at least for the U.S. airline industry, can be defined as the perception on the part of stakeholders that an organization is good, credible, safe, and one that ought to be allowed to continue operations.

#### Crisis-Response Strategies

Finally, this study has also heeded the call of Coombs (1995), who argues that future research should address the nature of crisis-response strategies, and should offer predictions about what kinds of crisis-response strategies should be used, and how the selection of crisis-response strategies affects attributions made about the organization. The data from the current investigation suggest that organizations should respond consistently to their various publics in crisis situations, or a crisis of legitimacy could arise, which Hearit defines as “one in which an organization faces a public charge that its actions have violated normative standards of behavior” (1995, p. 3). Seeger argues that “a crisis in legitimacy develops when discourse becomes an inadequate justification of and/or institutional activities do not fulfill expectations” (1986, p. 148).

Coombs (1995) argues that one of the primary goals of crisis management is the

protection of the organization's image. Data from the current investigation suggest that organizations engaging in crisis management should select consistent crisis-response strategies and avoid inconsistent ones. Otherwise, a crisis in legitimacy could result.

#### Limitations

Certain limitations must be placed on this study's conclusions. First of all, the sample could be more heterogeneous. It is predominated ethnically by Caucasians. It also is over-represented by individuals with high levels of education, given that all participants were university students. Additionally, a better sampling of people who currently work or who have worked for the airlines would provide a better test of the differences between these groups and those who do not work and have never worked for the airline. Only 10 participants in the sample have worked or currently work for the airline industry.

Another limitation involves the materials used in the investigation. Certainly organizations rely on a variety of media for their crisis-response strategies. This investigation employed only written communications. An investigation that utilizes both written and oral communication, and other, more visually oriented communications would be an improvement.

Also, because of the selection of the airlines, the generalization to other organizational fields may or may not hold. Certainly other organizational fields that share the same kinds of legitimacy concerns could be generalized to, but many organizational fields do not share this concern to the same extent.

A final issue should be addressed, and that is the operationalization of consistency, and the results obtained from the manipulation. One might argue that the results obtained are due not to the manipulation of consistent and inconsistent front and back stage communication, but rather to the positive and negative communication that is included in the messages. That is, the back stage messages, if inconsistent with the front stage messages, are always more negatively valenced than the front stage messages. I argue that this is actually not a confound, but a true operationalization of Goffman's notion of front and back stage. Recall Goffman's ideas regarding front and back stage:

When one's activity occurs in the presence of other persons, some aspects of the activity are expressively accentuated and other aspects, which might discredit the fostered impression, are suppressed. It is clear that accentuated facts make their appearance in what I have called a front region; it should be just as clear that there may be another region--a "back region" or "backstage"--where the suppressed facts make an appearance (pp. 111-112).

The suppressed facts Goffman speaks of include information that the performer, or organization, wants to keep hidden, or unknown. Therefore, the operationalization in this investigation of front and back stage consistency is in keeping with the conceptual framework laid out by Goffman, and not an inadvertent operationalization of valence.

## Conclusion

To conclude, while there are limitations in the extent to which these findings can be generalized, there are several important theoretical, conceptual, and operational implications to this study. First of all, the combination of sociological and communication theories is fruitful and future research should continue this practice. Where sociological theories, particularly the organizational sociological theory reviewed here, provide a macro-analysis of organizational phenomena like organizational ecologies and institutional legitimacy, communication theories can provide a micro-analysis of how these macro-level phenomena are enacted through communication behavior.

Second, perceived organizational legitimacy is a measurable concept, capable of being operationalized in research. More research should test the effects of organizational behavior on perceptions of legitimacy. Given the importance of legitimacy, it follows that organizational theory and research should focus more on this variable, not only in theory construction, but in hypothesis testing.

Third, organizations should engage in *ethical* public relations. Inconsistent communication oftentimes influences perceptions of organizational honesty, as the results of this investigation demonstrate. When organizations are viewed as dishonest, it affects perceptions of their status as ethical organizations.

Finally, more research must address the nature of niche width, organizational image management, legitimacy, and crisis-response strategies. While the current investigation

has provided valuable insights into these various issues, future research will help to clarify the relationship between them.

### Niche-width

As mentioned in Chapter 1, prior to this investigation, no research had hypothesized on the relationship between niche-width and legitimacy. This investigation predicted that generalist organizations would be perceived as being more legitimate than specialist organizations, and the hypothesis was supported. This may or may not be the case in all organizational environments. Perhaps in other types of organizational environments organizational newness is not such a liability, but in the U.S. airline industry it is. Future research should investigate the relationship between niche-width, crisis-response strategies, and perceptions of legitimacy in other organizational environments to address this issue.

### Image Management

This investigation has provided a theoretical model of image management. The model is based on Erving Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor and more generally on his notions of self presentation. While Goffman applied his work to individuals and teams, his work has proved to be very useful in the application to organizations. Organizations "have" images in much the same way that people do. Future work should more systematically develop the idea of corporate image and produce more eloquent theories of organizational image.

### Legitimacy

This investigation has focused on one type of organizational legitimacy. I have referred to this type of legitimacy as normative/ethical. It is the perception that an organization is good, credible, honest, and has a right to continue operations. It is a different kind of legitimacy than other theories have examined, and it highlights the important role that an organization's publics, both internal and external, play in the success or failure of the organization. More research must address this type of legitimacy, and the relationship between organizational image and perceptions of legitimacy. Just as impression management (source-oriented) and impression formation (receiver-oriented) are two sides of the same coin, so are organizational image management and legitimacy. The dynamics of this relationship are intriguing and deserve to be addressed.

### Crisis-Response Strategies

While this research has answered the call of Coombs who suggested that more research should focus on crisis-response strategies, it is only a beginning point. More research needs to address the critical role of crisis-response strategies in crisis communication. As the PanAm, TWA, ValuJet, and other cases have demonstrated, the way that an organization responds to crisis is vitally important for the organization's well-being. Just how organizations should respond must be the focus of future research in this area.

## APPENDIX A

## CODEBOOK FOR MANIPULATION CHECK

<u>Message</u>	<u>Consistency</u>	
1	1	Pensacola/Consistent
1	2	Pensacola/Inconsistent
2	1	LAX/Consistent
2	2	LAX/Inconsistent
3	1	DFW/Consistent
3	2	DFW/Inconsistent
4	1	Chicago/Consistent
4	2	Chicago/Inconsistent
5	1	NYC/Consistent
5	2	NYC/Inconsistent
6	1	Phoenix/Consistent
6	2	Phoenix/Inconsistent
7	1	Tucson/Consistent
7	2	Tucson/Inconsistent
8	1	Iowa/Consistent
8	2	Iowa/Inconsistent

APPENDIX B  
MEASURES FOR MANIPULATION CHECK  
SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Airline Messages Study  
Informed Consent

On the following pages you will see two messages, accompanied by questions we would like you to answer. Both messages were produced by Pacific Airways. Pacific Airways is a fictitious name we have given the organization that produced the messages. The messages are based on an actual event that occurred in the airline industry. The two messages were both produced by Pacific Airways regarding this SAME incident that occurred at Pacific Airways. One of the messages was sent to the employees of Pacific Airways and one of the messages was sent to the national media as a press release.

Please read each message and answer the questions that follow. What we are asking you to do in this study is to tell us how consistent the messages are with each other. Therefore, while reading the messages, please think about whether you think that the messages are similar in content or if they are not similar. We have provided questions after each message that will encourage you to think of the similarities and differences between the two messages.

Your participation in this investigation is voluntary. By completing the questionnaire you are giving your consent that your responses to these questions be used as data for our investigation. Your responses are entirely anonymous. For more information about this study, please contact Joseph Massey at 797-3259. Thank you for your participation.

**Please turn the page.**

Appendix B -- *Continued***Message #1**

On July 1st, the left engine on one of Pacific Airways' McDonnell-Douglas Super 80's exploded just before take-off, sending shrapnel into the main cabin. Flight 215 was to depart from Pensacola Airport with a scheduled destination of Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. Two people died and six people were seriously injured in the accident. Although early on speculation was that a bird may have flown into the engine, or that some other foreign object or debris may have somehow entered the engine, the conclusion of our investigation shows it to be the fault of the engine's manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney. Cracks in the engine are what caused the engine to catch fire, eventually leading to the explosion. We are beginning discussions with Pratt & Whitney to initiate immediate inspections of all engines to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again. Said CEO Robert Smith, "We all regret what has happened and we will do everything we can to make sure it is avoided in the future."

**Please answer the following questions:**

The type of plane involved in this accident was:

- Boeing 727
- Boeing 737
- Boeing 757
- Fokker 100
- McDonnell Douglas Super 80 (MD-80)

People died in this accident.

- True
- False

The cause of this accident was:

- Engine malfunction
- Pacific Airways pilot error
- Foreign objects in the engine
- Air traffic controller error
- FAA error
- Private pilot error
- Flight attendant error
- Manufacturer error
- Pacific Airways maintenance error

**Please turn the page and read the next message.**

Appendix B -- *Continued***Message #2**

During takeoff from Pensacola Airport on July 1st, one of the engines on Pacific Airways flight 215 exploded, killing two passengers and seriously injuring six others. The plane, an MD-80, made by the McDonnell-Douglas Corporation, uses engines made by Pratt & Whitney. Pacific Airways is working in partnership with Pratt & Whitney, a long-time supplier of jet engines, to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again. Initial results from Pacific Airways' own investigation shows that cracks in the engine led to a fire, eventually causing the engine to explode, which sent shrapnel through the fuselage and into the main cabin. Robert Smith, CEO of Pacific Airways, said "We all regret what has happened and we will do everything we can to make sure it is avoided in the future."

**Please answer the following questions:**

The type of plane involved in this accident was:

- Boeing 727
- Boeing 737
- Boeing 757
- Fokker 100
- McDonnell Douglas Super 80 (MD-80)

People died in this accident.

- True
- False

The cause of this accident was:

- Engine malfunction
- Pacific Airways pilot error
- Foreign objects in the engine
- Air traffic controller error
- FAA error
- Private pilot error
- Flight attendant error
- Manufacturer error
- Pacific Airways maintenance error

**Please turn the page.**

Appendix B -- *Continued*

**Now, please answer the following questions.**

How consistent do you think these messages are with each other?

Very Consistent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Inconsistent

How similar do you think these messages are?

Very Similar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Dissimilar

How alike do you think these messages are?

Very Alike 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Alike

Pacific Airways is being honest about the accident. (Circle one.)

True

False

**Thank you for your participation.**

## APPENDIX C

## MESSAGES FOR MANIPULATION CHECK

Message Pair 11

## Message #1

On July 1st, the left engine on one of Pacific Airways' McDonnell-Douglas Super 80's exploded just before take-off, sending shrapnel into the main cabin. Flight 215 was to depart from Pensacola Airport with a scheduled destination of Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. Two people died and six people were seriously injured in the accident. Although early on speculation was that a bird may have flown into the engine, or that some other foreign object or debris may have somehow entered the engine, the conclusion of our investigation shows it to be the fault of the engine's manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney. Cracks in the engine are what caused the engine to catch fire, eventually leading to the explosion. We are beginning discussions with Pratt & Whitney to initiate immediate inspections of all engines to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again. Said CEO Robert Smith, "We all regret what has happened and we will do everything we can to make sure it is avoided in the future."

## Message #2

During takeoff from Pensacola Airport on July 1st, one of the engines on Pacific Airways flight 215 exploded, killing two passengers and seriously injuring six others. The plane, an MD-80, made by the McDonnell-Douglas Corporation, uses engines made by Pratt & Whitney. Pacific Airways is working in partnership with Pratt & Whitney, a long-time supplier of jet engines, to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again. Initial results from Pacific Airways' own investigation shows that cracks in the engine led to a fire, eventually causing the engine to explode, which sent shrapnel through the fuselage and into the main cabin. Robert Smith, CEO of Pacific Airways, said "We all regret what has happened and we will do everything we can to make sure it is avoided in the future."

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 12

## Message #1

On July 1st, the left engine on one of Pacific Airways' McDonnell-Douglas Super 80's exploded just before take-off, sending shrapnel into the main cabin. Flight 215 was to depart from Pensacola Airport with a scheduled destination of Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. Two people died and six people were seriously injured in the accident. Although early on speculation was that a bird may have flown into the engine, or that some other foreign object or debris may have somehow entered the engine, the conclusion of our investigation shows it to be the fault of the engine's manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney. Cracks in the engine are what caused the engine to catch fire, eventually leading to the explosion. We are beginning discussions with Pratt & Whitney to initiate immediate inspections of all engines to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again. Said CEO Robert Smith, "We all regret what has happened and we will do everything we can to make sure it is avoided in the future."

## Message #2

During takeoff from Pensacola Airport on July 1st, one of the engines on Pacific Airways flight 215 exploded, killing two passengers and seriously injuring six others. The plane, an MD-80, made by the McDonnell-Douglas Corporation, uses engines made by Pratt & Whitney. Pacific Airways has determined that Pratt & Whitney, a long-time supplier of jet engines, is not to blame in this accident. Our investigation has revealed that it was actually a maintenance error on the part of Pacific Airways that has led to this disaster. A mechanic's inspection of the plane before take-off shows that one of our mechanics overlooked a fuel leak which led to the explosion.

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 21

## Message #1

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 aircraft crashed into the hills outside of Los Angeles California, killing all 142 passengers and five crew members on-board. Flight 664 originated in Dallas-Fort Worth, and was in its decent into the Los Angeles International airport (LAX) when it lost altitude and crashed east of the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has initially determined that the cause of the crash was pilot error. Visibility was generally good, and given the fact that the crash occurred at approximately 3pm PDT, lighting conditions were also good. Air Traffic Control at LAX has reported that they were in communication with the cockpit crew during the incident and that they had instructed the crew that they were descending too quickly and to immediately pull up. It was apparently too late for the pilot to do anything about it though, and the plane crashed into the side of a hill, catching fire immediately. All on board died immediately upon impact from broken necks and backs, and were already dead when fire engulfed the plane.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 664 crashed in its final decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on July 1st, killing all on board. The Boeing 757 was carrying 142 passengers and five crew members, en route from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to LAX, when it crashed east of the airport. Initial reports from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation into the crash have determined that pilot error led to the crash. Taped conversation taken from the flight data recorder on-board the plane show that the air traffic controllers at LAX warned the pilots that they were descending too rapidly and that they must pull up immediately. Additionally, on-board automatic warning indicators can be heard on the tape indicating to the pilots that they needed to pull up. It is unclear why the pilots descended to an unsafe altitude, given that the flying conditions were generally good, and given that it was still daylight (3pm PDT), but apparently by the time they received warning from the air traffic controllers and the automatic sensors on-board the plane it was already too late to reach a safe altitude and the plane crashed into a hill, immediately exploding into flames.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 22

## Message #1

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 aircraft crashed into the hills outside of Los Angeles California, killing all 142 passengers and five crew members on-board. Flight 664 originated in Dallas-Fort Worth, and was in its decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) when it lost altitude and crashed east of the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has initially determined that the cause of the crash was pilot error. Visibility was generally good, and given the fact that the crash occurred at approximately 3pm PDT, lighting conditions were also good. Air Traffic Control at LAX has reported that they were in communication with the cockpit crew during the incident and that they had instructed the crew that they were descending too quickly and to immediately pull up. It was apparently too late for the pilot to do anything about it though, and the plane crashed into the side of a hill, catching fire immediately. All on board died immediately upon impact from broken necks and backs, and were already dead when fire engulfed the plane.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 664 crashed in its final decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on July 1st, killing all on board. The Boeing 757 was carrying 142 passengers and five crew members, en route from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to LAX, when it crashed east of the airport. Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the event was due to pilot error, we at Pacific Airways are certain that it was due to air traffic controller (ATC) error. Two pieces of information lead us to believe that it was ATC personnel, and not Pacific Airways pilots, that caused the crash. First of all, the plane was slightly off course, which can be blamed on no one but ATC personnel. And second, the pilots were not given sufficient warning to pull up to a safe altitude by the ATC. By the time the pilots had received warning, it was too late to do anything about it. Pacific Airways denies any responsibility for this accident. It is entirely the fault of the air traffic controllers at LAX.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 31

## Message #1

Three flight attendants and 27 passengers were injured July 1st when Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed into the Dallas-Fort Worth airport (DFW). The flight originated at Boston's Logan Airport, and was scheduled to land at DFW. Injuries ranged from critical to serious, and were caused when the plane, a Boeing 727, came down too quickly and hit ground before the beginning of the runway. The captain was able to stabilize the aircraft and brought the plane to a full stop on the runway. Emergency crews were dispatched immediately and evacuated all passengers. The injured were taken to nearby hospitals by helicopter and ambulance. An investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that pilot error caused the crash. Apparently the crew descended too quickly and touched ground approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed at Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) airport July 1st, injuring 27 passengers and three flight attendants. The flight originated at Boston's Logan airport and was scheduled to land at DFW. The plane, a Boeing 727, crash landed when it touched down approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway. The captain brought the plane to a complete stop, emergency crews were dispatched, and the passengers were taken to safety. The injured were transported to area hospitals by ambulance and helicopter, depending on the severity of the injury. Injuries ranged from serious to critical. An initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has concluded that pilot error is the cause. Evidently the pilots descended too quickly, which caused the plane to touch ground sooner than it should have.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 32

## Message #1

Three flight attendants and 27 passengers were injured July 1st when Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed into the Dallas-Fort Worth airport (DFW). The flight originated at Boston's Logan Airport, and was scheduled to land at DFW. Injuries ranged from critical to serious, and were caused when the plane, a Boeing 727, came down too quickly and hit ground before the beginning of the runway. The captain was able to stabilize the aircraft and brought the plane to a full stop on the runway. Emergency crews were dispatched immediately and evacuated all passengers. The injured were taken to nearby hospitals by helicopter and ambulance. An investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that pilot error caused the crash. Apparently the crew descended too quickly and touched ground approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed at Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) airport July 1st, injuring 27 passengers and three flight attendants. The flight originated at Boston's Logan airport and was scheduled to land at DFW. The plane, a Boeing 727, crash landed when it touched down approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway. The captain brought the plane to a complete stop, emergency crews were dispatched, and the passengers were taken to safety. The injured were transported to area hospitals by ambulance and helicopter, depending on the severity of the injury. Injuries ranged from serious to critical. While initial results from the Federal Aviation Administration's investigation hint at pilot error, we at Pacific Airways stand behind our flight crew. We believe that the cause of the crash was air traffic control (ATC) error. ATC personnel at DFW are notoriously overworked and understaffed, and it is well-known that they are dealing with outdated technology. Given these stressful operating conditions, it is unsurprising that mistakes on the part of the ATC personnel will occur from time to time. Pacific Airways has proof that our pilots were simply told to descend more rapidly than they should have. Given the conditions at the airport--foggy and night time--there was nothing our pilots could have done to prevent this accident from occurring. It is the fault of the air traffic controllers at DFW, not Pacific Airways' pilots.

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 41

## Message #1

Five crew members and 98 passengers on board Pacific Airways flight 841 died when the plane, a Boeing 737, crashed shortly after take-off from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. The plane was near capacity en route to New York's LaGuardia Airport July 1st, when an engine fell off the right wing, causing the plane to go out of control. Pilots apparently attempted to correct the situation, but were unable to do so. The plane essentially flipped upside down just after take-off and nose-dived into a field just outside the airport. Initial findings from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation into the crash have determined that manufacturer error is what caused the engine to fall off, leading to the crash. The engine was apparently not bolted correctly onto the wing. Thus, when the engines were engaged, the force caused the engine to separate from the wing, eventually falling off the wing entirely. The engines on the Boeing 737 are manufactured by Pratt & Whitney, a major supplier of jet engines. Pacific Airways is working with Pratt & Whitney to begin immediate inspection of all our aircraft to ensure that this does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 841 crashed into the fields outside of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport July 1st, killing 98 passengers and 5 crew members. The plane was en route to New York's LaGuardia Airport when its right-wing engine fell off the plane, causing the plane to turn over and nose-dive into the ground. Pilots tried to correct the situation but there was nothing they could do. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the engine manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney, is to blame. Apparently the engine was not bolted onto the wing properly, which led to the engine eventually falling off the wing entirely. We at Pacific Airways regret that this occurred and we are working with Pratt & Whitney to make sure that it does not happen again.

*Appendix C – Continued*Message Pair 42

## Message #1

Five crew members and 98 passengers on board Pacific Airways flight 841 died when the plane, a Boeing 737, crashed shortly after take-off from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. The plane was near capacity en route to New York's LaGuardia Airport July 1st, when an engine fell off the right wing, causing the plane to go out of control. Pilots apparently attempted to correct the situation, but were unable to do so. The plane essentially flipped upside down just after take-off and nose-dived into a field just outside the airport. Initial findings from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation into the crash have determined that manufacturer error is what caused the engine to fall off, leading to the crash. The engine was apparently not bolted correctly onto the wing. Thus, when the engines were engaged, the force caused the engine to separate from the wing, eventually falling off the wing entirely. The engines on the Boeing 737 are manufactured by Pratt & Whitney, a major supplier of jet engines. Pacific Airways is working with Pratt & Whitney to begin immediate inspection of all our aircraft to ensure that this does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 841 crashed into the fields outside of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport July 1st, killing 98 passengers and 5 crew members. The plane was en route to New York's LaGuardia Airport when its right-wing engine fell off the plane, causing the plane to turn over and nose-dive into the ground. Pilots tried to correct the situation but there was nothing they could do. Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has suggested that the engine's manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney, is to blame, we at Pacific Airways support Pratt & Whitney and believe that it is actually the fault of the FAA, which is ultimately responsible for inspecting aircraft and determining whether or not a plane is safe to fly. The FAA, not Pratt & Whitney, are to blame, since they are the ones who gave the plane clearance to fly.

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 51

## Message #1

On July 1st, one of our Boeing 757's collided with a small, privately owned aircraft at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Two of the smaller plane's inhabitants were killed when the wing of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 struck the plane, decapitating a pilot and a passenger. The Boeing 757, flight 619, was taxiing out to the runway, preparing to depart for St. Louis. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation point to Pacific Airways pilots as those responsible for the crash. Apparently the Pacific Airways pilots failed to properly follow air traffic controller instructions and were headed in the wrong direction when they collided with the other aircraft.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 619, with scheduled service between New York's LaGuardia Airport and St. Louis, was involved in a collision with a privately owned aircraft shortly before scheduled take-off. Two people on-board the private aircraft, a pilot and a passenger, were killed when the right wing of the Boeing 757 struck the plane. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation show that it was error on the part of the Pacific Airways pilots that led to the collision. The pilots evidently did not follow the instructions given them by the air traffic controller, and were not where they should have been at the time.

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 52

## Message #1

On July 1st, one of our Boeing 757's collided with a small, privately owned aircraft at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Two of the smaller plane's inhabitants were killed when the wing of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 struck the plane, decapitating a pilot and a passenger. The Boeing 757, flight 619, was taxiing out to the runway, preparing to depart for St. Louis. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation point to Pacific Airways pilots as those responsible for the crash. Apparently the Pacific Airways pilots failed to properly follow air traffic controller instructions and were headed in the wrong direction when they collided with the other aircraft.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 619, with scheduled service between New York's LaGuardia Airport and St. Louis, was involved in a collision with a privately owned aircraft shortly before scheduled take-off. Two people on-board the private aircraft, a pilot and a passenger, were killed when the right wing of the Boeing 757 struck the plane. Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is suggesting that Pacific Airways' pilots are to blame for the investigation, we stand behind our pilots. Our pilots were simply following the instructions given to them by the air traffic controllers. Pacific Airways believes that it was the fault of the pilot of the private aircraft who is to blame. Our own investigation reveals that the pilot of the privately owned aircraft had a limited amount of experience in airports as large as New York's LaGuardia, and that his inexperience is what led to the fatal collision.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 61

## Message #1

On July 1st, a Pacific Airways' Boeing 737 lost a door in flight, injuring a flight attendant and a passenger. Just after flight 315 took off from Las Vegas, en route to Phoenix Sky Harbor airport the door swung open, and then was ripped off the plane from the force of the wind. A flight attendant that was seated in a jump seat just next to the door was almost sucked out of the plane, when a passenger seated near her got out of his seat and held on to her until the plane returned to a safe altitude and then landed. The flight attendant and the passenger were both injured, though neither one was injured seriously. They were both treated at the scene by emergency personnel and released. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation have determined that the door was not properly closed and secured by the Pacific Airways flight attendant. The FAA is continuing its investigation. In the meantime, we are implementing re-training of all ground personnel and flight attendants in the proper securing of aircraft doors to ensure that this does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 315, scheduled service from Las Vegas airport to Phoenix Sky Harbor, was involved in an accident July 1st. The plane, a Boeing 737, lost one of its doors just after take off. The door apparently came open, and then was ripped off the plane due to the forces of the wind. The flight attendant seated just next to the door was almost pulled out of the plane, but one of the passengers seated near her got up and held on to her while other passengers held on to him, forming a human chain that prevented the flight attendant from being sucked out of the plane. The flight attendant and the passenger who got up to save her were both slightly injured in the accident, but neither required hospitalization. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has initially reported on its investigation, concluding that the cause of the accident was flight attendant error and ground personnel error. Evidently the flight attendant did not sufficiently latch the door shut, which allowed it to come open during flight. Pacific Airways has ordered immediate re-training of flight attendants and ground crew so that this kind of accident does not happen again.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 62

## Message #1

On July 1st, a Pacific Airways' Boeing 737 lost a door in flight, injuring a flight attendant and a passenger. Just after flight 315 took off from Las Vegas, en route to Phoenix Sky Harbor airport the door swung open, and then was ripped off the plane from the force of the wind. A flight attendant that was seated in a jump seat just next to the door was almost sucked out of the plane, when a passenger seated near her got out of his seat and held on to her until the plane returned to a safe altitude and then landed. The flight attendant and the passenger were both injured, though neither one was injured seriously. They were both treated at the scene by emergency personnel and released. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation suggest that the door was not properly closed and secured by the Pacific Airways flight attendant. The FAA is continuing its investigation. In the meantime, we are implementing re-training of all ground personnel and flight attendants in the proper securing of aircraft doors to ensure that this does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 315, scheduled service from Las Vegas airport to Phoenix Sky Harbor, was involved in an accident July 1st. The plane, a Boeing 737, lost one of its doors just after take off. The door apparently came open, and then was ripped off the plane due to the forces of the wind. The flight attendant seated just next to the door was almost pulled out of the plane, but one of the passengers seated near her got up and held on to her while other passengers held on to him, forming a human chain that prevented the flight attendant from being sucked out of the plane. The flight attendant and the passenger who got up to save her were both slightly injured in the accident, but neither required hospitalization. Pacific Airways believes that the cause of the event was faulty manufacturing on the part of Boeing. This is not the first time a door has come open on a Boeing aircraft and Pacific is certain that it is because of poor manufacturing, not flight attendant error, that led to the accident. Pacific Airways has ordered immediate inspection of all Boeing aircraft to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 71

## Message #1

On July 1st, flight 215 had just taken off from Tucson International Airport en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport, when the pilots were alerted by automatic systems on the plane that the front tire had blown out on take-off. The plane, a McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 was filled to capacity, with 137 passengers and five crew members on board. The plane was instructed by air traffic control to land at Phoenix Sky Harbor, but could not do so for some three hours, until the fuel in the plane had been used up. Since the aircraft was going to have to attempt an emergency landing, with faulty landing gear, pilots and air traffic control personnel wanted the plane to be as light as possible when it landed, and that necessitated the burning off of the fuel. So the plane circled between Tucson and Phoenix for three hours that morning until the fuel was mostly gone, at which time the plane did emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor. No one aboard the plane was injured, but many passengers reported being terrified throughout the flight, not knowing if they would survive it. Initial investigation into the crash reveals that the tires on the plane had not been changed in the specified time-frame. The tires were scheduled to have been changed on the aircraft two weeks before the time of the emergency landing. Pacific Airways mechanics failed to follow proper Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) procedures. Pacific has ordered immediate re-training of our pilots to make sure this does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 215 was involved in an emergency landing on July 1st. The landing gear on the McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 apparently was affected when the front tire of the plane blew out during take-off from Tucson International Airport, en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport. 137 passengers and 5 crew members were on-board the plane, which was instructed by air traffic control to emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor. To bring the plane to as light a weight as possible, the flight crew was instructed to fly the plane between Tucson and Phoenix until most of the fuel on-board the plane was used up. Since the flight is approximately three hours in length, the plane had to circle between Tucson and Phoenix for close to three hours before it could land. Though no one on board the plane was injured, many passengers reported being terrified, not knowing if they would survive the landing. Initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) shows that the cause of the tire malfunction was the fact that the tires on the aircraft had not been changed within the specified time-frame. The tires on the aircraft should have been changed two weeks prior to the emergency landing. Pacific Airways accepts responsibility for the accident, and we have implemented re-training of our mechanics so that this does not happen again.

Appendix C -- *Continued*Message Pair 72

## Message #1

On July 1st, flight 215 had just taken off from Tucson International Airport en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport, when the pilots were alerted by automatic systems on the plane that the front tire had blown out on take-off. The plane, a McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 was filled to capacity, with 137 passengers and five crew members on board. The plane was instructed by air traffic control to land at Phoenix Sky Harbor, but could not do so for some three hours, until the fuel in the plane had been used up. Since the aircraft was going to have to attempt an emergency landing, with faulty landing gear, pilots and air traffic control personnel wanted the plane to be as light as possible when it landed, and that necessitated the burning off of the fuel. So the plane circled between Tucson and Phoenix for three hours that morning until the fuel was mostly gone, at which time the plane did emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor. No one aboard the plane was injured, but many passengers reported being terrified throughout the flight, not knowing if they would survive it. Initial investigation into the crash reveals that the tires on the plane had not been changed in the specified time-frame. The tires were scheduled to have been changed on the aircraft two weeks before the time of the emergency landing. Pacific Airways mechanics failed to follow proper Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) procedures. Pacific has ordered immediate re-training of our pilots to make sure this does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 215 was involved in an emergency landing on July 1st. The landing gear on the McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 apparently was affected when the front tire of the plane blew out during take-off from Tucson International Airport, en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport. 137 passengers and 5 crew members were on-board the plane, which was instructed by air traffic control to emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor. To bring the plane to as light a weight as possible, the flight crew was instructed to fly the plane between Tucson and Phoenix until most of the fuel on-board the plane was used up. Since the flight is approximately three hours in length, the plane had to circle between Tucson and Phoenix for close to three hours before it could land. Though no one on board the plane was injured, many passengers reported being terrified, not knowing if they would survive the landing. Initial inspection of the tires shows an unusual amount of wear, which leads Pacific Airways to believe that it is the tire manufacturer, and not Pacific Airways that is responsible for the accident. We at Pacific stick to a very strict schedule of maintenance on all our aircraft, and we are proud of our safety record. We are certain that it was the tire manufacturer and not Pacific Airways employees. Because of this situation with the tire manufacturer, we have ordered all the manufacturer's tires to be taken off our planes, and we are discontinuing our business with the manufacturer, effective immediately.

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 81

## Message #1

On January 22, one of our planes (flight 724) crashed in the fields of Iowa, killing everyone on board, which included 75 passengers and 4 crew members. The plane, a Fokker 100, was en route from Des Moines to Chicago's O'Hare airport when pilots lost control of the plane and it nose-dived into the frozen soil 100 miles north of Des Moines. Initial results from an investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have determined that the cause of the crash was ice build-up on the wings of the aircraft, which made the plane impossible to control. Pacific Airways' ground crew at Des Moines did not adequately de-ice the plane before take-off, which led to the disaster. Pacific Airways has ordered re-training of all ground personnel so that this kind of thing does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 724 crashed January 22nd 100 miles north of Iowa, killing all 75 passengers and 4 crew members. There were no survivors. The Fokker 100 had just departed Des Moines, Iowa, en route to Chicago's O'Hare airport. Pilots lost control of the plane and it nose-dived into a frozen corn field. The Federal Aviation Administration has initially stated that the cause of the event was inadequate de-icing of the plane, which led to abnormal amounts of ice build-up on the wings, resulting in a loss of control of the plane on the part of the pilots. Pacific Airways accepts responsibility for the accident, since it is our ground personnel who are responsible for de-icing the planes in our fleet. We have ordered re-training of all ground personnel so that this does not happen again.

*Appendix C -- Continued*Message Pair 82

## Message #1

On January 22, one of our planes (flight 724) crashed in the fields of Iowa, killing everyone on board, which included 75 passengers and 4 crew members. The plane, a Fokker 100, was en route from Des Moines to Chicago's O'Hare airport when pilots lost control of the plane and it nose-dived into the frozen soil 100 miles north of Des Moines. Initial results from an investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have determined that the cause of the crash was ice build-up on the wings of the aircraft, which made the plane impossible to control. Pacific Airways' ground crew at Des Moines did not adequately de-ice the plane before take-off, which led to the disaster. Pacific Airways has ordered re-training of all ground personnel so that this kind of thing does not happen again.

## Message #2

Pacific Airways flight 724 crashed January 22nd 100 miles north of Iowa, killing all 75 passengers and 4 crew members. There were no survivors. The Fokker 100 had just departed Des Moines, Iowa, en route to Chicago's O'Hare airport. Pilots lost control of the plane and it nose-dived into a frozen corn field. Although the Federal Aviation Administration has blamed Pacific Airways' ground crews for the incident, we do not agree with their conclusion. Pacific Airways is also conducting an investigation and we have determined that the cause of the event was that the plane was given clearance to fly by air traffic control when the weather was too cold and wet for a safe flight to have occurred. Therefore, it is the air traffic control, not Pacific Airways, who is to blame for this tragic accident. We pride ourselves on our strict adherence to FAA procedures regarding the safe de-icing of aircraft and we follow these procedures in all cases. But when air traffic control says it is alright for us to fly, we fly--at least until now. We are currently reviewing our procedures to determine if there is anyway we can avoid this kind of thing from happening in the future.

## APPENDIX D

## CODEBOOK FOR MAIN INVESTIGATION

<u>Message</u>	<u>Consistency</u>	<u>Niche</u>	
1	1	1	Tucson/Consistent/Generalist
1	2	1	Tucson/Inconsistent/Generalist
1	1	2	Tucson/Consistent/Specialist
1	2	2	Tucson/Inconsistent/Specialist
2	1	1	NYC/Consistent/Generalist
2	2	1	NYC/Inconsistent/Generalist
2	1	2	NYC/Consistent/Specialist
2	2	2	NYC/Inconsistent/Specialist
3	1	1	LA/Consistent/Generalist
3	2	1	LA/Inconsistent/Generalist
3	1	2	LA/Consistent/Specialist
3	2	2	LA/Inconsistent/Specialist
4	1	1	DFW/Consistent/Generalist
4	2	1	DFW/Inconsistent/Generalist
4	1	2	DFW/Consistent/Specialist
4	2	2	DFW/Inconsistent/Specialist

## APPENDIX E

## SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE -- MAIN INVESTIGATION

## GENERALIST NICHE

Public Relations Study  
Informed Consent

On the following pages you will see two messages, accompanied by questions we would like you to answer. Both messages were produced by Pacific Airways. Pacific Airways is a fictitious name we have given the organization that produced the messages. **Pacific Airways has been in operation for 49 years, services routes throughout the United States and internationally, has one of the largest fleets of any airliner in the world, and is a full-service air carrier. A full-service carrier is one that provides in-flight entertainment, like audio and video presentations, and provides meal and beverage service.** The messages are based on an actual event that occurred in the airline industry. The two messages were both produced by Pacific Airways regarding this SAME incident that occurred at Pacific Airways. The first message you will read was sent to the employees of Pacific Airways via electronic mail, and the second message was sent to the national media as a news release.

Please read each message and answer the questions that follow. One of the things we want you to focus on when reading the messages is how consistent the messages are with one another. Therefore, while reading the messages, please think about whether or not the messages are similar in their description of what happened and who is to blame for the incident.

Your participation in this investigation is voluntary. By completing the questionnaire you are giving your consent that your responses to these questions be used as data for our investigation. Your responses are entirely anonymous. For more information about this study, please contact Joseph Massey at 797-3259. Thank you for your participation.

111

**Please turn the page.**

Appendix E -- *Continued*

**We would first like to ask you some questions about your experiences with the airline industry, and your thoughts about the airline industry.**

Note: A "commercial airline" is one with scheduled service between cities, as opposed to charter or military airline operations. Examples of commercial airlines include American Airlines, Delta, Southwest, Reno Air, America West, etc.

1. Do you now, or have you ever worked for a commercial airline? Yes No

If you work for an airline now, which airline do you work for? If you worked for an airline or airlines in the past, which have you worked for? Please indicate whether the airline you list is one you work for now, or an airline you used to work for.

_____	Presently Employed	Former Employee
_____	Presently Employed	Former Employee

2. Do you have a private pilot's license? Yes No
3. Have you ever flown as a passenger in a commercial airplane? Yes No

**Please respond to the following questions by circling the number that best represents your attitude.**

4. In general, how risky do you consider flying in a commercial airplane?

Very Risky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Risky

5. How risky do you consider flying on a low-fare carrier (e.g., Reno Air, Frontier, ValuJet, etc.)?

Very Risky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Risky

6. How risky do you consider flying on a full-service carrier (e.g., American, Delta, TWA, Continental, etc.)?

Very Risky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Risky

**Please turn the page and read the message there.**

*Appendix E -- Continued***E-Mail**

**Subject:** Tucson Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways >  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees >

Pacific Airways flight 215 was involved in an emergency landing on July 1st. The landing gear on the McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 apparently was affected when the front tire of the plane blew out during take-off from Tucson International Airport, en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

One hundred-thirty-seven passengers and five crew members were on-board the plane, which was instructed by air traffic control to emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. To bring the plane to as light a weight as possible, the flight crew was instructed to fly the plane between Tucson and Phoenix until most of the fuel on-board the plane was used up. Since the flight from Tucson to Chicago is approximately three hours in length, the plane had to circle between Tucson and Phoenix for close to three hours before it could land.

Though no one on board the plane was injured, many passengers reported being terrified, not knowing if they would survive the landing. Initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) shows that the cause of the tire malfunction was the fact that the tires on the aircraft had not been changed within the specified time-frame. The tires on the aircraft should have been changed two weeks prior to the emergency landing. Pacific Airways accepts responsibility for the accident, and we have implemented re-training of our mechanics so that this does not happen again.

**To read the second message, which is a news release that the organization sent to the national media, please turn the page.**

Appendix E -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, flight 215 had just taken off from Tucson International Airport en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport, when the pilots were alerted by automatic systems on the plane that the front tire had blown out on take-off.

The plane, a McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 was filled to capacity, with 137 passengers and five crew members on board. The plane was instructed by air traffic control to land at Phoenix Sky Harbor, but could not do so for some three hours, until the fuel in the plane had been used up. Since the aircraft was going to have to attempt an emergency landing, with faulty landing gear, pilots and air traffic control personnel wanted the plane to be as light as possible when it landed, and that necessitated the burning off of the fuel. So the plane circled between Tucson and Phoenix for three hours that morning until the fuel was mostly gone, at which time the plane did emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor.

No one aboard the plane was injured, but many passengers reported being terrified throughout the flight, not knowing if they would survive it. Initial investigation into the crash reveals that the tires on the plane had not been changed in the specified time-frame. The tires were scheduled to have been changed on the aircraft two weeks before the time of the emergency landing. Pacific Airways mechanics failed to follow proper Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) procedures. Pacific has ordered immediate re-training of our mechanics to make sure this does not happen again.

-----*Pacific Airways is the full-service carrier!*-----

**Please turn the page and answer the questions there.**

Appendix E -- *Continued*

**Please answer the following questions. Remember, if you need to, feel free to return to the previous pages to respond to the following statements.**

Which type of carrier is Pacific Airways?

Full-service Carrier (i.e., has international flights, has been in operation for over 20 years, has a large fleet of aircraft, and has in-flight entertainment and meal service)

Low-fare Airline (i.e., does not have international flights, has been in operation for less than 10 years, has a small fleet of aircraft, and has no in-flight entertainment or meals)

The type of Pacific Airways airplane involved in this incident was:

Boeing 727

Boeing 757

McDonnell Douglas Super 80 (MD-80)

People died in this incident.

True

False

According to the E-mail, the cause of the incident was:

Pacific Airways Pilot Error

Private Pilot Error (Not Pacific Airways Pilot Error)

Air Traffic Controller (ATC) Error

Pacific Airways Mechanics/Maintenance Error

Tire Manufacturer Error

According to the News Release, the cause of the incident was:

Pacific Airways Pilot Error

Private Pilot Error (Not Pacific Airways Pilot Error)

Air Traffic Controller (ATC) Error

Pacific Airways Mechanics/Maintenance Error

Tire Manufacturer Error

**Please turn the page and answer the questions there.**

Appendix E -- *Continued*

**Please respond to the following statements by circling the number that best represents your viewpoint.**

The E-mail and the News Release are consistent with one another.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is a safe organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is a legitimate organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is trying to cover something up.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is a credible organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is being honest about the incident.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

The E-mail and the News Release are similar to one another.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways should be allowed to fly passengers.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

**Please turn the page and answer the questions there.**

Appendix E -- *Continued*

Pacific Airways is a good organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways should be allowed to continue operations.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is hiding something.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

The E-mail and the News Release are alike.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

### Additional Information

**Instructions:** These last questions are used to divide the questionnaires into groups. Please supply the information asked for by placing a check mark in each appropriate category. Keep in mind your answers are completely confidential.

What is your gender?     Male     Female

What is your age?     Years

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

High School                       Some College  
 Jr. College Degree               College Degree  
 Professional Degree             Advanced Degree (Masters, Ph.D., M.D., J.D.)

What is your ethnicity?

Caucasian                           Hispanic  
 African-American                 Native American  
 Asian-American                   Other please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E -- *Continued*

What would you estimate your annual household income to be before taxes? (If you are claimed on your parents' income taxes, indicate their income.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$39,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$14,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$49,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000-\$19,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$74,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$24,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-\$99,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000-\$29,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 or more

**Thank you for your participation in this study.**

## APPENDIX F

## SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE – MAIN INVESTIGATION

## SPECIALIST NICHE

Public Relations Study  
Informed Consent

On the following pages you will see two messages, accompanied by questions we would like you to answer. Both messages were produced by Pacific Airways. Pacific Airways is a fictitious name we have given the organization that produced the messages. **Pacific Airways has been in operation for 5 years, has a limited route throughout the United States, does not provide international service, has a small fleet of aircraft, and is a low-fare carrier. Pacific Airways is not a full-service carrier. They do not provide in-flight entertainment or meal service.** The messages are based on an actual event that occurred in the airline industry. The two messages were both produced by Pacific Airways regarding this SAME incident that occurred at Pacific Airways. The first message you will read was sent to the employees of Pacific Airways via electronic mail, and the second message was sent to the national media as a news release.

Please read each message and answer the questions that follow. One of the things we want you to focus on when reading the messages is how consistent the messages are with one another. Therefore, while reading the messages, please think about whether or not the messages are similar in their description of what happened and who is to blame for the incident.

Your participation in this investigation is voluntary. By completing the questionnaire you are giving your consent that your responses to these questions be used as data for our investigation. Your responses are entirely anonymous. For more information about this study, please contact Joseph Massey at 797-3259. Thank you for your participation.

112

**Please turn the page.**

Appendix F -- *Continued*

**We would first like to ask you some questions about your experiences with the airline industry, and your thoughts about the airline industry.**

Note: A "commercial airline" is one with scheduled service between cities, as opposed to charter or military airline operations. Examples of commercial airlines include American Airlines, Delta, Southwest, Reno Air, America West, etc.

1. Do you now, or have you ever worked for a commercial airline? Yes No

If you work for an airline now, which airline do you work for? If you worked for an airline or airlines in the past, which have you worked for? Please indicate whether the airline you list is one you work for now, or an airline you used to work for.

_____	Presently Employed	Former Employee
_____	Presently Employed	Former Employee

2. Do you have a private pilot's license? Yes No
3. Have you ever flown as a passenger in a commercial airplane? Yes No

**Please respond to the following questions by circling the number that best represents your attitude.**

4. In general, how risky do you consider flying in a commercial airplane?

Very Risky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Risky

5. How risky do you consider flying on a low-fare carrier (e.g., Reno Air, Frontier, ValuJet, etc.)?

Very Risky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Risky

6. How risky do you consider flying on a full-service carrier (e.g., American, Delta, TWA, Continental, etc.)?

Very Risky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not at all Risky

**Please turn the page and read the message there.**

Appendix F -- *Continued***E-Mail**

**Subject:** Tucson Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways >  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees >

On July 1st, flight 215 had just taken off from Tucson International Airport en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport, when the pilots were alerted by automatic systems on the plane that the front tire had blown out on take-off.

The plane, a McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 was filled to capacity, with 137 passengers and five crew members on board. The plane was instructed by air traffic control to land at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, but could not do so for some three hours, until the fuel in the plane had been used up. Since the aircraft was going to have to attempt an emergency landing, with faulty landing gear, pilots and air traffic control personnel wanted the plane to be as light as possible when it landed, and that necessitated the burning off of the fuel. So the plane circled between Tucson and Phoenix for three hours that morning until the fuel was mostly gone, at which time the plane did emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor.

No one aboard the plane was injured, but many passengers reported being terrified throughout the flight, not knowing if they would survive it. Initial investigation into the crash reveals that the tires on the plane had not been changed in the specified time-frame. The tires were scheduled to have been changed on the aircraft two weeks before the time of the emergency landing. Pacific Airways mechanics failed to follow proper Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) procedures. We have ordered immediate re-training of our mechanics to make sure this does not happen again.

**To read the second message, which is a news release that the organization sent to the national media, please turn the page.**

Appendix F -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

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-----*Pacific Airways is the low-fare airline!*-----

**Please turn the page and answer the questions there.**

Appendix F -- *Continued*

**Please answer the following questions. Remember, if you need to, feel free to return to the previous pages to respond to the following statements.**

Which type of carrier is Pacific Airways?

Full-service Carrier (i.e., has international flights, has been in operation for over 20 years, has a large fleet of aircraft, and has in-flight entertainment and meal service)

Low-fare Airline (i.e., does not have international flights, has been in operation for less than 10 years, has a small fleet of aircraft, and has no in-flight entertainment or meals)

The type of Pacific Airways airplane involved in this incident was:

Boeing 727

Boeing 757

McDonnell Douglas Super 80 (MD-80)

People died in this incident.

True

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According to the E-mail, the cause of the incident was:

Pacific Airways Pilot Error

Private Pilot Error (Not Pacific Airways Pilot Error)

Air Traffic Controller (ATC) Error

Pacific Airways Mechanics/Maintenance Error

Tire Manufacturer Error

According to the News Release, the cause of the incident was:

Pacific Airways Pilot Error

Private Pilot Error (Not Pacific Airways Pilot Error)

Air Traffic Controller (ATC) Error

Pacific Airways Mechanics/Maintenance Error

Tire Manufacturer Error

**Please turn the page and answer the questions there.**

Appendix F -- *Continued*

**Please respond to the following statements by circling the number that best represents your viewpoint.**

The E-mail and the News Release are consistent with one another.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is a safe organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is a legitimate organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is trying to cover something up.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is a credible organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is being honest about the incident.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

The E-mail and the News Release are similar to one another.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways should be allowed to fly passengers.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7    Strongly Disagree

**Please turn the page and answer the questions there.**

Appendix F -- *Continued*

Pacific Airways is a good organization.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways should be allowed to continue operations.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

Pacific Airways is hiding something.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

The E-mail and the News Release are alike.

Strongly Agree    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly Disagree

### Additional Information

**Instructions:** These last questions are used to divide the questionnaires into groups. Please supply the information asked for by placing a check mark in each appropriate category. Keep in mind your answers are completely confidential.

What is your gender?     Male     Female

What is your age?    \_\_\_\_\_ Years

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<input type="checkbox"/> Some College
<input type="checkbox"/> Jr. College Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> College Degree
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Degree (Masters, Ph.D., M.D., J.D.)

What is your ethnicity?

<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic
<input type="checkbox"/> African-American	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please describe: _____

Appendix F -- *Continued*

What would you estimate your annual household income to be before taxes? (If you are claimed on your parents' income taxes, indicate their income.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$39,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$14,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$49,999
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<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$24,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-\$99,999
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**Thank you for your participation in this study.**

## APPENDIX G

## MESSAGES FOR MAIN INVESTIGATION

Message Pair 111**E-Mail**

**Subject:** Tucson Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways >  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees >

Pacific Airways flight 215 was involved in an emergency landing on July 1st. The landing gear on the McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 apparently was affected when the front tire of the plane blew out during take-off from Tucson International Airport, en route to Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

One hundred-thirty-seven passengers and five crew members were on-board the plane, which was instructed by air traffic control to emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport. To bring the plane to as light a weight as possible, the flight crew was instructed to fly the plane between Tucson and Phoenix until most of the fuel on-board the plane was used up. Since the flight from Tucson to Chicago is approximately three hours in length, the plane had to circle between Tucson and Phoenix for close to three hours before it could land.

Though no one on board the plane was injured, many passengers reported being terrified, not knowing if they would survive the landing. Initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) shows that the cause of the tire malfunction was the fact that the tires on the aircraft had not been changed within the specified time-frame. The tires on the aircraft should have been changed two weeks prior to the emergency landing. Pacific Airways accepts responsibility for the accident, and we have implemented re-training of our mechanics so that this does not happen again.

## Appendix G -- Continued

**NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
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**For Immediate Release**

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The plane, a McDonnell-Douglas Super 80 was filled to capacity, with 137 passengers and five crew members on board. The plane was instructed by air traffic control to land at Phoenix Sky Harbor, but could not do so for some three hours, until the fuel in the plane had been used up. Since the aircraft was going to have to attempt an emergency landing, with faulty landing gear, pilots and air traffic control personnel wanted the plane to be as light as possible when it landed, and that necessitated the burning off of the fuel. So the plane circled between Tucson and Phoenix for three hours that morning until the fuel was mostly gone, at which time the plane did emergency land at Phoenix Sky Harbor.

No one aboard the plane was injured, but many passengers reported being terrified throughout the flight, not knowing if they would survive it. Initial investigation into the crash reveals that the tires on the plane had not been changed in the specified time-frame. The tires were scheduled to have been changed on the aircraft two weeks before the time of the emergency landing. Pacific Airways mechanics failed to follow proper Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) procedures. Pacific has ordered immediate re-training of our mechanics to make sure this does not happen again.

-----*Pacific Airways is the full-service carrier!*-----

## Appendix G -- Continued

Message Pair 121**E-Mail**

**Subject:** Tucson Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways >  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees >

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Though no one on board the plane was injured, many passengers reported being terrified, not knowing if they would survive the landing. Initial inspection of the tires shows an unusual amount of wear, which leads us to believe that it is the tire manufacturer, and not Pacific Airways that is responsible for the accident. As you well know, we at Pacific stick to a very strict schedule of maintenance on all our aircraft, and we can all be proud of our safety record. We are certain that it was the tire manufacturer and not our Pacific Airways employees who are at fault. Because of this situation with the tire manufacturer, we have ordered all the manufacturer's tires to be taken off our planes, and we are discontinuing our business with the manufacturer, effective immediately.

## Appendix G -- Continued

**NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

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*Appendix G -- Continued*Message Pair 112**E-Mail**

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**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
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## Appendix G -- Continued

**NEWS**

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-----Pacific Airways is *the* low-fare airline!-----

*Appendix G -- Continued*Message Pair 122**E-Mail**

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-----*Pacific Airways is the low-fare airline!*-----

Appendix G – *Continued*Message Pair 211**E-Mail**

**Subject:** LaGaurdia Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways >  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees >

Pacific Airways flight 619, with scheduled service between New York's LaGaurdia Airport and St. Louis, was involved in a collision with a privately owned aircraft shortly before scheduled take-off.

Two people on-board the private aircraft, a pilot and a passenger, were killed when the right wing of the Boeing 757 struck the plane. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation show that it was error on the part of the Pacific Airways pilots that led to the collision. The pilots evidently did not follow the instructions given them by the air traffic controller, and were not where they should have been at the time.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

---

Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
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2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757's collided with a small, privately owned aircraft at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Two of the smaller plane's inhabitants were killed when the wing of the Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 struck the plane, decapitating a pilot and a passenger.

The Boeing 757, flight 619, was taxiing out to the runway, preparing to depart for St. Louis. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation have identified Pacific Airways pilots as those responsible for the crash. Apparently the Pacific Airways pilots failed to properly follow air traffic controller instructions and were headed in the wrong direction when they collided with the other aircraft.

-----*Pacific Airways is the full-service carrier!*-----

*Appendix G -- Continued*Message Pair 221**E-Mail**

**Subject:** LaGaurdia Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways >  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees >

Pacific Airways flight 619, with scheduled service between New York's LaGaurdia Airport and St. Louis, was involved in a collision with a privately owned aircraft shortly before scheduled take-off.

Two people on-board the private aircraft, a pilot and a passenger, were killed when the right wing of the Boeing 757 struck the plane. Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is publicly stating that Pacific Airways' pilots are to blame for the investigation, we stand behind our pilots. Our pilots were simply following the instructions given to them by the air traffic controllers.

We at Pacific Airways believe that it is the pilot of the private aircraft who is to blame for the incident. Our own investigation reveals that the pilot of the privately owned aircraft had a limited amount of experience in airports as large as New York's LaGaurdia, and that his inexperience is what led to the fatal collision.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757's collided with a small, privately owned aircraft at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Two of the smaller plane's inhabitants were killed when the wing of the Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 struck the plane, decapitating a pilot and a passenger.

The Boeing 757, flight 619, was taxiing out to the runway, preparing to depart for St. Louis. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation have identified Pacific Airways pilots as those responsible for the crash. Apparently the Pacific Airways pilots failed to properly follow air traffic controller instructions and were headed in the wrong direction when they collided with the other aircraft.

-----*Pacific Airways is the full-service carrier!*-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 212**E-Mail****Subject:** LaGaurdia Incident**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 619, with scheduled service between New York's LaGaurdia Airport and St. Louis, was involved in a collision with a privately owned aircraft shortly before scheduled take-off.

Two people on-board the private aircraft, a pilot and a passenger, were killed when the right wing of the Boeing 757 struck the plane. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation show that it was error on the part of the Pacific Airways pilots that led to the collision. Our pilots evidently did not follow the instructions given them by the air traffic controller, and were not where they should have been at the time.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757's collided with a small, privately owned aircraft at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Two of the smaller plane's inhabitants were killed when the wing of the Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 struck the plane, decapitating a pilot and a passenger.

The Boeing 757, flight 619, was taxiing out to the runway, preparing to depart for St. Louis. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation have identified Pacific Airways pilots as those responsible for the crash. Apparently the Pacific Airways pilots failed to properly follow air traffic controller instructions and were headed in the wrong direction when they collided with the other aircraft.

-----Pacific Airways is *the* low-fare airline!-----

Appendix G – *Continued*Message Pair 222**E-Mail**

**Subject:** LaGaurdia Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 619, with scheduled service between New York's LaGaurdia Airport and St. Louis, was involved in a collision with a privately owned aircraft shortly before scheduled take-off.

Two people on-board the private aircraft, a pilot and a passenger, were killed when the right wing of the Boeing 757 struck the plane. Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is publicly stating that Pacific Airways' pilots are to blame for the investigation, we stand behind our pilots. Our pilots were simply following the instructions given to them by the air traffic controllers.

We at Pacific Airways believe that it is the pilot of the private aircraft who is to blame for the incident. Our own investigation reveals that the pilot of the privately owned aircraft had a limited amount of experience in airports as large as New York's LaGaurdia, and that his inexperience is what led to the fatal collision.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
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(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757's collided with a small, privately owned aircraft at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Two of the smaller plane's inhabitants were killed when the wing of the Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 struck the plane, decapitating a pilot and a passenger.

The Boeing 757, flight 619, was taxiing out to the runway, preparing to depart for St. Louis. Initial findings from a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation have identified Pacific Airways pilots as those responsible for the crash. Apparently the Pacific Airways pilots failed to properly follow air traffic controller instructions and were headed in the wrong direction when they collided with the other aircraft.

-----*Pacific Airways is the low-fare airline!*-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 311**E-Mail**

**Subject:** Los Angeles Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 664 crashed in its final decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on July 1st, killing all on board. The Boeing 757 was carrying 142 passengers and five crew members, en route from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to LAX, when it crashed east of the airport.

Initial reports from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation into the crash have determined that pilot error led to the crash. Taped conversation taken from the flight data recorder on-board the plane show that the air traffic controllers at LAX warned the pilots that they were descending too rapidly and that they must pull up immediately. Additionally, on-board automatic warning indicators can be heard on the tape indicating to the pilots that they needed to pull up.

It is unclear why our pilots descended to an unsafe altitude, given that the flying conditions were generally good, and given that it was still daylight (3pm PDT), but apparently by the time they received warning from the air traffic controllers and the automatic sensors on-board the plane it was already too late to reach a safe altitude and the plane crashed into a hill, immediately exploding into flames.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 aircraft crashed into the hills outside of Los Angeles California, killing all 142 passengers and five crew members on-board.

Flight 664 originated in Dallas-Fort Worth, and was in its decent into the Los Angeles International airport (LAX) when it lost altitude and crashed east of the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the crash was pilot error. Visibility was generally good, and given the fact that the crash occurred at approximately 3pm PDT, lighting conditions were also good.

Air Traffic Control at LAX has reported that they were in communication with the cockpit crew during the incident and that they had instructed the crew that they were descending too quickly and to immediately pull up. It was apparently too late for the pilot to do anything about it though, and the plane crashed into the side of a hill, catching fire immediately. All on board died immediately upon impact from broken necks and backs, and were already dead when fire engulfed the plane.

-----Pacific Airways is *the* full-service carrier!-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 321**E-Mail**

**Subject:** Los Angeles Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 664 crashed in its final decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on July 1st, killing all on board. The Boeing 757 was carrying 142 passengers and five crew members, en route from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to LAX, when it crashed east of the airport.

Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the event was due to pilot error, we at Pacific Airways are certain that it was due to air traffic controller (ATC) error. Two pieces of information lead us to believe that it was ATC personnel, and not our Pacific Airways pilots, that caused the crash. First of all, the plane was slightly off course, which can be blamed on no one but ATC personnel. And second, the pilots were not given sufficient warning to pull up to a safe altitude by the ATC. By the time the pilots had received warning, it was too late to do anything about it. We at Pacific Airways deny any responsibility for this accident. It is entirely the fault of the air traffic controllers at LAX.

Appendix G – *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 aircraft crashed into the hills outside of Los Angeles California, killing all 142 passengers and five crew members on-board.

Flight 664 originated in Dallas-Fort Worth, and was in its decent into the Los Angeles International airport (LAX) when it lost altitude and crashed east of the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the crash was pilot error. Visibility was generally good, and given the fact that the crash occurred at approximately 3pm PDT, lighting conditions were also good.

Air Traffic Control at LAX has reported that they were in communication with the cockpit crew during the incident and that they had instructed the crew that they were descending too quickly and to immediately pull up. It was apparently too late for the pilot to do anything about it though, and the plane crashed into the side of a hill, catching fire immediately. All on board died immediately upon impact from broken necks and backs, and were already dead when fire engulfed the plane.

-----*Pacific Airways is **the** full-service carrier!*-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 312**E-Mail**

**Subject:** Los Angeles  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 664 crashed in its final decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on July 1st, killing all on board. The Boeing 757 was carrying 142 passengers and five crew members, en route from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to LAX, when it crashed east of the airport.

Initial reports from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigation into the crash have determined that pilot error led to the crash. Taped conversation taken from the flight data recorder on-board the plane show that the air traffic controllers at LAX warned the pilots that they were descending too rapidly and that they must pull up immediately. Additionally, on-board automatic warning indicators can be heard on the tape indicating to the pilots that they needed to pull up.

It is unclear why our pilots descended to an unsafe altitude, given that the flying conditions were generally good, and given that it was still daylight (3pm PDT), but apparently by the time they received warning from the air traffic controllers and the automatic sensors on-board the plane it was already too late to reach a safe altitude and the plane crashed into a hill, immediately exploding into flames.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 aircraft crashed into the hills outside of Los Angeles California, killing all 142 passengers and five crew members on-board.

Flight 664 originated in Dallas-Fort Worth, and was in its decent into the Los Angeles International airport (LAX) when it lost altitude and crashed east of the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the crash was pilot error. Visibility was generally good, and given the fact that the crash occurred at approximately 3pm PDT, lighting conditions were also good.

Air Traffic Control at LAX has reported that they were in communication with the cockpit crew during the incident and that they had instructed the crew that they were descending too quickly and to immediately pull up. It was apparently too late for the pilot to do anything about it though, and the plane crashed into the side of a hill, catching fire immediately. All on board died immediately upon impact from broken necks and backs, and were already dead when fire engulfed the plane.

-----*Pacific Airways is the low-fare airline!*-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 322**E-Mail**

**Subject:** Los Angeles Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 664 crashed in its final decent into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on July 1st, killing all on board. The Boeing 757 was carrying 142 passengers and five crew members, en route from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to LAX, when it crashed east of the airport.

Although the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the event was due to pilot error, we at Pacific Airways are certain that it was due to air traffic controller (ATC) error. Two pieces of information lead us to believe that it was ATC personnel, and not our Pacific Airways pilots, that caused the crash. First of all, the plane was slightly off course, which can be blamed on no one but ATC personnel. And second, the pilots were not given sufficient warning to pull up to a safe altitude by the ATC. By the time the pilots had received warning, it was too late to do anything about it. We at Pacific Airways deny any responsibility for this accident. It is entirely the fault of the air traffic controllers at LAX.

## Appendix G -- Continued

**NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

On July 1st, one of Pacific Airways' Boeing 757 aircraft crashed into the hills outside of Los Angeles California, killing all 142 passengers and five crew members on-board.

Flight 664 originated in Dallas-Fort Worth, and was in its decent into the Los Angeles International airport (LAX) when it lost altitude and crashed east of the airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the cause of the crash was pilot error. Visibility was generally good, and given the fact that the crash occurred at approximately 3pm PDT, lighting conditions were also good.

Air Traffic Control at LAX has reported that they were in communication with the cockpit crew during the incident and that they had instructed the crew that they were descending too quickly and to immediately pull up. It was apparently too late for the pilot to do anything about it though, and the plane crashed into the side of a hill, catching fire immediately. All on board died immediately upon impact from broken necks and backs, and were already dead when fire engulfed the plane.

-----Pacific Airways is *the* low-fare airline!-----

*Appendix G – Continued*Message Pair 411**E-Mail**

**Subject:** DFW Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed at Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) airport July 1st, injuring 27 passengers and three flight attendants. The flight originated at Boston's Logan airport and was scheduled to land at DFW.

The plane, a Boeing 727, crash landed when it touched down approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway. The captain brought the plane to a complete stop, emergency crews were dispatched, and the passengers were taken to safety. The injured were transported to area hospitals by ambulance and helicopter, depending on the severity of the injury. Injuries ranged from serious to critical.

An initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has concluded that pilot error is the cause. Evidently our pilots descended too quickly, which caused the plane to touch ground sooner than it should have.

**NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

Three flight attendants and 27 passengers were injured July 1st when Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed into the Dallas-Fort Worth airport (DFW). The flight originated at Boston's Logan Airport, and was scheduled to land at DFW.

Injuries ranged from critical to serious, and were caused when the plane, a Boeing 727, came down too quickly and hit ground before the beginning of the runway. The captain was able to stabilize the aircraft and brought the plane to a full stop on the runway. Emergency crews were dispatched immediately and evacuated all passengers. The injured were taken to nearby hospitals by helicopter and ambulance.

An investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that pilot error caused the crash. Apparently the crew descended too quickly and touched ground approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway.

-----Pacific Airways is *the* full-service carrier!-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 421**E-Mail**

**Subject:** DFW Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed at Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) airport July 1st, injuring 27 passengers and three flight attendants. The flight originated at Boston's Logan airport and was scheduled to land at DFW.

The plane, a Boeing 727, crash landed when it touched down approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway. The captain brought the plane to a complete stop, emergency crews were dispatched, and the passengers were taken to safety. The injured were transported to area hospitals by ambulance and helicopter, depending on the severity of the injury. Injuries ranged from serious to critical.

While initial results from the Federal Aviation Administration's investigation hint at pilot error, we at Pacific Airways stand behind our flight crew. We believe that the cause of the crash was air traffic control (ATC) error. ATC personnel at DFW are notoriously overworked and understaffed, and it is well-known that they are dealing with outdated technology. Given these stressful operating conditions, it is unsurprising that mistakes on the part of the ATC personnel will occur from time to time. Pacific Airways has proof that our pilots were simply told to descend more rapidly than they should have. Given the conditions at the airport--foggy and night time--there was nothing our pilots could have done to prevent this accident from occurring. It is the fault of the air traffic controllers at DFW, not our Pacific Airways' pilots.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
Office of Corporate Communications  
5000 Sky Harbor Blvd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85035  
(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

Three flight attendants and 27 passengers were injured July 1st when Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed into the Dallas-Fort Worth airport (DFW). The flight originated at Boston's Logan Airport, and was scheduled to land at DFW.

Injuries ranged from critical to serious, and were caused when the plane, a Boeing 727, came down too quickly and hit ground before the beginning of the runway. The captain was able to stabilize the aircraft and brought the plane to a full stop on the runway. Emergency crews were dispatched immediately and evacuated all passengers. The injured were taken to nearby hospitals by helicopter and ambulance.

An investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that pilot error caused the crash. Apparently the crew descended too quickly and touched ground approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway.

-----*Pacific Airways is the full-service carrier!*-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 412**E-Mail****Subject:** DFW Incident**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed at Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) airport July 1st, injuring 27 passengers and three flight attendants. The flight originated at Boston's Logan airport and was scheduled to land at DFW.

The plane, a Boeing 727, crash landed when it touched down approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway. The captain brought the plane to a complete stop, emergency crews were dispatched, and the passengers were taken to safety. The injured were transported to area hospitals by ambulance and helicopter, depending on the severity of the injury. Injuries ranged from serious to critical.

An initial investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has concluded that pilot error is the cause. Evidently our pilots descended too quickly, which caused the plane to touch ground sooner than it should have.

Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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Pacific Airways  
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2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
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**For Immediate Release**

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An investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that pilot error caused the crash. Apparently the crew descended too quickly and touched ground approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway.

-----*Pacific Airways is the low-fare airline!*-----

Appendix G -- *Continued*Message Pair 422**E-Mail**

**Subject:** DFW Incident  
**Date:** Fri, 6 July 1996, 10:56:34 -0600  
**From:** Rsmith@PA.COM <Robert Smith, CEO, Pacific Airways>  
**To:** PAEMPLOYEES@PA.COM <Pacific Airways Employees>

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Appendix G -- *Continued***NEWS**

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(602) 895-0000

2 July 1996

**For Information, Contact:**

Jim Swanson, Vice-President  
Corporate Communications  
(602) 895-0000

**For Immediate Release**

Three flight attendants and 27 passengers were injured July 1st when Pacific Airways flight 522 crash landed into the Dallas-Fort Worth airport (DFW). The flight originated at Boston's Logan Airport, and was scheduled to land at DFW.

Injuries ranged from critical to serious, and were caused when the plane, a Boeing 727, came down too quickly and hit ground before the beginning of the runway. The captain was able to stabilize the aircraft and brought the plane to a full stop on the runway. Emergency crews were dispatched immediately and evacuated all passengers. The injured were taken to nearby hospitals by helicopter and ambulance.

An investigation conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that pilot error caused the crash. Apparently the crew descended too quickly and touched ground approximately 100 feet before the beginning of the runway.

-----*Pacific Airways is the low-fare airline!*-----

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