

FUNDAÇÃO GETULIO VARGAS
ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DE SÃO PAULO

LIONEL MOREIRA

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Organization's reactions to unexpected events

SÃO PAULO

2011

LIONEL MOREIRA

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Organization's reactions to unexpected events

Dissertação apresentada à
Escola de Administração de
Empresas de São Paulo da
Fundação Getúlio Vargas, como
requisito para obtenção do título
de Mestre em Administração de
Empresas

Campo de conhecimento:

Internacionalização de empresas

Data de aprovação

__/__/____

Banca examinadora

Prof Dr. Mário Aquino Alves
(Orientador)

Prof. Dr. Sérgio Túlio Prado Jr.

Profa. Dra. Patrícia E. Mendonça

Moreira, Lionel.

Crisis communication: Organization's reactions to unexpected events /
Lionel Moreira. - 2011.

110 f.

Orientador: Mário Aquino Alves

Dissertação (MPA) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo.

1. Air France. 2. Comunicação nas organizações. 3. Relações entre empresa e imprensa. 4. Administração de crise. 5. Comportamento organizacional. I. Alves, Mário Aquino. II. Dissertação (MPA) - Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo. III. Título.

CDU 65.013

In memory of my grandfather João Da
Costa Moreira

I dedicate also this work to my family who always give me strength to realize my dreams, to my girlfriend Haliny for her invaluable support and to my advisor Pr. Dr. Mário Aquino Alves for his help and his dedication which were important to achieve this project.

Em memória do meu avô João Da
Costa Moreira

Dedico igualmente esse trabalho a minha família que sempre me deu força para realizar os meus sonhos, a minha namorada Haliny pelo seu inestimável apoio e ao meu orientador Professor Dr.Mário Aquino Alves pela ajuda e dedicação quais foram importante para realização desse projeto.

A reputation once broken may possibly be repaired, but the world will always keep their eyes on the spot where the crack was.

Joseph Hall

RESUMO

A reputação é considerada o ativo mais importante das empresas. Ela permite o estabelecimento de relações comerciais e garante um bom funcionamento da organização. Quando um evento inesperado surge, a reputação pode ser ameaçada. Os gerentes, líderes da organização, têm então que demonstrar reatividade e capacidade em responder as necessidades dos stakeholders, e capacidade de detectar e consertar as falhas dentro da organização através de um processo de aprendizagem, para evitar conseqüências negativas que poderiam danificar a reputação e impactar o desenvolvimento operacional da empresa.

Através da comunicação de crise, observamos que depois da queda do avião AF 447, a companhia Air France adotou diferentes posturas adaptadas ao pedido dos stakeholders e ao grau de ameaça sofrido. Logo depois do acidente, a empresa decidiu adotar a estratégia do reconhecimento, assumindo uma responsabilidade simbólica e comunicando prioritariamente para as famílias das vítimas e para a mídia. Nas seguintes semanas ela utilizou a estratégia do silêncio que consiste em não comunicar diretamente a mídia. Finalmente, ela usou a estratégia do “bode expiatório” quando ela foi sujeita a ataques diretos. As reações da empresa somadas ao avanço das investigações judiciais revelaram falhas organizacionais “históricas” dentro da própria empresa, como por exemplo, a falta de comunicação entre pilotos e gerentes ou uma falha de sensibilidade técnica e operacional da parte dos gerentes.

Apesar de problemas interno e externo, a Air France demonstrou que uma comunicação de crise bem gerenciada limita os impactos financeiros e de reputação. As conseqüências negativas sofridas pela companhia Air France foram limitadas.

ABSTRACT

Reputation is considered the most important asset of companies. It enables to set up business relationship and ensure the good functioning of the organization. When an unexpected even crops up, reputation could be threatened. Managers, leaders of the organization, need to demonstrate reactivity, a capacity of responding to stakeholders' requirements and a capacity to detect and to rectify faults within the organization through a learning process, in order to avoid negative consequences. The latter could tarnish reputation and impact the operational development of the company.

Through crisis communication, we observed that Air France adopted different postures after the crash of the flight 447. These ones were adapted to stakeholders' requirements and to the degree of threat that the company suffered. Just after the accident, the company decided to use the recognition strategy by assuming a symbolic responsibility and by communicating uppermost to the families of victims and to the media. The following weeks, the company privileged the strategy of silence which consists in not to communicate directly with the media. Finally, Air France used the "scapegoat" strategy when the company was subjected to direct attacks. Companies' reactions summed up to the advance of the ongoing judiciary investigation revealed "historical" organizational faults within the company, as for instance, the lack of communication between pilots and managers or the managers technical and operational insensitivity.

Although internal and external issues, Air France demonstrated that a well managed crisis communication limits financial and reputational impacts. Consequently, the company suffers limited negative consequences of this crisis.

SUMMARY

I.	INTRODUCTION	10
II.	LITTERATURE REVIEW	12
1)	Reputation and legitimacy: two fundamental variables which creates legitimacy, confidence and reliability to the organization	12
2)	Analysis of changes in the environment	15
A.	Sensemaking, a crucial variable to manage unknown situation	15
B.	Why managers face difficulties in managing the unexpected?	20
C.	To limit unexpected effect, organization must to settle confidence trough its corporate culture	27
3)	Organizational risks	30
A.	Definition of risk	30
B.	What is the reaction of manager confronted to it	33
C.	The determination of a risk situation depends on the interpretation of managers based on the flow of information and knowledge integrated	34
4)	Corporate crisis communication, a sensible tool which should respond to stakeholders expectations	37
A.	The concept of corporate communication and crisis communication	37
B.	Crisis communication need to respond to stakeholders expectations	41
C.	In response, what are the main strategies adopted by companies?	49
III.	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	53
IV.	CASE STUDY.....	55
1)	Presentation of the company.....	55
2)	The accident	60
3)	Reactivity and empathy, two keys elements of the Air France successful short term communication.	63
4)	Avoid contradiction to avoid possible polemic.....	65
5)	By different treatment of information, Media defined priorities in Air France communication	66

6)	Has Air France learned from the previous catastrophes?.....	68
A.	Environmental side.....	68
B.	Organizational side.....	72
7)	Has the Air France communication strategy changed one year after the crash?.....	74
8)	Consequences for Air France	76
A.	Juridical consequences.....	76
B.	Financial consequences.....	80
V.	CONCLUSION	86
VI.	REFERENCES	89
VII.	APPENDIX	94
A.	Appendix 1: "L'image d'Air France est renforcée"	94
B.	Appendix 2: Programmation de l'émission d'actualité politique de France 5, <i>C dans l'air</i>	95
C.	Appendix 3: 206 ocupantes do voo 447 da Air France.....	95
D.	Appendix 4: 12 Air France press release after the crash.....	105
E.	Appendix 5: Un syndicat de pilotes d'Air France appelle à ne plus voler sur des A330.....	109

I. INTRODUCTION

Reputation is the social evaluation of a group of entities toward a person, a group of people or an organization based on defined criteria. Fundamental instrument of social order, reputation acts on different levels of agency.

As Publilius Syrus famous quotation said “*a good reputation is more valuable than money*”. Indeed, reputation is considered one of the most valuable assets of a company. Joachim Klewes and Robert Wreschniok (2010) stated that reputation legitimize a position of power and maintain social recognition, bring a premium price for goods and services offered, transmit a stronger willingness and confidence among shareholders to hold on to shares in times of crisis, and a stronger readiness to invest in the company’s stock. It is difficult companies for to maintain existing or to establish new business relationships.

“Delivering functional and social expectations of the public on the one hand and manage to build a unique identity on the other hand creates trust and this trust builds the informal framework of a company. This framework provides return in cooperation [...] and produces reputation capital. A positive reputation will secure a company or organization long-term competitive advantages. The higher the Reputation Capital, the less the costs for supervising and exercising control.” (Klewes J. & Wreschniok, R., 2010, p.364)

To protect the precious asset, managers install a strong corporate culture within the organization, establish routines’ procedures and create safety plans. Strongly influenced by organizational culture, managers experience difficulties in detecting risk and in offering solution to solve it. This paper focuses on presenting, through the concept of crisis communication, how a manager reacts when he faces unexpected situations and what are the consequences of his reactive decisions? How is it perceived by the environment and how it impacts the organization?

More precisely in this paper we will tackle the following questions:

- What are the fundamental variables which can make possible the management of unexpected situations?
- How the unexpected events impact organization and increase reputation risks?
- What are the organizational characteristics which difficult the detection of reputational risks and complicate the resolution of a crisis?
- How environment interprets corporate actions and reactions?

The case Air France flight 447' crash, which occurred on 01 June 2009, will enable us to put in perspective the theoretical concepts presented on the literature review section. We will analyze how these theoretical concepts manifest themselves within a crisis of situation.

To provide a complete analysis of the case, we will answer to the following questions:

- What is the unexpected event?
- How the company reacts and how has it been interpreted by the environment in the short-term and long-term?
- Are Air France reactions and strategies fruit of a learning process?
- Has Air France suffered reputational and financial negative consequences?

II. LITTERATURE REVIEW

1) Reputation and legitimacy: two fundamental variables which creates legitimacy, confidence and reliability to the organization

The confidence that stakeholders have on a company and its brand leans on two correlated concepts: legitimacy and reputation. According to David.L Deephouse and Suzanne M.Carter (2003), organizational legitimacy and organizational reputation are two concepts representing assessments of an organization by a social system.

Literature pointed out that legitimacy and reputations results from the same social construction process and have a link with similar antecedents such as organizational size, charitable giving's, strategic alliance, and regulatory compliance, and improved ability to acquire resources.

Nevertheless, Lawrence (1998) try to distinguish legitimacy from reputation by suggesting two criteria of analysis: the nature of the assessment stated in the definition and the dimension on which legitimacy and reputation can be evaluated.

In past definitions, legitimacy has been evaluated in terms of acceptability, taken-for-grantedness, reasonableness, appropriateness and congruence. Suchman (1995) presented legitimacy as *“the generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper and appropriate”* (Suchman, M.C., 1995, p.574) within a social system. The central element of legitimacy leans on the adhesion to expectations of social systems of norms, values, rules and meanings. So, many of explicit expectations are explicitly set by professional associations, governments, etc... Implicit ones emerge over time from interactions among participants of the social system.

Following Suchman observation, legitimacy is

“an anchor-point of a vastly expanded theoretical apparatus addressing the normative and cognitive forces that constrain, construct and empower organizational actors.” (Suchman, M.C., 1995, p.571)

In contrast, reputation has been assessed in past definitions in terms of relative standing or desirability, quality, esteem, and favorableness. Shenkar and Yuchtman-Yaar (1997) equated reputation with image, esteem, prestige and good-will in developing the encompassing concept of organizational standing, because all terms indicate the relative position of an organization amongst its counterparts. We notice that business and popular press such as Fortune or the Financial Times attached indirectly an emotional and symbolic importance to reputational risk. Indeed, they publish, every year, reputational rankings of businesses and universities.

Another way to distinguish legitimacy and reputation is by comparing the dimensions on which they can be evaluated. For instance, there are some attributes for which only reputation can be evaluated as the architectural merit of corporate headquarters buildings. Thus, it is very difficult to compare the nature of legitimacy and reputation assessments.

According to Deephouse (2005), there exist two critical antecedents which enable to distinguish legitimacy and reputation. The latter are isomorphism and financial performance.

Di Maggio and Powell (1983) concentrate their studies on the concept of isomorphism. For them, *“Institutional isomorphism is manifested empirically as increased conformity”* (Westphal, J. D., Gulati, R. and Shortell, S. M. ,1997, p. 371). They demonstrate to what extent an organization is mimetic on certain aspects to other organization by using common strategies, structures and practices because powerful entities like the state imposed a kind of code of conduct. Organizations which deviate from the considered “normal” behavior violate cultural or legal expectations and will be subject to legitimacy challenges. In consequence, Isomorphism through its conformism leads to legitimacy. Reaching defined level of conformity to social norms is considered necessary to develop a favorable reputation. However, differentiation is required to achieve higher levels of reputation as described by Fombrun (1996):

“The more a company pursues a strategy that differentiates it from rivals with each of its major constituent groups, the more likely are constituents to ascribe a strong reputation to the company” (Fombrun, C. J. ,1996, p.393)

Financial performance is related to legitimacy and reputation because financial performance is an indicator of efficiency and success. The relative impact on legitimacy is measured by knowing whether financial performance agreed with communicated forecasts and the real financial-operational situation of the company. Financial performance is a determinant of corporate reputation. The effect of performance on reputation is not only related to financial performance but it impacts other aspects of performance. According to Hirsh and Andrew (1984):

“Performance challenges (to legitimacy) occur when organizations are perceived by relevant actors as having failed to execute the purpose for which they are chartered and claim support. The values they serve are not at issue but rather their performance in “delivering goods” and meeting the goals of their mission are called into question. (A performance challenge) places the target in an inherently more unstable situation than is addressed in a comparative or longitudinal examination of administrative efficiency” (Hirsch, P. M. and Andrews, J. A. Y., 1984, p. 173–174)

This quotation suggests that normal fluctuations in performance are likely not the basis of changes in legitimacy for firms meeting financial expectations.

Legitimacy and reputation are built and maintained at a high level if an organization prove its efficiency in analysing the environment variables fluctuations and demonstrates its capacity of internal reorganization and external reaction when the latter is confronted to the unknown and the unexpected.

Reputation and legitimacy can only be maintained if the board succeed in managing turbulences created by the environment. The unpredictability of extraordinary events leads managers to be confronted unknown and

unexpected situations. We will analyze through the concept of sensemaking how the unknown impact organizations and through the concept of mindfulness how organizations can manage the unexpected.

2) Analysis of changes in the environment

A. Sensemaking, a crucial variable to manage unknown situation

Sensemaking, a structural pool of the organization

Sensemaking is considered a central activity in the construction of organization and the environment when they are confronted one to another. Scott (1987) determined three ways of defining the concept of organization. First, organizations are *“collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized structures”* (Scott, W.R., 1987, p.22). Second, organizations are a natural system in which *“collectivities whose participants share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informally structured to secure this end”* (Scott, W.R., 1987, p.23). Finally, organizations are open systems which bring together *“coalitions of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; the structure of coalition, its activities and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors”* (Scott, W.R, 1987, p.23).

Taking into account these complementariness definitions, sensemaking focused on the shifts attention between structures, processes, and environments. It measures the level of openness of an organization and its capacity in redefining and readapting its structure and processes to evolving environments. Sensemaking enable to answer the three basic questions based on a perceptive approach: “who am I”, “who are they” and “who are ‘we’”. According to Gephart (1992) sensemaking is a *“verbal intersubjective process of interpreting actions and events”* (Gephart, R.P.Jr, 1992, p.118). Intersubjectivity is based on individual interpretations created by the interactions between individuals and lead to the construction of the Durkheim’s social structure or collective consciousness.

A collective consciousness creates interlocking routines and habituated action patterns are social constructions that allow substitutability among agents.

Frances Wesley (1990) notes that:

“Organizations do not exist and cannot be imbued with action potential: all organizations are in fact only a series of interlocking routines, habituated action patters that bring the same people together around the same place activities in the same time and places”. (Wesley, F.R., 1990, p.339)

A more recent definition by Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) covers the same ground:

“Organizations are nets of collective action, undertaken in an effort to shape the world and human lives. The contents of the action are the meanings and things (artifacts). One net of collective action is distinguishable from another by the kind of meanings and products socially attributed to a given organization”. (Czarniawska-Joerges, B., 1992, p.32)

Because they are social constructions, generic routines and habituated actions, patterns are often reconstructed and reaffirmed subjectively.

As Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) describe in his book *Sensemaking in organizations*, Sensemaking is characterized by seven properties:

Properties	Explanation
Grounded identity in construction	The sensemaking derives from the self-identity and a general orientation of the situation (Imagination, judgment, self-feeling)
Retrospective	<i>“Any intellectually conceived objet is in the past and therefore unreal. Reality is always the moment of vision before intellectualization takes place. There is no other reality”</i> Pirsig
Enactive of sensible environments	The stimulus of the situation provokes the activity of the individual which influence the environment

Social	An attempt to understand and explain how the thought, feeling and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imaged or implied presence of the others
Ongoing	My talking is spread across time, competes for attention with others ongoing projects and is reflected on after it is finished, which means my interests may already changed
Focused on and by extracted cues	The “what” that I single out and embellish as the content of the thought is only a small portion of the utterance that becomes salient because of context and personal dispositions.
Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy	I need to know enough about what I think to get on with my projects, but no more, which means sufficiency and plausibility, take precedence over accuracy.

Consequences of environmental changes: effects on the organization

Sensemaking appears in period of uncertainty. Indeed, rhetorical effect reminds that perception matters are joint products of properties of the environment, processes, structures of organizations, and dispositions of individuals. The environmental determinants are properties of an ongoing flow that increase the probability that people, regardless of where they sit in organizations or who they are, will take note of what is happening and will pursue it. Huber and Daft focused their work on three properties: information load, complexity, and turbulence.

Increase in:	Information load¹	Complexity	Turbulence ²
Consequences	People take increasingly strong steps to manage it. They begin with omission, and then move to greater tolerance of error, queuing, filtering, abstracting, using multiple channels, escape, and end with chunking	Increase perceived uncertainty because a greater number of diverse elements interact in a greater variety of ways (interdependence). Again, complexity affects what people notice and ignore.	Creates debate over best organization performance better in turbulent environments. Time consuming comprehensive information processing against intuition, heuristics, and imitation.

According to Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), changes provoke:

Consciousness	Switching to a conscious mode is provoked when one experiences a situation as unusual or novel
Discrepancy	Switching is provoked by discrepancy when “acts are in some way frustrated”, when there is “an unexpected failure”, “a disruption”, “a troublesome...situation”, when there is a significant difference between expectations and reality.
Deliberate initiative	Usually in response to an internal or external request for an increased level of conscious attention as when people are “asked to think” or “explicitly questioned”.
Ambiguity	Refers to a lack of clarity or consistency in reality, causality, or intentionality ambiguous situations are situations that cannot be coded precisely into mutually exhaustive and exclusive categories.

¹ Complex mixture of the quantity, ambiguity, and variety of information that people are forced to process

² Combination of instability (frequency of changes) and randomness (frequency and direction of changes)

According to Mandler (1984), there exist two basic types of interruption provokes by environmental changes. First, the new event is not “expected”, meaning that the latter not fit into the ongoing interpretation of the environment. And the second is an “expected” event which will not happen. These two types have the same kind of interruptive structural consequences even if they are distinguishable. Indeed, both imply the presence of something else that is “unexpected”. Consequently, there is place for coping, problem solving, and “learning” activities.

What is important about activity in the autonomic nervous system is that it absorbs information-processing capacity. The degree of autonomy activity that occurs after an interruption depends on two factors: the degree of organization of the action and the severity of interruption.

Consequences of environmental changes: effects on individuals

Salancik (1977) worked on the behavioral commitment especially during unexpected events. Leaning on the concept of sensemaking, he defines it as “*a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions and through these actions to beliefs that sustain the activities and his own involvement*” (Salancik, G.R., 1977, p.62). Several factors, as having explicit, public and irrevocable behavior, are responsible of binding a person to an action. These factors combination confirm only the existence of the action. It did not confirm the responsibility of the agent. Staw (1982) emphasizes the role of consequences in commitment and argues that “*commitment is built by actions in which one is responsible for large consequences*” (Staw, B.M., 1982, p.103). Commitments are focused on publicity, irrevocability, and volition and increase responsibility for action. However, even if accountability turns visible consequences, the latter are often delayed, cofounded, and negotiated.

In this sense, as Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) states top managers are also manipulators of the organization’s environment. Huber and Glick (1993) questioned the degree of manipulating power of top managers in the environment definition. Top managers advertise, lobby, and educate to make environments hospitable for their organization. They affect the flow of

environmental demands and resources. Thus, political actors and organizational actors in general choose and create some of their own constraints because it demonstrates the barriers of understandings that can be imposed by taxonomies.

In the language of commitment model, the manipulation of the environment will enable to justify actions by fixing the frame which regroups sensible beliefs, action and associations. Nevertheless, organizations often fail in realizing it. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) stated that they do not fully perceive the change of flow of events provoked by their actions, which deposits an orderly, material, social construction which will be subject to multiply interpretation. In this sense, sensemaking involves acting in ways that create an environment that people can comprehend and manage. According to him, the manipulative processes includes constructing desirable niches and negotiating domains, forming coalitions, educating clients and employees, advertising to potential clients and customers, and resolving conflicts.

Manipulation is relatively straightforward because it can create order and sensibleness. Commitment focuses on the action itself. A sense is found when belief justify taking irrevocable action. In contrary, manipulation focuses on the meaningful consequences of the action. Both commitment and manipulation build sensemaking because it starts with action where beliefs are altered to create a sensible explanation for the specific action.

B. Why managers face difficulties in managing the unexpected?

The inability to manage the unexpected lean on the fact that executives face the number of the pressing problems, one of the most frequent problems is, according to them, “thinking and planning strategically” and “maintaining a high performance climate”. Problems become more pressing when the later is related to strategy or performance outcomes. Commonly, managers take too long to recognize the violation of their expectations and the growth of the

problem. In addition they recognize belatedly that their efforts at containment are misplaced.

One reason which can explain this behavior is because managers are preoccupied with their failures, large and mostly small. They treat everything as a symptom and consider that there is always something is wrong with the system. They manifest also reluctance to simplify interpretations because they conceive the facing world as something complex, unstable, unknowable, and unpredictable. Success in any coordinated activity requires simplicity in order to stay focused on handful of key issues and key indicators.

Unexpected events usually originate in what psychologist James Reason (1990) calls “latent failures” in the system’s defenses. Many of these latent failures are discovered only after an accident. However, normal operations reveal deficiencies and the development of unexpected events. High reliability organizations are attentive to the front line, i.e. operational line and its relation with organizational relationship. It tries to facilitate the circulation of information and to develop situational awareness in order to enable continuous adjustments making which will prevent errors enlargement and accumulation, and isolate anomalies.

Facing imperfections, high reliability organizations complement their anticipatory activities as learning from failures or and remaining sensitive to operations with a commitment to resilience. High reliable organization have success in detecting, containing, and bouncing back inevitable errors provoked by the indeterminate world. Resilience means finding a combination of maintaining errors small and of improvising workarounds that keeps the system functioning.

High reliability organizations cultivate diversity within the organization. In a rigid organizational system, errors created at high levels tend to pick up and combine with error at low levels turning the problem bigger and more difficult the resolution of it. In prevention, decisions are made on the front line and authority migrates to the people with the most expertise, regardless of their rank. The decisions migrate in search of a person who has specific knowledge about the situation.

All organizations know the potential for the future losses. Each organization needs develop precautionary norms that are set out in regulations, procedures, rules, guidelines, job descriptions, and training materials. In this sense, reliable organizations have a big incentive to contain the unexpected because they are aware that in case of failure, the results can be catastrophic in terms lives, assets, reputation, legitimacy, goodwill...

The ability of high reliable organizations to teach us about mindfulness lies on the capacity to know to which element it is important to pay attention, how should we process it and how to maintain continuing alertness.

The scale of an event is also another variable that company must to consider. For instance, a visit from a personality to a CEO's office does not produce fatalities, but it can generate external affects as in the financial markets. Thus, the meaning of the unexpected is contextual. In all organizations, people expect to continue doing routines operations. Unexpected interruptions can eventually turn disastrous the functioning of the company if unexpected is managed poorly. So, being prepared to the management of the unexpected possibility should be at the center of organization's attention.

The environment of high reliable organizations is one in which there are a high-risk technologies which enable the propagations of errors. Understanding it is never perfect, and people under pressure make wise choices with insufficient information. Stanford business school Professor Kathleen Eisenhardt describes the environments of the microcomputer industry as *"High velocity environments which are characterized by rapid and discontinuous change in demand, competitors, technology, and/or regulation such that information is often inaccurate, unavailable or obsolete."* (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt K. *apud* Mc Carthy I.P., Lawrence, T.B., Gordon B.R., 2010, p. 3). The ways people deal with a high-velocity resemble the mindful activities. Indeed, decision makers pay close attention to real time information.

According to Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), *"managing the unexpected is about alertness, sensemaking, updating, and staying in motion. But it all starts with a simple, straightforward, common sequence in organizational life: a person or unit as an intention, takes action, misunderstands the world; actual events fail to*

coincide with the intended sequence; and there is an unexpected outcome.”
 (p.35)

Unexpected means also be surprised by the happening of an event, Strategy researcher Brian Kylen³ stated that it exists five variety of surprises.

Surprise occurs when	Explanations
“a bolt from the blue”	Something appears for which you had no expectation, no prior model of the event, no hint that it was coming.
an issue is recognized but the direction of the expectation is wrong	Ex: fatigue, a team performed poorly due to lack of coordination even if they know each other.
you know what will happen but you discover that your timing is off	It is when the expected duration of an event proves to be wrong. An event whose effect to be transient turns out to have an enduring effect.
it will happen, and in what order	When the problem emerges before than expected, the chances are good that there were clues that tensions where higher than usual, but they were missed and coded instead as “normal” trouble of people settling in for a long cruise.
a problem is expected but its amplitude is not	

Surprise always starts with an expectation. Presumably if you hold these expectations, you look for evidence that confirms them. The continuing search for confirming evidence postpones your realization. If you slow to realize and questioned your expectation, problem will go worsens and will become harder to solve. When you confirm that your expectation is wrong, there may be few options left to solve the problem. In the meantime, efficiency and effectiveness

³ Rf. Weick K.E. & Sutcliffe K. M., 2001

declined, the system is now vulnerable to further collapse, and safety reputations and production are threatened.

The lack of understanding creates false expectations and dangerous anticipations

Expectations provoke also unexpected. Indeed, expectations mask surprises and problems, the unexpected, and lead to wrong expectation. Thus, High reliable organizations try to weaken the weight of expectations. The aim is to be self-conscious about validity of their beliefs and to question them, reaffirm them, update them, replace them, and learn from all these activities. These diverse activities hang together because they produce mindfulness.

According to Weick and Sutcliffe (2001), whenever people update their understanding of what is happening, they are essentially rework the ways they label and categorize what they see. They do at least three things: reexamine discarded information, monitor how categories affect expectations, and remove dated distinctions. Rework categories mindfully means seeing how much information is discarded when a specific event is treated as an instance of class of events with similar characteristics, paying close attention to their effect on my expectations

Inattention and misperception favor the escalation of serious adverse events. A danger of misperception relies on the temptation to normalize an unexpected event. Managers tend to seek confirmation for expectations and avoid disconfirmation, ignoring important data. To counteract the temptation to seek confirmation and avoid disconfirmation, people on aircraft carriers strive for mindful updating. The latter is facilitated by processes that focus on failures, simplifications, operations, resiliencies, and expertise.

All organizations need to constantly update understanding, knowledge and processes. Some experts argue that infinite number of weak signals in the environment turn impossible the anticipation of the unexpected. The ability to pick up these weak signals is far beyond the existing technological capabilities handled by organizations. This ability to become aware of unanticipated events

seems to be enhanced by the first three of our five processes: preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify interpretations, and sensitivity to operations.

A preoccupation with failure is translated by the use of the incident reviews to report malfunctioning within the organization. People need to feel safe to report them. Thus, managerial practices such as encouraging questioning and rewarding people who report errors or mistakes. Encouraging is also important because all employees recognize that complex technology can create positive and negative surprises.

Managers usually attribute success only to themselves or to the organization when the organization succeeds. Weick and Sutcliffe (2001) explain that by this attitude, managers narrow their perceptions, change their attitudes, feed their confidence in a single way of doing business, breed their overconfidence in the efficacy of current abilities and practices, and turn them into leaders intolerant with opposing points of view. Thus, managers drift more easily into complacency, inattention, and predictable dangerous routines.

Reliability enhancing organizations enact a number of processes to improve their capabilities to anticipate problems and to become aware of the unexpected earlier. We saw that these organizations:

- Persuade members to be chronically worried about the unexpected and sensitive to errors in analysis.
- Work to create a climate where people feel safe to question assumptions to report problems or failures candidly.
- Conduct frequently incident reviews of unexpected events, no matter how inconsequential.
- Help people expand the number of undesired consequences they envision to expand the number of precautions.
- Encourage organizational members to view close calls as a kind of failure that reveals potential danger.
- Create a climate where people are wary of success, suspicious of quiet periods, concerned about the stability, routine, and lack of challenge.

- Counteract tendencies to simplify assumptions, expectations and analyses
- Work to create a climate that encourages variety in people's analyses about organization's technology and production processes.
- Pay serious attention to operations, the front line, and imperfections in features.

However, presumes a level of understanding that is impossible to achieve when one is dealing with unknowable, unpredictable, incomprehensible, complex technologies.

Anticipating procedures give the illusion of being prepared to an unexpected event and has a serious effect on people behavior especially regarding uncertainty. Nevertheless, it is impossible to write procedures to anticipate all situations and conditions that shape people's work. Anticipation consumes great quantities of resources and attention. All solutions to all anticipated problems must be actively retained in the group's action repertoire and memory, so that any problem that arises can be matched with a predesigned solution.

In contrary, a commitment to resilience is different. The nature of it is described by Wildavsky *"the mode of resilience is based on the assumption that unexpected trouble is ubiquitous and unpredictable; and thus accurate advance information on how to get out of it is short supply. To learn from error and to implement that learning through fast negative feedback, with dampens oscillations, are at the forefront of operating resiliently"* (Wildavsky, apud Weick K.E. & Sutcliffe K. M., 2001, p.69). Resilient people are attentive to knowledge and resources that relieve, lighten, moderate reduce and decrease surprises. They think mitigation rather than anticipation. High reliable organizations committed to resilience worked to develop knowledge, capability for swift feedback, faster learning, speed knowledge, capability for swift feedback, faster learning, speed and accuracy of communication, experiential variety, skills at recombination of existing response repertoires, and comfort with improvisation.

In this sense, errors, surprises, and the unexpected are difficult to anticipate.

Some organizations deal with this difficulty by trying to improve their ability to anticipate. They invest resources in activities such as building defenses in depth, developing elaborate contingency plans, imagining worst case scenarios... The intention is to prevent bad outcomes. However, reliable organizations invest more of their resources to contain and bounce back from unexpected events after they actually occur. Reliability-enhancing organizations:

- Pay just as much attention to building capabilities to cope with errors that have occurred.
- Develop capabilities for mindfulness, swift learning, flexible role structures, quick size-ups, and elementary structuring of personnel
- Adopt organization-wide mindset of cure rather than prevention. This means people are attentive to knowledge and resources that relieve, lighten, moderate, reduce and decrease surprises.
- Encourage people to make knowledge about the system transparent and widely known.
- Establish pockets of resilience through uncommitted resources such as informal networks of people who come together on an as-needed basis to solve sticky problems.
- Create a set of operating dynamics that shifts leadership to the person who currently has the answer to the problem at hand.

C. To limit unexpected effect, organization must to settle confidence through its corporate culture

To create confidence inside its structures, organizations create plans of the inevitable, preempt the undesirable, and control the controllable. However, plans are designed on stable and predictable contexts. Managers believe that the world will unfold in a predetermined manner, a lapse that Mintzberg (1994) calls “the fallacy of predetermination”. Predetermination does not open space for unexpected events that fall outside the realm of planning. Plans are building from assumptions and beliefs about the world, they embody expectations.

Strong expectations influence interpretation and capacities of recognition of the current reality, and that along the time. By design, then, plans influence perception. Encoding the world, plans reduce the number of things people notice. In addition, plans can undercut organizational functioning because they specify contingent actions that are designed to cope with the future. However, contingent actions are doubly blind because they restrict present view of capabilities of improvisation in front of undefined situations. Moreover, plans presume that consistent and long-standing high quality outcomes. Nevertheless, build to solve routines issues, plans cannot handle novel events.

In dynamic environments, conventional practices of good management can conceal more than they reveal. Concealment occurs because good management tends to unfold at the mercy of expectations and its blind spots. When high reliability human resources practice good management tend to act in ways that loosen the grip of expectations on their perception and interpretation.

To embed process of mindfulness, companies try to integrate a set of values expectations and norms through its corporate culture.

Turner and Pidgeon (1997) consider corporate culture as:

“Part of the effectiveness of organization lies in the way in which they are able to bring together large numbers of people and imbue them for a sufficient time with a sufficient similarity of approach, outlook and priorities to enable them to achieve collective, sustained responses which would be impossible if a group of unorganized individuals were to face the same problem. However, this very property also brings with it dangers of a collective blindness to important issues, the danger that some vital factors may be left outside the bounds of organizational perception.” (Turner & Pidgeon, 1997, p.47)

In this context, culture is related to assumptions that preserve lessons learned from dealing with the outside and the inside environment. Values derived from these assumptions that prescribe how the organization should act; and artifacts are visible markers and activities that embody and give substance to the espoused values.

Culture affects what people expect from its equivalent and what people expect from their dealings with the external environment of customers, competitors, suppliers, shareholders... thus, expectations take the form of agreements about appropriate attitudes or behavior. Peters and Waterman (2004) notice that people in an organization were committed to no more than three or four core values and if they internalized these values and share them; top management could give these committed people wide latitude to make decisions because they would frame those decisions in a similar and preferred manner.

In addition, authors stated

“Autonomy is a product of discipline. The discipline provides the framework. It gives people confidence stemming from stable expectations about what really counts.” (Peters & Waterman, 2004, p.322)

A culture with three or four key values that have been converted into norms for appropriate behavior, norms that are shared widely and implemented with intensity, will be coordinated, resilient and opportunistic.

Unavoidable unexpected events and difficulties from managers to learn from past experiences allow risky situation to emerge. We will analyze in this section, which can be considered in a situation of risk and how the risk is perceived, generated and interpreted.

3) Organizational risks

A. Definition of risk

According to Bernstein, the definition risk has evolved along history. Its rapprochement with probability theory occurs during the shift toward modernity. The philosophical and cultural movement, modernist, influences strongly research from the second half the 20th century to the present time. In reaction, postmodernism responds critically to modernist beliefs. The following table (Miller, 2009, p.166) presents the contrast between modernist and postmodernist assumption

Dimensions of Contrast	Modernist Assumptions	Postmodernist Assumptions
Unit of Analysis	The individual is the primary unit of analysis of understanding organizational risk.	Risk is a social and multilevel phenomenon.
Risk Preferences	Risk preferences are given and left unexplained.	Risks preferences, perceptions and responses are learned.
Nature of the Environment	The environment is given and probabilistic.	The environment is a complex, socially constructed system.
Ethics	Ethical considerations are omitted.	Ethical considerations are integral to risk assessment and management
Risk Reponses	Decisions are the key way that organizations respond to risk.	Actions, not just decisions, respond to risk.

In this paper, we will be focused on the post-modernism theory which affects organization of the 21th century.

For postmodernists, researches will be focused on the interpretation of the interpersonal relationships and not individuals. The explanation of learning and transactional outcomes lean on the applications of social network analysis in organizational research convey this emphasis, pointing to network structure, the qualities of interpersonal ties, and the positions of individuals within networks.

Some authors combined institutional theory and sociological perspectives on risk. They conclude that risk is both emergent (bottom-up) from interdependence among individuals' actions, and downwardly affected (top-down) through regulation and institutionalization of norms. Organizations can be the targets of risk regulators and the instigators of risk regulations. Societal processes influence organizational discourse and actions, even as organizations seek to shape societal perceptions and responses to risks.

The risk is in part socially constructed

Learn from risk perceptions and norms follow directly from adopting the social and multilevel perspective. Miller (2009) reminds that risk is socially constructed across individuals. Culture provides shares conventions and categories, as well as expectations that give rise to personal judgment about crisis. The social aspect of forming risk perceptions includes interpersonal judgment and political processes. Within organization, risk perceptions and preferences are both causal and caused. Indeed, organization theorists tended to view individuals as bringing their prior preferences to organizations, with heterogeneous preferences producing ambiguous and unstable organization goals. Learning could produce shared risks perceptions and preferences, resulting in a more uniform and less ambiguous goals. Alternatively, organizational actions clearly create risks in the organization when individual members of the organization are unclear about their personal risk preferences.

The situation that managers face generally does not fulfill the requirements of Knight (1921) classic definition of risk. Knight defines risk as a situation

characterized by an objective and a stable distribution of possible states with known or estimable probabilities. According to him, managers operate under fundamental uncertainty so managers do not know the full set of strategic actions and their possible implications of organizational performance. Thus, organizational experiences reflect limited sampling of possible strategy - environment combination. However, managers intentionally limit their experiences with diverse environment depending on how it will affect performance.

According to some managers, risk is unquantifiable. The risk is measured more through perceptions than measured empirically. Miller (2009) said that culturally, learned patterns for assessing risk can render quantitative analysis irrelevant. Quantification may be the underlying subjectivity of risk assessments. Managers are often unable to quantify risks. Their heuristic decisions deviate from normative models based on expected risk-return relations or real-valuation.

Risk is in part socially constructed and complex to understand. Indeed, socio-technical systems are risky because their performance is contingent on many interdependent factors. Opportunistic action of social individuals within an exchange network creates behavioral uncertainty and proves the inability of the organization to coordinate and predict the actions of others. Miller (2009) stated that Giddens (1992) emphasized on the necessity of sustaining trust to mitigate risks and its dysfunctional consequences in complex systems. And Foucault concentrated its attention on the roles of disciplinary institutions and in the internalization of norms in social control over individuals' risky behaviors.

Organizations-society and the natural environment threatening to one another, in that sense they are interdependent. Having difficulties to mitigate it, the two systems let new kinds of risks emerge, brought by the pressing complexity of the sociotechnical system construction. As Dörner (1996) said, the interdependency creates a big challenge, which needs to be understood holistically. In a complex system, actions can have unanticipated consequences, and feedback effects can produce nonlinear outcomes. Risk arises from interactions at the systemic level.

B. What is the reaction of manager confronted to it

MacCrimmon and Wehrung (1986) stated that managers try to control uncertain variables rather than reacting to them. Risk is also generated from the manager himself, i.e. his personal behavior. The definition of 'risk' also includes a moral and hence ethical dimension. In this sense, risk evaluation calls for judgments about personal implications and empathy regarding effects on others. So risk indicates potential threats to desired social outcomes and involves consequences conflicting perceptions and interests. It can create a kind of "political instability" within the organization. Coming from the concept of identification with a community, empathy generates group creations inside the organization. Organization is a kind of arena where groups defend actively against their distinct perceptions of organizational risk and its implications. In addition, organizational decisions and actions affect the distribution of exposure to risk among stakeholders. Confronted to risk exposure, stakeholders always demand compensation; their contracts never fully anticipate all possible contingents affecting an organization's ability to honor its explicit and implicit commitments. Furthermore:

"Risk occurs in complex social systems, so risks bearing spills beyond organization boundaries and immediate stakeholders to society in general, and even to future generations. In the absence of compensation for risk bearing, stakeholders may hesitate to make firm specific investment. As such, societal arrangements to manage and allocate risks have implications for wealth creation as well as wealth distributions."

(Miller, 2009, p.170)

C. The determination of a risk situation depends on the interpretation of managers based on the flow of information and knowledge integrated

The major issue faced by interpretation system is to differentiate highly specialized information receptors which interact with the environment and which not. Decision making is possible only with filtered and processed information about the environment. Due to uncertainty, the organization must find ways to verify the veracity of the information about the environment in order to base organizational action on accurate information. Organizations must develop information processing mechanisms capable of detecting trends, events, competitors, markets and technological developments relevant for their survival. Interpretation, where individual human beings send and receive information and carry out the interpretation process, is a critical element that distinguishes human organization from others systems.

Organization theorists observed that organizations do not have different mechanisms to set goals, process information, or perceive the environment. Instead, Organizations have cognitive systems and memories to preserve knowledge, behaviors, mental maps, norms and values over time especially there is high turn-over level within employees. Sharing constitutes the interpretation system and is considered the distinctive feature of organization. In consequence, strategic-level managers formulate the organizations interpretation at the top of the organization hierarchy. Indeed, top managers bring together and interpret information for the system and channeled it into through the organization.

Interpretation is the process of translating these events of developing models for understanding, bringing out meaning and assembling conceptual schemes. Many authors proposed several interpretation images, including scanning, monitoring, sense making, interpretation, understanding, and learning. These concepts are organized into three steps that constitute the overall learning process as reflected in the following figure described by Daft and Weick (1984):

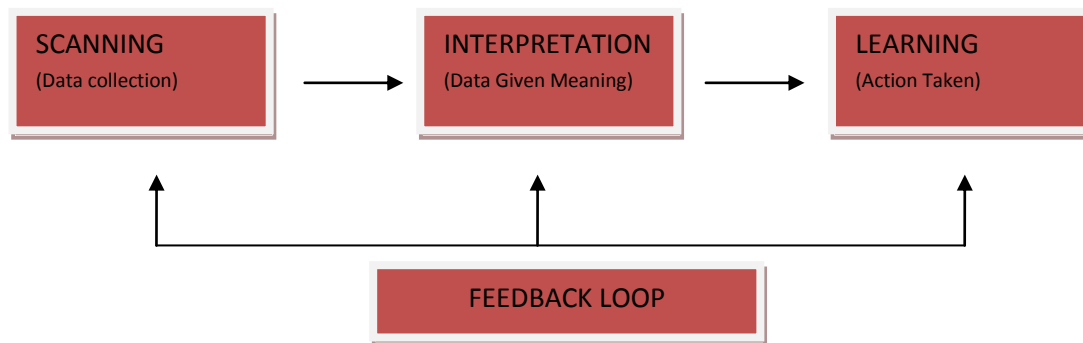


Figure: Organization Learning and Feedback

The first stage is scanning, which is defined as the process of monitoring the environment and providing environmental data to managers. Scanning is concerned with data collection. The organization may use formal data collection systems, or data through manager's personal contacts. Interpretation occurs in a second stage. Data given are meaning. Perceptions are shared and cognitive maps are constructed and organization experienced interpretation when a new construct is introduced into the collective cognitive map. Organizational interpretation is formally defined as the process of translating events and developing shared understanding and conceptual schemes among the board of directors. Interpretation gives meaning to data, but it occurs before organizational learning and action. Learning is distinguished from interpretation by the concept of action. Learning involves a new response or action based on the interpretation. Organizational learning is defined as a process by which knowledge about action outcome relationships between the organization and the environment is developed. Organizational interpretation is analogous to learning a new skill. The act of learning also provides new data for interpretation. Feedback from organizational actions may provide new collective insights for coalition members. Thus, the three stages are interconnects through a feedback loop.

Systematic process variations occur based on organization and environmental characteristics, and the interpretation process may in turn influence, organizational outcomes such as strategy structure and decision making.

According to Daft and Weick (1984), strategies positions will be defined by Miles and Snow four types of strategy:

- The company will be a prospector, which means the company has a high level of initiative.
- The company will be an analyzer which maintains a stable core of activities but with occasional innovation on the periphery.
- The company will be a defender which is more dependent of mode of interpretation of the environment within the organization.
- The company will be the reactor in which it reacts to seemingly random changes in the environment. Decisions making is influenced by coalition building and political processing, by systems analysis and rational procedures and by programmed responses to routine problems. It is part of the information and interpretation processes. However, the environment is not fully analyzable, manager will spend time making sense of what happened and reaching agreements about problem before proceeding to a solution.

The crisis is the consequences of the multiplication of risks situation. A crisis is considered an extraordinary event, or a series of events which affect in different ways the integrity of the product, the reputation and the financial stability of the organization.

When the social environment is interpreted and risks are detected, upper managers must to communicate to the organizations and to the external world specific information about the current situation to avoid the emergence of a crisis. In this chapter, we will see the importance of crisis communication and how the message deliver should be adapted to the judgment of stakeholders and the public opinion.

4) Corporate crisis communication, a sensible tool which should respond to stakeholders expectations

A. The concept of corporate communication and crisis communication

The concept of corporate communication

The concept of corporate communication was born in the United States in the beginning of the 20th century. Corporate or institutional, this professionalized communication has several definitions as the one established by Fernandez (1991). For the latter, corporate communication is

“ a set of techniques and activities aimed to facilitate and to speed up the flow of messages between the member of an organization, or between an organization and its environment, or either as, influence in opinions, behaviors and conducts of the internal or external public of the organization”. (Fernández, 1991, p.19)

Studies made within the first half of the 20th century were essentially focused on the study of a model of internal communication. Indeed, the flow of communication was linear and downward.

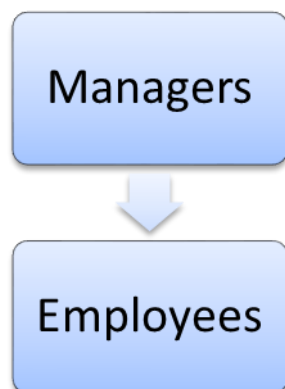


Figure: **Linear Flow of Communication**

Since the 1980's, when the global economy has been affected by a series of incidents: consumption crisis, the mass media, and the emerging of new values as environmental concerns. External effects have notorious impacts within an organization and lead to implement internal restructuration, impacting at the

same time the corporate philosophy. These events enable the adoption of the concept of corporate culture, understood as a set of norms, values and code of conducts which ruled all members of the corporation. The company starts to be considered as a social body.

Others terms related to corporate culture are the identity and the brand image. Communication can be considered in this context a medicine which can prevent or cure “diseases” suffered by a company. In other terms, communication is a tool activated when classical management technique cannot respond to a problematic situation. The awareness of communication relevance eased the emergence of two new important concepts in the management field: corporate reputation and social corporate responsibility.

Corporate reputation can be described as the crystallization of the image of a company when the latter results from an excellent behavior. As for the human being, reputation has a structural effect in the long term. The reputation will allow confidence in a product and consequently will create brand value.

Corporate social responsibility means an organization is committed to maintain a socially responsible management which respects moral principles defined by the society. Companies adopt policies of good conducts by, for instance, assuming the responsibility of the consequences in case of bad conduct, or promoting dialogue and transparency inside and outside the organization.

As defined Arrieta (1991), the corporate communication constitutes

“the nervous system of the company or the institution, being one of the objectives conceive and realize activities which create or promote internal and external flows’ vitality and efficiency adapting the contain and the form, whose aim is to create, reinforce or modify, one attitude within the company or the organizations”. (Arrieta, 1991, p.141)

Corporate communication put together every integrated communicative activity, produced by a company and addressed to publics in order to create a peaceful relationship and to deliver the correct message at once.

“Companies are worlds in action. Organisms highly complex immersed in a universal of constant changes and in expansion: markets, institutions, society, and global world. All changes, intern and extern, affects the company and requires efficient responses from it in its decision making and in its way of managing, behaving and being related.” (Costa J.,1999. p.13)

Costa’s quotation illustrates the necessity for a company to create an efficient communication inside and outside its own organization. The challenge leans on the capacity of harmonizing every communication in order to deliver a message which will be well understood by all receptors.

The concept of crisis communication

*“The crisis is 85% of bad communication; the lack of reactivity of the company is the principle factor of crisis: faster she goes, less crisis they are”*⁴as notice a study about sensitive communication made by Euro RSCG&Co. The crisis, in its globalized and trivialized definition, consists in describing exceptional, unusual and particularly grave situations, which affects groups or activities. It happens recurrently, as Kissinger said *“It cannot have crisis next week, my agenda is already full”*.

The “companies’ crisis” open the door to a new form of communication “the crisis communication”. According to Fournier (1993), this new kind of communication, coming from the United States of America, appeared in France and Brazil after a huge heterogeneity of accidents and events symbolized by Chernobyl, Le Crédit Lyonnais, Enron, TAM...

The crisis communication is so a function of the company. It aims to exonerate companies of its responsibilities. According to Fournier (1993), crisis and communication touch to cruel situations for corporations. It is in line with the heart of rationality and clear economic stakes where the survival of the

⁴ "Les médias et l'entreprise en crise" Report. Euro RSCG C&O. 2006

company can be threatened. In a world which offer a bigger security, difficulties and dangers meet by corporations will be amplified.

The role of crisis communication is to limit and control these effects. Crisis communication can be qualified as a “sedative” of crisis effect. However, it not responds to the heart of the problem, which must be solved by the top management. François-Bernard Huyghe⁵ reminds in its blog that the “sedative” effect can only occurs if communication errors are not committed because many mistakes came from precipitation, blunders made at the beginning of the crisis, declarations, impressions which determine the rest of the media treatment, especially when it is time to find out responsible.

The majority of authors mentioned along the literature review of the master’s thesis agreed to say that a true policy of media relationship can be decisive in turbulent times. Its importance is not always perceived by corporations as much as it is difficult to quantify. Thought, taking the brand image point of view, the internal communication, the activation of information networks, the positioning of the company and its products, its sensibility to environmental issues... this kind of policy seems to be essential and appropriate. Through, the word “policy”, searchers develop the idea of knowing how it is important for a company to have a big network of personalities (politics, clients, journalists...) with whom it will have privileged relations built on information exchanges and a common reflections. Insofar the help brought by this network in normal period, it might play a major role of intermediary, being perfectly credible.

⁵ Lead research at the Institute of Research in informational intelligence, associate searcher at the Institute of International and strategic relations, Professor of sociology of the media and infostrategy from 1987 to 2003 at CELSA Paris IV Sorbonne and at the Economic Warfare School of Paris.

B. Crisis communication need to respond to stakeholders expectations

How Audiences Judge Messages in a Crisis

In crisis communication, it is important to evaluate the judgment of the audience.

According to researches the first message received on a subject sets the stage for comparison of all future messages on that subject.

In consequence, the speed of communication with which you respond to the public can be an indicator of how prepared you are to respond to the emergency meaning that you have a system put in place and a process of action which will be taken. We need to bear in mind that the first impressions are lasting impressions. The public needs to be aware that the organization is responding to a problem in order to maintain confidence in the organization.

Indeed the public will be listening for factual information and some will be expecting to hear a recommendation for action. The organization needs to check if credible sources share the same facts. To make the message trustable, the board need to privilege repetition.

A research by Dr. Vincent T. Covello made in the West Virginia department of Health & Human resources shows that there are four basic elements to establishing trust and credibility through communication which are:

1. Empathy and caring expressed in the first 30 seconds. According to Dr. Vincent T. Covello's research being perceived as empathetic and caring provides greater opportunity for your message to be received and acted upon.
2. Competence and expertise. Education, position title, or organizational roles and missions are quick ways to indicate expertise. Previous experience and demonstrated abilities in the current situation enhance

the perception of competence. Another useful means is to have established a relationship with your audiences in advance of the emergency.

3. Honesty and openness. The organization must to face the realities of the situation and responding accordingly. It means being participatory by giving people choices and enough information to make appropriate decisions. The organization must to be realistic about its communication systems and procedures. For instance, if the organization cannot reveal information, it doesn't have to pretend that the organization doesn't hold the information. According to Dr. Vincent T. Covello, tell the public why the information isn't available for release at the time. Companies need to allow the public to observe the process while reminding them that this process is what drives the quality of the emergency response. The author underlines that the vocabulary chose is also a demonstrative of honesty.
4. Commitment and dedication. It means not leaving the emergency until the community is recovered. This often means staying in touch with the community long after the media lose interest in the story. Resolution and follow up should be committed to from the start and carried through to the end.

A successful communication is based on a combination of variables. As demonstrated the following figure, the successful of communication leans on two similar factors: The credibility and the trust. Both of them are generated by the behavior of the company and its representatives. The credibility is the fruit of honesty and commitment. The organization needs to provide accurate information delivered quickly. The trust is the result of the intrinsic behavior; it means that the trust is built exclusively on a behavioral aspect which is not affected by external variables as empathy and openness.

The success of communication can be summarized with the following figure:

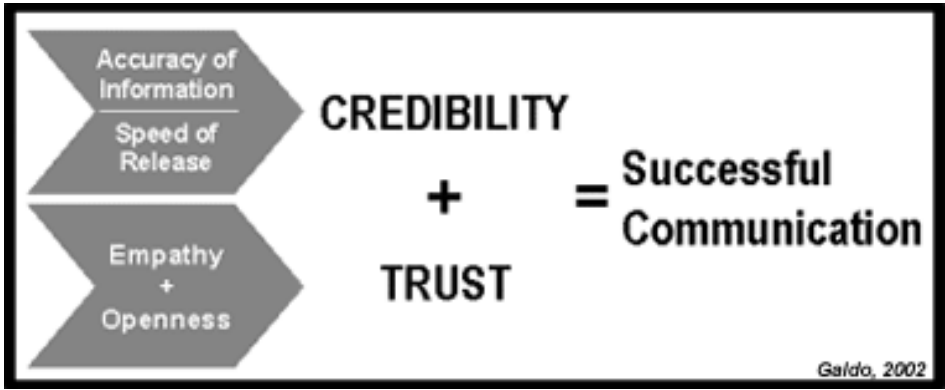


Figure: **Successful Communication Variables** - Source: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/>

Companies need to understand the audience to transmit a reliable message adapted to their concerns.

The receiver of your communication will be judging the content of the message, the messenger, and the method of which managers will deliver it.

Managers must take these aspects into account when they elaborate the plan for crisis and emergency risk communication. Managers must understand their audiences' point of view because those audiences have different concerns. Indeed, based on their relationship to the incident and/or on demographics, each of these audiences will be looking for a specific message. Audience segmentation and demographics are still relevant during a crisis. Prioritize the development of messages for each audience based on the level of the audience's involvement. As you develop messages, you will want to understand how audiences judge messages.

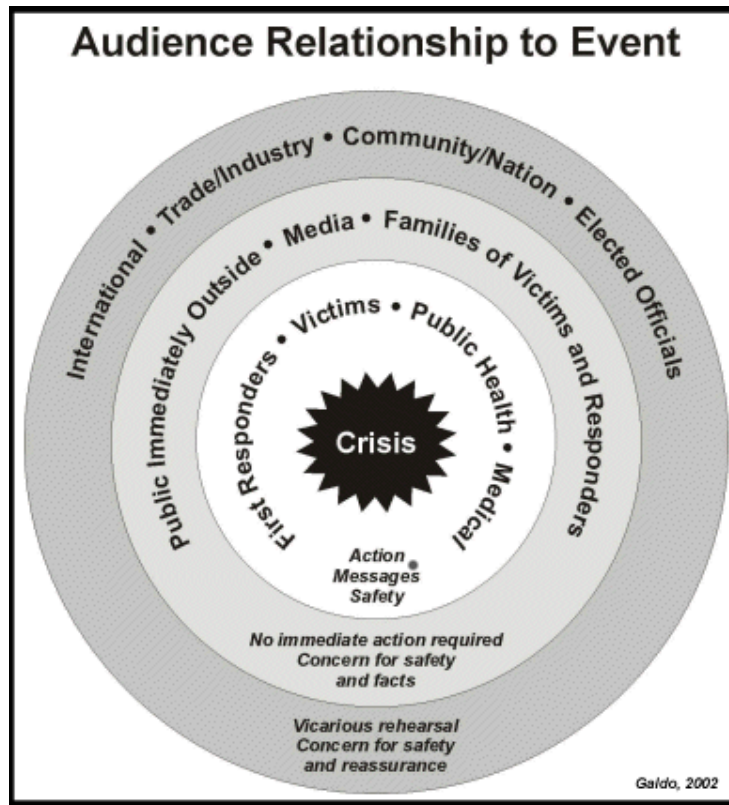
The following table made lists possible audiences and their likely concerns that you should consider when developing your crisis and emergency risk communication.

Possible Audiences	Concerns
Public within the circle of disaster or emergency, for whom action messages are intended	personal safety, family safety, pet safety, stigmatization (the fear and isolation of a group perceived to be contaminated or risky to be associated with), property protection

Public immediately outside the circle of disaster or emergency, for whom action messages are not intended	personal safety, family safety, pet safety, interruption of normal life activities
Emergency response and recovery workers, law enforcement	resources to accomplish response and recovery, personal safety, family safety, pet safety
Public health and medical professionals involved in the disaster response	personal safety, resources adequate to respond
Family members of victims and response workers	personal safety, safety of victims and response workers
Health care professionals outside the response effort	vicarious rehearsal of treatment recommendations, ability to respond to patients with appropriate information, access to treatment supplies if needed/wanted
Civic leaders: local, State, and national	response and recovery resources, liability, leadership, and quality of response and recovery planning and implementation; opportunities for expressions of concern; trade and international diplomatic relations
Congress	informing constituents, review of statutes and laws for adequacy and adjustment needs, opportunities for expressions of concern
Trade and industry	business issues (loss of revenue, liability, business interruption, and protection of employees)
National community	vicarious rehearsal, readiness efforts started
International neighbors	vicarious rehearsal, readiness efforts started
International community	vicarious rehearsal, exploration of readiness
Stakeholders and partners specific to the emergency	included in decision making and access to information
Media	personal safety, access to information and spokespersons, deadlines

Source: CDC- center for disease control and prevention (October 2002), crisis and emergency risk communication

Furthermore it is important to evaluate the relationship of the audiences to the event in order to establish priorities and to orientate the communication to a specific audience. The communication will be in this sense more efficient.



Source: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/>

According to this graphic and confirmed by a specialist in crisis and security consulting and manager in a business intelligence consulting firm, the victims are the first individuals that an organization has to focus its attention on. Indeed, the organization needs to have an emergency plan to put in place. During a crisis the opinion of the victim after their rescue will influence the judgment of the public and media opinion. In consequence, the judgment and the capacity of taking decisions by the elected officials and the industry will be modified. For instance, after their rescue worldwide broadcasted, Chilean minors accused the company to be the principle responsible of the accident. Those declarations forced the President Sebastian Piñera to propose new laws to guarantee safe and descent minor working conditions.

The need of conquer the public opinion, only judge of the reputation

According to John Locke, there exist three kinds of laws. First, the divine law, second the civil law, and third the law of virtue and of vice. This, third law appears under two other names in Locke's works - the law of fashion and of the judgment of the private persons, and the law of opinion or reputation. This law is generated by the public opinion. Rousseau says "*Man, the social creature, is always remote to himself, he only gains awareness of existence by perceiving what other think of him...*" (Rousseau apud Noelle-Neumann, 1979, p.152) this constitutes his vulnerability, the dependence of man on the judgment of his environment. Rousseau named it "slavery" of the "yoke of opinion". The clout of a unanimous opinion held by private persons brings a consensus.

However, there is the danger of isolating oneself with a losing opinion that is about to go out of fashion. An ordinary man extreme fear of becoming isolated entails a social-psychological mechanism which Noelle-Neumann (1979) calls the spiral of silence. This is a dynamic principle according to which public opinion emerges or vanishes. The process is set in motion because of a value, a custom, a habit, or a power constellation come under attack as a result of discoveries, changes of living conditions, crises, power of shifts, or the awakening of consciousness. The individual member of the society is virtually put in guard and confronted to one of the two possible situations: following the critical mass or keeping this idea and become isolated. Thus, charisma is an important asset. To appear stronger in the public eyes it is necessary to incentive people to speak up publicly in conformity with the zeitgeist⁶, in order to sink others into silence until dominating totally public life. Thus, the spiral of silence is opponent of the liberty of expression.

Public opinion seems to stabilize societies and establishes priorities by having an agenda-setting function. It confers also legitimization by striving for consensus and defending-established norms.

⁶ general cultural, intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and/or political climate within a nation or even specific groups, along with the general ambience, morals, sociocultural direction, and mood associated with an era

During a crisis, companies' worries are focused on the public opinion because they want to escape from the severe judgment from, what Backer (1993) named, "the opinion court". Public opinion is presented as a judge who is in charge to settle the litigious situation, basing its symbolical judgment on two principles justice and truth. The sanction of the "opinion court" can create disaffection and ostracize companies of the public space. Carrying representations, positions or norms shared by the majority, it cannot be defined as a sum of opinions of individuals who composed the society, neither a socio-media invention nor as a sum of journalistic speech receptors.

To avoid media fiasco, it is important to turn crisis parameters predictable. A model of strategic crisis communication has been proposed by two American searchers Michael W Corrigan and Daniel Mortensen:

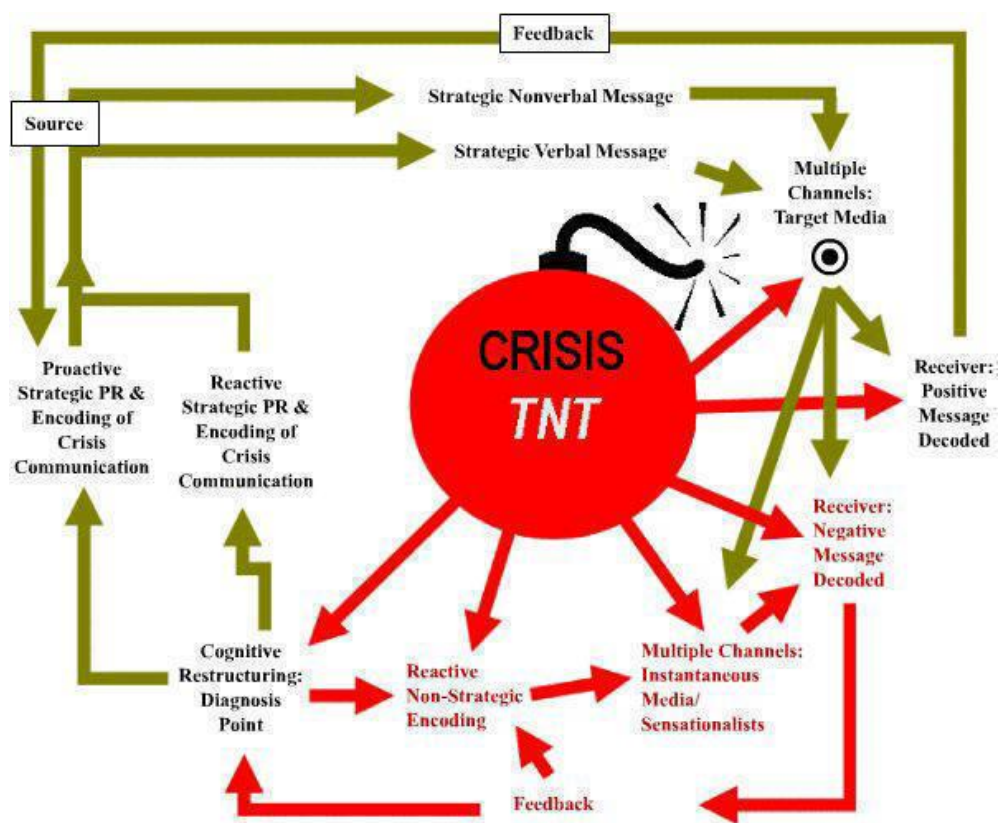


Figure: **Crisis Circle** Source: <http://users.marshall.edu/>

The model shows that the arriving of a crisis has a bomb blow up effect. However, effects are attenuated if a previous anticipation has been engaged in the company. This preparation gives a sort of check-list. It explains how

managers must to behave during the sequence of the crisis and what are verbal and non-verbal strategies privileged. The aim is to turn the message that the company wants to pass decodable by the public opinion. If it cannot reach this target, companies dive again in the cyclic crisis communication.

For that reason, managers cannot ignore, according to the institute of company, by activities and the existence of companies in the public scene, so many “active participants” of the public opinion who are entitled parties of the Public debate. Identify them is to make the effort to understand their motivation, to register their attempts and to integrate them into communication plans. The communicator must also put himself in a position appropriate to pick up signals coming from the society and broadcasted by media.

According to the institute, knowing, listening and understanding what are societies’ worries constitute a reflex to evaluate corporate behaviors conformity to dominating social values. These observation and listening steps of the environment can be considered as ways to predict and anticipate crisis.

Media, between role of vector of the Public debate and economic interests

Media has an important role in the constitution of the Public opinion. When exceptional events arise, media play the role of telltale; they put in perspective the event to capture public attention and to facilitate public comprehension by using different support and mise-en-scene of the information as the scoop. Media have an entrepreneurial functioning, and thus financial profitable objectives. Based on factual events, critical event communication is a normal production in our modern democracies. If these big events, which mobilize population, constitute important moments of the “live together”, it is because they crystallize public stakes putting in perspective a collective destiny through conflicts of values. Company’ media accusation always hides out vast debates concerning the society. For instance, in 1996, the anecdotal openness of a Crazy’s Georges store created in France a scandal because the company sold households goods to low-income population in leasing with a high interest rate. Juridically legal, the operation led to emotion and initiated a political debate

concerning economic liberalism and its excesses. Crazy's Georges became the emblem of the cruel Anglo-Saxon liberalism, threat of the French economic model. To establish the debate in the public space, media must mobilize a symbolic arena⁷ which brings the debate to society

The Chamber of commerce and industry of Paris⁸ thinks that media crisis implying companies cannot be only apprehended by managers with technical acts of communication or activating good reflex of the crisis management procedure. It must previously be understood by the society because the media crisis is always linked with the social context lighted by companies.

We cannot forget that information is become a consumption good. As Reveret and Moreau (1997) schematized, if information is considered as a product, thus "*media are considered as hypermarkets*" because the latter produce and buy information, stock it and then sell it to consumers. The value of an information is measured first by the interest provoked, it means if the latter is fresh, new and has the faculty to become an event.

In front of this economic reality which influence the transmission mode of the information and its content, and the willingness of media to become the establisher of the Public debate, what communication strategies employed companies to limit impacts of media effects?

C. In response, what are the main strategies adopted by companies?

Taking into account the commercial strategy of media and their positions in the society, companies need to previously elaborate a strategy of communication. The objective is to limit the responsibility within the crisis. Quantitatively, the strategy of minimization seems to be the one used as a majority even if its efficiency is questioned.

⁷ Actors of the society as consumers' associations, politicians, sanitary authorities, experts, employees...

⁸ White paper of the Chamber of commerce and industry of Paris (2003): Public opinion and companies: toward the reconquest.

Piotet (1991) proposed in a ranking of the communication strategy. According to him, five strategies can be listed, each one lead to a specific speech. The strategies are:

The strategy of acceptance leans on the fact that managers bet on the extension of the crisis and judiciary and media investigation. The company recognizes partially its responsibility and is prepared to explain its level of responsibility. This strategy of recognition is used when the company is convinced of having favor attenuating circumstances. To avoid accusation or suspicion of none divulgation of information, the company tries to minimize the conflict by transmitting good faith feeling and naivety to not appear guilty and to universalize the culpability. This strategy is the less used due to numerous internal constraints. It frequent modality consists in giving an ambiguous answer (responsible but not guilty), punctual (not unique responsibility) look for attenuating circumstances.

The disassociation strategy is when the company wants to be disassociated from the responsible of the crisis. A lot of financial scandals (corruption, false bills, and money laundering...) are often presented as outside the company. The organization recognizes the issue but classifies it as part of the private life of employees. For instance, Electricité de France moved away its problematic President, Gilles Ménage (1992-1994). The latter has been suspected to be a major actor of the French President residence's phone tapping. The strategy of the company was to always communicate about the absence of relations between the duties of Gilles Ménage as general state secretary and as President of Electricité de France. The strategy uses the lateral concept which consists of displacing the point of view of the problem in order to try to solve it from another perspective by moving the place of communication to a positive zone. This strategy is usually followed by the use the complot theory rhetoric. Already presented by Aristotle in its book entitled *Rhetoric*, this strategy consists in transforming indices of culpability in innocence's proofs. In crisis communication, this strategy leans on not responding on the content. It consists in finding eventual individuals who created the crisis and are making profit of it. Kawasaki (1996) and Salmon and Linares (1997) state that the existence of a complot is generally not provable even if it seems conform to traditional

practices of the warfare. This method is particularly used by individuals confronted to corruption accusations or in response to negative rumors.

The overmediatization of an event can lead to the adoption of a new strategy based on the deflection of accusations by opening a second front denouncing an individual previously targeted, the scapegoat strategy. The aim is to multiply the number of interlocutors in order to lower the media pressure.

The strategy of silence can be envisaged under certain conditions. When external events crystallized media attention, a situation appearing critic can stay in a discretion zone. For that, the secret must to be keep and any particular company must to be targeted and the source must to be not credible. Indeed, if a scandal is reveal by a politically connoted media or by a media which use to publish pseudo-scandals, the company should to discredit the origin of the information. In the other way around, if a scandal is revealed by a newspaper as the *Canard Enchaîné*, the company must to react quickly in reason of the deontology of its readers.

The last type of strategy adopted by companies is the refusal one. They refuse categorically to recognize their responsibilities in a scandal but continue to communicate without justifying their positions. The company envisages each one of its information as provocative elements which can feed controversies. Company will tend to deny the crisis. The lack of credibility double by a lie can be fatal. For example, Pan Am airline managed badly the explosion of one of its aircraft above Lockerbie (Scotland, 21 December 1988) which killed 270 passengers. The airplane company declared having not been informed of terrorist attack threats. Nevertheless, as Michäel Regester (1995) said this information was refuted, all airplane companies operating in Europe, including Pan Am, had been forewarned.

The history of aviation has been marked another time by a tragedy. On 1 June 2009, an Airbus airplane 330-200 of the company Air France operating on the flight AF 447 linking the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Paris disappeared in the middle of the Atlantic ocean with 227 passengers.

Learning from airplane catastrophes bad management, and having a diversity of communication strategies, How Air France managed this tragedy? What was the reaction of managers, the reaction of the audiences and the financial and symbolical impacts to the company?

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The theoretical support gives us an orientation of how company reacts in front of uncertainty and how they manage environmental reactions. The aim of the practical case is to verify the veracity and the ways of application of these theories presented by academic researchers and professional of the risk management.

Indeed, the case of the crash of an airplane owned by a well-know and high brand-value company as Air France will confirm or refute academics arguments and will stated if the theory is followed or if it is applicable. Indeed, we decided to focus on the case of the company Air France and not on the constructor Airbus because the company was the principal actor accused in this accident, and the only actor which suffered a strong media exposure which balanced its reputation management.

To answer questions relative to the management of Air France, the following sources has been used:

- Media sources
 - Corporate Air France – KLM website
 - Television programs
 - Radio programs
 - Newspaper articles

Information provided by media enabled us to see what strategy was adopted by the company and to see how the company judge the environment and how the environment will judged the company and determined whether the communication of the company has been efficient or not. Media will also provide information of reactions and actions of the different audiences. Indeed, we will observe the judgment of media themselves, the Public opinion, and aviation technical specialists and communication specialists.

Being very subjective, the evaluation of what a good communication needs to be determined by confronting, in the public space, interpretations and opinions of all actors.

In addition, opinions evolve as new elements of the crash come out and communication strategies are susceptible to be changed. In consequence, we analyze interpretations during the month after the crisis and one year later.

- A confidential interview with a senior consultant of Business intelligence, specialist in security and crisis management.

We consider fundamental to confront what can be stated, even for specialist in communication, in a public stage and in a private interview. The confidential interview gives an interpretation more precise of which element a specialist in communication takes into account. It enabled us to identify with theoretical elements of sensemaking, mindfulness and audiences' evaluation process will be taking into account when a company is establishing preparation plans. Indeed, one of the functions of this senior consultant is to elaborate safety plans and to prepare companies through training sessions to be confronted to crisis.

This informal interview took place at the consultant office. The first part of the conversation was about determining if companies take into account recommendations presented by academics. Then, we discussed about crisis prevention and specifically about how mimetic are companies regarding the elaboration of prevention and safety plans. We finished the conversation by analyzing to what extent the environment can put under pressure companies and lead them to commit strong communication mistakes.

IV. CASE STUDY

1) Presentation of the company

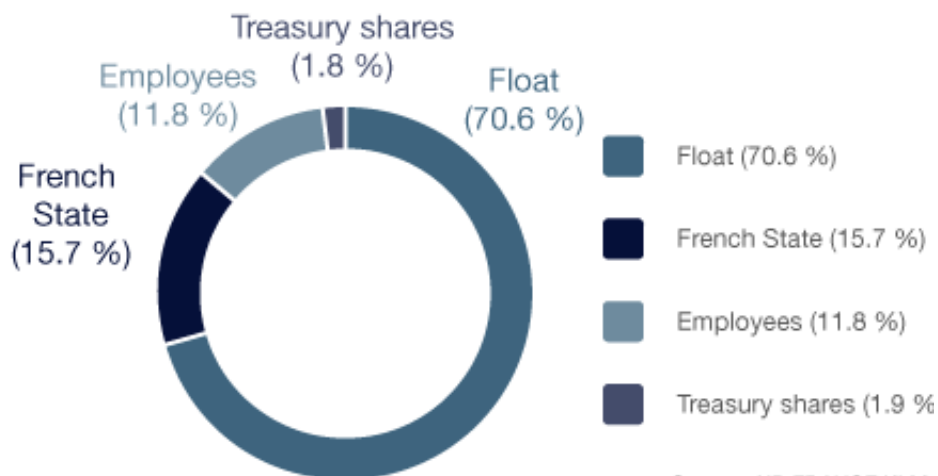
Air France is the French flag carrier headquartered in Tremblay-en-France, France.

On 30 September 2003, Air France and Netherlands-based KLM Royal Dutch Airlines announced the merger of the two airlines under the new company name Air France-KLM. The merger started its operations on 5 May 2004.

In the redefinition of the share capital, former Air France shareholders owned 81% of the new firm in which 44% owned by the French state and 37% by private shareholders. Consequently, former KLM shareholders remained with 19% of shares.

Being in the past the major shareholder, the French state during the Jean-Pierre Raffarin government, reduced its participation in the former Air France group from 54.4% to 44% in order to create the new privatized Air France-KLM Group. In December 2004, the French state sold 18.4% of its equity in Air France-KLM and its shares fell subsequently to 15.7%.

Breakdown of share capital at 31 March 2010



Source: AIR FRANCE KLM
Air France Press Office
<http://corporate.airfrance.com/en>

Air France-KLM became the largest airline in the world in terms of operating revenues and third-largest (largest in Europe) in passenger kilometers⁹. Although, whether the group is roughly owned by a single company, Air France and KLM continued to fly under their own brand names. Air France and KLM are home-based in two principal European air traffic hubs, Paris and Amsterdam.

The group is also part of the SkyTeam alliance. The latter includes companies as Aeroflot, Delta Air Lines, Aeroméxico, Korean Air, Czech Airlines, Alitalia, Northwest Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Air Europa and Continental Airlines. The SkyTeam alliance holds 19% of the global market.

Air France - KLM has 244 destinations are concentrated principally in Europe. The company counts with 104,721 employees, 71.4 million passengers and 594 aircrafts in operations. According to the Air France corporate website, Latin-America represents only 7.9% of Air France total revenues.

Air France – KLM signed a new joint venture on 20 May 2009 with Delta and with Alitalia on 5 July 2010 to jointly operate their trans-Atlantic routes.

AIR FRANCE KLM Passenger Traffic at 31 March 2010

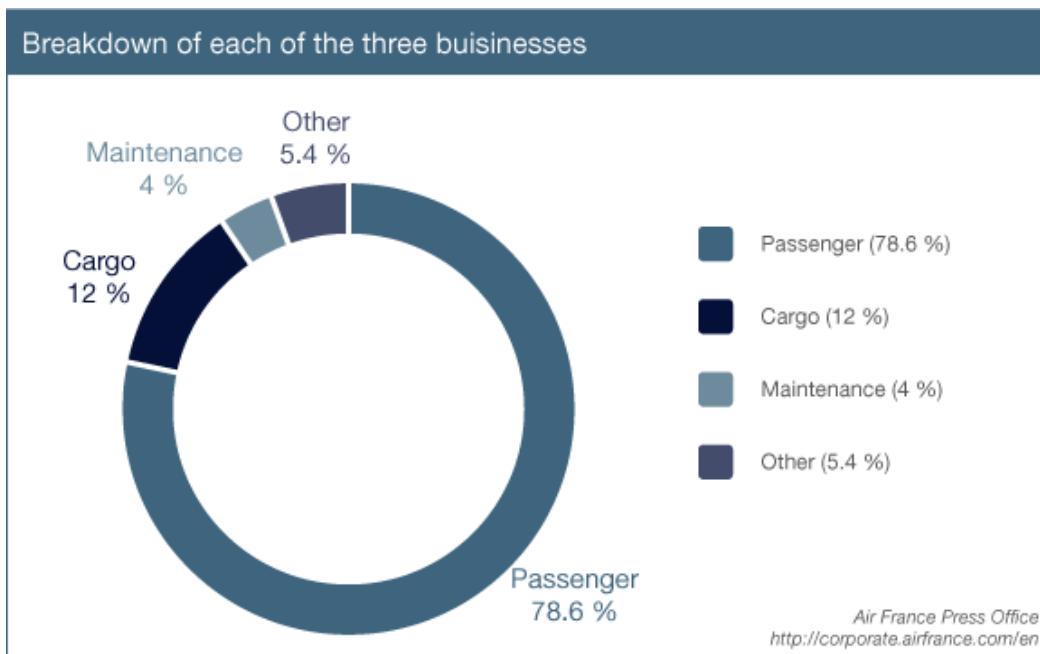
	Destinations	Number of passengers (in thousands)	Revenues (in €bn)
Europe	123	48,492	5,921
North America	23	6,835	2,407
Latin America	11	2,181	1,223
Asia / Pacific	22	5,397	2,393
Africa/ Middle East	50	5,484	2,372
Caribbean / Indian Ocean	15	3,005	1,173
Total	244	71,394	15,489

Source:<http://corporate.airfrance.com>

⁹ World Airlines (2007, March 27) *Flight International review*, p. 56–57.

According to Air France corporate website, Air France's operations are divided in three businesses:

- Passenger which represents more than the three-quarters of its operations
- Cargo where Air France express the will to be a leader in this branch
- Maintenance where Air France Industries and KLM Engineering & Maintenance provide services to 150 customers airlines.



Air France operates a mixed fleet of Airbus and Boeing wide-body jetliners on long-haul routes, and utilizes Airbus A320 family aircraft on short-haul routes. Air France debuted operations with the A380 on 20 November 2009 with service to New York's JFK Airport from Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport and opens on 3 December 2010 the route Paris –Washington DC.

Air France and KLM have a tragic past regarding aircraft accident history. The following table summarizes airplane accident involving KLM and Air France airplanes.

Figure: Last accidents - number of death and local of crashes

Date of the accident	Air France crashes	KLM crashes
20 December 1934		Unknow – Irak
14 July 1935		6 deaths, 14 survivals – Schiphol, Nederland
17 July 1935		All survived – <i>Bushehr</i> , Iran
20 July 1935		13 deaths – Pian San Giacomo, Italy
9 December 1936		15 deaths, 2 survival – London, United Kingdom
28 December 1941		All deaths – destroyed
1 June 1943		17deaths – destroyed
14 November 1946		26 deaths – Schiphol, Netherlands
26 January 1947		22 deaths – Copenhagen, Denmark
20 October 1948		40 deaths – Preswick, Scotland
23 June 1949		33 deaths – Bari, Italy
12 July 1949		45 deaths – Bombay, India
22 March 1952		42 deaths, 5 survivals – Frankfurt, Germany
23 March 1952		All survived – Bangkok, Thailand
23 August 1954		21 deaths – Schiphol, Netherlands
5 September 1954		28 deaths, 28 survivals – Shannon, Ireland
1957		49 deaths, 10 survivals – Biak, Hawaii
14 August 1958		99 deaths – sea close to Irish

		coasts
29 August 1960	63 deaths – Dakar, Senegal	
10 May 1961	78 deaths – Sahara, Libya	
12 September 1961	77 deaths – Rabat, Morocco	
6 March 1962	130 deaths – Villeneuve Le Roi, France	
3 June 1962	130 death, 2 survival – Paris, France	
22 June 1962	113 deaths – Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe	
11 September 1968	95 deaths – Cap d’Antibes, France	
4 December 1969	62 deaths – Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe	
27 March 1977		589 deaths – Tenerife, Canaries Island
26 June 1988	3 deaths, 120 wounded – Habsheim, France	
15 December 1989		All survived – Anchorage, Alaska, United States
22 January 1992	87 deaths – Sainte Odile, France	
13 September 1993	3 wounded – Papeete, Tahiti	
25 July 2000	113 deaths – Gonesse, France	
28 November 2004		All survived – Schiphol, Netherlands
3 August 2005	43 wounded – Toronto, Canada	
1 June 2009	227 deaths – Atlantic ocean close to Brazilian coasts	

Source: www.aviation-safety.net; www.bea-fr.org ; www.en.wikipedia.org

The crash of the airbus 330-200 which operated in the flight AF 447 is the 14th crash of a long list of Air France's airplane accidents. Both, Air France and KLM, have a long historic of flight accidents.

In the following part, we will provide a short resume of the sequence of events which led to disappearance of the airbus 330-200.

2) The accident

The aircraft took off on 31 May 2009 at 22:03 coordinated universal time, with a scheduled arrival at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport, approximately 11 hours later.

The last verbal contact between the pilots and the Brazilian air traffic controllers was when the aircraft approached the edge of Brazilian radar surveillance over the Atlantic Ocean. At 01:33 coordinated universal time, the aircraft was located 565 km¹⁰ off the city of Natal, in Brazil's north-eastern coast. Forty minutes later, the onboard maintenance system, Aircraft Communication Addressing and Reporting System (ACARS), sent a four-minute-long series of automatic radio messages stating numerous problems and warnings. Among ACARS transmissions, 12 messages indicated the disengagement of the autopilot and the auto-thrust system. The last message was a "cabin vertical speed warning".

After, Brazilian air traffic controllers contacted air traffic control in Dakar to notice that the plane had not made the required radio call signaling its crossing into Senegalese airspace, Brazilian air force started search and rescue operations. Besides French and Brazilian air force and navy which sent recognition airplanes, vessels and submarines, Spain participates in the search operations by sending a maritime patrol plane and the United States by providing information captured by their satellites.

Several commercial airplanes as a TAM Airlines one flying from Europe to Brazil, and an Air Comet one reported to have detected something flashing

¹⁰ 351 miles

brightly over the ocean then taking a descending vertical trajectory. Brazilian and French authorities came to the conclusion that there was any survival. The 6 June 2009 Brazilian air force localized the airplane debris and bodies. In total, 50 bodies and more than 400 pieces of debris from the plane had been recovered. Amongst the 228 victims, noble passengers as Luis Roberto Anastacio, president of Michelin for Latin America or Prince Pedro Luís of Orléans-Bragança, third in succession to the now extinguished throne of Brazil, were on board.

After the statement of the accident, the French government has opened two investigations:

- A criminal investigation for manslaughter: This is a standard procedure is launched when accidents involving loss in life occurs. It implies no presumption of foul play.

Sky news channel indicates in the article *“Terror Names Linked To Doomed Flight AF 447”* published on 10 June 2009 that French secret services *“established that two names on the passenger list are also on highly-classified documents listing the names of radical Muslims considered a threat to the French Republic.”*

- A technical investigation: this procedure is launched to know the reason of the accident in order to enhance the safety of future flights.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization, as the airplane was registered nearby French authorities and crashed over international waters, the French authorities have the responsibility of to be in charge of the investigation.

French Air Accident Investigation Bureau is since the beginning managing the technical investigation. Diverse hypothesis are advanced to explain the accident as the icing of the pitot probes, incidents involving a loss of airspeed data or the weather. Nevertheless, the bureau never came to a conclusion and investigations are still ongoing.

Since the crash and along the investigation, several events occurred showing us the Air France and the environment reactions. The events are summarized into the following chronological figure:

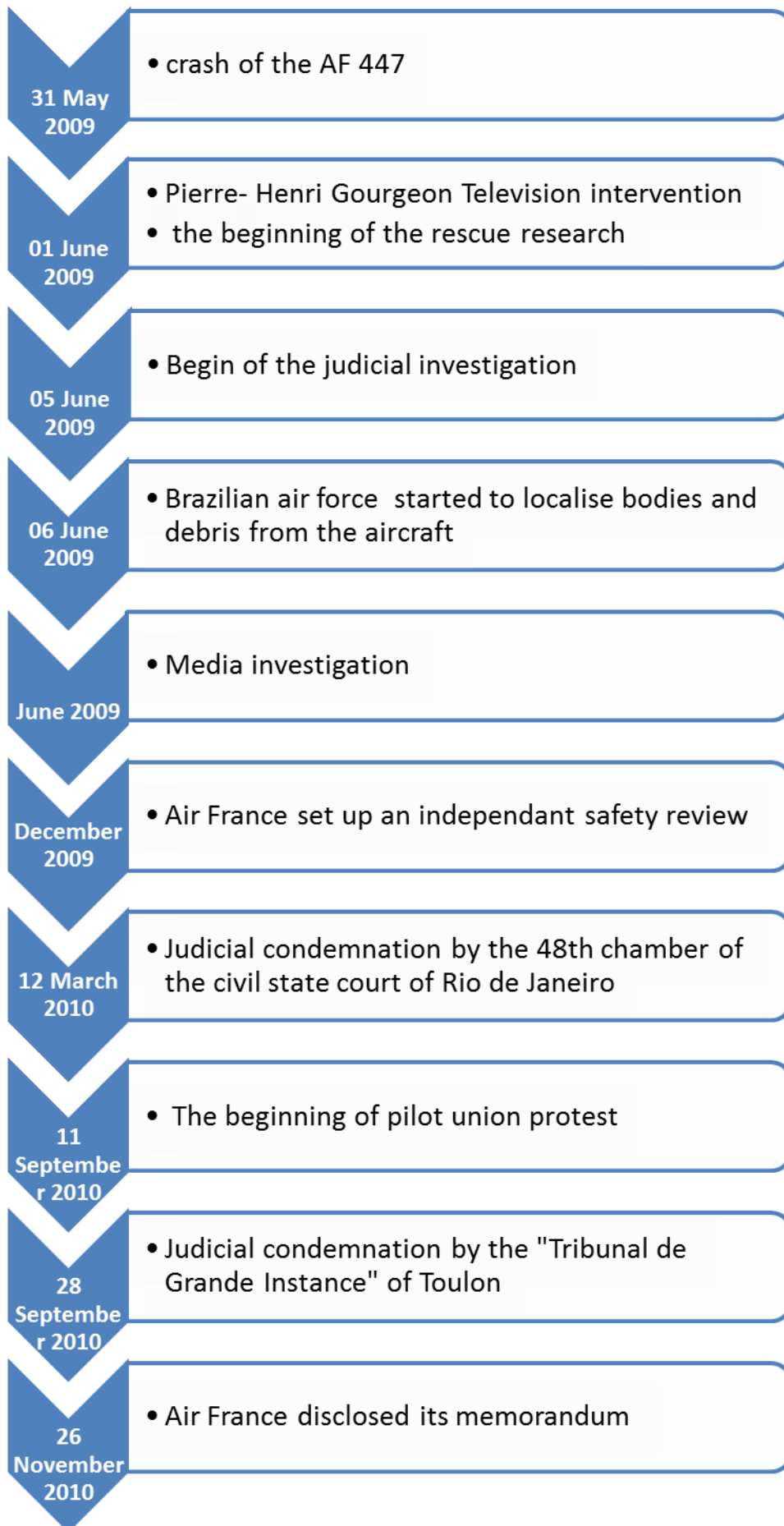


Figure: **Chronology of events occurred after the crash**

Facing uncertainty of the reason of the accident and the diversity of information which publically come out, how Air France manages its crisis communication strategy. Has Air France maintained or change its posture?

Through our analysis, we will analyze and explain, in the short-term and long term, how Air France managed its communication? Is it a success or failure? And how the company readapted its strategy when it faced the audience diverse postures?

3) Reactivity and empathy, two keys elements of the Air France successful short term communication.

Few minutes after the expected time of arrival, Air France published in a short “communiqué” announcing the disappearance of the airplane. This short press release was followed by the TV announcement of the catastrophe. During his allocution, Air Frances CEO Pierre-Henri Gourgeon described the stage of flight procedure, explained at what time of the flight authorities tried to contact the pilots, in which circumstances the communication with them failed, and what were the detected faults on the airplane. He finished its speech by assuming the responsibility of the company and by mentioning some initiative will take to help the family of victims, psychologically and financially.

We can notice that Air France choose to adopt the strategy of acceptance of the responsibility. Air France privileged a fast and impacting ways of communication. The company wanted to deliver first the message in order to protect its brand from possible media attacks. Taking into account its environment, Air France decided to use the power of internet and television to transmit direct and a priori clear information to its audiences. These two media are the most used especially during a holiday.

In its way of communicate, the company provoked two feelings to the viewers. In a first time, the physic expression of the communicator leads to the development of a feeling of compassion. Indeed, Pierre-Henri Gourgeon began his by maintaining a stature and a ton expressing sadness “*Air France is bruised and all the Air France community is hugely suffering*”. In a second time,

the discourse can be judged as convincing. Air France gave the feeling to have communicated rapidly all information they had. The company appeared as sincere and totally cooperative; these two elements are essential keys of the strategy of recognition. After the press releases, Air France has not communicated any information about the catastrophe. Only Public authorities and the Accident investigation office “*are henceforth authorized to do it*”¹¹

The company needed to communicate, because media - through former pilots - denounced the malfunctioning of the speed captors. To protect the reputation of one of the biggest company in the world and to avoid polemics, Air France decided to remember journalist that the company took the decision of changing speed captors before the accident. « *Air France has recognized in a release that, since May 2008, “incidents of anometric information losses during cruise flights” on Airbus 340 and 330 has been noticed* »¹².

Trying to create an armour around the brand value, the company followed strictly the procedure defined by Dr. Vincent T. Covello. Indeed, Air France firstly expressed empathy and caring towards victim’s family, Competence, expertise and honesty by giving “*verified and proved information. It was the case with the list of passengers and the information about the aircraft*”¹³, *openness, commitment and dedication by maintaining a special page on the internet website.*

Adopting they create trust and credibly, and thus have success in their communication.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Publicis, Maurice Lévy interviewed by the magazine *Challenge*, Air France crisis management was remarkable in all points, « *managers have demonstrated a profound humanity and have shown much intelligence*”¹⁴. For him, the company made the effort to provide clear and transparent information; Air France managed the crisis well because the company learned from past catastrophe as the Concorde one which

¹¹ Le porte parole d’Air France its intervention on TV the day of the accident.

¹² Le Monde (2009, June 09)

¹³ Jean- Christophe Alquier(2009, June 10)“Air France a remarquablement géré la communication autour du crash”, Le Grand journal BFM

¹⁴ Rf: appendix 1– Challenges “l’image d’Air France a été renforcée”, 6 June 2009

occurred in 2000. According to the publicist, the “sympathy capital” between Air France and its clients remained intact. The emotional link existing between them reinforces Air France’s image. Thus, the recognition strategy is a success. For example, a policy of ticket price reduction to compensate a possible slowdown of demand has not been launched.

Even if media denounced the lack of reliability of certain components of the aircraft, Airbus, contrarily to Air France, decided not to communicate directly with the press. Airbus just let a note announcing the tragedy and giving a description of the airplane on its corporate website. The constructor clearly chose the strategy of refusal. Airbus did not want to recognize its responsibility and bet on a short-term over-mediation of the event. Indeed, the constructor has never been put in cause by newspapers. For example, *La Tribune*, French economic newspaper, syndicated an article on Monday 8 June 2009 named « *Accident of Air France: Airplanes put in cause* ». In this article, Airbus is never directly quoted.

According to *Journal du Dimanche*, the problem of icing, considered one of the hypotheses explaining the crash, has been detected since 1996. However, the French Air Accident Investigation Bureau did not privilege any track. Member of the 2009 government as Transport state secretary Dominique Bussereau stated in every television and radio interview « *we cannot privilege any hypothesis* »¹⁵.

Uncertainty plays in favor of Air France and Airbus. At the top of the financial crisis which impacted sales volumes, the launch of the A380 by the inauguration of the route Singapore-London, and the command made by Delta Airlines marked at that time an important moment of Airbus development. In this sense the European airplane constructor wished to minimize the impact of the catastrophe in order to preserve the brand image.

4) Avoid contradiction to avoid possible polemic

Some divergence of analysis appeared on the day of the announcement of the accident between Air France management and aeronautical specialists

¹⁵ RTL radio, 06 June 2009, Le Grand jury RTL

expressed different or contradictor opinion about the cause of the crash. Air France advances in its first release that the aircraft has been lightning stroked. This hypothesis has been refuted by the community of experts. Expressed in an emotive moment, this contradiction had not affected Air France credibility. In addition, a former pilot of the company, which due to its former position in the company represents it indirectly, and current expert for BFM TV stated that any contact is possible in the “Black post”¹⁶ zone. In opposition, experts present at “*C dans l’air*” stated that all airplanes can be followed by satellite everywhere in the world. As Dr. Vincent T. Covello highlights the company needs to give accurate information to maintain a high level of credibility. Contradictions can provoke false accusation toward the company and alter the judgment of the public opinion.

5) By different treatment of information, media defined priorities in Air France communication

After analyzing different media, according to their format, political sensibilities, degree of specialization and nationalities, we can observe that a heterogeneous treatment of the information. The importance given to the event is variable. For example, during the day of the catastrophe, principal French television channels as TF1 or France 2 stopped their programs and sent reporters to the Charles de Gaulle airport, to collect new information and to transmit the determined emotion of the moment. In contrary, the importance of the event did not changed the schedule of others public and private television channels. “*C dans l’air*”, political current event show of the of the French television channel France 5, devoted the beginning and the end of the week to the catastrophe¹⁷. Contrarily to general television channels, the new channel BFM TV did a special program which lasted three days.

Television programs also differentiated one to another through the content broadcasted. Just after the accident, television channels even if they mobilized experts as BFM TV transmit information with a sentimental point of view. Media

¹⁶ Zone of the accident, turbulent zone in the Atlantic ocean

¹⁷ Rf: appendix 2

justify this position by advancing that they wanted to broadcast public opinion concerns. For them, public opinion is in the first moments more concerned about the victims and the families of victims the mechanical event properly speaking. Thus, reports were concentrated on the pain of victim families. The central concern was to know if the Air France psychological structure is efficient and adapted to them. Images broadcasted showed families tears, their irritations and angry feelings and the denunciation of the lack of psychological support for the families living outside Paris.

Even if newspapers try to give complete reports which fiddly details of the crash, explanatory maps, historic... they had also presented information on an exaggerated compassion tone and a dramatic rhetoric. For example, in its 2 June 2009, Le Figaro syndicated an article exclusively on families' pain.

“new arrivals have their hand in front of their mouths as to shush the emotion. Some of them let fall in silence their arm to their neighbors, the time of a painful hug. A mother continue to repeat that her daughter was in the airplane, as if she struggled to face the reality”

Another article was about the fact that among victims 19 passengers were employees of the same company...

“this travel might be a reward, it has been transformed in tragedy. 19 of the 72 French passengers who disappeared with the flight AF 447 Rio-Paris had win a trip to Brazil. CGED, an electrical material distributor company, offered to nine of its best sales managers of the Centre Atlantique Pyrénées regional management Office and their spouses a four-day trip to Rio de Janeiro.”

«they were dynamic young man and young woman, between 25 and 40 years-old. “They had win our challenge of the Best Sales persons” said Laurent Bouveresse, CGED general manager, at the radio station Europe 1, which revealed this information »”

This media attention on victim's families illustrates well what Guido graphic tries to show us. Air France need to concentrate first its attention on victim's

families and media which are the public immediately outside. The combination of the two elements will form the public opinion, base of the legitimacy and credibility of the public opinion.

The research of the truth comes in a second time. Just after the crash, only the Brazilian newspaper *A Folha de São Paulo* made a serious investigation. The journal relayed information set by authorities and proposed some hypothesis which can explain the accident. While French newspapers had difficulties to evaluate how many children and French were on board, *A Folha de São Paulo* published on 3 June 2009 a list of 104 passengers mentioning their age and professions¹⁸.

6) Has Air France learned from the previous catastrophes?

According to specialist Air France has a successful communication due to a high level of preparation. Indeed, in its history, Air France experienced 14 crashed which enable him to learn how prepare a good crisis communication and how to learn from errors by filling what psychologist James Reason (1990) named the “latent failures”. Learning from errors, it is one of the central points of mindfulness, Air France had the capacity throughout its history to improve its emergency plan. The good management of the crisis has been at a short-term period possible because Air France was correctly prepared to be confronted to unexpected situations. However it is necessary to analyze the interpretations and learning structure on both the environmental side and the internal organizational side.

A. Environmental side

Regarding the environment side, the company had the capacity to respond to the public opinion and media needs. At the first moment of the crisis, according to Michael W Corrigan and Daniel Mortens which is the strongest one, Air France provide a reactive answer by communicating relevant information and by having put in place psychological structure.

¹⁸ Rf: appendix 3

However after the media release, the company stopped to communicate directly and maintains a website to maintain informed the public opinion and the market of the evolution of the investigation. In this website, Air France posted short press releases. On 6 June 2009, 12 press releases have been posted¹⁹. For few months after the catastrophe, the number of posts has plummeted. The latter only gave general information as the presentation of the equiptage or contact phone numbers. One of the last important “communiqué” was the announcement of the change of the Pitot sensor of the same model of disappeared aircraft. Air France – KLM developed few month after the crisis a more developed webpage giving technical information and a follow-up of the investigation in order to maintain the audiences aware of the worries and the total cooperation of the company in this case.

This change of behavior unveiled remaining misunderstandings between managers and the environment. For instance, according to a French Office of communication investigation realized in April 2009, journalists perceived as autism the silence of companies. In addition, 85% of journalists believe that companies are not prepared to communicate during a crisis and 95% of journalists have the feeling that managers do not trust media because they considers them accelerators of crisis. Many companies think that media refuse to understand the corporate reality because the majority of journalist has any professional experiences in management. Thus, journalists don't know practically how a company work and what are kind of problems the organization is facing, what are the impacts of a crisis for the organization as a whole and for each managers and employees. In the case of the crash, media totally forgot to present information about the families of the Air France crew. In consequence, journalists are often considered as incompetent, hostile, sensationalist, responsible of the incomprehension of the public opinion and sometimes responsible of the crisis itself. During the radio show “*Les grands débats de l'économie*” of the radio station BFM, the anchor Nicolas Doze said that journalist have no interest in accelerating a crisis, their mission is to transmit accurate information, and not to judge the company. The existence of the misunderstanding is not a recent phenomenon. In 1997, an investigation made

¹⁹ Rf: appendix 4

by Deloitte & Touche stated that 51% of journalists consider economic and financial information provided by companies is not adapted to their needs and, 90% are incomplete and 75% not understandable.

To overcome bad interpretation of crisis by journalist and to anticipate the Public opinion reaction, companies decided to go forwards by using a new way of communication, direct media. Companies have numerous possibilities in order to transmit better the message. The following graphic summarizes them:



Figure: List of the Direct Media

<http://www.karinemiron.com/exploiter-les-reseaux-sociaux-en-temps-de-crise-economique>

This significant symbolic and material change brings a major risk. Companies forget the symbolic and ideological challenges brought by a crisis. This apprehension of symbols is not always part of the managerial culture.

Air France has not chosen to communicate through direct media. The company is just maintaining its corporate webpage. Air France decided to communicate in a traditional way adopting a strategy of brand reputational protection instead of spreading first information in order to reach first the public opinion. New media has been considered a threat for the company because this new media can also propagate false information and rumors.

However, the company did not set any interview with journalist or answer journalist's questions. Air France took into account the fact that, as Reveret and Moreau (1997) tell, media like situations of exceptions because it can be tell, they play the role of the builder of the immediate story. This character immediately dramatic present in a crisis situation suit particularly to the dramaturgy which preside over the shaping of the information. Air France did not forget that information is consumption good. Media are companies which are also selling a product which is submitted to production and mass production constraints. The work of the journalist is submitted to an obligation of result, the veracity or the importance of the information is not sufficient to be broadcast but it must to be adaptable to the distribution circuit. In addition, Information must to be desirable in order to respond to a need and, in addition, to a real and solvable demand. Each media valorizes its particular qualities to build the most attractive offer. A company as Air France decided to protect its Brand image not to react to possible transformation of the media. The company decides not to communicate, giving less information to journalist in order to avoid possible manipulation of the information.

In this sense, Air France managers are manipulator of the environment. Indeed, the lack of information orientates media, and throughout them, the Public opinion, to perceive Air France as a trustable company which will give true and verified information. Air France gives the feeling that the company is well prepared and seems to be not attackable by media.

B. Organizational side

To avoid bad understanding, bad anticipation, and to improve its processes, Air France decided to embark on new initiatives forming part of the company's ongoing continuous improvement programs, and more particularly its safety management system suspected to be at the origin of the accident. The airline company decided in December 2009 to set up an Independent Safety Review. The Independent Safety Review Team got together eight acknowledged independent experts of international standing which have practical experience in running operations at airlines comparable in size to Air France. The Review Team is reviewing and improving internal operating modes, decision-making processes and practices which have direct and indirect impact on the safety of flights. Experts will make proposals that will serve as drivers for continuous safety improvement process.

After, preliminary recommendations from the Independent Safety Review Team the Air France board of directors has decided to create a "Flight Safety Committee".

The objectives of this committee are to:

- Examine flight safety issues
- Guarantee the existence, deployment and management of internal systems and processes put into place to ensure flight safety
- Provide follow-up to ensure the suitability of the internal processes that come together to ensure the safety of operations
- And, in the case of major events affecting flight safety, to ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent accidents

The company is taking measures to prevent future possible crisis. However, the evolution of the investigation let appears inefficiency. Based on the presentation of the following two articles, we detected several organizational ones.

The article entitled “An Air France pilot Union call not to fly with A330”²⁰ syndicated by Le Monde on 08 June 2009 shows that the pilot union named ALTER, third Air France biggest union, gives as instructions to refuse to pilot Airbus 330 and 340 if they have not changed speed instruments as the Pitot tubes. Indeed, according to the article, anometric information losses have been detected by Air France since 2008.

Another article entitled “Air France: an Air France pilot Union warns against meteorological radars” syndicated by the Le Point magazine on 11 September 2010 shows that pilots are denouncing publically that meteorological radars of Airbus 320 owned by Air France are victim of malfunctioning. The minority pilot union named UNPL-R'Way gives as instructions to refuse to pilot airplane equipped with Honeywell radars if conditions do not allow safety flights.

The two articles pointed out long-term technical effects on Air France airplane questioning the safety commitment from the company to its passengers. The lack of communication between managers and pilots unveils structural deficiencies.

These kinds of denunciation demonstrate also a lack of communication between union which represent the pilots and the top management. Following the characteristics of a high reliable organization presented by Weick, we detected inefficiencies of Air France in the following points:

- Manager’s insensitivity to operations

In fact, pilots are reporting operational deficiency to media and not directly to their managers. In this sense, the board does not demonstrate strong worries about operational efficiencies and seems to have as Weick names a “lack of sensitivity to operations”.

- Lack of culture diversity

Decisions are taken at the top of the organization go down vertically. Pilots seem to have a weak weight in managerial decisions, in this sense their recommendations or worries are not taken into account.

²⁰ Rf: appendix 5

- Managers unperceptive awareness for technical risks

In consequence, not having technical knowledge leads managers to have a misperception of what can provoke an accident, consequently a crisis. Mismanagement provokes tensions within the organization. This is what Huber and Daft named as turbulence because it creates debate over best organization performance in turbulent environments as the Air France one.

- Political risks emerges due to different interests

Managers have different interests than pilots. Indeed, managers are subjected to financial result and operational performance pressures. In this context managers tend to privileged cost reduction and are regardless to technical operational aspects. In the air industry, it passes by reducing non visible costs for passengers as the maintenance costs. The lack of technical knowledge of managers will create a misperception of risks and a tendency of creating new risks by minimizing current ones.

7) Has the Air France communication strategy changed one year after the crash?

An article named "Flight AF447: Air France knew a critical risk" syndicated by Challenge magazine on 26 November 2010 explained that Air France lawyer, Fernand Garnault, handed a memorandum about the accident Rio-Paris to the French Justice. According to the families' victims association, "mutual aid and solidarity AF 447", this document show that the company was aware of the existence of "critical risks" for flight safety. Jean-Baptiste Audousset, President of the association, said *"critical risks for flight safety means catastrophe risks. For several months, they repeat that it is impossible to have conclusion about the major role of the Pitot probes. With this memorandum, Air France valid without ambiguity that Pitot probes are at the heart of the causal chain which has led to the crash."*

In this memorandum, Air France esteems to have an irreproachable conduct regarding the accident of the Airbus 330. However, the company recognizes having been warned by the European constructor Airbus about ascertained

incidents on the Pitot probes. Air France stated on the memorandum that Airbus and Thales (manufacturer of Pitot probes) have considered these events as minors and without consequences potentially catastrophic. The company judges that it is impossible to establish with certitude if there is a cause and effect link between the malfunctioning of the Pitot plots and the accident. Through this statement, Air France shares the same opinion as the French Air Accident Investigation Bureau for which the icing of the plot has a role on the accident but cannot explain the catastrophe itself.

Due to the emotion felt by the Public opinion, Air France at the first's stages of the crisis has never been under direct attacks. Indeed, the judgment was focused on the assistance of families' victims and not on the determination of the causes of accident. One year after the catastrophe, the investigation is still ongoing but new elements came out publically. In its memorandum, Air France did not recognize any fault committed by the company. Furthermore, the French airplane company affirmations turn, in an indirect way, the constructor Airbus and its supplier Thales, in part responsible of the accident. The question sparked off will be about determining the level of responsibility of Air France knowing that even minor, problems have been detected in its airplanes and thus determining what is a safe flight technically speaking. We notice that by this indirect accusation, Air France goes out of one year of silence. Indeed, after having not communicated directly to media, Air France came back to headlines through this critical revelation and its indirect accusation which plunge the company into a shy adoption of what Piotet (1991) named the scapegoat strategy.

Analyzing the evolution of the strategy of Air France along the crisis we can observe that Air France adopted three successive strategies.

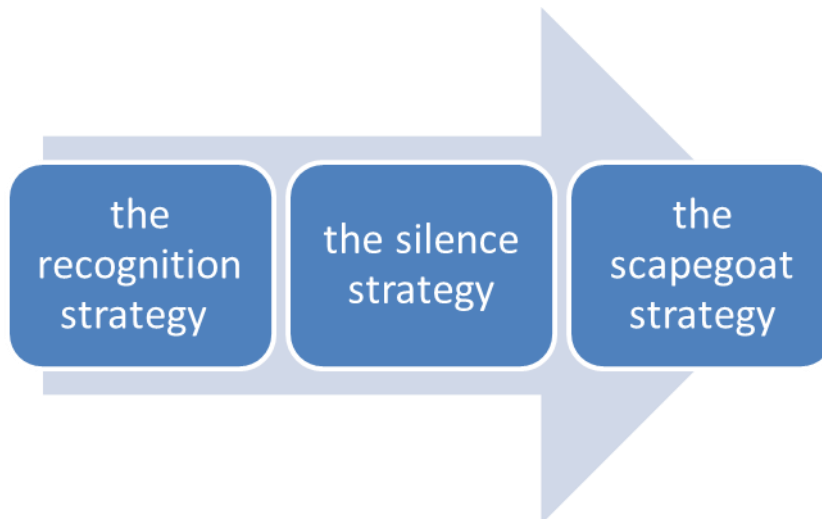


Figure: **Evolution of Air France communication strategy**

The recognition strategy and the scapegoat one were used for short period. The strategy of silence remains the one privileged by the Air France board. The company used it for more than one year and still continuing using it. Indeed, as long as the Air investigation bureau not determined the cause of the accident, nobody can accuse directly Air France of negligence. In consequence, not being confronted to direct attacks, Air France chooses to communicate as less as possible in order to not create suspicions.

8) **Consequences for Air France**

A. **Juridical consequences**

After been under media pressure, Air France passed in front another challenge, courts. Indeed, during May 2010, a lawyer of German families' victims – third nationality the most represented - complained against person. They are looking for an eventual responsibility of the French government. The objective of this complain is to enable the justice to investigate in which conditions Pitot plots incidents have been noticed and stocked before the accident, and how French authorities transmitted these information to European competent authorities. As element contributive to the accident, incidents involving Pitot plot has not been noticed to the European Air Security Agency. In this sense, there is a disrespect

of the 2003 European directive. Between 2003 and 2009, 32 cases of Pitot plots icing has been registered on Airbus 330 and 340. Only nine incidents have been reported to the European Air Security Agency. This accusation concerns indirectly airlines companies. They are responsible of not having indicated incidences to French authorities, especially the Civil Aviation General Bureau which is accused to avoid omitted to inform the European Air Security Agency. A report of the Pilot national union adds that 12 of the 32 incidents have been reported after the accident. Among the 12, six concerns Air France.

Concerning directly the company, Air France has been condemned, for the first time, on March 2010. The 48th chamber of the civil state court of Rio de Janeiro state decided to oblige Air France to financially compensate the family of Marcelle Valpaços Fonseca, prosecutor at the state court of Rio de Janeiro state and one of the victims. The company paid an indemnity of 2.04 million reais (835,000 euros).

The family of the stewardess, Carla Mar Amado asked to the French justice to align itself on the Brazilian one. The attorney said *“It can have two justice, a courageous Brazilian justice and a cautious French justice which is getting nowhere on the Brazilian tarmac²¹”*.

On 28 September 2010, the *“tribunal de grande instance”* (Higher Court) of Toulon recognize *“the existence of a penal fault”* in the case of the accident of the Airbus 330 owned by Air France and operating in the flight AF 447. The recognition has been made to attribute a compensation provision to the family of one of the victims before the end of technique and judicial investigation. As, the Brazilian Justice, the French one judged also the Pitot plots responsible of the crash. The commission of penal infraction victim’s compensation said that the company can pay a compensation of 20,000 Euros to the family of the stewardess Clara Amanda. As for the Brazilian justice, the Pitot plot is put in cause. The French justice characterized the case as *“involuntary manslaughter”*. The guarantee fund of the victim of terrorism and others infraction paid 10,000 Euros to the father of the victim and 10,000 Euros to the brother.

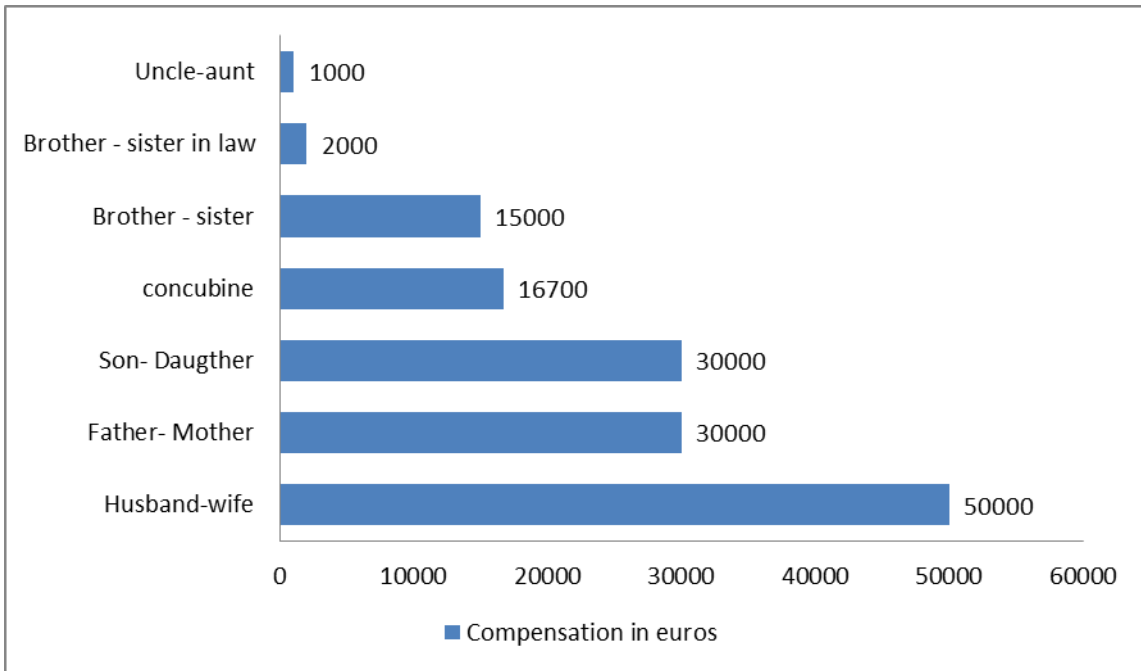
²¹ Le Parisien, 12March 2010, Vol AF 447: Air France devra indemniser la famille d’une victime

Air France decided not to react publically to juridical accusation. Indeed, we can suppose that Air France is keeping on its strategy of silence. Indeed, in one of the three accusation presented, the French Air Security Institution is directly targeted. In this way, the universalization of the culpability will diminish the responsibility of the company in the Public scene. By its silence and these revelations, Air France gives the feeling to have the control on its communication and that the weight of the State, which was in the past financially, is still exercising a political protection on the company. This last factor reduces considerably the vulnerability of the company towards its environment.

However, future possible litigations are emerging regarding compensations.

Through its corporate website, Air France stated that they gave a financial advance compensation of 17,500 Euros to 165 families which had requested it. According to Axa, insurance agent of Air France, each family is waiting for a compensation of around 100,000 Euros per passenger. However, there exist divergences between countries regarding the amount of compensation. Indeed according to national jurisdictions, Brazil or the United States compensate more for this type of accident than European states. Many of French families are protesting against this difference of treatment. According to Axa, the determination of the value of the compensation depends of the nationality, the blood relationship with the victim, and the current jurisprudence which is different in each country, applicable in virtue of the Montreal convention.

The following graphic shows the french jurisprudence for moral compensation. We notice, in comparition that in Germany the concept of moral prejudice does not exist.



Jurisprudence: amount for the crash of Mont -St- Odile

Figure: **Compensation for moral prejudice in case of airplane accident**

Source: Le Figaro, 19 March 2010, AF 447: Ce que vaut la vie d'un passage

Furthermore, juridical tensions are emerging concerning the determination of the judicial responsibility of Air France in the accident. Axa will appeal, in Marcelle Valpaços Fonseca case, against the judgment of the state court of Rio de Janeiro state which sentence the amount of the compensation close to one million Euros. According to Patrick de la Morinerie, Deputy General Manager of Axa Corporate Solutions, the compensation requested seems to considerate Air France as the responsible of the accident. We got to remember that no one actor as be judged guilty and the investigation is still ongoing.

Victim of attacks coming from the different treatment of victims' family compensations, Air France continues to use its strategy of silence. The company lets its insurance agent Axa in the front line. Indeed, the insurance company is the responsible for managing financial retributions

Using the strategy of silence and being under judicial attacks, has Air France been inflicted financial loses?

B. Financial consequences

To evaluate the financial impact of the crash we need to analyze the variation of the Air France stock price, just after the accident, in the long-term in order to detect possible long-term effects and before the accident to understand if Air France used to be confronted to strong stock value variation.


Just after the crash



Figure: **Evolution of the stock quotation at the first stage of the crisis**

Source: [www. br.finance.yahoo.com](http://www.br.finance.yahoo.com)

Keys:

 : Day of the crash

This graphic shows the evolution of Air France-KLM stock value before two months before and two months after the accident. Before the accident, Air France- KLM was in a period of significant growth. The stock won in two months more than 57.1%, passing from around 7 Euros to 11 Euros per stock.

We can observe that the crash of the airplane had a visible impact for Air France in the very short term. From June to July, the stock loss more than

18.2% and passed from more than 11 Euros to 9 Euros. In two month, the stock value plummeted 29.1%.

Loosing close to 30% so quickly, the variation of the stock value has a financial impact on Air France final results. Being reactive, the market gives signal that an unexpected event occurred. Stock market variation enables to measure the level of confidence that investors have on a company. This is the only instrument handled by managers to measure the efficiency of their management and the interpretation made by the environment. This strong variation means that some shareholders did not trust the Air France communication efficiency or did not bet on Air France fast recovery.

By selling their stocks, some investors forecasted possible commercial negative impacts on Air France KLM operational result and the installation of a long-term crisis.

However, the stock begins to recover very soon. In August the stock started to go up. The success of the strategy of recognition reassured investor and allowed the fast recovery. In six days, the stock market wins 19.3%. Thus, we can advance that the crash had a short-term impact on the financial market. After two months, the stock recovers the value of June, its highest level. Nevertheless, it is important to measure if this is a long-term recovery or if the new revelation along the investigation will have further financial impacts.

Long term evolution

In the long term, we can observe strong fluctuation of the value of the Air France-KLM stock



Figure: **Evolution of the stock quotation after the crash**

Source: www.br.finance.yahoo.com

Keys:

- : Day of the crash
- : Worth stock's value

The financial impact of the crash of the Airbus 330 needs to be put into perspective. In fact, some others events had a stronger impact. As show, this graphic the stock of Air-France KLM plummeted less strongly on March 2010 and June 2010.

The value of the stock went down on March 2010 due to the accumulation of several operational restructuration impacts and a judicial condemnation. Operational restructuration concerns the redefinition of the company strategy efficiency which is a routine procedure. The judicial condemnation in the Marcelle Valpaços Fonseca's case is related the unexpected crash of the flight 447. In consequence, the variation of the stock value cannot be explained only by the consequence of the crash of the airplane itself.

Regarding internal restructuration and conflicts:

- Air France's pilots went on strike from 26 February 2010 to the 01 March 2010 to protest against the reorganization the cargo activity within the subsidiary Martinair and within the short and medium haul airline, Transavia.
- Steward and Stewardess conducted a strike on 28 March 2010 to protest against cost reductions on short and medium haul airliner.

Regarding the justice condemnation:

- As explained in the previous section, Air France has been condemned by 48th chamber of the civil state court of Rio de Janeiro state to pay 835,000 Euros to the family of Marcelle Valpaços Fonseca, one victim of the crash.

In May 2010, the stock value plummeted due to the financial impact caused by the Island volcano, Eyjafjallajökull. Indeed, the eruption provoked air traffic restriction during all April 2010, thus financial operational losses. In addition, June 2010 represents the one anniversary of the accident.

The success of the communication of Air France can be determined only if we make a comparison between the variation of the stock value just after the crash and the variation of the stock value just after incidents which also affected the organization.

It is very hard to determine the real financial impact of the crash because the translation of juridical events on the stock market is blurred by routine operational and organizational matters.

To understand the weight of the variation of Air France stock value just after the crash, we need to see if the stock has already been confronted to the same kind of variation.

Before the crash



This graphic shows clearly that operational issue strikes routinely financial results principally measured by the stock market.



Figure: **Evolution of the stock value before the crash**

Source: [www. br.finance.yahoo.com](http://www.br.finance.yahoo.com)

Keys:

-  : Day of the crash
-  : Worth stock's value

The stock value of Air France-KLM fell during January lost close to 30% due to the 2008 annual operation results distinguished by operational losses. This

tendency is also explained by the fact that during January Air France air traffic fell 1.9% compared to a reduction of 1.2% during the same period, the previous year. The occupation rate went down 0.5% reaching 76.6%. Every subsidiary or member of the network of the company suffered traffic reduction in general and specially for the European zone. The reduction has been provoked by bad meteorological conditions which forced many airports to cancel or delay numerous flights.

In addition, the board of Air France has been confronted to several renewable strikes organized by many Air France pilots unions to protest against the suppression of the ticket's free-of-charge part for employees of Air France, considered the privilege of airlines companies.

In conclusion, we can state that in the short-term and long-term, Air France did not suffer apparent strong financial consequences. Indeed, Air France recovers quickly damaged provoked just after the crash. Pre and post variation of the stock was impacted by external issues which are not related to our unexpected event.

V. CONCLUSION

Managers use to face unexpected events of diverse importance. Nevertheless, how managers manage and protect the reputation of a company. Through this question it is important to know how they react when they are facing unexpected events, how the situation is interpreted inside the organization and by the different stakeholders, how organizational reactions are interpreted by the environment and to which consequences lead those actions and interpretations.

The case of the Air France crash reveals that companies adapt their communication strategy to the possible reaction of the audiences by using diverse methodologies and strategy plans. In the middle of a crisis, companies constantly readapt their strategy in order to diminish its responsibility. Indeed, the aim of the crisis communication is to converse confidence over the organization and to protect the most important asset of a company, its reputation. Companies suffer unavoidable consequences of crisis; however they try to limit the impacts and to enter in a fast recovery process.

By having a sensibility toward respectively family of victims, then media and finally shareholders, Air France demonstrated a capacity of reaction in front of crisis acquired through learning process along years. By adopting the acceptance strategy, Air France improved its reactivity and pro-activity by giving communicating quickly and giving irrefutable information. Companies need to define priorities and privilege defined targets. It includes having a strong stakeholder's sensitiveness to understand what each audiences wants to know and at what moment this message can be delivered. Knowledge incorporated in the company along the years, Air France immediately decided to address its message, first, to the families of victims and the media and subsequently to shareholders. The redefinition of the strategy depends entirely of this characteristic because the communication strategy has as goal to inform and convince individual and protect the company from risks.

Risky situations are provoked by unexpected events outside the company which unveil latent failures inside the organization, as it was the case for Air France.

This latent failures lean on different interpretation of the risk and environment by individuals and the way they behave in front of a risky situation. For instance, the inability to manage the unexpected come from the inability to prioritize the resolution of emerging problems, to manage relationship within the organization and to have sensitivity to the operative functioning of the organization. Integrated in their mindset by the corporate culture, executives reported that one of the most frequent problems was “thinking and planning strategically. They have elaborated previous standard emerging plans which are not adapted to the specific situation and create false anticipations.

The success of a crisis resolution is based on the degree of openness of the organization and its capacity in redefining and readapting its structure and processes to evolving environments. This is the reason why sensemaking, is an important instrument of protection and restructuration of organization because it focused on the shifts attention between structures and processes which could avoid future crisis. Mindfulness, which focuses more on the individual behavior and its interrelationship within the organization and with the environment, comes in complement to sensemaking. As sensemaking, it shows on with specific element is based a high reliable organization and how can the organization improves its internal processes.

Sensemaking and mindfulness are two fundamentals elements that companies have difficulties to integrate. Their appropriation is the results of a long process of learning from errors when the latter are detected. In this way, we can questioned the capacity of companies to recognized there errors.

Air France seems to be the only company which recognizes errors. Why Airbus decided not to communicate and why it seems the company is hiding itself behind the back of Air France. Further research could determine what is the real or the symbolic responsibility of the constructor in an airplane crash. Having in the history a financial weigh and having now a political weigh on Air France, the French government is strongly present in investigation and plays a major role on the research of the true. Why the French government is investing so much in the determination of the cause of the accident?

From a more theoretical point of view, the recognition strategy is often presented as the best option by specialists and academic researchers. However, in a case of evident crisis, is honesty an important asset, protector of the reputation of company, or is it a dangerous instrument which can devalue the brand value?

VI. REFERENCES

Books:

Aristote(1991), *Rhétorique*, livre 2, Paris, Edition Gallimard,

Arrieta, L. (1991) *La dimensión del propósito en la comunicación organizacional*, Mexico, Fernandez ed.

Baker, K.M (1993) *In the Opinion court, essay on the politic imaginary in the XVIIIth century*, Paris, Payot,

Bartor,L. (1993), *Crisis in Organization*, Cincinnati, South Western

Breton,P. (1998), *La parole manipulée*, Paris, La Découverte/ Essais

Costa J. (1999) *La comunicacion en accion*, Barcelona, Paidos Ibérica

Czarnaiwska-Joerges, B. (1992) *Exploring complex organizations: A cultural perspective*. Newburry Park, Sage

Daft, R.L & Weick, K.E, (1984) *Toward a model of Organizations as Interpretation Systems*, *Academic Management Review*, Vol 9, N°2

Deephouse, D.L and Carter,S.M. (2005). 'examination of differences between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational reputation'. *Journal of management studies*

DiMaggio, P. J. and Powell, W. W. (1983). 'The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields'. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 147–60.

Dörner, D. (1996), *The logic of failure: Recognizing and avoiding error in complex situations*. Reading, Massachusetts, Perseus Books.

Fernández, C (1991), *La comunicación en las organizaciones*, México, ed: Trillas

Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing Value from the Corporate Image*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Fournier,B.(1993), *L'entreprise en état de choc*, Paris, Les éditions de l'environnement,

Gabay, M. (2005) *Communiquer dans un monde en crise*, Paris, L'Harmattan,

Gephart, R.P.Jr. (1992), *Sensemaking, communication distortion and the logic of public inquiry legitimation*. *Industrial crisis quarterly*.

Giddens, A. (1992) *Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge,UK, Polity Press.

- Harrison,S. (1999), *Disasters and the Media*,London, MacMillian Business
- Hirsch, P. M. and Andrews, J. A. Y. (1984). 'Administrators' response to performance and value challenges: stance, symbols, and behavior'. In forensic accounting'. *Human Relations*, 51, 1103–31.
- Huber, G.P, & Glick, W.H. (1993). Sources and forms of change. In G.P Huber & W.H. Glick (Eds). *Organizational change and redesign*
- Kawasaki.G (1996), *Affolez vos concurrents*, Paris, First
- Klewes J. Wreschniok R. (2010), *Reputation Capital: Building and Maintaining Trust in the 21st Century*, Springer, Pleon edition
- Knight, F. H.(1921) *Risk, uncertainty, and profit*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin.
- L'Institut de l'Entreprise (2008,December) *Working paper n°21*, Opinion publique et grandes entreprises : le divorce ?
- Lagadec,P. (1986), *Stratégies de communication en situation de crise*, Paris Futuribles
- Lagadec,P. (1991), *La gestion des crises*, Paris, Mc-Grawhill
- Lagadec,P. (1995), *Cellules de crise*, Paris, Ed. d'Organisation,
- Larkin, J. (2003) *Basingstoke*, Strategic reputation risk management, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan
- Lawrence, T. B. (1998), *Examining resources in an occupational community: reputation in Canadian*, University of Victoria, Faculty of Business.
- Livre Blanc de la Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris (2003), *Opinion publique et entreprises : vers une reconquête*
- McCarthy I.P.,Lawrence,T.B., Gordon B.R. (2010), *A Multidimensional Conceptualization of Environmental Velocity*, Faculty of Business Administration Simon Fraser University, Vancouver
- MacCrimmon, K. R. & Wehrung, D.A. (1986), *Taking risks: The management of uncertainty*, New York, Free Press
- Mandler, O. (1984), *Mind and body: Psychology of emotion and stress*, New-York, Norton
- Mattelart. A & M (1979), *De l'usage des médias en temps de crise*, Paris
- Miller, K.D. (2009), *Organizational Risk after Modernism*, *Organization Studies*, Sage, European Group for Organizational Studies

- Mintzberg, H. (1994), *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners*, New York, The Free Press
- Noelle-Neumann, E. (1979), *Public Opinion and the Classical Tradition: A Re-evaluation*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Oxford Journal
- Peters T.J. Waterman R.H. (2004), *In search of the Excellence, Lessons from American run-best companies*, New-York, Harper Business Essentials
- Pinto,E. (2006) *Pour une analyse critique des médias*, Paris, éditions du craquant,
- Piotet, J.P.(1991), *Communication de crise : quelles stratégies ?* in Maud Tixier, *La communication de crise*, Paris, Mc-Grawhill,
- Reason, J.T. (1990), *Human Errors*, Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridge Press University
- Regester, M (1995), *Crisis Management* , In Sam Black. *The practice of Public Relations*, Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann
- Regester,M. (1995), “ *Crisis Management* ”, In Sam Black. *The practice of Public Relations*, Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann,
- Reveret, R. Moreau,J.N (1997) *Media and communication crisis*, Economica,
- Salancik, G.R (1977). *Commitment and the control of organization behavior and belief*, Chicago: St Clair, On B.M Staw& G.R Salancik (Eds.), *New direction in organization behavior*
- Salmon, R.& Linares.Y (1997), *L'intelligence compétitive*, Paris, Economica, School Press
- Scott, W.R. (1987) *Organizations: Rational, natural, and open systems* (2nd ed.) Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall
- Sergiovanni, T. J. and Corbally, J. E. (Eds), *Leadership and Organizational Culture*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 170–85.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. and Corbally, J. E. (Eds), *Leadership and Organizational Culture*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 170–85.
- Shenkar, O. and Yuchtman-Yaar, E. (1997). ‘Reputation, image, prestige, and goodwill: an interdisciplinary approach to organizational standing’. *Human Relations*, 50, 1361–81
- Sicard, M.N.(1998) *Entre médias et crises technologiques*, Paris, Ed. du Septentrion,
- Staw,B.M (1982). *Counterforces to changes*. I.P.S Goldman & associates (Ed.), *Change in organizations: New perspectives on theory research and practices*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass

Suchman, M. C. (1995). 'Managing legitimacy: strategic and institutional approaches'. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 571–610.

Synthèse de l'Institut CSA (2009, April), la communication de crise des chefs d'entreprise : la perception des journalistes, N°0900480

Turner B.A. Pidgeon N.F.(1997), *Man-Made Disasters*, 2nd ed Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann

Weick K. E.(1995), *Sensemaking in Organizations*, London, Sage Publications

Weick, K.E.(1998). Enacted sensemaking in crisis situations. *Journal of Management Studies*.

Weick K.E. and Sutcliffe K. M.(2001), *Managing the Unexpected*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass

Wesley, F.R. (1990) Middle managers and strategy: Microdynamics of inclusion. *Strategy Management Journal*.

Westphal, J. D., Gulati, R. and Shortell, S. M. (1997). 'Customization or conformity? An institutional and network perspective on the content and consequences of TQM adoption'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **42**, 366–94.

Wolton, D. (1991), *Les contradictions de l'espace public médiatisé*, HERMÈS 10, Paris, CNRS

Newspapers (principal articles used):

- *A Folha*, 03 June 2009, Saiba mais sobre 206 ocupantes do voo 447 da Air France
- *Agence France Presse*, 28 April 2010, Crash vol AF447 : un avocat critique la politique d'indemnisation d'Air France
- *Challenges*, 6 June 2009, l'image d'Air France a été renforcée
- *Challenges*, 26 November 2010, Vol AF447: Air France connaissait le risque critique
- *La Tribune*, 08 June 2009, Accident of Air France: Airplanes put in cause
- *Le Figaro*, 19 March 2010, AF 447: Ce que vaut la vie d'un passage
- *Le Figaro*, 05 August 2010, AF 447: la responsabilité de la France mise en cause
- *Le Figaro*, 02 June 2009, La plus grave catastrophe aérienne de l'histoire d'Air France
- *Le Monde*, 09 June 2009, several articles
- *Le Monde*, 08 June 2009, un syndicat de pilote d'Air France appelle à ne plus voler sur A330
- *Le Point*, 11 September 2010, Air France: un syndicat de pilote d'air France averti contre les radars météorologiques

Radio:

- RTL radio, 06 June 2009 Le Grand jury RTL
- BFM, 10 June 2009, Le Grand journal, "Air France a remarquablement géré la communication autour du crash"
- BFM, 21 Avril 2009, Les Grands Débats, En temps de crise, les sociétés communiquent-elles suffisamment ?

Televisions channels:

- TF1
- France 2
- France 5
- BFM TV

VII. APPENDIX

A. Appendix 1: "L'image d'Air France est renforcée"

"L'image d'Air France est renforcée"

Suite au crash du vol Air France entre Rio et Paris au début de la semaine (228 victimes), Maurice Lévy, P-DG de Publicis, s'exprime sur les conséquences que peut engendrer un tel accident sur l'image de la compagnie.

Selon vous, la direction d'Air France a-t-elle bien géré ce dramatique accident ?

- Sa gestion a été en tout point remarquable. Les dirigeants d'Air France ont fait preuve d'une profonde humanité. Leur émotion était palpable, sincère, même s'ils ont su tirer des leçons des catastrophes passées, comme celle du Concorde en juillet 2000. Ils ont aussi montré beaucoup d'intelligence. Bien que les causes de l'accident soient loin d'être encore aujourd'hui connues avec certitude, ils se sont efforcés de donner des explications claires en jouant au maximum la transparence.

Leur discours a-t-il permis de mobiliser le personnel ?

- Sans aucun doute. J'ai le sentiment qu'il s'est passé quelque chose à Air France. La solidarité entre les équipes s'est renforcée. Et l'ensemble des personnels s'est resserré autour de ses dirigeants. Fait remarquable, je n'ai pas entendu la moindre note dissonante, la moindre critique, la moindre accusation, comme cela peut parfois se produire après un tel accident.

Les clients risquent-ils de désertir les vols Air France ?

- N'oublions pas que, statistiquement, le transport aérien est un des plus sûrs qui soit et qu'Air France est réputée pour son sérieux. La peur est une affaire personnelle. Même si la compagnie connaît une baisse de trafic, cela ne devrait durer que quelques jours. Car le capital de sympathie entre Air France et ses clients est resté intact. Le lien émotionnel qui existe entre eux contribue à renforcer l'image d'Air France.

Propos recueillis par Francine Rivaud, grand reporter à *Challenges* (le vendredi 5 juin 2009)

B. Appendix 2: Programmation de l'émission d'actualité politique de France 5, *C dans l'air*

Programmation de l'émission d'actualité politique de France 5, *C dans l'air*

source : <http://www.france5.fr/c-dans-l-air/> émissions consultable sur le site internet

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| - lundi 1er juin 2009 | 4 h 15 : le vol AF 447 a disparu |
| - mardi 2 juin 2009 | Débris repérés en mer |
| - vendredi 5 juin 2009 | Vol AF 447 : dans la gueule du loup... |

C. Appendix 3: 206 ocupantes do voo 447 da Air France

Saiba mais sobre 206 ocupantes do voo 447 da Air France

da **Folha Online**

A Air France divulgou na noite desta quarta-feira parte da lista de ocupantes brasileiros que estavam no [voo 447](#). De acordo com a assessoria da companhia aérea, foram divulgadas apenas as identidades de 53 dos 58 ocupantes brasileiros que estavam na aeronave, já que algumas famílias não autorizaram a divulgação dos nomes.

A lista não inclui os nomes dos ocupantes de outras nacionalidades. Segundo a Air France, ao todo, havia 228 pessoas no avião, de 32 nacionalidades diferentes.

Desde a última segunda-feira (1), a **Folha Online** vem publicando uma [lista](#) com os nomes dos ocupantes da aeronave, com base na confirmação dada por familiares e amigos das vítimas, além de jornais e agências internacionais de notícia.

Veja a lista divulgada pela Air France:

"É com muito pesar que a Air France vem a público apresentar a lista com o nome dos brasileiros --apenas os autorizados pelos familiares-- a bordo do voo AF 447, desaparecido em 31 de maio de 2009. São eles:

Universidade Humboldt



Advogada Júlia Schmidt cursou doutorado na Alemanha e ia para Berlim trabalhar

- [Adriana Moreira Henriques](#)
- [Adriana Francisca Van Sluijs](#)
- [Ana Carolina Rodrigues da Silva](#), 28, integrante da ONG Viva Rio
- Ana Luisa Curty
- [Angela Cristina de Oliveira Silva](#), responsável por uma organização internacional
- [Antonio Augusto Gueiros](#)
- [Bianca Machado Cotta](#), médica que viajava com o marido em lua de mel
- Bruno Pelajo
- Carlos Mateus
- [Carlos Eduardo Lopes de Mello](#), recém-casado com Bianca
- [Deise Possamai](#), 34, funcionária da prefeitura de Criciúma
- Eduardo Moreno
- [Ferdinand Porcaro](#), 79, oftalmologista aposentado
- [Francisco Eudes Mesquita Valle](#), viajou ao lado do filho, da mulher e da nora
- [Gustavo Peretti Mattos](#), 30, brasileiro, funcionário da petrolífera norueguesa StatoilHydro.
- [Izabela Maria Furtado Kestler](#), professora de alemão da UFRJ
- [Jean-Claude Lozouet](#)

- [João Marques da Silva Filho](#), 67, gerente de interface do Estaleiro Atlântico Sul

Efe/Arquivo pessoal



Lucas Galiano Juca, 24, comissário

- [José Gregório Marques](#), juiz aposentado, completaria 72 anos na segunda-feira (1º)
- Jose Souza
- José Roberto Gomes, 50, professor de administração da PUC-RJ
- [Júlia Chaves de Miranda Schmidt](#), 27, advogada mineira
- [Juliana Aquino](#), 29, cantora, mora na Alemanha e passava férias com a família em Brasília
- [Leonardo Veloso Dardengo](#), 31, oceanógrafo e doutorando da Coppe/UFRJ
- Leonardo Pereira Leite
- [Letícia Chem](#), 36, gerente de roaming internacional da operadora Oi
- [Luciana Clarkson Seba](#), psicóloga, viajou ao lado do marido, Paulo Brito, e dos sogros
- [Luiz Cláudio Monlevad](#), 48, funcionário da empresa de tubulações Saint-Gobain
- [Luiz Roberto Anastácio](#), presidente da Michelin para a América do Sul
- [Marcela Marques Pellizzon](#), 29, geóloga, funcionária da petrolífera norueguesa StatoilHydro
- [Marcelo Parente Gomes de Oliveira](#), 38, chefe de gabinete do prefeito do Rio, Eduardo Paes (PMDB)
- [Marcia Moscon de Faria](#), 49, psicóloga, funcionária da Vara da Infância, Juventude e Idoso do TJ do Rio
- [Marco Antonio Camargos Mendonça](#)

- [Maria de Fátima Brito Valle](#), arquiteta, viajou ao lado do marido, do filho e da nora
- [Maria Tereza Gregório Marques](#), 69, advogada, mulher do juiz José Gregório Marques
- [Mateus Nazareth Ceva Antunes](#), 3, filho de Octavio e Patricia, também no voo
- [Nelson Marinho Filho](#), 40, mecânico de engrenagens
- [Octavio Augusto Ceva Antunes](#), professor do Instituto de Química da UFRJ
- [Otmene Tequadon](#), funcionário da CGED.
- [Patricia Nazareth Antunes](#), química da Anvisa que viajava com o marido, Octavio
- [Paulo Valle Brito](#), empresário, viajou ao lado da mulher, Luciana Sebá, e dos pais
- [Pedro Luis de Orleans e Bragança](#), 26, descendente de dom Pedro 2º
- [Roberto Corrêa Chem](#), 66, cirurgião plástico e professor universitário
- [Silvio Barbato](#), ex-diretor artístico da Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional
- [Simone Jacomo dos Santos Elias](#), 41, psicóloga, funcionária da Vara da Infância, Juventude e Idoso do TJ do Rio
- [Soluwellington Vieira de Sá](#), 40, iria para o Egito, onde comanda um rebocador para pesquisa de petróleo
- [Sonia Maria Cordeiro Porcaro](#), 67, mulher de Ferdinand Porcaro; ia visitar filha na Noruega
- [Tadeu Dias de Moraes](#), 65, fiscal de renda aposentado; ia à Europa ver ópera
- [Valnilzia Betler](#), 44, casada com um alemão

Divulgação



Carlos Eduardo e Bianca se casaram no sábado (30); eles embarcaram no voo 447

- Vanderleia Carraro
- [Vera Chem](#), 63, psicóloga, casada com Roberto Chem
- [Veronica Ivanovitch](#), 57, suíço-brasileira
- [Vincent Poitrenaud](#), funcionário da CGED, que viajava com a mulher.
- Walter Carrilho Junior"

Lista extraoficial

- [Abdel Kader Benotmane](#), amigo de Otmame Tegudadon, funcionário da CGED.
- Adrian S., alemão de Hattingen
- [Agostino Cordioli](#), 73, empresário italiano de Verona. Viajou a negócios para Fortaleza
- [Ahmed Faouzi](#), técnico veterinário marroquino
- Akram Ku, libanês
- [Aisling Butler](#), 26, médica irlandesa
- Albert Kersten, 43, holandês, passava férias no Brasil
- [Alexander Bjoroy](#), 11, estudante britânico
- Alexander C., 25, estudante alemão
- [Alexander Paulitsch](#), 35, consultor comercial italiano de San Candido (Bolzano)
- Andree, V-N. alemão, vinha ao Brasil visitar amigo
- [Andrei Kiselev](#), russo, veio ao Brasil para tratar de negócios
- Anne-Marie Wilhelm, francesa, veio participar de congresso no Brasil
- Anne-Marie Boullery, francesa
- [Anna Negra Barrabeig](#), 28, espanhola

- [Andrés Suárez Montes](#), 38, engenheiro espanhol que trabalhava no Brasil
- [Anne Harris](#), 54, mulher do geólogo Michael Harris
- [Arden Jugueta](#), marinheiro filipino que pegaria conexão em Paris
- Arnold Gergel, 33, eslovaco, funcionário da companhia aérea Aer Lingus no aeroporto de Dublin
- Funcionário estoniano da companhia aérea irlandesa Aer Lingus, de 25 anos, cujo nome não será divulgado a pedido da família
- [Arthur Coakley](#), 61, engenheiro inglês que veio ao Brasil a trabalho
- Audrey Quesada, francesa, mulher de Hatem Zrelli e mãe de Jassem e Sana
- [Aurélia Pasquet](#), 24, amiga de Laetitia Alazar
- Bassam Murr, libanês
- [Cathy Arrondo](#), 54, companheira de Gilles Dutheil, da empresa CGED
- [Brad Clemes](#), 49, canadense; executivo da Coca-Cola na Bélgica
- Carlos Alberto Mateus, 53, brasileiro
- [Carmen E.](#), economista alemã; filha de Rolf E.
- Caroline Coquet, 24, professora francesa, casada com o comissário Sébastien Vedovati
- Cécile Guitare, francesa, ex-comissária de bordo da Air Austral e amiga de François Henry
- Cédric Monteiro, francês, pintor
- [Chen Chiping](#), 53, da empresa chinesa Benxi Iron & Steel

Arquivo pessoal



O engenheiro da Petrobras Hilton Jadir Silveira de Souza, 50, é de Montes Claros

- [Chen Qingwei](#), 35, executivo chinês

- [Christiane Zeuthen](#), 47, dinamarquesa, fez curso sobre terapia de choque no Brasil
- [Christine Badre Schnabl](#), 34, sueca
- [Christin Pieraerts](#), funcionária da unidade Paris da Michelin
- [Clara Sofie E.](#), 2, filha de Carmen E.
- [Claudia Degli Esposti](#), 55, italiana, empresária que trabalha com marketing
- Claus H., alemão de Nürtingen
- [Claus-Peter Hellhammer, 28.](#), 28, funcionário alemão da ThyssenKrupp Steel AG
- [Christophe Paus](#), 32, médico suíço
- Daniel Bencat, eslovaco, ex-prefeito de Kozarovec
- Daniela, A., alemã de Hamburgo
- [David Sebastian](#), 28, funcionário da empresa CGED
- [Élise Chabanne](#), 26, francesa, professora de matemática
- Dennis L., 38, gerente, da cidade alemã de Bremen, gostava de visitar o Brasil
- [Eithne Walls](#), médica irlandesa
- [Enzo Canaletti](#), italiano, marido de Angela Cristina de Oliveira Silva
- [Erich Heine](#), presidente da ThyssenKrupp CSA - Companhia Siderúrgica do Atlântico
- [Fabrice Pezzoni](#), francês, funcionário da empresa CGED
- [Fatma Ceren Necipoglu, professora turca da Anadolu University](#)
- [Fouad Haddour](#), veterinário marroquino
- François Henry, 39, francês, funcionário da companhia aérea francesa Air Austral (parceira da Air France)
- [Gao Xing](#), 39, da empresa chinesa Benxi Iron & Steel
- [Gilles Dutheil](#), 46, francês, funcionário da empresa CGED
- [Georg Lercher](#), 34, empresário italiano do setor florestal de San Candido (Bolzano)
- [Georg Martiner](#), 24, de origem brasileira, adotado com dois irmãos por uma família italiana
- [Giovanni Batista Lenzi](#), deputado da Província Autônoma de Trento
- [Graham Gardner](#), 52, engenheiro escocês que trabalha no Rio
- [Gustave Thille Guy](#), 65, comerciante belga que foi a Luxemburgo visitar a filha

- [Hannelore E.](#), dona de casa, mulher de Rolf E; alemã
- Hans H., alemão
- Harald Maximillian Winner, 44, alemão que iria providenciar documentos para se casar
- Hatem Zrelli, 30, tunisiano, funcionário do Carrefour e pai de Jassem e Sana
- Helge Gustafsson
- [Hélène Leybros](#), companheira de Vincent Poitrenaud, da CGED.
- [Hilton Jadir Silveira de Souza](#), 50, engenheiro da Petrobras que viajou a trabalho
- Hussein Khalifeh, 34, libanês, estava em viagem de trabalho ao Brasil
- Ines G., 31, gerente de vendas alemã
- Iris H., alemã
- Iris M., 21; alemã
- Isabelle Bonin, 36, francesa; mulher do copiloto Pierre-Cedric Bonin
- Isabelle Hocabaeff, 41, francesa, viajava com o marido Yvan
- Isis Pinet, francesa, mulher de José Ronnel Amorim
- [Ivan Lorgeré](#), 41, francês, pesquisador do CNRS (Centro Nacional para a Pesquisa Científica da França)
- [Jane Deasy](#), médica irlandesa
- Jassem Zrelli, 1, francês, filho de Audrey e Hatem, irmão de Sana
- Jean-Luc Wilhelm, engenheiro francês, marido de Anne-Marie Wilhelm
- [José Ronnel Amorim](#), 35, dentista casado com a francesa Isis
- Jozsef Gallasz, 44, húngaro, marido de Rita Szarvas
- Katja R., alemã de Hamburgo
- [Kristian Berg Andersen](#), 37, norueguês, funcionário da petrolífera norueguesa StatoilHydro
- Koo Hak-rim, 40, sul-coreano
- [Laura Rahal](#), 28, engenheira sueca que veio ao Brasil a trabalho
- [Laetitia Alazar](#), 23, funcionária da empresa francesa CGED
- [Li Mingwen](#), 44, da empresa chinesa Benxi Iron & Steel
- [Luigi Zortea](#), prefeito de Canal San Bovo, em Trento (Itália)
- Lutz U, alemão de Backnang
- [Karsten Moholt Jr](#), 58, dono de empresa na Noruega
- [Karsten Aleksander Moholt](#), 35, executivo de empresa norueguesa
- M. Owondon

- [Marcelle Valpaços Fonseca Lima](#), 28, procuradora do Estado do Rio
- [Maria G.](#), 27, fisioterapeuta austríaca
- Matthias P., designer de moda alemão visitava o Brasil
- [Marie-Josée Treillou](#), 70, conselheira municipal de Ermenonville, na França
- [Maxence Lamaison](#), 28, francês
- [Michael Harris](#), 60, geólogo americano que trabalha para a Devon Energy no Brasil
- Michael Hudec, 53, eslovaco, amigo de Daniel Bencat
- [Moritz Koch](#), 54, arquiteto alemão, veio ao Rio para reunião no escritório de Oscar Niemeyer
- [Martin](#), 29, médico alemão em férias no Brasil
- [Nathalie Marroig](#), 41, conselheira municipal de Ermenonville, na França
- [Neil Warrior](#), 48, britânico, diretor de relações públicas da fabricante de carros Mazda na Europa
- Nicolas Touillou, 27, francês
- [Olivier Guérineau](#), funcionário da CGED, que viajava com a mulher.
- [Olivier Guillot-Noël](#), 37, francês, pesquisador do CNRS (Centro Nacional para a Pesquisa Científica da França)
- [Pascal Linguet](#), 48, francês, funcionário da empresa CGED
- [Pascal Delarablee](#), 51, engenheiro francês
- [Philippe Schnabl](#), 5, filho de Christine Schnabl
- [Pablo Dreyfus](#), 38, argentino integrante da ONG Viva Rio
- Rajae Tazi Moukha, veterinária marroquina
- Ralf K., alemão
- [Regine E.](#), alemã, professora de música; filha de Rolf E.
- Renate W., alemã, viajava com Lutz e Viviane
- [Rino Zandonai](#), diretor da Associazione Trentini Nel Mondo
- Rita Szarvas, terapeuta húngara de um centro para crianças com deficiência motora
- Filho de 7 anos de Jozsef Gallasz e Rita Szarvas, cujo nome ainda não foi divulgado
- [Rolf E](#), aposentado alemão
- [Ronald Dreyer](#), 59, cientista político suíço
- Sana Zrelli, 3, filha de Audrey e Hatam
- [Sabrina Guérineau](#), mulher de Olivier Guérineau, da CGED.

- [Sandrine Artiguenave](#), 34, francesa, mulher de Stéphane Artiguenave, da CGED.
- [Shen Zuobing](#), 40, da empresa chinesa Benxi Iron & Steel
Patricia Santos/AP



Adriana Moreira Henriques

- [Shlomo Anidjar](#), 40, francês, executivo de empresa de tecnologia
- Sophie Le Corvec, 43, francesa, funcionária da Cargill
- [Sonia Maria Amorim](#), 57, funcionária da Vara da Infância, Juventude e Idoso do TJ do Rio
- Sonia al Muallem, libanesa
- Stefan B., alemão
- [Stephane Artiguenave](#), 35, francês, vendedor da CGED
- [Sun Lianyou](#), 49, da empresa chinesa Benxi Iron & Steel
- [Véronique Gaignard](#), cantora lírica francesa
- Virginie Mommayou, 35, francesa
- [Violeta Bajenaru-Declerck](#), 33, professora romena que participou de evento no Rio
- Viviane U, alemã de Backnang, viajava com Lutz e Renate
- [Xiao Xiang](#), 35, pesquisador chinês
- Yvan Hochabaeff, 43, francês, diretor de empresa de automóveis
- [Zhang Qingbo](#), 54, da empresa chinesa Benxi Iron & Steel
- [Zhuo Jiachun](#), 27, da empresa chinesa Huawei Technologies
- [Zoran Markovic](#), 45, marinheiro croata de Kostelji

Brasileiros cujos nomes não foram informados a pedido da família

- Homem, 50, engenheiro, família pediu para não divulgar o nome
- Homem, 24, família pediu para não divulgar o nome

Tripulantes - extraoficial

- [Anne Grimout](#), 49, francesa, principal chefe de cabine.
- [Clara Mar Amado](#), 32, argentina com nacionalidade francesa
- [David Robert](#), 37, francês, copiloto do voo AF 447
- Françoise Sonnic, 53 anos, francesa, chefe de cabine
- Laurence Yapi-Desmots, 44, francesa, comissária de bordo, mãe de três filhos
- [Lucas Gagriano Juca](#), 24, comissário - único tripulante brasileiro
- [Marc Dubois](#), 58, francês, comandante do voo AF 447
- Maryline Colombies-Messaud, chefe de cabine
- [Pierre-Cedric Bonin](#), 32, copiloto do voo AF447
- Sébastien Vedovati, francês, comissário de bordo; casado com Caroline Coquet
- Stéphane Giroux, 37, francês, comissário de bordo
- Stephanie Shoumacker, 39, comissária de bordo francesa, casada e mãe de três filhos

D. [Appendix 4: 12 Air France press release after the crash](#)

source : www.airfrance.fr

Liste des communiqués de presse publiés par Air France :

- [Communiqué N° 12](#)
- [Communiqué N° 11](#)
- [Cérémonies religieuses à l'intention des victimes du vol AF 447](#)
- [Communiqué de presse : Archevêché de Paris](#)
- [Note aux rédactions](#)
- [Communiqué N° 10](#)
- [Communiqué N° 9](#)
- [Communiqué N° 8](#)
- [Notes aux rédactions](#)
- [Communiqué N° 7](#)
- [Communiqué N° 6](#)
- [Communiqué N° 5](#)
- [Communiqué N° 4](#)
- [Communiqué N° 3](#)
- [Communiqué N° 2](#)
- [Premier communiqué](#)

Exemple de communiqué

- **Paris, 06 juin 2009 - 21h06 heure locale**

Communiqué N° 12

Point sur les sondes anémométriques

A la suite d'interrogations multiples apparues dans les médias sur la question des sondes Pitot de sa flotte (la sonde Pitot est un des capteurs qui permet de calculer la vitesse aérodynamique de l'avion), Air France souhaite apporter les précisions suivantes :

1) Des défauts de fonctionnement des sondes Pitot sur A320 amènent le constructeur à édicter en septembre 2007 une recommandation de changer les sondes. Cette recommandation s'applique également aux avions long-courriers qui utilisent les mêmes sondes et sur lesquels n'avaient été observés qu'un faible nombre d'incidents du même type.

Il est rappelé qu'une « recommandation » du constructeur laisse à l'opérateur toute liberté de l'appliquer totalement, partiellement ou pas du tout. Par contre, lorsque la sécurité peut être en cause le constructeur, en liaison avec les autorités, émet un bulletin-service obligatoire (mandatory service bulletin) repris par une « consigne de navigabilité » (Airworthiness directive)

La recommandation de changer les sondes a été appliquée par Air France sur les A320 où de tels incidents par ingestion d'eau à basse altitude avaient été observés. Elle n'a pas été appliquée sur ses A340/330 en l'absence d'incidents constatés.

2) A partir de mai 2008 Air France observe des incidents de pertes d'informations anémométriques en vol en croisière sur A340 et A330. Ces évènements sont analysés avec Airbus comme découlant d'un givrage des sondes, la panne disparaissant au bout de quelques minutes. Des discussions sont alors menées activement avec le constructeur lors de plusieurs réunions techniques. Air France demande une solution pour réduire ou faire disparaître l'apparition de ces incidents. En réponse le constructeur indique que le modèle recommandé sur A320 n'est pas conçu pour prévenir les incidents survenus en croisière à haute altitude dont nous faisons état, et rappelle les procédures opérationnelles bien connues des équipages.

Au premier trimestre 2009 des essais en laboratoire font cependant apparaître que la nouvelle sonde pourrait apporter une amélioration significative au problème de givrage en haute altitude par rapport à la sonde précédente. Pour le vérifier, Airbus propose une expérimentation en vol, en situation réelle. Sans attendre cette expérimentation, Air France décide alors de changer toutes les sondes de sa flotte A330/340 et le programme a été lancé le 27 avril 2009.

Sans préjuger d'un lien avec les causes de l'accident, Air France a accéléré ce programme et rappelé les consignes en vigueur émises par le constructeur pour faire face à la perte potentielle d'informations anémométriques.

Communiqué N° 10

Hommage aux victimes

Une cérémonie interreligieuse aura lieu le mercredi 3 juin à 16h00 en la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris pour les familles et les proches des victimes.

Avis aux rédactions : des informations pratiques seront communiquées ultérieurement sur l'organisation de la cérémonie interreligieuse.

- **Paris, 02 juin 2009 - 09h32 heure locale**
- **Paris, 02 juin 2009 - 07h20 heure locale**

Notes aux rédactions

Air France demande aux journalistes, notamment de la presse audiovisuelle, de bien vouloir respecter le deuil des familles des victimes actuellement accueillies dans des hôtels de l'aéroport de Paris-CDG.

Merci de notre compréhension.

- **Paris, 01 juin 2009 - 21h28 heure locale**

Communiqué N° 7

Personnel navigant technique

Commandant de bord :

- Nationalité française
- 58 ans
- Entré à la compagnie en 1988
- Qualifié sur Airbus A330/A340 en février 2007
- 11 000 heures de vol dont 1 700 sur Airbus A330/A340

2 officiers pilotes de ligne (copilotes) :

- Nationalité française
- 37 ans et 32 ans
- Entrés à la compagnie en 1999 et 2004
- Qualifiés sur Airbus A330/A340 en avril 2002 et en juin 2008
- 6 600 heures de vol dont 2 600 sur Airbus A330/A340
- 3 000 heures de vol dont 800 sur Airbus A330/A340

Personnel navigant commercial

Chef de cabine principal :

- Nationalité française
- 49 ans
- Entré à la compagnie en 1985

2 chefs de cabine :

- Nationalité française
- 54 et 46 ans
- Entrés à la compagnie en 1981 et en 1989

6 hôtesses et stewards

- 5 de nationalité française et 1 de nationalité brésilienne
- Entre 24 et 44 ans
- Entrés à la compagnie entre 1996 et 2007

Numéros de téléphone réservés aux familles et aux proches

0800 800 812 depuis la France,

0800 881 20 20 depuis le Brésil,

et + 33 1 57 02 10 55 depuis les autres pays.

NB : Nous demandons aux journalistes de ne pas appeler ces numéros réservés aux familles et aux proches.

Paris, 01 juin 2009 - 11h14 heure locale

Premier communiqué

Air France a le regret d'annoncer être sans nouvelle du vol AF 447 effectuant la liaison Rio de Janeiro – Paris-Charles de Gaulle, arrivée prévue ce matin à 11h15 locales.

Le vol a quitté Rio le 31 mai à 19 heures locales.

216 passagers sont à bords.

L'équipage est composé de 12 navigants : 3 navigants techniques et 9 navigants commerciaux.

Un numéro vert est ouvert au 0800 800 812 pour la France,
et + 33 1 57 02 10 55 pour l'étranger.

Air France partage l'émotion et l'inquiétude des familles concernées. Les proches sont reçus dans un endroit spécialement réservé à l'aérogare de Paris-Charles de Gaulle 2

E. Appendix 5: Un syndicat de pilotes d'Air France appelle à ne plus voler sur des A330

Un syndicat de pilotes d'Air France appelle à ne plus voler sur des A330
LEMONDE.FR | 08.06.09 | 18h09 • Mis à jour le 09.06.09 | 07h37

A lors que seize corps au total - et non dix-sept - ont été repêchés dans l'Atlantique par les forces brésiliennes et françaises à la recherche de l'Airbus A330 d'Air France disparu entre le Brésil et la France le 1er juin, un syndicat de pilotes de la compagnie aérienne française a appelé, lundi 8 juin, à "refuser" de voler sur les A330 et A340 tant que des modifications techniques sur les sondes de vitesse n'auront pas été apportées sur ces avions.

"Refusez tout vol sur A 330/A340 n'ayant pas au moins deux sondes pitots modifiées" a ainsi lancé aux pilotes le syndicat ALTER. Cette organisation est la troisième force chez Air France derrière le SNPL et SPAF.

Le syndicat déplore que, dans l'attente du remplacement de tous les pitots défectueux, la direction n'"ait pas pris la décision d'immobiliser les A330 et A340 non encore équipés de nouveaux modèles de pitots" et dont le remplacement complet n'est prévu que "dans les prochaines semaines".

La pitot est un tube fixé sur le long de la carlingue, à l'avant d'un avion. Cette sonde sert à calculer la vitesse de l'avion. Depuis la veille du week-end, elle est [devenue un élément sensible de l'enquête](#) sur la disparition du vol Air France 447 entre Rio et Paris dans la nuit du 30 mai au 1er juin.

Cette sonde dont le dysfonctionnement est avéré par le rapport Acars (messages automatiques envoyés par l'avion à la maintenance d'Air France à Roissy) pourrait avoir un rôle dans l'enchaînement des événements qui ont causé la perte de l'avion.

Air France a reconnu dans un communiqué que, depuis mai 2008, *"des incidents de pertes d'information anémométrique en vol en croisière"* sur des A340 et des A330 avaient été constatés.

Interrogée sur l'avancée de la procédure de remplacement des pitots (trois par avions), la direction d'Air France a précisé, lundi soir, que la compagnie exploitait actuellement quinze A330 et dix-neuf A340. Sur cette flotte, a-t-elle ajouté, tous les avions disposent d'au moins un pitot de dernière génération et neuf avions en *"ont au moins deux ou trois"*.

François Bostnavaron