The new spin:
Effects of information control behaviours on source trustworthiness and persuasion

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Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

This thesis is presented for the degree of
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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

....................................
Dale Hynd
ABSTRACT
Given the high level of skepticism from the public toward politicians, this research explores the communication styles that separate public figures who are trusted and supported from those who are not. Contrary to conventional practice, it is argued that the use of ‘spin’ in political communication is a large factor contributing to the public’s negative perception of politicians. Political spin is defined as a communication style encompassing specific behaviours designed to appeal to the media, control information, and contain the meaning audiences derive from a message. This research operationalised spin as it is used in political communication and compared participants’ responses to messages with low and high levels of spin. The present research comprised three studies. In Study One, interviews were conducted with communication professionals to define the concept and specific ‘information control behaviours’ associated with spin. An ‘authenticity’ scale was then developed to measure audience responses to low and high-spin messages. In Study Two, 50 participants were randomly assigned to view a series of low or high-spin political messages. Participants rated messages from a confederate politician as well as actual politicians, government officials, and corporate representatives using the Authenticity Scale. Study Three was conducted throughout the 5-weeks of political campaigning prior to a general election. A representative sample of 60 voters was used each week in a repeated measures design to rate the political candidates and two confederate politicians using the Authenticity Scale. It was found that participants were able to clearly discern the degree of spin used by politicians when communicating a message. Messages containing a high level of spin elicited more negative attitudes and significantly lower levels of support for politicians, than messages containing a low level of spin. Specifically, participants’ perceptions of source trustworthiness and credibility were significantly higher for politicians using a low-spin style of communication. The findings are discussed in terms of the expectancy
disconfirmation theory. The findings suggest that adopting a new low-spin style of communication will assist public figures to communicate more persuasively and to better engage an increasingly skeptical public.
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CHAPTER ONE: THE ROLE OF ‘AUTHENTICITY’ IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

1.1 Political Communication

1.1.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter will outline the relationship between politicians, the media, and the public. It will illustrate how politicians’ communication style has produced an untrustworthy political stereotype. I will also detail a different style of political communication that has produced perceptions of ‘authenticity’ within the public. Examples of this new low-spin style of political communication will be outlined and its effectiveness, in terms of gaining greater credibility and influence, will be explored. In section two of this chapter, a survey of the relevant persuasion studies will be undertaken. This will provide the theoretical basis to understand the effects of greater perceptions of source credibility and trustworthiness as well as message persuasiveness. Ultimately, this research will go on to define the characteristics of this new low-spin style of communication and to test its effects on public attitudes and its persuasiveness compared to its high-spin counterpart.

1.1.2 Politicians, the media, and the public

In order for politicians to publicly communicate in this information-saturated world, the use of the mass media is essential. The process employed by the media in its construction of the news is helpful in understanding the techniques used by politicians and public figures to access the news media. The relationship between journalists and politicians, like other news sources, is a symbiotic one. For the politician this “requires giving the media organisation what it wants, in terms of news and entertainment, while exerting some influence over how that something is mediated and presented to the audience” (McNair, 1995, p. 115). Due to the news media’s preference to deal with
simplified versions of complex issues and their constraint on the amount of time and space used to express them, a politician will supply information that is highly suited for the journalistic structure of a news story, which is also beneficial to their own concerns.

Politicians compete for access to the news media in order to articulate a preferred message. However, gaining access to the news can be difficult if information is not packaged according to the media’s vocabulary of news values. The media require the navigation of a narrow set of criteria such as the use of short crafted messages, emotive imagery, as well as other prized news values (Ericson, Baranek, & Chan, 1987; Galtung & Ruge, 1981; Hall, 1981; Hartley, 1982; Hynd, 2001; Tiffen, 1989). This has given rise to public relations professionals, often ex-journalists themselves, who have had many years experience with the news media. Their experience and knowledge enable them to skilfully manage journalists, by providing them with a steady flow of targeted information. This flow of information to the media circulates the meanings politicians want to generate within the public sphere. Moreover, public relations advisers impose their own ‘spin’ on events by devising, scripting, creating and staging media events, media conferences and press releases.

This use of spin in public communication is designed to control information and to deliver more specific messages. For example, when being interviewed politicians use information control behaviours or techniques, including the following behaviours. The politician will avoid answering on the spot questions by continually repeating a prepared message crafted in different ways. If challenged on a point, a politician will attempt to disrupt the interviewer, change the subject, or discuss only part of the question. If challenged or pressed on an answer given or position held the politician will generally become adversarial. These behaviours are designed to limit the information
being offered about a given issue and to maintain control over the message being
delivered to the public. Other information-control techniques used by politicians include
providing oversimplified metaphors, exaggerated examples, and catch phrases in the
delivery of statements given to the media.

However, today public communication is in crisis. The public is simply not listening,
which poses a serious threat to modern democratic societies (Forstorp, 1997; Grattan,
1998; Longstaff, 2001; Ward, 2002). Many commentators have argued that the public is
extremely sceptical of messages and statements given by public figures and government
representatives across the various media formats. This scepticism is contributed to, in
part, by the media formats that are in place. Unfortunately, this media format public
figures are required to work within generates communication that lacks credibility and
believability (Erickson, 1996; Forstorp, 1997; Grattan, 1998; Roscoe, 2001). To
communicate in this format public figures must structure what they say into succinct
messages, much like an actor in a theatre production, which form small highly refined
segments in the news content. However, an increasingly media ‘savvy’ or literate public
now perceives this slick media ‘spin’ as being ‘inauthentic’ and the credibility of their
message is called into question.

1.1.3 Honesty in politics

Longstaff (2001) argues that the current relationship between politics and the media
does not encourage honesty in politicians. The media have a tendency to distort and
sensationalise political statements; therefore, politicians learn to only make statements
that are highly contrived and fit within the conventional media structure. The problem
with messages that are mediated through journalists, editors, speechwriters, and spin-
doctors is that the communication becomes so refined and polished it no longer
resembles credible and believable communication. This current strategy of communicating with the public is driving community opinion of politicians to a feeling of either total distrust or complete disinterest (Longstaff, 2001). Longstaff suggests that the danger of this situation is that “If people do not trust the people who make the laws, then they might eventually stop trusting the laws they make” (2001, p. 64). Of course, many politicians are working hard for the public good and deserve respect but this appears to get lost in their publicly communicated messages (Longstaff, 2001).

The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, also raised concerns that it is hard to have a discussion about policy issues “without every thing being distorted and blown out of the water by misrepresentation” (cited in March, 2001, p. 1). Correspondingly, this problem was acknowledged by Estelle Morris, former UK Education Secretary, who stood down after a number of public crises in her department (Ward, 2003). Morris publicly urged the UK government to be prepared to admit mistakes more often in order to help turn back a growing tide of voter cynicism. Morris suggested that politicians must be willing to explain their actions and "to say 'I don't know' a bit more, to say 'it didn't quite go right' a bit more" (Ward, 2003). Morris called for a new relationship between politicians and the media to try to win back disillusioned voters. Politicians should be braver about using a ‘new vocabulary’ which would admit uncertainty or difficulty, she said, but indicated they would only do so if they felt the media would hold back from condemning them for weakness (Ward, 2003).

In contrast to the normal relationship between politicians and the media, the media performances of Pakistan’s political leader, Pervez Musharraf, has a style of communication that is very different. It is clear that the President is able to speak his

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1 It must be noted that Pakistan is not classified as a democracy but a dictatorship.
mind. For example, this is an excerpt of an interview of President Musharraf and a
surprised Jim Lehrer of PBS’s Newshour program in the USA:

JIM LEHRER: Earlier today here in Washington you said that you believe Wall Street
Journal reporter Daniel Pearl is alive. What was that based on?

PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF: Well, it was a guess. We, I can't be 100 percent
sure of it. But since we have closed on, honed on, on all those people involved in the
crime and it's only those who have kidnapped him who are left now, I thought that we
are closing in on him. Other than that, I don't, can't be very sure about the final state. So
it was just a guess.

JIM LEHRER: It was a guess. There is no evidence -- concrete evidence that the man is
still alive?

PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF: Well, no. I wouldn't say that.
(PBS, 2002).

Clearly, Musharraf was quite comfortable in telling the ‘truth’ (the fact that his belief
that the journalist was still alive was just a guess), as he saw it, about the status of the
kidnapped Wall Street Journal reporter. Clearly, President Musharraf did not appear to
have concerns in relation to any repercussions from the media and public about his
candid comments vis-à-vis the kidnapped reporter. This approach certainly avoids the
typical spin cycle inherent in most modern democracies and, therefore, it is suggested
that these statements hold more credibility and believability. This particular interview
also appeared to rattle the media presenter because there was nowhere to go; in terms of
further questioning as an attempt to try and catch the politician not being completely
honest and upfront.

1.2 Styles of Communicating

1.2.1 The new spin

The Australian political landscape has undergone upheaval in recent years, particularly,
with respect to the meteoric rise and subsequent fall of Pauline Hanson and the One
Nation Party. Hanson ran as an Independent Candidate in the 1996 Federal election,
winning the safe Labor seat of Oxley with the biggest swing of the election. Pauline
Hanson’s One Nation party was formed in 1997 and in the 1998 Queensland State election, the party attracted 23% percent of the vote and won 11 seats. This result “rocked the nation” and set the “political establishment on fire with panic” (Kingston, 1999, p. xvii). Some commentators suggested that Hanson’s party might secure enough Senate seats to gain the balance of power in the Federal Parliamentary Senate. At the time of the Queensland Election, Kingston (1999) described Hanson as “no longer the stumbling, gauche, ordinary woman at whom educated and politically aware Australians can afford to sneer … The themes resonating with her people are an anarchistic desire to punish the big parties for their sins, and an energy for political activism generated by the fact that Hanson is speaking their language and expressing their instincts” (1999, p. xvii).

Of course, there has been much valid criticism of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party; however, politics aside, Pauline Hanson’s communication style differed greatly from the mainstream political parties. Speaking about Hanson’s communications style, Glenn Milne, political editor for News Limited, suggested Hanson’s “strength was that there wasn’t spin…this was a message from her untutored heart” (SBS, 2004). Even though the One Nation Party’s political policy was rather defective, it is suggested that many in Australia seem to have felt Pauline Hanson’s style of communication had more authenticity about it and seemed more credible. Kingston, a journalist with The Sydney Morning Herald, described Hanson’s style of communication as “grammatically tortured and earthy” (1999, p. xvi) and “like she was having a chat over coffee with friends” (1999, p. 6). Kingston was stunned when Hanson would admit to the media that she wasn’t always sure about what she would be doing and where she would be going throughout her political campaigning (1999, p. 23). This exemplified Hanson’s spontaneity and lack of management of the media. Part of Hanson’s public appeal was
that she was not a professional politician but an ordinary person in the role of politician. This more authentic communication approach appears to have captivated an increasingly disenfranchised public, which was able to connect with the One Nation Party message.

Grattan clearly highlights the problem with the current political communication condition:

“The trouble is that the spin cycle can produce a circle of cynics. Cynical spin merchants, working for cynical politicians, give a line to cynical journalists. The public decide if all these players treat them with such disdain, they will return the compliment and become alienated from the political process. Why did the punter leap to Pauline Hanson’s defence when she was attacked by journalists…she was seen as somehow outside the ‘spin’ game, the amateur in the world of hard–bitten and cynical professionals” (1998, p. 87).

Audiences know how media stories are packaged and that knowledge of the process compromises the package’s credibility (Milburn, 1991). The same can be said not only of politicians but also of corporations that “only know how to talk in the soothing, humorless monotone of the mission statement, marketing brochure, and your-call-is-important-to-us busy signal. Same old tone, same old lies” (Levine, Locke, Weinberger, & Searls, 2001, p. xxi). If a connection with the public is to be achieved in the political process then the overuse of the ‘spin’ strategy in order to get a message across will need to change. Pauline Hanson did not use a ‘high’ spin style of communication like most politicians and because of that, it is suggested, the public considered her communication to be more credible and her messages appeared to be more persuasive.

The mass communication of messages via the media is a crucial part of the political process. Therefore, Australian political figures may benefit from a different communication approach in a climate where worn-out political rhetoric is no longer
believable. As Ward (Ward, 2002, p. 32) contends, “there is a climate of cynicism about politics that prevails in the wider Australian community”. It is argued that, to the more media savvy public, political ‘spin’ now holds very little credibility. In place of the political spin strategy a new style of communicating a message to the public will have to be developed in order for politicians to be able to connect with the public. It is contended that the political use of a communication style with a greater degree of ‘authenticity’ will produce messages with more credibility and persuasiveness to an increasingly sceptical audience.

1.3 Perceptions of Authenticity

1.3.1 Defining authenticity

The historical interpretation of the term ‘authenticity’, as with many other social concepts, is fraught with discrepant definitions of meaning across various social scientific disciplines. Some of these definitions are relevant to this research’s use of the term ‘authenticity’ where others are not. The term authenticity being established here relates to Trilling’s sociological definition of sincerity; that, is “a congruence between one’s outward appearance and the underlying reality of self” (1972, p. 4). Therefore, the term authenticity refers to the perceived appearance that one’s real thoughts, feelings, and opinions are the same as those outwardly communicated. From a sociological perspective Erickson (1996) argues that authenticity is defined as a self-dialogue with comparisons between self-values and the representation of self as being consistent. Erickson (1996) describes ‘inauthenticity’ as not being true to oneself. He suggests society’s heightened search for the ‘real me’ and the ‘real you’ reflects the concern over the lack of authenticity in our culture.
These ideas about authenticity are found earlier in Goffman’s (1986) work detailing strategies used by people to manage personal information. Goffman details strategies used to control information in relation to people concealing a social stigma. For example, a person suffering from a stutter would employ a number of strategies to disguise or minimise speech blocks. The person would survey ahead for words that cause blocks in order to avoid them, hastily substituting them with other more pronounceable words (p.89). Goffman suggests a person is compromised and risks being discredited for the contingencies used to manage information about oneself in order to gain social acceptance and is referred to as the discreplicable person (1986, p. 91). These ideas are also applicable to the development, understanding, and definition of the term authenticity used here in relation to mass communication. The assumption is that if an individual self-discloses a personal failing in a matter-of-fact way, it shifts the emphasis off information management of the secret and places pressure on the receiver to be above concern. Goffman suggests by doing so the receiver will call on the tendency for “forget-and-forgiveness” associated with confessions (1986, p. 95).

### 1.3.2 Authenticity and information control

Interestingly, this kind of information management has recently been introduced in a major US hospital in order to reduce medical negligence payments. The Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Lexington is affiliated with the University of Kentucky College of Medicine and provides care to around 18,000 veterans. It has a policy of proactive full disclosure to patients who have incurred injury due to medical accidents or negligence and compensation is paid whether or not the patient is aware of any mistakes at the time (Kraman & Hamm, 1999). The policy includes an early injury review, full proactive disclosure, and the steadfast maintenance of the relationship.
between the hospital and the patient. It has been found that this policy actually reduces their liability payment to a moderate level.

In a study conducted by Hickson, Clayton, Githens, and Sloan (1992) it was found that 43 percent of patients were motivated to sue because they suspected a cover-up. Almost all respondents wanted their doctors to acknowledge even minor errors and failure to do so would result in them filing a lawsuit. Other motivations included the break down in doctor-patient and hospital-patient relationships as causes to file lawsuits. Doctors rarely accept responsibility for medical mistakes in an effort in avoid litigation and distance themselves by using denial, blaming others, and becoming unavailable (Witman, Park, & Hardin, 1996). However, this type of poor communication and relationship management actually leads to an increase in the patient’s intention to sue. In fact, the risk of litigation nearly doubled in certain incidences where the patient was not informed (Witman et al., 1996). Clearly, people develop negative attitudes towards communication that appears not to be open or upfront and deliberately withholds information.

The Australian State Premier from Queensland, Peter Beattie, has built much of his reputation around the idea of being completely upfront when communicating with the public, where anything less would be an admission of guilt. Beatty is on record as believing that the best way forward is the “truth and a bit of honesty, nothing more nothing less. All I am saying is tell the truth and if you make a mistake you fess up to it. None of us are perfect, I make mistakes, if I do I try and own up to it and I try and get it right…” (Beattie lashes out at opposition tactics, 2002). Beattie relies on the use of ‘disclosure etiquette’, a formula whereby the individual admits their own failing in a matter of fact way, supporting the assumption that those present are above such
concerns while preventing them from trapping themselves into showing that they are not (Goffman, 1996). It is interesting to note that Premier Beattie recently won the 2004 Queensland State election even after it was revealed sections of his government were involved with election fraud in the previous election. Premier Beattie was re-elected after he had publicly exposed the situation and vowed he would pursue all those involved and ensure that safeguards are put in place in order that it could not happen again.

1.3.3 Authenticity and television

The suggestion that audiences are seeking to experience more authenticity in the representations being presented in the media is illustrated by the dramatic rise in the popularity of ‘reality’ television programs (Bruzzi, 2000; Hill, 2000; Roscoe, 2001) such as *Big Brother, Survivor, The Bachelor*, and *Australian Idol* to name a few. Roscoe (2001) describes how reality television audiences are placed in a viewing position central to the performance with both audience and performers acknowledging each other’s gaze. Within this two-way process the “audiences play the game of evaluating how well participants perform their role” (Roscoe, 2001, p. 4). This new positioning of the audience mimics everyday life interaction in that it gives the appearance of an unscripted constructed process. The fact that there is not a set script, as such, means that the conversational style between the performers also resembles everyday conversations. This helps to generate the perception of ‘authenticity’. “These moments of so called authenticity, moments when we think we see the real person, take on key importance in these new factual hybrids” (Lury, 1995, p. 126).

These media representations in reality television programmes resemble interactions in everyday life and as such provide the audiences with a sense of authenticity. As Lury
points out, such mediated displays of authenticity are “the prize in the audience game of
performance, thus presenting us with a satisfying experience” (1995, p. 126). Roscoe
(2001) observes that reality television audiences evaluate the participants in their roles
and hope they will be rewarded with ‘flickers of authenticity’. The flicker of
authenticity is a sense of the everyday life due to its un-constructed and unscripted
nature embodied by moments when the performance breaks and the person can be seen
in relation to a real emotion, action, or experience.

1.3.4 Authenticity and image
It is argued that displays of authenticity serve an important role in public
communication in order to communicate through the media in a way that delivers a
more credible and persuasive message. Forstorp makes reference to the role of
authenticity in relation to what he terms ‘audienticity’, which refers to “communication
strategies through which an ‘authentic’ relationship with the audience can be
established” (1997, p. 71). Forstorp refers to the way a particular media audience is
made to feel ‘authentic’ themselves or are able to actually be ‘themselves’ and “feel as
if they are invited, involved and participating” within a mass media context (1997, p.
72). It is suggested that politics is taking place too far away from the public, therefore, if
a politician brings the bureaucratic system into the domain of everyday life and
practices the audience will not feel as manipulated and exploited. Forstorp describes the
rule of media ‘authenticity’ as tending towards the ‘state of the ordinary’\(^2\), being
‘yourself’ as a representative; “a politician who claims to be not a ‘politician’ but
simply ‘him or herself’ as a politician” (Forstorp, 1997, p. 69).

\(^2\) Forstorp’s use of the state of the ‘ordinary’ concept does not refer to the everyday intricacies
problematised, for example, by Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1984). It refers to a politician’s or public
figure’s style of dress, language, speech, not being adversarial, but being humble, listening,
compromising, truthful and admitting when you are wrong.
Forstorp documents the impact of a young urban mother of four on the Swedish political scene. Mona Sahlin transformed politics into something more relevant to the public by using the language of everyday life. Forstorp suggests “the concreteness of her feelings is hard to resist and she comes through as a very authentic person…Mona Sahlin has this way of speaking of others in an informal way as if they were members of a family” (1997, p. 74). Her success as a politician and in handling the media was due to her role as an ordinary and honest everyday person. This role of everyday ordinariness extended to language used, image portrayed, casual hairstyle and clothes. Sahlin presents as colourful and lively with bright lipstick, red hair and a warm smile. She speaks with a lively pitch and has a strong urban accent. This is in contrast to typical politicians in Sweden who wear dark suits, conservative ties, have a perpetual strained look on their face, and speak with an angry tone of voice.

Mona Sahlin’s success saw her become a candidate for the highest public office, the Prime Minister of Sweden. Forstorp argues that Sahlin’s success was not only due to the specific ideas and values she advocated but her skill in the use of ‘authenticity’ in political communication; her ability to project herself as a ‘real’ person. Whether real or rhetorical, Sahlin’s everyday ordinary persona appealed to a public who had become disillusioned with politicians.

Another example of image taking preference over substance was when President Clinton clearly misled the American public over his affair with Monica Lewinsky. However, in the end, Clinton did publicly confess to having an inappropriate relationship with Ms. Lewinsky. This did not negatively affect his public popularity; in fact, Clinton generated his highest approval rating in opinion polls after confessing he had cheated on his wife and lied to the senate and the public. It could be argued that
people perceived Clinton as being more ‘authentic’ and this was related to the public trust placed in him to be a representative leader of the American people. This is an interesting development with respect to the elevation of the importance of image and the amount of spin washing through the mass media at every turn, in an attempt to control image and meaning.

The use of information control behaviours associated with spin has produced political stereotypes, which society has grown to distrust and reject as ‘inauthentic’. However, due to this increase in societal distrust in the media images of politicians, it will be argued that there has been a marked shift back to a search for substance in the appearance of authenticity. It could be argued that the public knows that what is often presented as reality and truth is simply a highly polished representation. Moreover, when a situation arises such as Clinton’s affair being made public and then Clinton having to publicly respond, a chink in the armour of public image surfaces and audiences are treated to a more authentic version of a public figure. It is suggested that this chink in the armour of highly polished spin is almost received with a sigh of relief from the public because they feel they have obtained ‘flickers of authenticity’ amongst all the whitewash.

1.4 Summary

Many communication professionals have a vital role in devising political and corporate strategy because damage to reputation is a major risk that needs to be managed. Publicly communicating the wrong message could destroy public confidence in a politician or rattle a company’s share price. Currently, many of the leading political and corporate communication advisors and directors believe it is important to be upfront with the public and honest with the media. They hold the view that “Australians are very
forgiving if you tell them the truth” (Ham, 2003, p. B01). Ian Kortlang, one of
Australia’s foremost communications advisors, believes that the spin strategy does not
work because Australians have very finely tuned ‘bullshit’ detectors (Ham, 2003).

Kortlang maintains that “the best defence is often the truth” and even suggests that if
Nixon had been upfront and confessed, the American people would have forgiven him

It is argued that the system in place that facilitates political communication is not
fulfilling its purpose; the public do not trust or believe politicians’ accounts on matters
of national importance. The antithesis of authenticity or ‘inauthenticity’ is described by
Berman as “the determination of men to hide themselves not merely from others, but
from themselves” (1970, p. 60). It is not difficult to relate this description of
inauthenticity to many politicians, who seem to be able to hide the ‘truth’ of an issue
when making public statements, even from themselves. The structured forms of public
communication seem so removed from many people that it has lost all credibility and
believability. The structure of the mass media formats in relation to public
communication, with its copious amounts of hyperbole, highly polished segments, and
emphasis on the dramatic, has become like a continuous rerun of an old movie. The
audience knows exactly whom the goodies and the baddies are and what the actors are
going to say next. It is argued that this is leading the public to become alienated from
the political process.

The following section will outline previous studies that provide the theoretical basis and
effects of source credibility and trustworthiness as well as message persuasiveness. This
review of the literature will also provide the relevant factors for experimental design in
persuasion research. This information will be incorporated into the proposed quantitative testing of low and high-spin messages.

1.5 Review of Persuasion Studies

1.5.1 Introduction

It has been suggested that the high-spin style of communication, typified by specific information control behaviours, has created an untrustworthy stereotype that society has come to expect from politicians. The effect of authenticity in communication delivery on the persuasive outcome of a message finds support in experimental persuasion research. Current persuasion research findings have demonstrated that source credibility and liking, as well as receiver expectations, are important elements that affect the persuasive outcome of a message (O'Keefe, 2002). It is proposed that the effect of a more authentic communication style, produced by a low-spin style of message delivery, increases the receiver’s perceived credibility of the communicator. It is argued that this low-spin style of communication will deliver a more persuasive message due to the receiver’s perceived increase in source trustworthiness and overall credibility. Likewise, a high-spin style of political communication negatively affects the credibility of the communicator. The following discussion will review relevant persuasion research findings in relation to the use of low and high-spin communications, and the effect in terms of the persuasive outcome of political messages.

1.6 Credibility and Influence

1.6.1 Elaboration likelihood model

The ‘elaboration likelihood model’ (ELM) of persuasion posits that the persuasiveness of a message is related to the likelihood that a receiver will elaborate on, or think about, information concerning the topic of the message. According to ELM there are two
processes by which persuasion occurs, depending on the degree of elaboration. These involve systematic thinking and cognitive short cuts (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1999). An alternative dual process approach to information processing in relation to persuasion is the Chaiken & Trope (1999) ‘heuristic-systematic model’ (HSM). Both ELM and HSM share the same notion that persuasion can occur via the central or peripheral routes, which varies depending on the amount of elaboration. It is said that the central route to persuasion is activated when there is more scrutiny of the message’s arguments and other issue-relevant considerations of the topic. The peripheral route is activated where there is less scrutiny of the message arguments and more consideration of a heuristic principal such as the credibility of the message source. These peripheral cues act as guides to the receiver rather than issue-relevant thinking. Therefore, as elaboration decreases peripheral cues have a greater impact on the persuasive effect and when elaboration increases argument-strength tends to have a greater impact than peripheral cues.

However, the ELM theory of persuasion suggests “at intermediate levels of elaboration, one should expect correspondingly complex possible combinations of central route and peripheral route processes” (O'Keefe, 2002, p. 151). According to ELM credibility is able to operate as a peripheral cue, such as high credibility sources can be trusted, or could serve as an influence on elaboration motivation, whereby receivers may be more motivated to process a message from a high credibility source, (Petty & Wegener, 1999, pp. 59-60). More specifically, this suggests that as elaboration increases credibility might have less impact as a peripheral cue but could affect persuasion in relation to higher elaboration by increasing receiver motivation to pay more attention to the message. Moreover, it is also argued that these “central and peripheral processes will
co-occur and jointly influence judgements” (Petty, Kasmer, Haugetvedt, & Cacioppo, 1987).

1.6.2 Source credibility

It has been well documented that, all else being equal, the persuasive influence of a message is generally greater for a high credibility communicator over a communicator that is perceived as less credible. However, this is not always the case - there are some exceptions in which a low credibility source has been more effective in persuasive influence than a high credibility source. For reviews of source credibility effects see (Bock & Saine, 1975; Chebat, Filiatrault, Laroche, & Watson, 1988; Dholakia, 1987; Harmon & Coney, 1982; McGinnies, 1973; McGinnies & Ward, 1980; O'Keefe, 2002; Pompitakpan, 2004). Research into source credibility also suggested that as personal relevance of the topic increases the impact of source credibility on the persuasive outcome decreases (Johnson & Scileppi, 1969; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981; Rhine & Severance, 1970). ELM suggests that the lower the elaboration likelihood the greater the impact of credibility cues. Moreover, variations in the salience of credibility cues tend to correspond to credibility’s effect on persuasion (Andreoli & Worchel, 1978; Worchel, Andreoli, & Eason, 1975). Certainly, research has overwhelmingly demonstrated the importance of perceived source credibility on the persuasive outcome of a message.

1.6.3 Factors affecting credibility

In terms of the dimensions contributing to overall source credibility it has been established that ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘expertise’ or ‘competence’ are useful terms, which have commonly emerged in persuasion research (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; O'Keefe, 2002). Trustworthiness has conceptual similarities with authenticity of
delivery because authenticity is concerned with source motivation and source bias (reporting bias). Authenticity judgements may be made not just in relation to the arguments a source makes about a specific subject but in terms of the overall integrity of the source to report impartially on all subjects. It is made in reference to the communication style of the source and the cues a receiver derives from the information control behaviours used in the message delivery. The argument here is that ‘authenticity’ affects source attributes such as trustworthiness. If a trustworthy source appeared to be withholding or hiding information in the delivery of a message this would affect the receiver’s perception of source trustworthiness. If a source high in expertise delivered a message in which the source appeared to not know the subject then would this impact on perceptions of expertise.

1.7 Measuring Effects

The following studies outline the method, materials, participants, findings, and limitations that are relevant to the planned research of low and high-spin messages.

1.7.1 McGinnies & Ward (1980)

However, as suggested by McGinnies & Ward (1980) communicators can convey a mixed impression in terms of their level of expertise and trustworthiness. They can be seen as lacking in expertise but be viewed as trustworthy and visa versa. A study conducted by McGinnies & Ward (1980) examined the role of increased and decreased source trustworthiness and its effect on the persuasive outcome of a message. The study was conducted in four countries - the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan. The sample was drawn from universities with a total of 1055 participants taking part. Two thirds of the sample was female and all the students were psychology undergraduates.
Participants were told the study was about how students reacted to issues of international affairs. Participants were given a booklet and were asked to go through each page without skipping any pages. There was a one-page background brief on the author of the message followed by a four-page argument that was identical for all participants. The one-sided argument was entitled ‘The Case for Extending Territorial Boundaries Further Out into the Sea’. The message took the position that the traditional three-mile maritime limit was inadequate in the world and spoke specifically about the plight of Gambia. The argument described how other countries had extended their boundaries by as much as 200 miles and was advocating an extension to 25 miles for Gambia.

The expertise and trustworthiness of the author were manipulated by a description that preceded the message. The first independent variable was expertise of the communication source. The expert source was described as an authority on international law and had been a representative at an international conference on maritime limits. The non-expert source was described as a journalist who primarily wrote on the subject of arts and theatre but his article on maritime limits had recently appeared in the newspaper. These two descriptions were coupled with the second independent variable, the trustworthiness of the communication source.

The trustworthy source was described as being viewed by his colleagues as honest sincere and trustworthy. It was said that he had developed an interested in Gambia’s maritime issue after a personal holiday to the country. The non-trustworthy source was given a description that implied sympathy towards the Nazi party with a reputation among journalists as being devious, calculating and inclined to place personal gain above public welfare. His interest in Gambia developed after working there as a public
relations spokesman. Each expertise condition was paired with each of the trustworthiness conditions. In the control condition, participants read the same argument as in the other conditions but were not given any background information about the author of the article.

Participants’ opinions on the issue were assessed by five questions (for example, “how necessary is it for Gambia to extend her territorial sea further than three miles?” and “how many miles at sea do you think Gambia should be allowed to claim as falling within her territorial waters?”). Participants used a five-point rating-scale format to answer the questions. Responses were summed to provide a composite score with a lower score representing the least favourable attitude toward extension of Gambia’s boundary and higher scores representing the most favourable.

There was a significant main effect for trustworthiness on the attitude scores in relation to the unilateral extension of Gambia’s maritime boundaries. The high trust condition resulted in more favourable attitudes towards the extension of Gambia’s maritime boundaries. However, a main effect for expertise was not found, nor was there an interaction between expertise and trustworthiness. There was a significant effect between countries, with Japan producing the most favourable attitude, followed by New Zealand, Australia, and the United States respectively. A main effect for trustworthiness was found in the between-country analysis for each country apart from New Zealand. However, no effect was found for expertise in the between-country analysis.

One of the main implications of the study was that the trustworthiness of the source was more important than expertise in terms of the persuasive outcome or, more specifically, producing the most favourable attitude towards extension of Gambia’s maritime
boundaries. The condition for persuasion was more favourable in both the United States and New Zealand samples where the source was described as both expert and trustworthy. However, in Australia and Japan the trustworthy source was more persuasive whether it was paired with expertise or not. This finding tends to support the idea that trustworthiness is an important component to credibility and can directly affect the persuasiveness of a communicator.

This finding is in contrast to McGuire’s (1968) conclusion that the trustworthiness component’s effect on persuasiveness was almost at the “vanishing point” (p.185). In fact, in this study the expertise component did not have as much effect as trustworthiness on the persuasiveness of the communicator. However, the results are in line with Mills and Harvey’s (1972) finding that although expertise provides credibility to a communicator, trustworthiness may be more important in some circumstances.

One of the limitations of this study is that the manipulation of the background descriptions of the author was quite extreme. For example, in the trustworthy condition the source was described as being viewed by his contemporaries as honest, sincere, and trustworthy. In the non-trustworthy condition the source was described as being sympathetic towards the Nazi party and being devious, calculating and favouring personal gain over public welfare. Similar extreme description was given in the expertise condition. The extreme manipulations of both conditions and the fact that it was a single message design may have limitation on external validity.

1.7.2 Wiener & Mowen (1986)

In another study that manipulated source trustworthiness, Wiener & Mowen (1986) suggested that one of the problems with previous research into the components of
source credibility was that source expertise and trustworthiness had often been confounded. For example, source credibility effects would be measured by extreme manipulations of the source such as a US President verses a Nazi leader. They argued in these blatant manipulations expertise, likeability, and attractiveness variables were manipulated simultaneously and that it was difficult to determine their independent effects on the persuasive outcome.

Wiener and Mowen (1986) conducted a study that manipulated source trustworthiness and expertise independently of source attractiveness and measured the effect on the persuasiveness of messages. Their results suggested that source trustworthiness is an important source component along with source expertise within the dimensions of credibility. They argued that a communicator perceived to have biased reasons for making a persuasive argument would be discounted by receivers and that this impacts on the persuasiveness of the message.

The study consisted of a pre-test with a sample of 40 participants and main-test with a sample of 70 participants being drawn from a student population. Participants in both tests were presented with the same scenario of purchasing a used car. The participants were asked to determining the mechanical quality and value of the vehicle based on a mechanics inspection report. The mechanic’s trustworthiness and expertise was manipulated by varying his background information. For example, in the low trustworthiness condition the background information described the mechanic as a part owner of the dealership where the car was to be purchased. In the high trustworthiness condition the mechanic had no association to the dealership. Therefore, this study linked trustworthiness with inherent self-interest. Source expertise was manipulated by altering the mechanic’s training, experience, and certification. It should be noted that explicit
description of the mechanic as being honest or dishonest were not used. Participants used a seven-point semantic differential scale to answer the questions on their perceived mechanical quality and value of the vehicle.

The manipulation of trust and expertise was pre-tested independently and was found to be successful. The pre-test demonstrated that perceived trustworthiness of the mechanic was influenced by the inherent self-interest of being a part owner of the car dealership. Tests were also conducted to determine if any halo and attractiveness effects were associated with the manipulation of trust or expertise. It was found that the manipulation did not influence the level of attractiveness. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions (2 trustworthiness by 3 expertise conditions). In all conditions a common scenario and biography were used. Participants then indicated their level of agreement with the mechanic’s assessment and evaluated the source.

The seven-point scale questions used to measure persuasion in relation to the quality and value of the car were excellent mechanical quality vs. not excellent mechanical quality and worth a lot more vs. not worth a lot more. In relation to mechanical quality, significant main effects occurred for both source trustworthiness and expertise. It was also found that car value was significantly different across levels of source trustworthiness but differences were not found for expertise. Wiener and Mowen (1986) contend that the results confirm source trustworthiness as an important factor influencing the persuasive outcome of messages. The findings from this study tend to support the suggestion by Sternthal, Phillips, and Dholakia (1978) that the receiver will discount a source perceived to have other motivations for making a persuasive argument. The important point here is that the discounting of source trustworthiness impacts on the persuasiveness of the argument.
However, a limitation of this study is that participants were asked to evaluate the quality and value of a car based on a common scenario. Manipulation of the components of credibility was achieved by simply using written background information to provide the source with a motivation to provide biased information (the mechanic being an owner of the dealership where the car was to be purchased). Therefore, it is possible that due to the contrived nature of the experiment the manipulation was obvious and may have induced the acquiescence response set from participants.

1.7.3 Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy (1965)
An early study conducted by Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy (1965) tested the general notion in social psychology that receivers are more persuaded by a message in which the source is high in credibility (Aronson, Turner, & Carlsmith, 1963; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953). Traditionally source credibility relates to the audience perception of communicator attributes relevant to the communicated topic such as trust and expertise. However, Zimbardo et al. (1965) contended that source traits not specifically related to the communicated topic, such as demeanour, could also influence attitude change in relation to the topic. They argued that these types of communicator characteristics, that are irrelevant to the topic, have been used to influence in everyday situations. For example, politicians create a particular image by packaging a collection of these traits, irrelevant to the topic, in order to influence voter attitudes.

The study set out to test the effect of positive and negative trait characteristics, in a communicator, and the influence on attitudes towards eating a highly disliked food such as fried grasshoppers after being induced by the communicator to eat them. It was
explained to the reservist participants that the experiment was to test the needs of a new mobile army and survival foods. The college sample was told that the experiment was to test the physiological and intellectual reaction to food deprivation and eating behaviour. It must be noted that the army reserve participants did not take part voluntarily but it was made clear that the request to eat grasshoppers was voluntary. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions within their respective groups.

Participants’ perceptions of positive and negative communicator traits were pre-tested and their attitudes towards eating grasshoppers and other dislikeable foods were noted both before and after testing. There were 243 participants that took part, 68 of which were used as the control. Participants were made up of students from the University College of New York as part of course requirement and army reservists from the nearby army reserve base. Participants from both groups were of similar education with the reservists being just a few years older.

The study manipulated communicator trait characteristics from positive to negative. In the positive condition the confederate communicator had a polite manner when dealing with an assistant, addressing the assistant by first name. The positive communicator was calm when responding to a mistake made by the assistant and was generally considerate and pleasant. In the negative condition the confederate communicator was quite formal with the assistant and addressed the assistant by last name and was generally annoyed and irritated. When the assistant made a mistake the communicator got verbally abusive and told the assistant to get with it and to hurry up in front of the participants. The communicator then apologised to the participants for the interruption before continuing in the same tone of voice before reprimanding the assistant. It was also important that the manipulations in both conditions did not affect the credibility of the communicators.
in relation to being conscientious, capable, and organised or generate hostility in participants.

Results indicated that participants perceived the positive communicator as having significantly more positive traits and less negative traits than the negative communicator across both participant groups. The communicator traits related to being conscientious, capable, organised, and not generating hostility in participants were not significantly different across the positive and negative conditions. Approximately 50 per cent of participants accepted the inducement to eat the grasshopper in both college and reservist sample; therefore, the experimental condition did not effect whether participants ate the grasshoppers.

Those who ate the grasshoppers under the positive communicator did not change their attitudes towards how they felt about eating grasshoppers, but they did tend to justify their eating in terms of irrelevant personal communicator traits. In other words, irrelevant to the topic, trait characteristics impact on the receiver’s acceptance of persuasive communication. Those who ate the grasshoppers under the negative communicator did not develop more favourable attitudes towards the communicator but, after eating, did change their attitudes towards how they felt about eating grasshoppers – they were less negative.

These results differ from a similar experiment by Smith (1961) where the positive communicator was able to persuade 90 per cent of participants to eat fried grasshoppers but their attitudes towards eating the grasshoppers did not change. The negative communicator only persuaded 50 per cent of participants to eat grasshoppers, with participants who did eat the grasshoppers becoming more positive. However, as was
pointed out by Zimbardo et al. (1965), there were issues with the experiment in relation to social contagion effects in that participants may have been exposed to social pressures to conform in the direction of eating. Although participants in both positive and negative conditions would have been exposed to the same potential social pressures they were an uncontrolled source of pressure between the conditions.

In relation to the Zimbardo et al. (1965) experiment, there is some question as to how much pressure there was on participants between conditions in terms of the frequency of those who decided to eat the grasshoppers. Certainly the volatility and display of intimidation by the communicator in the negative condition in relation to his treatment of the assistant may have contributed additional coercion on participants to conform to eating the grasshoppers place in front of them. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether a negative communicator would achieve the same ratio of participants eating a distasteful food in a non-pressurised condition as compared to a positive communicator.

1.8 Causal Attribution and Expectancy Disconfirmation

1.8.1 Kelley (1973)

Drawn from Kelley’s (1973) causal attribution work, attribution analysis of persuasion theory (AAP) predicts that people make inferences about the accuracy of a communicator based on whether the communicator either confirms or disconfirms the receiver’s expectancy about the message position being taken by the communicator. For instance, a politician may have the knowledge to be accurate on a particular subject but in order to gain votes presents an inaccurate position because it is supported by an audience. The expected position taken is the one that would gain the politician the most votes. Therefore, because the message confirms expectancies the receiver cannot be sure that the politician is being honest. When this occurs the receiver must then further
scrutinise the message in order to determine its validity. However, if the politician took a position that disconfirmed the receiver position (a position seemingly not taken in order to gain votes) the receiver would infer that the politician was being honest and the message was accurate. The receiver would not need to scrutinise the message in order to determine the validity of the message. The AAP theory predicts that expectancy disconfirmation leads to greater persuasion as compared to expectancy confirmation and is supported by various studies including Eagly & Chaiken (1975); Eagly, Wood, Chaiken (1978); Petty, Fleming, Priester, & Feinstein (2001); Priester & Petty (1995); and Wood & Eagly (1981).

1.8.2 Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken (1978)

Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken’s (1978) study on causal inferences of communicators and the effect on opinion change suggests that messages are more persuasive under expectancy disconfirmation conditions. Eagly et al. stated that causal inferences made by receivers implied that “communicator’s biased knowledge and unwillingness to report their genuine positions did affect their stated positions” (1978, p. 424). They argue that receivers infer a knowledge and or reporting bias in communicators (based on background or personality traits and the audience being addressed) and that these biases will affect the information disclosed and the position advocated by communicator. When these expectancies are confirmed receiver perception of the message validity is decreased. The receiver believes the message position advocated by the communicator is based on the communicator’s subjective access to relevant information and or the communicator’s expressed position is incongruent with their true attitudes and beliefs. However, if the communicator’s position disconfirms the receiver’s knowledge or reporting bias expectations this will lead the receiver to believe that the reality was compelling enough to override any personal or situational pressure on the
communicator’s stated position. The communicator’s stated position is perceived to be more representative of external reality and trustworthy; therefore the persuasiveness of the message is increased.

It must be noted that Eagly et al.’s (1978) knowledge bias does not refer to expertise as described by Hovland, Janis, & Kelley (1953); McGinnies and Ward (1980); Wiener and Mowen (1986); O’Keefe (2002). This is “because knowing that a communicator is expert (or inexpert) does not ordinarily lead observers to form an expectancy concerning what position the communicator will advocate” (Eagly et al., 1978, p. 426). Eagly et al.’s (1978) knowledge as well as reporting bias more closely relates to source trustworthiness associated with overall source credibility. Knowledge bias specifically refers to a receiver’s inference that the source knowledge is not representative of external reality. The information provided by a communicator about a particular issue may be biased and unrepresentative due to current attitudes and beliefs. Reporting bias specifically refers to the receiver’s perception about the willingness of the source to accurately report information in relation to the topic.

For example, a knowledge bias may be inferred about a conservative politician having negative attitudes relating to a proposal to increase labour unions’ powers in industrial relations disputes. The receiver might expect that the conservative politician’s knowledge will be influenced by internal or external factors such as biased attitudes and beliefs and having only subjective access to the relevant information concerning the matter. These knowledge inferences generate an expectancy about the position which will be taken by the communicator. In short, Eagly and colleagues’ definition of knowledge bias relates to the communicator’s breadth and balance of knowledge concerning the topic and reporting bias relating to the communicator’s willingness to
accurately report that information in relation to the topic. Both knowledge and reporting biases are associated with the source trustworthiness aspect of overall source credibility.

Eagly et al. (1978) used a 2x3 between-subject design. In total there were seven experimental conditions consisting of: expectancy confirmed verses expectancy disconfirmed; by knowledge bias verses reporting bias; verses both knowledge and reporting bias; as well as a no-bias control group. The sample consisted of a total of 355 male and female psychology students from the University of Massachusetts who took part and gained course credit for participating. Of those, 214 participants took place as persuasion participants and 113 as expectancy participants. Participants were told the experiment was looking at opinion formation. They were asked to read background information and to give preliminary opinions on the issue, read a transcript on a meeting discussing the issue, then to give their final opinion and responses concerning the issue.

Each participant was given a booklet representing one of the experimental conditions, which contained all the experimental material. The booklets provided the background information about a fictitious company and a Pacific Northwest city and how the company’s waste disposal practices were polluting the local river. It was explained that the company was an important economic contributor to the city and also that a clean river was important to the area’s tourism industry and for the general environment. Two solutions to the issue were suggested; one was pro-business and the other pro-environment. The pro-business solution advocated a continuation of the company’s production while making gradual changes to the waste disposal methods. The pro-environment solution advocated an immediate stop to production in order to implement radical changes. Participants were then asked to provide their initial opinions on the subject.
The booklet subsequently provided information about a transcript concerning a meeting in which a political candidate was presenting his views on the issue regarding the company. All participants read that the candidate, a well-known local lawyer who was new to politics, was well liked in the community. The meeting was attended by influential citizens whose support would be needed in the election. Other details about both the candidate and the audience varied depending on the experimental conditions. After reading the information regarding the meeting transcript, that also contained a persuasive message from the candidate, persuasion participants then completed a questionnaire providing their opinions and other responses. The expectancy participants followed the same procedure but were not given the persuasive message from the candidate on the issue. Expectancy participants were asked to gauge how likely the candidate would advocate the pro-environment solution as well as other responses.

The transcript of the meeting described how the meeting chair introduced the candidate and invited him to give his views on the river pollution issue to the audience members. In each of the experimental conditions the candidate’s view on the issue was always the pro-environmental position. That is, the company should stop production immediately in order to make radical changes to its waste disposal methods. The chairperson and others attending the meeting asked questions to which the candidate supported his position with three arguments.

The independent variables were manipulated by altering the candidate’s background information and the specific political make up of the audience attending the meeting. Knowledge bias (only) expectancy was established by characterising the audience as a mix of people with varying opinions on the pollution issue while describing and
illustrating the candidate’s legal career as specialising in either environmental tourism or business labour interests. Reporting bias (only) expectancy was established by not providing any information about the candidate’s legal career while characterising the audience as being comprised of either people who were concerned with environmental and tourism issues or business and labour issues. A knowledge and reporting bias expectancy was established by providing specific information on both the candidate’s legal career and specific information on the position of the audience in relation to the pollution issue. The non-bias control was established by not providing background information on either the candidate’s legal career or on the position of the audience in regards to the pollution issue.

Participant expectancies were measured using a 15-point scale for ‘very likely’ to ‘very unlikely’ in relation to whether the candidate would advocate the pro-environment position. These expectancy participants responded to all other measures but not the final opinion or message comprehension questions. Manipulation checks were conducted with participants using a 15-point scale to answer two questions in relation to the candidate’s support for a pro-environment or pro-business position as well as the audience’s position on the issue. Opinions were measured by asking participants to indicated their opinion on the pollution issue using the 15-point scale in relation to the company ‘stopping production immediately and making radical changes’ and ‘continuing production and making gradual changes’ with ‘uncertain’ as the neutral point. Causal inferences were established by using the 15-point scale in relation to ‘extremely important’ and ‘extremely unimportant’ to indicate the influence of factors effecting the candidate advocated position.
The participants’ perception of the candidate (the communicator or source) was measured by rating the communicator on the 15-point bipolar evaluative scales. The nine item positive poles in the evaluation scale included: honest, sincere, non-opportunistic, non-manipulative, non-compliant, open-minded, un-biased, consistent, and likeable. Message comprehension in participants was measured by asking them to indicate the candidate’s position and the arguments used as well as rating the candidate using the opinion scales. Other measures included participants’ judgements about the candidate’s freedom of choice to attend the meeting and to express true opinions, and the overall importance of the environmental issue.

The main findings of the study establish that when the communicator’s stated position disconfirms the expectancies held by the participants the communicator was significantly more persuasive compared to when participant expectancies were confirmed. The finding of expectancy disconfirmation being more persuasive was consistent across knowledge bias, reporting bias, or both knowledge and reporting bias expectancy manipulations. Moreover, in order to determine if the persuasion effect could be explained by other mechanisms, the expectancy participants rated the communicator before the message delivery. It was found that the communicator was rated equally in each condition, which indicates that the persuasive effect was not due to other variables such as participants having greater agreement with a communicator that was more likeable.

The knowledge bias expectancy was produced by establishing commitments in the communicator’s background, which corresponded with a particular side of the pollution issue being discussed. The reporting bias expectancy was produced by establishing the audience’s background commitments, which corresponded with a particular side of the
pollution issue. It was found that participant expectancies were generated by their inferences about the likely position the communicator would hold, consistent with the background of the communicator or that of the audience. The ratings obtained on the importance of the communicator or audience background in influencing the communicators’ stated views were more strongly attributed when expectancies were confirmed than disconfirmed. Therefore, a rationalization of the communicator’s stated position, due to a knowledge bias, a reporting bias, or both, leads the audience to perceive that the message is invalid. When these perceptions or expectancies about the communicator’s position are disconfirmed the message is perceived to be more valid and the audience rationalises that the message must be an accurate rendering of external reality. In terms of the communicator’s perceived bias it was found that when the communicator disconfirmed a knowledge or reporting bias or both the communicator was judged as being less biased than when expectancies were confirmed. This paralleled the opinion change findings.

Moreover, in terms of the audience perceptions of communicator sincerity the communicator was rated considerably less sincere, more manipulative, and less free to express opinions when a reporting bias was confirmed than when disconfirmed. Conversely, when knowledge bias was confirmed compared to disconfirmed, an audience rating of the communicator sincerity was higher. Related to this sincerity finding was the audience perception of the communicator’s true opinion because a communicator that is rated insincere is being seen as not expressing their true opinion. These findings are compatible with attribution theory and research in that the less expected an act the stronger the receiver’s inference that the communicator’s true opinion is consistence with the act (Ajzen, 1971; Himmelfarb & Anderson, 1975; Jones & Davis, 1965; Lay, Burron, & Jackson, 1973).
The no-bias control group allowed the examination of whether expectancy confirmation decreased the persuasiveness of a message or expectancy disconfirmation increase the persuasiveness. While a strong conclusion could not be made, the message disconfirming audiences’ expectation was approaching significance in terms of increasing persuasion as compared with the no-bias control. The difference between the no-bias control and the message confirming audience’s expectancy did not approach significance.

The authors of this study noted that, although the study provided strong evidence for opinion change effects in relation to attributed communicator biases, it did not incorporate a multiple message design or audience variables (such as a non-student population). This was due to the lengthy pre-testing necessary to satisfy the design requirements of the study before the appropriate expectancies were achieved. However, the clarity of the version tested, in relation to knowledge and reporting-bias expectancies, demonstrated clear opinion change effects.

The participants that took part in this study could closely resemble media consumers (television news audience, newspaper readers, or radio listeners) receiving information about a politician’s address to a group of people. However, it would be rare for message recipients to have full background knowledge about the makeup of the group in terms of their ideological belief or political background. Therefore, can the way in which a politician communicates influence the way an audience makes inferences about the trustworthiness of the politician without full knowledge of personal characteristics or the group being addressed? For instance, if a politician used a different style of communication than is generally expected from politicians such as a low-spin, up-front
approach will it induce the expectancy disconfirmation effect? Will that low-spin style of communication increase the persuasiveness of the message as compared to the same message delivered in a high-spin style of communication?

1.8.3 Priester & Petty (1995)

In a follow up to the Eagly et al. (1978) study concerning causal inferences, conducted by Priester & Petty (1995), source trustworthiness was manipulated using expectancy disconfirmation in order to determine how this impacted on message scrutiny. It was suggested that participants low in the need for cognition would not scrutinise an argument if the source were perceived to be trustworthy. It was hypothesised that a receiver of a message who has insufficient confidence in the trustworthiness of a source’s communication (attributed message accuracy) would undertake the cognitive work necessary to attain this confidence. As suggested by Eagly et al. (1978) in their attribution analysis of persuasion theory, individuals are likely not to undertake cognitive processing of a message if they believe the communicator is honest and the message is accurate. In other words, if a source’s message disconfirms audience expectancies, about the position the source will take, the source will be perceived as more honest and trustworthy. The expectancy disconfirming source will be more persuasive than a source that confirms the audience’s expectancies about the message position of a source because the expectancy disconfirming source demonstrates unbiased reporting.

However, Priester & Petty (1995) hypothesised that the confirming source would be equally or even more persuasive than the disconfirming source if the argument was sufficiently strong. In the case of an expectancy confirming source, participants would undertake the cognitive work necessary and scrutinise the message, which would lead to
increased message persuasiveness. This is consistent with the ELM and HSM model of persuasion which assumes that the amount of message processing is associated with accuracy motives of the source. It was contended that the more honest, expectancy disconfirming, source may not have a persuasion advantage over the message confirmation source when the message arguments were strong. The prediction was that the effects of expectancy confirmation / disconfirmation on message processing would be greatest in participants low in need for cognition. Participants low in need for cognition would be less likely to scrutinise the message argument if the source was perceived to be trustworthy (expectancy disconfirming source) and the message was perceived to be accurate. However, if the source could not be assumed to be accurate (expectancy confirming source) then message scrutiny would be undertaken and if the argument was sufficiently strong this would be more persuasive than the expectancy disconfirming source.

One of the goals of study three of the Priester & Petty (1995) research was to vary perceptions of communicator honesty less directly and avoid using contrived definitive background information about a communicator by using a confirmation / disconfirmation manipulation to imply source honesty to participants. It was suggested that this would allow for the results to provide more generalised implications. 84 psychology undergraduates took part in study three and were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: expectancy confirmed or disconfirmed and strong argument or weak argument. Participants were also classified as low or high in need for cognition using a Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984). It was explained to participants that the research was investigating the processes that individuals use to form impressions of others. Participants were asked to read about a social issue, an individual, and a group. They were to review a meeting transcript of the individual
giving an opinion on the issue to the group. They were then asked to give their impression of the individual and the group. A booklet was provided to participants that consisted of the required information on the issue, individual, group and the cover story as well as the response questionnaires. The background material was adapted from the Eagly et al. (1978) study.

A significant two-way interaction was found. Low ‘need for cognition’ participants in the expectancy confirmed condition were significantly different between the strong and weak argument conditions. There was no significant difference in the disconfirmed condition. High ‘need for cognition’ participants were not significantly different between confirmed / disconfirmed conditions, although there was a significant difference between the strong and weak argument conditions. These results indicate that attitudes of individuals low in need for cognition were based more on argument strength when expectancies are confirmed than when they are disconfirmed. As the source increased in perceived honesty less message evaluation was undertaken, particularly with those individuals low in need for cognition.

Priester & Petty (1995) argued that the results are consistent with the ELM and HSM models of persuasion; that is, perceptions of source honesty influence the extent of message scrutiny. Moreover, it was primarily for the low need for cognition individuals’ that message processing was influenced by perceptions of source trustworthiness as compared with those high in need for cognition. It was suggested that results also support the AAP theory but with two qualifications. Firstly, that expectancy disconfirmation, as opposed to confirmation, influences perceptions of source honesty and produces less message scrutiny, especially for individuals who do not have a high need for cognition or thinking. Secondly, expectancy disconfirmation, as opposed to
confirmation, does not necessarily result in greater message persuasiveness but is most likely in individuals who do not have a high need for cognition that are presented with weak or only moderately strong arguments. The enhanced message scrutiny provoked by an expectancy-confirming source can lead to as much persuasiveness as the expectancy-disconfirming source when the argument is at least moderately strong, due to increased message scrutiny.

However, the researchers believe that it is not simply the expectancy disconfirmation that reduces message scrutiny but the inference that the source is trustworthy with regards to the accuracy of the message. It must be noted that the researchers acknowledged that the untrustworthiness manipulation was rated above the mid-point of the trustworthiness scale. Had participants been presented with a source rated as untrustworthy it is possible that participants would have forgone message scrutiny in the message confirming condition and, therefore, the message confirming source would not have been as persuasive.

Moreover, in relation to the argument strength manipulation, it is possible that this would impact on the participant’s perception of source credibility. The political candidate was described as being well-liked and a well-known lawyer in the community; therefore, for this person to use such poor arguments in an address to prominent community members, whose support was required in order to be elected, would have impacted on the participants’ perception of source credibility. In relation to expectancy disconfirmation, it is entirely possible that participants’ expectancy would have been disconfirmed in relation to the use of a weak argument by an intelligent lawyer in such an environment particularly given that part of a lawyer’s job is to deliver strong convincing arguments. In this case, one could only conclude that the source was
either not a very good lawyer or that the source would not be a very good politician, which would impact on the inferences an audience makes about the source’s credibility.

The third study in the research attempted to obtain a more naturalistic approach to the background story. This was achieved by using expectancy disconfirmation / confirmation to generate the perceived source trustworthiness manipulation as compared to directly stating that the source was considered trustworthy. The trustworthiness manipulation check demonstrated that participants clearly detected the connotation concerning the trustworthiness of the source. However, the inferences made about the source were obvious and what would have been surprising was if participants did not perceive those trustworthiness connotations.

Furthermore, it would be fair to say that participants could have found the background story and scenario obviously contrived (particularly given that it was developed and used in Eagly et al.’s 1978 study) and, therefore, this may have produced unusual results. As was stated by the researchers, evidence from several other studies showed that expectancy disconfirmation is associated with increased information processing than expectancy confirmation (Enzle & Schopflocher, 1978; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1981; Wong & Weiner, 1981). What is interesting is whether the same results would be found when the issues being discussed are less contrived and more relevant to the audience.

However, the findings do clearly demonstrate that source trustworthiness has an impact on the persuasiveness of messages and that source trustworthiness can be determined by message characteristics or content alone. When a source disconfirms an audience’s expectation of the position a communicator takes it will increases the audience’s
perceived trustworthiness of the source. In other words, when a source’s message and argument appears to support a position that is in contrast to their previously expected standpoint it gives the impression of message accuracy. This will increase the audience’s perceptions of the source’s trustworthiness.

1.9 Message Features

1.9.1 Equivocation effects

Edwards & Bello (2001) conducted a study into the influence of equivocation on an audience’s interpretations of messages. The term equivocation is made in relation to communication that is vague and ambiguous, where the meaning of the message is uncertain. The use of equivocation involves indirectly answering a question in order to avoid directly lying or providing full disclosure in response to a question. It is a way of providing a response to a question without answering it (Bavelas, Black, Chovil, & Mullett, 1990). For example, a politician may be asked if taxes will rise next year and rather than lying or telling the truth the politician might respond with an equivocal answer such as, the government is committed to keeping taxes as low as possible. The study found that equivocal responses were perceived to be more polite but less honest and less competent than unequivocal criticism. Moreover, the notion that an equivocal response portrays a more positive meaning than unequivocal criticism was not found.

Equivocation has been associated with protection of face, particularly, in relation to avoiding explicit disagreement. Brown & Levinson (1978) refer to the positive and negative face of self and other and the face-threatening acts that affect them. The study explored the face-threatening action of criticism, particularly in relation to equivocal messages that concern poor performance by the self. Politicians will often use equivocation in order to deflect criticism of themselves and of the party they represent.
and to avoid answering difficult questions. Bull, Elliott, Palmer & Walker (1996) have documented various ways in which questions in political interviews threaten a politician’s face and the sidestepping tactics used to save face. Bull et al. (1996) developed a typology of interview questions based on their various face-threatening properties, which is able to determine when an equivocation or non-reply response to a question is likely.

Of interest in Edwards & Bello’s (2001) study is the effect of criticism on the hearer’s face, which is often countered by highlighting relevant strengths and minimising weaknesses. Edwards & Bello (2001) argue equivocal responses in relation to the poor performance of others are considered polite and hypothesised that equivocal responses in terms of the poor performance of self can also be perceived as polite. It was suggested that direct criticism of the self could place the listener in an uncomfortable position because it often requires them to respond by disagreeing with the negative assessments expressed. Therefore, an equivocal response to criticism may protect self-face as well as other-face at the same time and be perceived as being polite.

However, observers of an interview or discussion may perceive the consistent use of equivocal responses in a negative way. Bello’s (1999) study into the use of equivocation found a preference in some cases for manner or clarity in language, as cited by Edwards & Bello (2001). It has been suggested, that observers may welcome the use of more direct and unequivocal language than the actors involved. This may be due to the observer not being faced with the same ego-involving concerns as those taking part in the interview or discussion.
Edwards & Bello’s (2001) study examines how communicators interpret the meaning, both connotative and denotative, of equivocal messages of others as well as how they perceive the intentions of individuals who use them. An individual equivocates in order to avoid a clear response. Using the previous example, the politician equivocated on the question of whether tax will rise in order to avoid answering the question. In relation to this equivocal message, what do the voters assume about the taxes when an equivocal response is given? Furthermore, what assumptions do observers make when an equivocal response is given in relation to the evaluation of a performance? Do they assume the answer is negative or positive, or is judgement reserved?

Other issues concerning the effect of equivocal language use are perception of honesty, politeness, and competency. As identified by Rokeach (1973) honesty is instrumentally valued by language users. The concept of equivocation, as defined by Edwards & Bello (2001), is “truthful but unclear communication designed largely to lessen the negative impact (upon self or other or both) of difficult or awkward messages” (p.601). Politeness is also identified by Rokeach (1973) as an instrumental language value. The degree that a message protects the face of the other will determine how polite the communicator is perceived to be (Baxter, 1984; Trees & Manusov, 1998; Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). Edwards & Bello (2001) also hypothesise that messages that primarily protect the face of the self could simultaneously protect the face of the other. Competency assessments are also made in relation to the extent a communicator achieves their goals while protecting the face of the other (Wiemann, 1977). Therefore, communicator competence is associated with politeness but also comprises the broader idea of goal attainment.
Bavelas, Black, Chovil, & Mullett (1990) suggest that the use of equivocal messages is a competent response to difficult situations in which the communicator does not want to tell the truth or tell a lie. However, it is argued that equivocal responses are in violation of commonly accepted conversational maxims (Grice, 1975, 1981), such as quality (be truthful) and manner (be clear and direct). An equivocal response is defined by the desire of the communicator to sidestep difficult questions or messages and is intended to be ambiguous. It is seen as communication that is not completely clear and not completely forthcoming. Therefore, as suggested by Edwards & Bello (2001), it is reasonable to assume that communicators consider an equivocal response to be competent, and polite, albeit dishonest.

The study compared equivocal with unequivocal responses and messages. The study comprised of 496 university students from a public speaking class, (257 males and 238 females, with 99 percent being between the ages of 18 to 25). Twenty-eight different versions of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to students during class. Participation was voluntary and anonymous and no extra credit was received. The questionnaire presented a scenario describing the situation in which a student in a public speaking class asks a fellow student about the quality of a speech that was given. The student being addressed responds with either an equivocal response or unequivocal criticism. Using Likert-scaled items, participants assessed their perception of the speech as well as the perceptions of honesty, politeness, and communicator competence of the student commenting on the quality of the speech. The material was adapted from work by Bavelas et al. (1990).

The research findings of interest were that equivocal communication was not perceived to be more competent compared with unequivocal communication. It is suggested that
perhaps clarity in communication is highly regarded in relation to competence.

Equivocal responses were also seen as less honest than unequivocal criticism, although they were viewed as more polite particularly when the response was made in relation to the poor performance of another person.

Moreover, a more positive meaning was not derived from equivocal responses compared to unequivocal criticism. It was expected that the vagueness of the equivocal response would allow the inference of a more positive meaning, however, this was not found to be the case. It appeared that participants understood equivocation is used to hide the truth and to avoid difficult questions, although the more negative meaning is clearly recognised. It was also apparent that observers are more positively oriented towards clear critical language. This has clear implication for the use of spin in relation to media consumers of political interviews or discussions.

It has been argued that equivocal responses from politicians are something that the public have come to expect and are part of the information control behaviours used by public figures, commonly referred to as spin. Edwards & Bello’s (2001) results on audience or observer’s perception of equivocation demonstrates that when equivocation is not used, that is when unequivocal language is used, observers perceive the communicator as more honest and competent. This could be explained in terms of expectancy disconfirmation theory as previously outlined. The communication source that does not use equivocal language is perceived as trustworthy; this in turn generates perceptions of a more credible source and therefore more persuasive communication.
1.9.2 Metaphor effects

There are also individual studies looking at competence and trustworthiness. They manipulated individual features such as speaking rate, fluencies of delivery, citation of evidence sources, position advocated, liking for the communicator, and humour. The conclusion is that the effects are small and may have inconsistent effects and effect sizes (O'Keefe, 2002). One study of particular interest was conducted by Sopory & Dillard (2002), who undertook a meta-analytic summary of research into the effects of metaphor use on the persuasiveness of messages. Previous research into the persuasive effect of metaphors had produced mixed results, therefore, this study was undertaken in order to integrate the existing literature. The research suggested that there was evidence that the use of metaphor was moderately more persuasive under certain conditions, but communicator credibility, in terms of competency and trustworthiness of the source, was not affected by metaphor use.

More specifically, the use of metaphor increases persuasion when the audience is familiar with the metaphor target, the metaphor is novel, is used at the beginning of the message, is single, and non-extended. The study hypothesised that metaphor use would have a positive effect on perceptions of credibility. However, results indicated that there was no evidence of enhanced perceptions of either communicator competence or character. The data did show a small relationship with the use of metaphor and dynamism. The research suggested that individuals do not judge communicators who use metaphors more favourably than those who use literal language. This indicates that the use of metaphors does not prompt a competence or character based source heuristic.
1.10 Conclusion

Some of the issues surrounding previous studies into source credibility, competence and trustworthiness are that the experiments are quite contrived with the use of simple background information in order to manipulate the conditions. However, in reality receivers of messages are not privileged to that kind of information. In fact, as pointed out by Weiner and Mowen (1986) communicators go to great lengths to hide these facts in order to present a more credible source. Public relations firms are employed for this very reason, that is, to hide or present a source as unbiased. Therefore, do audiences look for more subtle cues of source credibility in communicators such as the level of spin used in a message? Certainly, expectancy disconfirmation theory provides an interesting framework in which to explore the effect of communication style and, more specifically, the use of low-spin vs. high-spin communication.

It has been argued here that the public are extremely sceptical of messages and statements given by politician across the various media formats, which poses a serious threat to modern democratic societies. Public figures structure what they say into succinct messages, which form small highly refined segments in the news content. However, an increasingly media savvy or literate public now perceive this slick media ‘spin’ as being ‘inauthentic’ and the credibility of their message is called into question. The use of information control behaviours associated with spin produces political stereotypes, which society has grown to distrust and reject as ‘inauthentic’. Due to this increase in societal distrust in the media images of politicians there has been a marked shift back to a search for substance in the appearance of authenticity.

It has been suggested that the high-spin style of communication, typified by specific information control behaviours, has created this untrustworthy stereotype that society
has come to expect from politicians. Furthermore, the effects of a low-spin style of communication may increase the receiver’s perceived credibility of the communicator. This low-spin style of communication will deliver a more persuasive message due to the perceived increase in source trustworthiness and overall credibility. Likewise, a high-spin style of political communication negatively impacts on the credibility of the communicator. The following chapter will explore the use of spin, the information control behaviours and techniques, which are promoted and used within public communication. An interview study of communication professionals will be conducted in order to further identify these information control behaviours and techniques common to a high-spin style of message delivery. This information will contribute to the development of useful items to be included in a measurement scale design to determine the level of spin in political messages. This will be used to test the effects of spin on the persuasiveness of a message.
CHAPTER TWO
CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIN IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

It would be a wonderful thing for mankind if some philosophic Yankee would contrive some kind of ‘ometer’ that would measure the infusion of humbug in anything. A ‘Humbugometer’ he might call it. I would warrant him a good sale. (P.T. Barnum)

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear definition of the spin construct and describe the characteristics associated with the use of spin. This discussion will contribute to the identification and measurement of the amount of spin used in a given political message. This construct will then be operationalised and used to determine spin’s effect on receiver perceptions of source trustworthiness, credibility, and also message persuasiveness.

There has been much discussion of the use of spin in the media; however, the concept of spin is ill defined. Academic and media articles referring to spin do not provide much in the way of definition regarding the various characteristics associated with the concept (Frankfurt, 2005b; Harris, 2001; Henneberg, 2004; Norton & Goethals, 2004). A useful approximation of the definition of spin is provided in the Oxford English Dictionary. It describes spin as “a bias or slant on information, intended to create a favourable impression when it is presented to the public” (1993). This brief description of spin provides the generally accepted meaning of the term. However, the following exploration will further define the term spin in order to denote a specific construct.

This chapter sets out to define the concept of spin by establishing the characteristics associated with low and high-spin styles of political communication. It will encompass information drawn from academic research into specific individual items that are
associated with the concept of spin. A study was conducted with communication professionals in industries such as public relations, pharmaceuticals, and marketing in order to understand the structure and purpose of high-spin style communication. Other information will be drawn from media training sources used to coach politicians in the use of spin and the information control behaviours associated with this style of communication.

2.2 Defining ‘Spin’

2.2.1 Spin and interrelated terms
In the book ‘On Bullshit’, Frankfurt (2005a) defines the concept of ‘bullshit’ and the difference between the concepts of bullshit and those of truth and falsity. The definitions offered on bullshit are particularly useful in the characterisation of the concept of spin and will be explored. In an interview in 2005, Frankfurt suggested that, although the exact distinguishing characteristics of spin have not been articulated, spin is a subcategory of the concept of ‘bullshit’. He suggests that spin is associated with politicians who do not particularly care about the truth and are more concerned with producing a certain impression in the minds of those to whom the communication is directed. The politicians using spin are engaged in “the enterprise of manipulating opinion, they’re not engaged in the enterprise of reporting the facts” (Frankfurt, 2005b).

There are strong similarities between political spin and the description of characteristics associated with bullshit. Frankfurt (2005a) characterises bullshit as disconnected from a concern for truth; “the issue is not that the description of reality is incorrect but that there is no attempt to portray an accurate description of reality” (p.32). It is this indifference to how things really are that Frankfurt regards as the essence of bullshit. Moreover, the person using bullshit does not care whether what is said is true or false,
but that it suits the purpose of the communication, in other words, speech without substance or content. Frankfurt refers to the Oxford English Dictionary definition of the term ‘bull’, which states the meaning as: unnecessary routine tasks or ceremonial; excessive discipline or ‘spit-and-polish’ (p. 39). It is suggested that this is a somewhat useful description in defining the term bullshit. Correspondingly, political spin tends to be largely devoid of substance or content and more about dressing up the truth with a bit of spit-and-polish in order to get the preferred message across.

Frankfurt refers to Black’s (1983) account of ‘humbug’ and suggests that the concepts of humbug and bullshit are similar in that they are both ‘short of lying’ and are misrepresentations. Black (1983) discusses and defines the attributes and characteristics that are associated with the term humbug. Although not a commonly used word today the attributes and characteristics associated with it, as described by Black, are also useful in defining the characteristics of spin. In 1751 the word humbug was used to describe a false claim, a hoax, or practical joke. In 1828 humbug was a synonym for swindle or fraud and also used as a noun for an imposition under false pretences, and as a verb to deceive (Black, p.121). These distinctive characteristics of misrepresentation are particularly relevant to the characteristics associated with spin.

Black described humbug as associated with insincerity and deception. Black deliberates on the principal charge against a speaker accused of humbug. He suggests that some pertinent descriptions associated with humbugging are pretence, pretentiousness, affectation, insincerity, and deception. He suggests that there is also the perception of self-satisfaction in the speaker, adding, “humbug goes well with a smirk” (Black, 1983, p.119). Certainly, these aspects associated with humbug are also directly relevant to the
characteristics of spin. It is argued that the use of spin in political communication tends to be associated with a lack of speaker authenticity.

Frankfurt argues that politics along with advertising and public relations are synonymous with bullshit. In fact, Frankfurt (2005a) suggests that the word bullshit is derived from the term ‘bull session’. A bull session was a way in which people could discuss topics such as politics, religion, and sex without having those statements necessarily attributed to what the person actually believed to be unequivocally true. In a bull session, the general assumption that people say what they believe was suspended. Frankfurt (2005a) argues that a bull session is likened to the concept of bullshit by the fact that they express a similar degree of disregard for truth. Certainly, spin also shares that same disregard for truth; what politicians say is not necessarily what they believe to be true.

Moreover, Black argues that the more indirect means of generating a false belief is a standard strategy in advertising and diplomacy. Misleading can be achieved more efficiently and with less fear of detection or reprisal by indirect means; “one can intimate ‘the thing that is not’ by implication” (1983, p. 133). It is suggested that by doing so the speaker can plead that literally nothing was said that was disbelieved. Suggestions and associations are substituted for what would have been an outright lie if explicitly stated. Therefore, implicit statements with use of suggestion and association are characteristics of humbug and, it is argued, also of spin. The use of ambiguous and equivocal messages is a typical characteristic of high-spin political communication. It has been suggested that politicians will use deliberate vagueness on a contentious issue in an attempt to avoid offending those who may disagree (Goss & Williams, 1973).
Frankfurt makes the point that people are more tolerant of someone caught bullshitting than lying because bullshitting is considered to be a less personal affront. This is also true of spin, in that politicians appear unapologetic for their use of spin, while being caught in a lie is political death. As Frankfurt states, “we may seek to distance ourselves from bullshit, but we are more likely to turn away from it with an impatient or irritated shrug than with the sense of violation or outrage that lies often inspire” (2005a, p. 50). He suggests that the difference in the use of bullshit as opposed to lying is as follows:

This involves not merely producing one instance of bullshit; it involves a program of producing bullshit to whatever extent the circumstances require…telling a lie is an act with a sharp focus. It is designed to insert a particular falsehood at a specific point in a set or system of beliefs, in order to avoid the consequences of having that point occupied by the truth. …On the other hand, a person who undertakes to bullshit his way through has much more freedom. His focus is panoramic rather than particular. …The mode of creativity upon which it relies is less analytical and less deliberative than that which is mobilized in lying. It is more expansive and independent, with more spacious opportunities for improvisation, color, and imaginative play (2005a, pp. 51-53).

This idea of an ongoing programme using improvisation, colour, and imagination is particularly relevant to the definition of spin. Spin is a collection of information control behaviours and techniques designed to lead the receiver away from the real intention of the communicator’s message. Frankfurt gives the example of a Fourth of July orator who speaks bombastically about “our great and blessed country, whose Founding Fathers under divine guidance created a new beginning for mankind” (2005a, p. 16). It is suggested that the reason this type of communication falls into the category of bullshit is not that the speaker regards the statement as necessarily false but that the intention of these statements is to convey a particular image about the orator. The orator is not trying to deceive anyone about American history but wants the audience to think he or she is a great patriot who is passionate about the country.
Black suggests that the difference between humbug and outright lying is “not in the content of the communicated message, or in the intention to deceive by implanting false beliefs, but rather in the sophistication of the means used to achieve the purpose” (1983, p. 134). To successfully deceive by using humbug the speaker’s own disbelief must be concealed in order that the message is initially plausible and the assertion accepted. It generally requires the deliberate selection and distortion of evidence. Likewise a politician using a high-spin style of communication will exclude information that is not beneficial to their policy or position and emphasise information that is beneficial. Moreover, politicians craft their messages based on sophisticated public polling, research, and psychological testing in order to present each word and image perfectly (Harris, 2001; Henneberg, 2004; Norton & Goethals, 2004).

However, Frankfurt contends that this type of crafted communication has something about it that indicates that the politician is trying to get away with something. Furthermore, Black suggests that asking questions such as ‘do you really believe that?’ or ‘do you really mean that?’ can expose the person using humbug. It is also suggested that tone, facial expression, or actions will often expose the person of using humbug. A high-spin style of communication has a refined and crafted quality to it that is identifiable. As suggested by Black in relation in humbug, the use of spin tends to become more obvious from a politician’s tone, facial expression, and action in response to more specific questions. These descriptions of both bullshit and humbug relate to the concept of political spin and add to its defining characteristics.

2.2.2 Devices and techniques in political speeches

One of the synonyms suggested for humbug is the term ‘claptrap’. Claptrap is another term that has an association with the concept of bullshit and it has specific links with
political communication or speeches. Claptrap in political communication, as described by Atkinson (1984), is designed to generate applause and other forms of audience approval, particularly among the party faithful. Claptrap is the technique of structuring information in a way that elicits an approval response and, as Atkinson describes, enables an audience to know when to applaud and show approval. The communicated message employing claptrap devices does not necessarily need to contain important substance or ideas in order to draw out spontaneous agreement and acknowledgement from a mass audience. Claptrap is made up of catchphrases, metaphors, and crafted messages that are purely designed for effect. Respectively, high-spin style messages rely heavily on these devices and are distinct features of that type of political communication.

However, in relation to message delivery, Atkinson suggests speakers who stick to a script sound less spontaneous and impressive, or sympathetic. It is important that the communicated message does not appear to be carefully prepared before hand. This may raise doubts about the authorship of the political message. The speaker may appear to be speaking someone else’s words, which would impact negatively on the audience’s perception of the speaker. Certainly, Atkinson suggests spontaneity, humbleness, speaking directly to the audience, and a less staged appearance are important aspects of communication that engage an audience. This has implications for the specific characteristics of low-spin style communication and an understanding of a low to high-spin continuum.

The advent of television coverage and interviews changed the way in which politicians communicate because other techniques and aspects have become important in this medium (Atkinson, 1984). Heritage & Greatbatch (1991) outline the news interview as
a system of turn-taking procedures with its specific tasks and constraints in relation to broadcast journalism. This turn-taking system summarises the construct of news interviews to the rule that the interviewer is confined to asking questions and the interviewee is confined to answering them. Heritage & Greatbatch (1991) emphasise that broadcast interviews and political messages are clearly conducted for the ‘listening audience’. Bull (1998) contends that what is primarily at stake in media interviews is the interviewee’s ‘positive face’. In other words, the desire to be approved of by others, and more specifically, in the case of the politician, the approval of the voting public.

This is particularly observable as the politician responds to the interviewer’s questions but is primarily geared to delivering information to the listening audience. Members of the audience have varying opinions and positions, and political messages attempt to appeal to the majority without disenfranchising those who might disagree. Therefore, the communication becomes equivocal, evasive, and guarded in nature and generally appears to be highly prepared and crafted. This use of high-spin style communication is designed to strengthen a stated position or argument within the context of news interviews. The problem arises when an interviewer’s statements or questions threaten the position of the politician. Hostility and interruptions subsequently occur in the media interview as the politician attempts to control information and meaning to reassert a positive message.

It is clear that one of the characteristics of spin is the high degree of equivocation used. Politicians give equivocal answers on issues that may not be popular and are controversial in order not to lose support from voters. Bavelas, Black, Chovil, & Mullett (1990) define equivocation as “nonstraightforward communication; it appears ambiguous, contradictory, tangential, obscure, or even evasive” (p. 28). Bello (2000)
notes that this broad definition is useful because it allows for the inclusion of vagueness and ambiguity within the concept of equivocation. Certainly, for the purposes of defining political spin, the inclusion of vagueness and ambiguity are useful in the description of spin. It is argued that ambiguity and vagueness are part of the desired effect of information control behaviours and techniques associated with high-spin political messages. Felling (2001) provides further political examples of the behaviours and techniques used in a typical high-spin message as well as attributes associated with a low-spin style message.

Felling (2001) reiterates the aforementioned definition of spin by emphasising that the essence of spin is weaving or synthesising the truth. It is suggested that, typically, the use of analogies and parallels are often associated with spin because of the propensity for misrepresentation. For example, when countering US President George W. Bush’s tax cuts the Democrats claimed that the plan would disproportionately benefit the rich. The Democrat Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle attacked the tax plan by making this analogy: “if you make over $300,000 a year this tax cut means you get to buy a new Lexus. If you make $50,000 a year, you get to buy a muffler on your used car… that’s what we are talking about here. A Lexus versus a muffler” (Felling, 2001, p. 63). It was a compelling parallel but it was not accurate. Although it was true to say if you earned over $300,000 per year you could buy a new Lexus with the tax cut, what Daschle did not make clear was that you would need to earn a million dollars per year in order to pay for a Lexus using Bush’s tax cut. Spinning can be described as dealing creatively with the truth. Felling argues that spin is not difficult to recognize because it comes across as a sales pitch.
The commercial use of spin is also highly prevalent with public relation firms employed to disguise bad news as relatively good news. An example of this is a company describing their financial losses as a fantastic result given that losses were less than originally expected or a company describes the cutting of 10 percent of its workforce in order to fulfil the business plan viability as ‘strategic staff restructuring’ (Felling, 2001). As with its political counterpart, this particular type of spin “portrays innocuous-sounding yet opinionated statements as factual (Felling, 2001, p. 64). Spin takes advantage of certain journalistic habits and uses them to obscure the truth, to the spinner’s advantage. This type of equivocation features heavily in a high-spin style of political communication

Felling (2001) suggests that when politicians get back to more ‘straight’ talking or communicating in a low-spin style, ‘trust’ within the community will develop. Low-spin means sticking to the facts. Low-spin is about not acting or sounding like a sales person because the public can recognise the difference. In this type of low-spin communication, sound bites (crafted catchphrase type statement that has high media value) and short messages need to be qualified with details and explanations. Although catchphrases and slogans have greater media value than specifics it is important that more detail is provided. The use of analogies and examples are a common feature in the art of spinning; they are very distorting because equal comparisons are rarely possible. Therefore, a low-spin style of communication is more understated, direct and provides more accurate details.

2.3 Study One: Interviews with Communication Professionals

In order to confirm the utility and suitability of these characteristics in accounting for spin, a series of interviews was conducted with communication professionals. The
following study of communication professionals provided collective industry
knowledge about important properties of public communication and of persuasive
messages. This provided insight into useful items to be included in the measurement
scale to rate receiver perceptions of a communicator along the proposed low high-spin
continuum.

2.3.1 Rationale and aims

Interviews were conducted with communication professionals to provide information
about public communication strategies, practices, and their understandings of spin.
These professionals provided information about public communications and what they
believed were effective and persuasive ways of communicating in the current
environment. The communication professionals were drawn from large public relations
firms, pharmaceutical companies, marketing and advertising firms. These organisations
were chosen because they were industry leaders and were generating, either for
themselves or their clients, frequent public communication. The pharmaceutical
company was included because Australian law prohibits the direct advertising and
marketing of pharmaceutical products. Therefore, pharmaceutical companies have had
to develop other effective public communication strategies to promote their products.

The interviews with communication professionals were conducted with the following
aims:

1. Determine the kinds of communication strategies (information control
   behaviours and techniques) used in public communication;
2. Determine the perceived effectiveness of these strategies;
3. Determine the perceived role of ‘spin’ and ‘authenticity’ in public
   communications.
This will provide information about public communication strategies, practices, and further understanding concerning the use of spin.

2.3.2 Participants

Five participants took part in the study, four men and one woman, drawn from the three abovementioned organisations. ‘Participant A’ was a male in his early 30’s. A was an Account Manager in the Health Care Division of the public relation firm. His responsibilities included daily contact with clients and projects as well as input into communication strategies, new business development and budgets. ‘Participant B’ was the General Manager of the Health Care Division at the same firm. She was in her early 30’s. B managed communication campaigns for pharmaceutical companies designed to promote awareness of pharmaceutical products. Participant C was a Demographer and Communications Analyst consulting to marketing and advertising firms. He was in his late 40’s. C analysed demographic trends and created systems to capitalise on those trends. The work entailed surveying community opinions on various issues, and developing strategies based on the information gathered. ‘Participant D’ was the Communications Director for a multinational Pharmaceutical company. He was in his early 40’s. D managed the promotion of pharmaceutical products and government lobbying efforts. The work included responsibilities of media advisor and liaison, business development, and crisis management. ‘Participant E’ was a male in his mid 40’s. E was the Managing Director of the Corporate Campaigning Division of the public relations firm. He developed communication campaigns promoting brands and products, as well as crisis management strategies.
2.3.3 Procedure

The three communications organisations were first selected on the basis that they were industry leaders. They were contacted directly by letter and then followed up by telephone and invited to take part in the study. Key personnel and division heads of these organisations were then identified and asked to take part.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants individually. Questions were designed to be open-ended, and focused on how the participants understood the communication process, its desired effect, and the effectiveness of communication strategies. The interviews included questions such as, “What types of strategies are employed in different circumstances?” and “What problems do you face in delivering a specify message to the public?”.

Participants were provided with an information letter describing the purpose of the study, and their rights to confidentiality and to withdraw consent. Participants were then provided with a consent form. These are attached as Appendix A. With participants’ permission, all interviews were audio-recorded. Transcriptions of the interviews are presented as Appendix B. Transcripts were analysed thematically for evidence of the level of spin used in public communication strategy and practice.

2.3.4 Analysis

The following themes emerged from the interviews conducted with industry professionals, which were relevant to public communication. They also illustrate public communication strategies and practices, as well as provide details concerning the use of spin.
2.3.4.1 Credibility is key

Credibility of the information source was considered by the communication professionals to be of primary concern, particularly in the healthcare divisions of public relations (PR) firms. A explained that it is important to be seen to be both credible and informative when communicating with clinicians. A emphasised that it is imperative when communicating with medical personnel regarding product benefits that the communication style does not use standard marketing jargon. The data and information provided must be perceived to be in an unbiased form, which will be useful for doctors in performing their job more effectively. Therefore, messages cannot just use standard marketing terms in their communication because that does not hold much credibility with this audience. The way the communication is delivered must overcome the appearance of any bias due to vested interests.

B also emphasised the importance of credibility and how the communication professionals will fiercely protect it. It was explained that communicator credibility was very important to persuasive messages and that this was easily diminished if the public perceived the messages as untruthful or to be withholding facts. B expressed that “we have a credibility that we have to keep with doctors and also with journalists, we almost act like the conscience, if you like, of people” (Appendix B, p. 314). A explained that these strict codes of ethics are very different to the methods and strategies used by public relations practitioners in other areas. He stated that, “you are governed by such a straight and narrow passage with what you can communicate. I think it’s actually a lot more ethical than a lot of PR” (Appendix B, p. 286). Among those communication professionals working in the ‘healthcare’ area, it was felt that the messages they communicate are more ethical because there are fewer unsubstantiated claims and more
factual detail. Therefore, the ethical guidelines associated with pharmaceuticals have influenced the style of communication used.

A explained that marketing and communicating messages about pharmaceuticals to medical personnel and the public is unique because directly advertising products is not permitted. Therefore, communication “programmes actually reflect that sensitivity but you still got to deliver brain messages” (Appendix B, p. 285). A explained that there are a number of challenges in communicating in this environment and with this audience. The first challenge is determining how to communicate without using marketing concepts. The second is creating opportunities to communicate directly to clinicians. The third challenge is that any claims made about the product need to be substantiated by comprehensive research. “It’s not like brand marketing for Coca Cola or Nike where you can say, you know, ‘this is the best’” (Appendix B, p. 286). This is particularly the case where the audience is well informed and literate in the subject matter. This more upfront, direct, and comprehensive style of communication appears to add to the credibility and persuasiveness of the message.

Healthcare communication is delivered and presented in a less biased manner, without appearing to be trying to persuade. Therefore credibility is established by using comprehensive information and upfront facts, coupled with a low level of marketing jargon. A explained the difference in healthcare communication is that, “unlike advertising to consumers, where you are able to communicate that individual or key point in maybe six or seven words, we need a bit more space because of the ethics that we are guided by” (Appendix B, p. 287). It is clear that this type of communication is not the typical sales pitch and tends to resemble a low-spin style message. Although it is clear that the aim is still to persuade, the method has to be different. It appears that for
those working in other areas of public relations, where there is little restriction on what can be communicated in public messages, the communication tend to be more exaggerated like brand advertising. This type of communication resembles the typical high-spin style messages, where sharp, brief, crafted messages are used.

2.3.4.2 Communication strategies

E discussed an example of what he considered to be poor public communication, which he argues contributed to the collapse of the Australian airline ‘Ansett’. E suggested that an alternative style of public communication would have helped save the airline from collapse. It was argued that a more effective public communication campaign about the airline’s ability to operate viably and safely needed to be implemented in order to persuade the public that it was in their best interests that the airline remain in operation. E contended that it would then have been incumbent on the government and other organisations to ensure that the airline continued to operate. However, as it was explained, many of the public did not develop an attitude of trust or confidence about the airline’s ability to continue flying or its necessity to do so at public expense, therefore, the airline was allowed to collapse. The following timeline of events leading up to the airline’s collapse was as the participant recalled it (Appendix B, pp. 353-356).

E explained that there was a series of problems with the 767’s aircraft and at Easter the Ansett airline fleet was grounded. E recalled that the airline’s CEO was publicly criticised by the media for allowing the national carrier to be grounded while he remained on holiday in New Zealand. He detailed that it was only then the CEO conducted media conferences and interviews. Ansett responded by running national advertisements explaining that everything was under control. E said at that point the airline regulator criticised the airline’s systems and stated that it could have put lives at
serious risk. E explained it was at that time the airline began running a major brand campaign to try to build public confidence. He said the airline subsequently went into bankruptcy. He explained it was at that point that Ansett workers and staff said they would take pay cuts to keep the airline flying. However, he explained that consumers, frequent fliers, and unions began criticising the airline and wanted compensation. It was at that time Ansett airline collapsed.

E suggested an alternative timeline of events could have saved the airline if the right communication strategy had been put in place. E argued that when the Ansett fleet was first grounded it was clear that the airline was in financial difficulty. He suggested that instead of talking to the media and running an expensive advertising campaign, the CEO should have approached the Ansett workers and staff about taking pay cuts in order to keep the airline viable. Then, E contended that the consumers could have been addressed directly also, this was their airline too. He maintained that running a huge branding campaign was a mistake. E suggested the CEO could have just talked to the media about how this is Australia’s airline, owned and operated by hard working Australians. He suggested that a grassroots campaign with unions, workers, staff, and frequent flyers would have then been a very powerful communication tool. This, E suggested, could be used to send a clear message to government, institutions, and consumers that Ansett needed to be supported.

As described by E, the proposed alternate outcome for the Ansett airline could have been achieved if a more effective public communication strategy had been implemented. He suggested that the CEO’s belated contact with the media, expensive advertising, and brand campaigns did little to create confidence and trust within the community. This high-spin communication approach gave the public the impression
that the company was omitting facts, concealing information, and not fully disclosing the airline’s situation and, according to E, this contributed to the airline collapse. The alternate communication strategy described by E was a more direct, genuine, and grassroots approach to public communication and is suggestive of a low-spin style. Clearly, it was believed that the low-spin approach would have produced an attitude of trust and confidence in the community and a better outcome for the airline.

2.3.4.3 Recognition of political spin

B discussed media demands and how they affected the credibility of messages.

The news is now formatted - it’s now all completely packaged… that’s why you end up with this situation… whereby you have to get your message across in 45 seconds or less. Now where I think that really falls down is the fact that the majority of important messages don’t really do well to be brought down to 45 seconds or less. So you’re losing complexity and that is often when you lose credibility, because what you want to be doing is, is talking about quite complex messages in a very short format and that can actually be perceived as superficial (Appendix B, pp. 324-325).

It has been argued that there is a lot of spin and less emphasis on details and facts in the way most politicians communicate. Clearly, communication professionals believe that the public can recognize the use of spin and that this may generate mistrust in politicians.

B spoke about the credibility of messages in relation to politicians and suggested that, “it comes back to the substance” (Appendix B, p. 314). B used the following example involving, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair.

He’s an amazing speaker and he’s a passionate speaker but when he has no substance it’s spin. …Just before the election, he did a speech in front of the women’s institute in England and he went in supposedly talking about family values and he did a political campaign speech and they slow clapped him. And it’s exactly that, when you fail to have credibility even though everything else is
right. It’s when you’ve got too much PR and not enough substance (Appendix B, p. 314).

The understanding from this example was that the audience knew that Blair was not actually talking about family values; he was simply promoting his government in the hope of winning votes. The audience recognised that, and they ‘slow clapped him’, which refers to the way an audience can show disapproval of the speaker. The Blair example demonstrated that when there is not enough substance and too much spin, politicians lose credibility.

2.3.4.4 The Perception of spin

C emphasised that the media system is designed to facilitate stories, whether they are true or not true. Often the ‘truth’ is spun or twisted in order to present a more positive picture. For example, an economic report might predict growth of 2 percent, while only 1 percent growth occurred. The government would then publicly communicate that the forecast was only off by 1 percent. However, C argued, it would be more correct to describe the forecast as being inaccurate by 100 percent. However, C suggested that, “politics is a dirty horrible game and people have accepted that” (Appendix B, p. 330).

D spoke about the use of high-spin style messages and the public’s ability to recognise the use of spin in public communication. D acknowledged that there are questions in the community about the amount of ‘spin’ over substance being delivered in political messages. He cited an example of the health minister in Britain re-announcing the same statistics “in different ways to make the government look good” and the media and public saw this as manipulation. However, D believed that it is simply about delivering “fact A to the public and I want them to understand it in such and such a way” and that this is what spin is. Spin is about helping the public interpret the information you are
giving them. D explained it as “helping your customer to understand the benefit or a particular message about your product” and that this was common marketing practice. D recognised that the public have a negative view of the high levels of spin being used in public communication but he did not understand why. D suggested that the use of a high level of spin does tend to patronise the public and he summed up his thoughts by stating:

I don’t think there is anything wrong with simple spinning of complicated messages to help a very broad population understand the meaning that is intended, I don’t think there is anything particularly sinister about that. (Appendix B, pp. 380-381).

Communication professionals certainly support the idea that the public do recognise high-spin style messages but that this type of communication is expected from politicians. Although the public expect high-spin communication from politicians the public perceive these messages as manipulative.

2.3.4.5 The role of spin

D made the comment that he believed certain advertising messages that make women and men look impossibly attractive was underhanded and was, in his mind, an inappropriate use of spin. In relation to this point, B suggested advertising is now viewed in a different way. Advertising is seen as contrived and exaggerated and uses unsubstantiated claims as part of its sales pitch approach and this style of communication is also associated with high-spin messages. Moreover B spoke about the public’s ability to ‘read between the lines’ and referred to this as ‘PR literacy’. It was suggested that the public are now very media savvy and highly critical of mediated messages. B argued audiences will view advertising messages and rate them, for example, “you’ll give it marks for being funny and intelligent” (Appendix B, p. 315).
However, B stated that in the same way as advertising has changed so too had the communication strategies in public relations.

As an interesting comparison to Ansett Airline’s style of communication when facing a crisis, the following example presents the communication style of another airline facing a crisis but with a different outcome:

B gave an example of how communication strategy has changed using the following example of the airline British Midland (now called BIM). BIM had an incident when one of their aircraft was attempting to land at East Anglia Airport. There was a fire in one of the two engines and the pilot had turned off the wrong engine. This caused the plane to crash onto one of the UK motorways. Within half an hour the company’s public relations crisis management team had the airline’s CEO at the crash site. He directly helped with the crisis in the middle of the night. He spoke to the media, frankly, stating: “We don’t know what happened, we will find out and we will make sure that it doesn’t happen again” (Appendix B, p. 318). According to B the CEO and the company was seen to be accountable. The type of communication was authentic, honest, and believable. He was not hiding behind a spokesperson or repeating crafted messages designed to minimise damage to reputation or company revenue. B believed that BIM is now one of the most successful airlines in the UK due to the way they handled the situation and was able to communicate with the public.

F made an interesting observation about the use of more open communication, which was expressed as follows:
This morning we saw an announcement that the crime rate had gone down with police actually talking to people rather than the zero tolerance policy. Where the police are actually engaging in dialogue with people who may perpetrate crime and they actually see crime rates go down. It’s the same principle, which is that if you are open and there is an exchange then naturally people are less inclined to think that your adversary is covering something up (Appendix B, p. 386).

F felt that although this was not a mass communication example, the principles were very much the same in a mass communication format.

2.3.5 Summary of study findings

Clearly, communicator credibility is an important aspect to professional communication and public relations consultants. Communicators’ credibility tended to be regarded as a prized characteristic in order to produce persuasive communication. The public communication specialists have a clear understanding of what the term ‘spin’ refers to. It is understood that there are degrees of spin and they believe it can be an effective tool when communicating to the public. It is not simply lying; it is more about packaging information in such a way that it is less offensive to most of the public. A high-spin message is designed to reinforce the communicator’s position and objectives. It is also concerned with structuring information specifically to appeal to the media. However, industry professionals believe that the public do view spin cynically. It is also believed that if there is a more open communication greater trust is developed and this communication style can be applied to the mass communication format.

Just as medical clinicians are conscious of biased information associated with marketing jargon (high-spin), messages being communicated to the public also need to appear unbiased and credible. It is argued that the public are well informed and literate concerning political communication. They are able to recognise high-spin communication and it is viewed as manipulative. Therefore, it is argued political
messages need to provide more comprehensive information and upfront facts, coupled with a low level of marketing jargon (low-spin) in order to generate greater trust and source credibility.

2.4 Media Training

The research in this thesis focuses primarily on political communication and the audience perception of the use of spin, specifically in relation to the context of news interviews and statements. The following information is sourced from a media-training manual and represents standard practices and techniques, which are commonly used in public communication. This material was obtained from a media training company that trains politicians, government officials, and company spokespeople (Media, 2005). The media company is well established and reflects the standard in the industry. This media training information will illustrate the information control techniques associated with a high-spin style message. This will identify possible scale items related to communicator behaviours and techniques that exist along the spin continuum.

2.4.1 Overview of media training

Media training is designed to provide public figures with the skills to handle media demands. These skills allow public figures to become “polished media performers” by developing an interview ‘theme’ with the use of prepared, targeted, key messages (Media, 2005). It teaches public figures how to communicate with the media in order to deliver these key messages irrespective of the questions asked. This is primarily achieved by using information control behaviours and techniques. These information behaviours and techniques are designed to appeal to the media, control information, and contain the meaning audiences derive from the interview. This allows the interviewee to keep communication with the media on the preferred theme and message regardless of
the different types of questions posed. The information control behaviours and
techniques have the effect of preventing the interview from going off track, thwarting
challenges from the interviewer, and avoiding the interview turning into an
interrogation. These communication strategies will be examined in the following
discussion.

2.4.2 Communication style and message delivery

Media training teaches that an effective interview seldom relies entirely on content but
rests very much on style of delivery, both in physical presence and language used. It is
emphasised that the preparation of the facts and packaging the message for interviews is
very important. This preparation of information is used not only to appeal to the media
but to provide some control over the message that will ultimately be used in the
broadcast as well as providing an attractive message for the listening audience. It is
suggested that media interviews should not be seen as simply answering questions but
an opportunity to promote a prepared message to the audience. The type of message
generally used for the ‘news grab’ should provide only a crafted statement that is not
given in response to a question. The longer interviews require more active use of control
techniques to ensure the interview focuses on the positive agenda not the agenda of the
interviewer. These control behaviours and techniques will be discussed individually.

Media training recommends that a main theme and message is developed by first
establishing the communication objective to be achieved prior to any media interview. It
is important that the message delivered is short, sharp, and to the point particularly in
relation to the news interview. In the current affairs-type interviews, questions will need
to at least be acknowledged before the prepared message is delivered and the
predetermined theme promoted. The interview is rehearsed and set responses to
different questions are developed and honed. Responses to different questions are variations of the main message and reinforce the communication theme. These answers are repeated many times during the interview without being intimidated by the questions. Responses are to be delivered in a clear and precise way and appearing confident at all times is essential.

Traditionally conflict is an important element in news stories and will increase the prevalence of a message in the media. Therefore, media training suggests that the addition of criticism in the content will add the essential ingredient of conflict to the message. It recommends the use of ‘prophecies of doom’, which can be used to great effect. A prediction of impending disaster or detrimental consequence increases the importance of the message and motivates an audience through fear. The use of a catchphrase provides colour, excitement and strength to a message and has a powerful impact on an audience. Moreover, providing examples and analogies operate as proof of the stated position and form pictures in the mind of the audience. Media training suggests examples and analogies will assist the audience to relate to the message and simplify complex issues. It is argued these techniques enhance media appeal and are designed to facilitate the communication objective to control information and contain its meaning.

2.4.3 Specific control techniques

Standard media training asserts that the successful delivery of a positive message will depend on the interviewee’s ability to control the content and direction of a media interview. The interviewer will increase the element of conflict by posing hard-line and negative questions and it is important to stay on track with the prepared message and theme. In order to move away from question areas that are not desirable to discuss and
into an area that promotes the main message ‘control words and phrases’ are used to
deviate the interview direction. These words can be as simple as ‘but’ or ‘however’ or
phrases like ‘the main point is’ and ‘from our point of view’ or ‘let me say this’. This
will allow the main message to then be restated and emphasised without having to
answer the specific question. In the event of a question being asked that cannot be
responded to, the phrase ‘no comment’ should not be used. This response will give the
impression that there is something to hide. A response to this type of question could be,
“I cannot comment on that, but what I can say is…” and the main message can be
repeated. These techniques will exert control over a line of questioning that is
distracting from the main message.

Moreover, media training teaches that in order to maintain control in an interview it is
essential that the statements made be supported by reasons and examples. This will
substantiate the message and reduce the level of cross-questioning by the interviewer.
These types of answers create more interesting interviews and are responses that the
media are seeking. Interruptions to message delivery by the interviewer must not be
tolerated. It is important to stop the interruption at the first opportunity. This can be
achieved by politely telling the interviewer “please let me finish” and continue with the
statement. This can also act as deterrent to any further interruptions by the interviewer
for fear of appearing rude.

2.4.4 Recognition of information control behaviours

It is easy to recognise these standard behaviours and techniques in the public
communication of politicians and why, as it is argued here, it confirms the public
expectations about this high-spin style and the promotion of self-interest. Not only are
the public recognising these behaviours and techniques but the media also, on occasion,
openly refer to media training in the use of spin. The following is an extract from a television interview with Laurie Oakes, one of Australia’s top political journalists and Bill Shorten, head of the Australian Workers Union (Oakes, May 21, 2006). In this excerpt Laurie Oakes is questioning Bill Shorten on allegations of corrupt political candidate selection (known as ‘branch stacking’) within the Australian Labor Party.

LAURIE OAKES: Your other job as Victorian President of the ALP, so how can you just turn your back on branch stacking and say it has nothing to do with you?

BILL SHORTEN: In terms of how the Labor Party functions, that is a very important question but in terms of your specific question about particular matters to do with particular pre-selections, that's sort of fish and chip wrapper stuff, that's yesterday's news. What we are interested in, and it all comes back to, I always imagine myself explaining what I do as if I was talking to a group of our members and their families. What my members and their families say is, 'Listen, how can we make sure we've got secure employment? How can we make sure that our wages and conditions are going to keep pace?' These are the issues which are important to people and that's the issues which I am focused on.

LAURIE OAKES: So, branch stacking is OK because your members are more concerned about bread and butter issues?

BILL SHORTEN: No, what I'm saying is that for myself and the energy which our members want, they don't like disunity in the Labor Party. That's why a lot of people are saying listen, we've got Kim Beazley let's get behind him.

LAURIE OAKES: Isn't branch stacking corrupt?
BILL SHORTEN: Branch stack, it's all in the eye of the beholder I suppose at one level. I notice that we saw a pretty vigorous debate in Kooyong going on between different factions of the Liberal Party. I also notice that in Queensland they seem to have a debate about who was eligible to vote in the Liberal Party pre-selections with people in Hong Kong casting a vote. I think what's important, Laurie, is that we, the Labor Party focuses on presenting a united front and dealing with the Liberal Party. What Labor voters want, what trade union members want, what the community wants is a strong opposition to deal with the government and to provide an alternative. And that's where Kim Beazley is taking Federal Labor.

LAURIE OAKES: Is George Seats a branch stacker?

BILL SHORTEN: George Seats has been in Parliament a long time. He has done a lot of work in his community. What is important for me in terms of going forward is how does the Labor Party and the trade unions provide a united front. How is it that we draw attention to the fact that the Howard Government's passed laws which make it easy to sack people? How is it that we draw attention to the fact that we can't even talk about OH & S training and industrial arrangements? That's why again I'm hoping that there's an opportunity for the Prime Minister and Kevin Andrews to rise above the usual sort of union baiting rhetoric and instead say listen, we actually understand it is important that employees and employers are able to talk about trade union training, talk about OH & S training, talk about issues which will actually improve workplace safety. That, after all, has been some, of trying to make some sense of the last three-and-a-half weeks.

LAURIE OAKES: Mr Shorten, have you done media training?

BILL SHORTEN: No.
Laurie Oakes: As you seem to be using the technique of ignore the question you're asked and answer the one you wanted to be asked.

Bill Shorten: Well, what I guess I'm doing Laurie, is the issue which is important here is how on earth does the Labor Party provide a decent Opposition and become a decent government. What is fundamental to this is helping explore and try and convince people and demonstrate how unfair these IR laws are. By the way, I don't think people need a lot of convincing on that.

As pointed out by Oakes, Shorten was not answering questions and just repeating prepared messages. He was clearly using control words and phases, catchphrases, and ‘prophecies of doom’, to avoid some areas of discussion and to highlight others. However, Shorten’s use of information control behaviours in the interview was made plainly evident after he was questioned on his use of spin. Oakes’ question (Have you done media training?) forced Shorten into a lie, as he undoubtedly had undertaken media training. This, it is argued, would appear to have caused Bill Shorten considerable loss of face and credibility.

This interview with Oakes and Shorten demonstrates that even the media are openly acknowledging and discussing the information control behaviours associated with spin. These behaviours used by the interviewee are an attempt to maintain control of the information delivered, and the meaning and interpretation of that information. The high-spin style of communication attempts to close down alternative views and arguments that are contrary to the one being propagated in order that the argument or position advocated is not challenged. Therefore, a high-spin style of communication in media interviews tends to appear more authoritative and aggressive in the interviewee’s attempt to have a greater persuasive effect on the public.
2.5 The Definition of Spin

Political spin is a communication style encompassing specific behaviours designed to appeal to the media, control information, and contain audience interpretation of the message.

2.5.1 The spin continuum

There is no ideal measure that exists to rate the level and perception of spin in a message. It is argued that, as with Black’s (1984) discussion of ‘humbug’ and Frankfurt’s (2005) discussion of ‘bullshit’, the concept of spin also appears associated with varying degrees of intensity along a continuum with low-spin at one end and high-spin on the other. Therefore a message can contain varying levels of spin characteristics. Table 2.1 sets out the summary of characteristics associated with the spin continuum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Features</th>
<th>Low-spin</th>
<th>High-spin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language and Style</td>
<td>Candid and Relaxed</td>
<td>Guarded and Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control technique</td>
<td>Direct and Unequivocal</td>
<td>Evasive and Equivocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main message</td>
<td>Informal and Spontaneous</td>
<td>Formal and Crafted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.2 Specific spin characteristics

The following communicator features are consistent with the specific characteristics of the low to high-spin continuum.

2.5.2.1 Demeanour

High-spin is characterised by the communicator appearing tense, anxious, and slightly hostile towards the interviewer. The communicator will often cause interruptions in order to avoid the interviewer making a strong point.
Low-spin is characterised by the communicator responding spontaneously in a relaxed and flexible manner. The communicator will often make use of a smile and where appropriate a limited and measured use of humour.

2.5.2.2 Style

High-spin often involves the use of formal language. It also tends to make use of over-generalisations or academic and technical jargon in order to avoid poignant detail. The communicator uses this in an attempt to confound the interviewer and audience.

Low-spin often involves the use of everyday common language and colloquialisms. It gives the impression that the communicator is ‘telling it how it is’, ‘not mixing words’ and talking straight. It is used in an attempt to appear more inclusive of the audience.

2.5.2.3 Clarity

High-spin is characterised by the communicator using ambiguous statements or clearly withholding information to present a better picture. The communicator will often avoid directly answering questions by making unrelated statements, engaging minimally with the question, or attempting to circumvent it by answering a question with a question.

Low-spin is characterised by the communicator providing answers in an open and direct way without simply repeating the same message. The communicator is happy to foster a dialogue with the interviewer and does not attempt to omit or conceal information.
2.5.2.4 Devices

High-spin is characterised by the use of analogies and examples that tend to promote inaccurate comparisons and exaggerate or understate differences that favour the communicator’s position. The communicator will also make use of puns, similes, and witty one-liners to either reinforce their argument or ridicule the opponent’s argument.

Low-spin is characterised by the communicator giving the full background to policy positions and decisions. The communicator tends not to dress up answers by employing literary devices but provides more detailed answers, examples, and explanations without the use of hyperbole.

2.5.2.5 Spontaneity

High-spin communication involves the use of carefully considered and crafted statements and catchphrases, which are delivered with a lack of spontaneity. The communicator will simply repeat a rehearsed message or series of messages, which are designed to appeal to the media and stand out to the audience.

Low-spin is characterised by the communicator not trying to ‘hard sell’ a particular position or policy. The communicator responds to questions in a spontaneous way and tends not to repeat crafted messages.

2.6 Conclusion

Having now conceptually reviewed and defined the various characteristics associated with political spin, these characteristics will be operationalised for the experimental comparisons of the effectiveness of high and low-spin messages. The next chapter will discuss the development of a rating scale to measure the level of spin inherent in a
message and an audience’s perception of the politician. This measurement scale will then be used to test the effects of high and low-spin messages in relation to audience perception of source trustworthiness, credibility, and the persuasiveness.
CHAPTER 3 – MEASUREMENT ISSUES

3.1 Research Aims

To date there has been no psychological research examining the effect of spin on the persuasiveness of political messages. Consequently, it is unknown whether low-spin messages are a more persuasive approach than high-spin messages in political communication. While it has been theorised that audiences no longer perceive high-spin messages used by politicians as believable, this has not been demonstrated empirically. Understanding the relationship between spin and persuasion is important given that society relies heavily on media broadcasts of political messages to gain information about current issues. Therefore, this research seeks to better understand the way audiences perceive political messages.

A wide research net has been cast to investigate the effect of the complex construct of ‘spin’, which consists of many different behavioural features associated with information control behaviours. The following studies were designed to investigate the combined effect of these features. Consequently, the studies do not provide detailed information about the effects of each individual behavioural feature. However, they do provide clear information on the combined effect of the features that are directly related to high-spin messages, which is a phenomenon typical of political communication in democracies around the world.

This research involved the development of an Authenticity Scale to measure the information control behaviours directly associated with spin, and audience perceptions of communicator attributes. The Authenticity Scale will be used to ascertain the public’s attitudes and responses toward low and high-spin messages. The planned studies will
investigate the relationship between audience demographic factors and political alliances, and the persuasiveness of low and high-spin messages. For example, specific voter groups (such as conservative voters) or demographic characteristics (such as age) may mediate the influence of the level of spin used in political communication. This research will also explore the specific characteristics of spin that combine to produce greater source credibility in delivering a message. Finally, the research will explore the relationship between the authenticity score (representing the level of spin being used, and the audiences’ perception of the communicator) and the persuasiveness of political messages.

This chapter presents the factors considered in the research approach in relation to the experimental design, equipment used, and the various measurement issues.

3.2 Rationale for Experimental Design

3.2.1 Quantitative approach

An experimental design was considered to be the most appropriate method of assessing public perceptions of low and high-spin political messages. This design allows specific characteristics of spin to be isolated in order to determine their effect on Authenticity Scale ratings. An experimental design also enables the statistical analysis of participants’ attitudes and behavioural responses and allows an effect size to be determined. A causal relationship can be established between the level of spin used by a politician and the level of support the politician receives from an audience. Moreover, any relationship between the various demographics and low and high-spin can also be determined.
This research examines audience perceptions of politicians, and therefore the 
generalisation of the results to the voting population is of key importance. Therefore, 
the external validity of the design was considered to be important. However, as Cook & 
Campbell (1979) suggest, preventable tradeoffs between one kind of validity and 
another should been avoided. Clearly, internal validity is a priority and aspects affecting 
internal validity are carefully considered. Aspects of design such as sample, setting, 
materials, and timing of the testing, have been considered with concern for internal and 
external validity in mind. Moreover, multiple messages, multiple communicators, and 
different studies will be undertaken in order that any possible internal and external 
validity issues will be minimised (Cook & Campbell, 1979). This multiple 
operationalised design will also strengthen construct validity (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

3.3 Outcome Measures

3.3.1 Development of the Authenticity Scale

The level of spin used in political messages will be measured using the ‘Authenticity 
Scale’. The Authenticity Scale was designed to measure the information control 
behaviours directly associated with spin, and audience perceptions of communicator 
attributes. The level of spin contained in a political message and the audience perception 
of the communicator are measured in the single authenticity score. The level of support 
elicited for the communicator will also be measured to determine the persuasiveness of 
low and high-spin messages.

The initial scale contained 23 items. The items were drawn from the research findings 
discussed in Chapter One and Two. The scale assesses the audience’s perception of 
credibility and trustworthiness of the communicator and other items associated with 
information control behaviours. The scale also contains an item assessing the audience’s
level of support for the communicator. Table 3.1 below presents the 23 items comprising the Authenticity Scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1: Items comprising the Authenticity Scale.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What level of spin do you believe was used by the public figure in this interview?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How would you rate the attractiveness of the public figure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe the public figure gave evasive answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I believe the public figure's statements were credible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I sensed hostility from the public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe the public figure spoke openly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The public figure used everyday language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I believed the public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The public figure made direct statements/directly answered questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I believe the public figure was authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I believe the public figure's statements to be dishonest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The public figure had a relaxed posture / manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The public figure made unclear / ambiguous statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The public figure was likeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I believe the public figure interrupted the interviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The statements made were not believable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The politician's statements instilled me with trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The public figure spoke with authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The public figure was not given a fair chance to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I would support this public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The public figure was unconvincing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. The public figure was trying to exert influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The public figure was credible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Bold items are reverse scored

Participants responded to each item on a 5-point Likert scale. Likert scales are considered easy to use and are able to measure degrees of agreement (Jackson, Wroblewski, & Ashton, 2000; Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2001). Likert-type scales were commonly used in persuasion studies outlined in Chapter One. As indicated in Table 1, several negatively worded items were included in the scale to minimise acquiescence bias (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). A 5-point scale was selected because it was considered sufficiently sensitive to capture a useful range of responses. It was also considered that a 5-point scale would require less thought from participants than a larger scale, such as a 7-point or 9-point scale, and therefore response time would be reduced. An odd-numbered Likert scale (rather than even numbered) was selected because it
allows for a true neutral response. It was considered that this would eliminate difficulties associated with participants selecting two central points on an even numbered scale to indicate a neutral response.

Given that the Authenticity Scale was designed to measure a single construct, the scale is scored such that a single authenticity score is obtained. Items 3, 5, 11, 13, 15, 16, 21, and 22 are reversed scored, and then the scores for all authenticity items are summed and divided by the number of items in the Authenticity Scale. This produces an authenticity score between 1 and 5 for each messages tested.

3.3.2 Perception Analyzer
It was decided that Perception Analyzer™ technology would be used to measure audience responses to the audiovisual messages in the proposed studies. The Perception Analyzer™ electronically records participant responses on a handheld dial (see Figure 3.1). It can measure responses to discrete questions as well as recording moment-to-moment ratings of stimuli. For example, participants may be asked to give discrete answers to demographic characteristics or a continuous Likert-type rating as they view a televised interview. The advantage of this technology is that participants have their own handheld device on which to respond to the message being shown. The handheld devices allow participants to provide anonymous responses, reducing the possibility of participants influencing each other’s responses. Using the Perception Analyzer™ will provide variation in the method of recording attitudes, which minimise mono-method bias (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Moreover, this kind of technology is the only way to get second-by-second data throughout the duration of a message.
While participants view each of the messages to be tested, they will use a hand-held Perception Analyzer™ dial to note their responses (see Figure 3.1).

![Image of handheld dial and screen image of data](image)

**Figure 3.1: Image of handheld dial and screen image of data**

### 3.4 Outline of Proposed Studies

As discussed, Study One involved interviews with communication professionals. Analysis of these interviews explored and defined the concept and utility of low and high-spin messages from the communicator’s perspective. A subsequent experimental investigation was required to explore the effects of low and high-spin messages from an audience perspective. In order to achieve the most reliable results, the proposed quantitative research was conducted in two phases (Studies Two and Three).

#### 3.4.1 Study Two

The aim of Study Two was to refine and evaluate the Authenticity Scale and to determine the suitability of the research materials and methods in identifying audience perceptions of low and high-spin messages.

In this study, one group of participants viewed messages deemed to be high-spin and the other group viewed messages deemed to be low-spin. The test material was television interviews with actual politicians, government and corporate representatives, as well as
a confederate politician. The testing of messages from government and corporate public figures minimised the effect of participants’ political biases on the data collected. This provided information on how audiences perceive spin being used by politicians and non-political public figures.

Participants then completed the Authenticity Scale to determine the amount of spin observed in each message and their perceptions of the communicator. Participants then completed a demographic questionnaire designed to establish participants’ political ‘orientation’ and voting history. This was used to determine whether participants had a political party preference or if they were uncommitted voters. Participants were also asked to provide demographic information including their age, gender, marital status, education, occupation and income.

The data collected was used to refine the Authenticity Scale and determine the specific elements participants associated with low and high-spin political messages. It was also used to determine the relationship between low and high-spin messages and the persuasiveness of those messages.

3.4.2 Study Three

Study Three provided further quantitative data on how low and high-spin messages affect audience attitudes. Confederate politicians and ‘actual’ politicians were shown delivering political messages in a real state election campaign.

The Authenticity Scale was employed to rate political messages using uncommitted voters. This study utilised a repeated measures design with participants providing data over the five weeks of the 2005 Western Australian State election campaign. This
design increased sensitivity, making it more likely than an effect would be detected and reduced systematic bias attributed to using different participants throughout the testing period. The participants viewed weekly-recorded political messages over the 5-week election period from actual politicians campaigning in the election as well as political messages from the confederate politician.

The findings determined the nature of the relationship between the level of spin used by politicians and the support elicited from an audience. Moreover, the authenticity ratings of actual politicians campaigning in the election could be compared to actual election outcome. This provided an indication of external validity and accuracy of the research findings.

3.5 Test Materials and Procedures

3.5.1 Message variables

This research is primarily concerned with the audiovisual medium of television as opposed to radio, print, or Internet-based media. This focus was selected due to the current popularity and predominance of the television medium. It has been noted that television is the primary means of communication that politicians use to reach the voting public (Crewe & Gosschalk, 1995; Harris, 2001; O'Shaughnessy, 1990). Television, and particularly television news, has the biggest impact on political communication and is the primary factor that dominates political strategies (Butler & Kavanagh, 1992; Harris & Wring, 2002; Wring, 1997). Given that the public obtain much of their political information from television, it was decided that low and high-spin messages would be compared in this audiovisual format. However, the findings of the research may also be relevant to the other news media such as radio or print.
Many empirical studies that have manipulated trustworthiness have used written statements to provide information on a communicator’s background. For example, participants may read that a communicator is sympathetic toward the nazi party, or has a reputation for being devious and calculating. These studies tend to give explicit descriptions of the communicator (being sincere and trustworthy) or give explicit statements about the communicator’s inherent self-interest (Eagly et al, 1978; McGinnes & Ward 1980; Weiner & Mowen, 1986). However, other studies have used the expectancy disconfirmation effect to manipulate communicator honesty in a less direct manner (Priester & Petty, 1995). These types of manipulations are employed in order to avoid the more contrived direct statements and descriptions about a communicator’s background. Furthermore, (Zimbardo et al., 1965) used a confederate to give live demonstrations to participants as a treatment in a study investigating communicator effectiveness.

The present research is interested in how the voting public perceive political messages. Therefore, the test materials will comprise audiovisual messages rather than simple written messages. Although written messages are easier to produce than audiovisual ones and allow greater control over possible confounds, strengthening internal validity, it was considered that audiovisual messages had greater external validity. Moreover, using audiovisual messages allows the findings to be generalised to televised messages, such as political interviews.

3.5.2 Use of the confederate politician

As with the Zimbardo et al., (1965) study, studies Two and Three utilised a confederate to deliver political messages in both a high and a low-spin style. This avoided the use of simple written background information about the communicator to create the different
message conditions. The use of the same confederate in both conditions eliminated possible confounds such as attractiveness, demeanour, class indicators, accent, or race. Different confederates were used in each study. This minimised potential mono-method bias, and provided greater external validity by reducing the chance of unusual results arising from qualities specific to one confederate (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

The communication features used by the confederates are consistent with the specific low and high-spin characteristics outlined in Chapter Two, which were used to create separate low and high-spin political messages. The political messages delivered by the confederates communicated the same policies and positions in either in a low or high-spin style. The two versions of the confederates’ messages were designed to be as identical as possible, with the same setting, clothing, subject matter, policy positions, and interview length utilised. The only difference between the low and high-spin messages was the level of spin used by the confederates. Specifically, the confederate used the information control behaviours associated with spin in the high-spin condition, and did not use the information control behaviours in the low-spin condition.

3.5.3 Spin conditions
The high-spin messages were shown only to participants in the high-spin condition, and the low-spin messages were shown only to participants in the low-spin condition. This allowed the independent variables (information control behaviours) of spin to be isolated. The dependent variables (audience perceptions of the communicator) of source trustworthiness, credibility, and support were then compared between conditions to ascertain response differences in relation to the independent variables such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and politician alliance. Due to the defined message
features of low and high-spin that have been established, it was determined that a specific message manipulation check would not be required (O’Keefe, 2003).

One of the threats to internal validity identified by Cook & Campbell (1979) is that participants become aware of the experiment conditions, which can influence responses. Therefore, designing the studies so that each group viewed only the low or high-spin messages reduced the probability that participants would learn of the treatment differences and the hypotheses. This also allowed the use of the same confederate for both conditions, reducing potential confounds.

3.5.4 Use of multi message and communicator design

The present research utilised a multiple message design. This increased the causal generalisation of effects detected across the different messages (Jackson & Jacobs, 1983). This avoids some of the questions concerning uniform effects across different messages. A single message design may not be as generalisable because there could be something atypical about the message, other than the independent variable, that causes the observed effects (O’Keefe, 1999c). Variation in effect sizes are common in persuasion research with single message design, therefore studying and testing multiple messages across divergent subjects limits the potential for other message factors and confounds from the interpretation of the independent variables effects (Jackson, O’Keefe, & Brashers, 1994; O’Keefe, 2003).

In the low and high-spin conditions of both studies, participants viewed three political messages. It was thought that three messages should be used because it would provide a sufficient number of messages per condition to measure any trends between them. This
further minimised mono-method bias and increase internal and external validity (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

3.6 Sample and Testing

3.6.1 Student and non-student populations

Many studies investigating source credibility have relied solely on student populations, often drawn from psychology courses (e.g., Eagly et al, 1978; Edwards & Bello 2001; McGinnes & Ward, 1980; Petty, Flemming, Priester, Feinstein, 2001; Preister & Petty, 1995; Wiener & Mowen, 1986). These samples are cheap and convenient, and may appeal to researchers with budget and time constraints. However, as suggested by Cook & Campbell (1979) this may make generalising research findings to other populations somewhat problematic. Zimbardo et al. (1965) used a combination of students and non-students (drawn from army reservists) in a communicator effectiveness study. This approach allowed the comparison of results between both samples, and the extrapolation of the findings was less problematic.

With this issue is mind, Study Two utilised a student cohort and a non-student cohort drawn from the wider community. Study Two also utilised a sample with varying political alliances. Study Three utilised a sample representative of the Western Australian voting population, drawn from the community. As suggested by Cook & Campbell (1979) when target audiences have been identified it is important that the sample be representative of that group. Therefore it was felt that the sample chosen to participate in Study Three needed to be representative of the actual Australian voting population. This would allow a strong indication of how actual voters will react to variations in communication style and how that would affect their voting outcome.
3.6.2 Use of uncommitted voters

It was anticipated that the largest effects would be found for ‘uncommitted’ voters. Uncommitted voters are not aligned with any specific political party and therefore their support for a particular politician or policy is not influenced by unrelated alliances.

In Study Two, the participants were a combination of students and non-students drawn from the wider community. These participants were assigned to the two spin conditions randomly. In Study Three, participants were selected to be representative of the Western Australian voting population, and a stratified sample was used to an equivalent distribution of demographic characteristics in each condition. Therefore, the sampling across the studies were a combination of “random sampling for representativeness” and “deliberate sampling for heterogeneity”, implemented to increase external validity (Cook & Campbell, 1979, p. 75).

3.6.3 Context

An important aspect of external validity was establishing the effect of spin on voting trends in the political climate of an election. For this reason, Study Three was conducted in the context of a genuine election, utilising participants eligible to vote and representative of the ‘uncommitted’ voting population. It was felt that this would further increase the external validity of the information obtained to ‘real world’ political applications.

In addition to participants rating confederate messages, they also rated messages from actual political candidates to determine whether the same causal effects occurred. This acted as an internal and external validity check. Participants’ attitudes and intentions
towards both the confederate and the political candidates in the study could be compared to their voting behaviour in the election.

Moreover, Study Three was conducted with the cooperation of a local television network. The opinions and voting trends obtained from participants in the study were broadcast throughout the election campaigning, as part of the networks’ election coverage. This provided a similar intensity to participants, which comes with real voting decisions. The coverage provided a heightened sense that participant responses had an impact throughout the data collection period in the lead up to actual voting. It is noted that in the Australian electoral system voting is compulsory.

3.6.4 Timing
In Study Two, the low and high-spin groups were tested alternatively over the period of a month. There was approximately one day between testing the low-spin group and high-spin group, and they were tested at the same time of the day. In Study Three, the low-spin group was tested no more than one hour before or after the high-spin group on the same day. The time each low and high-spin group were tested rotated each week. This was designed to minimise any confounding influence on one group over the other and to preserve internal validity. The testing occurred in the early evening, each week, for a consecutive five-week period.

3.7 Conclusion
The proposed studies manipulate the communicator’s style of delivering political messages. It is contended that the level of spin used in the delivery of a political message will affect the audiences’ perception the communicator trustworthiness and overall credibility, which in turn impacts on the persuasiveness of the message.
The expectancy disconfirmation effect suggests that the less expected an act, the stronger the audience’s inference that the communicator’s true opinion is consistent with the act. It is hypothesised that a high-spin message will reduce audience perception of source trustworthiness and credibility. Moreover, it is argued that the reduced trustworthiness of the source negatively affects the persuasive outcome of the communication. Therefore, it is expected that a low-spin style of political communication will have a greater persuasive effect due to the audience perceived increase in source trustworthiness. The following chapters discuss the experimental investigations of spin and the persuasiveness of political messages.
CHAPTER 4: STUDY TWO

4.1 Introduction

1. The current study aims to determine whether the Authenticity Scale is a reliable measure of audience response to low and high-spin messages. An alpha coefficient will be used to determine whether the Authenticity Scale is internally consistent. It is hypothesised that the alpha coefficient for the items in the Authenticity Scale will be high, allowing the use of a mean authenticity score rather than analysis of individual items.

2. The study aims to determine whether the characteristics distinguishing low from high-spin are discernable to an audience. The low and high-spin messages were constructed based on specific characteristics drawn from the literature and the interviews study discussed in Chapter Two. It is hypothesised that participants will be able to distinguish between low and high-spin messages. Moreover, participants will record a significantly higher authenticity score for low-spin over high-spin messages.

3. The study aims to determine the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. It is hypothesised that a low-spin message will increase audience perceptions of communicator trustworthiness and credibility. This will provide evidence consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of expectancy disconfirmations, which will account for increased source trustworthiness and credibility of low-spin political communicator.

4. The study aims to determine whether the authenticity score, designed to measure the information control behaviours used by the communicator and the audience perception
of communicator attributes, is directly correlated with audience support for the communicator. It is hypothesised that a higher authenticity score will correspond to significantly greater levels of audience support for the communicator. Moreover, that there will be a significant relationship between the communicators’ use of information control behaviours and lower levels of support for the communicator.

5. The study aims to track audience believability of communicators throughout the duration of their messages and compare the low and high-spin messages. This will be achieved by using the Perception Analyzer, which creates a graphical representation of how audience response is changing on a second-by-second basis throughout a message. It is hypothesised that an increase in the audience believability score will occur from the start of a low-spin message and consistently throughout the message.

6. The study aims to identify any specific demographic effects that occur across both the low and high-spin groups. Specifically, the demographics being considered will be age, gender, occupation, marital status, education, and income. The study also aims to identify whether political attitudes of participants impact on audience response to low and high-spin messages.

7. The study aims to identify what effect size exists in order to determine what sample size will be required for Study Three. This will be calculated using Cohen’s $d$ and also using Eta (1988).
4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

50 participants took part in Study Two. Participants comprised of 24 males and 26 females, and were aged between 17 and 70 years (median = 26 to 30 years). Participants were divided into two experimental groups; one viewed low-spin political messages, the other viewed high-spin political messages. Participants were randomly allocated into either the low or high-spin condition. The low-spin condition comprised 13 males and 13 females, while the high-spin condition comprised 11 males and 13 females.

The details of participant demographics and condition assignment are presented in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of participants.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
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<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/De facto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Administrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24 participants (48%) were recruited using the snowball sampling method; that is, they were recruited randomly through various social networks. The participants recruited by this method were not provided incentives to participate. The remaining 26 participants (52%) were recruited through an undergraduate subject pool and were given subject pool credits for their participation. Participants represented a range of occupations, socio-economic backgrounds, and political orientations.

4.2.2 Materials

All participants viewed three videotaped political messages. Those in the low-spin condition viewed three messages determined to be a low-spin style of communication. Those in the high-spin condition also viewed three messages determined to be a high-spin style of communication. The attributes used to comprise the low and high-spin messages were based on a key set of characteristics developed from the aforementioned literature and study. The characteristics of high-spin can be summarised in general terms as not answering or engaging questions but repeating a rehearsed message or a group of messages. It is advancing a message at the expense of providing spontaneous information and withholding information which is clearly known in order in present a better story or picture to an audience. The characteristics of low-spin can be summarised in general terms as answering questions spontaneously and in a relaxed and flexible manner, not being defensive or aggressive but giving direct answers in an open and calm way. It is delivering detailed responses without simply repeating a crafted message.

The interviews varied in duration with low-spin message one being 6 min 23 seconds, low-spin message two being 14 min 35 seconds, and low-spin message three being 8 min 24 seconds (total duration of low-spin messages 29 min 22 seconds). High-spin
message one was 6 minutes 02 seconds in duration, high-spin message two was 9 minutes 25 seconds in duration, and high-spin message three was 13 minutes 02 seconds in duration (total duration of high-spin messages 28 min 29 seconds).

Both the low and high-spin groups viewed a confederate in message one. The confederate played the role of an independent politician called ‘Laurie Miller’ who was campaigning for a seat in the upcoming State election. The two versions of the confederate message (one low-spin and one high-spin) were designed to be as identical as possible, with the same setting, clothing, subject matter, policy positions, and length of interview. The only difference between the messages was the style of delivery used by the confederate; one message was delivered in a low-spin style and the other in a high-spin style. Figure 4.1 and 4.2 show pictures from the low and high-spin confederate interviews. The low and high-spin confederate scripts are attached as Appendix C.

Figure 4.1: Picture of low-spin confederate Laurie Miller being ‘interviewed’ outside the state parliament building
Messages two and three in the low and high-spin conditions were actual political interviews. The interviews were varied, taking place in different studios with different interviewers about different subjects and policy positions. Journalists from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) conducted the interviews and they all display a similar tough interview style. The four interviews were chosen because the style of communication used contained the low and high-spin attributes required for each condition. The public figures featured in those interviews were also relatively unknown and, therefore, the participants would be less likely to have developed set responses toward them.

The descriptions of the following two interviews demonstrate characteristics of low-spin style communication. Low-spin message two was an interview with Air Marshal Ray Funnell, former chief of the Australian Air Force. Funnell, along with others, had written a petition to the Australian Government appealing for 'truth in Government' and an increase in transparency and openness of communication with the public. Maxine McKue, a current affairs journalist, conducted the interview with Ray Funnell and former Liberal Senator and Australian Consul General in New York, Michael Baume in the television studio. Funnell came across as relaxed, confident, forthright and had a
warm but solemn appearance. He spoke openly and calmly as he defended his position with questions coming not only from the interviewer but also from his opponent Michael Baume. Even though it initially seemed to support his opponent’s argument Funnell directly answered questions and then provided further explanation. He was interrupted on a number of occasions but did not react or attempt to talk over the top of his opponent. Figure 4.3 shows a picture from the low-spin Ray Funnell interview.

![Figure 4.3: Picture of low-spin Ray Funnell](image)

Low-spin message three was an interview with Mike Scrafton, a former Ministerial Defence Advisor who had made damaging allegation against the Government in the well-publicised “Children Overboard” affair.\(^3\) Kerry O’Brien, a current affairs journalist, conducted the interview with Mike Scrafton in a formal and intense interview environment. Scrafton appeared relaxed, confident, and directly answered questions in a spontaneous way. He occasionally smiled and spoke in a frank and down-to-earth manner. When defending his position from the interviewer’s critical questioning Scrafton was up-front, softly spoken and did not seem to get flustered. He did not

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\(^3\) The Children Overboard affair took place in the weeks before the 2001 Federal election. The Australian Navy intercepted a group of asylum seekers approaching Australian waters. The Government released information suggesting some of the asylum seekers had deliberately thrown their children into the sea to prevent or interfere with the interception of their vessel. However, it was later believed that the vessel was sinking, and that the children were placed in the sea to be rescued by the Navy. The allegations against the asylum seekers helped to galvanise support for the Prime Minister, who was campaigning on tougher refugee policies. A subsequent Senate Inquiry determined that children had not been deliberately thrown overboard.
attempt to talk over the top in the interviewer at any time. Figure 4.4 shows a picture from the low-spin Mike Scrafton interview.

The descriptions of the following two interviews demonstrate characteristics of high-spin style communication. High-spin message two was an interview with Meredith Hellicar, chair of James Hardie Industries. At the time of the interview, James Hardie was undergoing a Coronial Inquiry investigating claims that the trust fund set up to compensate victims of asbestos related illnesses was intentionally under-funded. Kerry O’Brien, a current affairs journalist, was conducting the interview with Meredith Hellicar in the television studio. She came across as defensive, serious, and intense. Hellicar appeared to be restrained in her answers and made very repetitive statements. When the interviewer pressed her for answers Hellicar was sporadically aggressive and simply refused to answer certain questions. She periodically used complex terminology and appeared to be quite evasive. When interrupted for clarification she, on a number of occasions, continued to speak over the top of the interviewer. Figure 4.5 shows a picture from the high-spin Meredith Hellicar interview.
High-spin message three was an interview with Government Senator George Brandis, who was refuting the allegations made by Mike Scrafton. Tony Jones, a current affairs journalist, was interviewing Senator George Brandis, in the television studio. George Brandis came across as very serious, formal and precise. His statements appeared to be exacting and thorough as if they had been carefully crafted. He was painstakingly cautious about how he answered questions put to him by the interviewer with many of his answers containing complex terminology and legal language. When Brandis defended his position from the interviewer’s pressing questions he just repeated his previous statements, frequently talked over the interviewer and always tried to have the last word. Figure 4.6 shows a picture from the high-spin George Brandis interview.
These messages were genuine interviews, recorded in a television studio with known interviewers, and broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). As such, the ‘production values’ of these four interviews was greater than for the confederate interviews, which were recorded at the Western Australian Parliament with unknown reporters.

A summary of the high and low-spin messages is presented in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low spin</th>
<th>Public Figure being interviewed</th>
<th>Policy discussed</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message One</td>
<td>Laurie Miller (confederate)</td>
<td>Explanation of election platform</td>
<td>Outside Parliament House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Two</td>
<td>Ray Funell</td>
<td>Explanation of petition calling for greater truth in Government</td>
<td>ABC Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Three</td>
<td>Mike Scrafton</td>
<td>Explanation of his involvement in the “Children overboard” affair</td>
<td>ABC Studio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High spin</th>
<th>Public Figure being interviewed</th>
<th>Policy discussed</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message One</td>
<td>Laurie Miller (confederate)</td>
<td>Explanation of election platform</td>
<td>Outside Parliament House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Two</td>
<td>Meredith Hellicar</td>
<td>Explanation of James Hardie Industries actions</td>
<td>ABC Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Three</td>
<td>George Brandis</td>
<td>Explanation of Government actions in the “Children overboard” affair</td>
<td>ABC Studio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While participants viewed each of the messages, they used a hand-held Perception Analyzer dial to note their responses (See Chapter Three, Figure 1, for image of handheld dial). The Perception Analyzer allows the participant to make continuous Likert-style response to a stimulus. During the videotaped messages, participants were asked to give a continuous rating in response to the statement “How believable is this public figure?”. The dial allowed a response of 0 to 10, with 0 representing “not at all believable” through to 10 representing “completely believable”. A response of 5 is “neutral”. The primary advantage of using this equipment is that the program produces a
graphical representation of the mean score generated by participants for each second of the message.

Before participants viewed any of the low or high-spin messages, they were shown a 5-minute piece of test footage to allow them to practise using the Perception Analyzer equipment. It was thought this would lessen any unintended responses, particularly in the first clip, that may be caused by participant distraction due to unfamiliarity with the Perception Analyser™ equipment. The test footage was an interview with Jenny Macklin, Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition. This interview was selected because it was considered ‘neutral’ rather than low or high-spin and, therefore, would not tend to prime the participants in any particular way. This message was shown to participants in both conditions.

Participants completed a Questionnaire comprising three sections. The first section of the Questionnaire was the 23-item Authenticity Scale designed to measure the amount of ‘spin’ observed and perceptions of the communicator. Each item was rated using a 5-point anchored scale (such as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). The Authenticity Scale is designed to measure a single construct therefore the scale is scored so that a single authenticity score between 1 and 5 is obtained. The 23-item Authenticity Scale is presented in Table 3.1, p. 101.

The second section of the Questionnaire was designed to determine the participant’s political ‘orientation’ and voting history. The Political Attitudes Questionnaire was adapted from a larger questionnaire developed by Hastie (2001). The Political Attitudes Questionnaire comprised 20 items, comprising 14 forced-choice items and 6 Likert-type items. The questionnaire was used to determine if participants had a political party
preference or if they were swinging voters. The Political Attitudes Questionnaire is attached as Appendix D.

The final section of the Questionnaire collected demographic information about participant age, gender, marital status, education, occupation and income. This allowed a comparison of authenticity scores across demographic categories. The demographic questionnaire is attached as Appendix E.

4.2.3 Procedure
All participants were tested at the Interactive Television Research Institute Laboratory at Murdoch University in September 2004. Participants were assigned to a session time based on the time they could attend. Eleven testing sessions were conducted, five low-spin and six high-spin. Each session had a maximum of seven participants, and some sessions contained as few as two participants. All participants that viewed the message together were in the same experimental condition.

Participants were greeted on arrival and seated in the lab. The laboratory was furnished like a domestic lounge room, with comfortable sofa chairs, coffee tables and lamps. There was sufficient room for a maximum of eight participants to sit without being able to see the way other participants were responding with their dials or questionnaires.

Participants were informed that they would view three videotaped interviews of different public figures. They were told that the public figures were senior government bureaucrats, corporate spokespeople, or politicians and that there was also a local State Independent Political Candidate (the confederate).
Participants were then shown how to use the Perception Analyzer hand held dial and were able to trial the device on some test footage. Participants were then read the following instructions:

You are going to be viewing some interviews and rating them with the Perception Analyzer™ (also known as the ‘worm’, which has been publicised by the Nine Network). This dial records a second-by-second account of how you are responding to the interviews. It is basically an electronic scale from 0 to 10. The question to keep in mind when you are watching the public figure being interviewed is “How believable is this public figure?” It is on a scale of 0-10, so 0 would be when you think the public figure is ‘Not at all believable’, and 10 would be when you think the public figure is ‘Completely believable’. A neutral score would be 5.

You will then be asked to fill in a short questionnaire after each interview. It is important that you do not speak to each other about the interviews while we are still testing.

There is no right or wrong answer we just want to know what you think. So there is no need to worry about how others are rating the interview. We just want to record your own thoughts and opinions.

Although, it is quite difficult, try to put your political views aside and be as objective as possible in relation to the question being asked. We are looking for your top-of-mind reactions. When we have finished the interviews, we will then have a discussion about the interviews over tea and biscuits.

But first we need you to read the information provision and sign the consent form but don’t look forward through the booklet. I don’t want the questions to influence the way you view and respond to the interviews so it is important not to look at the questionnaires until after the interviews are finished.

The information provision and consent form are attached as Appendix F. The first message shown to participants was the test message, containing a neutral spin message. This allowed participants an opportunity to practice using the hand-dials. Participants were then shown the confederate message; either the low or high-spin version depending on the condition participants were in. When the confederate message finished, participants were asked to complete the Authenticity Scale. Completion of the Authenticity scale required approximately 10 minutes. Participants were then shown message two (the Ray Funell interview in the low-spin condition, and the Meredith Hellicar interview in the high-spin condition). Participants then completed another
Authenticity Scale. Finally, participants viewed the third message (the Mike Scrafton interview in the low-spin condition and the George Brandis interview in the high-spin condition), and completed another Authenticity Scale.

It was decided that the messages should be presented in this order so that the confederate message, and the completion of the Authenticity Scale relating to the confederate message, would be done first for both the low and high-spin groups. As a result, participants had not seen the Authenticity Scale before viewing the confederate message. This prevented any potential influence that may have occurred if participants were aware of which attributes of the message they would be asked to comment on.

It was also thought the confederate messages should be viewed before the other messages because the confederate messages were not of the same picture, sound and editing quality as the other messages. It was thought that having participants view one of the other messages before the confederate message might alert them to the simulated nature of the message.

After the participants had viewed the three messages and completed the Authenticity Scale for each, they were asked to complete the Political Attitudes Questionnaire, and the demographic questionnaire. This required approximately 10 minutes. After these scales were completed, participants were provided with refreshments and a group debrief discussion began. This discussion lasted for approximately 15 minutes. In total, the testing session required approximately 90 minutes.
4.3 Results

4.3.1 Aim One: Determining the Authenticity Scale’s internal consistency

The first aim of Study Two was to determine the reliability of the Authenticity Scale. In order to do this, Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the Authenticity Scale when it was used to respond to the different messages. Items were rated using a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 4.3 demonstrates the alpha co-efficient of the Authenticity Scale when participants rated the low and high-spin confederate messages and the non-confederate messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confederate – Low-spin</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederate – High-spin</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Funell – Low-spin</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith Hellicar – High-spin</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Scrafton – Low-spin</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Brandis – High-spin</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.3, the alpha co-efficient of the scale was high when used to respond to the low and high-spin confederate message. The alpha co-efficient produced for the low and high-spin confederate messages was .922 and .915 respectively.

In order to ensure that the Authenticity Scale is reliable when used to rate the remaining low and high-spin messages, an alpha co-efficient was calculated for each of the non-confederate messages individually. Table 4.3 demonstrates the alpha co-efficient of the Authenticity Scale when participants rated low-spin message two (the Ray Funell interview) and high-spin message two (the Meredith Hellicar interview). The alpha co-efficient produced by participants rating the low-spin message two was high, at .897. The alpha co-efficient produced by participants rating the high-spin message two was
also high, at .896. Table 4.3, demonstrates the alpha co-efficient of the Authenticity Scale when participants rated low-spin message three (the Mike Scrafton interview) and high-spin message three (the George Brandis interview). The alpha co-efficient produced by participants rating the low-spin message three was high, at .966. The alpha co-efficient produced by participants rating the high-spin message three was also high, at .886.

The mean alpha co-efficient of all messages is very high at .914. A high alpha co-efficient reflects the high internal consistency of the Authenticity Scale. This demonstrates that the mean authenticity score can be used as a unitary construct rather than requiring analysis of items individually.

The aim of producing a reliable and internally consistent Authenticity Scale to measure an audience response to low and high-spin messages has been met.

4.3.2 Aim Two: Determine whether low and high-spin messages are discernable

The second aim of Study Two was to determine whether audiences could discern the difference between a low and high-spin message. A t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the authenticity scores generated by participants viewing the low and high-spin confederate messages. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.4: Results of an independent samples t-test comparing mean Authenticity Scale scores for low and high-spin confederate messages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederate message</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.4, participants viewing the low-spin confederate message produced a significantly higher mean authenticity score than did participants viewing the high-spin confederate message.

Table 4.5 below presents the mean authenticity scores generated by participants viewing each of the non-confederate messages (low and high-spin messages two and three).

| Table 4.5: Authenticity Scale scores produced for public figures viewed in Study Two. |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
|                                   | Mean | sd  | t    | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Low-spin figures                  |      |     |      |    |                |
| Ray Funnell                       | 3.40 | .52 | .412 | 25 | .684           |
| Mike Scrafton                     | 3.32 | .86 |      |    |                |
| High-spin figures                 |      |     |      |    |                |
| Meredith Hellicar                 | 2.45 | .58 | -.745| 23 | .464           |
| George Brandis                    | 2.58 | .57 |      |    |                |

As seen in Table 4.5, participants produced higher mean authenticity scores for low-spin messages from Ray Funnell and Mike Scrafton than for the high-spin messages from Meredith Hellicar and George Brandis. Given that there were no significant differences between the two low-spin figures, Funnell and Scrafton, and between the two high-spin figures, Hellicar and Brandis, data from the low-spin messages will be combined for comparison with the data from the high-spin messages combined.

A t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the authenticity scores generated by participants viewing the two low-spin and the two high-spin non-confederate messages (low and high-spin messages two and three). The results are presented in Table 4.6.

| Table 4.6: Results of an independent samples t-test comparing mean Authenticity Scale scores for low and high-spin messages two and three. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|
| Messages 2 & 3                                                                                                                     | 26  | 24  | .132   | 6.259| 48     |
| Low-spin                                                                                                                          | 3.36| .54 |        |     | .001   |
| High-spin                                                                                                                         | 2.51| .40 |        |     |        |
| Levene’s test (p)                                                                                                                  |     |     |        |     |        |
| df                                                                                                                                  |     |     |        |     |        |
| Sig. (2-tailed)                                                                                                                    |     |     |        |     |        |
As seen in Table 4.6, participants viewing low-spin messages two and three produced a significantly higher mean authenticity score than did participants viewing high-spin messages two and three.

The aim of determining whether the characteristics distinguishing low from high-spin are discernable to an audience has been met.

4.3.3 Aim Three: Identify audience perceptions of the communicator

The fifth aim of Study Two was to identify changes in the audience’s perceptions of communicator characteristics in response to low and high-spin messages. A split plot analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the low and high-spin messages and the trust and credibility ratings of communicators generated by participants. The results are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 represents the mean communicator trust and credibility scores produced by participants viewing low and high-spin confederate messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.7: Results of split plot ANOVA examining the effects of condition on trust and credibility ratings of the confederate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low-spin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 4.7, a split plot ANOVA was conducted for the confederate messages comparing condition (2) and participant ratings of trust and credibility. Participants’ perception of communicator trust and credibility were significantly higher in the low-spin condition than for the high-spin condition (between subjects). Moreover, as seen in Table 4.7, participants’ perceptions of trust were significantly lower than credibility in both the low and high-spin condition (within subjects). It was also found that there was no significant interaction between condition and the trust and credibility rating (interaction effect).

Table 4.8 represents the mean trust and credibility scores produced by participants viewing the Ray Funnel message two (low-spin); Meredith Hellicar message two (high-spin); Mike Scrafton message three (low-spin); and the George Brandis message three (high-spin). Two related samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the trust and credibility scores of messages 2 and 3.

| Table 4.8: Results of split plot ANOVA examining the effects of condition on trust and credibility ratings of the non-confederate messages. |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                                  | Low-spin        | High-spin       |
|                                                  | n   | Mean | sd  | n   | Mean | sd  |
| Trust                                            | 26  | 3.07 | .82 | 24  | 1.85 | .60 |
| Credibility                                      | 26  | 3.60 | .86 | 24  | 2.65 | .67 |
| Effect                                           |     |      |     |     |      |     |
| Within subjects                                  |     |      |     |     |      |     |
| Trust vs. Credibility                            | 36.51 | 1, 48 | .001  |
| Between subjects                                 |     |      |     |     |      |     |
| Low vs. High-spin                                | 35.60 | 1, 48 | .001  |
| Interaction                                      |     |      |     |     |      |     |
| Condition x DV                                   | 1.58  | 1, 48 | .215  |
As seen in Table 4.8, participants produced significantly higher trust and credibility ratings when viewing the low-spin non-confederate messages. Although, participants produced lower trust and credibility ratings for the non-confederate high-spin messages, perceptions of trust in both low and high-spin messages were all lower than credibility ratings. This is consistent with findings for the confederate.

The aim of determining the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trustworthiness and credibility has been met.

4.3.4 Aim Four: Relationship between authenticity score and support

The fourth aim of Study Two was to determine whether there was a relationship between the authenticity score and participant support for the communicator. There was a positive, significant linear relationship between authenticity scores and support for the confederate (r (48) = .829, p < .001). There was also a positive, significant linear relationship between authenticity scores and support for Messages 2 and 3 (r (48) = .876, p < .001).

In addition, analysis was conducted on items directly measuring information control behaviours associated with high-spin messages. It was found that the use of these information control behaviours in messages correlated with significantly lower levels of support for the communicator (r (48) = .712, p < .001). Simply stated, the communicator’s use of information control behaviours corresponded with lower audience support. The same relationship between information control behaviours and support for the communicator was also found for both Messages 2 and 3 (r (48) = .846, p < .001).
The aim of determining whether the authenticity score correlates with audience support for the communicator has been met.

4.3.5 Aim Five: Tracking audience believability throughout a message

The sixth aim of Study Two was to track audience believability score throughout the duration of a message and compare low and high-spin messages. The continuous mean rating of audience ‘believability’ for the low and high-spin confederate message is displayed below in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.7 presents the continuous mean rating of audience believability for the low and high-spin confederate interviews, which participants produced using the Perception Analyzer. Participants were asked, “How believable is this public figure”? While viewing the messages participants indicated their belief on a rating scale of 0 to 10 (0 indicates the public figure is ‘Not at all believable’, 10 indicates the public figure is ‘Completely believable’, and 5 indicates a neutral score). This produces a continuous fluctuating mean belief score, which is represented as a line graph as seen below.

However, it must be noted that participants returned to a neutral rating when the interviewer spoke, which is seen as sharp decreases or increases in the mean believability rating of the communicator. Although more detailed information is gained from the traditional data collected, the Perception Analyzer graph provides a useful overall comparison of the continuous believability scores for low and high-spin communicators.
As seen in Figure 4.7, participants viewing the low-spin confederate message produced a higher mean believability score throughout the interview than did participants viewing the high-spin confederate message. It is interesting to note that after diverging almost straightaway, (low-spin going positive and high-spin going negative) the rating of both the low and high-spin messages slowly rose throughout the interview. The low-spin confederate maintained a positive believability score throughout the message. The believability score for the high-spin message did not increase much above the neutral point. Clearly, the believability of the high-spin confederate was perceived as lower in the first half of the message.

Figures 4.8 to 4.11 present the continuous mean believability score throughout the interviews participants produced using the Perception Analyzer.
As seen in Figure 4.8, participants’ mean believability score for Ray Funnell (low-spin message two) indicates that participants’ mean rating of the public figure remained in the believable range throughout the interview.
As seen in Figure 4.9, participants’ mean belief score for Mike Scrafton (low-spin message three) indicates that participants’ mean rating of the public figure remained in the “believable” range overall. It also indicates that participants’ mean belief rating briefly dipped into the “not believable” range 220 seconds into the interview.
As seen in Figure 4.10, participants’ mean believability score for Meredith Hellicar (high-spin message two) indicates that participants’ mean rating of the public figure remained in the “not believable” range overall. It also indicates that participants’ mean belief rating briefly moved marginally into the “believable” range at 140, 250, 320, and 460 seconds into the interview.
As seen in Figure 4.11, participants’ mean believability score for George Brandis (high-spin message three) indicates that participants’ mean rating of the public figure remained in the “not believable” range overall. It also indicates that participants’ mean belief rating briefly moved marginally into the “believable” range at 145, 325, 475, and 520 seconds into the interview.

It is interesting to note that the mean believability scores for low-spin messages were higher and immediately diverge as compared to the high-spin messages for all communicators.

The aim to track audience believability of communicators throughout the duration of their messages and compare low and high-spin messages has been met.
4.3.6 Aim Six: Identify demographic differences across low and high-spin

The seventh aim of Study Two was to identify whether there are any demographic differences related to variation in authenticity scores. An ANOVA was conducted to determine whether males and females produced different authenticity scores when viewing the confederate messages. The results are presented in Table 4.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.9: Two-way ANOVA comparing the effect of condition and gender on Authenticity Scale scores for the confederate messages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-spin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.9, males did not produce consistently higher or lower mean authenticity scores than did female participants. The results of the 2 x 2 ANOVA confirmed that there were no significant differences between the scores produced by males and females when viewing either low or high-spin messages.

An ANOVA was used to determine whether participants of different marital status produced different authenticity scores after viewing low and high-spin messages. Participants who were separated or divorced were excluded from this analysis due to the small cell size in the category (n = 3). The results are presented in Table 4.10.
Table 4.10: Two-way ANOVA comparing the effect of condition and marital status on Authenticity Scale scores for the confederate messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low spin</td>
<td>Levene’s test (.475)</td>
<td>Condition (.5186)</td>
<td>5.186</td>
<td>1, 46</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High spin</td>
<td>Levene’s test (.475)</td>
<td>Marital status (.11.62)</td>
<td>11.62</td>
<td>1, 46</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levene’s test (.475)</td>
<td>Interaction (.0.205)</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>1, 46</td>
<td>.653</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.10, there appears to be a relationship between marital status and authenticity scores, with married/de facto participants producing higher authenticity scores than separated/divorced or never married participants when viewing either low or high-spin messages. The two-way ANOVA demonstrates that there is a significant effect for marital status for participants viewing the high-spin confederate message. Participants who had never married produced significantly lower authenticity scores than those who were married (p < .05).

In order to further investigate this effect between marital status and authenticity scores analysis was conducted on the non-confederate messages. Again participants who were separated or divorced were excluded from this analysis due to the small cell size in the category (n = 3). The results are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Two-way ANOVA comparing the effect of condition and marital status on Authenticity Scale scores for the non-confederate messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low spin</td>
<td>Levene’s test (.189)</td>
<td>Condition (.29.871)</td>
<td>29.871</td>
<td>1, 42</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High spin</td>
<td>Levene’s test (.189)</td>
<td>Marital status (.2.240)</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>1, 42</td>
<td>.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levene’s test (.189)</td>
<td>Interaction (.0.499)</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>1, 42</td>
<td>.484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 4.11, the effect of marital status was not significant for message 2 and 3. There was no interaction between marital status and condition for either message.

An ANOVA was also used to determine whether there was a relationship between participant age and the authenticity scores produced after viewing low and high-spin confederate messages. Given the small cell sizes in some age groups a median split was used to divide age into two groups (above and below 30 years of age). The results are presented in Table 4.12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.12: Two-way ANOVA comparing the effect of condition and age on Authenticity Scale scores for the confederate messages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 years and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.12, there is a significant effect for age, with older participants producing higher authenticity scores. This age effect is consistent with the effect found for marital status, as older people are more likely to be married than a younger demographic. It is also noted that the effect of the interaction between age and condition on authenticity scores is not significant.

In order to further investigate this age effect analysis was done on the non-confederate messages. Table 4.13 demonstrates the mean authenticity scores produced by participants in different age groups viewing the low and high-spin non-confederate messages. Again a median split was used to divide age into two groups.
Table 4.13: One-way ANOVA comparing the effect of condition and age on Authenticity Scale scores for the non-confederate messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low spin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>38.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 years and</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
<td>.172</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 years and</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High spin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 years and</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
<td>.172</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 years and</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.13, the effect of age was not significant for message 2 and 3. There was no interaction between age and condition for either message.

Figure 4.12 demonstrates the political party that participants usually vote for in the House of Representatives.

![Figure 4.12: Percentage of participants who usually vote for different political parties.](image)

150
As seen in Figure 4.12, nearly one quarter of participants indicated that they did not usually vote for any particular party. The majority of participants indicated that they usually voted for the ALP or Liberal Party.

Additionally, to the question identified in Figure 4.12, the Political Attitudes Questionnaire asked participants if they considered themselves to be uncommitted voters. 32% of participants indicated that they considered themselves to be an uncommitted voter.

Figure 4.13 demonstrates the proportion of participants who voted for different political parties in the last Federal election.

As seen in Figure 4.13, the majority of participants voted for one of the two major parties. An ANOVA was conducted to determine whether participants’ voting behaviour was related to the authenticity scores they produced. Table 4.14 presents the results of the ANOVA.
Table 4.14: One-way ANOVAs comparing the authenticity scores produced by participants viewing the confederate messages who usually vote for different political parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which political party do you usually vote for?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No usual party</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>3, 49</td>
<td>.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which political party did you vote for in the last Federal election?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>3, 49</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.14, participants voting for one of the mainstream parties produced higher authenticity scores than those who voted for alternative parties such as the Greens or making an Informal vote. It is noted that participants voting for the most conservative parties (the Christian Democrats and Family First) produced the highest scores.

Figure 4.14 represents the responses of participants to the statement “I am interested in politics”. As seen below, participants produced a range of responses, with approximately one third of the sample disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement, and nearly one half agreeing or strongly agreeing.
The mean score produced by participants in response to the statement “I am interested in politics” is produced a neutral score of 3.04. The highest level of education obtained by participants is presented in Figure 4.15.
As seen in Figure 4.15, the level of education achieved by participants appears to be well distributed. Most participants indicated that they had completed high school, with fewer having completed TAFE or university. The occupations of participants are displayed in Figure 4.16.

As seen in Figure 4.16, more than half of the participants were students, reflecting the use of the subject pool to recruit participants. The rest of the sample was evenly distributed among the remaining occupation types. The marital status of participants is presented in Figure 4.17.
As seen in Figure 4.17, more than half of participants had never been married, and over one third were married or living in a de facto relationship. The remaining participants were separated or divorced, with no participants indicating that they were widowed.

The income received by participants, and their partners where applicable, is demonstrated in Figure 4.18.
As demonstrated in Figure 4.18, the majority of participants indicated that they earned less than $20,000 annually. The majority of the remaining participants earned between $20,000 and $80,000, with fewer than 5% of participants earning between $80,000 and $120,000.

The aim to identify any specific demographic or political attitude effects across both the low and high-spin groups has been met.

4.3.7 Aim Seven: Identify the effect size

Table 4.15 presents the results of a Cohen’s d effect-size calculation (Cohen, 1988).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.15: Calculations of effect size for the Authenticity Scale when used to rate the confederate messages.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-spin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen’s $d$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 4.15, the effect size calculated for the difference between low and high-spin messages was small to medium.

The aim to identify the effect size between low and high-spin message using the Authenticity Scale has been met.
4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Aims of Study Two

1. This study aimed to determine whether the Authenticity scale is a reliable measure of audience response to low and high-spin messages. An alpha coefficient was used to determine whether the Authenticity Scale is internally consistent. It was hypothesised that the alpha coefficient for the items in the Authenticity Scale would be high, which would allow the use of a mean authenticity score rather than analysis of individual items.

2. The study aimed to determine whether the characteristics distinguishing low from high-spin were discernable to an audience. The low and high-spin messages were constructed based on specific characteristics drawn from the literature and the interviews study discussed in Chapter Two. It was hypothesised that participants would be able to distinguish between low and high-spin messages and a significantly higher authenticity score would be recorded for low-spin over high-spin messages.

3. The study aimed to determine the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. It was hypothesised that a low-spin style message will increase audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. This would provide evidence consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of expectancy disconfirmations, which account for the increased source trustworthiness and credibility of low-spin political communicators.

4. The study aimed to determine the relationship between the authenticity score and the audience support for the communicator. It was hypothesised that a higher authenticity score will correspond to significantly greater levels of audience support for the
communicator. This would provide further evidence of expectancy disconfirmations, which accounts for the increased persuasiveness of the low-spin political communicator.

5. The study aimed to track audience believability throughout a message in relation to low and high-spin communicators. This was achieved by using the Perception Analyzer, which creates a graphical representation of how audience responses change on a second-by-second basis throughout a message. It was hypothesised that an increase in the audience believability score would occur from the start of a low-spin message and consistently throughout the message.

6. The study aimed to identify what specific demographic effects occurred across both the low and high-spin groups. Specifically, the demographics considered were age, gender, occupation, marital status, education, and income. The study also aimed to identify whether political attitudes of participants impact on audience response to low and high-spin messages.

7. The study aimed to identify what effect size exists in order to determine what sample size will be required for Study Three. This was calculated using Cohen’s $d$ and also using Eta (1988).

4.4.2 Aim 1: Determining the Authenticity Scale’s internal consistency

The study aimed to determine whether the Authenticity Scale was internally consistent. It was hypothesised that the alpha co-efficient for the Authenticity Scale would be high. This hypothesis was supported by the data, with the mean alpha co-efficient of all messages being .914. According to Cronbach (1951) an alpha co-efficient of above .70 is very high, and represents a high level of scale reliability.
The Authenticity Scale was designed to produce a single score useful in evaluating the level of spin in a political message. It measured the information control behaviours used by the politician and the audiences’ perception of the politician. The finding of a very high alpha co-efficient for the items in the Authenticity Scale allows the use of a single mean authenticity score rather than analysis of individual items.

For Study Three, it would be useful to have a shortened version of the Authenticity Scale, which could be completed more quickly by participants. The very high alpha level of the Authenticity Scale will allow the number of items to be reduced without weakening the consistency of the scale. Therefore, items 1, 18, 19, and 22 are identified as being the least related items of the scale when it is used to rate both the confederate and non-confederate messages. Several items also measure similar characteristics, and could be eliminated from the scale also. For example, items 3 and 6, 4 and 23, 5 and 12, 8 and 16, 9 and 13, 11 and 17, 15 and 19, could be reduced to 1 of the items, which has the strongest alpha score. Therefore, the Authenticity Scale could be reduced to 13 items or less, which would include the following items: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 20, and 21. This reduced scale includes 3 negatively worded items (1, 6, and 10) in order to reduce acquiescence bias.

4.4.3 Aim Two: Determine whether low and high-spin messages are discernable

The study aimed to determine whether the characteristics distinguishing low from high-spin were discernable to an audience. It was hypothesised that participants viewing the low-spin messages would produce significantly higher authenticity scores than participants viewing the high-spin messages. This hypothesis was supported by the results. Participants produced significantly higher authenticity scores for confederate
and non-confederate low-spin messages than for confederate and non-confederate high-spin messages. This finding is consistent with the literature review and interview study in chapters one and two, which assert that the public are media literate and are able to recognise political spin.

The Authenticity Scale was designed to measure the information control behaviours used by a communicator and the audience perception of the communicator. It has been demonstrated that the single score produced by the Authenticity Scale is useful in evaluation of the level of spin in a message. This is consistent with the communication professionals (outlined in Chapter Two) who suggest the public are able to recognise high-spin communication. It is also consistent with Australia’s foremost communication advisor, Ian Kortlang, who suggested that the public have finely tuned ‘bullshit’ detectors (Ham, 2003) as well as Frankfurt and Black’s assertion that communication such as bullshit and humbug is recognisable (Black, 1983; Frankfurt, 2005a; Ham, 2003).

4.4.4 Aim Three: Identify audience perceptions of the communicator

The study aimed to determine the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. It was hypothesised that a low-spin style message will increase audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. The hypothesis was supported by the results. Participants produced significantly higher ratings of trust and credibility for the low-spin confederate politician as compared with the high-spin confederate politician. This result was replicated in non-confederate communicators. Participants produced significantly higher ratings of trust and credibility for the low-spin communicators as compared to the high-spin communicators. These findings are supported by conclusions in the study conducted
with communication professionals who believe the public do view spin cynically and where there is more open communication greater trust is developed.

This result is also consistent with Wiener & Mowen (1986) who found communicator source trustworthiness to be an important source component within the dimensions of credibility. There are similarity between these findings and Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken’s (1978) study in relation to a reporting bias (referring to the receiver’s perception about the willingness of the source to accurately report information in relation to the topic). It suggested that if the communicator’s position disconfirms the receiver’s reporting bias expectations this will lead the receiver to believe that the communicator’s stated position is perceived to be more representative of external reality and trustworthy. Moreover, when these expectancies are confirmed receiver perception of the message validity is decreased.

4.4.5 Aim Four: Relationship between authenticity score and support

The study aimed to determine whether there was a relationship between the authenticity score and participant support for the communicator. It was hypothesised that a positive linear relationship existed between authenticity scores and support for a communicator. This hypothesis was supported by the results. It was found that there was a correlation between higher authenticity scores produced by participants and significantly greater levels of support for both the confederate and non-confederate communicators. The relationship between the communicator’s use of specific information control behaviours and lower participant support was also found to have a significant relationship. This relationship was found to be significant for both confederate and non-confederate communicators. This finding clearly shows that communicators who used the information control behaviours associated with a high-spin message elicited lower
levels of support. These results all demonstrated the relationship between low-spin communicators and significantly greater levels of support.

These findings are consistent with the literature review chapters one and two, which assert that people respond more favourably to direct, upfront and open communication. For example, Goffman (1986) suggests that a person is compromised and risks being discredited for using strategies to manage information to gain acceptance. Other studies have found that patients were motivated to sue because they suspected a cover-up and liabilities were reduced when more open communication was implemented (Hickson et al., 1992; Kraman & Hamm, 1999). Interviews conducted with communication professionals suggested that the public recognise high-spin communication and it is viewed as manipulative.

The findings are similar to McGinnies & Ward (1980) who found that there was a significant main effect for trustworthiness on the attitude scores in relation to the unilateral extension of Gambia’s maritime boundaries. The high trust condition resulted in more favourable attitudes towards the extension of Gambia’s maritime boundaries. Also relevant to this research is the Smith (1961) study indicating that a positive communicator was able to persuade 90 percent of participants to eat an undesirable food over the negative communicator who only persuaded 50 percent.

The findings are supported by the expectancy disconfirming theory that asserts a disconfirming source will be more persuasive than a source that confirms the audience’s expectancies about the message position of a source because the expectancy disconfirming source demonstrates unbiased reporting (Eagly et al., 1978; Petty et al., 2001; Priester & Petty, 1995).
4.4.6 Aim Five: Tracking audience believability throughout a message

The study aimed to track audience believability of communicators throughout the duration of their messages and compare low and high-spin messages. It was hypothesised that an increase in the audience believability score would occur from the start of a low-spin message and consistently throughout the message. The hypothesis was supported by the results. As seen in the continuous graphical output of audience believability scores from the Perception Analyzer, believability of the communicator consistently fell in response to the high-spin confederate message. Conversely, the believability score increased in response to the low-spin message compared with the high-spin message. The higher believability of the low-spin message occurred at the beginning of the message and continued throughout the message.

These results were found for both the confederate and non-confederate communicators. As seen in the graphical output from the Perception Analyzer, the audiences’ believability of the communicator consistently fell when all non-confederate public figures used communication that has been identified as high-spin characteristics. Finding from the literature review supports these results and interviews study that communicators’ credibility tended to be regarded as a prized characteristic in order to produce persuasive communication.

These results are consistent with the assertions of Goffman (1986), Grattan (1998), Kraman & Hamm (1999), and Ward (2003) that more up-front and honest communication styles will be received more favourably by audiences. The interviews conducted with public communication professionals from the public relations and pharmaceuticals firms also supports the finding that attempts to avoid answers, as was
evident in the high-spin messages, are less likely to be believed by audiences (see discussion in Chapter 2).

4.4.7 Aim Six: Identify demographic differences across low and high-spin

The study aimed to determine whether any participant demographic characteristics were related to different responses to the low and high-spin messages. Several demographic characteristics were explored, including gender, age, marital status, and previous voting behaviour. There were no gender differences in the authenticity scores produced from the low or high-spin messages. This suggests that neither men nor women are more sceptical of public messages.

However, there was a difference between the authenticity scores produced by participants of different ages when viewing both the low and high-spin confederate messages. It was found that older participants produced higher authenticity scores than younger participants viewing the confederate messages. Interestingly, this pattern was not evident when participants viewed the non-confederate messages. When both low and high-spin non-confederate messages were viewed, there was no relationship between authenticity scores and age. There are two possible explanations for why there would be an age effect for the confederate messages but not for the non-confederate messages. The ‘production values’ of the confederate messages were not as high as those in the non-confederate messages. The interview was filmed outdoors with unknown journalists and the sound was of a lower quality. It may be that the younger participants, who Graden, (2001) and Klein (1995) have suggested are more media literate, were relatively more sceptical when viewing the confederate messages.
The other aspect to this explanation for the age effect in authenticity score is that 52% of participants were psychology students, which made up a large proportion of the younger demographic. The psychology student may have picked the confederate interviews as the independent variable, given their familiarity with the use of confederates in experimental research. If they had suspected it was the independent variable they may have contributed to the lower authenticity score they produced.

The second possibility is that an age effect was detected in the confederate messages because the confederate was completely unknown to participants. Although the non-confederate interviews were selected because they feature less-known public figures, it is possible that participants had some level of familiarity with them. This might have influenced the way participants of different ages viewed them. There may be a genuine age effect with authenticity that is only detected with unknown figures.

There appears to be a relationship between marital status and belief, with the married participants producing higher belief scores than the unmarried and divorced in both the high and low conditions. These differences are significant in the high-spin group, and approaching significance in the low-spin group. However, the small numbers of divorced participants prohibits post-hoc analysis of the low-spin group.

It is suggested that married participants may produce higher authenticity scores than never married or divorced participants because they are more contented generally and perhaps consequently more trusting. There is some evidence from sociological studies that subjective well-being is greater in married people than in the unmarried (Stack & Eshleman, 1998). This explanation would account for why those participants who are separated or divorced produce the lowest authenticity scores, as they are the group
previously identified as having the lowest subjective well-being (Stack & Eshleman, 1998). Correspondingly, it could be argued that happier people would be more trusting and have a less skeptical outlook.

4.4.8 Aim Seven: Identify the effect size

The study aimed to determine the size of the effect between low and high-spin message styles. It was found that the effect size was .355. Cohen describes this effect size as small to medium (Cohen, 1988). It is suggested that the main study will only need to use slightly more participants in a repeated measures design in order to maintain this effect.
4.5 Conclusion

4.5.1 Limitations

There are potential sample limitations with the possibility that participants in the study were atypical of the voting population, resulting in unusual effects. 48 percent of participants were recruited using the snowball sampling method and may have been a homogenous group. 52 percent of participants were psychology students and this may have affected the relationship between the age condition and the authenticity mean. However, participants did represent a range of occupations, socio-economic backgrounds, and political orientations.

The quality of the sound and vision of confederate interview treatment was not as high as the non-confederate treatments. This may have caused unusual effects to occur. However, similar effects were obtained from the non-confederate treatments.

Only a single confederate and message was used in Study Two testing and there may have been something atypical about ether the message of the communicator, which caused an unusual result to occur.

Moreover, the context of the testing was not in an election period and this may have affected participants’ responses to the political messages.

4.5.2 Implications and Applications

Comprehensive implications and application will be discussed in Chapter Seven, after the completion of Study Three. However, it is clear that the low-spin style of communicating is better received and more believable. Perhaps the high-spin style of communication is no longer as effective as it once was, particularly with a growing
media literate public and their increased appetite for true-to-life representations. As the former UK education secretary, Estelle Morris, suggested, a new relationship between politicians and the media is needed to reverse the increasing cynicism of the public (Ward, 2003). Although high-spin messages suit the media’s processes, it alienates the public, for whom the messages are intended. However, with much at stake for organisations in relation to gaining public support they may find other ways to communicate to their public in a low-spin style if traditional media do not accommodate it.

4.5.3 Recommendation for Study Three

To address possible limitation to Study Two the following directions are provide for use in Study Three.

Primarily, Study Three will aim to determine whether the Authenticity Scale has external validity, that is, to determine whether participants can use the Authenticity Scale in a ‘real world’ context to identify differences between low and high-spin political messages. Study Three will also aim to determine whether scores on the Authenticity Scale predict support for political figures. Study Three will be conducted in the context of a state election to provide the real world context in which to test the Authenticity Scale’s predictive validity and measure the persuasiveness of the different styles of communication. The use of confederates and actual politicians will be used to test participants’ response to low and high-spin messages throughout the election campaign period. Therefore, in Study Three the recruitment of participants, selection of test materials, setting and procedures used will diverge from those used in the second study.
4.5.3.1 Design and sample

The sample in Study Two was adequate because a sufficient effect size was achieved. However, in Study Three participants will be a representative sample of the Western Australian voting population. The sample for Study Three will be selected in order to control for age, marital status, occupation, and political orientations. The participants’ chosen will also be ‘uncommitted’ voters.

A repeated measure design will be used in Study Three in order to ensure a sufficient effect from the sample. It will also facilitate analysis to determine the effect of low and high-spin messages on an audience over a longer period of time and any possible cumulative effects. The community sample will be tested over five weekly sessions throughout the election campaign and in two groups of 30 participants.

4.5.3.2 Treatments

The treatments and confederate used in Study Two will be re-tested in Study Three. This will reduce the possibility of an unusual effect being found in Study Two due to the sample being atypical of the voting population. Study Three will also test new treatments using a different confederate politician and message content. The quality of the confederate interviews will be broadcast standard and will be conducted with a known news presenter. Moreover, due to the repeated measure design, cells will act as their own control. The low and high-spin conditions of the cells will be switched in the last test session in order to verify no sample bias exists in the cells.

It was found that participants in Study Two were experiencing some fatigue when viewing over half-an-hour of political interviews. Therefore, the confederate interviews in Study Three will only be 3 minute in duration rather than the 6 to 6.5 minutes in
Study Two. The other two non-confederate interviews will also be shorter, around 10 minutes in total. There will not be any test footage used because it was found in Study Two that the hand held dials were simple to use and participants did not have any difficulties.

In Study Three, a shortened version of the Authenticity Scale will be used in order to further reduce fatigue, as it was found that the Authenticity Scale could be shortened without reducing reliability. Participants will use their hand held dials to complete an electronic questionnaire. This will reduce the time normally required by the paper and pen questionnaire and will also require less data entry work. This will also provide variation in the method of recording attitudes from Study Two, minimising mono-method bias (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

4.5.3.3 Context

The Study Three testing will occur throughout a state election campaign in which participants will be asked to respond to political messages. Moreover, participants will be asked to rate not only confederates but also actual politicians campaigning in the election. The Authenticity Scale will be tested on those actual politicians and the findings will be compared to the results of the election.
CHAPTER 5: STUDY THREE METHOD

5.1 Rationale for Study Three

Study Two aimed to determine whether the Authenticity Scale had utility as a unitary construct and whether participants could use it to identify differences between low and high-spin political messages and their persuasiveness. The recruitment of participants, selection of test materials, setting and procedures used in Study Two allowed these aims to be explored.

Study Three differs from Study Two in that its primary aim is to determine whether the Authenticity Scale has external validity. That is, the aim of the third study is to determine whether participants can use the Authenticity Scale in a ‘real world’ context to identify differences between low and high-spin political messages. Study Three also aims to determine whether scores on the Authenticity Scale predict support for political figures. Due to this difference in aims, the recruitment of participants, selection of test materials, setting and procedures used in Study Three diverge from those used in the second study.

An election was selected as the context in which Study Three could be conducted because this would provide the real world context in which to test the Authenticity Scale’s predictive validity and measure the persuasiveness of the different styles of communication. In elections such as the Western Australian State election voting is compulsory. The voting public are the targets of the political messages designed to influence their attitudes and behaviours. The voting public are focused on political issues and are weighing up the various arguments in order to decide on which candidate to vote for. The outcome of these decisions will be measured and the results are freely
available. Therefore the results of the study can be compared to the actual voting habits of the population in relation to the election outcome.

Study Three was conducted in the campaigning phase of the 2005 state election held in Western Australia. It examined participants’ responses to political messages in the context of an election campaign. This was an important aspect to Study Three because it allowed for examination of participant responses to political communication in a more ‘real world’ context. For example, participants were asked to respond to real political messages in a politically charged environment. That is, when participants were asked whom they would vote for this was done with all the complexity that is contained in the actual decision required of them in the weeks following. Therefore, participants were making decisions based on real political communication in a real election campaign.

5.1.1 Rationale for selection of participants

In Study Two, it was found that 50 participants were sufficient to identify differences between the conditions. Therefore, it was decided that 30 participants in each of the two conditions in Study Three would also be sufficient. However, the method used to recruit participants was modified.

Participants in Study Two comprised a convenience sample of students (52%) and non-students from the wider community (48%). As might be expected, the student group amongst the participants was fairly homogenous in terms of their age, educational background, and political alignment. Given that one of the aims of Study Three is to determine how the Authenticity Scale is used in a real world context, a more heterogeneous sample is required. A representative sample containing age, educational and occupational diversity is required in order to make inferences about how the general
voting population might use the Authenticity Scale. It was decided that participants for Study Three would be stratified to represent the demographic characteristics of this population. Participants will be selected to represent those of different ages, marital statuses, and occupations.

In Study Two, participants were not selected based on their political orientation. However, the Study Three sample included only those participants who had indicated they were ‘uncommitted’ voters (voters who had not decided which political party they were going to vote for in the up-coming State Election). It was decided that if people had predetermined which party they would be voting for, and had voted for the same party in every previous election, they would have strong political beliefs that would not be easily influenced by persuasive arguments or political policies. Therefore, uncommitted voters were chosen because the aim of Study Three was to determine the persuasiveness of a low-spin message over a high-spin message and uncommitted voters, by their very nature, could be persuaded one way or the other.

The recruitment of participants commenced before the Western Australian State Election campaign began. This was designed to reduce the inclusion into the sample of political party agents, seeking to influence the weekly results of the study (due to the fact that the results would be broadcast primetime each week, see further details in section 5.1.3). The initial information provided in recruitment advertising did not inform potential participants that the study involved taking part in a studio audience and appearing once a week in a television news segment. It was felt that if people knew they would be appearing on television and that their opinions would form part of the statistical data presented to the public on election issues, this could cause selection bias.
Therefore, participants were only told of the exact nature of the study after they had responded to the initial advertising and applied to participate.

Moreover, the application to participate in the study was quite lengthy and involved answering 19 questions about political beliefs and providing demographic information. It was felt that because the initial application was time consuming and required some effort, with no guarantee of being selected, this would reduce the number of participants that may drop out of the 5-week study. The actual study sample had been selected from the pool of potential participants who did not have full knowledge of what the study involved and had made a commitment to participate in the 5-week study. The published recruitment advertisement is attached as Appendix G and the information provided to those who responded to participate in the study is attached as Appendix H.

5.1.2 Rationale for test materials

In Study Two, a 23-item Authenticity Scale was used to assess the characteristics of low and high-spin messages. Multiple items on the Authenticity Scale, worded differently, assessed the characteristics of the political messages being tested. It was found that the 23-item Authenticity Scale was internally consistent; with participants producing high alpha coefficients when rating both low and high-spin messages.

Given that the Authenticity Scale demonstrated high internal consistency, it was decided that the scale could be reduced for use in Study Three. The items producing the lowest correlations with other items were removed, as were items replicating other items. Therefore, a 9-item scale was developed for use in the second study. This shortened scale was required to reduce time participants would need to complete the
questionnaire in each test session. It was also believed that a shortened version of the
scale would maintain high internal consistency while reducing participant fatigue.

Table 5.1 below presents the 9-items comprising the Authenticity Scale, which
participants respond to using a 5-point Likert scale. The level of support elicited for the
communicator was also measured to determine the persuasiveness of low and high-spin
messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe the public figure gave evasive answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I believe the public figure's statements were credible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believed the public figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The public figure made direct statements/directly answered questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe the public figure was authentic</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I believe the public figure's statements to be dishonest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The public figure had a relaxed posture / manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The politician's statements instilled me with trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I would support this public figure</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The public figure was unconvincing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Bold items are reverse scored

In Study Two, participants recorded their responses to the Authenticity Scale and
demographic questions using a written questionnaire. For Study Three, participants used
the hand held Perception Analyzer dials to complete an electronic questionnaire. It is
anticipated that responding to the questionnaires in this way will reduced the time
normally required by the paper and pen questionnaire. It is also believed that this
method will reduce data entry and the human error associated with it.

In Study Two, the recordings of political messages shown to participants were selected
because they were evaluated as being low or high in spin content. The messages were
not selected because of the issues being discussed. The messages viewed in Study
Three, however, were selected based on issues that were relevant to the 2005 Western Australian election campaign.

5.1.3 Rationale for setting

Study One was conducted outside of a political campaign. At the time Study Two was conducted, there were no state or federal election campaigns taking place. Therefore, the social atmosphere was not politically charged as it might otherwise have been, although, the 2004 Australian Federal election had taken place a month earlier and there was some public speculation about when the state election was going to be held. However, Study Three was conducted during the 5-week political campaign for the 2005 Western Australian state election. During this time, participants were considering the political leaders and policies they would vote for. It is believed that this election environment would give Study Three results greater external validity.

Study Two was conducted at a university laboratory resembling a domestic lounge room. Conversely, participants in Study Three formed a television studio audience that provided opinions during the election campaign. The responses of participants to the different political candidates were analysed and the results broadcasted on commercial television each week as part of a summary of political issues surrounding the upcoming election. Figure 5.1 shows a picture of the participant setting during the election campaign testing.
5.1.4 Rationale for procedures

It was found that participants in Study Two were experiencing some fatigue when viewing over half-an-hour of political interviews. Therefore, the confederate interviews in Study Three were only 3 minutes in duration rather than the 6.5 minutes in study one. The other two non-confederate interviews were also shorter, around 5 minutes each. No test footage was used because it was found in Study Two that the hand held dials for the Perception Analyzer were simple to use and participants did not have any difficulties. However, in the first week of Study Three participants were instructed on how to use the hand held dial and they used them to rate two interviews from the respective leaders of the two parties.

A repeated measures design was used in order to ensure a sufficient effect from the sample as well as determining whether any sample bias existed between the two groups viewing low and high-spin messages. It also facilitated analysis over time and to determine if the communication styles being tested have a cumulative effect.
5.2 Hypotheses

1. Study Three aims to determine whether the reduced Authenticity Scale is a reliable measure of audience response to low and high-spin messages. An alpha coefficient will be used to determine whether the Authenticity Scale is internally consistent. It is hypothesised that the alpha co-efficient for the items in the Authenticity Scale will be high for both confederate politician and actual politicians. This will allow for the use of a mean authenticity score rather than analysis of individual items.

2. Study Three aims to explore whether there are any demographic characteristics that relate to different responses on the Authenticity Scale. In Study Two, some demographic characteristics were related to different responses on the Authenticity Scale. However, the sample used in Study Two was not representative demographically of the voting population. The participant sample used for Study Three will contain greater diversity of age, occupation and education.

3. Study Three aims to re-test the same confederate treatment as Study Two in order to verify if the more representative sample of participants responds in the same way and produces similar results. Study Three also aims to test a new confederate and message treatment utilising broadcast standard production quality for the interview. The new confederate interview material will also be a different style of political interview than previously tested. The style of interview tested will be a one-on-one studio interview. The interviewer used to conduct the interview in the confederate treatment will be a well-known news presenter. It is hypothesised that the authenticity score and support will be higher for the low-spin confederate politicians than the high-spin ones. In addition, Study Three aims to determine the authenticity score for the actual political leaders campaigning in the election.
4. Study Three aims to determine what the effect size is between low and high-spin messages. It is hypothesised that the effect size will be at least consistent with a low to medium effect size found in Study Two.

5. Study Three aims to confirm the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. It is hypothesised that a low-spin style message will increase audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. This would provide evidence consistent with an expectancy disconfirmation effect, which will account for the increased persuasiveness of the low-spin political communicators.

6. Study Three aims to track the audience approval of communicators throughout the duration of their message and compare low and high-spin messages. This will be achieved by using the Perception Analyzer, which creates a graphical representation of how audience response is changing on a second-by-second basis throughout a message. It is hypothesised that audience approval for the low-spin communicator will increase throughout the duration of the message.

7. Study Three aims to confirm the relationship between the level of spin used and the audience’s support for both the confederate and the actual politicians. It is hypothesised that a higher authenticity score will correspond to greater levels of audience support for the communicator. Moreover, the information control behaviours used in high-spin political communication will be significantly related to lower levels of support for the communicator. Additionally, the effects of the low-spin condition will elicit greater communicator support. This will provide further evidence of an expectancy
disconfirmation effect, which accounts for the increased persuasiveness of a low-spin style of political communication.

8. Study Three aims to establish the authenticity score for the actual political leaders during a general election campaign. It is hypothesised that the political leader who generates the higher authenticity score will enjoy significantly higher levels of support. Moreover, it is hypothesised that the politician with the highest authenticity score will win the 2005 Western Australian general election.

5.3 Participants

Participants were recruited through a newspaper advertisement placed in metropolitan community newspapers run for four weeks and public notice boards, seven weeks prior to the calling of the 2005 Western Australian state election. The advertisement invited participants to be part of a research project exploring community responses to political messages. The advertisement requested volunteers aged 18 years or more, who could be available for a one-hour session once a week for five weeks. The advertisement informed readers that participants would be paid $50 at the end of the study to assist with their travel expenses. The advertisement provided a website address for readers to register their details if they wished to participate. The advertisement is attached as Appendix G.

Readers who registered at the project website were asked a series of demographic and political attitudes questions to assist with selection. The registration questions are attached as Appendix I. Of the nearly 532 people that registered on the website, 60 participants were selected to take part in the study.
Participants were selected from the group that registered on the following basis.

Participant selection was stratified to be representative of the Australian population based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data in relation to demographics such as marital status, income, occupation, and age. Participants also needed to be uncommitted voters, were not members of a political party, and were willing to appear on television.

Moreover, they needed to be available on 5 consecutive Thursday evenings for 1 hour beginning somewhere between mid-January and mid-February.\(^4\)

Those participants fitting that profile were then contacted by phone and given further details about the study and what was required. The questions and details given to respondents as part of the last stage of recruitment for the project were:

You registered to take part in an election project. Are you still able to take part? Are you a member of a political party? If you are willing to participate, you will be part of a community panel viewing the issues throughout the election. It will be held at the Channel Nine studios and will be filmed and the footage will be used in a weekly news segment. You may appear on television. Are you okay with that possibility? You will be required for 5 consecutive Thursday evenings for about one hour. You will be asked to sign a form stating you are not a member of a political party and giving permission to be filmed. Are you still willing to take part in this project?

Two respondents indicated they were members of a political party. One of them had resigned 3 years ago and considered himself an uncommitted voter and the other was excluded from participating in the study.

Participants were paid for attending the test sessions at the conclusion of the test period. Participants received $62.50 for attending the full 5 weeks of testing which was intended to compensate them for travel expenses. There were no participant dropouts throughout the testing over the election campaign.

\(^4\) At the time of recruitment it was not known exactly when the election would be held. However, it was determined at the time of final recruitment that the election would be held between mid-February and mid-March. This would mean the official election campaign would start between mid-January and mid-February 2005.
5.3.1 Characteristics of the sample

Participants comprised of 30 males and 30 females, and were aged in groups ranging from ‘18 - 30’ to ‘70 plus’ years (median age group = ‘41- 50’ years). Participants were divided into two experimental groups; one viewing low-spin political messages, the other viewing high-spin political messages. The conditions were stratified so that both groups were balanced as much as possible in terms of participant gender, age, marital status and occupation. The demographic characteristics of the low and high-spin groups are outlined in Table 5.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2: Demographic characteristics of participants.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
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<td>51-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/De facto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Administrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant machine operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales/Personal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Materials

Each week during the five-weeks of Study Three, participants viewed and responded to a series of political messages. From Week One to Five, participants viewed an edited
series of political interviews conducted with two political candidates (State Premier, Geoff Gallop, and the Leader of the opposition government, Colin Barnett). The footage was drawn from interviews that had taken place during that week’s election campaigning. The interviews that participants viewed were not televised in their entirety, although small excerpts from the interviews may have been including in some news packages. The edited interviews were viewed as one piece of audiovisual material of approximately 10 minutes duration. Equal time was given to each candidate in the edited material. Participants in both the low and high-spin conditions viewed these political messages. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 show pictures from interviews with political leaders Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.
Table 5.3 demonstrates the duration of the edited political messages for each week of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>8 minutes 33 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>11 minutes 13 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Three</td>
<td>11 minutes 02 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>10 minutes 41 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week Five</td>
<td>11 minutes 23 seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As participants viewed these edited political messages each week, they were asked to rate them using the Perception Analyzer handheld dial. As in Study Two, the Perception Analyzer was used to collect moment-to-moment participant responses to the political messages. While viewing the political messages, participants were asked to continuously respond to the statement, “Please indicate your approval for this politician throughout the interview” on a 0 - 100 scale. Participants were informed that a response of 0 indicated disapproval, a response of 25 indicated mild disapproval, a response of 50 indicated a neutral response, a response of 75 indicated mild approval, and a response of 100 indicated approval. It was further explained that there are also gradients of disapproval and approval in-between those specific scores. This statement, and the response scale, was used to rate all political messages viewed over the 5-week study.

The Perception Analyzer was considered to be an effective tool for collecting responses to the political messages because it allowed a continuous response to the message, rather than responses at particular intervals. In addition, the use of the handheld dial required that participants to pay close attention to the test material.

After viewing the political messages, participants were asked to indicate which of the candidates was their preferred Premier, and which political party they intended to vote
for. Each week, participants were also asked to indicate their stance on particular issues raised throughout the election campaign. The demographic questions, and political attitudes questions asked during each week of the testing period is attached as Appendix J.

Participant responses to the demographic and political attitudes questions were also recorded using the Perception Analyzer. Using the Perception Analyzer to record questionnaire responses required less time than a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, and also prevented participants from overlooking individual items. In addition, recording responses in this way allowed the data to be exported into a statistics spreadsheet, reducing the human error associated with data entry.

In Weeks Two to Five, participants also viewed a confederate message. The confederate used in Study Two was used in Weeks Two and Three of the current study. As in Study Two, the confederate played the role of an Independent politician called ‘Laurie Miller’ who was campaigning for a seat in the Legislative Council of State Parliament. The Laurie Miller confederate messages were in the form of interviews conducted by several journalists outside Parliament House. The interview was designed to mimic the ‘doorstop’ interview (an interview held typically outside, in front of a group journalists all asking uncontrolled questions). This type of interview is very similar to the media conference but appears less planned. By its very nature the doorstop interview is generally of lesser production quality compared to prearranged studio interviews or media conferences.

The interviews viewed by participants in Weeks Two and Three covered different political issues of relevance to the election campaign. The message viewed in Week
Two involved Laurie Miller discussing the advantages of electing independent politicians such as him, and the current State Government payroll taxes, stamp duties and charges. A low-spin version and a high-spin version of this interview were created. Both the low-spin and high-spin versions of this interview were identical in terms of setting, clothing, subject matter, policy positions, and length of interview. The only difference between these messages was the style of delivery used by the confederate; one message was delivered in a low-spin style and the other in a high-spin style. The low-spin confederate message viewed in Week Two (test session one) was 3 minutes 25 seconds in duration. The high-spin version of the confederate message viewed in Week Two was 3 minutes 04 seconds in duration. In Week Two, participants allocated to the low-spin condition viewed the low-spin version of the confederate message. Those participants allocated to the high-spin condition viewed the high-spin version of the confederate message. The low and high-spin confederate scripts use for Week Two (test session 1) are attached as Appendix K.

The message viewed in Week Three involved Laurie Miller discussing the current state government funding of public schools and ways to improve the health care system. As with Week Two, a low-spin and high-spin version of the interview was created. The low-spin confederate message viewed in Week Three was 3 minutes 20 seconds in duration, and the high-spin confederate message viewed was 3 minutes 03 seconds in duration. In Week Three, participants allocated to the low-spin condition viewed the low-spin version of the confederate message. Those participants allocated to the high-spin condition viewed the high-spin version of the confederate message. The low and high-spin confederate scripts use for Week Three (test session 2) are attached as Appendix L.
In order to determine that any effect was not confined to a specific confederate a different confederate was used in Weeks Four and Five of the study. The confederate played Steve Turner, who was also described as an Independent candidate in the State Election. The political message featuring Steve Turner was a one-on-one interview conducted by Dixie Marshall, a well-known Perth journalist, in the Channel Nine studio. The production of the Steve Turner interviews was of higher quality and better continuity in terms of sound, lighting, camera work, and editing. Moreover, the studio in which the interviews were filmed was a more controlled and consistent environment than that of the interviews used in Weeks two and three. Moreover, the confederate used for the interviews produced a superior standard of delivery in terms of appearing to be an experienced politician. Figures 5.4 and 5.5 show pictures from the low and high-spin confederate Steve Turner interviews. Figure 5.6 shows a picture of the confederate interviewer Dixie Marshall.
During the interview, Steve Turner discussed his position on water management and marijuana legislation. As with the previous confederate messages, a low-spin and high-spin version of this interview was created. The only difference between these versions of the interview was the style of presentation used. The low-spin Steve Turner confederate message was 5 minutes 44 seconds in duration, and the high-spin version was 5 minutes and 17 seconds in duration. In Week Four, participants allocated to the low-spin condition viewed the low-spin version of the confederate message. Those participants allocated to the high-spin condition viewed the high-spin version of the confederate message. The low and high-spin confederate scripts use for Week Four (test session 3) are attached as Appendix M.
In Week 5, the presentation of confederate message styles was reversed. As a result, participants in the low-spin condition viewed the high-spin Steve Turner confederate message. Conversely, participants allocated to the high-spin condition viewed the low-spin Steve Turner confederate message. This eliminated the possibility of a sample effect rather than a treatment effect from the testing. It also served to provide an insight into an audiences’ response to a communicator changing their style of communication from low to high-spin and high to low-spin. The low and high-spin confederate scripts use for Week Five (test session 4) are attached as Appendix M.

5.5 Procedures
All participants were tested at the Channel Nine Studios in Perth, Western Australia in January and February 2005. Participants were assigned to either the low-spin or high-spin condition. The low-spin sessions were conducted at 6.30pm, and the high-spin sessions conducted at 7.30pm, on Thursday evenings for five consecutive weeks. The allocation of low and high-spin groups to the 6.30pm or 7.30pm timeslots was random. There was no communication between participants in each condition and both groups were kept apart throughout the testing period.

The participants were not introduced to or asked to rate the confederate politician’s interviews until week two. In weeks two, three, four, and five the confederate interview was last in the order of presentation in relation to the other political leader’s interviews. There was only one short group discussion throughout the test period, which was held before the test session of week 4. This was used to determine whether participants were aware of the real status of the confederate and to inform them of the next phase of testing in weeks four and five.
The Study Three test design consisted of two phases, which were held over the five-week testing period. The first week was simply used to familiarise the participants to the equipment, tasks, and environment. Weeks two and three were used to retest the low and high-spin material used in Study Two. In this first phase the participants were not told that there was a confederate being used. In weeks four and five new low and high-spin material with greater production value was used. In this second phase participants were told that an actor was playing the part of a politician.

Participants viewed two types of test material consisting of real recorded interviews with the leaders of both political parties and interviews with the confederate independent politician throughout the election campaign. The test material of the respective political party leaders consisted of interviews conducted throughout the week leading up to the test sessions. Therefore, the political issues being debated and discussed in the interviews with the political leaders were current and relevant for each week’s test session. The content of the confederate interviews was also on the subject of those political issues currently being debated throughout the election campaign and were relevant for each week’s test session.

5.5.1 Week One - Instructing the low-spin group

Upon arriving at the studio in the first week, participants were greeted and provided with refreshments such as tea, coffee, spring water and sandwiches before the session began.

It was then explained to participants that the purpose of the study and their role as participants was twofold. The study was designed to provide information about general community reactions and opinions on the various election issues that arise throughout
the 2005 Western Australian State Election; and that they were selected as the representative community panel that would provide that feedback. It was also explained that the community panel they were a part of, would be used in a Murdoch University research project investigating the ways people respond to political messages and interviews, and that their responses would be analysed as part of that research, the results of which would be published.

It was again emphasised that participants may appear, albeit briefly, on the evening television news over the election campaign period. However, they were assured that their opinions and feedback would remain completely confidential and that the feedback they provided would not be attributed to any individual. Those participants wanting to reduce the chance of appearing on television were offered a suitable seating position, which would not be filmed. Although there were a number of participants who did not necessarily want to appear on television they were not concerned if they did appear briefly. Other participants appeared to enjoy the prospect that the community panel’s opinions would be made known to the wider community and that they were a part of that group.

Participants were then asked to read and complete an information letter and consent form about the study (See Appendix N for information letter and consent form). Participants were also asked to provide Channel 9 with consent to film the test sessions and use the material as part of their televised election coverage. Finally, participants were required to sign a declaration that they were not members of a political party.

It was explained to participants that this first test session would be used to familiarise the group with the Perception Analyzer equipment they would be using, the tasks they
needed to perform, and the environment they were working in over the testing period. Participants were seated and provided with a Perception Analyzer handheld dial. A record was kept of the specific dial each participant used in order that participants were given the same dial every week. This allowed the comparison of each participant’s responses over the test period. A record was also kept of participants’ attendance over the 5-week test period. Participants were then shown how to use the Perception Analyzer hand held dial and were able to trial the device on some test footage.

Participants were read the following instructions:

You are going to be viewing some interviews and rating them with the Perception Analyzer (also known as the ‘worm’, which has been publicised by the Nine Network). The dial records a second-by-second account of how you are responding to the interviews. The dial is basically an electronic scale from 0 to 100. We want you to indicate your approval of the politician throughout the interview. So 0 is when you disapprove; 25 is when you mildly disapprove; 50 is when you are neutral; 75 is mildly approve; 100 is approve and there is also gradients in between.

It is important that you do not speak to each other about the interviews while we are still testing.

There is no right or wrong answer we just want to know what you think. So there is no need to worry about how others are rating the interview. We just want to record your own thoughts and opinions. We are looking for your top-of-mind reactions.

When the politician begins their speech you can start rating your approval. When or if a journalist begins to speak you can begin to drift back to neutral and start again when the politician resumes.

The computer system takes a continuous reading of your dial so you can continuously rate your approval of the politician’s policies and promises in the interview. You may find you approve of some things and disapprove of others, so you can move from approve to disapprove to neutral or any point in between at any time.

You should always start the interviews on a rating of 50 or the neutral score.

After the introduction participants were asked to input their demographic details into the computer using the hand held dial. In the first week’s test session the participants were
only asked to rate a summary of the two main political party leaders’ statements and interviews in the opening week of the election campaign. The audiovisual clip was approximately 11 minutes in duration. After viewing and rating each of the political party leaders, participants were then asked to answer three discrete questions about each of the leaders. (See Appendix O for list of questions).

After participant completed rating the two main party leaders the session was concluded and they were thanked. Participants were asked to attend the following week’s test session on the same day and at the same time and place. The first test session took approximately 60 minutes each. It was explained to participants that test sessions in the following weeks would only take approximately 45 minutes because they would not need to sign consent forms or re-enter demographic details.

5.5.2 Week One - Instructing the high-spin group

The same procedure was followed for the high-spin group. Participants viewed identical material and answered identical questions.

5.5.3 Week Two - Test session 1: low-spin group

Upon arriving at the studio participants were greeted and provided with refreshments such as tea, coffee, spring water and sandwiches before the test session began.

An explanation of the Perception Analyzer and instructions in the operation of the hand held dials were given in order to refresh participants in the equipment’s use. It was deemed that participants did not require a test exercise with the equipment.
In the week two test session the participants were asked to rate a summary of the two main political party leaders’ statements and interviews in the second week of the election campaign. Participants were asked to use their hand held dial to indicate their approval of the politicians throughout their interviews.

The first clip shown to participants was of Geoff Gallop, the incumbent premier, and Colin Barnett, the then leader of the opposition government. The audiovisual clip showed the political leaders, alternatively, presenting their policies and vision for the State if elected to govern for the next four years. The edited clip was approximately 11 minutes 13 seconds in duration.

After viewing and rating each of the political party leaders, participants were then asked to answer four discrete questions about each of the leaders.

Participants were then asked to rate another candidate called Laurie Miller (the confederate). It was explained to them that:

Laurie is an independent candidate and he is talking about his election platform. We need you to rate him using your dial in the same way as the other politicians. Just to remind you the scale is 0 to 100. 0 being disapprove; 25 being mildly disapprove; 50 being neutral; 75 being mildly approve; 100 being approve and there is also continuous gradients in between. The interview with Laurie Miller will only run for about 3 minutes.

Participants were then shown an audiovisual clip of the low-spin confederate message and were asked to rate it as instructed. When the confederate message finished, participants were then asked to complete the Authenticity Scale. Rather than complete the Authenticity Scale as a paper-and-pencil test as was done in Study Two, participants completed the scale using the Perception Analyzer. The equipment can be used to respond to discrete-choice and intensity-scale questions as well as to rate continuously
(as with the video footage). Completion of the Authenticity Scale required approximately 10 minutes.

It must be noted that the order of test material presented each week, with the political leaders placed first and the confederate message last, was continued throughout the testing. This allowed participants to use the interviews with the leaders to familiarise themselves with the equipment, the scale, and format each week before viewing and rating the confederate material. It was felt this would help reduce extreme responses and provide a real world point of comparison with which to rate the confederate. Moreover, presenting the test material in the same order each week allowed the test sessions to be uniform and standardised, which reduced the possibility of technical failures and errors in the testing session.

After the participants had viewed the confederate message and completed the Authenticity Scale the test session was then concluded and participants were thanked. Participants were asked to attend the following weeks test session on the same day and at the same time and place. In total, the testing session required approximately 45 minutes.

5.5.4 Week Two - Test session 1: high-spin group

The same procedure was followed for the high-spin group. Participants viewed identical material and answered identical questions. However, participants in this condition viewed the high-spin confederate message.
5.5.5 Week Three - Test session 2: low-spin group

Upon arriving at the studio participants were greeted and provided with refreshments such as tea, coffee, spring water and sandwiches before the session began.

An explanation of the Perception Analyzer and instructions in the operation of the hand held dials were given in order to refresh participants in the equipment’s use.

In the week three test session the participants were asked to rate a summary of the two main political party leaders’ statements and interviews given in the third week of the election campaign. Participants were again asked to use their hand held dial to indicate their approval of the politicians throughout their interviews on a scale of 0 to 100.

The first clip shown to participants was of Geoff Gallop, the then premier, and Colin Barnett, the then leader of the opposition government. The audiovisual clip showed the political leaders, alternatively (multiple switches), presenting their policies and vision for the State if elected to govern for the next four years. Equal time was given to each politician and the edited clip was approximately 11 minutes 02 seconds in total duration.

After viewing and rating each of the political party leaders, participants were then asked to answer five discrete questions about each of the leaders.

Participants were then asked to rate Laurie Miller, the confederate politician. It was explained to them that:

Laurie is an independent candidate and he is talking about his election platform. We need you to rate him using your dial in the same way as the other politicians. Just to remind you the scale is 0 to 100. 0 being disapprove; 25 being mildly disapprove; 50 being neutral; 75 being mildly approve; 100 being approve and there is also continuous gradients in between. The interview with Laurie Miller will only run for about 3 minutes.
Participants were then shown an audiovisual clip of the low-spin confederate message and were asked to rate it as instructed. When the confederate message finished, participants were then asked to complete the Authenticity Scale. Completion of the Authenticity Scale required approximately 10 minutes.

After the participants had viewed the confederate message and completed the Authenticity Scale the test session was then concluded and participants were thanked. Participants were asked to attend the following week test session on the same day and at the same time and place. In total, the testing session required approximately 45 minutes.

5.5.6 Week Three - Test session 2: high-spin group

The same procedure was followed for the high-spin group. Participants viewed identical material and answered identical questions about Gallop and Barnett. However, participants in this condition viewed the high-spin confederate message.

It must be noted that in the Week Three test sessions, participants in each condition were observed murmuring after introducing that week’s confederate test material. After preliminary examination of the data, it was revealed that a decline in the expected effect had occurred. It was suspected that the confederate’s cover had been compromised among the group. This was confirmed by a telephone call a day after the test session to one participant from each condition. These participants indicated that there was a concern that the confederate was not a real politician. Therefore, it was decided that an undercover confederate would not be used in Weeks Four and Five.
5.5.7 Week Four - Test session 3: low-spin group

Upon arriving at the studio in the first week, participants were greeted and provided with refreshments such as tea, coffee, spring water and sandwiches before the session began.

A short discussion was conducted before the test session started in order to confirm participants’ thoughts on the confederate politician used in week three. The discussions were conducted in a relaxed and informal manner both with individual participants and in small groups of two and three as they arrived for the test session. It was found that the cover for the confederate politician, Laurie Miller, was compromised in Week Three.

An explanation of the Perception Analyzer and instructions in the operation of the hand held dials were given in order to refresh participants in the equipment’s use.

In the week four test session the participants were asked to rate a summary of the two main political party leaders’ statements and interviews given in the fourth week of the election campaign. Participants were asked to use their hand held dial to indicate their approval of the politicians throughout their interviews on a scale of 0 to 100.

The first clip shown to participants was of Geoff Gallop, the then premier, and Colin Barnett, the then leader of the opposition government. The audiovisual clip showed the political leaders, alternatively (multiple switches), presenting their policies and vision for the State if elected to govern for the next four years. Equal time was given to each politician and the edited clip was approximately 10 minutes 41 seconds in total duration.
After viewing and rating each of the political party leaders, participants were asked to answer three discrete questions about each of the leaders.

Participants were then asked to complete the Authenticity Scale for Geoff Gallop. Completion of the Authenticity Scale required approximately 10 minutes.

It was then explained to the participants that they would now be asked to rate Steve Turner, the new confederate. It was felt that another covert confederate would be viewed with a high degree of suspicion because the cover was compromised on the first confederate, Laurie Miller, in Week Three. Therefore, participants were simply told that the following messages would be presenting different styles of political communication.

Participants were then shown an audiovisual clip of the low-spin confederate message and were asked to rate it as instructed. When the confederate message finished, participants were then asked to complete the Authenticity Scale. Completion of the Authenticity Scale required approximately 10 minutes.

After the participants had viewed the confederate message and completed the Authenticity Scale the test session was then concluded and participants were thanked. Participants were asked to attend the following week test session on the same day and at the same time and place. In total, the testing session required approximately 45 minutes.

5.5.8 Week Four - Test session 3: high-spin group

The same procedure was followed for the high-spin group. Participants viewed identical material and answered identical questions about Gallop and Barnett. However, participant in this condition viewed the high-spin confederate message.
5.5.9 Week Five - Test session 4: low-spin group

Upon arriving at the studio in the first week, participants were greeted and provided with refreshments such as tea, coffee, spring water and sandwiches before the session began.

An explanation of the Perception Analyzer and instructions in the operation of the hand held dials were given in order to refresh participants in the equipment’s use.

In the week five test session the participants were asked to rate a summary of the two main political party leader’s statements and interviews given in the fifth week of the election campaign. Participants were asked to use their hand held dial to indicate their approval of the politicians throughout their interviews on a scale of 0 to 100.

The first clip shown to participants was of Geoff Gallop, the then premier, and Colin Barnett, the then leader of the opposition government. The audiovisual clip showed the political leaders, alternatively (multiple switches), presenting their policies and vision for the State if elected to govern for the next four years. Equal time was given to each politician and the edited clip was approximately 10 minutes in total duration.

After viewing and rating each of the political party leaders, participants were asked to answer four discrete questions about each of the leaders.

Participants were then asked to complete the Authenticity Scale for Colin Barnett. Completion of the Authenticity Scale required approximately 10 minutes.
It must be noted, that in week five participants in the low-spin condition were shown an audiovisual clip of the high-spin confederate message and were asked to rate it as instructed. When the confederate message finished, participants were then asked to complete the Authenticity Scale. Completion of the Authenticity Scale required approximately 10 minutes.

After the participants had viewed the confederate message and completed the Authenticity Scale the test session was then concluded and participants were thanked for their involvement in the project. Participants were then given their payment for attendance over the five-week test period. In total, the testing session required approximately 45 minutes.

5.5.10 Week Five - Test session 4: high-spin group

The same procedure was followed for the high-spin group. Participants viewed identical material and answered identical questions about Gallop and Barnett. However, it must be noted, that participants in this high-spin condition viewed the low-spin confederate message.
CHAPTER 6: STUDY THREE RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Six compares the responses of participants to confederate politicians and actual politicians over four test sessions throughout the 2005 Western Australian State election campaign. This provided a real world context in which to measure the persuasiveness of low and high-spin messages and to compare the Authenticity Scale’s predictive validity. The analysis focuses on the internal validity of the Authenticity Scale for confederate and actual politicians. It explores the participants’ demographic characteristics in relation to different responses on the Authenticity Scale. Participants’ authenticity scores, support and approval ratings were compared for each low and high-spin confederate message as well as for the messages from actual politicians. The effect size between low and high-spin messages will also be determined.

6.2 Verifying the Authenticity Scale’s Internal Consistency

6.2.1 Confirming the internal consistency of the scale with both confederates

The high level of internal consistency of the Authenticity Scale in Study Two was confirmed using the Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient in the current study. In Study Three separate co-efficients were calculated for the Authenticity Scale for each confederate. Items were rated using a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 6.1 demonstrates the alpha co-efficient of the Authenticity Scale when used to rate the low and high-spin messages of each confederate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Miller</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Turner</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 6.1, the alpha co-efficient of the scale was high when used to rate the confederate messages. It is noted that the alpha co-efficient was higher when used to rate the confederate Steve Turner.

6.2.2 Confirming the internal consistency of the scale with actual politicians

Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the Authenticity Scale when used to rate actual politicians. Separate co-efficients were calculated for both Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett in test sessions 3 and 4 of the study.

Table 6.2 demonstrates the alpha co-efficient of the Authenticity Scale when used to rate Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.2, the alpha co-efficient of the scale was very high when used to rate Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett. It is noted that the combined confederate and actual politician mean alpha co-efficient for the Authenticity Scale is .900

The aim of determining whether the reduced Authenticity Scale is reliable and internally consistent to measure an audience response to low and high-spin messages has been met.
6.3 Effects of Demographics on Authenticity Scores

6.3.1 Effects of demographics on authenticity scores for confederates

The authenticity scores produced by participants with different demographic characteristics were compared. It was decided to limit the comparisons to test session 1 and 3, as these sessions were the first time participants viewed messages from the two confederates; Laurie Miller and Steve Turner respectively.

Table 6.3 demonstrates the results of Independent Samples t-tests to determine whether participants’ gender affected authenticity scores produced for both confederates in test sessions 1 and 3 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3: Independent Samples t-tests comparing the effect of gender on authenticity scores for the confederates.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.3, there were no significant differences in the authenticity scores produced by males and females.

Table 6.4 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ age affected authenticity scores produced for confederates in test session 1 and 3 of the study.
Table 6.4: One-way ANOVAs comparing the effect of age on authenticity scores for the confederates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>2.3846</td>
<td>.7210</td>
<td>.889</td>
<td>2.135</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>2.3778</td>
<td>.5981</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>1.215</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>2.2828</td>
<td>.6467</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td>1.076</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>2.9506</td>
<td>.7352</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>1.806</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>2.9861</td>
<td>.9094</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>1.986</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70</td>
<td>3.0278</td>
<td>.8083</td>
<td>.989</td>
<td>2.135</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.4, there were no significant differences in the authenticity scores produced by different age groups.

Table 6.5 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ education affected authenticity scores produced for confederates in test sessions 1 and 3 of the study.

Table 6.5: One-way ANOVAs comparing the effect of education on authenticity scores for the confederates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Attended university</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>3.457</td>
<td>2, 52</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7490</td>
<td>.8330</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE or Trade Diploma</td>
<td>2.6296</td>
<td>.5438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>2.1111</td>
<td>.6651</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.5, the effect of education on authenticity scores is significant in test session 1. Tukey’s HSD post hoc analysis demonstrated that those who had attended
university produced significantly higher authenticity scores than those who had completed high school (p > .05).

Table 6.6 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ occupation affected authenticity scores produced for confederates in test session 1 and 3 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Administration</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Executive</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Superannuant</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Administration</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td>.836</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Executive</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Superannuant</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.6, the effect of occupation on authenticity scores was not significant.

Table 6.7 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ marital status affected authenticity scores produced for confederates in test session 1 and 3 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/De facto</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>.691</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/De facto</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 6.7, the effect of marital status on authenticity scores is not significant.

6.3.2 Effects of demographics on authenticity scores for actual politician

Table 6.8 demonstrates the results of independent samples t-tests to determine whether participants’ gender affected authenticity scores produced for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett recorded in test session 3 and 4 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>1.049</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.8, there were no significant differences in the authenticity scores produced by males and females.

Table 6.9 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ age affected authenticity scores produced for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett recorded in test session 3 and 4 of the study.
### Table 6.9: Two-way ANOVA comparing the effect of age on authenticity scores for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test (p)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>3.6239</td>
<td>.6440</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>2.830</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>3.5704</td>
<td>.7523</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>3.5152</td>
<td>.5715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>2.7407</td>
<td>.5358</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>3.4028</td>
<td>1.1062</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70</td>
<td>2.5833</td>
<td>.8952</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>2.6389</td>
<td>.9996</td>
<td>.888</td>
<td>2.553</td>
<td>5, 54</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>2.6444</td>
<td>.8221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>2.4444</td>
<td>.9027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>3.6535</td>
<td>1.0815</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>3.0556</td>
<td>.9777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70</td>
<td>3.6111</td>
<td>.9362</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.9, the effect of age on authenticity scores is significant for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett. Post hoc analysis was conducted to determine which age groups produced significant differences. Tukey’s HSD tests found that for Geoff Gallop, 18-30 year olds produced significantly higher authenticity scores than did 51-60 year olds (p > .08). It was also found that for Colin Barnett, the 41-50 year olds produced significantly lower authenticity scores than the 51-60 year olds (p > .07).

Figure 6.1 represents the relationship between age and authenticity scores for participants viewing Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.
As seen in Figure 6.1, Geoff Gallop tended to receive higher authenticity scores from younger participants, while Colin Barnett tended to receive higher authenticity scores from older participants.

Table 6.10 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ education affected authenticity scores produced for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett recorded in test session 3 and 4 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Levene’s test ($p$)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended university</td>
<td>3.4486</td>
<td>.8226</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>1.986</td>
<td>2, 52</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE or Trade Diploma</td>
<td>3.0667</td>
<td>.8615</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>3.6325</td>
<td>.5600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended university</td>
<td>2.9017</td>
<td>1.0058</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>1.725</td>
<td>2, 52</td>
<td>.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE or Trade Diploma</td>
<td>3.1402</td>
<td>1.0513</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>2.4444</td>
<td>.9351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 6.10, the effect of education on authenticity scores was not significant.

Table 6.11 demonstrates the results of a one-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ occupation affected authenticity scores produced for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett recorded in test session 3 and 4 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.11: One-way ANOVAs comparing the effect of occupation on authenticity scores for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Superannuant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager/Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Superannuant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.11, the effect of occupation on authenticity scores was not significant.

Table 6.12 demonstrates the results of a One-way ANOVA to determine whether participants’ marital status affected authenticity scores produced for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett recorded in test session 3 and 4 of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.12: One-way ANOVAs comparing the effect of marital status on authenticity scores for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/De facto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/De facto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 6.12, the effect of marital status on authenticity scores is not significant.

The aim to explore possible demographic effects in authenticity scores across both the low and high-spin groups has been met.

### 6.4 Audience Perceptions of the Confederates

#### 6.4.1 Authenticity scores produced for confederates in each condition

The current study aimed to determine whether participants viewing the low and high-spin confederate messages would produce different Authenticity Scale scores each week. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine the effect of condition (low versus high-spin) on the authenticity scores produced in test sessions 1 to 4.

Table 6.13 demonstrates the results of the MANOVA to determine whether participants produced different Authenticity Scale scores for low and high-spin confederate messages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 4</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>10.91</td>
<td>3, 171</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low vs. High-spin</td>
<td>30.64</td>
<td>1, 57</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td>3, 171</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 6.13, participants viewing the low-spin confederate message produced significantly higher Authenticity Scale scores than did participants viewing the high-spin confederate message (between subjects). Moreover, the effect of session is also significant with higher authenticity scores occurring across sessions (within subjects). Table 6.13 also demonstrates that there is a significant interaction effect with the difference between low and high-spin authenticity scores increasing across each test session. Of particular interest is the cumulative effect of authenticity scores for the low-spin messages. The analysis also found that the multivariate effect of condition was significant (F (4,54) = 14.20; p = .001, η² = .513).

6.4.2 Identifying the effect size

An effect size for condition across test sessions 1 to 4 was calculated. As discussed it was found that condition has a multivariate effect size of .513. This effect size is considered to be medium (Cohen, 1988).

The aim to identify the effect size between low and high-spin message using the Authenticity Scale has been met.

6.4.3 Identify audience perceptions of the confederate trust and credibility

The current study aimed to identify changes in the audience’s perception of the communicator characteristics in response to low and high-spin messages. A split plot ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the low and high-spin messages and the trust and credibility ratings of the communicator generated by participants. The results are presented in Table 6.14.
### Table 6.14: Results of split plot ANOVA examining the effects of condition on trust and credibility ratings of the confederate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low-spin</th>
<th></th>
<th>High-spin</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>sd</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within subjects</td>
<td>Trust vs. Credibility</td>
<td>24.57</td>
<td>1, 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between subjects</td>
<td>Low vs. High-spin</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>1, 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Condition x DV</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1, 57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.14, a split plot ANOVA was conducted for the confederate messages comparing condition and participant ratings of trust and credibility. Participants’ perception of communicator trust and credibility were significantly higher in the low-spin condition than for the high-spin condition (between subject). As seen in Table 6.14, participants’ perceptions of trust were significantly lower than credibility in both the low and high-spin condition (within subjects). It was also found that there were no significant interaction between condition and the trust and credibility rating (interaction effect).

The aim of determining the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility has been met.
6.4.4 Continuous approval rating for low and high-spin confederate

Figure 6.2 presents the continuous mean approval rating for the low and high-spin confederate interviews, which participants’ produced using the Perception Analyzer in test session 4.

As previously noted, participants returned to a neutral rating when the interviewer spoke, which is seen as sharp decreases or increases in the mean approval rating of the communicator. Although more detailed information is gained from the traditional data collected, the Perception Analyzer graph provides a useful overall comparison of the continuous approval scores for low and high-spin communicators.

As seen in Figure 6.2, the approval scores indicated by the low-spin group are notably higher than those of the high-spin group. This trend is particularly marked after 3 minutes into the interview. The difference in approval scores continues to increase throughout the interview. It is clear that the approval rating for the high-spin confederate was lower in the second half of the message, which indicates a higher level...
of spin being used. This trend is consistent with authenticity score ratings produced for the low and high-spin confederate message in test sessions 3 and 4.

The aim of tracking audience approval of the confederate communicator throughout the duration of their message and comparing low and high-spin messages has been met.

### 6.5 Audience Perceptions of the Actual Politicians

#### 6.5.1 Authenticity scores produced for each political leader

Table 6.15 demonstrates the results of an Independent Samples t-tests to determine whether participants produced different Authenticity Scale scores for political party leaders Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
<td>3.3748</td>
<td>.7910</td>
<td>2.153</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
<td>2.9153</td>
<td>1.0720</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.15, participants produced significantly higher Authenticity Scale scores after viewing messages from Premier Geoff Gallop than after viewing messages from Leader of the Opposition Colin Barnet.

#### 6.5.2 Identify audience perceptions of the politicians’ trust and credibility

The current study aimed to identify the audience’s perception of the actual politician, which can be compared to authenticity scores and the perceived level of spin used. A paired sample t-test was conducted to determine the mean communicator trust and credibility scores produced by participants viewing actual politicians campaigning in the election. It also determines the difference between the communicator trust and
credibility scores generated by participants viewing the actual politicians. The results are presented in Table 6.16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.16: Results of paired samples t-tests comparing the perceived trust and credibility of Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust vs. Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoff vs. Colin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.16, participants viewing Geoff Gallop produced a significantly higher mean communicator trust and credibility scores than did participants viewing Colin Barnett. Moreover, participants’ perceptions of trust were significantly lower than credibility for both Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett. It was also found that there were no significant interaction between the actual politicians and the trust and credibility ratings. These results are consistent with the politicians’ authenticity scores.

It is noted, that there are uncontrolled factors that impact on the rating of actual politicians and significant difference is only useful in relation to its consistency of direction with other findings such as the level of spin used and support.

6.5.3 Continuous approval rating for actual politicians

Figure 6.3 presents the continuous mean approval rating for political leaders Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett, which participants’ produced using the Perception Analyzer.
As seen in Figure 6.3, the approval scores indicated by participants in both low and high-spin conditions are consistently higher overall for Geoff Gallop. This trend is consistent with participants’ rating of Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett’s authenticity scores as well as the individual ratings of communicator trust and credibility.

The aim of tracking audience approval of the actual politicians throughout the duration of their messages and comparing each message has been met.

### 6.6 Relationships Between Authenticity Scores and Support

#### 6.6.1 Confederates’ authenticity scores and support

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between authenticity scores and participants’ support for both confederates in each condition.

A Pearson’s r test was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between these variables. It was found that there is a positive linear relationship between the authenticity score and support produced by participants viewing the confederate in test
session 1 and 2. It was found that the relationship was significant in both tests respectively, \( r(58) = .699; p < .001 \) and \( r(58) = .729; p < .001 \). These results confirm the findings in Study Two.

It was also found that there is a positive linear relationship between the authenticity score and support produced by participants viewing the confederate in test sessions 3 and 4. It was found that the relationship was significant in both tests respectively, \( r(58) = .745; p < .001 \) and \( r(58) = .819; p < .001 \). These results are consistent with the findings for the other confederate.

6.6.2 Actual politicians’ authenticity scores and support

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between authenticity scores and participant’s support for both politicians campaigning in the election.

A Pearson’s r test was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between these variables. It was found that there is a positive linear relationship between the authenticity score and support produced by participants viewing the politicians campaigning in the election. It was found that the relationship was significant for both Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett respectively, \( r(58) = .795; p < .001 \) and \( r(57) = .906; p < .001 \). These results confirm the findings in Study Two and that found for the confederates in the current study.

The aim of determining whether the authenticity score correlates with audience support for the actual politicians has been met.
6.7 Relationships Between Information Control Behaviours and Support

In addition, analysis was conducted on items directly measuring information control behaviours associated with high-spin messages for confederate and non-confederate politicians.

6.7.1 Confederates’ information control behaviours and support

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between the specific information control behaviours associated with a high-spin message and participants’ support for the confederate for test sessions 3 and 4.

A Pearson’s r test was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between these variables. It was found that the use of information control behaviours in messages was significantly correlated with lower levels of participant support for the confederate. It was found that the relationship was significant in both test sessions 3 and 4 respectively, \((r (58) = .564; p < .001)\) and \((r (58) = .737; p < .001)\). This demonstrates that the communicators’ use of information control behaviours corresponded with lower support.

6.7.2 Politicians’ use of information control behaviours and support

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between specific information control behaviours associated with a high-spin message and support for the politicians campaigning in the election.

A Pearson’s r test was conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between these variables. Correspondingly, it was found that the use of information control behaviours in messages was significantly correlated with lower levels of participant
support for the actual politicians campaigning in the election. It was found that the relationship was significant for both Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett respectively, \( r (48) = .651, p < .001 \) and 3 \( r (48) = .834, p < .001 \). These results confirm the relationship between the use of information control behaviours and lower levels of support for the communicators, which were found in Study Two.

### 6.8 The Effect of Condition on Support

6.8.1 The effect of condition on support for the confederate

A MANOVA was conducted to determine whether participants viewing the low and high-spin confederate messages would produce different support scores across the test sessions. Table 6.17 demonstrates the results of the MANOVA to determine whether participants viewing low-spin confederate messages produced significantly higher support scores for the confederate delivering a message in a high-spin style of communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 4</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>3, 171</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low vs. High-spin</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>1, 57</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>3, 171</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.17, participants viewing low-spin confederate messages over test sessions 1 to 4 produced significantly higher support scores than the confederate.
delivering a message in a high-spin style of communication (between subjects). The effect of session is also significant with higher support scores occurring across test sessions (within subjects). Although the interaction is only approaching significance, the same trend as in Table 6.13 can be seen between low and high-spin support scores increasing across each test session. Again, it is interesting to note that it is the low-spin support scores that appear to have a cumulative effect across test sessions 1 to 4.

The aim to confirm the relationship between a high-spin communicator and lower level of audience support as compared to a low-spin communicator has been met.

6.8.2 Support for actual politicians

Table 6.18 demonstrates the results of a t-test comparing participant’s indicated support for Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politician</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. 2-tailed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Gallop</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>2.678</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Barnett</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 6.18, support indicated for Geoff Gallop was significantly higher than that indicated for Colin Barnett. This significantly higher level of support for Geoff Gallop is consistent with the significantly higher authenticity score. Moreover, it is noted that Geoff Gallop and his government went on to win the 2005 Western Australian Election.

The aim to confirm that the politician with the highest authenticity score would enjoy significantly higher support has been met.
6.9 Conclusion

Study Three was conducted in the context of a state election to provide a real world context in which to test the Authenticity Scale’s predictive validity and measure the persuasiveness of low and high-spin communicators. It used confederates and actual politicians to test participants’ responses to low and high-spin messages throughout the election campaign period.

Study Three found that the use of the Authenticity Scale in a real world election context was able to identify differences between low and high-spin political messages. It found that the Authenticity Scale scores predicted the support for political figures and that both the authenticity score and support were significantly greater for low-spin as compared to high-spin communicators. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the actual politician that elicited the highest authenticity score did go on to win the 2005 Western Australian election.
CHAPTER 7: STUDY THREE DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The following chapter will discuss the results of Study Three drawing on the previously conducted studies, and literature reviewed in Chapters One and Two. Study Three was conducted over 5 weeks during the campaigning phase of the 2005 Western Australian Election. Participants were assigned to view either low-spin or high-spin messages from confederate politicians as well as campaign messages from actual politicians. The study’s primary aim was to determine if the Authenticity Scale was useful in identifying low and high-spin messages and predicting support for politicians in a real world environment. The discussion will explore the results of authenticity scores, support, and approval ratings in relation to low and high-spin political messages. The results of participants’ responses to actual politicians will also be compared to the outcome of the election.

7.2 Hypotheses

1. Study Three aimed to determine whether the reduced Authenticity Scale is a reliable measure of audience response to low and high-spin messages. An alpha coefficient was used to determine whether the Authenticity Scale is internally consistent. It was hypothesised that the alpha co-efficient for the items in the Authenticity Scale would be high for both confederate politicians and actual politicians. This would allow for the use of a mean authenticity score rather than analysis of individual items.

2. Study Three aimed to explore whether there were any demographic characteristics that relate to different responses on the Authenticity Scale. In addition, it also aimed to
explore whether there are any demographic characteristics related to different responses on the Authenticity Scale for actual politicians. In Study Two, some demographic characteristics were related to different responses on the Authenticity Scale.

3. Study Three aimed to confirm that the characteristics distinguishing low from high-spin are discernable to a representative voting population. The study re-tested the same confederate treatment as was used in Study Two to verify that the more representative sample of participants produced similar results. Study Three also aimed to test the new confederate and message treatment utilising broadcast standard production quality for the interview. It was hypothesised that a significantly higher authenticity score will be found for the low-spin confederate politicians. In addition, Study Three aimed to determine the authenticity score for the actual political leaders campaigning in the election.

4. Study Three aimed to determine what the effect size would be between low and high-spin messages, given the study’s greater external validity. It was hypothesised that the effect size would be at least consistent with the low to medium effect size found in Study Two.

5. Study Three aimed to confirm the effect of low and high-spin messages on audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility of both confederate and actual politicians. It was hypothesised that a low-spin style message will increase audience perceptions of communicator trust and credibility. This would provide evidence consistent with an expectancy disconfirmation effect, which will account for the increased persuasiveness of the low-spin political communicators.
6. Study Three aimed to track audience approval of communicators throughout the duration of their messages and compare low and high-spin messages. This was achieved by using the Perception Analyzer, which creates a graphical representation of how audience response is changing on a second-by-second basis throughout a message. It was hypothesised that there will be an increase in audience approval for the low-spin communicator compared to the high-spin communicator throughout the duration of the message.

7. Study Three aimed to confirm the relationship between the level of spin used and the audience stated support for both the confederate and the actual politicians. It was hypothesised that a higher authenticity score will correspond to greater levels of audience support for the communicator. Moreover, that the information control behaviours used in high-spin political communication has a direct inverse relationship with support for the communicator. Additionally, the effects of the low-spin condition will elicit greater communicator support. This will provide further evidence of an expectancy disconfirmation effect, which accounts for the increased persuasiveness of a low-spin style of political communication.

8. Study Three aimed to establish the authenticity score for the actual political leaders during a general election campaign. It was hypothesised that the political leader who generates the higher authenticity score will enjoy significantly high levels of support. Moreover, it was hypothesised that the politician with the highest authenticity score will win the 2005 Western Australian General election.
7.2.1 Hypothesis 1: Verifying the Authenticity Scales internal consistency

It was hypothesised that the alpha co-efficient for the Authenticity Scale (measuring information control behaviours and perceptions of the communicator) would be high. This hypothesis was supported by the data. It was found that participants viewing the confederate messages produced alphas of greater than .88 in each week of testing. Alpha co-efficients for the Authenticity Scale were above .92 when used by participants to rate messages from actual politicians, Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett. The overall mean alpha co-efficient for the reduced item Authenticity Scale across all messages is .900. An alpha co-efficient of above .70 is considered very high, and represents a high level of scale reliability (Cronbach, 1951).

These coefficients are consistent with those found with the Authenticity Scale used in Study Two. Therefore, the reduced Authenticity Scale used in this study can be considered internally consistent and can be analysed as a unitary construct with a single score. It is interesting to note that the scale had an even great internal consistency when testing the actual politicians. This finding supports the real world usefulness of the Authenticity Scale.

7.2.2 Hypothesis 2: Demographic characteristics related to the authenticity score

Study Three explored whether there were any demographic differences associated with the authenticity scores produced by participants viewing the confederate messages. No differences in authenticity scores were found between participants from different gender, age, occupation, and marital status groups. These trends are consistent with those found in Study Two, where few demographic differences in authenticity scores were identified.
However, there were significant differences in the authenticity scores produced by participants with different educational backgrounds. It was found that university-educated participants produced higher authenticity scores than did high school educated participants viewing the confederate messages in test session 1. A possible explanation for this finding is that educational policy was discussed as part of the confederate’s message in test session 1. The discussion of these educational issues may have elicited a stronger response from those with a university education than those with only high school education. It may also indicate that less educated people may feel more disconnected from political process.

In addition, Study Three also explored whether there were any demographic differences in authenticity score produced for actual politicians. As with the confederate messages, there were no differences in authenticity scores produced by participants from most demographic groups viewing the actual political messages. However, there were some differences in authenticity scores across age. It was found that 18-30 year olds produced significantly higher authenticity scores for Geoff Gallop than did 51-60 year olds. It was also found that 41-50 year olds produced lower authenticity scores for Colin Barnett than did 51-60 year olds.

A possible explanation for this finding is that the political orientations or specific policies of the candidates may have appealed more to voters of different ages. For example, Geoff Gallop’s Labor Party policy tends to place greater emphases on education, social welfare, and environmental issues. This may account for why Geoff Gallop elicited higher authenticity scores from younger viewers, and Colin Barnett, a conservative, from older viewers. Education, welfare, and environmental issues may be more important and appealing to a younger contemporary voting population than a older conservative voting population.
With the exception of some educational differences identified for the confederate messages in test session 1, and the age differences identified for the actual political messages, authenticity scores are not affected by demographic differences. These findings suggest that the characteristics comprising a persuasive political message are generally consistent. It does not appear that authenticity ratings are sensitive to individual viewer characteristics, but are most strongly influenced by characteristics of the message.

7.2.3 Hypothesis 3: Confirming low and high-spin is discernable

It was hypothesised that participants in Study Three would be able to differentiate between low and high-spin confederate messages. This hypothesis was supported by the results. Participant responses indicated they clearly differentiated between low and high-spin messages over the four testing sessions. Those test sessions consisted of multiple confederates, messages, and interview types. Participants viewing the confederate low-spin messages produced significantly higher authenticity scores than those viewing the confederate high-spin messages.

This finding is consistent with Study Two findings that demonstrated the single Authenticity Scale score is a useful in evaluating the level of spin in a message. It is also consistent with the literature review and interviews study in Chapters One and Two, which argue that the public are able to recognise spin in communication (Black, 1983; Frankfurt, 2005a; Ham, 2003; Menand, 1989). Moreover, as previously discussed, the interviews conducted with communication professionals contended that the public are able to recognise high-spin communication (Chapter Two, Section: 2.3.5.3).
Furthermore, a within subject session effect was found, with significantly higher authenticity scores occurring across the four test sessions. A significant interaction effect was also found, with the difference between low and high-spin authenticity scores increasing across sessions. Specifically, there was a cumulative effect of authenticity scores for the low-spin messages with high-spin scores remaining relatively consistent. This is suggests that the benefits a low-spin style of communication increase over time.

In addition, Study Three aimed to determine the authenticity score for the actual political leaders campaigning in the election. It was also found that participants produced different authenticity scores for the actual politicians. A related samples t-test found that participants produced a significantly higher authenticity score for Geoff Gallop than they did for Colin Barnett. This indicates that Barnett was seen as using a greater level of spin in his communication. It is acknowledged, however, that this finding is primarily useful in relation to its consistency of direction with other findings.

7.2.4 Hypothesis 4: Effect size between low and high-spin confederate messages
It was hypothesised that the effect size found for the difference between low and high-spin messages will be at least consistent with that found in Study Two. This hypothesis was supported by the results with the MANOVA examining authenticity scores in test sessions 1 to 4 producing an effect size of .513 (Eta squared). This represents a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). As hypothesised this effect size represents a greater effect size than in Study Two. This finding suggests that participants are clearly able to distinguish between low and high-spin messages, and that these differences are measured using the Authenticity Scale.
What was interesting was that participants demonstrated clear attitude change towards Steve Turner in test session 4. Participants gave a higher authenticity score and indicated higher support for Steve Turner when he communicated in a low-spin as compared to a high-spin style. This was despite the fact that the political policies being promoted were exactly the same as in the low and high-spin condition in test session 3. This markedly stronger result in test session 4 may be due to participants having a direct comparison of communication style to consider. Moreover, in test session 4 participants in the low-spin condition viewed a high-spin message after 3 weeks of low-spin messages. Therefore, the difference in communication style, in terms of the level of spin, was accentuated and participants had a clear point of comparison.

This may provide an insight into the result of a politician using low-spin in direct comparison to another politician using high-spin communication. This type of interview situation can be found when a journalist conducts a studio interview with two politicians at the same time (for instance, a politician from each main political party).

7.2.5 Hypothesis 5: Identifying the audience perceptions of the communicator

The study aimed to confirm the relationship between the level of spin and the audience perceptions of the communicator trust and credibility. It was hypothesised that a low-spin style message would increase audience perceptions of communicator trustworthiness and credibility. This hypothesis was supported by the results. Participants produced significantly higher ratings of trust and credibility for the low-spin confederate politician. In addition, participants viewing the actual politicians produced significantly higher ratings of trust and credibility for Geoff Gallop than they did for Colin Barnett. This is consistent with Colin Barnett’s significantly lower
authenticity score, which suggests the use of a greater level of spin in his style of communication.

These results are consistent with the conclusion in Study Two. They also confirm the interview study findings that the public view the use of spin cynically and trust is developed with a more open style of communication. Moreover, these findings support Felling’s (2001) argument that when politicians get back to more ‘straight’ talking, ‘trust’ within the community will develop. These results are also consistent with a number of studies that found communicator source trustworthiness to be an important source component of credibility (Hovland et al., 1953; McGinnies & Ward, 1980; Wiener & Mowen, 1986).

The findings are also consistent with an expectancy disconfirmation effect that the less expected an act, the stronger the audience’s inference that the communicator’s true opinion is consistent with the act. As suggested by Petty et al. (2001), people have expectations about persuasion attempts. It is argued that due to the public’s expectancies about the political use of a high-spin style of communication, a politician who uses a low-spin style of communication will disconfirm those expectancies. The disconfirmation of these expectancies increases perceived source trustworthiness and credibility because it appears to be inconsistent with the interests of the politician (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975; Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1981; Petty et al., 2001; Priester & Petty, 1995). Therefore, based on the expectancy disconfirmation effect, a low-spin style of political communication will cause increased source trustworthiness and credibility.
Furthermore, the findings are also consistent with Sopory & Dillard’s (2002) meta-analytic study into the persuasive effects of metaphor use in messages, which is a characteristic associated with a high-spin message. The research suggested that although under certain conditions metaphor use was moderately more persuasive it had no effect on communicator trustworthiness.

7.2.6 Hypothesis 6: Tracking audience approval throughout a message

Study Three aimed to track audience approval of communicators throughout the duration of their messages and compare low and high-spin messages. It was hypothesised that there will be an increase in audience approval for the low-spin communicator compared to the high-spin communicator throughout the duration of the message. This hypothesis was supported by the results. The Perception Analyzer approval scores produced by participants for the confederate were increasingly and markedly higher for the low-spin condition. In addition, the Perception Analyzer approval scores produced by participants for the actual politicians demonstrated that Geoff Gallop (rated the lower spin communicator) enjoyed greater and increasing levels of approval as compared with Colin Barnett (rated the higher spin communicator). This is consistent with Geoff Gallop’s significantly higher authenticity score, as well as trust and credibility ratings compared with Colin Barnett’s.

The Perception Analyzer approval scores support the significant differences found between the low and high-spin condition. This finding is consistent with Study Two’s findings that demonstrated the low-spin condition produced consistently greater levels of message believability. The findings also support the hypothesis that approval ratings for low-spin messages would increase over time as trust develops compared to the high-spin messages.
These findings are consistent with assertions that the public are clearly able to identify spin in public communication (Ham, 2003; Menand, 1989) and that the use of spin generates negative attitudes in the public (Grattan, 1998; Ward, 2002). These results are consistent with the assertions of Goffman (1986), Grattan (1998), Kraman & Hamm (1999), and Ward (2003) that more up-front and honest communication styles will be received more favourably by audiences. These findings are also consistent with the themes, which emerged from the interviews in Study One. The industry professionals interviewed suggested that the public are able to recognise spin and view it cynically.

7.2.7 Hypothesis 7: The relationship between the level of spin and support
Study Three aimed to confirm the relationship between the level of spin used and the audience support for both the confederate and the actual politicians. It was hypothesised that a higher authenticity score will correspond to greater levels of audience support for the communicator. Moreover, that the information control behaviours used in high-spin political communication will have a direct relationship with support for the communicator. Additionally, that the effect of condition would generate significantly different levels of support for the communicator. These hypotheses were confirmed by the results.

7.2.7.1 Authenticity scores and support
It was found that there was a positive and significant relationship between authenticity scores and support produced for the confederate politicians. The participants viewing the confederate politician in test sessions 1 and 2 produced correlations of .699 and .729 respectively. The participants viewing the confederate politician in test sessions 3 and 4 produced significant correlations of .745 and .819 respectively. It was also found that
there was a positive and significant relationship between authenticity scores and support produce for the actual politicians. The participants viewing political leaders Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett produced correlations of .795 and .906 respectively. These high correlations suggest that receivers will support politicians who use a low-spin style of communication or who use a low-spin style of communication compared with their contemporaries.

7.2.7.2 Information control behaviours and support

Moreover, it was confirmed that there is a direct relationship between the use of information control behaviours associated with a high-spin style of communication and lower participant support for the communicator. The participants viewing the confederate politicians in test sessions 3 and 4 produced significant correlations between the use of information control behaviours and lower support of .564 and .737 respectively. It was also found that participants viewing the actual politicians Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett produced significant correlations between the use of information control behaviours and lower support of .651 and .834 respectively.

7.2.7.3 Condition and support

In addition, it was confirmed that the effect of condition on support for the communicator was significant. It was found that participants produced significantly greater support for the low-spin confederates than for the high-spin confederates. It was also found that there was a test session effect (within subjects) with significantly higher support scores occurring across the four test sessions. Although, only approaching significant there appeared to be an interaction effect with an increasing difference between low and high-spin support scores. Specifically, there was a cumulative effect of support scores for the low-spin condition with high-spin scores remaining relatively
consistent. This could also be suggestive that audience support increases in response to a low-spin style of communication over time.

In addition, it was also found that participants produced significantly greater support for Geoff Gallop (rated the lower spin communicator) than for Colin Barnett (rated the higher spin communicator).

These results demonstrate that messages containing high levels of information control behaviours associated with spin will elicit significantly less support for the communicator as compared with messages containing low levels of these behaviours. This relationship between the level of spin and support is found in the context of a real election with actual candidates, which increases the external validity of the results.

These findings suggest that the public are more willing to support politicians perceived as using a low-spin style of communication. These results are consistent with Study Two findings and supportive of Forstorp’s (1997) argument that a politician’s success is not only due to the specific ideas and values but their skill in the use of ‘authenticity’ in political communication; their ability to project themselves as a ‘real’ person. The interviews conducted with public communication professionals from the public relations and pharmaceuticals firms also supports the finding that attempts to avoid answers, as was evident in the high-spin messages, are less likely to be believed by audiences (see discussion in Chapter 2).

These findings provide further evidence consistent with an expectancy disconfirmation effect, which accounts for the increased persuasiveness of the low-spin political communicators. As previously stated, an expectancy disconfirmation effect posits that
the less expected an act, the stronger the audience’s inference that the communicator’s true opinion is consistent with the act. The communicator’s stated position is perceived to be more representative of external reality and trustworthy; therefore the persuasiveness of the message is increased.

Moreover, these findings are consistent with Edwards & Bello’s (2001) study (previously discussed in Chapter One, Section: 1.9.1) into the influence of equivocation, which is a characteristic of a high-spin style of communication. They suggested that a more positive meaning was not derived from equivocal responses and were seen as less honest than unequivocal responses.

7.2.8 Hypothesis 8: Predicting who would win the election

It was hypothesised that the actual politician generating the higher authenticity score would win the Western Australian state election. Specifically, the politician with the highest authenticity score would receive higher indicated support, and that this would correspond to voting behaviour. This hypothesis was supported by the data. It was found that Geoff Gallop produced a significantly higher authenticity score and received higher indicated support. Subsequently, this translated into confirmed voting behaviour, with Geoff Gallop winning the 2005 Western Australian State Election.

This finding is supportive of case studies by Forstorp (1997) and Grattan (1998, p. 87) on specific politicians who successfully gained huge support from the public due to their low-spin style of communication and presenting themselves as ‘ordinary’ everyday people.
Moreover, the finding is consistent with research demonstrating clear evidence in support of a consistent relationship between attitudes and behaviour (Kim & Hunter, 1993; Kraus, 1995). It is also consistent with Kraman & Hamm (1999) and Witman et al., (1996) findings that a more proactively upfront and honest communication with patients notably reduces litigation action and liability payments associated with medical accidents or negligence.

### 7.3 Implications

This research was designed to investigate the effect of the complex construct of ‘spin’, which consists of many different behavioural features associated with information control behaviours. As such, the study was designed to investigate the combined effect of these features in a real world application. This study provides clear information on the combined effect of the features that are directly related to high-spin messages, which is a phenomenon typical of political communication in democracies around the world. The following section will discuss the theoretical explanations that account for the findings, and the possible implications that arise.

#### 7.3.1 Expectancy disconfirmation

The persuasive influence of a low-spin over a high-spin style of political communication finds support in the expectancy disconfirmation theory. If a politician communicates in a way that seems to oppose their own self-interest, then the communicator is perceived by an audience to have greater trustworthiness because it disconfirms their expectations. When a politician begins to communicate in a low-spin style of communication (not framing and discussing political issues in order to cast them in the best possible light, such as using skewed metaphors that oversimplify
complex issues and avoiding difficult questions) this disconfirms the audience expectation of how a politician normally communicates their position.

As previously discussed, an expectancy disconfirmation effect suggests that the less expected an act, the stronger the audience’s inference that the communicator’s true opinion is consistent with the act. As suggested by Petty et al., (2001) people have expectations about persuasion attempts. It is argued that due to the public’s expectancies about the political use of a high-spin style of communication a politician who uses a low-spin style of communication will disconfirm those expectancies. As Eagly et al.’s (1978) study on causal inferences of communicators and the effect on opinion change suggests, messages are more persuasive under expectancy disconfirmation conditions.

Eagly et al. stated that causal inferences made by receivers implied that “communicator’s biased knowledge and unwillingness to report their genuine positions did affect their stated positions” (1978, p. 424). They argue that receivers infer a knowledge and or reporting bias in communicators (based on background or personality traits and the audience being addressed) and that these biases affect the information disclosed and the position advocated by a communicator. When the communicator’s position disconfirms the receiver’s knowledge or reporting bias expectations, this will lead the receiver to believe that the reality was compelling enough to override any personal or situational pressure on the communicator’s stated position. The communicator’s stated position is perceived to be more representative of external reality and trustworthy; therefore the persuasiveness of the message is increased. Therefore, a low-spin political message is more persuasive over a high political message.
7.3.2 Equivocation

Politicians will often use equivocation to deflect criticism of themselves or their political party and to avoid answering difficult questions. However, the finding that a low-spin communicator elicited greater levels of support than a high-spin communicator is consistent with equivocation research. Research has found that observers of discussions or interviews may perceive the continued use of equivocal responses negatively (Edwards & Bello, 2001). For example, if a politician equivocates on whether taxes will be raised it was found that observers would assume the negative, in other words, that taxes would be more likely to rise rather than fall or remain the same.

Edward and Bello (2001) found that equivocal communication was not perceived to be more competent compared with unequivocal communication. It is suggested that perhaps clarity in communication is highly regarded in relation to competence. Equivocal responses were also seen as less honest than unequivocal criticism, although they were viewed as more polite particularly when the response was made in relation to the poor performance of another person.

Moreover, a more positive meaning was not derived from equivocal responses compared to unequivocal criticism. The researchers initially expected that the vagueness of the equivocal response would allow the inference of a more positive meaning; however, this was not found to be the case. It appeared that participants understood equivocation is used to hide the truth and to avoid difficult questions, although the more negative meaning is clearly recognised. It was also apparent that observers are more positively oriented towards clear critical language.
This has clear implications for the use of spin in relation to media consumers of political interviews or discussions and is supportive of Study Three’s findings on low and high-spin political messages. The use of equivocation or a high level of spin in political communication does not elicit more positive meaning from audiences. In fact, equivocation in political communication will raise suspicions that the politician is not being honest and is trying to hide information that is likely to be politically damaging.

7.3.3 Metaphors and analogies

Metaphor use is a characteristic of a high-spin style of communication due to the propensity for misrepresentation. Metaphors are often used in high-spin messages because it is easy to present inaccurate comparisons that present information favouring the communicator. Study Three’s findings have demonstrated that a high-spin communicator elicits significantly lower levels of trustworthiness and credibility compared to a low-spin communicator. This finding is consistent with results from recent studies into metaphor use.

Sopory and Dillard’s (2002) conducted research into the effects of metaphor use on the persuasiveness of messages. The research suggested that there was evidence that the use of metaphor was moderately more persuasive under certain conditions, but communicator credibility, in terms of competency and trustworthiness of the source, was not affected by metaphor use. Moreover, Felling (2001) suggested that, typically, the use of analogies and parallels are often associated with spin because of the propensity for misrepresentation. Felling suggests this type of spin can be described as dealing creatively with the truth and suggests it can be recognised because it comes across as a sales pitch.
Therefore, it is argued that in a political context, the use of metaphors in high-spin communication would not benefit from an increase in source trustworthiness. However, low-spin communication’s use of more literal examples has been shown to contribute to an increase in source trustworthiness and credibility as well as greater message persuasiveness. Moreover, that the use of exaggerative metaphors does not create any overall persuasive advantage when used in a high-spin political context.

7.3.4 Trust, competence, and credibility

This research was designed to investigate the effects of spin as a communication style on the audience perception of the communicator. It measured the audience perceptions of source trustworthiness and credibility. It has been suggested that credibility is comprised of competence and trustworthiness (McGinnies & Ward, 1980; Mowen & Weiner, 1987; O’Keefe, 2002). As discussed, it has been argued that the public are distrustful of their political representatives and are disillusioned with the political process (Felling, 2001; Grattan, 1998; Longstaff, 2001; Ward, 2002). Correspondingly, this research demonstrates that the high-spin style of communication that the majority of politicians are currently using is perceived as being deceptive. It is suggested that this may be contributing to the alienation of the public from the political process.

It is reasonable to assume that the use of a high-spin style of communication by politicians is intended by them to create more persuasive messages and arguments. High-spin communication is a strategy of framing and discussing political issues in order to cast the communicator in the best possible light. Spin often involves the oversimplification of complex issues and the avoidance of difficult questions and a range of techniques designed to control information about a given issue or event. It could be argued that this communication style presents the communicator as being more
competent or having greater expertise. One of the implications of this study is that the use of spin may increase the receiver’s perception of competence but at the expense of trustworthiness. This appears to impact negatively on credibility and therefore on support in a political communication context.

This research has demonstrated that the characteristics typical of a high-spin message produce a less persuasive message than the characteristics that make up low-spin. These findings may also indicate that in a political communication context trustworthiness is a stronger component than competence in relation to credibility. More specifically, it is argued that the increase in communicator credibility was achieved via an increase in trustworthiness. It is believed that a high-spin style of communication may affect the competence component but decreases the trustworthiness component of source credibility.

This suggestion that trustworthiness is a stronger component than competence in relation to credibility finds support in a number of previous studies. Mowen et al. (1987) found that trustworthiness was an important source component influencing the persuasive outcome of a message. McGinnies and Ward (1980) investigated the persuasive effect of a message where trustworthiness and expertise of the source was manipulated independently. They reported that the expert and trustworthy source created greater opinion change. The trustworthy source was more persuasive regardless of being high or low in expertise. It is interesting to note that this finding was established with an Australian cohort. Therefore, trustworthiness may have a stronger effect on perceptions of credibility than competence in the communication of political messages in an Australian environment.
7.3.5 Elaboration likelihood model

It has been demonstrated that the level of spin impacted on source trustworthiness and credibility, which increased the persuasiveness of the political message. That is, the low-spin style of communication created greater persuasive outcomes in comparison to the high-spin style of communication. It is suggested that the low-spin style of communication operates as a peripheral cue by increasing the communicator trustworthiness and credibility. The Elaboration Likelihood Model suggests that peripheral cues should be greater under conditions of relatively low elaboration likelihood or under conditions in which the cue is relatively more important (O’Keefe, 2002). An interesting issue is whether under these test conditions persuasion occurs via the central or peripheral routes when the determining factor is source trustworthiness and overall credibility.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) suggests that when elaboration is relatively high, persuasion is achieved via the central route. In this investigation, participants could be considered to have high elaboration likelihood. The participants were uncommitted voters who by law were required to vote in the upcoming election. They were instructed to view relevant political message from the actual political leaders they would be voting for. They were also using a device that recorded their responses to the political messages on a second-by-second basis as they viewed each message. Moreover, participants were in a television studio setting where their views were collected and results were broadcast each week during the 6.00pm news. The study design presented participants with the same confederates delivering the same political policies and positions with only the communication style being manipulated (low verses high-spin). The strength of the arguments was designed to be consistently high in both conditions.
It was demonstrated that the low-spin style of communication increased communicator trust and credibility, which played a predominant role in the persuasive outcome.

However, it is uncertain whether the persuasive outcome is achieved through the central or peripheral route given that the argument strength and elaboration likelihood are both high. The higher source credibility generated by the low-spin style of communication may, in fact, add to the argument strength. There is some evidence for credibility adding to argument strength in recent studies on the ‘unimodel’ of persuasion (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999; Kruglanski, Thompson, & Spiegel, 1999). The heuristics-systems model suggests that “heuristic processing can impact directly on judgement when it co-occurs with systematic processing” (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994, p.461). In other words, central and peripheral routes to persuasion can have an ‘independent’ or ‘interdependent’ effect (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). Moreover, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) suggest that credibility may influence persuasive outcomes by acting as extra argument strength: as “bits of information contained in a communication that are relevant to a person’s subjective determination of the true merits of an advocated position” (p. 133). If this is the case, then an increase in source credibility will strengthen the argument or act as an argument in itself and therefore persuasion will occur via the central route.

It could be argued that, given the tough political environment, the strength of most political arguments is relatively high. Therefore, the persuasive effect may well be derived from the more peripheral cues such as trustworthiness and credibility of the source. This may be more prevalent among uncommitted voters. Obviously, those who have strong attitudes and beliefs on the relevant political issues will not be easily persuaded. Whether persuasion is achieved via the central or peripheral route may have
an impact on the rate of ‘decay’ of the persuasive effect. ELM suggests that persuasion occurring via the central route is more likely to have increased endurance as opposed to persuasion via the peripheral route (O’Keefe, 2002). This may be an important consideration for politicians and their ability to maintain influence over a particular time period such as leading up to an election.

7.4 Applications

It was found that participants were clearly able to differentiate low from high-spin messages. In addition, low-spin messages elicited higher authenticity scores and support from audiences than high-spin messages. These findings have several applications for public communications.

7.4.1 Politicians and public figures

This research demonstrates that political figures would benefit from increased public support by adopting a low-spin style of communication. The findings suggest that politicians need to adopt a low-spin style of communication over a high-spin style of communication in order to deliver a more persuasive message. Low-spin communication style appears to be particularly effective in contrast to figures using high-spin styles. Therefore, there appears to be a large persuasive advantage for the politician that communicates in a low-spin style over those that would use a high-spin style of communication.

Public figures looking to communicate an image of trustworthiness would be better to use a low-spin style of communication. This may also apply to corporate and governmental organisations. It is clear that the level of spin used in public communication impacts directly on the persuasiveness of political messages. There is
also some evidence suggesting a low-spin style delivery may also be relevant to public communication in general such as corporate communication and even some types of advertising.

It has been speculated that these findings may indicate the political use of high-spin communication could increase the perception of expertise or competence but at the expense of trustworthiness. The perception of low source trustworthiness and overall credibility has the effect of decreasing the persuasiveness of a message in political communication. However, in a more general application, public figures may benefit from using different levels of spin depending on the target and purpose of the communication. Public figures may use this information strategically with different communication aims. For example, if expertise or competence has a greater importance over trust and overall credibility for a particular issue then perhaps a high-spin style of communication will be preferable. Conversely, when source trustworthiness is paramount, then a low-spin style of communication may produce a more persuasive effect in receivers. However, this may be over stretching the parameters of these research findings and further research in this area will be required.

7.4.2 Media training

These findings may have important application for media training purposes. Different media training for political and public figures may need to be adopted. Currently, many aspects of media training teach control characteristics associated with high-spin message delivery. The use of information control behaviours such as not answering questions directly and simply repeating short crafted messages may need to be revised. As demonstrated in the political communication context, information control behaviours are detrimental to the persuasiveness of messages.
7.4.3 Advertising

There may be important applications for the advertising industry when devising campaigns. Perhaps campaigns that tend to use a high level of hype and exaggeration may find that it is less effective in relation to the persuasive outcome of the message particularly in a political context. These findings may also provide important information that can be used to improve interpersonal communications. For example, people working in a sales environment may very well have increased persuasive success by adopting a low-spin style communication over a high-spin style of communication.

7.5 Limitations

As previously stated, the research conducted investigated the effect of spin, which is a complex construct consisting of many different behavioural features associated with information control. It has provided clear information on the combined effect of the features that are directly related to high-spin style of political communication, which is common in democracies around the world. However, it does not provide detailed information about the effects of each individual behavioural feature. These limitations notwithstanding, potential limitations regarding the participant sample, political messages, testing procedures, and research scope will be discussed.

7.5.1 Sample

There are several characteristics of the participant sample that may limit the amount of generalisations from the results. First, the study utilised a relatively small sample. Although the sample of 60 was sufficient for purposes of statistical power and was used in a repeated measures design over 4 weekly test sessions, it is unlikely that this sample represented all the demographic diversity of the Western Australian voting population.
(for example, people without transport, in regional areas, or in institutional care). However, they were representative of uncommitted voters and by gender, age, education, and marital status.

Secondly, participants were recruited through a Western Australian community newspaper. It is possible that readers of this community newspaper are not representative of the voting population in a systematic way that influences their perception of political messages. In addition, the involvement of Channel Nine with this study required that participants agree to the video recording and broadcast of the weekly test sessions. Consequently, participants who were unwilling to appear on television were excluded from the study (although there was only 1 known case). It is possible that this selection requirement resulted in a participant sample that systematically differed from the general population in a way that influenced their perception of political messages. However, these possibilities are considered to be unlikely to have influenced the results.

The participants selected for Study Three were, however, systematically different from the general voting population is one important way: all identified as uncommitted voters. In other words the majority of the participants had stated that they had not entirely decided who they were going to vote for in the election.

Despite these possible limitations, there were very few demographic characteristics identified as influencing perceptions of authenticity. This suggests that the participant sample, although possibly non-representative of the greater Australian voting population, were responding fairly homogenously to the low and high-spin messages respectively. In other words, it is improbable that a perfectly demographically
representative sample would produce any difference in results because demographic characteristics did not appear to greatly influence perceptions in relation to the authenticity score.

The use of uncommitted voters recruited through community newspapers and willing to appear on television also did not appear to affect the key variables in this study. The finding that the most supported actual politician in this study (Geoff Gallop) went on to win the Western Australian state election two days after the data collection was completed suggests that the sample was an adequate representation of the voting public.

7.5.2 Procedure

Selective exposure suggests that there exists a predisposition to avoid non-supportive information. Communicators will need to overcome the problem of receivers not paying attention to their communicative messages (O’Keefe, 2002). Therefore, in the election experiment participants were required to pay attention to the political information presented and make judgements on them. This is not exactly a normal occurrence. However, in Australia voting is compulsory, and therefore in this political environment it is not so unusual for the voting population to pay attention to political communication in considering who to vote for. Although, according to selective exposure theory, the audience will concentrate on the information supporting their current attitudes and beliefs. Although, the participants used in the study were uncommitted voters who were still deciding on which candidate to vote for. This sample, unlike the general population, will be focused on information pertaining to the political candidates in order to make a determination on which candidate they will be voting for.
7.5.3 Confederate

One of the limitations of Study Three was the detection of confederate politician, Laurie Miller, in test session 2. This loss of cover for the confederate politician had impacted on the confederate data in test session 2 of the study. However, this message was successfully presented to participants in Study Two without the group detecting he was a confederate politician.

There are two likely explanations for why the confederate politician was detected in this study. In Study Two, participants were presented with the confederate message first, and were then presented with genuine political messages. As a result, the confederate messages were viewed without an immediate previous point of reference. In Study Three, conversely, participants viewed the confederate message last. After viewing several high production value messages, the contrast between these messages and the first confederate messages may have been more striking. Moreover, in Study Two participants were provided with a cover story, which provided an explanation for the lower production quality of the message. This would have inoculated suspicions in the participants in Study Two; however, Study Three participants were not able to be provided with this explanation.

However, the Steve Turner confederate messages used for test session 3 and 4 were produced to broadcast production standards. These messages were filmed in an indoor studio with a well-recognised political journalist conducting the interview. Despite the improved production quality of the new confederate messages, it was considered too risky to present these new messages to participants as a genuine politician. It was felt that participants would be highly suspicious, and it was decided that the remaining data should not be compromised by possible interference of participant suspicions. Therefore
participants were simply told that the new messages were presenting different styles of political communication.

It is unfortunate that participants did not believe the confederate was an actual political in the test session 3 and 4. However, one of the advantages of participants knowing the confederate was not an actual politician was that there was no risk of participants becoming aware of a secret confederate being used and this possibly impacting on the results. Of course checks can be made and any participants who were suspicious could be eliminated from the sample. Although, in this environment, suspicion of that type would certainly have the capacity to travel through the group very quickly, particularly when it is a repeated measures design and the same people participated over a 5-week period. In such a case it may be found that most of the participants would then have suspicions and would all have to be eliminated. This would obviously be unsuitable for this type of research methodology.

Given this was a new concept that was being tested, having the participants know that the confederate was not an actual politician, for one of the messages being tested, was a useful method of researching attitudes towards different communication styles. This method allowed the separate low and high-spin messages to be switched between conditions in the final test session. This enabled the testing of responses to the exact same message by the same participants delivered in the both low and high-spin communication styles. This would not have been possible if participants were led to believe that the confederate was an actual politician throughout the testing period. In order to perform this test with participants believing the confederate was an actual politician there would need to be a different message developed, which would not necessarily be exactly the same and confounds would be unavoidably present.
Therefore, in test session 3 and 4 the two delivery styles could be tested on the same participants without the added interference of other message confounds. There is a possibility that participants would respond differently in test session 3 and 4 if they believe the confederate was an actual politician. However, the alpha level and attitude responses associated with the confederate were consistent with actual politicians and suggest that this effect would be minimal. Moreover, the results were also consistent with Study Two findings.

7.5.4 Materials

Participants rated the political messages using Perception Analyzer dials. Participants were required to continually respond to the test material using the device in order to record their attitudes. The use of the hand held dials therefore required that participants would pay close attention to the test material. It could be argued that this level of attention, and the use of the dial, constitute interference with the normal way in which participants would view political messages. However, the study was not designed to measure viewing habits but participants’ response to different communication styles.

Although the confederate speeches were not actual political speeches, they were realistic. For example, the speech used in the Steve Turner high-spin message was very close to a speech given by Australia’s treasurer after the testing had finished. Peter Costello was explaining to a studio and national television audience about required changes to the health system in the following way:

Now, my message is this - that we can start preparing for this now with small steps, you know, small steps this year, small steps in three years time, small steps in five years time, small steps in 10 years time. Or if we don't start preparing for it now, the adjustment for our society is going to be drastic. We
don't have a choice here. We don't have a choice of doing nothing or doing something. We will have to do something. The choice we have is by doing small things now, or drastic things later (SBS, 2005).

This message “doing small things now, or drastic things later” was repeated throughout the interview. This was very similar to parts of the high-spin message the confederate, Steve Turner, gave in his interview prior to Costello giving this interview in front of a studio audience on April 19, 2005. This provides some evidence suggesting that the scripts used would not appear artificial and goes some way in demonstrating the real world nature of the scripts used.

7.5.5 Context
Finally, the generalisable nature of the study’s finding may be limited to the current historical context. The characteristics identified as constituting spin in this study were clearly identified by participants. Furthermore, participants showed a preference for low-spin styles of communication and were more likely to support politicians utilising this style. However, it is plausible that the characteristics defining spin may change with the socio-cultural context, and there may be a lag between the introduction of these characteristics and techniques and the public’s recognition of them. Therefore, the level of spin and its effect on the persuasiveness of messages may require updating in future because as culture and society changes the way people view communication styles may also change.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Research
The findings of this research have raised some interesting questions that could be investigated. This study has considered the persuasive influences of typical political communication strategy and style. The study investigates persuasion in a specific
context and looks at combinations of items that are commonly used in specific situations such as the communication of political messages broadcast on television.

7.6.1 Components of credibility
It would be useful to conduct further multi-message testing of the low and high-spin delivery condition and its effect on source credibility, specifically testing the effect of the level of spin on perceptions of source expertise and competence. There are also questions about how the trustworthiness and competence components may be affected across different message context and subjects. It would be useful to explore how the low and high-spin delivery interacts with different communication requirements such as in a political, corporate, advertising, governmental, and interpersonal context.

7.6.2 Effects across media
It would be useful to understand how the level of spin in communication would be perceived across different media such as print and radio. This research looked primarily at the audiovisual communication medium; therefore, further research will be required in order for this to be established. The Authenticity Scale would need to be further developed in order to be useful in rating communication via the radio and print medium. It is noted that source credibility variations tend to have greater impact in the audiovisual mediums compared to written messages (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983; Worchel et al., 1975).

7.6.3 Specific attitude change
The participants in Study Three were predominantly uncommitted voters, who could be classed as having weaker beliefs. Certainly, it would be interesting to see the effect on those with strongly held political attitudes and their voting behaviour in an election
Further research would need to explore whether this negative opinion formation in audiences and the effect on attitude and behaviour change rather than just higher levels of support. Directions for further research would include developing a method to test for more specific attitude change and to determine whether the level of spin used in communication affects those attitudes and behaviours.

7.6.4 Decay of effect

Moreover, in early persuasion studies, Mann and Janis (1968) demonstrated that attitude change in role-playing experiments remained after an 18-month period. For future research, it would be interesting to determine how long any persuasive effect lasted in relation to a low-spin style of political communication.

7.7 Conclusion

This is largely the first investigation of its kind. There is a lot of further research that can be done in this area to explore different characteristics, settings, and media. Study Three was designed to test the Authenticity Scale and two styles of message delivery in an environment, which is closer to real world situations. Testing was conducted in an election campaign and participants viewed actual politicians as well as confederates.

The findings from this research present some answers to broad questions regarding the use of spin in political communication, which also raise many more interesting questions. The set of attributes or information control behaviours associated with high-spin communication have been fairly well established here. It was found that a high-spin style of political communication is correlated with lower support. A low-spin delivery style of communication had a greater persuasive influence than a high-spin delivery style of communication, specifically, in relation to political messages. This
effect was found to be consistent across various demographic characteristics with minor exceptions in relation to education and age. This investigation discovered the same results when using confederates as well as actual politicians, which gives these results strong external validity.

One of O’Keefe’s (2002) criticisms of persuasion research to date has been the use of single message designs. This investigation has attempted to overcome some of these difficulties by incorporating a multiple message design. The findings of this research were not only replicated across multiple messages but also across different message lengths, different interview environments and interview formats. The findings were replicated across different confederates and different types of communicators including actual politicians in campaign mode.

It is suggested that a low-spin as compared to a high-spin style of political communication increases perceptions of communicator trustworthiness and credibility. It has been found that a low-spin political message is more effective at eliciting greater support than a high-spin style of communication. What is interesting is that the specific information control behaviours associated with a high-spin message are correlated with lower support. When people perceive those behaviours associated with spin are present in a message support is significantly lower. Likewise, the absence of those behaviours in a message generates significantly higher support.

The following chapter will provide an overview of the thesis research findings. It will discuss the research findings in terms of broader applications and recommendations for communicators. Additionally, the following chapter will make some final observations concerning the persuasive effect of low and high-spin political communication.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Overview

Section One of Chapter One outlined the relationship between politicians, the media and the public. It illustrated how the use of a high-spin style of communication has produced an untrustworthy political stereotype. Section Two reviewed the relevant literature that provided theoretical analysis concerning source trustworthiness and credibility effects on message persuasiveness. Chapter Two provided a clear definition of the spin construct and outlined the findings from Study One’s interviews with communication professionals. The chapter then described the specific characteristics directly associated with low and high-spin communication. Chapter Three discussed the development of a rating scale to measure the level of spin used in a message and the audience perceptions of the politician. It also discussed measurement issues in relation to the quantitative testing of attitudes and responses toward low and high-spin messages. Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven outlined the method, results, and discussion of the quantitative testing in Study Two and Three. This present chapter will outline the scope of the research and summarise the findings. It will then detail the relevant applications and recommendations for public communicators before providing final observations and comments.

8.2 Thesis Summary

8.2.1 Research scope

This research was the first known empirical investigation into the persuasive effect of spin in political communication. Consequently, a wide research net was cast. This research was designed to investigate the effect of the complex construct of spin, which consists of many different behavioural features associated with information control
behaviours. As such, the studies were designed to investigate the combined effect of these behaviours rather than detailed information about the effects of individual behaviours. However, the findings of this research provide clear information on the effects of low and high-spin political messages. The use of high-spin messages is a phenomenon typical of current political communication in democracies around the world.

This research sought to better understand the way audiences perceive political messages. It had been theorised that audiences no longer perceive high-spin political messages as believable; the present research has now demonstrated this empirically. It has been found that low-spin style messages compared to high-spin style messages are a more effective approach in political communication. It is argued that understanding the relationship between the level of spin and persuasion is important given that society relies heavily on media broadcasts of political messages in order to gain information about current issues.

8.3 Summary of Findings

8.3.1 Politicians, the media, and the public

This thesis examined the relationship between politicians, the media, and the public. It argued that the public is extremely sceptical of messages and statements given by politicians across the various media formats. This scepticism is contributed to, in part, by the media formats that are in place. Unfortunately, the media format public figures are required to work within generates communication that lacks credibility and persuasiveness (Erickson, 1996; Forstorp, 1997; Grattan, 1998; Roscoe, 2001). To communicate in this format public figures must structure what they say into succinct messages, much like an actor in a theatre production, which form small highly refined
segments in the news content. However, the increasingly media literate public now perceives slick media spin as being ‘inauthentic’ and the credibility of their message is called into question.

8.3.2 Political use of spin
The thesis illustrated how the high-spin style of political communication has produced an untrustworthy political stereotype. The use of spin in public communication is designed to control information and to deliver more specific messages. Politicians use information control behaviours when being interviewed. For example, politicians will avoid answering on the spot questions by continually repeating a prepared message crafted in different ways. If challenged on a point, a politician will attempt to disrupt the interviewer, change the subject, or discuss only part of the question. If challenged or pressed on an answer given or position held, the politician will generally become adversarial. These behaviours are designed to limit the information being offered about a given issue and to maintain control over the message being delivered to the public. Other information-control techniques used by politicians include providing oversimplified metaphors, exaggerated examples, and catch phrases in the delivery of statements given to the media.

8.3.3 Information control behaviours
It is argued that political spin is a communication style encompassing specific behaviours designed to appeal to the media, control information, and contain the meaning an audience interprets from the message. Moreover, the concept of spin is associated with varying degrees of intensity along a continuum with low-spin at one end and high-spin on the other. Therefore a message can contain varying levels of spin characteristics. This spin construct and the associated information control behaviours
contributed to the identification and measurement of the amount of spin used in a given political message. The spin construct was operationalised and used to determine spin’s effect on receiver perceptions of the communicator.

### 8.3.4 Measuring spin

An Authenticity Scale measured the information control behaviours directly associated with spin, and the audience perceptions of communicator attributes. The Authenticity Scale was used to ascertain the public’s attitudes and responses toward low and high-spin messages. It was found that a low-spin as compared to a high-spin style of communication increases perception of source trustworthiness and credibility. The low-spin style of communication has been demonstrated to be more effective at eliciting greater support than a high-spin style of communication. What is interesting is that the specific information control behaviours associated with a high-spin message has a direct relationship with support for the communicator. Specifically, when people perceive those behaviours, associated with spin, are present in a message support is significantly lower. Likewise, the absence of those behaviours in a message generates significantly higher support. This effect was consistent across various demographic characteristics with minor exceptions in relation to education and age. This investigation discovered the same results when using confederates as well as actual politicians, giving the results stronger external validity.

### 8.3.5 Public expectancy

It is contended that due to the public’s expectancies about the political use of a high-spin style of communication, a politician who uses a low-spin style of communication will disconfirm those expectancies. It is argued that a low-spin style of political communication will cause increased source trustworthiness and credibility based on the
expectancy disconfirmation effect that the less expected an act, the stronger the audience’s inference that the communicator’s true opinion is consistent with the act. Moreover, it is argued that the increased trustworthiness of the source increases the persuasive outcome of the communication. Therefore, a low-spin style of political communication has a greater persuasive effect due to the audience’s perceived increase in source trustworthiness.

8.3.6 External validity

This investigation attempted to overcome the difficulties of generalising persuasion research findings caused by single message designs, by incorporating a multiple message design. Moreover, the findings of this research were not only replicated across multiples messages but also across different message lengths, different interview environments, and interview formats. The findings were also replicated across different confederates and types of communicators, including corporate, government, and actual politicians in campaign mode. Therefore, it is argued that the research findings have strong external validity and have real world applications.

8.4 Communicator Applications and Recommendations

8.4.1 Message design

This research has been concerned with the effect of the political use of spin and much has been done to describe message variation in relation to low and high-spin communication. This research has defined the specific characteristics associated with low and high-spin communication and the varying levels that can exist along a continuum. The research findings provide information on how message variations, in relation to the levels of spin used in a message, influence persuasive effects. Therefore, it is envisaged that this research would be useful as a guide to politician, speechwriters,
or communication advisors to create low-spin communication. Certainly, politicians could build greater perceptions of public trust by using a low-spin approach to communication as well as gaining significantly greater levels of support.

8.4.2 Credibility, trustworthiness, and competence

What was interesting about these research findings is the relationship between low-spin communication and perceived source credibility. As has been established in previous studies and referred to in Chapter One, there are two dimension that impact on source credibility - trustworthiness and competence. McGinnies & Ward (1980) found that communicators could convey mixed impressions in relation to levels of competence and trustworthiness. For example, they found that communicators could be seen as competent but lacking in trustworthiness.

It is suggested that politicians are likely to believe the use of a high-spin style of communication will create a more persuasive message and a stronger argument, perhaps because it presents the communicator as more competent. Certainly, a high-spin style of communication allows the politician to have greater control over an interview and of the information that is communicated. Therefore, it is possible that their level of perceived competence increases. A high-spin style of communication also appeals to the media and therefore a politician may increase the likelihood of gaining greater media coverage.

However, it is argued that, if the use of high-spin communication provides some incremental increase in perceptions of communicator competence, it comes at the expense of trustworthiness; this indirectly appears to impact negatively on support in a political communication context. In other words, this increase in competence may come
at the cost of reduced communicator trustworthiness and overall credibility. Moreover, the high-spin style of communication, whilst potentially gaining greater media coverage, has been shown to negatively impact on support, which is of course the holy grail of political communication.

Certainly, there is a culture of misrepresentation and deception associated with political communication and politics more generally. Therefore, when it comes to politicians, it appears any increase in the public perception of trustworthiness has a measurable effect on the persuasiveness of their political messages. It appears that the perception of trustworthiness in politicians is rare and, as a result, is possibly valued by the public above other aspects of source credibility such as competence or expertise. Consequently, a small increase in the perception of trustworthiness generated through the use of a low-spin style of communication has a measurable increase in public support for the communicator.

Further research will need to be conducted to determine the effects that the level of spin has on perceptions of competence as components of credibility in political communication. This research has clearly demonstrated that low-spin political communication generates increased source trustworthiness compared to a high-spin communication. It has also shown that what is important in increasing support in a political communication context is source trustworthiness.

8.4.3 Low-spin politicians

There are a number of politicians detailed in Chapter One who appear to have benefited from a low-spin communication approach. The new low-spin style of communication
these politicians use disconfirms everything the public has come to expect from politicians in terms of how they communicate and interact with the public.

For example, Pauline Hanson’s style of communication when interacting with the media was described as, like she was having a chat over coffee with friends and did not always have a highly controlled schedule (Kingston, 1999). This low-spin approach gave the perception that she was not a professional politicians but an ordinary person in the role of a politician. This approach struck a cord with the public and Pauline Hanson and the One Nation Party she founded, secured 23 percent of the vote and won 11 seats in the 1998 Queensland State election.

Peter Beattie, the current Queensland State Premier, also has benefited from a low-spin approach to political communication. He often uses the disclosure etiquette strategy of admitting his own failings in a matter of fact way. This idea of being completely upfront when communicating with the public draws on forgive-and-forget tendencies and builds trust in the public. Mona Sahlin’s success in Swedish politics is another example of a politician’s skilful use of the low-spin style of communication. Sahlin’s low-spin approach transformed politics into something more relevant to the Swedish public.

8.5 Generalisability

8.5.1 Cross-cultural applications

As this research was conducted using a Western Australian population it is possible that the effects may be culturally specific. Certainly, McGinnies & Ward’s (1980) study did find differences between countries such as the United States and Japan. However, much of the information and examples concerning the relationship between the media, politicians and the public was sourced from the US, UK, and Europe. Therefore, it is
likely that similar effects will be found in economically developed western style democracies. Moreover, the lack of public trust in politicians does appear to be a current worldwide phenomenon. Further research will need to be conducted to determine any cultural specific effects.

8.5.2 Corporate applications

Another question is how effective will the low-spin style of communication be in broader areas of public communication? There is some suggestion that a low-spin approach would also be useful for corporate communication. Certainly, results from the study of communication professionals’ strategies suggested that a low-spin approach was paramount for marketing success. As was discussed in chapter two, pharmaceutical firms used the low-spin approach to deliver marketing success in their communication with healthcare professionals and with government.

It was argued that many corporations use a great deal of spin to communicate to the public about their brands, products and services. For example, companies that use the same old tone and hype, illustrated in their mission statement, marketing brochure, and your-call-is-important-to-us busy signal, may be negatively impacting on potential customers. Therefore, it is possible that low-spin communication effects will be useful in advertising and marketing applications. There is already information supporting this and strategies in place that make use of low-spin in marketing, particularly with youth brands. Certainly, further research will be useful to determine the effect of low Vs high-spin messages in these different public communication contexts, formats, and applications.
8.6 The Media and Spin

8.6.1 Traditional media

The public now recognise a high-spin style of communication as a way in which politicians hide the truth and attempt to strengthen their position or argument. A television audience interprets the characteristics of a high-spin political message negatively and derives more meaning from what the high-spin communicator is trying not to say. It has been demonstrated that the use of a high-spin style of message delivery negatively impacts on source trustworthiness, credibility, and message persuasiveness.

Correspondingly, the media may need to adjust the way in which they report and structure news stories. If politicians and other public figures do begin to adopt a low-spin style of communication the structure of news reports may need to alter in order to accommodate the new style of communication. For example, the media may not be provided with the short crafted messages or statement containing puns and clichés as often. This different communication style may be more difficult to structure into stories.

8.6.2 Future media

It is clear from this research that a low-spin communicator receives greater perceived trustworthiness, credibility, and support from the public. Perhaps the high-spin style of communication is no longer as effective as it once was, particularly with a growing media literate public and their increased appetite for perceptions of authenticity in their political representatives. As the former UK education secretary, Estelle Morris, suggested, a new relationship between politicians and the media is needed to reverse the increasing cynicism of the public (Ward, 2003). Although high-spin messages suit the media’s processes, they alienate the public, for whom the messages are intended.

However, with much at stake for politicians and organisations in relation to gaining
public support they may find other ways to communicate to their public in a low-spin style if traditional media do not accommodate it.

8.7 Closing Observations

It must be noted that this new low-spin style of communication that has been outlined in this thesis is still just a different style of political communication. The political intention will likely remain the same, that is, to influence and persuade by all means necessary. If this new style of communication begins to be used more extensively by politicians it will eventually come to be viewed by the voting public as just that, another strategy to persuade and to reinforce a political position. As a result, the new low-spin style of political communication will eventually cease to disconfirm expectations. Therefore, it is likely the communicator will no longer benefit from an increase in perceived trustworthiness and credibility. Consequently, the new spin may become the same old spin and perhaps the old high-spin style of political communication will eventually benefit from the expectancy disconfirmation effect.

As the aforementioned P. T. Barnum once quipped, the creation of some kind of ‘o-meter’ to measure the infusion of humbug would generate great interest. Certainly, it would seem that the public have now developed their own inbuilt ‘spin-o-meter’, which they use to measure the infusion of humbug in political messages.
REFERENCES


Mills, J., & Harvey, J. (1972). Opinion change as a function of when information about the communicator is received and whether he is attractive or expert. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 21*, 52-55.


APPENDIX A

Information Provision for Study One

I am a PhD Candidate from Murdoch University investigating different approaches to public communication. The main aim of this study is to gain insight into the strategies used by communication professionals in delivering information to the public. This study will also explore the effectiveness of the strategies used to convey messages to the public and whether they achieve the desired outcomes.

You can help in this study by consenting to be interviewed. The interviews will be recorded, with your permission, and the tapes will be stored securely at Murdoch University. We anticipate that interviews will take about 15 minutes.

All information given during the study is confidential, and no names or other information that might identify you will be used in any report or publication arising from this research unless express permission is given. Feedback on the study will be provided to participating organisations and to individual participants upon request.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can also decide to withdraw from the study at any time. Whether you choose to participate or not is completely unrelated to your employment. Furthermore, your employment will not be affected by any decision by you to withdraw from the study at a later date. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact either myself, Dale Hynd, or my supervisor, Professor Iain Walker, on (08) 9360 2186. Alternatively, you can contact the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.

Thank you,

Dale Hynd
CONSENT FORM

I, ________________________, (the participant) have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity; however, I know that I may change my mind at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for these test sessions to be audiotaped/videotaped (if applicable).

I agree that research gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information, which might identify me, is not used or is only used if express permission is given.

Participant:

Date:

Investigator’s Name: Dale Hynd

Investigator’s Signature:
Interview Transcriptions for Study One

Interview with participant A

Interviewer: How long have you been here?
Participant: I’ve been here 2.5 years.
Interviewer: 2.5 years. Are you? Were you a graduate here?
Participant: No. I came here after working in the industry for 4 years.
Interviewer: Oh yeah, in PR?
Participant: In PR, so I’ve got, I guess 6.5 years in total. Before I was here, I’d worked with a non-profit organization in a commerce role there, so I was there for two years. And before that, I was a, I guess a graduate, in a graduate position for a year.
Interviewer: No Journo work?
Participant: Sorry
Interviewer: No Journo work?
Participant: Juno? As in?
Interviewer: Journalist?
Participant: No, No, No.
Interviewer: It seems like a lot of people in PR are ex journalisms or media relations’ sort of stuff.
Participant: I think, I think the trend now is that most coms people have come from a commerce background because I guess that’s what you study at university. So it’s a much more defined path, whereas like 10 years ago the traditional path to PR was coming from a journalist background.
Interviewer: Yeah, Yeah, I think your right yeah. It’s interesting actually. So you did mass communications?

Participant: Yep, at UTS

Interviewer: So what’s your job here now?

Participant: I’m an associate, so I would be (inaudible) practice. I guess I’m an associate within a consulting environment, an account manager in other consultancies, because we’ve got weird titles for us. It’s actually an account manager. Primarily, that’s the day-to-day contact with the clients; so project responsibilities, budget responsibilities and all that sort of stuff falls to me. In terms of developing strategies and I guess, new business development, that’s sort of done with me, and senior council so would be like Lewi and Joe. They would get involved at that stage.

Interviewer: So you don’t have any input into strategy?

Participant: Oh I do. I guess what I’m saying is that I…

Interviewer: You attend the meetings but…

Participant: I would defer a lot of things, not defer but I would seek their advice. They’ve got 10 years more experience than me, so you’ve got to utilise that. So I guess the strategy is usually co-developed between senior council and account managers. And I think within… (confidential) …there’s three account managers in the health care practise. Myself, Catherine and Rita and then there’s the support staff so that’s Bernadette and Sarah, primarily.

Interviewer: Do they attend the strategy meetings as well or mainly just the …?

Participant: Yeah, they probably would, it depends on the client. Yeah, if it’s a prickly kind of client we’ll keep it to the more senior people.
Interviewer: Of course, yeah. I guess they don’t want too many people in the room at
the time.

Participant: Well exactly yeah.

Interviewer: Security or whatever. So, I guess I’ve just got a couple of general
questions here, thers four of them. They might not even be relevant.
It’s just that I have been thrown into it so. So I’m just going to throw out
a few questions.

Participant: Sure. Yeah.

Interviewer: First one was. What problems do you face in delivering a specific
message or the message to the public?

Participant: I guess most of the work with health care is I’d say 70 – 80 % of the
work that we do goes; the public is usually government or clinicians. In
terms of general communications in health care because a lot…

Interviewer: Your client is the government?

Participant: No, No. A significant amount of our work with our pharmaceutical
clients

Interviewer: Is focussed to the government. Is your target audience?

Participant: Yep, so there are sensitivities there, in terms of the messages we
communicate because I guess there’s a lot of noise at the moment about
PBS.

Interviewer: Yeah, there been quite a bit of flack recently. I don’t know if you saw
the Sunday programme a few weeks ago giving people a bit of a
hammering, I suppose?

Participant: Yep, so we are working in that environment. Pharmaceutical companies
are not exactly up there, in terms of public perceptions, nor with
government perception either. So that’s always going to be a challenge.
A. That we representing pharmaceutical companies. In terms of
government relations, discussions usually focus on budget discussions.
So whenever you’re talking about budgets with governments that’s
always a sensitive issue, so that’s message challenge number one. But
also I guess just in terms of government, very different, key opinion
leaders you need to target and ...

Interviewer: Particular ministers or members…?

Participant: Yep and different ministers or different politicians will have a different
trigger point based on their interests and their electorates, so that’s
challenge number two.

Interviewer: There might be an issue in their electorates, which is sensitive and so
that’s something that they may be interested in. So you can find a way
for it to be an advantage to them.

Participant: Absolutely. So that’s challenge number two is finding that, I guess those
lobbyists. Whilst again being mindful of fact that you are representing a
pharma company and a lot of people are not necessarily enamoured by
that concept. So that’s probably two challenges to government in terms
of talking to clinicians. Again, there’s been a lot of media noise about
the way pharmaceutical companies market to them, doctors, in terms of
the training or whatever it is, you know, because the training you’ll find,
a lot of it is…

Interviewer: Inducements and so on.

Participant: Yeah, so that’s challenge number one is to be seen when communicating
with clinicians, to be seen to be credible and informative and this is by
no means just marketing gobble-de-gook or whatever.
Interviewer: It may have some marketing element but it’s also about providing
information on new drugs. So basically you might say you’ve got a PR
problem at the moment. Is that what your saying with …?

Participant: We’ve always worked in a challenging environment from the
pharmaceutical company point of view.

Interviewer: Because you’re not actually allowed to advertise, so how do you get
information…?

Participant: Absolutely, so it’s quite unique in marketing, in terms of PR and
advertising in healthcare, because you aren’t able to directly advertise to
doctors and even more so to patients. Your programmes actually reflect
that sensitivity but you still got to deliver brain messages or messages.

Interviewer: Messages to the public and all the doctors and I guess governments as
well.

Participant: Yeah, so challenge number one with clinicians is the whole marketing
concepts to doctors. That’s challenge number one. Challenge number
two is not being able to directly speak to clinicians a lot of times. You
can mention drug names to clinicians but again that is rifling a little low.
You can do that to clinicians as long as it is in context and it’s

Interviewer: In a training environment?

Participant: In training and concept. We are governed by the Australian
Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Association code (ACMA Code). Which
says what we can and can’t say to doctors.

Interviewer: See that wasn’t mentioned in that report on the Sunday programme. I
remember seeing it and they didn’t say much about the regulations
regarding that. They just say that you know.
Participant: Well I guess it’s a voluntary code of ethics that the pharma companies have put together. And it’s not unusual for a lot of pharma companies to be brought to… sorry for one competitor to bring their competitor to the APMA in breach of that code. For example, when you’re making claims about your product, it needs to be verified by statistics and research and all the rest of it. So that’s probably challenge number three is having every claim you make being substantiated by comprehensive research. It’s not, it’s not like brand marketing for Coca Cola or Nike where you can say, you know, “This is the best”. Or it had to be something that…

Interviewer: Yeah, it’s got to be substantiated. Yeah.

Participant: But I think that’s actually quite a good thing, it makes PR practitioners more disciplined and ethical in what you can claim. Because. I think anyway. Because it’s unlike so many other, and this is why I find healthcare so challenging and so interesting because you are governed by strict codes and ethics, more, more so than in the other fields. You are governed by such a straight and narrow passage with what you can communicate. I think it’s actually a lot more ethical than a lot of PR.

Interviewer: Yeah I think it’s an interesting point, you know. Now you said, mentioned that the second point was clinicians but you were going to say the third point. I think that was the public presumably, is it?

Interviewer: I interrupted you, sorry.

Participant: No, no you’re right. I guess first challenge is the whole marketing environment. Challenge number two is what you can say to clinicians, it has to be substantiated. Challenge number three, I guess perhaps challenge number three would be the sheer bulk of noise that is being thrown to doctors. There’s a lot of pharmaceutical companies out there,
each with a lot of different drugs and they’re all communicating to

doctors. So there is literally an information overload.

Interviewer: So you have a similar environment to say advertising, there’s a huge

noise out there. So you’re got a similar…

Participant: Sure, but I guess the difference here is that unlike advertising to say, consumers, where you are able to communicate that individual or key point in maybe six or seven words, we need a bit more space because of the ethics that we are guided by but we still need to be able to cut through quantities of clichés. So how do you do that? And I guess that’s always the perennial challenge.

Interviewer: So what are some of the means and sort of avenues you have?

Participant: Sure.

Interviewer: If you, if you don’t want to answer that, that’s fine.

Participant: That’s fine. I guess there are sensitivities to how we do that but generally speaking, I guess it’s about communicating the benefits of the drug that you’re representing and finding synergies between what a clinician is looking for and what, and what the drug is offering. So for example, I’ll use industry examples more so I guess so. Pfizer has probably got the most long known example of doing that in terms of erectile dysfunction. We don’t work for Pfizer or Viagra; I should just point that out. But this is an established case study. Established for recognising needs that there is, there was a significant lack of awareness about the problem of erectile dysfunction and it wasn’t something that people, the community generally spoke about. So what they have done is they established a foundation. I can’t remember what they are called it now, Erectile Dysfunction Foundation, I think.
Interviewer: Ah yeah. Sort of like a grass roots type group?

Participant: Yeah it’s a patient focussed organization that looks at, I guess the patient aspects of the disease, it was sponsored by Pfizer. It had copped a lot of flack as it probably normally would but I guess what that has done there, was looking at creating an educational campaign that fit within their marketing scope i.e. the more people that become aware of erectile dysfunction, the more people that are… Because viagra is probably at the time, it was really the only viable option for a lot of people. Creating the market or stimulating the disease or awareness, is basically driving prescription for viagra. So working backwards from that, they saw the education gap; they filled the gap by creating a patient organization that looked at creating awareness status. At the end of the day, there was marketing result for them but from the clinician’s point of view and from the community point of view there was an educational gap out there. This is how a lot of (to use really generic ugly terms) a lot of awareness gets raised because there has to be a marketing piece for it to be identified and you can trace that right back to a lot therapeutic areas, things like the National Heart Foundation, Diabetes Australia. A lot of these companies / organizations wouldn’t exist without the support of pharma companies because they’ve got a marketing need but there is also a …

Interviewer: A real need.

Participant: There is a real need. So it’s about making those two converge. So that’s probably one core way that a lot of pharma companies will get involved with. There is the, again you know, what has been recorded in the past, educational seminars are offered to doctors. The classic PR approach is
to, is to find those doctors that sympathise with your, (not marketing need, that’s not the right thing) that sympathise with the issue that you’re trying to address so…

Interviewer: They may have a number of patients with this problem and how can you best serve them and recommend.

Participant: Absolutely. Absolutely, or it may be, it may be a doctor for example or a specialist that sees a lot of patients that pass through his or her practise that he is diagnosing with diabetes. And it sort of clicks in that there is an overwhelming number of people that may be undiagnosed, that are not being diagnosed. So how can we, you know as a medical community address this situation and that’s the job of pharma companies is to sort of tap into the minds of some of these leading clinicians, to see what their mandate is and tap into that.

Interviewer: Pretty much answered the second question there. So basically the aim of your strategies is to bring the two together, presumably.

Participant: Yes, precisely. So I guess what our prime allotted money for, is for us to understand the industry and the clinicians. Because having to define that and then about knowing what the industry is like and what the particular clinicians or government, what their triggers points are. So, I guess that’s why our clients come to us because we have that background and we know I guess how, to use wankie speak, we know who the players and we know what their triggers points are. So that’s why they came, they come to us.

Interviewer: And so do you, do you conduct research or sort of more in-house type enquires?
Participant: I think it’s more in-house type enquires, when you work, have been working in this field for few years and that’s why I guess I refer a lot to people who have been working in the field a lot longer than I.

Interviewer: Okay. I know this guy and he’s, I know he’s got a big interest in this or that. His concerns are these and so on.

Participant: Precisely. So a lot of research is informal because I guess the classic top down approach is the, is the process that a lot of PR people use in health care. That is, from the clinicians side of things, he may have six or seven opinion leaders that influence the second tier of influence, influences and that sort of keeps moving down, down the ranks and I guess the classic PR approach, and this is more of a traditional approach, is to get to those five or six opinion leaders and tap into their interests about a new drug or whatever and really sort of targeting your communications when a drug is quite new.

Interviewer: So you’d pick up the phone and have chat with them. Do you send them a letter? It just varies does it?

Participant: Yeah, it would be a formal programme. So it may be about perhaps communicating to these doctors about some of the new research that has come through about it. A drug before it’s actually out on the market. A lot of, a lot of you know, first and second tier doctors attend conferences all over the world and so before a drug is even on the market they’ll already know about it, know about the research and all the rest of it. So it may be about either introducing or reinforcing the research that’s been done on the drug to those key opinion leaders. You know, what people may already know about the way pharmaceutical companies communicate to doctors. It may be, that he would take that doctor to an
international conference. So that they might hear what’s happening in the whole industry, in general but also obviously to hear about the latest research of this new drug. But the way that, again where there is confusion here, is that doctors would normally attend those international conferences anyway. So what, what the pharmaceutical company might do is that they might sponsor that doctor, so it might be just a flight or I mean…

Interviewer: Reservations or whatever.

Participant: Yeah. Look I mean that’s the extend of the…

Interviewer: So you’re basically buying his time so that you can present some information to him.

Participant: Yeah. Sure. But at the end of the day, he is a, an informed consumer and all the sponsorship and all the freebies that these doctors allegedly get, which is a lot I should point out.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Participant: At the end of the day, they are an informed consumer, they are obviously highly intelligent and intellectual and if your presenting data to them, they’re going to dissect it and they’re going to think about it and no free airfare and accommodation can buy doctors, I can tell you that because that doesn’t work in the industry. The data, the data has to be there.

Interviewer: I guess it’s the same mass communication argument, you know, can information sort of, on television or mass media, is that going to directly influence someone, well probably not. They’ll think about it, they’ll process the information and whatever comes out of it, varies doesn’t it?

Participant: Yeah
Interviewer: Can you think of instances perhaps which a campaign, do you call them campaigns?

Participant: Yeah campaigns, programmes, yeah.

Interviewer: Where they could have been improved, like personally speaking or well we could have done this or perhaps that would have been a better approach.

Participant: Sure. Can I think of an example?

Interviewer: Perhaps in terms of, in terms of your target audience whether it be doctors, the government or the public. How do you think they perceive the messages you’re sending, along those lines?

Participant: So, I guess what your asking there is, is there a programme that we undertaken that perhaps didn’t deliver the best results that we were hoping for.

Interviewer: Obviously, speaking in general terms.

Participant: Sure. Well, I’m just trying to think here. I guess actually not. I think the examples that I can give, is that, it’s not so much there has been a strategic misdirection with the programme, it’s more to do I guess with the resources and budgets that we have to work with. So I can think some programmes that we had developed with an initial brief from the client and where we had sort of X amount of resources, X amount of budget to work with and it was a long term programme and stage one in this year would be this and stage two would be that; but it’s a dynamic ones that we were working with, so budget and resources change and economies change and September 11th happened and budgets get cut. So, so then, what does that do for that programme? It means that sometimes the programmes we sign aren’t necessarily flexible to those
environments. When you set up a large infrastructure and you need to scale down and it’s not necessarily very easy to do and I’m thinking here primarily about patient education programmes because there is a large infrastructure that you need to set up and the scaling of that. Depending obviously the area but there are some areas like heart disease and diabetes that are quite large and then there are other areas like hepatitis B or, or even HIV that are, whilst well know are actually quite small in terms of patient topography; so I can think of examples where we’ve had some educational programmes where they’ve had to be cut and what that has meant for both, well what has that meant for the pharma company is that they have created expectations from both clinicians and patients that weren’t necessarily delivered. So we’ve had to deliver an exit strategy on those programmes. Again, I guess it’s through no fault of the clients or ours. The situation has said that from there side of things we just don’t have the money to keep funding these programmes even though it’s expected, it’s a good programme and it can deliver all these things. We just don’t have the money. So I think that’s been a challenge and I think that’s always an ongoing challenge.

[End of Interview]
Interview with participant B

Interviewer: So how long have been working here?
Participant: Six months
Interviewer: Oh ok
Participant: Very new.
Interviewer: Are you? You have an English accent. Have you have been working in England recently?
Participant: Yeah that’s right
Interviewer: Ok
Participant: So I was with [inaudible] first working for four years.
Interviewer: In England?
Participant: In England?
Interviewer: 1995 – 1999, and I’ve done three years at GlaxoSmithKline in a variety of different roles. Well Glaxo Smith and then GlaxoSmithKline. Different jobs, with the merger and things. Before all that I was a Journalist for years.
Participant: I was going to ask that question because there are quite a few journalists that move in PR, for obvious reasons.
Interviewer: Did you do, you studied Journalism at University?
Participant: No I studied English. It’s a different system in Australia or at least now people look very much for some sort of PR communications media degree whereas back in whenever it was. In the beginning of the nineties it was fine to have an English degree or in fact any degree. They like science degrees as well.
Interviewer: Yeah I guess depending upon the area….
Participant: Yeah, yeah, so I worked in, in fact it was investigative journalism for a year and then decided I didn’t like it very much and preferred …. 

Interviewer: Cloak and dagger kind of stuff or sneaking around?

Participant: Well it was all kind of stuff, war corresponding officer, I didn’t do a lot of it but I was coordinating a lot of it and I didn’t enjoy it.

Interviewer: Right. Stressful?

Participant: Not my thing. Yeah and not many jobs where you could actually get shot and you know, they put me on a SAS course and that was when I handed my resignation in.

Interviewer: Did you actually do the course or you do you say I’m sorry?

Participant: I was like, no thanks very much.

Interviewer: I don’t think so.

Participant: It sounds absolutely fantastic when you look at it on paper and you think one day that would be great and when they actually say “Were going to send you on one”. Your like um a week doing that, no thanks.

Interviewer: Oh God, no I couldn’t handle that, that’s terrible. Ok, I’ll just ask a few questions. You’re a manager, so what does your job entail here?

Participant: It’s a variety of different things, there’s quite a lot of sort of practice work which is basically about keeping everybody busy and keeping the business pipeline coming through.

Interviewer: So you’re involved in new business?

Participant: Yeah, new business and client development, practice development essentially.

Interviewer: Basically developing new relationships, presumably?

Participant: Yeah exactly. And looking for opportunities, so that your trying to work about, well I would think probably about two or three years ahead, in
terms of pipeline. So I will be watching new drugs as they come through. And that’s because I used to be involved so closely with that in GSK. So I watch the industry really carefully and watch all the data coming through on the new blockbusters. And what you want to be doing is building the relationships sort of three or four years ahead, so that when they actually come to decide which agency they want to use, they will automatically consider you.

Interviewer: So you’re involved even before the drug hits the market basically?
Participant: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: So you get in on the ground floor and sort of develop relationships?
Participant: And pharmaceutical marketing does tend to be, there’s usually quite a lot of work done before the launch because there might be… There are drugs that for example, they get an indication for something like with, there is a drug that is not ever going to be marketed here, it called Deducetrol, Detrol by Pharmacia. It was given the indication for an overactive bladder, so it’s a urinary incontinence product essentially but the indication was overactive bladder. Now no doctor has ever used the term overactive bladder, so there was a huge long global campaign to get doctors to actually to get doctors to understand what overactive bladder was, two or three years before they actually launched the product because otherwise it would have arrived and everyone would have said that I don’t quite see that fits in. So it was actually a question of defining the problem.

Interviewer: So did you think about changing the name?
Participant: Well this was the definition it had, so we actually had to do it the other way, so we actually ended getting that definition put into the medical
books, if you like. We worked with WHO because it's not, I mean it’s quite technical….

Interviewer: It’s like a new disease that was discovered and this is the new name for it?

Participant: It wasn’t really what it was, it was. There is straight incontinence when people are wetting themselves essentially and then there was overactive bladder which is when people are desperate and are running to the loo all day basically, and they get there in time but there going 20 / 25 times a day and overactive bladder covers that but because there wasn’t a treatment for it, nobody ever really defined it and they discovered that this drug actually brought that down to four or five times a day. So you then actually had to go out and say that I know that people probably haven’t really talked about this before but this can actually be massively helpful and this can massively improve there quality of life, so you sort of do it the other way round, if you see what I mean.

Interviewer: That’s quite interesting actually. Once that happens, I guess, is it a matter of… You’ve obviously got a number of objectives presumably you want to be on the subsidy scheme, you need to inform doctors about the situation and also the public. Did you want to talk about any of those things?

Participant: Well I mean if you, if you’re approaching a launch a product and you do have a lot of time ahead of you, you need to look at… Well basically what are the things that would stop the product from being a success? So if you were launching, and with healthcare it’s a little bit more complicated. Because if you were launching a car for example, you are allowed to charge whatever price you want for the car. You have quite a
long lead, sort of pipeline if you like, so that people know that the new Ferrari is coming out for example and people are desperately trying to get onto that waiting list and they will be on the waiting list from two and three years ago. And then they’d see it at the motor shows and so basically your PR would be around…

Interviewer: Anything you can advertise as well

Participant: Your PR would be around… Exactly but your PR initially for the launch of the car product would be, a car for example would be very much focused around the trade so, so trade relations in terms of, so what car, and those magazines, specialist magazines to the general public. You’d do an awful lot of work with the people who sell the cars so, the showrooms and those a long way in advance to get everybody really excited about it. So you channels for distribution, you’d do a lot of work and then you’d go to the general public. And then you would also look at what else would influence them. So you’d do advertising but you would also try and get as many placements in newspapers and magazines and car magazines and get good reviews in the car magazines as you possibly could. You’d also look at, you know, if it was a very prestigious car, could you get it played in a Bond Film, could get it placed in… You know, what else could you do and then you also have opportunities to do PR off the back of the premier or you might have a tie in. So when the film is in it’s first six weeks, you might do lots and lots of magazine placements, win a car, buy two tickets to see the film and your eligible to a draw to win the car. We are going to give one away and one for whatever. So there’s loads and loads of promotional things you can do. And that’s all fairly straight forward. You can charge
whatever you want for the car, your audience is fairly educated, so that’s fine and they are allowed to buy the car themselves but nobody is decided which car they are going to buy. Now with pharmaceutical products, it’s a whole different matter because basically for prescription medicine the doctor is the key player; so you have a target audience who is not the end user and yet there are two people in that consultation. So there is a degree of information that you can give to the patient without breaking any codes which is perfectly ok to say, “Look these are the things that you’re able to ask your doctor” or “There is a new treatment out”. If somebody has tried you know seven different treatments and then a new one comes out and they haven’t had real relief, like if it’s a pain relief or something and they haven’t had real relief then they are likely to go and try that product and your allowed to make a certain amount of provision of information to the general public and there’s a line that you draw.

Interviewer: You have more of direct mail type thing?
Participant: No you can’t. You can’t go directly.
Interviewer: It’s more a general …
Participant: Awareness, rather than a [inaudible]
Interviewer: Sort of like a press release and this is the new product?
Participant: Yeah and you might work with a patient group, if they had an interest at heart or you might work with the research centre who have done a load of work because you wouldn’t want it all to just to come from pharmaceutical company because actually…

Interviewer: Credibility is called into question.
Participant: Yeah and also it’s … If other people believe that there’s a real reason to
tell someone something for example migraine treatments, we don’t do
them here, migraine treatments… A migraine can last anything from 2
to 48 hours and for people who have very bad migraines they can
actually be laid out for 48 hours.

Interviewer: I’ve heard that, I’ve got a friend that’s like that.

Participant: But you can take a Triptan which is a particular type of medicine, which
is like a switch which shuts it off in probably 85 percent of people. So
there’s a real case to tell people that this is available because in terms of
productivity at work and things, they can actually lay down for an hour
and then they are back on their feet because otherwise they’ll be taking
two days off work. And it’s also incredibly unpleasant to be having a
migraine. It’s very upsetting and very very, you feel sick and you’re got
a headache and flashing lights and you can feel quite dizzy and in those
sorts of circumstances there is a real case for people to say, “You know,
doctor, I’ve heard about this new treatment, could I try it?” Another
added complexity of this, with medicines is that not only does the GP
prescribe, so it’s the GP who decides what’s the best thing for the patient
and absolutely rightly so because, because we are talking about active
substances and the GP knows what parents had and family history and
knows all the things in terms of that person. But also the added
complexity is that particularly with most medicines, it’s paid for by the
government.

Interviewer: So there’s a public interest.

Participant: Yeah so there’s a public interest and also the price of the medicines agree
with government, so there’s a negotiation there. So in terms of…
Interviewer: Are you involved in that side of it? You are? So it’s very much you guys standing in between the …

Participant: Well we might not be standing in between, we might just be advising and there’s…

Interviewer: You are negotiating between the government and the …

Participant: So there’s a health care specialist and a government specialist who work quite closely.

Interviewer: There’s a government relations issue as well?

Participant: Exactly yeah. So you might be advising them on their strategy and you know your immediate strategy is not to create undue demand because you would seem to be creating hype and it would be inappropriate to drive patients in. So there has to be a very, very fine balance between what is appropriate information dissemination and what isn’t.

Interviewer: You don’t want to create a frenzy out there.

Participant: What it means is, at different times in the lifecycle of the product, at pre launch you’re really focusing on maybe disease awareness and maybe government relations and some work with experts in the area who’ve been involved in the clinical trials. Then at launch you’re talking very much to doctors and the general public but you might stagger that. And then post launch you’d actually be, well you’re only allowed to go the general public once.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Participant: That’s in terms of prescription medicine but you may…

Interviewer: When you say you can only go to the general public, in what channel?

Participant: Through, if you could only issue a press release on one occasion to say that this drug is available or …
Interviewer: Does that mean you can only issue the press release once or can only go to print or or…

Participant: No you’re only allowed one chance of actually of saying…

Interviewer: Wow

Participant: You can save that up. You can save it up until it gets listed or you could save it up until three years into it’s lifecycle but you can talk about disease awareness all the way through. Which is why you see a lot of things for Pfizer at the moment about Viagra but what you’ll see there actually…

Interviewer: Lots of photos and so on…

Participant: Yeah they can do that to their hearts desire. All that GlaxoSmithKline stuff about you know what a ...(inaudible).

Interviewer: So you’re working on the demand side and I guess educational type campaign.

Participant: And that’s with the general public. But you can continue to talk the product to the GP’s and to the Specialists as much as you want and you should. And particularly if your thinking about someone on heart disease who’s on four or five different … There on ACE inhibitor, a diuretic, possibly a cholesterol lowering therapy and maybe taking an aspirin once a day to thin their blood, you know because they’ve chronic heart failure but there also got high cholesterol, so they’re taking four different pills, which of these of pills do you take is bugger all to do with patients. The patient doesn’t give a flying anything as to which of these, but the doctor does and so if there was an ACE inhibitor or if there was a beta blocker that was particularly good at prolonging life, that would be a message that you take to the doctors. You say, “Did you know that of all
ACE inhibitors this one actually has the best prognosis for the long term and actually has evidence in clinical trials to show reduced mortality.

Interviewer: And here’s the stats.

Participant: Exactly and the doctor will want to do that for his patients because obviously because GP’s don’t often have opportunity to save someone’s life, so those sort of messages are quite compelling.

Interviewer: I saw a program, one of the Sunday programmes, they did a bit of job on pharmaceutical companies and the way they market and so on and it was a bit of negative…

Participant: You’d think that pharmaceutical companies were making tobacco, the way they carry on. It may be the case…

Interviewer: I think most media stories are negative to some extent. Now how do you respond to those sort of things? It’s become a bit of; I presume there’s been a number of other little stories from that?

Participant: The hypothesis behind all of that is that pharmaceutical companies, use money and buy doctors and buy their opinions. Now if you speak to any doctors, you work with regularly you’ll discover that actually not appropriate nor is it anywhere true and this has been going on for years and it’s quite an intense media debate now, here. But I mean back in the UK probably about 25 years ago, there was stories about pharmaceutical companies that took doctors on the Orient Express and they were ridiculously exaggerated, all those sorts of things. So it’s not a new story by any means. In terms of responding, well I mean it’s very important for us to make sure that we’re protecting the interests of the doctors that we involve because you wouldn’t use somebody who would be biased because they wouldn’t be credible in the media and they have to be able
to stand up to those questions and what happen now is that most
journalists will say, “Who’s paid for your time today?” Who’s paid for
your? Have you had media training, who paid for that?

Interviewer: Oh they ask that?

Participant: Oh yeah, they ask those sorts of questions.

Interviewer: Presumably a doctor has had media training.

Participant: Well some of them do but some of them don’t and doctors might say
well… You know, most doctors who are at the highest level of their
career will have had media training probably paid for by about four or
five different companies. And you know the key thing, the sub text of
the question is, is your opinion being paid for? And so the doctor can
actually answer the question that’s intended.

Interviewer: Actually being asked?

Participant: Actually being asked. I may have had media training on a number of
occasions in my career but my opinion of what your actually hearing
now is my own and I’ve never worked with a doctor who would not
happily disagree with something and say, “I’m not saying that and I
don’t agree with that” And you know you wouldn’t ask them to say
anything they didn’t feel comfortable with.

Interviewer: Well we know that a doctor’s reputation is fiercely guarded. I mean it’s
one of their main assets really.

Participant: And that’s why we use it. I mean people have different opinions and it’s
as controversial as cars, I guess, you know, which drugs are better for
this or which one’s go faster and this might have a slightly better
acceleration but this one has a top speed of. It’s that sort of thing, you
know, doctors have personal preferences and providing, they’re in line
with their opinions then that’s fine for a pharmaceutical company to working with them but in terms of payment, a lot of doctors won’t even take it now. Or though, you know, it’s not something that they feel comfortable doing and they do because they believe in it and they don’t do because they’re sort being paid for it.

Interviewer: No that’s right. It’s interesting.

Participant: But you’ll find right the way across the grid because it’s as same [inaudible], cash for comment situation and yet it’s so much worse with doctors for some reason but I mean it goes on, celebrity endorsements of pizzas or people don’t get…

Interviewer: Well that’s why the fast food industry is coming under attack as well.

Participant: And, I mean that happens right the way across the board. The issue with pharmaceuticals is that people say that they have a right to medicines, which is fine provided people are happy to pay for it in their taxes. If people get upset about paying for it in their taxes then you end up with this very difficult situation where you end up with private medicine or non-private. It’s to do with this idea of rights and also now that there is an advent of more drugs that have been labeled lifestyle drugs.

Interviewer: Oh I guess that’s the thing with erectile problem type drugs.

Participant: Yeah but then you’ll also get a weight management product labeled a lifestyle drug when actually weight is the biggest risk factor for diabetes and heart disease and people say that this is a lifestyle drug and actually it’s not. Because what you’re doing is you’re preventing huge costs in terms of treating diabetes and obesity down the track and heart disease. But there is this idea that people are making these… that the focus is on the wrong area, which isn’t really true. I mean I use to do a load of work
for GSK with HIV. And you know the most superb company in terms of…

Interviewer: Ethics.

Participant: Yeah, in terms of their ethics, but the fact that, I mean I was meeting people, who, we saw a trailer for *Philadelphia* the other day, with Tom Hanks…

Interviewer: Oh yeah, I’ve never actually seen that.

Participant: It’s amazing, it what 1988. Something like that, maybe? Maybe 1990. When I was at GSK I launched the triple combination therapy chosen there, and you take one tablet twice a day, and you think about all the regimented (inaudible) that people had before; and people going to the low viral load stage and they can be there for 15, 20 years and there were people I was working with who had HIV, who’d had it for 20 years. And I remember thinking, my God, I thought, people died. I thought they died from the virus. And they don’t now and that’s because of the work that pharmaceutical companies have done. And people forget that part of it.

Interviewer: There’s two sides of the coin there. You can’t just dismiss …

Participant: But the bits that you’ll see, and this is probably why it has a bad reputation, the bits that you’ll see are the bits that will respond to patient power. So there tends to be consumer-oriented areas, so cholesterol lowering, weight loss, erectile dysfunction, things that the consumer is very aware of, whereas the ones which are actually the life-saving stuff, that all goes just directly to the doctors, so heart failure, which stitch to use after surgery, you can promote all of these things, you know, needles, which needle is better, which needles prevent needle-stick
injuries, and you do pick up all of those things. That nobody really
knows about..

Interviewer: It’s more of that direct marketing style.

Participant: Well you just, ‘cos there are a whole load of publications that are just for
doctors and you have to be a doctor to have them.

Interviewer: The journals…

Participant: You work with those publications and you work directly with the
doctors.

Interviewer: Yeah, its interesting. You sound like you’d almost study to become a
doctor…

Participant: My parents are doctors, I love medicine. Get quite passionate about it. I
used to faint at the sight of blood though, so it was hopeless, never was
going to be able to make a doctor.

Interviewer: Yeah, great profession actually. One last thing, I’m interested in strategy,
communications strategy, can you, yourself, ‘cos you’re obviously very
experienced, can you see strategies that you think would be more
effective or a campaign which would do a better job than more
established sort of methods? Do you think along those lines at all?

Participant: It’s quite interesting, a lot of people don’t work strategically. A lot of
people go “We’ll use this story to get to the media”, or “This media
channel would really like this story”. And that can be quite a short term
way of thinking about things. A good healthcare strategy is something
the actually, I mean you, it’s the difference between strategy and tactics,
essentially. So strategy being “We will win the battle by taking that hill”,
now you can take that hill by doing, you know, rear-guard action,
charging it from the front, dropping three people in here, having a decoy
attacker, the hero. You know there are hundreds of ways of doing it. The traditional strategy for most marketing is present the need and present the solution. You know, so I was talking about migraine, you know people are laid out for two days, but with this, this is the solution. Now you might want to spend the whole time pre-launch of a product saying, “Did you know how much migraine debilitates, people, how many days, working days a tear are lost, you know how much personal time is lost, you know migraine is actually a bane on society?” Suddenly everybody knows about migraine. And then six months down the track, you’ve got the solution, which is “And here’s a new treatment for migraine. Did you know that migraine does A, B and C?” Which, you actually did because we’ve already told you that, you know eight months ago. Which is fine for a ‘new to market’, which is fine if you’ve got a new product, (inaudible), easy, easiest drugs to market. It you’re coming to a crowded marketplace then you’ve got to look at what the other players are doing. So then you’re looking for your unique selling point and you’re looking for, how can this be better so that if in a complex marketplace you’re talking about a cholesterol lowering and you wouldn’t be launching a new one into a crowded marketplace unless either it had a price advantage or it was better in some format. So you’d say, try a create a need before launch in that marketplace, so you say, and this is in fact what Lipator did before they launched, which is …

Interviewer: A side effect like this…

Participant: And the most successful drug globally. And what they did was a survey (inaudible) of all the KOL’s (inaudible) and said :”How low is low enough to save lives?” Are current therapies getting cholesterol down
low enough? And it came back with a resounding NO! We’re getting some of the way, but we’re not achieving what we ideally want. So that’s their pre-launch platform saying, “We’re still not getting to the ideal targets.” And then you bring out a drug that brings it down to those targets. So again, it the ‘create the need, provide the solution.’” And most strategies will fall into that sort of area. Different strategies, I mean if you’re in a crisis management mode than it’s a very different thing. You know its about getting out, getting messages out as quickly as possible, as targeted as possible and as credible as possible. And that might be your strategy to inform your key audiences and have an early warning system that you’re monitoring it so that you can see where escalations will occur. So you’d have media monitoring in place, you’d have everybody who was dealing with it (inaudible) … mobilized so if something broke on, you know the morning news or a caller called into a program or something then you’d pick that up almost immediately and you’d be able to have statements ready, because what you don’t want is…

Interviewer: So this is to combat a negative sentiment.

Participant: Yes, or indeed a rumour that’s not actually true. You have to squash it quickly. ‘Cos you get a lot of, particularly with scare stories you get a lot of internet channels going saying, “Did you know …” And it could be for anything, a food product, “Did you know that they actually put silicon into Coke” or something.

Interviewer: Do you think they’re driven from other competitors? Industrial espionage?
Participant: Not necessarily. But you often get, particularly with large pharmaceuticals where they have a large representative force, I have a theory that they send representatives into talk shows.

Interviewer: Would they, they wouldn’t advance it directly?

Participant: No, but it would help them with their competitor. I’d be John from Townsville ring up, and nobody knows whether I’m John from Townsville or not.

Interviewer: But in terms of their representative job, they’d go into see a doctor and say, “Well this product here, have you heard about …(inaudible)”

Participant: I have no proof that these people …

Interviewer: I know were speculating.

Participant: But you know I think a lot of…

Interviewer: I have to agree with you, these things don’t happen by accident, its too convenient.

Participant: It’s in somebody’s vested interest somewhere along the line.

Interviewer: You mentioned a couple of times credibility, you didn’t say authenticity, but I’m quite interested in the idea of credibility. It’s sometimes difficult to generate credibility in the mass communication world that we live in. So how do you go about that?

Participant: Well I think it’s actually to do with the story itself. I mean you wouldn’t try to flog a dead horse. You have to be, a product has to actually legitimately live up to its claims. You can’t, this is the difference between spin and substance. And this is ultimately the difference between a good PR practitioner and a bad PR practitioner, because a client might actually say, “Its just great and fantastic, I want it to be on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald.” And I mean, “You’ve
got to be joking!”. I mean its actually looking at it with (inaudible) because is it really where you want to be, is it really that big a story?

Interviewer: Because you don’t want a (inaudible) if it’s not.

Participant: Exactly. Because a new, I used to work on Zyban, you don’t have Zyban here. The first pill to help you give up smoking is a big story. A public interest story. Yeah, so you can go big, and you can go really big. And you can pull in any lung surgeon, any heart surgeon, any GP, ASH, British Heart Foundation, you know you could pull in anybody and we didn’t but they all actually issued press releases on the day that it was launched saying, “Isn’t this great”?

Interviewer: What the doctors?

Participant: All these people and the charity groups and everybody. Nothing to do with GSK. Nothing at all…

[Tape Change]

Participant: And if you actually look at the media coverage for Zyban in the UK, even the junior minister of health came out and made a statement about the product. Again nothing ...

Interviewer: You didn’t prompt that?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Not at all?

Participant: No, we told them the date it was coming out, that was all, as a courtesy.

Interviewer: So basically, it was in their advantage to get in there and say, “Hey we’re behind this too”.

Participant: Cause everybody saw that and said, “Great we can get some anti smoking messages out here”. There’s gonna be a high profile anti
smoking story, lets get as many anti smoking messages out there as possible to you know, to help people quit.

Interviewer: So it’s almost like a tie in situation?

Participant: And that was not, not coordinated. It was just…

Interviewer: Just spontaneous.

Participant: And that’s how you get credibility. If you actually have a story that has genuine merit then, then, then and your doctors are willing to stand up and say something about it, then actually you’ll find that a load of other people will say something about it without being prompted.

Interviewer: And presumably they can stand up and say something about it because they have the information beforehand. They’ve seen the stats and know what it does. They’ve been informed.

Participant: Yep, exactly. And you get the same even just within medical circles as if new data comes out from a trial that is, you know, again we look at the data and they say we want the press releases out and we say ok and the press release says it’s not 0.2 percentage better than something else and we’re thinking that’s it’s not going to make a lot of coverage and we’ll tell them that and they’ll say ok, fine but still do it anyway. And you might get, you know, little bits of coverage here and there. You get a landmark study like the WASCOFF? Study, which was in 1995, yeah I think it was, end of 1995, beginning of 1996, which is the Western Scotland, Western Scotland Coronary Convention Study. And it was the first time that they used Statins on a large population and it showed that it actually prevented death. So it was the first time that they showed that cholesterol lowering actually prolonged life.

Interviewer: Wow
Participant: I mean that was front-page news and the people who did the study issued the press release, even though it had been paid for by the pharmaceutical company. The people, the coordinators of the trial felt so passionately about it they actually issued the press release. So the whole thing is…

Interviewer: Is it unusual that the researchers would do that?

Participant: No, because they want the publicity themselves, you know, but they, they knew that it would have such profile.

Interviewer: They’d get some more funding this way.

Participant: You need to double check, cause I’m sure that, that Mark also put out the press release. I’m sure that they would have as well. But it was such a big study and it was the very first time they’d had linked lowering of cholesterol to lowering of life and it was massive news in health terms. And that is great. It’s got real credibility, where I think anybody is quite legitimately accused of spin is when your sort of seen to being manipulating the figures to show that actually this is better than that but your forgetting about that bit. And what I like about health PR is that because your dealing with clinical trials a lot of the time you can’t really manipulate. And they’re accusations if you read JAMA, Journal of American Medicine, whatever it is, American Medical Association.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know JAMA

Participant: There are (and in fact there aren’t in England) there are accusations that the trialists will manipulate or put things in the best light. But they’re not being pushed by PR people to do that; they might be by the pharmaceutical companies but…

Interviewer: No, perhaps the researcher as well?
Participant: There’s no, there is no point, we have a credibility that we have to keep with doctors and also with journalists, we almost act like the conscience, if like, of people.

Interviewer: Yeah, I guess when you see, when we’re talking credibility; let’s take a political example like John Howard, talking about the children overboard thing. When he got up there and made the highly polished sound bites that he did. He didn’t have credibility, no one believed him and hence his popularity in the opinions poles dived. So you could ask this, why even bother making the statement?

Participant: Well, I think it comes back to the substance, I think it comes back to substance and Tony Blair is exactly the same. You know, I’ve spent a lot of time watching him.

Interviewer: He is brilliant though, isn’t he? He’s a very good speaker.

Participant: He’s an amazing speaker and he’s a passionate speaker but when he has no substance, it’s spin. It’s absolute spin and he did a speech in front of the, just before the election, he did a speech in front of the women’s institute in England and he went in supposedly talking about family values and he did a political, a party political speech and they slow clapped him. (audible clap)

Interviewer: Did they?

Participant: And it’s exactly that, when you fail to have credibility even though everything else is right. It’s when you’ve got too much PR and not enough substance.

Interviewer: That’s something to me seems quite prevalent. People, they read between the lines and particularly these days where there’s a lot of media suaveness out there now.
Participant: It’s literacy it’s PR literacy. In the way that people weren’t very literate about advertising and now they’re very literate about advertising.

Interviewer: Yes and they don’t believe the hype.

Participant: They don’t believe advertising anymore. They look at it and you know, and they might say, it still works, advertising works.

Interviewer: Of course.

Participant: But it works in a different way, it works in a more of an intelligent way than it used to than …

Interviewer: Almost an entertaining way.

Participant: Yeah in fact, you give, you give, you often give particularly a (inaudible) product and you’ll give it marks for being funny and intelligent and I like that because that’s me and your talking to me and I’m funny and I’m intelligent and therefore I want to buy this product but it’s working on a different level, then you know, when you need to clean your clothes this is the answer or whatever, you know it’s a much, it’s not the same. It’s not the same dynamic with the audience anymore and that’s what’s happening with PR.

Interviewer: I mean using that same example with John Howard, I would have thought it would have been better him saying, “Yes there’s been a mistake, they weren’t thrown over but this is how we’re going to fix the problem. And people say, “Oh well, that’s fair enough, everyone makes mistakes. You think, they’re thinking that anyway, they could just stand there and blatantly put out this spin.

Participant: In issues management, the first rule of issues management is tell the truth and I always stand by that a 100 percent.
Interviewer: But I guess from your point a view, it’s hard, is it hard to convince the client to do so?

Participant: Sometimes they don’t want to and when I worked in-house, sometimes they were, sometimes it was so complex, that you actually had, it took me a long time to even find out what the truth was.

Interviewer: Right

Participant: Why is this drug priced at this level and you find that it was based on prices from when the deuschmark was four to the pound and the dollar was four and a half to the pound and that was they did the pricing and they haven’t changed the pricing since and now you’ve got this situation and were it’s cheaper everywhere else in the world but England and yet they’re all one price when they actually… And now you’ve got this historical, hideous situation where this drug costs so much that people can’t have it and you know, your trying to come up with an explanation and actually you should answer the issue and not the, you know.

Interviewer: The affordability rather than why is priced…

Participant: Well not only that, but the issue is, are you going to bring the price down.

Interviewer: [Inaudible over laugh]

Participant: On this occasion we will. But you have to get through all this rubbish beforehand because people didn’t know, you know, you have find these things out. So, you say the truth and…

Interviewer: And then you say why, you can add on, well this is the truth, this is how we are going to rectify this, how we are gonna…

Participant: The action is the important thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, action, yeah.
Participant: Yeah you can’t just answer, if you find someone in an issues management situation or whatever. They’re being accused of something; the important thing is to actually be putting it right and to be acknowledging that there’s was a problem. Now you don’t have to take the blame but you can say “We are aware of the issue and what we’re doing” and that’s usually the best way to go.

Interviewer: I think that’s how PR, that’s how PR originally started, it was about train crashes and the train crashed. The guy informed the media first and so then he had an avenue to explain and how they’re going to fix it and what and were able to have some input to information that went out to people.

Participant: There’s a lot of case studies about that. Again, all I’ve got are British examples.

Interviewer: No that’s fine.

Participant: The Townsend Torres? the *Spirit of Enterprise*, Townsend Torres? They had a ship that they opened, they didn’t shut the, you might have heard, the loading Cargo car loading ship.

Interviewer: Oh, I know the one.

Participant: They didn’t shut the doors properly and all the water came in and five, six, eight hundred people died from that.

Interviewer: Was that the ferry?

Participant: Yeah, yeah *Spirit of enterprise*, Ziebruger. And Townsend Torres (?) did not make a statement for four days. Four days and they went under. And they lost.

Interviewer: I guess they went bankrupt.
Participant: They went bankrupt. The British Midland who are now BMI very famous airline, they had a plane coming in over into East Midlands Airport and they had a fire in one of the engines and the pilot turned off the wrong engine.

Interviewer: Oh my God.

Participant: So you’ve got an engine that’s not working and then you turn off the engine that’s actually working and it just crashed onto the motorway. The pilot didn’t die, actually it didn’t kill all the people, it didn’t have a, amazingly there wasn’t a fire, it smashed literally on the bank of a motorway, nobody was killed on the motorway, amazingly. The crisis management team, this was 94, 93, 94 no in the 80’s it had to be the 80’s, and they had the CEO of British Midland, out there in half an hour, helping, talking to the media, in his shirt, literally it’s the middle of the night, middle of the night. Now one of the most successful companies because they took accountability and they said, “We don’t know what happened, we will find out and we will make sure that it doesn’t happen again”.

Interviewer: So there’s that notion of credibility there.

Participant: It’s because it’s visibility and it’s credibility, it’s just like, you know, Townsend Torres? Could have said we don’t know what happened, this is awful

Interviewer: But we do care.

Participant: We really care and we don’t want it to happen again. So whatever happens we will investigate and we will make sure that this never happens again. And in the meantime we will do everything we can to
rescue people and to look after their families. And nothing, and that lack of, it comes over as a lack of compassion essentially.

Interviewer: I guess that’s a case study.

Participant: It’s a very famous case study and it’s doesn’t work. Because then people just look and say, “This isn’t acceptable, this is not acceptable corporate practice”. Which is why now you have the whole new vocabulary of corporate social responsibility. And you see…

Interviewer: The triple bottom line.

Participant: Exactly, exactly and you know and pharmaceutical companies are accountable for the prices of their drugs and so well because the have that sort of revenue, they have power and people are turning around and saying, “Ok we won’t buy your drugs. There are so many antibiotics out there; we don’t have to buy yours. We don’t have to use your asthma drugs”. And they’ll boycott and use their people power and people have to listen, quite rightly.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I remember speculating about, I remember it was the English elections, British elections rather, Prescott tackled some guy.

Participant: Thumped him in the face.

Interviewer: What a great PR stunt.

Participant: It was a shocker. I can’t believe they got away with that. They got away with that because the Prime Minister didn’t come down on him and he said, “John is John and that was his statement”.

Interviewer: But he won the public opinion didn’t he? I think he was going to get dumped or something but…

Participant: The guy, the guy was really awful to him but I mean there was still no call to thump him.
Interviewer: He went to throw something and then he thumped him.

Participant: But everyone just thought it was so funny.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Participant: I mean that was the thing. They laughed it off and it worked and it was a real gamble because you know all these heavy weights from the other political parties came out saying this totally unacceptable, this is violence, this is…

Interviewer: But people liked it. If someone did that to me I’d punch them so…

Participant: Exactly, exactly and it was just… He threw an egg at him. He threw an egg in his face.

Interviewer: I guess the speculation is did he plan that?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: I mean obviously it’s…

Participant: If you see the film, I mean, he didn’t. It was, his hand was back there and he was thumping him before he had even registered that he was defending himself.

Interviewer: Yeah. I often wondered about that. If he could use that as a way of getting a message across, it would probably be very effective.

Participant: Yeah, that’s true.

Interviewer: Because you’d certainly get all the coverage in the world that you wanted because you’re breaking that barrier.

Participant: Yeah exactly, breaking the norm with the behaviour.

Interviewer: Yeah the norm, yeah the social norm. Yeah.

Participant: But it is quite interesting because years ago you’d see how politicians would be editors of the papers and you’d see how many, I mean I’m sure that it happens here because it happens everywhere, that the editors of
the paper send up sort of seats in the House of Lords, peerages or these sorts of things and literally if you had a newspaper behind you, if you had the Sun or the Guardian or whichever newspaper it was behind you, that would go to 60% to winning an election and the rest was actually policies.

**Interviewer:** That’s right.

**Participant:** Because they, the sway that the newspapers have over public opinion. And there’s a very famous case of the night before, it’s amazing actually, the night before John Major won his last election, which was the last 4 years of Tory rule, the Sun which is the most powerful newspaper in England, a dreadful tabloid. Around the headline, would the last person to leave England, please, when labour gets in please turn the light out? And the whole of the sub population went out to vote Tory because they were so afraid that the taxes were going to go up to the 40, 50 percent bracket that they had done in the previous labour government. And then basically that made, if labour had got in at that point, that would have been much better for politics of the country because you would have ended up with this two, three system going ahead but what happened was that then the Tory party got so completely down trodden and shite, Labour came in and they were so successful that now you actually have no opposition and now your in a situation where you’ve got people saying they are craving an opposition that’s credible and they haven’t got the credible opposition. They haven’t got, the just, it’s like the Democrats here. They’re all over the shop. Not the Democrats, that woman that just resigned.

**Interviewer:** Stott-Despoyer
Participant: Yeah is that her.

Interviewer: Yeah. I don’t know what she did; she completely stuffed up there.

Participant: It a weak a party as that and up against a party that came in on such a landslide and you know it doesn’t make for good politics and it doesn’t make for good PR.

Interviewer: Cause you’ve got low voter turn out as well haven’t you?

Participant: Yeah, because nobody cares because it’s not, there’s nothing to it. Where in the last days of Major, you’d actually be watching the, you’d be watching the politics in the evening to see how the votes were going because if a vote went against the government they’d actually have to go to a general election. So you’d have a vote of no confidence. So, you know, it was literally two in it, one or two and then a MP died so then there was like all these even numbers in the house and it was so, politics was extraordinary, everybody cared about politics. Nobody cares now.

Interviewer: Tony Blair is a brilliant media star isn’t he?

Participant: If you’re interested in this, there’s a book called “Servants of the People” by Andrew something, Andrew, Servants of the People… It’s the biography of the first labour party history of England, the first 5 years of Blair. I can’t remember, Andrew Wormsley, something like that. If you can’t get in on amazon.com, you can get it under amazon.co.uk and they’ll ship here because I’ve got a lot of stuff from them and it’s a really good read and it’s just highly entertaining.

Interviewer: On the subject of …do we have much time?

Participant: You get another five minutes.

Interviewer: OK. This is the so sort of stuff I’m interested I suppose, in terms of politics here, it seems that Beattie seems to have a lot of credibility with
the public and the other aspect to it is that he’s not a polished politician in a normal sense, Australian sense, perhaps. And I’m wondering if you’ve got these well highly polished politicians with great sound bites and when they have this, it all comes together and looks great on television and when people see that they just see no credibility, no authenticity.

Participant: No substance, no substance.

Interviewer: And then you get a guy who’s kind of a little no tie wearing, very sort of non politician almost or though he is a very good politician, gain so much credibility and authenticity about him and I wondering if that, obviously a strategy in terms of maybe people, sort of being put off by the highly polished sound bites and the structured events and so on.

Participant: I don’t know, I don’t know if it’s a reaction against it. I just wonder whether people are focussing on getting the sound bites right and not enough on getting the messages right.

Interviewer: Substance, substance.

Participant: And in PR you’ll find that messages are the core of everything that we do, your key messages and how you deliver those messages. Now, it doesn’t really matter how you deliver those messages provided they come over as credible. Now for some people you are looking for the very, very polished, sort of, sound bite but I mean, you look at Bush, a man I detest, hideous makes me want to… But he knows his target audience, which is mainly trash…

Interviewer: Red necks…

Participant: Exactly red neck Americans and he gets his messages across and he doesn’t necessarily come over as polished because he’s made some
corkers, he’s made some absolute corkers. Some of his little sound bites, they work.

Interviewer: On his target group, that’s the thing you’ve got to know your target audience.

Participant: It’s exactly. He’s talking to me them and he’s bypassing the media and you know, hideous though it is, he’s had events work in his favour. To have a groundswell of public support for a presidency where he was not going to have that support. You know.

Interviewer: I speculated whether, the way you deliver a message affects the message.

Participant: It does.

Interviewer: In terms of what we were talking about before. Go on…

Participant: There’s a word… A new word…Metamorphism? Anyway it’s basically that the medium dictates the message.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, the medium is the message.

Participant: No, not is the message, it dictates how you say it. So if I was to, if we were to have this, these are all very formal letters and their written in a very formal style and the letter format dictates how you write. If we were to be doing this by email it would be much more informal and this is the whole thing about how email becomes almost like a spoken conversation and that has created this whole informal and very democratic and very powerful as democracy is powerful, message channels on the internet. You talk about a phone, a phone has to be two way, you have to stop and let the other person speak, so again it’s a two way message and with the way that the news is now formatted - it’s now all completely packaged and that’s why you end up with this situation, this situation whereby you have to get your message across in 45 seconds.
or less. Now where I think that really falls down is the fact that that the majority of important messages don’t really do well to be brought down to 45 seconds or less and so you're losing complexity and that is often when you lose credibility because what you want to do is, is talking about quite complex messages in a very, very banal format and that can actually can be, almost like a superficial. Again you can lose some credibility there because you got this medium and that’s actually dictated by the television channels and you do get a few… At my old company that I used to work for, Investigative Journalism, their mission statement was to make the important interesting and that’s not unlike PR actually. In some ways it’s how can you make….  

Interviewer: How can you put this in a form that’s going to be…?  
Participant: And how can you tell this story so that all this complexity is actually quite simple?  

Interviewer: Yeah. Obviously communications change constantly and I guess I was wondering about, there needs to be perhaps a change the way politicians present messages or a corporation presents messages because when they ask so polished and well set out and so on, it comes across as a bit un-credible and making lacking authenticity, simply because it’s done in that fashion. Does that equal….  
Participant: It think there may be some sacrifices of substance in that and I’m sure that, that’s probably where the lack of credibility comes.  
Interviewer: Whether you have a little off the cuff remark, it sort has some sort of authenticity. The public says “Oh yeah that’s not a polished sound bite, that’s actually someone expressing a real opinion or something”. And I
thought well that’s, this is sort of some of the ideas that I have been thinking about.

Participant: I think also, I think is very important that people relate everything back to personal experience of the target audience that their speaking about and that would actually work a lot with corporations. You look at, I mean we did the Panadol crisis, it’s public domain, it's public domain. We don’t care how much this costs, what were worried about is our consumers and we want to much sure that everyone is aware that we’re withdrawing this particular vat of these particular tablets, everything else is fine, because we care about you. That comes over as completely sincere and it’s absolutely the right thing to be doing and it’s the absolute truth, because you wouldn’t be withdrawing them if you weren’t worried about their safety.

Interviewer: It costs a lot of money, you wouldn’t…

Participant: No exactly, you wouldn’t, you wouldn’t do it, but you could of gone out there and just said, “Look we’ve had this call and were withdrawing”. But because you’re actually saying is what matters is our customers, you’re actually putting that in, as a message that’s really important. Now we …

Interviewer: So you make the negative thing work for you in a word, in a brand.

Participant: Exactly, in the way that, it’s like if you tell someone to give up smoking, 1 in 3 smokers will die before they put on the patch, 1 in 2 smokers will die of smoking related diseases. So you have a 50 percent chance of dying of smoking related disease. You say that to a smoker who is smoking 40 a day, probably will put themselves in that 50 percent bracket aren’t going to die. Literally that’s what their doing.
Participant: You have a small child say to Daddy, “Daddy I don’t want you to die, I want you to be there for my graduation”. And that has an impact at an emotional level that facts and figures don’t have. And that’s probably what you’re seeing and it’s probably what its actually coming down to. The polished sound bite is your facts and figures, is the rational argument and what they’re probably doing is they’re missing the emotion, the emotional part of an argument and you know that both of those work in a sell. And if you can get the emotion right and you can get the right trigger then people with just go with the company. Richard Branson is fantastic, he’s personal, I mean he’s am absolute tyrant and he’s … and if you’ve read any of the books about him.

Participant: He’s not a nice man, he’s…

Interviewer: He’s ruthless; oh he’s very shrewd.

Participant: He’s very shrewd and he doesn’t hold loyalty and respect in a way that a lot of people would. But he…

Interviewer: But he comes across very authentic.

Participant: I want to…He sells things on what matters to people and he finds that market. Everybody was selling airlines on routes, on destinations and he sold it comfort and he sold it on the mass market rather than the elite market. And just turned it on it’s head but it’s all about the customer and actually caring about them and if people feel cared for and they feel that they are not being talked down to or there not being spun at. That’s when it works.

[End of Interview]
Interview with participant C

Interviewer: So I mean it’s just really, just a bit of background chatting at this point.

Participant: All right, you guide the chatting and I’ll chat.

Interviewer: I was interested in what we were talking about before with John Howard and the overboard affair and it seemed like when he made that statement about not knowing about the information, you know, it was very highly structured statement which kind of, just sort of walked the tightrope as it were, between truth and falsity or whatever.

Participant: Presumably, that’s how I would, truth and fantasy. Is that right?

Interviewer: That’s how I perceived it anyway but the interesting thing was that his opinion poll all of a sudden took a dive and I wondered well perhaps the audience, the public, being more media savvy now supposedly, anecdotally, read between the lines saying, “Look this guy is completely lying and I don’t believe him”. And sort of, you know what I mean, so the statement of denying really what was the point because he suffered in the opinion poll.

Participant: Yeah, I go back to what I was saying before it doesn’t matter. The fact of the matter is that if your view is that it’s bad to have Afghani’s coming into Australia, Moslems are evil bad people and they will throw their children overboard. Whether he stood up there and denied it or not doesn’t really matter. Okay, it really doesn’t matter, so maybe he’s, because again you’re doing an opinion poll, what your doing is your going through a piece of research. You’re asking people about what they thought, okay and so people follow the fashion, if the fashion says what an evil man is. Look the media told us that maybe he, maybe he did
know and he lied to us, that’s bad, so my opinion of whether or not you are going to vote for him or not, completely different ballgame.

Interviewer: Different, different set of questions.

Participant: Absolutely different. So I really do think that people follow a communication fashion trend for want of a better example.

Interviewer: I wondered if, perhaps if he said, “Look, we’ve made a mistake, they didn’t throw the children overboard. I was given information to that affect, however it’s wrong. Now what we’ve done is to rectify this, you know, lack of communication, whatever it is” blah, blah, blah, a nice little statement. He’s being sort of upfront and honest, now is that being honest to a certain degree or he’s certainly appearing to be in that circumstance. I wonder if the opinion poll would have increased…

Participant: Was it mishandled is the question, I suppose.

Interviewer: Yeah I guess from a public relations point of view, I suppose. And if you look at Beattie, he’s not as polished and he kind of shoots from the hip as it were, he’s not like the polished politicians and I’m wondering well maybe that holds a little more authenticity and…

Participant: Look; I think people have very, very short memories to begin with, okay. So they go with whatever is happening at the moment. That’s really what it comes down to. So if you think about John Howard when he first appeared on the scene and the honest John thing, okay, most people seem to have forgotten about that. The fact that he appeared on the scene as being honest and credible and above board and all that kind of stuff, part of his conservative grace. That’s gone, completely, no one…. However, you’ve gotta wonder whether we think that we deserve a leader who’s going to lie and bullshit his way through it. Whether in actual fact what
we are doing is we are saying that politics is a dirty horrible game and people have accepted that, and therefore the people who should win in politics are the ones who are good at playing dirty. Which goes against, if like the democratic ideal. Which John Howard keeps waxing lyrical about, you know. He was in Greece not long ago talking about how, you know, the Greeks had created the best, the most wonderful, ideal political system and I felt like puking. He’s taken whatever that ideal was and shit all over it. Look, I’ll give you a great example of how, going back to the business side of communication as well, a great example of how funny it becomes or peculiar. When I was in my first job I worked for an engineering company and they asked me to go in and look at a presentation, a public presentation that was done by one of the large economic research companies and the Chief Executive Officer of this research company literally stood up, literally stood up and did a presentation and said, “We predicted that the Australian economy would grow by 2 percent, it’s only grown by 1 percent, therefore we were only 1 percent wrong”. As a naïve young man I put my hand and said, “Well hang on, you were actually 100 percent incorrect, because you take 2 minus 1 divided by…” And he turned around and said, “Look, when you’re older and wiser you’ll realise why that’s a ridiculous statement”. And then he just proceeded to… So what, what, as a communication tool, so what he did was, he was confronted and rather than actually saying well that’s the truth, because this guys an economist, in theory he knows statistics, what he chose to do was say “Well, Okay this is a young guy, I can knock him for six and everybody else hasn’t got a clue what I’m talking about, so it doesn’t matter”. So he was relying on the
fact that he could miscommunicate the truth up there and get away with it. And repeatedly you will see that in business, you will see researchers standing up and saying, “Well you know we forecast that it would be this kind of growth it was only that kind but in the meantime X, Y, and Z has happened and we couldn’t take all those into account. I know a lot of research companies that do exactly that. They have companies that worked for shopping centre developers who forecast what the likely sales would be in an area and get it off by 10 of millions of dollars and then they come back and they say, “Oh yeah, but when we did that the economy was pumping along at this percent and now it’s pumping at that one. Or you built the centre with an L shape in it and we told you, you needed to… all this so of crap. So at the end of day what they’re doing is they’re not even taking into account the weakness of their own models. What they’re doing is they’re saying is, “Well this is what our model will tell us, don’t attack the model the model is God”. Therefore any variation of the model would be dealt with by miscommunication. And that’s really what it comes down to. There’s very little sincerity about the integrity and truth of their models. And that’s just the way it is.

Having said that…

Interviewer: They sometimes get it right?

Participant: They sometimes get it right? I really do, you know, I’ve been an analyst for a long, long time, I really do wonder when they get it right whether it’s just another fluke. The probability of getting it right is just as likely as the probability of getting it wrong.

Interviewer: Right, yeah. Eventually you’ll get it right, yeah you know, yeah it’s interesting.
Participant: And even all our statistical methodologies, regardless of what method we use, whether it’s parametric or nonparametric, whatever it might be. All they are is best line of fit regardless of how good that line might be, it’s still guess work and we’ll never be able to predict those ups and those downs. We just can’t do it. It’s a bit like the wings of a butterfly scenario, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, I guess in terms of stats, significance is a very specific quantity.

Participant: Absolutely, well defined. Clearly defined. A standard deviation is so much over this much. Well what is a mean? Well it’s a standard deviation.

Interviewer: We don’t necessary have a model. That is already set. That means that it is significant. Well yeah, yeah interesting. I guess as you say its estimation in a way.

Participant: So, so what we’ve really got is. In the business world, we’ve got a set of tools, we use those tools, they come up with the right answer if we’ve lucky, they’ll come up, equally likely, they’ll come up with the wrong answer and then we’ve got a series of ways of explaining why it didn’t work. And it’s that, that part of it, of explaining why things did or didn’t work that probably accounts for 80 percent of the communication out there, maybe more, you know. So we use scientific method, we pay lip services to scientific method and then we bullshit for the rest of the time and it’s the bullshit that really keeps things pumping. Hey, it’s always been like that, why not?

Interviewer: It’s a worry considering the way capitalism is structured. There’s so much on the line.
Participant: Well, no it’s not capitalism; it’s economic rationalism that’s structured that way. There’s a fundamentalism difference between the two.

Interviewer: I wondered about the American economy and the state of their companies in debt laden and so on. And then of course we all start talking about Iraq and I wonder if that was a good way of changing the issue very… because if it is about perception then…

Participant: The tail wagging the dog is one scenario, the dog scenario. Yeah there is an element of that.

Interviewer: I mean, I mean this is conspiracy theory and all that. It is an interesting idea when your talking about perceptions and the way business works. And presumably they did need to get the publics’ mind off the state of the companies and on to something else. Sort of rally the country together and so on.

Participant: Well yeah. There are two things that can happen; one is it’s probably one of the better-used strategies in politics that if something happening that you don’t like you try and distract the public. Carr is the master at that.

Interviewer: Carr?

Participant: The premier of New South Wales. He’s the master at that. He does that repeatedly but he does it with such incredible finesse that he gets away with it continuously. I think in comparison, Howard and Bush are bunglers. I don’t think they’re really master politicians, there certainly not master statesman because repeatedly they get caught out. Now that could be a reflection either of what you were talking about before which is savvy or it could be just a reflection of just how poor they are. Or how made naïve, their, their polishers are.
Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Participant: Because they’re working on a model as well.

Interviewer: Of course, yeah and they’ve probably got guys crunching numbers and doing polls and writing their speeches, all night long.

Participant: All the time, but then the politicians before the elections will all stand up and say, “We just don’t believe the polls, they’re just indicators but their not…” and they’re right and they’re right.

Interviewer: I wondered with the rise of Hansen-ism and this sort of thing. She just wasn’t a politician, I don’t know if she is a politician still or not? She was very much a non-politician sort of thing…

Participant: She’s one of the common people.

Interviewer: And she was seemingly really popular amongst… and become that very quickly and it seemed because of her sort of stumbling in the media, it almost gave her an authentic feel about her. She’s not a politician, she just one of us and she’s got a few ideas which we kind of think are not bad or for whatever reason but obviously it seemed that because of that, she seemed to gain favour with lots of people… I know it was never a specific right winged group but there were others also that sort of, for some reason obviously voted for her.

Participant: Maybe if we go to our models again we’re talking about two types of models, there’s probably more but let’s talk about two types. There’s one model which is the politician is God or Moe, okay and maybe that’s the model that the liberal and labour parties take because they saying, “Well we’ve been in the game for a long, long time and we just know it particularly well and were organised blah, blah, blah” … And then we’ve got the other model which is the cry from the undergrowth which
says, “I’m the voice of the common people”. And that’s maybe where Pauline Hanson came into the picture. Did she represent a minority? My feeling is that what happened with her was that she represented the voice of the extreme. However, that voice goes through every strata of Australian society to a lesser or greater degree. Okay, and in actual fact she was saying things, she said some ridiculous statements like, “If we’re running out of money why don’t we just print some more”. I’ve always liked that statement personally I… What did they call it? The forgers’ statement. That’s a great statement and I fundamentally believe in that.

Interviewer: That we should all just print more money, yeah.

Participant: But you know it’s that kind of naivety that came out with her and basically shot her in the foot in one case because she didn’t get the support from the intelligentsia and you’ve got wonder if someone like that had come along and had, had a slightly broader cross section of the community whether you wouldn’t have had a more, a greater force. Because again, she was reflecting what people, to a lesser or greater degree think or what they say, whether it’s politically correct or not. There is a fundamental element in all of Australia, in all societies not just Australian society which says, “Were different, we belong to a group, this is how we behave, you know we don’t want people coming from outside” and if your down and out and if your been unemployed for three generations as Australians and someone stands up and says, “These wog bastards are taking our work, get them out of here”. You’ve got say, “Well yeah”. That’s exactly…

Interviewer: “That’s probably why I’ve been unemployed”.

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Participant: That’s right. And so it’s always good going back to it, it’s always good if you’re a member of a group to be able to say, “I support my group and I’d like to point out that these people are the bad guys and I’m not going to support them at all. It’s your membership to that group. In marketing research [inaudible] segmentation, if you like.

Interviewer: Segmentation yeah.

Participant: And businesses are exactly the same thing. Did you ever, have you ever done any work on the Cuban missile crisis and the meeting of Canada?

Interviewer: No, I did some on the Reagan, the contra affair.

Participant: Well get a bunch of people in a group together in a room, who are suppose to be making objective decisions and all the peer pressures are there and so it takes a very, very strong person to stand up and say, “Well actually that’s not right”. Okay. Because they want to reinforce that membership of the group and a lot of very, very poor decisions are made as a result of that and I think we see it in business all the time. You get a bunch of guys sitting in a boardroom, some guy has an idea, no one else has any ideas but some guy does and they’ll all nod. Saying, “That’s a great idea”, you know because no one else has one. Or he’s the heavy-duty dude that everyone wants to look good in front of. It takes a lot of courage to stand up in a group like that and say “Oh that’s bullshit, that’s a load of crap”. Especially if it is an MD and people think get sacked over it, people will stand up and say, “I don’t think that’s right for x, y and z reasons and a lot of people, especially entrepreneurs who started a company from scratch … There egos are on the line and they basically say, “Your not part of the team”. You can’t say business communication is strictly and distinctively objective, it just isn’t. It’s full
of the all the elements of any other social interaction. All of them, and more so some ways because there is an authority in power involved. In ways it wouldn’t be with a bunch of friends for example.

Interviewer: So with the, talking about the Kennedy thing. You were saying, was Kennedy a person who stood up to this group?

Participant: President Kennedy? No his idea was that one way to topple the Cuban regime was to get Cuban mercenaries to invade in the Bay of Pigs.

Interviewer: Disaster.

Participant: Yeah, it was a disaster. They thought they had thought it out, but they didn’t. They basically had landed a hand full of heart-trained mercenaries in the Bay of Pigs and these people got cut to shreds.

Interviewer: They must have believed their own lies because they obviously underestimated their enemy.

Participant: Yeah but you know, watch the space. If you look at the Howard government they believe their own lies. You look at economic rationalists they believe their own bullshit, you know and it is bullshit. And the models coming undone now, with the collapse of large companies, you know. It’s almost like you support a piece of bullshit to such a great degree that it becomes gospel; it becomes the truth and then when the flaws appear everyone looks horrified and all a sudden everyone turns around says, “See I told you it didn’t work because x, y and z reason”. So all the…

Interviewer: But the model is always protected presumably.

Participant: Absolutely. How could you possibly stand up against an economic rationalist and say, you know? Maybe a great example of that is we now have, and the other problem I suppose, back to the wings of a butterfly,
we don’t know really what the long term affects of a policy decision will be. We’ve had the Australian workforce now increasing the number of hours that are working. As a result we are getting a more a career orientation. Women are getting married later and later, if at all. Men are getting married later and later, if at all. Our birth rate has dropped from 6 in the 1960’s down to about to 1.7 at the moment. And there are people turning around and saying, “It’s a lifestyle decision”. And you think well it’s the chicken and egg decision, you know.

Interviewer: It might be a lifestyle because that’s the lifestyle really you’ve got, people have to work to buy a house or…

Participant: Well that’s the rational side of it but the other side of it is that we’ve all been shown this ideal lifestyle. The Amy McBeal, is that the name?

Interviewer: Ally McBeal.

Participant: Lifestyle. Where you’re a business woman, your young, you’ve got thousands of boyfriends, you’ve got money, you’ve got the four wheel drive or Saab, Volvo or whatever it might be and you don’t have kids until your much, much older. Well the fact of the matter is that you probably don’t have kids because you can’t at that point.

Interviewer: Because you can’t, simply…

Participant: Or you won’t find a partner that’s commit themselves to a relationship like that. The result of that is the Australian population, birth rate is going down, the Australian population is skew is whole as it is most in the west and we now have a major problem. Well why is that? Is it because we suddenly made a decision in the late 60’s and early 70’s that’s Australians should be working greater hours, that we put the business career in front of the family and there’s been some great
examples of advertising along those lines.

I remember an IBM think pad commercial and it was poster and it showed two women in a railway station, one woman had a baby in a pouch and the other woman had this laptop and this woman with this baby in a pouch looked longingly at this laptop. So what it was really saying was…

Interviewer: Put the baby down and get yourself a laptop.

Participant: And there are so many examples of that in modern day advertising. That’s great but try and work out what the downstream effects would be of that. Maybe in the 70’s we couldn’t predict it. We assume that they’d always be a pool of women out that are always going to have six kids. Economic situation, plus the fashion, for one of a better term. So it’s just not going to happen. So there’s a lot of a factors like that, that we just, and we can’t vision, you can’t vision. You can only look back in history and say, “Well that’s what happened”. And that’s the other side of it; we don’t look back at history.

Interviewer: Yeah. No it doesn’t seem like we don’t. I mean if you did you’d see a lot of wreckages and maybe learn a few things and try not to it. But as you say, people just follow the trends.

Participant: Maybe, maybe a great PHD would be something like marketing history. You could go back and say, “This is what the great successes were, and this is what the great failures were and this is what the ramification of the political and economic decisions have been”.

Interviewer: It’s a changing world.

Participant: Were sort of repeating history.

Interviewer: We do, don’t we? Yeah. Maybe it’s just our nature. I don’t know.
Participant: Well, short memories, remember?

Interviewer: Exactly, short memories. Now I want to talk a little bit about the work you did for, the one you mentioned the name of that company. I’ll make an account of that and it won’t go in the report anyway. Just what your brief was and how you went about it and so on.

Participant: There were three projects with two companies, which were fairly similar. One of them was, we were asked to look at vending placement, where to put a vending machine, and what it should look like. What we did was we took 1500 vending machines, this particular company has a system whereby all vending machines at the end of each day telephone into head office and they give you what’s going on.

Interviewer: The score.

Participant: They give you the score. So you know how many drinks you’ve sold, at what price etc, etc. What that allowed us to do was to actually go out there and collect information about location practice for each of those vending machines and relate that back to their sales and then we were able to collaborate. We were able to change prices, change product mix etc, etc and monitor that.

Interviewer: See what differences…

Participant: It took us about six months because, not because we couldn’t do it quicker but because we wanted that period of time. And out of that we came up with a demographic model, which identified the relationship between product mix and the demography within the vending machine region. And a lot of vending machines are in businesses; they’re in courtyards and places and that kind of stuff. So they were very closely related to the immediate environment rather than you know passing
traffic, so that was part of it. And the other thing that we could do was identify what the relationship was with price so we would change a price between $1.00 and $1.80 and got some interesting results.

Interviewer: And what were the results between the price differences? I guess that would depend on in what area too, wouldn’t it?

Participant: It was fairly, it was almost like a three dimensional model because one dimension was definitely demography and we had some very fuzzy ways of defining that demography and it could have been something like, whether it was a white collar office or whether it was industrial or whatever. Whether the majority of employees were youngish, or whether they were older. Whether they were mainly man or female and on it went. So we really used very, very fuzzy terms and the objective behind that was for a sales rep to go in and not have to physically count and ask everybody their age. It was just ridiculous to do that. So it gave us the opportunity to actually get a general way of describing an environment, which an average bod might choose.

Interviewer: So it was just the observing saying, “Well taking a sort of average sort of an idea of what’s going on around you”.

Participant: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Presumably taking into account the type of businesses as well which…

Participant: Yep, some things were painfully obvious for example if it was an industrial site it was mainly blue-collar workers, mainly men, then it would be the fuzzy sweet drinks. If it was a white-collar site, if it was office for example and it was predominately women between the ages of 20 – 28 or 34, then we found that the flavoured waters would sell really well. Which in hindsight makes sense. But then we found out that…
And what that allowed us to do was to look at the mix that should go into the machine and we came up with a model. We used decision tree modelling to do that and we came up with a model. If it’s an office and the majority are women between 20 and 34 then out of the seven cells within the vending machine four of them should have still waters, flavoured waters and the rest should be diet products. If it’s a factory floor and it’s predominately men between the ages of 20 – 34 and it would have to be your hard core high caffeine type drinks because that was part of it as well. So we came up with an image like that and then on top of that because we could tweak the prices, we could identify what the sales were going to be at a $1.00 and a $1.10 and $1.20 in those environments and some interesting things came out of it. There was some segments which basically liked a $1.00 drink and they would drink three of them a day, whereas if you made it a $1.20 they cut down to two. Which was you know, it seems insignificant but it was probably just as likely that they were afraid of not getting their change out of the machine or getting loose change then it was about having that extra 20 cents. So it wasn’t so much price consciousness as price, coin convenience for one of better term.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: So that was the first project and we came up with a multi dimensional model which allowed a rep, literally to go in a laptop and we wrote a program, which allowed them to do this. And they would put into the programme a selection. Okay it’s white collar, it’s an office and it looks youngish and it would come back and would say, “OKAY, this is the mix of drinks and this is what we think your sales will be at a $1.00,
$1.10, $1.20, $1.30 etc., etc”, and then that would go into, how much will it costs to place a vending a machine here, what kind of volume sales do we expect, how profitable will it be. So right out that they got models, which actually allowed them to identify products to whatever site would be appropriate. We got some great results out of that. Overall a lot of the existing vending machines were simply redesigned so that they gave different products out of them and we had sales increases between 13 and 18 percent out of those, which was pretty extraordinary. And out of the tens of thousands of vending machine out there, we discovered that about 60 percent of them were going to be non profitable.

Interviewer: Oh I see, so obviously you’re not going to put them out there. Are you?

Participant: Well there was no use putting them out there because they were just going to cost you money. So there was two things there was a cost savings in terms of making sure the vending machine was in the right place and there was an increase of profitability by the fact that you could come up with the optimum mix and price. So that was one exercise.

Interviewer: I was just wondering about the price. Was there much difference, did price make a difference between the blue-collar areas or the white-collar areas. Was it like price didn’t make a big impact on one or the other or?

Participant: Not as much as I thought initially. My initial hypothesis would have been that if they were blue collar then they were less lightly to spend money on drinks but that wasn’t the case. What we found was that it was that coin convenience thing that I was speaking about before, you know. And people were scared about losing their change. It sounds bizarre, you know, people were saying things like, “If I put in a two dollar coin and I don’t get my change back, I’ll lose 80 cents even if I get
my drink out”. You know, stuff like that. “So I’d rather put in $1.20 and rather not risk it and that determined whether or not they were going to buy a drink. If I didn’t have $1.20 on me I wouldn’t buy a drink.

Interviewer: Wouldn’t buy a drink, interesting.

Participant: But then you got some bizarre things like you had these vending machines, some of them two or three of them on a train platform and when we looked into the vending machines we found that each machine would have exactly the same mix of drinks and it had to do with stacking these machines. Some guy would have to bring boxes of drinks down with a trolley and so rather than have a large variety of drinks, they would load in three boxes and put exactly the same and what we discovered was that well there’s a lot of machines in there, increase the range that you offer and that could increase sales. So there were other factors that needed to be considered. What we then did was we were asked to look at two things and they were interrelated. We were asked to look at the optimum mix of product that could be sold out of a retail outlet and the optimum way sales reps to travel into a region. What we did there was use their secondary data initially because literally there are thousands and thousands of retail sites out there. We could identify the mix of product that was sold out of each site. We delineated a trading area around each site and aggregated demographic information from the census and we looked at the relationship between product mix and demographic.

Interviewer: Can you get access to census?

Participant: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh yeah through the stats bureau.
Participant: Plus they sent the census through. I’m not talking about raw data.

Interviewer: No. Yeah, yeah.

Participant: So we came up with a model we channel a relationship between product mix…

[End of Interview]
Interview with participant D

Participant: You’re asking about multi-faceted campaigns?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah

Participant: I think it’s the best way to look it is that there are probably five or six audiences that you can get to anytime and if you look at that on the outside of a model you’re looking at industry organizations, NGO’s, financial community, government regulators (right) consumers and the media, cos media is an end audience in itself because of it’s, as well as being a conduit. So you’re dealing with that set of audiences and pretty much anybody you can think of that would want to make a decision or a…you know…you want to get a message to would fit within those groups. I mean, even analysts you put those within a media context (yeah) government regulators, anything from ACCC through to the CIA in some instances. It’s whoever you want to get to. Then you’ve got a set of tools that you can get to those audiences (right yeah) and they’re not predetermined tools that go to individual audiences. They’re any that can be configured. So that would include lobbying. Now, I wouldn’t put lobbying down as a government only activity. You lobby, you can lobby industry groups, you can lobby consumers; you can lobby anybody you want to lobby. And there’s a set of techniques within that tool set. You’ve got corporate social responsibility, which not only is a required action by some companies but it’s also a superb leverage tool. Now, you know, we tried to launch that here in Australia six months ago and we tried to go to everybody and the Australian market place isn’t ready for it
and it is way behind the rest of the world, but it’s just not ready, it’s not interested, doesn’t need it.

Interviewer: So what is it exactly?

Participant: Well, it’s about using anything from philanthropy through to actual, your actions as a company to set your (boost your plan) brand aside. Take a look at Shell and it’s current advertising campaign, but that is actually I mean that’s an advertising iteration of it but there’s plenty of media that could go and should go along with that. (Yeah) You’re looking also at financial communications; actually understanding a configuration of how that sits together, we handle the Singtel here. (Right) We taken over Optus and you need a specific, financial communications practice(?)

Interviewer: And there’s some opposition there too isn’t there? So I mean, you got your work cut out for you.

Participant: You’ve got media relations, straight media relations, but everybody thinks that’s PR and that just gets my goat really to be honest with you (why?) cos it’s not. You want to talk to the media, fine, go and have lunch with the media but it’s not that. That’s not what…

Interviewer: It’s not just about relationships

Participant: No, it’s not at all.

Interviewer: It’s not like ringing your mate and saying hello

Participant: No, no. I mean we don’t have, I mean, we have staff here who have great relationships but I got none and yet I have no problems standing up there in front (is that right?) well I have a few but I mean (yeah) in all honesty it’s (it’s not) not, it’s the way you package the story. That’s what counts?

Interviewer: Cos that’s their job they want a good story. You haven’t got a good story they’re not going to print it.
Participant: You can call a favour once or twice but after a while you’re going to get fairly boring I suppose as a contact.

Interviewer: So it’s about constructing the story so it fits their agenda?

Participant: And also fits your client’s agenda. That’s the artistry (yeah, yeah) and it’s about applying (yeah, yah) its about finding the hooks (and expanding on them). Absolutely. You then got…

Interviewer: Do you write the story when you put out a press release; we’re talking press releases presumably are we? Or video news…

Participant: We could do…well, you see that again is very, that’s a very single dimension, I mean, how you interact with the media you should look at it, we tend to look at it as being having long term relationships on behalf of our clients but not, not in the context of having a direct relationship. It’s actually building a honey pot that journalists want to go to, to find information out. You make, that way (yeah) you make your client a thought leader and an industry leader.

Interviewer: So you’re setting up a website where they can go to (yeah) and consider to find they’re own stuff.

Participant: Yeah, and it may well be that you’re providing on going briefings by executives that can’t get hold of (right). You now there’s exclusivity to you, but you’ve gotta learn how to get the balance of right so that you get most people under the exclusive umbrella. (Right, right, right). Then everybody feels they’re getting exclusive treatment but again it’s down to…

Interviewer: Most people, being particular journalists or…
Participant: Oh yeah, you can get as many journalists as you can all feeling they’re having an exclusive relationship which is a contradiction in terms but that’s the artistry of it.

Interviewer: That gets you hooked up with this guy and he’ll give you a good little …

Participant: And as an ongoing piece that … defining media by different tiers of influence that sort of thing.

Interviewer: This sounds more financial.

Participant: No there’s technology media (right), vertical media. Look we represent TNT and yet it’s still incredibly important that they’re called media. You know the time we represented them the response was the journalist walked into the CAA they just said “it’s amazing.” The last six months they didn’t even know it was us. Just last six months TNT has just opened up it’s just so great to be reporting such great news. It’s just a different way of them going out. TV media relations it’s also advocacy advertising. (Yup) Now, that’s a very under-utilised.

Interviewer: I guess that comes back to the other issue we were talking about – philanthropy and those sorts of things.

Participant: Well to an extent but let me give an example. If I was to put three ads up, four ads up, maybe five here in Australia, just do the major five centres, featuring a dead dog (I know what it is) and get people to write to in and say how appalling they thought it was, I just started a debate in the media. The media love the idea of talking about it, I’ve got consumers talking about it, I’ve got websites that I can, I’ve got a call to action and I’ve got response mechanisms in place. I only have to run five. I can call it a national media campaign, as long as I put in five different centres.

People don’t think enough about actually using (integrating) yeah,
integrating the whole piece together. Now that’s one route. And so you can actually use specific advertising to drive PR campaigns or vice versa. You then got the Brand building passé, which actually looks at getting into the brand and then developing that out. There’s been a transition – our research is part of [another company] and has a proprietary resource corps, brand asset evaluator. And it’s actually probably the reason why [the company] got bought [out, because of] its differentiator. It’s, it shows where brands are going, where they’ve been and it shows them on a cycle and where they are on a trend cycle. There’s 15,000 brands surveyed every two years and what it means is that we have a history of where brands have gone. What we’ve found in the last situation of that research is actually that the, whereas, when, you know, 10 years ago, you remember this when banks, brands, whatever, needed to get you to trust their brand. Now trust is nothing to do with it. (No) A brand needs to be in your belief portfolio (yeah, yeah). You need to believe in that brand. It has been aligned with you. Virgin is a belief brand that works. Actually but it’s again about philosophy, almost brands are taking religion’s space (it is, yeah, that’s right) Okay. It’s, you know, I believe in this church and I couldn’t give a monkey’s, I haven’t got a clue what the various churches are. (Yeah) Neither have 70% of the population and yet, but they will tell you what Virgin stands for and why you’ve gotta get a Virgin phone and why you’ve got to (cos they identify with the brand) yeah why you gotta wear Gap, why gotta wear…it’s all about belief (and image I suppose) and why you’ve gotta wear Nike, or not wear Nike. So there’s the brand building approach, then you’ve got Viral, well Internet
based campaigning. Viral is huge. Viral is just the best; if you can get that right it’s fantastic

Interviewer: Yeah because it really has more credibility in a way

Participant: It’s passed on by your friends.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. It’s often funny and or rude and or whatever

Participant: Yeah and recall’s there.

Interviewer: The other thing with that is, I suppose, companies which can’t sort of put out, you might say deviant type messages on television, they can do something different on the web.

Participant: No rules on the web.

Interviewer: And who’s to say who put it out.

Participant: If it’s forwarded to by a friend they, it’s been self-selected. Did you see the umbrella ad that went round? The umbrella series that went round (where they kicked the dog) yeah and there was another one where the guy came down and he sat in and he basically pumping up a football but his girlfriend was standing behind him and it looked like something completely different. (Yeah, right, right, right) and you know the recall on those is huge. (Yeah) But more to the point you see you can actually, with those, you can build a database behind them whereby if you run a, maybe if you play a game a high score competition draw, you can data capture off it (right) and there’s some huge opportunities there but that means you have direct consumer and that, get that audience, viral internet campaigning allows you to get direct consumer. More to the point, and this is the critical bit, check out the number of independent bodies there are out in the market place that are actually commercially run, that have their own website, their own vehicles, cos that’s incredibly
important. And when you see that you’ll realize that actually coalition building which is another facet of it, is, and this is really between you and I and the gate post but the, if you take a look at, say, the Marine stewardship Council. Marine stewardship Council judges what happens in terms of recommending policy to government across Europe and globally (right) on the fish stocks (right) it’s run by the World Wildlife Fund together with Unilever. (Right) Now those two were so diametrically opposed they’re now running, there on a council together. There are member of that council now, and it’s on going but the agenda, at least Unilever has a say in what the agenda is (right) and before, that coalition it didn’t (it didn’t) Now about this public relations, because actually, Unilever is setting, is able to respond to the requirements of it’s consumers before the consumers get those requirements. So there’s coalition building into that toolset. There’s also …

Interviewer: So obviously there’s some lobbying going on for (inaudible) to really get onto that.

Participant: No we set it up.

Interviewer: You set it up?

Participant: Unilever set it up. I mean you can do it in all sorts of ways. Look I’ve set up for numerous clients and look, [this company] is not special we do it (no, no, no) to there but we’ve set up, I’ve set up so many alliances and third party bodies with the agendas that run

Interviewer: Is that sort of the community fields that have involvement in policy?

Participant: No, cos people look at an independent body as an independent body. Check out the National Pet Care body, it’s I mean it’s been there for 30 odd years and it advocates pet ownership. (inaudible) but what happens
when the wildlife people stand up and say this is absolutely outrageous, that people shouldn’t own pets, get a buffer. (Yeah) You got somebody to turn around and say (hang on a minute) that’s a terrible thing to say.

Interviewer: (inaudible)

Participant: Exactly, exactly. (Yeah) so you, it’s about emotional messages. You see, it’s about creating vehicles and opening channels. Now I’ll give you an example. Ansett. (Yeah) I mean, let me give you the timeline of Ansett (yeah) and this will explain to you how an integrated campaign can really work in a public communication context. Here’s the timeline, okay? Problems with the 767s 767s grounded (Christmas) okay. No I think that was around the mark that was the Easter time frame, wasn’t it? (Was it)? Yeah it was Easter. (Yeah, I thought about, yeah) They’re grounded. Toomey hauled across the coals by the media and hauled back from New Zealand, remember? (Yeah that’s right) He’s on holiday while our national airline is on the ground. Toomey spends two days getting absolutely, doing the whole media spiel, getting shafted basically.

Interviewer: Now he wasn’t a polished performer was he?

Participant: No and that brings me to…

Interviewer: Did they help him?

Participant: No, not at all.

Interviewer: No, not at all…? That was part of the problems then?

Participant: Yeah absolutely, I mean CEO positioning is another one of those tool sets. 50, over 50 % of a company’s reputation, through our research, is determined by the CEO. So you got to …

Interviewer: I thought he was quite liked in the public. He seemed to be, you know, one of the good guys (no) no?
No he was a New Zealander. Not the way he was set in that way by the media and what you had then there after that followed was government comment, this is a terrible thing. (Yeah) Then you had, you had a continuing piece here through the regulators saying ‘absolutely outrageous’ then you had the unions dive in and then you had the collapse (yep) okay? And then, following on from the collapse when they tried to rescue you had consumer comment but here, just for the collapse, you had a big brand campaign, (yeah) That was huge (yeah) but they even fouled that up, got wrong music, got it all wrong cos they, Toyota already booked out absolutely which was sell out packed (yeah) Anyway, you had consumers, then you had the unions getting involved again, then you had the frequent flyers (oh yeah) getting involved saying it’s outrageous, You have all the staff offering to take 10% cuts down here. Do you remember the one who tried to get it up? Then the Tesna thing fell apart and Ansett was no more. Now that’s all of that. Let’s look at the pieces that you have there. Let’s look at a separate timeline that you could’ve done. Here, he knew that the 767s were grounded (right) okay? Don’t stick your head in the sand cos he knew that he was coming this way. Everybody knew it was going to arrive at this point, he knew the finances were bad so let’s look at it. Go talk to the unions; it’s their life; share it with them. This is done; we’re all over. Go to the staff. Let’s do your 10% cut there (yeah). Let’s make you all shareholders in Ansett. Once you’ve done that, let’s grab the consumers and talk to them about the fact that this is your airline, okay? This is Australia’s airline. You don’t need to go out on a huge branding campaign; you could talk about Australia’s airline. Government is then stuffed. It has to come in cos
that’s their voters. You got to talk that grass roots campaign going on and you’ve got your frequent flyers talking about the fact that this airline must stay in the sky because of a duopoly. Then don’t talk to the media cos you’ve got all this covered off, and they’re reporting it. So then bring in a select few media and you say, “Media, you’ve got to come on side with this”. I’m going to do a tie up with the Telegraph to save Australia’s best airline. And I’m actually going to talk about what went before, and the fact that we got sold a pup, by the former owners of Ansett. And this is about these people here are talking about saving a problem that was originating in the past. And then you basically move forward from that point and there’s no way that government unions or anybody will let it go bust. And you pull it all together. Then, and only then, can you run a brand campaign. And what they had was all the right notes in completely the wrong order, at all the wrong tomes. And nobody was in control at any given point. It did not feel that anybody had a tiller on that boat.

Interviewer: ‘Cos they were just running from one thing to the next. Just totally (inaudible) bowled over.

Participant: Every one of those audiences that they went out to, could’ve been put together in the right order, controlled, delivered in a two week period, and not only would Ansett have survived, because government would’ve had to injected money, but you’d had an outcome. And, you know the bottom line there, is it would not have dragged out; you’d still have an airline that’s about an integrated campaign. About using your resources in the correct way. We tried to get hold of Toomey for two days, but he had an old style communications officer, ex-government, who didn’t
have a bloody clue. And who wouldn’t know what an integrated
campaign was if it leapt up and bit him.

Interviewer: I mean that comes down to crisis management, or issues management
doesn’t it?

Participant: But it wasn’t an issue. You see the problem was, when you applied that,
it was an issue up front, but the issue was actually that, and this was the
essence of the thing, the finances was stuffed. (Yeah that’s the issue) The
issue wasn’t that they weren’t making money, but they had no, no flying
stock that worked; they had had too many deals, the airline was
completely misfinanced. And so that’s the problem. You can overcome
that with perceptions. So what you saw play out was actually the slow
death because of a poorly financed airline. What communications
could’ve given you, was air support to that re-financing. Actually, an
awful lot of underwriting from all the groups, who stood to criticize. I
think the way to look at it is communications perceptions in the
marketplace that was a political campaign could have been run for the
success of the Ansett brand. Add to that the CEO reputation being one of
the component parts, government lobbying is one of those component
parts, of that toolset. But grass-roots mobilization as well, that’s a critical
part.

Interviewer: Are you familiar with Alcoa? The problems they’re having at the
moment?

Participant: No

Interviewer: They don’t seem to be doing well at the moment.

Participant: Alcoa? No I don’t …
Interviewer: They’re having some serious issues, particularly in Western Australia, with their liquor burning. It’s just turning into, it just building, building, building. It’s got out of control, they don’t seem to be responding very well, you know, they’re putting in ads, big full page ads which have got no credibility at all, people are just worried about their health. They don’t seem to care...

Participant: Nah, ‘cos they’re making a lot of money.

Interviewer: But they’re really losing the battle, and they’re going to be loosing money because they’re not going to...

Participant: Look if you’re a politician, here’s how the configuration sits. If you’re a politician and you want a cheap win, what are you going to do?

Interviewer: Exactly, you’re going to jump on the bandwagon.

Participant: And regulation is going to come down

Interviewer: That’s right, that’s what government’s done, now.

Participant: Now look at smoking. Take smoking, the only thing that caused the tobacco companies to get nailed in the way they did was under-aged smoking. It was an emotional issue. You can show, even a classic thing like someone with a tracheotomy putting a cigarette into the hole, and smoking, sad puppy adult. You know if that’s how sad you are, then you’re welcome to it. You made your choices and now let’s get on with it, right? A child, 16 year old, then the tracheotomy has relevance. Because you’ve started that person before they were ready to make a choice. And you’re responsible.

Interviewer: Again, now we’ve got the fast food industry, they’re going to come under attack very soon…
Participant: But I’d say it’s going to go further than that. Because, actually the fast food industry is, everybody likes to find out that there’s been this horrendous (inaudible) fast food industry is up for a major fall. You know the ingredients; the interesting thing is that, in the same way as ingredients, not knowing what you’re getting, is going to be the crucial piece. And the carcinogens that are within food are going to prove the downfall of those entities. Plus the fact that you can leave a MacDonald’s patty on the side, you know, for over a year and it ain’t going to go off. You know this is also the piece with Coca Cola …

Interviewer: Well they’re been yanked out of schools now in LA, haven’t they?

Participant: Yeah, You could take, I’ve seen this done you take a child’s milk tooth, a put it into a bottle of Coca Cola at the beginning of the day, it won’t be there at the end of the day, it will have dissolved.

Interviewer: Oh, you’re kidding me.

Participant: No

Interviewer: I mean if you were an advocate in child’s health you might like to see that on television…

Participant: Yeah, absolutely, you just put it in there and say “Look what happened” But the trouble is, there is just too much advertising component. Look you start moving into one of the discussions with John Pilger discussion, of hidden agendas, secret deals, that kind of thing. Well I went to see a Pilger lecture about three or four weeks ago, and I told the then CEO of the company that I’d done that, and she was absolutely horrified. That I could go and see Pilger, ‘cos he’s a fringe lunatic. Well. I would also say to you, I don’t think he’s a fringe lunatic. He plays the game I play. Or he observes the game I play. I did this piece up here, this pipe line
project in the Middle East, with a journalist…(confidential)…who was killed in Pakistan. He came looking at the project. That was an arms deal that was done there. The pipeline was put in place as a backhander from the US government to the Abu Dhabi government for buying F-16 jets, from Lockheed Martin. It was a commercial deal to buy F-16’s for, the air force of Abu Dhabi. But given the Gulf War, that was a requirement, but anyway, there’s a load of spin around it, more CIA people walking round than god knows what. And in all honesty, I’d have to tell you that … (confidential)… [he] was a Mossad agent, there was no denying it, he was a Mossad agent, and he was an Israeli agent, who was also a …(confidential)… journalist.

Interviewer: Right

Participant: And more to the point, that you, well, I ended up with a piece of intelligence that came through to me and I had no idea where it came, it was top and tail; There was no piece on it. It just said, “This guy’s turning up and he’s looking at the deal, he’s coming looking at the deal and you fend him off.” And I fended him off for eight weeks. And it was very amusing and it was a great game. Chased around the world and went in where I knew he was going to be, got to people before he got to them, briefed them on what to say and how to say it.

Interviewer: ‘Cos he was trying to find out about the backhand deal.

Participant: He was trying to find out what was going on behind it and trying to pull it all apart.

Interviewer: So it wouldn’t go through?

Participant: Well, no. Just so that he knew what was going on and what deals were being done in the gulf region and who were the players. And he was
doing it as a journalist. But, lovely guy, really sweet guy and the thing is as a journalist you can get access to information nobody else can get access to, because you can ask questions; If you couple it up with intelligence that was already, and you can get it from primary source; if you couple that with intelligence you obviously receive from other areas then he’s providing valuable intelligence. I don’t think he was any more than that. I think he was an intelligence gatherer. But we also represent the Iraqi National Congress, the Iraqi opposition party, which is headed by some really, you know, one guy who actually if he tuned up back in Jordan would be put in prison for 20 years. And you have to ask yourself, “Where does our world begin and where does it end”. And if you take a look at Hill & Knowlton and the Gulf War and what they did. I left Hill & Knowlton in 1995 on the basis that I got lied to by the Chairman because we were stood up and there was an expose done by Matthew Paris in the UK on the Senatorial Hearings that Hill & Knowlton put together to send the US to war. And it wasn’t the fact, the Senatorial Hearing, in my book, from the game I play, was a master stroke, fantastic, public perception. You rely on people’s ignorance to pull it. One plus one is two. Senators, Senatorial Hall, evidence therefore Senatorial Hearing. Poof, get a war off the back of that. The fact that it was commercial …

Interviewer: That has an effect because it pulls on the heart-strings of the American public…?

Participant: Well the American public (inaudible) ... No, exactly but the problem was all the witnesses that were hauled in, had not been …

Interviewer: No
Participant: They weren’t there, I saw babies being pulled out of incubators, (inaudible). And this is on the record. I’ll tell you this now, I asked the then chairman of London Anthony Snow (??) there was a big company meeting pulled together and they basically said “Last night’s program was a real travesty”. They said, “That they weren’t real Senatorial Hearings”, and we’d said they were, and etc, etc. And its an old trick, you shift what the problem is, (Right) and everybody in the room, they’re not going to talk to each other because they’re being talked at, says “Oh, that’s the problem, I must be a bit dumb, because I thought the problem was (inaudible). Witnesses not seeing what they’d said they saw; but I’m not going to stand up because I’ve got to check that I’m not stupid.” Except there were three or four of us who said, “No, the issue was they said they saw babies being pulled from incubators”. Now, you know, did anyone not know that those witnesses didn’t know? No, that’s not the issue, and we were lied to repeatedly.

Interviewer: The issue was that they were not real Senatorial Hearings...

Participant: The issue was that Paris has said that there weren’t real Senatorial Hearings and H&K had claimed there were. Which is rubbish. The issue was the witnesses lied.

Interviewer: (inaudible) set them up to lie?

Participant: Set them up to lie, Hill Knowlton did. And as far as I’m concerned, we don’t have a professional watchdog body, but if we did, but that’s the nature of the beast; Hill Knowlton should absolutely be, I mean it was outrageous.

Interviewer: But did they look at it and say, the outcome of that is …

Participant: Justified? No look I think the deal here …
Interviewer: ‘Cos obviously, when it comes down to war, that sort of thing is alright…

Participant: It’s about propaganda

Interviewer: Pure and simple black propaganda.

Participant: I think my response to that is, ‘cos we’re going through that right now, one more time. And if I hear one more rumoured speech out of Saddam Hussein, I’m going to spew. To your point, is the public becoming more savvy? Yes. Because even those, I mean a rare beast, in the sense I’ve spent a lot of time in the Middle East. And 18 months travelling across the region, and have seen it. Here’s a piece for you that never gets put out; the Islamic world views itself as the Islamic world. It did not; the British, the French and the Americans, 60 years ago, applied sovereign states. But it’s fine for a Qatari to talk about the government of Yemen because they are part of the Islamic world. And they are tribes within the Islamic world. So then the West develops this really bright idea of shoving in a sovereign state called Israel. Smack bang in the Middle of the whole thing. And if you’re, if you look at the European Union, or the US imagine taking a state kike Ohio and turning it into a Muslim state; and defending it. Supplying it with weapons from Russia, I don’t think the US would really deal with it in a positive way. But that’s exactly what Israel is in the middle of this. So the interesting piece about that whole debate has been the discussion about whether or not the use of language, and the use of, you know, it’s a Palestinian gunman, but it’s an Israeli soldier. Well you know what’s the difference?

Interviewer: Because one’s a sovereign state and one’s not.
Participant: Well one is apparently. See what I mean? I think it’s an interesting thing. And you know, Nelson Mandela, let’s take that one. Perception? He bullied people up?

Interviewer: Oh, but he did it for the right reasons…

Participant: Exactly. So, so, he is now revered as a, I mean he was a shit terrorist, that’s why he got caught. So there you end up with a perceptual judgment. And time being a perceptual judge. That’s an amazing one to look at because current framework of banning terrorism, the War on Terrorism, then Nelson Mandela should have been lock up for the rest of his natural days. (He nearly was). Yeah, but then you take a look at the Tamil tigers, and the resolution that’s being pulled together in Sri Lanka, is because the Tamil Tigers can’t get support anymore. They’re viewed as a terrorist organization and yet are they freedom fighters, for their own homeland? And so, you know Ireland, I mean how do you deal with that one? And it’s extremely interesting that the greatest problem Bush had in the four or five days after September 11th was the use of language. Anybody who uses the word crusade really doesn’t have a clue about the world that he’s operating in.

Interviewer: He must have been advised on what to say; those words must have been put together for him …

[Change of Tape]

Participant: (inaudible) Here’s the deal. I did a global project the other day, and we need to cut a lot of it; it was for a new business proposal, it’s a theoretical budget that allows us to be selective for a global relationship. And when it came time to cutting it out, you should have heard my
American colleagues talking about how to cut it, globally. You know, couldn’t you run this from there? Why is that country important? And yet they’re talking about the sixth largest global economy, in one of the countries they were talking about; but for them it’s just a dot on the map. You know that’s more than …

**Interviewer:** It’s just an account to them?

**Participant:** Well exactly. It was slightly worse than that, (inaudible) account handles. But to that end I think, what you’re looking at is a, there is a globalisation movement going on, the tech sector will lead it because the tech sector is the most driven, global brand set up, that requires, that needs the same, that offers the same global products. You see the Coca Cola in India is not the same as the Coca Cola in the UK or in Germany or in Korea. They mean different things within people’s belief portfolio, because you have a spectrum of humanity with its beliefs. But technology is …

**Interviewer:** It transcends, doesn’t it?

**Participant:** Yeah, and that’s the driver for globalisation. You remove technology, its very interesting, you see. It’s a bit like the book, the printing press was built a certain way therefore, we receive books. Everybody got books. Different languages, but they’re all books. And for five hundred years that was the way that we communicated or learnt, with books. Do you see what I mean? And in didn’t change in five hundred years, in fact it still hasn’t changed, because the printing process could move digital, and yet we don’t. We stick with the old, let’s get the printing presses going, and roll it out because we go with the format, we expect …
Interviewer: It’s a cultural thing I suppose. Well the current issue with Iraq, what struck me as interesting was, all of a sudden America’s in trouble. Now is it just an issues management thing?

Participant: Of course it is. 1982. Falklands War; Margaret Thatcher; three terms in government, thereafter. Don’t ever think she went to war for any other reason. Her three terms in government cost her 800 lives. That’s it. British lives, forget the Argentinean lives that were lost over a lump of land in the middle of the Atlantic.

Interviewer: I guess perception in the market is so important.

Participant: One of my good friends, sorry one of my big clients in Europe was good friends with Hilary Clinton. (Inaudible) to meet with her after he’d finally admitted to having sex with Monica Lewinsky, They went off to the Hampton’s; I think it was for a holiday, for a week. And I asked this lady, I said to her, “How much shit is he in?” And she said “I wouldn’t want to be him, ‘cos Hillary will, you know the next week I would find anything to get out of there and get back to work”. And three days later he, and his approval rating was down at it’s lowest point, he bombed Osama Bin Laden. And that’s …

Interviewer: To get out of the holiday with the wife?

Participant: Well I really don’t think it was get out of the holiday with the wife, but I think it was a view that it was a perceptual landscape he did not want to continue. He wanted to be the decisive president with military … I don’t know, I mean the bottom line is that the funny thing about Bill Clinton was, and here’s the very interesting piece, about perceptions: Bill Clinton, good or bad president?

Interviewer: Huh, I think he did some good things.
Participant: Yeah, but good or bad president, though?

Interviewer: I was going to say bad I suppose.

Participant: Right. George Bush? Good or bad?

Interviewer: George Bush snr?

Participant: Junior.

Interviewer: Junior? Crap, I reckon (laughs)

Participant: Well, all right then, here’s the deal. Princess Diana, good or bad?

Interviewer: Good (laughs)

Participant: Good, well here’s the (inaudible), you’ll meet, I’ll put you in a room with people and the room will polarize on each of those personalities. It denies the human condition that is that people are neither all good nor all bad. And genius is often approached, accompanied by some severe weaknesses and strength is also coupled with limitations. And I think you’ll find that Princess Diana was a raving lunatic on one day and form my own experience, I went to the gym that she used to go to. There was a back entrance that you could go in any time you wanted, she chose to go out the front door to get her picture taken. She set numerous things up, equally so, the MI-6, if you believe the latest book, which, I mean I really do, because the Squidgy tapes that came out were picked up by local radio hams. MI-6 apparently recorded the tapes and then played them out at frequencies so radio hams could pick them up, to disenfranchise her growing brand. Now the bottom line is, Bill Clinton, I think he’s an absolute, I mean women, I’ve met women who’ve met him, and they say they walk in a room and he has Factor X, he just makes women melt. Not in the sense, not in a kind of purely kind of sexual way, just purely in the way he has so much presence. And he just has an aura.
But you’d be a god if you didn’t use that or have a weakness where you felt that power and actually, so, so, you’re going to end up with presidents, and there are, you know there must be secret service men who could tell you a tale or two about all of them. But that is not something that will ever be discussed, you know, what, why and where? The fact of the matter is, was Bill Clinton an incisive, insightful, humanly disposed president? Yes he was. And then actually, then we go back to that question about the John Howard piece, the people overboard. Forget his approval rating, would they vote for him again tomorrow? Bill Clinton Verses George Bush, George Bush would not have stood a chance. Even after all of that. Even the cheap shot of his wife, Bushes wife actually saying “I want my children growing up respecting the president”. It’s just like, oh love, you’re just not even in the realms, half the men in the US respect him because he pulled Moni (inaudible). So I think that if you look at it in that context that there is our weakness, there’s our dumbing down of the media; it’s black and white. And there is not room for media; if you look, there’s a launch of a newspaper called The Independent, in the UK, which was really going to be non-politically aligned, and take a view; couldn’t, didn’t last (No) And now …

Interviewer: ‘Cos people want to back a team they want to (inaudible)

Participant: Exactly. The bottom line is, if you want to get anything in as PR, if you want to get anything in a paper in the UK, get it in The Independent. As long as your client doesn’t know it’s only got a circulation of 110 thousand, you’ll be all right, ‘cos it had a broadsheet reputation. Again, that’s perception. You see what I mean? (Yeah) And yet The Guardian is the most independent, but yet has a reputation, it’s been ostracised as
being this left wing, loony paper. Yet it’s very editorial, sorry editorially objective.

Interviewer: I was going to say, talking about John Howard, and the little speech and so on, in terms of say Peter Beatty and… Hansen. Peter Beatty seems to have a non-polished politician sort of feel about him and he seems to have a lot of credibility with the public. Now Hansen was a bit of a nut, but because she wasn’t a politician…

Participant: No, no I don’t think it, I think Hansen was, you see the thing is the Hansen phenomena is exactly the same as the Green phenomena, the eighties and early Nineties. The Green’s don’t survive in anywhere there isn’t proportional representation, for the simple reason, in a first past the post electoral system any extreme is assimilated by the major parties. So the Green policies that the Green’s forwarded in the UK, they don’t have any seats; the won loads of seats at one stage, but now all of their policies; well the core of them have been assimilated, the random stuff on the outside, you wouldn’t get that in the mainstream. Whereas Hansen, look at her, ’96, ’97, was when she had her lift up period, all of those policies, the current, are currently in place. You know, let’s send them packing I don’t want them, you know.

Interviewer: But that was obviously a strategy by the Liberal Party, they see they’re losing their base, so they change policy.

Participant: They change policy to include that new extreme. And the pendulum swings. And if you look at the Australian Labor Party, they’re not that far away, (inaudible)

Interviewer: Hansen seemed to have, there seemed to be some sort of air of authenticity about her…
Participant: I think what you’re looking at is the authenticity of representation within that political context. (Okay) Here’s the deal; here’s the deal, that’s just an unpolished, and I would say he could do, they could do it better. That’s an unpolished version of, if you want to talk about hospitals, announce a hospital policy, stand in a hospital and do it. If you want to talk about roads, go and stand near a busy road near a death black spot where there’s flowers you know taped to a lamppost.

Interviewer: Not outside of the parliament.

Participant: Don’t do it in the parliament. That’s part of the middle way communications technique. That’s part of the Clinton/Blair model. All I think you’re finding there, it’s a regionalized approach. But in the UK, they have the Excalibur Computer, and every morning, every MP that represents Labor, when Labor announce a policy decision, they write the press release, and it has insert fields, in certain sections, right okay, and what it will do is run off the press release appropriate to every single MP. And then that then comes through the fax machine that’s been provided to the MP who then turns it over, hits send to the max field, to the distribution list and it comes out on the, ‘cos its been constructed that way, from the office of Tony Blair, MP for X, Labor today announced its policy, first paragraph; second paragraph, this will mean X an Y jobs in, likely, in this constituency. My MP is doing this for me. Its all tailored to the constituency so Labor’s getting the brand, aligned to the constituency representation as well as hooking it up at the National level. And so that is a grass roots mobilization about brand development at a very localized level. It about effectively lobbying you know your MP’s to … it was all this big thing about being a message, but how the hell do you compete
with that? So to your point of he’s got a very regional message, he’s got
a very regional approach, its all part of the game. And I think that, you
know, that I don’t think there’s a politician out there who doesn’t have,
doesn’t share the core approach. You look at Tony Blair, the really
interesting thing about his, is that he’s now being viewed as being
dishonest.

Interviewer: He’s probably one of the best public speakers, politician–wise. He’s
very, very crisp, clean; he’s very precise…

Participant: Oh, look, I mean he does it right. I remember watching him in Egypt just
after September 11, where he was going around canvassing, and he did
all the Middle East leaders and he did a run, you know he’s George’s
boy. And I remember it was really funny. If I had a difficult question,
that I need you to cut, that I’m worried about, okay, and I know I’ve got
a set answer for it; now you’re Tony Blair, and you’re gone into that kind
of context and there’s a whole room of press people, how do I, you know
that question’s going to come. We know its there, and we’ve got one
answer. The easiest technique in the world … You get a journalist in
there that you, to ask the question, journalist asks, you say, “You can
have the first question, we’ll nominate it to you”. He’ll go. “Oh, I’ll take
that.” The question gets asked, you give the answer, and then thereafter
you can just say, “Well as I said earlier on, I don’t think any more can be
said about that.” But it was brilliant, because they had a shot behind
Blair, which is very rare and Alistair Campbell, his PR boy was up the
back and he, Blair had got stuck, he didn’t know where to go and
Campbell went like that, which is basically get back to your three core
messages, and then Blair went, and nobody else would have seen it
unless you were in the gallery. But it was like, let me just re-emphasize.

Bang! Bang! Bang! And then we’re out of that question.

Interviewer: What, I know I’m talking about fringe sort of stuff but Prescott, he
punched that guy; he was in some political trouble, he was going to get
chopped. Wasn’t he? But after that his public popularity rose.

Participant: No, that was really interesting.

Interviewer: I’m not saying it was set up, but…

Participant: No, it definitely wasn’t set up. But Prescott (inaudible)

Interviewer: Oh… (inaudible)

Participant: I spent time with his constituency, wondering round there up north, its
poor there, very poor. And there’s fights every Saturday night; so they
understand that.

Interviewer: Although it seemed to come across as a little bit negative with the
media’s view of it.

Participant: Maybe not. More neutral, wasn’t it? Well here’s the deal: And I’m …

Interviewer: But that worked for him, didn’t it?

Participant: Oh. Its huge, but the fact is

Interviewer: Does it come near authenticity?

Participant: That was authenticity. It was also about Labor’s brand position. Four
years before that what happened, four years before if that had happened,
they’d have been into damage control. ‘Cos they didn’t know, anything
could’ve gone wrong. But their brand position was so solid, because the
opposition was so weak, that actually when, I read a guy who’d reported
this, Blair was with Alistair Campbell in the back of a car travelling
between events, and they were told of it, they thought it was a joke to
begin with. And then when they found out it was true they laughed their
heads off. Yeah. They didn’t care because the brand was so solid that actually they could spin it anyway they wanted to spin it. And so I think…

Interviewer: Are you saying ordinarily that would have damaged their campaign or their brand?

Participant: Yeah, but they had all their channels open, it’s about having every channel open, to pit the spin on it that you need to put. Look, if you’re just using media, you’re stuffed. I mean if you can lift that grass roots, if you can have, if you can pick up that phone … It’s a bit like this piece here, Ansett had no channels open, so they had no way of using forces against forces to produce an outcome. Labor controlled every channel it was possible for a political party to control.

Interviewer: So what sort of grass roots did they have in place? Not just the party, obviously.

Participant: They had the party piece, but they also had regional newspapers, they also had the unions, that Prescott used to be a former Union leader; they had a, but more to the point you see, they could run their own survey, that they could publish out really, really quickly and say, “Do you think Prescott was right?” “Is it fair?” Yeah, absolutely, I think it’s outrageous.

Interviewer: So that’s how it goes to the media, oh yeah, everyone makes mistakes.

Participant: Mistakes in politics, yeah, I’d punch him too.

Interviewer: So you’ve got this image of the way society actually interacts in reality, you know… If someone attacked you, you’d punch them, or that could be a likely outcome; but in the media it’s just not … the way society should act.
Participant: Well the media you see, it’s a moving goal post. Don’t ever trust it. It doesn’t always have the same ethics. On one day it’ll say, “This is terrible.” And on the next it’ll say, “Good on you.” It depends on what drives sales. It’s commercially minded, that’s it.

Interviewer: And I think in a lot of cases, brands, youth brands perhaps use this ‘cos they need to be youthful, it about …

Participant: Fringe. It’s about fringe.

Interviewer: It’s fringe. You don’t want to be mainstream you’ve got to be something else. You’ve got to set yourself apart. And if you look at Calvin Kline, Benneton maybe to a lesser extent Windsor Smith, They’ve used that and created controversy in the sort of mainstream media to generate a brand, who says, “We’re on the outskirts of mainstream, we’re challenging those things” or whatever.

Participant: The Benetton piece produced more of that, that’s the ultimate example of controversy advertising. But take a look at Nike’s campaign in the, probably Nike’s campaign was the best-integrated campaign run ever, for the Soccer World Cup. It was about, you see, what sports companies had always suffered from in any World Cup was the fact that when they developed the advertising campaigns, half the players who were in the campaign hadn’t made the World Cup, they got injured, they got whatever. Nike owns some fantastic players, so this time what they thought was, “Let’s create something, a point of view for our consumers that is based on the Worlds Cup but that they can share with and they can get in the spirit of, but we’re not dependent on their, you know if the see one of our players they’re reminded of that point of view, not on their performance on the pitch at that time. Now Figo? Had a disastrous World
Cup, and yet he’s still a fantastic spokesman for Nike global soccer piece because every time people see the advert they just realize what Figo is truly about. And it’s about spirit; it’s about sense of humour. And they went down the route of using Cantona who was this bad boy, and what they did was they created a point of view and they drove it out and they owned urban soccer. They went on a grass roots campaign and actually ran the Scorpion Competition, the cage competition in city centers around the world.

Interviewer: The cage competition?

Participant: Do you remember seeing the advert, which included the Elvis soundtrack? And it was basically all the players in a cage, secret tournament it was called. It was on board a ship.

Interviewer: Oh and they were kicking …

Participant: Let me show it to you. I got actually got it here. And then it’ll give you a viewpoint. … This was the cinema version that they ran … They ran all sorts, an internet campaign combined with, you know the Elvis soundtrack, was in fact, you know, the it had been re-mixed and went … (Plays ad) Now these are all their players, some of them made the World Cup. The French boys all went out in the first round, but the bottom line was that for the first time ever …

Interviewer: And this was the viral thing as well.

Participant: This went round as a viral … some were injured … yeah, you look at this, and this is the real (inaudible) this is real soccer players and you’re in contact with consumers.

Interviewer: ‘Cos this is street level stuff.
Participant: Yeah. Exactly, and they ran the Scorpion Contest in city centres around the world.

Interviewer: So there’s your grass roots.

Participant: There’s your grass roots piece. There was a, effectively a (inaudible), there was an Internet approach to it, there was a cinema ad was a one eighty, there was a real ‘get people involved’ in that; you had the PR that went around the whole approach, as well as the Scorpion. So you had the generation …

Interviewer: So you create this …

Participant: It’s another game. But they ran this piece here and they actually created another ad that was called the Rematch, were they sang (inaudible), they didn’t use a cage. But the more important piece about this was the fact that you could control the players’ participation. And therefore you can control Nike’s association with it.

Interviewer: And the sound track, which hadn’t been released, at that point was it?

Participant: No exactly, it was released after.

Interviewer: That’s the integration.

Participant: Exactly.

Interviewer: They must’ve worked it out with the Elvis people.

Participant: They did. It was the first time that a remix, and this was the PR when they ran it, the first time a remix with Elvis. It was the first time that anybody had allowed a remix of an Elvis tune.

Interviewer: Who’s running the campaign?

Participant: Well we are. The important thing for Nike was that they organized it and that in terms of sitting in with their brand of being differentiated was huge. The whole point about this was, as I say, was a point of view. You
know, you’ve Figo, Roberto, Carlos, and Renaldo; they picked an Asian player you’ve got an Italian, a Frenchman …

Interviewer: So they would have sat down and said, “Right, we need a creative game around soccer.” And the other thing is, it’s very much the basketball-type style.

Participant: It was the same. It was taken from that because also the American market was something (inaudible). But that’s probably the best-integrated campaign that’s been run, in my view, ever.

[End of Interview]
Interview with Participants E

Participant: …your customer base, I don’t know if you (inaudible) whereas in a crisis, in fact the rules if there are any is to do the opposite, which is to be open to give out facts as soon as they are available to you. To be responsive, honest, you know as (inaudible) as things are. That’s what goes in carrying to much paper you see.

Interviewer: Inaudible

Participant: Trying desperately to avoid carrying paper around with me at the moment.

Interviewer: I brought a bunch of stuff over, just in case, you know…

Participant: But I suppose when I moved from crisis into corporate affairs, for a UK company, which was in the last year, it was a much bigger group of companies. So the largest is a pharmaceutical company which your sitting in the office in the building of now, but we’re also a contact lens manufacturer, we’re also a consumer health division, we’re also an animal health division as well, we’re also a group of a number of different companies about 17th in the world, market cap. And in the pharmaceutical sector we’re number three, so its quite a big, quite a big company. When we merged in ’96 we were the biggest company in the world. Which just goes so show that in less than 10 years all kinds of things change. And I have a much more of corporate affairs, kind of government affairs kind of function. And then coming here I cover everything. So I’m the only person in the building with any real expertise in public relations, so that’s very media oriented and very product specific. Government affairs which is very product specific as well but its lobbying government to help them understand the value of some of
our medicines. And there’s also a government affairs element, which is helping them to understand the corporate brand, which, is quite separate to product brands. But this in itself could be the whole afternoon’s discussion. But we tend to have medicines that we are trying to get market access for, where we have government affairs activities to lobby governments. And then we have helping the government to understand who Novatis is, which is the corporate brand. I’ve separated out those two areas of activities. And then we’ve got corporate affairs which, is helping not just government to understand who Novatis are, but also the doctors, people who take our medicines and even employees would be included as well and any number of sub-audiences would be included there as well. And then internal communications; so reward and recognition programs, internal newsletters, the intranet, the internet site for Novatis in Australia is my responsibility any crisis communications which occur on any of our products would be my responsibility as well so…

Interviewer: Do you write the manuals for those as well?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: You do?

Participant: Yes, absolutely everything. So it’s a huge remit. And a little bit too much to do. What I tend to do is carve a bit of money out of the marketing budgets to get agencies to help out. At the moment we’re looking again at our crisis preparedness and I’m asking a freelance to help with the manual. But I am at the moment looking at the second draft so you know I’ll do a lot of the writing of that as well. And a lot of my role day-to-day
is strategic counsel to the MD who I report to and then also the individual product managers across the business as well.

Interviewer: So you do a bit of like media training?

Participant: Yeah I have done. Generally speaking I don’t prefer to do it myself. And that’s for the simple reason that if I’m going to put, you know my colleague in a difficult real life position it probably doesn’t help if they know who I am. So I’d prefer to ask other companies to help me out. But I s’pose because you started off discussing with your observation about the way the evolution of political messages and how politicians have changed the style that they deliver messages I think it’s a very astute observation even in the six months I’ve been here you’ve actually seen the Australian Government been much more media savvy. We come, I say we, Joe and I come from a country in the UK where there has been a huge amount of debate, even perhaps worth looking at, for your benefit, but a huge amount of debate in the last couple of years about how much politics is there still involved in British politics and how much spin is there. And spin, the way the message is positioned to the public has been a huge area of debate. You know how much is politics and how much is spin. For example the health minister in England was actually re-announcing the same statistics over and over again in different ways to make the government look good and spin was seen as evil, you know that helping the public to understand something in a particular way was seen as, I mean all it’s really doing is, saying I am going to deliver fact A to the public and I want them to understand it in such and such a way. That’s what spin is, is being very, is helping you to interpret the information you are giving them. And we do that all the time as
marketeers, I mean, your helping your customer to understand the benefit or a particular message about your product.

Interviewer: The positive points you want to get across.

Participant: So my own view would be there is very little sinister about spin as perhaps you think there is. I mean, if you’re, to some extent spin underestimates the public, because you’re giving them a message and you’re helping them to understand what the message means. You know so if employment is down and you give them the figure you’re helping them interpret that as a good thing for the political party in power. Whereas traditionally perhaps 20 years ago you might just distribute the statistics on employment and expect the public you know the public to interpret them how they wanted to. So you see political organizations being much more focused in helping the public to understand that particular message. Now in the UK perhaps because they’re so insecure, you know this is seen to somehow make the political process less democratic, you know that spin…

Interviewer: A manipulation going on.

Participant: Yeah, exactly. It’s not credible and that we’re moving toward a much more US style of politics. Where I think in perhaps the US your population recognise that politicians are going to speak in sound bites. You know they expect the president to speak in these kind of very monosyllabic sentences, which are very punchy.

Interviewer: I love it.

Participant: And I love it. I don’t think there is anything wrong with simple spinning of complicated messages to help a very broad population understand the
meaning that is intended, I don’t think there should be anything particular sinister about that.

Interviewer: Well the problem of course we have is how do you communicate in a mass media world? You can only communicate using spin if you want to get a message across, as I was saying before. Were you suggesting that in the UK there seems to be a backlash against spin?

Participant: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: And I think that’s the way here perhaps.

Participant: That’s where I was going to finish up. You see the US, which is now so evolved into this very sound bite oriented way of communicating from politicians. You have the UK, which is on the precipice of becoming that way, but as yet undecided and you probably have Australia somewhere in the middle. Because I see Australian politicians speaking like American politicians sometimes, and that was your point. You actually see much more sound bites coming out, and there are certain departments that I’ve worked with in the last couple of months where they are tremendously unreceptive to the way the media might interpret the way they behave. In fact I’m very, very surprised by how undeveloped the spinning facility, if you like, of government in this country is, has been developed. I mean, I think, you’re just starting now to see a lot of politicians have people within their staff who can advise them on media matters. And I think what we’ve seen in the last year even is a huge trend in you know, Australian governments start to bring people in who can help them understand how the media will interpret the messages they’re handing out. So it’s kind of perhaps a little bit in front of the UK but I think that’s very astute of you to point out that there’s this kind of
juxtaposition. And I don’t yet know whether the Australian public, I
don’t know what they expect of politicians at the moment. You know
someone like Pauline Hansen’s very evangelical in a way you don’t
really have, you know she’s going to be talking in sound bites, perhaps
not as credible as, even John Howard. You know I think perhaps if you
compared the way he performs now in front of the media to how he did
you know, three or four years ago he’s changed hugely, he’s much more
punchy. You saw the same transformation in Tony Blair. That evolution
in the way people are delivering political messages that’s the central
thesis of what you’re looking at its very interesting certainly.

Interviewer: I think we looked at John Howard and I’ll bring this example up – the
children overboard affair. He made a nice statement about it sort of
saying he didn’t have information about it, whether he did or didn’t is
irrelevant but it seemed, so he put out a nice little sound bite to address
that question, I think a number of times and rephrased it. But as slick as
they tried to be his public opinion dove and it was pretty much from
what I could understand the public just simply didn’t believe him reading
between the lines and I think that’s what they do, it seems they’re
moving to this point where they’re listening to sound bites and thinking
“that doesn’t sound” you know they’re hiding something or they’re not
telling the truth or it just comes across that way. And I thought well
maybe the better statement to make was okay we made a mistake, this is
what we’re doing to fix it. Making a sound bite but accepting
responsibility, almost like being honest overtly to gain more credibility.
We’ll never know exactly how it might have panned out.
Participant: Let’s think about that particular… You and I are sitting with John Howard, he’s got to give a statement on the children overboard and you’re got a couple of choices don’t you? He can come clean and be honest and the risk would be that, and take the risk that the public will say “good on you, John, you’ve been honest”. Here’s the polls, you know he’d actually claw back what credibility he’s lost. ‘Cos at the point he made that statement it was pretty low anyway. So is he going to try to claw back, we made a mistake we didn’t, we’re wrong. Option B is to fudge it a bit and actually we won’t admit having known, I’ll still play honest John, but I’m not going to claw back credibility because I have in fact, got further to fall. And I s’pose Option C would be deny everything and just carry on as if nothing has happened. And they went for probably somewhere in the middle. In my mind if you’d said, “Guys, I really screwed up” you probably would’ve seen, as happened anyway massive headlines saying “John admits that he screwed up”. And in fact the polls would probably have shown his popularity decline even more, they probably did. It’s inevitable that in politics that you weather the storm of public opinion. You will be unpopular one day or popular the next and if you’re going to try and keep it at a relative plateau then you’re probably looking for the least risky. I think if I was counselling John Howard in a way, I probably would have said “actually John, go out there and admit some, a certain degree of understanding of what the situation was.

Interviewer: But I don’t think he did though did he? He was just sort of (inaudible)

Participant: No it was all, was it mishandled? I don’t know. I never understood it, because I arrived in February, and it was just about a time where it was all coming to a head. Did he or didn’t he know? And they had the
general, can’t remember his name, was the scapegoat, he was the honest
guy in front of the public and I didn’t understand the issue for the simple
reason that I couldn’t see why these, they thought the kids had fallen
overboard, the government had turned them away. Why did they turn
them away? And I didn’t realise it was turned around as you know,
they’re evil people and that’s why we won’t let them into the country. I
was actually totally confused, yeah right! But I think it is inevitable in
politics that you can afford a certain amount of unpopularity. That’s
inevitable. It really doesn’t matter as long as you’ve got in mind that if
there’s good news, keep it in your back pocket til nearer the election.
You’ll always see governments be unpopular, if you look at the four
years, you know there’ll always be much more unpopular for the first
couple of years and they can store it up for the second two. And I
suppose there is the grand plan so a scandal like children overboard
won’t be forgotten but in fact when it comes to the next election it won’t
be clear what the issue was. So there’s that evolution of the political, of
about four years, which is also quite important to consider as well.
Important in a political sense, you know.

Interviewer: I was looking at, a hospital came up with this notion of humanistic risk
management and he came up with this, I don’t know if you’ve heard
about it? Basically what they did was to reduce their liability for
lawsuits, negligence claims. They took a proactive approach, and if there
was something that went wrong, they’d sit down with their patient and
say “Look, something went wrong and this is what’s happened” and have
a compensation type format before it ends up in court. ‘Cos what they
found was that people weren’t suing because of what happened, but because of the cover up. Ordinarily they’d just close off and I guess just hold back information and keep them out of the loop as it were. And the surveys that they did, they were finding that something like 90% of people suing their caregivers were suing because of a cover up and they wanted to make someone pay, not because of the mistake itself. And so this particular hospital, were finding once they implemented this program their liabilities reduced significantly. And so I thought, well if we applied that to say the John Howard case, if he’d have come up and say “Look we’ve made a mistake, it wasn’t our fault but because there was a communication thing or whatever”, and this is how we’re rectifying it. I wondered if that then would create credibility and maybe he wouldn’t have lost so much in the polls.

Participant: I haven’t got a particular comment on that bit I mean the other very surprising thing to me about the scandal was how long it went on for. Again, but I’m bit of a broken record on this, but in the UK, an issue on the Monday is finished by the Friday. And that either means the politician resigns or he’d make an apology or the media moves on. The media’s just not interested in the scandal for longer than a week, maybe two weeks. That’s just the newspapers. The newspapers are more interested, there’s more going on. They’d find another scandal. You know, if headlines are “Children overboard” on the Monday, they’re not going to sell papers with the same headline on the Wednesday. Or even the one that we’ve got. So I suppose it is sales, but there’s also the way that the government will spin the stories they want to get out the way and move on. Things move much, much quicker. I mean Children overboard,
I remember there was a big deal when I arrived, when I went to
Canberra, ‘cos I spent a lot of time in Canberra, and I remember there
was a debate on the floor almost two months after, still about the same
thing. And I still don’t understand why. Maybe I’m getting used to the
cycle of politics is just slower, so the don’t see the same (inaudible).

Interviewer: It seemed to me that there were a group of people that well, the public as
well as politicians that wanted to get to the bottom it, so to speak, like
there were lies getting thrown around and they sort of wanted to get to
the bottom (inaudible).

Participant: Yeah, even in the UK, I would say, you know there’s a problem here,
there’s an inquest immediately you keep the media happy that
something’s ongoing. And then you’d just align the party line from then
onwards say we’ll wait til the inquest, we’ll wait to the inquest, we’ll
wait to the inquest. And none of these kinds of supplementary interviews
with other people on the scene and stuff before the inquest comes
through, which (inaudible) seems extraordinary.

Participant: Your point on risk management, even this morning we saw an
announcement that the crime levels had gone down with police actually
talking to people rather than the zero tolerance policy. Where the police
are actually engaging in dialogue with people who may perpetrate the
crime and they actually see crime rates go down. It’s the same principle,
which is that if you’re open and there is an exchange, then naturally
people are less inclined to think that your adversary is covering
something up. I don’t anything about this particular theory but if it is
humanistic it might well be something like, I will suspect more of you if
your not speaking to me.
Interviewer: The problem with that is we’re applying a one-on-one communication model to a mass communication format.

Participant: But then it’s not dissimilar. The principles I think perhaps are very much the same. You will respond to a caring message from your family in the same way that a lot of media decide to take a caring, I mean there’s basic principles in how you position messages, you take decision I will either help you understand message A or I will tell you message A is a decision a parent might in how they bring up a kid. Do I help them understand why I can’t let him stay out till midnight or do I tell him can’t go out until midnight. In terms of helping people to interpret what you’re telling them, that a very similar decision.

Interviewer: That is an interesting example, bringing in the notion of children and often the public are treated like children. If they are more educated more media savvy perhaps they do need to given more acknowledgment of that.

Participant: Yes, spin patronises. The assumption is that if George Bush doesn’t let his speeches go on more than five minutes because he doesn’t think the Americans can concentrate any longer, that seems to be patronising. I’m not desperately unintelligent, at least I hope not, but I still prefer to listen to a speech that is only five minutes. I’m happy to admit that my concentration, I like sound bite messages much more, still.

Interviewer: You might see it from an artistic point of view, perhaps.

Participant: Well I don’t know. I’ve seen, this probably is digressing but, advertising in this country, jingles, jingles are very, very obvious in advertising and I would have thought that that’s a very interesting litmus test for the way Australians obviously interpret product messages, as an example, that
jingles were done away with in the UK years ago. And they’re just not used. Because there were loads of studies to show they didn’t work. And then jingles in the US, I know when I lived there, there were loads, but I know that in Australia, jingles are still, catch phrases are still really big. Little jingles and catch phrases, and I’m assuming that, that has been researched, that there must be something that the Australians must respond still to short but all product oriented jingles. Because I’ve read research saying the opposite certainly, for a lot of other countries.

Participant: There are the trends in advertising here, which have been very interesting in my role, which are in the US, everyone knows, this is obvious, but in the US, you can still deliver a credible message which is caring and we might call it cheesy or over effusive. But in the US it’s still acceptable, whereas in Australia we’ll raise our eyebrows and you can’t run with that. But humour or even quite coarse, awkward humour people respond very well to, in Australia. And I mean in internal communications in the building anything, which is too sort of bold, and we will be a company as one to the next couple of years – no one will respond to that. But add a bit of humour, make it a bit tongue in cheek and people will respond very, very well to that, so in the Australian sensibility …

Interviewer: I think England’s similar… they have similar humour.

Participant: Yeah, it is. You’d probably even go, if you had, I mean I’ve probably drawn this spectrum out, with a couple of things I’ve said. But you do seem to have England at one end, the US in one and then Australia somewhere in the middle. So with this caring message, the message would have to be very, very credible, austere. And actually people respond to sensible messages, in England. The more sensible it is, the
better. Advertising is not a good example of that, because advertising
tends to be quite funny in England. I actually find advertising much more
risqué and amusing in Australia. It’s all most as pleasurable to watch
advertising in Australia, as it is to watch the programs. There was this, I
can’t even remember the, the name of the car. You know the bugger ad
with the car rolling down the hill. But not brilliant because I don’t
remember the car and I’ve seen it hundreds of times. It was just fantastic.
Even the tosser campaign, don’t be a tosser with your rubbish and I
remember there was “Eat beef you bastard” was an advertising campaign
in Australia a few years ago. “Eat beef you bastard” and that was from
the red meat association or something. That was great stuff.

Interviewer: That’s the other point I kind of, an observation I’ve made. Of course the
media construct this mainstream world, and in reality it’s something
quite different. We don’t talk like that in real life. So these kinds of ads
touch on the way we actually would respond with each other on a
personal level. It’s almost like deviant, but it sends a positive message.

Participant: By creating an alternative reality, almost. This is just me, with a PR hat.
I don’t know whether it’s such a bad thing. It sort of depends. I don’t see
that an advertiser says “My product is brilliant”. I don’t feel threatened
by that. A lot of people do, they feel somehow because they’re being
patronised, because they’re being delivered a simple, spun highly
polished message in an alternate reality, which is the advert, which
makes the women look sexy and guys look better, that, that’s threatening
and underhand and inappropriate. You know, a lot of the debate about
eating disorders or you know it’s somehow underhand or obesity, at the
moment with MacDonald’s being in appropriate advertising or
Alchopops. The packaging of the way some of the alcoholic drinks look, looks more like, I mean I think it just completely underestimates your customer. Which I think is just a bit of a shame. Have you read “No logo”?

Interviewer: Yeah, I have. It’s a good book. It’s extreme.

Participant: It is. I didn’t finish it. I read most it and then saw Naomi interviewed and decided it was quite irritating, attractive, but irritating. I just decided for whatever reason, I just wasn’t interested in her, her ideas, anyway.

Interviewer: Going back to the political examples, Prescott, when he punched that guy. You get sort of a collision of worlds. Because the media ordinarily would frame that really deviant and bad, this person is out of control. Yet the public loved it. ‘Cos if someone threw something at you, you’d probably punch them in the nose or whatever, supposedly.

Participant: That’s a very Australian response as well.

Interviewer: Yeah. And his popularity went through the roof. I believe, from what I heard, he was, Tony Blair was actually going to kick him out of cabinet, to some extent. But because of that incident, and the rise of popularity, of course he’s still there.

Participant: That’s the story in a nutshell.

Interviewer: So that deviance that creates a moral panic in the media, so to speak, and in the mainstream public. But to your actual target group its positive.

Participant: Well, I agree. It depends what mainstream is. ‘Cos we learn in communications there is no such thing as mainstream. That in fact, what you’re got are many, many target audiences. So, John Prescott probably alienated, lets call mainstream, over 50’s and generally the elderly population of the UK, conservative is a way you could define it.
Alienated a certain audience, but certainly, probably a lot of male voters, might have decided, a lot of Labour voters, well their target audience is slightly younger. A lot of Labour voters are quite bold personalities, by nature. It’s the history or tradition of the Labour Party. They may well have separated out those different audiences. But it is interesting the way they responded to that, you see it happen a lot more in Australian politics, that if an Australian politician might swear, for example on the Floor, or an Australian politician might say, “well I thing that guy over there”, just an interview on the street, that “such and such is a bastard”. And most Australians think, he’s just a bastard. Whereas in the UK that would probably over-alienate most of your target audience because its just not proper to swear, to swear about your opposition particularly. But you see Australians responding, yeah, he’s a dickhead. And fair play, and these kind of basic principles of the Aussie sentiment.

Interviewer: We’re talking as if Prescott deliberately did that.

Participant: No, No, he, I never thought that he did. I wondered at the time. There were a few of us at the time, presumably when we saw the aftermath and what it did for Prescott. And I can even remember talking to Joe about it and thinking was it deliberate. But I think it is probably overestimating the spin machine in the UK government. I think to stage a punch would have been an enormous risk particularly at that time. Enough that it wouldn’t have been worth taking. I couldn’t see myself counselling to do that. I mean, despite how high a risk, you see very, you see I just don’t know enough about stunts and things, but it’s not very stunt oriented in the UK. I don’t see as many stunts as that.

Interviewer: And that’s a media event isn’t it?
Participant: Yeah, but very, very high risk.

Interviewer: It may even have been that he was sort of backed into a corner. He knew he was going to get axed. And he maybe had in his mind, he’d have to pull something out of the bag, this sort of opportunity rose and he took advantage, if you know what I mean. So it was conscious, but not strategic.

Participant: That’s interesting. Maybe you’d been so well ….

[END OF TAPE]

Participant: What are the, what are your personality traits, where you’re aggressive, you know you’re alienating your vote, your electorate, because you’re too aggressive. You know you’re too, too much, the, you know the Labour Politician. Let’s try and go for the much more of a caring image. It might have been a much lower risk to have him help an old lady across the road, or if you’re going to do a stunt, have him being you know being A & E or something, a helper, a patient. Actually there could have been a lot easier ways of trying to transform his image, if that’s what, but I never got, I mean people would, commentators would often say that John Prescott was having none of the spin. He never wanted to be spun.

Interviewer: Right

Participant: You know that he was one of the few politicians who would wear what he wanted to wear, do what he wanted to do, say what he wanted to say. And that was perhaps in the end his greatest virtue.

Interviewer: Although a planned stunt like helping an old lady cross the road, is an obvious stunt to the public, you might…

Participant: Yeah, yeah,
Interviewer: So you’d lose that authenticity, wouldn’t it come back to this notion of “Is this for real”? Because personally I think, the public are used to stunts, they know that they’re just constructed; they exist as a tool to communicate a message. And I think the public for the most part, probably, see it in that light. But if there’s an uncontrolled situation then it has, I mean I’m not saying that Prescott deliberately did it, but those types of things seem to carry more credibility…

Participant: That’s a really good observation. And you could even look at Hugh Grant and Divine Brown because that did wonders for his popularity. He went on to Letterman and apologised. You actually see in corporate terms, I mean I’ve seen a lot data that show that companies that pull through a difficult crisis do better or can do better in the short term. Governments that go through crises do better. I suppose the US government would be a good example when they get drilled (inaudible) they call wars to, keep their polls high. But the same is true in the corporate game as well. I can’t think of any particular corporate examples where crises may have been deliberately started because you have an extra accountability to your shareholders, in a way that you don’t have accountability perhaps to your electorate.

Interviewer: What about Calvin Kline, Benetton? I mean, they you could say that they pulled stunts in the way that their advertising was considered deviant. And then it became an issue.

Participant: It happens often. I don’t know because these might have been Australian advertising campaigns I’m not sure.

Interviewer: No, American

Participant: You mean the guys in shorts?
Interviewer: Yeah, I don’t know if you remember it?

Participant: No I don’t, but I mean there’s controversy about advertising usually gives you better PR as a result. I mean there was even a *Secret Life of Us* episode, I don’t know if you saw it, a little while ago where there were some very provocative ads, you know of a woman being a coffee table with a guy putting his feet up on, and it was I think a timely ad because there was debate also, a timely episode, because there was debate at the time about a series of ads in I think it was Melbourne where there’d been a huge uproar and in fact it did wonders.

Interviewer: Windsor Smith.

Participant: Windsor Smith that’s it. There you get another example where in fact, I don’t know what their sales looked like, but I would be very surprised if they haven’t gone up.

Interviewer: Yeah, well you’d certainly get coverage...

Participant: But your target, I mean this is your argument your target audience is quite a rebellious population, and they appreciate rebellion and you know. I mean I s’pose other areas would be in pop music, because you know has tended to pander to that, you know the rebellion, youth certainly. That’s only staged or stunts, so trashing hotel rooms would be any number of (inaudible) examples, how you’re in fact getting closer to your target audience, kids would love to be able to do that. I’m trying to think of other examples where that same kind of, that same approach is taken in politics anyway. I mean, I suppose it happens in the way politicians dress, the speech that politicians use, to different audiences. I mean we do it in corporate terms all the time. If you’re speaking to
different doctors, or different physicians they respond to different types of language.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: You know NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) is obviously written, a lot of those same principles run through NLP, then even in this conversation, I might identify certain things in the way you behave which would help me empathise with you and therefore you would listen a lot more to what I’m saying. Have done a lot of work in NLP (inaudible)

Interviewer: Okay, yeah.

Participant: Because Jo and I, we were really interested in this last year. ‘Cos my boss was an instructor in NLP, and I became very paranoid about the way she behaved around me, because the basic principles are that if I can identify elements in your behaviour and your language and adopt them myself, then in fact you’ll be more receptive to what I’m saying. I mean that you know, can help you to persuade, can help you to convince people of your argument, can help you to win friends, and this was obviously popular writing you know in sort of in the 70’s. A lot of people do it very instinctively and that was the basic premise of NLP. Lets look at people who do it instinctively and try and find some kind of you know correlation between them and someone else who does it very well and try and pull together a set of rules. But the same principles that exist in NLP, we use in written communication, or email. Or, I certainly use different types of email styles to people in this building that I know respond better to either short emails styles or more flamboyant language. I won’t sign and finish an email with ‘Best Regards’ or ‘best wishes’ or
“regards” or “see you later”. I mean everyone will tailor that kind of finish depending on the type of person they’re writing to is. So you actually find that there are elements in that kind of very personal, face-to-face or email communication which is very, very true just for the general population as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, no you’re right.

Participant: NLP specialists are gold dust, if you can see them in advertising at the moment and copywriters with NLP experience that can find language and metaphors in copy and in the kind of imagery used in advertising is very, very, popular in trying to help people respond to marketing activities.

Interviewer: Yeah, interesting. I guess it’s useful for branding isn’t it?

Participant: Yeah, I think so. Having said all that, I mean I’m not sure that a lot of the pharmaceutical industry, to speak more empirically is very strong, very good at branding. I think it has its identity crisis. Because we’re not actually asking the people who use our medicine to pay for them, or decide to use them. ‘Cos there’s disconnect as to who is your end user. We’re perhaps a very good example of where third parties are used a lot to add credibility to our messages to all of our customers, whether its doctors or whether its consumers.

Interviewer: Do you do brand recall type studies?

Participant: In what sense? How do you mean?

Interviewer: Going to the public and asking them, about this drug and from what company and so on?

Participant: Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: And you (inaudible) as a measurement of …
Participant: We probably do that more with doctors, than we would do with consumers. There a probably a few key examples of products, that stand out as having high consumer recalls, so for example, Prozac, Viagra, in the US, Lipator. These are the big, big, big drugs. Even (inaudible) probably reaching that status. Very few prescription medicines have quite that status that Xenical does. But within doctor segments, I mean we make a lot of specialised hospital medicines, and we’ll do recall studies within doctors certainly, to get an idea of what they remember. But then I suppose by their profession we’re dealing with a very different kind of, you know our messages tend to be much more rational than emotional. So in fact, we tend as an industry, rightly or wrongly, I don’t know, I don’t specialise in the branding of pharma products. Rightly or wrongly we go in with a very rational ‘this drug is better because of data X, Y and Z’, very, very rational arguments and numbers and response rates in patients and we tend not to go to doctors with a ‘use Zenical because its warm and friendly and caring’. We do that with some products, but generally speaking, particularly in specialist areas of medicine we recognise the audience is quite academic, and very proud of their own credibility, and so we will go to them with a much more rational method. Now in the US it’s changing a lot. You know you’ve seen brand loyalty among prescribers where there wasn’t any before, because they think of a particular anti-hypertensive as being a really solid reliable drug and those kind of messages are coming out more, whereas traditionally your, if you, you would never persuade you to. But if you look at the pharmaceutical sector you look to branding you look to products you would end up in fact, ‘cos there’s a lot of studies into it,
with speed, efficacy, sometimes safety, as being, you know the key messages in helping someone to prescribe your product. The much more abstract product selling practice like reliability, strength or caring or these things not traditional ways of trying to communicate particular products within the pharmaceutical industry.

Interviewer: I guess it comes back to doctors (inaudible)…

Participant: Buying cookies. They’re not buying a car. You know they’re prescribing a medicine that generally will, and this is very specialist. I mean just I don’t enough about what we call primary care, like GP’s. GP’s, probably, because they prescribe so much, and a lot of medicines, I wouldn’t be surprised if the answer was different for GP’s. You could probably build up a lot of loyalty for brands, but I don’t know.

Interviewer: That’s if they trust a particular company, to put out a good product, they might not look too hard about a particular drug, “Well this company’s very trustworthy and ethical, they …”

Participant: That’s an interesting point you raise. And I’m sorry but this is going to raise specific to the pharma industry, but very few pharmaceutical companies have taken the decision, there’s a few actually, I shouldn’t talk specifics, but there are a few companies that have adopted a you know, “we will market our brand and use it as an umbrella”, you can actually draw the pyramids, its basically umbrella branding. You try and find if you’ve got a portfolio of 20 medicines, you take elements of all those 20, which reflect the corporate brand. So if you’re prescribing a medicine from Company A, you know that it’s made by Company A, and that’s why you might be driven to prescribe them. That’s not very common. Certainly a lot of specialist companies try and put a lot of the
investment into individual product brands and not so much into the corporate brand. Because they see doctors you know remember, probably recall rates a higher for particular brands or the medicines themselves and there’s also the risk assessment which is, as the industry’s both volatile and products can be misused, can be withdrawn, might fall off patent. Do you want to invest in your whole corporate brand in a corporate product? When you find in the automobile industry, Toyota’s a good example of a company that invests a lot in making sure each of its individual models reflects the corporate motto as a brand. You see probably Mitsubishi I don’t know, as well as a brand, Mitsubishi do that to some extent as well, you see it as a package. With car manufacturers, you now people make decisions on, not the model, on probably the brand, you know? The Mitsubishi or the Ford or BMW. So this is a fairly good example of the umbrella model. And you then get examples of like Proctor and Gamble, obviously, you know where they separate, invest a lot more in individual brands. I heard recently that P&G had taken a strategic (inaudible) investment decision to reverse that. They’ve gone from this individual investment in brands to actually realising that people do know Proctor and Gamble and that there is some heritage.

Interviewer: There probably would be.

Participant: I suppose the other thing about the pharma industry is that we merge, we merge all the time, so you get, you know a brand, a corporate brand today that might disappear in a couple of weeks so how much do you want to invest in a brand that might disappear? Whereas the medicine brands the product brands remain…
Interviewer: Then you run the risk that one particular drug turns out badly or whatever could damage the corporate brand image that you’ve invested so much in.

Participant: Yeah, yeah. Exactly, yeah, But the mergers are inevitable in the industry so you just see a lot of corporate brands. I mean, yeah.

Interviewer: But if Proctor and Gamble merge with another company, I couldn’t see them, the Proctor and Gambol name would certainly stand I would have thought.

Participant: I mean they tend to be; well P&G’s a family of companies anyway. So it tends by its very nature to be a company that acquires rather than merges. P&G, ICI (inaudible). Anyway did you want to talk more about politics?

Interviewer: No, we’ve covered some good ground actually.

Participant: Its interesting how communications as a profession is evolving and communications or public relations it seems to be a qualification at a lot of universities here, not in England.

Interviewer: Did you do management?

Participant: No I did politics, just politics at university, so, I learnt my trade if you can call it that in agencies. I learnt it in a company. You find a lot of graduates in Australia particularly in (confidential) as an example are very, very well qualified people who understand this very basic processes, getting the message to the target audience, and changing the way they behave, to deliver on a particular business result, if you like.

Interviewer: Its becoming more science oriented, I guess it a mix of science and art and…
Participant: I mean you can, its interesting, certainly some companies, some agencies will over intellectualise, a very instinctive process. And you actually see I think in politics a least a much more instinctive, fluid, I think the spin doctor that stands next to John Howard, doesn’t make the academic assessment every time he unbuttons his tie. You know, I think its much more instinctive you know the way politicians manage their image, is probably not based on lots of market research, they do polls and stuff, but generally speaking, its not quite as academic as an agency might be. I just don’t know enough about other sectors, you know in pharmaceuticals we’re still, in terms of people within our industry in house in companies, like myself there a very few of us. There’s about 20 people 25 people with real communications expertise in a very large sector, as is the industry in Australia. Whereas in telecommunications there’s a lot of PR people in telecommunications in other industries. I know the agency sector is very, very small as well, and nothing like… And then you get other trends as well, there are nowhere near as many trade publications in Australia as there are in the UK, or even in the US. There are nowhere near as many channels in Australia as there are in the US. The media is still relatively undeveloped; I don’t mean to sound patronising. When I first arrived in Australia, I made very arrogant assumptions about they way the media behaved, “Oh God these Australians are so…” Journalists, ‘cos there was some study done, incredible study done, 98% of the media is seeded by press releases, column inches you know in national newspapers, which shows that the media are spoon fed. You know I thought this is just hilarious, what an opportunity for someone like me (inaudible). But I don’t think at the
moment, I’m still undecided, I’m constantly impressed by how astute journalists are, and how well reported a lot of politics is, how very clear and concise a lot of the language is, but there are some exceptions obviously. It’s been a really great place to learn, I can tell you, and go on to the US next.

Interviewer: So when you’re targeting media, you’re obviously targeting journals as well.

Participant: Not so much, no. Journals, certainly we target journals with academic papers, if we do a study into medicine well we try and get the study, but that would be for the doctors in my building, to liaise with a journal. My interest is with a variety of trade media in this country, that report on medicines for the benefit of the doctors’ readership, which is largely physicians.

Interviewer: Right.

Participant: Or I will work with the wider, the general consumer media as well.

(Inaudible) but then my target audience extends more and more also to patient groups, to politicians, to opinion leaders, and core members on different areas of science. So I mean it wouldn’t even have to be …

Interviewer: Do you mean media personalities who are…

Participant: Yeah, yeah, that would be a good example. We talk a lot in medicine about, because of the nature of doctor’s that they, in order to succeed and improve, their career path means they’re always looking for more knowledge. Not always true of every professional. But what that means is that you have this cascade, which as if you can get the three people who are leading oncologists, for example, in Australia, to agree that your medicine is useful, then it is more than likely that other oncologists in
Australia will also follow best practice that those academics are using. And you see, for us, that’s often an opportunity, because if we can recognise the sphere of influence for a physician, which is his peers, I mean you know, physicians are often looking to get the best possible newest information and to see what the people in their area are doing, you know that works quite well.

Interviewer: You get third party endorsement that’s got high credibility and you get a strong message.

Participant: Very important, very important. There is a lot of debate and commentary in the media at the moment about whether the pharmaceutical industry is behaving appropriately in that third party endorsement. I think they are. And I strongly believe that that is underestimating our customers. If we think that doctors who are exceedingly well-trained, intelligent people are somehow being persuaded inappropriately by an industry that all we really do is make our products (inaudible) I think that’s naive. I mean there is no doubt that we are aggressive with our marketing, we are aggressive with our sales techniques as any capitalist organization has to be, but the idea that we, you know are being underhanded with our solutions is probably misguided.

Interviewer: Manipulating doctors and so on.

Participant: I mean I am willing to be persuaded on that. But at the moment I really do feel, and even with these leading oncologists. I mean lets take for example we go out for dinner with a leading oncologist. The idea that that dinner might persuade a leading oncologist to use our medicine over another, I think is very, you know disappointing, because I just don’t think it gives enough credit to the leading oncologist.
Interviewer: But you wouldn’t meet personally with a leading oncologist would you?

Participant: Oh absolutely, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh you do. So you’ve got a one-on-one type role as well.

Participant: Yeah I’ll generally leave that to a lot of our product managers. Other managers will build up relationships with oncologists in Australia, so, and I tend to, if there is an event or symposium in a particular area of medicine I’ll go along and I’ll meet them as well. Interaction between prescribers and the company is fine.

Interviewer: So you’ll look them in the eye and make sure…

Participant: Yeah, we hold events where we will explain the newest information about our medicine to doctors that want to come along. And doctors come along and we’ll spend however many hours going over new data and explaining how the medicine works and then okay there’ll be a dinner, there’ll be a dinner at the end of it as there would be for anything. But if that dinner is somehow meant to be a deal, its just trying to make the seminar attractive for them to come along. Generally they’re intelligent guys they’re coming to learn about the medicine and I just, you know I think it really, and even what surprises me are doctors that might complain about the way we behave, when in fact, I think a lot of doctors are really grateful for the new information and the way we help them to get it.

Interviewer: It certainly helps their job in a way, than to do that sort of work themselves, find out what’s best, that sort of thing, for their practice.

Participant: I mean if the whole sector are of inerest to you in future I think my own view sort of academic view is that there are moral and ethical dimensions to our industry that don’t exist with a lot of other industries. So the way
that Coca Cola promotes its product is only recently, or MacDonald’s promotes, its only recently becoming an ethical issue, because of obesity. But within the healthcare, people feel entitled to their health; they feel a moral entitlement to medicine. And that if we as a manufacturer of medicines are not being honest in the way we make it available and particularly in Australia we’re not making it available for free then that’s unethical. They have these very curious dimensions which mean people have very different interests in the way we work. Different interests in how we price our medicines, which doesn’t exist with Coke. People aren’t interested, as interested in the profit margin of a can of Coke, as being an unethical thing to do. But within medicine I mean we charge $50,000 for one of our medicines and we do that because it costs us 500 up to five hundred million dollars to make. I mean the equation is there; we have to get our money back. And yet because of these moral dimensions it seems that we are, that it’s inappropriate for us to charge what we do.

Interviewer: It’s a social responsibility associated with the product.

Participant: It’s the whole, and I’ve tried not to bore you with it too much, but the whole area of corporate responsibility within the pharmaceutical sector, within other sectors interests me a lot. I’m very interested in CSR, but within the pharmaceutical sector its extremely important to it. Because we are by our very nature making medicines that make people better so we should be being socially responsible in the product we’re making. But yet somehow there is still that perception because of these moral dimensions that, and the prices that we charge for our medicines that
we’re not being socially responsible. So you know it’s just kind of curious.

Interviewer: I guess pharmaceutical companies have come under attack in recent years, haven’t they in terms of how profits are looked at?

Participant: It’s because we make very, very high profits. You actually have an industry that has low bulk and high profit and so the figures always look on paper absolutely enormous. And particularly some of the largest companies in the world are pharmaceutical companies. But the reason I s’pose for the (inaudible) and the profit margins so high is that we put more back into the company, we put 18% of our profit back into research and development of our product, which you can’t say for any other sector. I mean automobiles are way down, nowhere near 18% of their profits go straight back into R&D. And so 18% stands out, but that’s the second table, which shows you how much profit we actually make at the end of the day.

[End of Interview]
Journalist Q1. Mr Miller, why give up a successfully business as an accountant to jump into the furnace that is state politics? And why as an independent?

Well, I think we are seeing more and more a state government, and I mean this from both sides of politics, that is not representing the average member of the community. Politicians are meant to be our representatives but when they are a member of a political party then the party interests tend to come first and the interests of the community come second, unless there is some political gain to be had from either of the parties. And that is where I think I can fill a gap and a need. By being an independent, I think I can be the voice in parliament that keeps both sides of politics in check. As an independent my focus can be more on the needs of the community – not only in my electorate but across the whole state. I think the average person needs a voice.

Journalist Q2. Mr Miller how as an independent do you expect to fulfil these goals?

I'm an experienced member of the community and that is who I am representing. I have experience in encountering the problems bad government and bad decisions have on ordinary people. And I think the advantage of having an independent sitting in parliament is that that person can look out for community interests first and foremost. But when the average person's avenue to parliament is a member of Labor or Liberal or National parties then there is another layer they have to go through before their voice is heard and that is the party's interests. And the main objective of a political party is to stay in government, so if you have a question or need or requirement that does not meet that party objective or does not help get on the front page of the newspaper with a neatly packaged headline then chances are that the issue – which could be affecting a significant portion of the community – will get ignored. And that is where I see my job as being: listening to and assessing the needs of the community – not for political gain, because I am not here as a career politician looking to satisfy some vain need, but because I, like a lot of other people am a frustrated member of the community.

Journalist Q3. You have been described as an economic rationalist – how are you going to apply that in a practical sense?

I won't shy away from the fact that I have a strong background in accounting and I have a strong understanding of how a state economy is run, as well what kind of resources are required to make it run. But I have a conscience – a community-minded conscience – and that will be where I position myself on any economic issues affecting the state. If I feel the government is taking an avenue that, while having fiscal benefits, is not in the social interests of the community then I will speak out against that and demand that the government of the day be called to answer. And I think I would start by calling payroll tax into review. Payroll tax has got out of control as far as I'm concerned and it is putting unnecessary pressure on small and
medium-sized business. And I can tell you that from experience because I deal first hand with these businesses. And there are some businesses that are struggling to keep their head above water – simply because of the pressure placed on them while government reaps the benefits of a tax that is questionably applied.

**Journalist Q4.** It sounds like typically political rhetoric to say you want to cut taxes, but isn’t that a bit unrealistic?

On the contrary, I think I am being realistic. Just because it is payroll tax and a big ticket item for the government, doesn’t mean that it can’t called into to review to ensure that it is applied responsibly. Western Australia has a reputation for being the most over-tariffed state in Australia and the average member of the community may not realise that, yet there are profoundly affected by it. Stamp duty is out of control here and I can't help but ask why. The application of government fees also needs to be looked at. If government charges a fee then they should provide a service in return. And that is not the case at the moment. These are examples of where I think I can make a difference as an independent and bring these things to the attention of the community.

**Journalist Q5.** How do you propose the government pay for these tax cuts without throwing the state finances into turmoil?

Well that’s something that needs to be looks at; obviously, it needs to be done in stages. But what we need to understand is that these government taxes, such payroll tax, are stuffing up businesses that are driving the economy and...

**Journalist Q6.** (Journalist interrupts)...but...but Laurie that’s all well and good but how do you propose it is going to be paid for?

Well, look these small to medium businesses are creating most of the employment in this state and generate most the wealth and we need to give them a fair go. What we have to remember is that the state government gets all the GST revenue – so by reducing payroll tax - it will virtually pay for itself, through the growth in the economy.

**Journalist Q7.** You have suggested there needs to be changes to the way schools are funded – are you opposed to government funding private schools?

Education is an important issue for me and I think the way schools are funded and managed is an ongoing issue for state governments. Private and independent schools are worthy of receiving funding but their argument for the way funding should be allocated is that it should be student-based and not schools-based. I agree with that but with one condition. If they want student-based funding then they should not be allowed to discriminate based on religion.

**Journalist Q8.** Are you saying you would like to see private schools forced to change core beliefs?

Of course not, what I’m suggesting is that, religion can form the foundation principles of the schools but it should not be the determining factor in terms of exclusivity. State
schools deserve as many benefits from the government as possible to compensate for their relative disadvantage, but if private and independent schools want government funding then they need to allow access for all comers.

**Journalist Q9. Are you suggesting that funding should be cut to schools that do not comply?**

Well I think it would be on a case-by-case basis but Yes; I think that if private and independent schools want public money then they should be open to all students.

**Journalist Q10. Mr Miller the AMA have come out and said that the structural changes you are proposing to the health system are dangerous?**

I don’t think it is accurate to say that I want to change the structure of the medical system. I want to see a shift in the primary values of medicine. As far as I can tell it is the doctors that have all power. The system is structured for their needs and their efficiencies but this seems largely to the detriment of the patient. Whereas I see the patient being the most important element in the relationship. As far as I am concerned it is the patient's needs that are undervalued. The emphasis needs to placed on what suits the patient and not necessarily always what suits doctors and the AMA. Patients don't have a lobby group like the AMA behind them and so it is hard for their needs to be acted upon. And that is where I believe government should come in. If the balance can be shifted, even just slightly, in favour of the patient then I think we will see a better health system. And one way to do that is to up-skill some of our high experienced nurses – allow nurses to fulfil some of the rudimentary functions that doctors now perform.

**Journalist Q11. Are you suggesting nurses should do the work of doctors?**

Well, I am talking about allowing nurses to progress from nurse to nurse practitioner. I also believe that nurses are among the most undervalued and neglected people in the health system – anyone who has been to hospital can't help but agree with that – and by giving them more responsibility – and more money I might add – it will help take the load from doctors. And it will widen the base available to satisfy the needs of the patient and ideally do it in a more efficient and economic manner. The patient needs to be at the centre of the health loop.

**Journalist Q12. The AMA has said this will put patients directly at risk and will create a second-class health system.**

Well you know that’s the AMA and their job is to get the best deal for their doctors.

But really, how can patients be put in any greater risk than not being able to receive treatment. The up-skilling of these nurses would clearly widen the medical base available to hospitals to satisfy the needs of patients. Some of these nurses that I am talking about, have got as much or in some cases more education and training that doctors! These nurses could very easily gain the training necessary to become nurse
practitioners so they can fulfil some of the rudimentary functions that doctor’s now perform.

Okay, thanks for your time (Laurie ends interview and walks towards parliament).
Journalist Q1. Mr Miller, why give up a successfully business as an accountant to jump into the furnace that is state politics? And why as an independent?

In some ways you could say it is a matter of answering a calling, but I don’t mean from a selfish point view to claim some sort of badge of honour. I mean I am answering a call – a need, within our community for government and our politicians, to be called to order, to be kept in check. Because as an ordinary citizen, as an ordinary member of the public. I look at the sitting members of parliament and I can’t help but ask who is representing me? Who is representing the interests of the ordinary bloke and the ordinary woman? Who stands for the interests of the ordinary member of the community?

Journalist Q2. Mr Miller how as an independent do you expect to fulfil these goals?

Well, the question is who is standing for the ordinary members of the community? Who understands their interests? Well, I do! And that’s where my experience counts. And as far as I am concerned that is what is really important.

If your local member is also a member of the Labor, Liberal, or National party, then the interests of the party will come first. And your need or your problem is only going to be addressed if it helps that party win or stay in government, because that is, after all, all that politicians are interested in, winning or sitting in office. And who stands for the rights and needs of ordinary members of the community? No-one. And that's where I see my place as being. I will be the voice of the ordinary citizen in state parliament. Because one thing you know for sure about me is that I'm not a career politician. I'm not trying to work my way up the ladder. I’m here to stand for the ordinary interests and needs of our community and our state.

Journalist Q3. You have been described as an economic rationalist – how are you going to apply that in a practical sense?

I’m not afraid to call myself an economic rationalist but I am an economic rationalist with a conscience. And I think that needs to be underlined. Of course, I believe I have something to contribute to the way the state's economy is run. But it is not from the point of view of the government – it is from the point of view of the ordinary citizen. As an accountant, I deal a lot with small and medium business and I get to see first hand the effect government has on the backbone of our community. And the first thing I would call into order is the manner, structure and application of payroll tax. "Never before have so many businesses been taken for so much and left with so little."

Journalist Q4. It sounds like typically political rhetoric to say you want to cut taxes, but isn’t that a bit unrealistic?

Let me say this, I’m here to stand for the interests of ordinary members of the community. The government knows that payroll tax and stamp duty puts a lot of
pressure on business where it doesn’t need to. And both sides of parliament cough and move on when the subject comes up because they know it is money for jam.

The government seems to be acting like Robin Hood’s evil twin – they steel money from the people who can least afford it and keep it for themselves.

Quite frankly, I don't want to see business taken to the brink by an unfair system. I don't want to see businesses bankrupted by a bankroll for the premier.

Journalist Q5. How do you propose the government pay for these tax cuts without throwing the state finances into turmoil?

From my point of view, I do not see why these small to medium size businesses should be taken to the brink by an unfair system. Particularly, when these businesses are the creating most of the employment and generating wealth in our community – these businesses…

Journalist Q6. (Journalist interrupts)...but...but Laurie that’s all well and good but how (Laurie interjects journalist) do you propose it is going to be paid for?…

(Laurie interjects journalist)...please just let me finish...these businesses are the backbone of our community and they are being bankrupted by a bankroll for the premier. How can that possibly be good for the state’s economy given that the state receives all the GST revenue? This tax cut will pay for itself!

Journalist Q7. You have suggested there needs to be changes to the way schools are funded – are you opposed to government funding private schools?

Well, I am all for the private and independent school’s ideal for government assistance – that is don’t fund the schools, fund the child! However, there is one big 'but' that I would like to see applied to that from the government's point of view. If private and independent schools want equality in funding then there should be equality in access. Schools should not be able to discriminate on the basis of religious belief.

Journalist Q8. Are you saying you would like to see private schools forced to change core beliefs?

By all means, schools can build their school ethics on religious principles but that should not affect the basis of admittance. Equality in access for equality in funding. And if those schools aren’t willing to meet the criteria then state schools should continue to be compensated for their relative disadvantage.

Journalist Q9. Are you suggesting that funding should be cut to schools that do not comply?

Well look, what I am simply saying is that if there is equality in funding for private and independent schools then these schools should provide equality in access. "Our progress as a state can be no swifter than our progress in education."
Journalist Q10. Mr Miller the AMA have come out and said that the structural changes you are proposing to the health system are dangerous?

I don’t want to change structure of the business of medicine – and that's what it is, a business. I want to change the focus. Who has the need in doctor-patient scenario? It's not the doctor. It is not the doctor's need that needs to be fulfilled – yet that is how our system is structured. It is the patient who has the need and so the patient is open to being held to ransom by the doctor, both in terms of time and money. And our system facilitates that. And that's why we need to change the focus on health. That is why we need a patient-centred health system. The patients don’t have a large and iron-fisted body looking after their needs. They don’t have a powerful lobby group embedded in each and every major party. That is why we need to shift the balance and change the focus of the health system. And the way to do that is to reward the people who are effectively holding the health system together – nurses. Let's upskill our nurses and take the load off doctors – and take the load off the wallets and the waiting time of patients.

Journalist Q11. Are you suggesting nurses should do the work of doctors?

I am an advocate for nurse practitioners. Why not give the ability to nurses – skilled and experienced medical people – to perform those functions that are effectively rudimentary for doctors? As far as I can see, everyone is a winner in that scenario and it helps shift the focus of the system back onto the patients. Put a level of medical people between doctors and current abilities of nurses. It will take the load off doctors, it will prevent nurses being placed in compromising positions as far as administering drugs and the like is concerned.

Journalist Q12. The AMA has said this will put patients directly at risk…(Laurie interrupts: that is absolute rubbish)…and will create a second-class health system.

The AMA is saying that because they’ve got the vested interest of rich doctors to protect. Important changes have always encountered vehement opposition from powerful establishments!

What I am talking about is up-skilling our nurses and taking the load off doctors as well as taking the load of the wallets and waiting times of patients.

If you wanted to get your car repainted would you take it to a grand artistic master or an experienced auto spray painter. Sure they can both do the job but the grand master is going to charge you a fortune and take a lot longer. That’s what we are talking about here; taking the load of the wallets and waiting time of patients. What we need to do is to shift the focus of the system back onto the patient.

Thank you (Laurie ends interview and walks towards parliament).
APPENDIX D

POLITICAL ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDY TWO

PLEASE CIRCLE OR TICK YOUR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:
(You can reply “don’t know”)

1. Are you eligible to vote in Australian Government elections? 
   Yes No
   (ie. Australian citizen or permanent resident and enrolled?)

2. Did you vote in the 2001 State election? 
   Yes No

3. Did you vote in the recent Federal elections? 
   Yes No

4. Would you describe yourself as a swinging voter (ie. You do not always vote for the same political party or candidate) 
   Yes No

5. Are you a member of a political party? 
   Yes No
   If yes, which one? ……………………………………………………………………………

6. For which political party’s candidate do you usually vote in the Federal House of Representatives (Lower House, not Senate)?
   [ ] No usual party
   [ ] Australian Labor Party
   [ ] Liberal Party of Australia
   [ ] National Party of Australia
   [ ] Australian Democrats
   [ ] Australian Greens
   [ ] One Nation
   [ ] Independent
   [ ] Informal vote
   [ ] Other ……………………………………………………………………………

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PLEASE INDICATE THE STRENGTH OF YOUR AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I strongly identify with my preferred party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My knowledge of my preferred party’s policies is strong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I agree with my preferred political party’s policies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am interested in politics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have no preferred political party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have a preferred political party but have voted for another party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Which party did you vote for in the recent Federal elections? ..............

For 13: .................................................................

14. Was this the party you voted for at the last Federal election (2001)? Yes No

If not, which party did you vote for? ..............................................
APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS FOR STUDY TWO

15. What gender are you?
   [ ] Female
   [ ] Male

16. What is your age group?
   [ ] 17-25 years
   [ ] 26-30 years
   [ ] 31-40 years
   [ ] 41-50 years
   [ ] 51-60 years
   [ ] 61-70 years
   [ ] more than 71 years

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   [ ] University Postgraduate
   [ ] University Undergraduate
   [ ] TAFE of Trade Certificate or Diploma
   [ ] Completed high school
   [ ] Some high school
   [ ] Completed primary school
   [ ] Some primary school
   [ ] Never attended school

18. Which of the following best describes your current occupation?
   [ ] Manager or Administration
   [ ] Self employed
   [ ] Tradesperson
   [ ] Professional or Executive
   [ ] Salesperson/personal services
   [ ] Labour or related worker
   [ ] Home duties
   [ ] Plant machine operator/driver
   [ ] Student
   [ ] Retired/superannuant
   [ ] Unable to work
   [ ] Other (please specify)________________

19. Which best describes your marital status?
   [ ] Never married
   [ ] Married/defacto
   [ ] Separated/Divorced
   [ ] Widowed

20. Which best describes the income category for you and your partner?
   [ ] Less than $20,000
   [ ] $20,000 - $40,000
   [ ] $20,000 - $60,000
   [ ] $20,000 - $80,000
   [ ] $20,000 plus

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.
YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.
APPENDIX F

Information Provision for Study Two

I am a PhD Candidate from Murdoch University investigating the way people respond to political communications. I am particularly interested in the way audiences perceive specific political messages and media interviews.

You can assist with this research by consenting to view three political messages and completing a questionnaire about your responses to these messages. You will also be asked to use a hand-held dial to indicate your response to the messages as you watch them. It is anticipated that this feedback session will take approximately 1 hour.

All information given during the study is confidential, and no names or other information that might identify you will be used in any report or publication arising from this research unless express permission is given. Feedback on the study will be provided to any participant who requests it.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can also decide to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any data already collected from you will be destroyed or returned to you, depending upon your wishes, and will not be included in the study. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor Iain Walker, or myself on 9360 2186. Alternatively, you can contact the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.

Thank you,

Dale Hynd
CONSENT FORM

I, ________________________, (the participant) have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity; however, I know that I may change my mind at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for these test sessions to be audiotaped/videotaped (if applicable).

I agree that research gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information, which might identify me, is not used or is only used if express permission is given.

Participant:

Date:

Investigator’s Name: Dale Hynd

Investigator’s Signature:
Recruitment Advertisement for Study Three

murdochuniversity

Have your say!
A community survey

Participants (aged 18 years and over) required for research project exploring audience responses to political messages. Participation requires your attendance at a one-hour session once a week for 3 weeks.
You will be asked to view political messages while rating them using the ‘worm’ (audience rating device).
Participation is voluntary, however at the end of the 3 weeks participants will receive $50 towards travel expenses.
60 participants will be selected from those who apply.

To register your interest please go to:

www.itri.tv/registration

Registered Provider Code - 00125J

www.murdoch.edu.au
I am a PhD Candidate from Murdoch University investigating audience responses to political messages.

You can assist with this research by providing information about yourself.

This information will be used to recruit a representative sample of 60 people from the Western Australian community.

Those people selected will be asked to form a panel to provide feedback about current community issues surrounding the State election.

Participation requires your attendance at a one-hour session once a week for 5 weeks. You will be asked to view political messages while rating them using the ‘worm’ (audience rating device).

Participation is voluntary, however at the end of the 5 weeks you will receive $50 towards travel expenses.

All information given during the study is confidential, and no names or other information that might identify you will be used in any report or publication arising from this research unless express permission is given. Feedback on the completed study will be provided to any participant who requests it.

You can also decide to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any data already collected from you will be destroyed or returned to you, depending upon your wishes, and will not be included in the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please provide your contact details and complete the questionnaire on the Sign Up page.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact Professor Iain Walker or Dale Hynd on 9360 2186. Alternatively, you can contact the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.
Registration Questions for Study Three

Thank you for volunteering to sign up for this project. We will request your contact details, then ask you to fill out a questionnaire on your political stance.

Your Name:
Email Address:
Contact Number:

Great, we've got your contact details - thank you for volunteering for the Persuasion in Modern Politics Study.

We just need you to answer a few questions about your political stance now.

1. Are you eligible to vote in Australian Government elections? (ie. are you Australian citizen or permanent resident and enrolled?)
   
   Yes  No  Unsure

2. Would you describe yourself as a swinging voter (ie. you do not always vote for the same political party or candidate)?
   
   Yes  No  Unsure

3. Are you a member of a political party?
   
   Yes  No  Unsure

   If 'yes' to question (3), which party?

   4. For which political party’s candidate do you usually vote in the State election?
      
      No usual party
      Australian Labor Party
      Liberal Party of      Australia
      The Nationals
      Australian Democrats
      Australian Greens
      One Nation
      Independent
      Informal vote
      Other:
Thank you - only 14 more questions left to answer. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:

5. I identify strongly with my preferred party: [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly Agree

6. My knowledge of my preferred party's politics is strong: [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly Agree

7. I agree with my preferred political party's policies: [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly Agree

8. I am interested in politics: [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly Agree

9. I have no preferred political party: [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly Agree

10. I have a preferred political party but have voted for another party before: [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Disagree [ ] Neutral [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly Agree

11. Which party will you vote for in the upcoming State elections?

12. Was this the party you voted for at the last State election (2001)?
   Yes No

If not, which party did you vote for?

Thank you. The following questions are about your demographics.

13. What gender are you?
   Male  Female

14. What is your age group?
   18-25
   26-30
   31-40
   41-50
   51-60
   61-70
   Over 71

15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   University Postgraduate
   University Undergraduate
   Some University
   TAFE of Trade Certificate or Diploma
   Completed high school
   Some high school
   Completed primary school
   Some primary school
   Never attended school
16. Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Manager or Administration
Self-employed
Tradesperson
Professional or Executive
Salesperson or personal services
Labour or related worker
Home duties
Plant machine operator or driver
Student
Retired or superannuitant
Unemployed

17. Which best describes your marital status?

Never married
Married or Defacto
Separated or Divorced
Widowed

18 (a). Which best describes your household?

I live with unrelated people
I live with related people
I live with a Partner or Spouse
I live alone

18 (b).

I have children under 18 years of age
I have children over 18 years of age
I have no children

19. Which best describes the income category for you and/or your partner?

Less than $20,000
$20,000 - $40,000
$40,000 - $60,000
$60,000 - $80,000
$80,000 - $120,000
$120,000 - $150,000
$150,000 plus
APPENDIX J

Demographic Questions for Study Three

1. Gender
   a. Male
   b. Female

2. Age
   a. 18-30 years
   b. 31-40 years
   c. 41-50 years
   d. 51-60 years
   e. 61-70 years
   f. Over 70 years

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   a. Attended University
   b. TAFE or Trade Diploma
   c. Completed High School
   d. Some High School

4. Which best describes your occupation?
   a. Manager/Administrative
   b. Self-Employed
   c. Tradesperson
   d. Professional/Executive
   e. Sales/Personal Services
   f. Labourer
   g. Home duties
   h. Plant Machine Operator
   i. Student
   j. Retired
   k. Community Services
   l. Unemployed
   m. Other

5. Which best describes your marital status?
   a. Never married
   b. Married/De facto
   c. Separated/Divorced
   d. Widowed

---

5 This questionnaire was administered electronically using the Perception Analyzer hand-held dials
6. Which category best describes the annual income of you and your partner (if applicable)
   a. Less than $20,000
   b. $20,000 - $40,000
   c. $40,000 - $60,000
   d. $60,000 - $80,000
   e. $80,000 - $100,000
   f. $100,000 - $120,000
   g. Over $120,000

**Week 2 (test session 1) - Questions**

1. Which party do you believe is better able to run the WA economy?
2. Do you believe that retail trading hours in Perth should be deregulated to allow general retail shops to trade for 6 hours on Sunday?
3. Please indicate your approval of Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett throughout this interview (11m 13s)
4. Who is your preferred Premier?
5. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
6. Please indicate your approval of Laurie Miller throughout this interview – low- (3m 30s)
7. Please indicate your approval of Laurie Miller throughout this interview – high- (3m 04s)
8. Authenticity Scale questions for Laurie Miller

**Week 3 (test session 2) - Questions**

1. Please indicate your approval of Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett throughout this interview (11m 02s)
2. Who is your preferred Premier?
3. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
4. Do you believe the sentences handed down by the courts are adequate?
5. Do you support Mr Barnett's commitment to build a canal from the Kimberley to Perth?
6. Do you support Mr Barnett's commitment to build a canal from the Kimberley to Perth regardless of the cost?
7. Please indicate your approval of Laurie Miller throughout this interview – low- (3m 22s)
8. Please indicate your approval of Laurie Miller throughout this interview – high- (3m 03s)
9. Authenticity Scale questions for Laurie Miller
**Week 4 (test session 3) - Questions**

1. Please indicate your approval of Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett throughout this interview (10m 41s)
2. Who is your preferred Premier?
3. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
4. Do you regard speed cameras as useful in helping to save lives, or as a revenue raising measure?
5. Authenticity Scale questions for Geoff Gallop
6. Please indicate your approval of Steve Turner throughout this interview – low- (5m 44s)
7. Please indicate your approval of Steve Turner throughout this interview- high- (5m 17s)
8. Authenticity Scale questions for Steve Turner

**Week 5 (test session 4) - Questions**

1. Please indicate your approval of Geoff Gallop and Colin Barnett throughout this interview (11m 10s)
2. Who is your preferred Premier?
3. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
4. Do you believe that the West Australian community would benefit if trading hours in the Perth metropolitan area were extended to allow general retail shops to trade until 9pm Monday to Friday?
5. Do you believe that the West Australian community would benefit if trading hours in the Perth metropolitan area were extended to allow general retail shops to trade for 6 hours on Sunday?
6. Authenticity Scale questions for Colin Barnett
7. Please indicate your approval of Steve Turner throughout this interview - high- (5m 17s)
8. Please indicate your approval of Steve Turner throughout this interview - low- (5m 44s)
9. Authenticity Scale questions for Steve Turner
Laurie Miller Low-Spin Script Test Session 1

Journalist Q1. Mr Miller, why give up a successfully business as an accountant to jump into the furnace that is state politics? And why as an independent?

Well, I think we are seeing more and more a state government, and I mean this from both sides of politics, that is not representing the average member of the community. Politicians are meant to be our representatives but when they are a member of a political party then the party interests tend to come first and the interests of the community come second, unless there is some political gain to be had from either of the parties. And that is where I think I can fill a gap and a need. By being an independent, I think I can be the voice in parliament that keeps both sides of politics in check. As an independent my focus can be more on the needs of the community – not only in my electorate but across the whole state. I think the average person needs a voice.

Journalist Q2. Mr Miller how as an independent do you expect to fulfil these goals?

I'm an experienced member of the community and that is who I am representing. I have experience in encountering the problems bad government and bad decisions have on ordinary people. And I think the advantage of having an independent sitting in parliament is that that person can look out for community interests first and foremost. But when the average person's avenue to parliament is a member of Labor or Liberal or National parties then there is another layer they have to go through before their voice is heard and that is the party's interests. And the main objective of a political party is to stay in government, so if you have a question or need or requirement that does not meet that party objective or does not help get on the front page of the newspaper with a neatly packaged headline then chances are that the issue – which could be affecting a significant portion of the community – will get ignored. And that is where I see my job as being: listening to and assessing the needs of the community – not for political gain, because I am not here as a career politician looking to satisfy some vain need, but because I, like a lot of other people am a frustrated member of the community.

Journalist Q3. You have been described as an economic rationalist – how are you going to apply that in a practical sense?

I won't shy away from the fact that I have a strong background in accounting and I have a strong understanding of how a state economy is run, as well what kind of resources are required to make it run. But I have a conscience – a community-minded conscience – and that will be where I position myself on any economic issues affecting the state. If I feel the government is taking an avenue that, while having fiscal benefits, is not in the social interests of the community then I will speak out against that and demand that the government of the day be called to answer.
And I think I would start by calling payroll tax into review. Payroll tax has got out of control as far as I'm concerned and it is putting unnecessary pressure on small and medium-sized business. And I can tell you that from experience because I deal first hand with these businesses. And there are some businesses that are struggling to keep their head above water – simply because of the pressure placed on them while government reaps the benefits of a tax that is questionably applied.

**Journalist Q4.** It sounds like typically political rhetoric to say you want to cut taxes, but isn’t that a bit unrealistic?

On the contrary, I think I am being realistic. Just because it is payroll tax and a big ticket item for the government, doesn’t mean that it can’t called into to review to ensure that it is applied responsibly. Western Australia has a reputation for being the most over-tariffed state in Australia and the average member of the community may not realise that, yet there are profoundly affected by it. Stamp duty is out of control here and I can't help but ask why. The application of government fees also needs to be looked at. If government charges a fee then they should provide a service in return. And that is not the case at the moment. These are examples of where I think I can make a difference as an independent and bring these things to the attention of the community.

**Journalist Q5.** How do you propose the government pay for these tax cuts without throwing the state finances into turmoil?

Well that’s something that needs to be looks at; obviously, it needs to be done in stages. But what we need to understand is that these government taxes, such payroll tax, are stuffing up businesses that are driving the economy and...

**Journalist Q6.** (Journalist interrupts)...but…but Laurie that’s all well and good but how do you propose it is going to be paid for?

Well, look these small to medium businesses are creating most of the employment in this state and generate most the wealth and we need to give them a fair go. What we have to remember is that the state government gets all the GST revenue – so by reducing payroll tax - it will virtually pay for itself, through the growth in the economy.

Okay, thanks for your time (Laurie ends interview and walks towards parliament).
Journalist Q1. Mr Miller, why give up a successfully business as an accountant to jump into the furnace that is state politics? And why as an independent?

In some ways you could say it is a matter of answering a calling, but I don’t mean from a selfish point view to claim some sort of badge of honour. I mean I am answering a call – a need, within our community for government and our politicians, to be called to order, to be kept in check. Because as an ordinary citizen, as an ordinary member of the public. I look at the sitting members of parliament and I can’t help but ask who is representing me? Who is representing the interests of the ordinary bloke and the ordinary woman? Who stands for the interests of the ordinary member of the community?

Journalist Q2. Mr Miller how as an independent do you expect to fulfil these goals?

Well, the question is who is standing for the ordinary members of the community? Who understands their interests? Well, I do! And that’s where my experience counts. And as far as I am concerned that is what is really important

If your local member is also a member of the Labor, Liberal, or National party, then the interests of the party will come first. And your need or your problem is only going to be addressed if it helps that party win or stay in government, because that is, after all, all that politicians are interested in, winning or sitting in office. And who stands for the rights and needs of ordinary members of the community? No-one. And that's where I see my place as being. I will be the voice of the ordinary citizen in state parliament. Because one thing you know for sure about me is that I'm not a career politician. I'm not trying to work my way up the ladder. I'm here to stand for the ordinary interests and needs of our community and our state.

Journalist Q3. You have been described as an economic rationalist – how are you going to apply that in a practical sense?

I'm not afraid to call myself an economic rationalist but I am an economic rationalist with a conscience. And I think that needs to be underlined. Of course, I believe I have something to contribute to the way the state's economy is run. But it is not from the point of view of the government – it is from the point of view of the ordinary citizen. As an accountant, I deal a lot with small and medium business and I get to see first hand the effect government has on the backbone of our community. And the first thing I would call into order is the manner, structure and application of payroll tax. "Never before have so many businesses been taken for so much and left with so little."

Journalist Q4. It sounds like typically political rhetoric to say you want to cut taxes, but isn’t that a bit unrealistic?

Let me say this, I’m here to stand for the interests of ordinary members of the community. The government knows that payroll tax and stamp duty puts a lot of
pressure on business where it doesn’t need to. And both sides of parliament cough and move on when the subject comes up because they know it is money for jam.

The government seems to be acting like Robin Hood’s evil twin – they steel money from the people who can least afford it and keep it for themselves.

Quite frankly, I don't want to see business taken to the brink by an unfair system. I don't want to see businesses bankrupted by a bankroll for the premier.

**Journalist Q5. How do you propose the government pay for these tax cuts without throwing the state finances into turmoil?**

From my point of view, I do not see why these small to medium size businesses should be taken to the brink by an unfair system. Particularly, when these businesses are the creating most of the employment and generating wealth in our community – these businesses…

**Journalist Q6. (Journalist interrupts)…but…but Laurie that’s all well and good but how (Laurie interjects journalist) do you propose it is going to be paid for?…**

(Laurie interjects journalist)…please just let me finish…these businesses are the backbone of our community and they are being bankrupted by a bankroll for the premier. How can that possibly be good for the state’s economy given that the state receives all the GST revenue? This tax cut will pay for itself!

Thank you (Laurie ends interview and walks towards parliament).
Laurie Miller Low-Spin Script Test Session 2

Journalist Q1. You have suggested there needs to be changes to the way schools are funded – are you opposed to government funding private schools?

Education is an important issue for me and I think the way schools are funded and managed is an ongoing issue for state governments. Private and independent schools are worthy of receiving funding but their argument for the way funding should be allocated is that it should be student-based and not schools-based. I agree with that but with one condition. If they want student-based funding then they should not be allowed to discriminate based on religion.

Journalist Q2. Are you saying you would like to see private schools forced to change core beliefs?

Of course not, what I’m suggesting is that, religion can form the foundation principles of the schools but it should not be the determining factor in terms of exclusivity. State schools deserve as many benefits from the government as possible to compensate for their relative disadvantage, but if private and independent schools want government funding then they need to allow access for all comers.

Journalist Q3. Are you suggesting that funding should be cut to schools that do not comply?

Well I think it would be on a case-by-case basis but Yes; I think that if private and independent schools want public money then they should be open to all students.

Journalist Q4. Mr Miller the AMA have come out and said that the structural changes you are proposing to the health system are dangerous?

I don’t think it is accurate to say that I want to change the structure of the medical system. I want to see a shift in the primary values of medicine. As far as I can tell it is the doctors that have all power. The system is structured for their needs and their efficiencies but this seems largely to the detriment of the patient. Whereas I see the patient being the most important element in the relationship. As far as I am concerned it is the patient's needs that are undervalued. The emphasis needs to placed on what suits the patient and not necessarily always what suits doctors and the AMA. Patients don't have a lobby group like the AMA behind them and so it is hard for their needs to be acted upon. And that is where I believe government should come in. If the balance can be shifted, even just slightly, in favour of the patient then I think we will see a better health system. And one way to do that is to up-skill some of our high experienced nurses – allow nurses to fulfil some of the rudimentary functions that doctors now perform.
Journalist Q5. Are you suggesting nurses should do the work of doctors?

Well, I am talking about allowing nurses to progress from nurse to nurse practitioner. I also believe that nurses are among the most undervalued and neglected people in the health system – anyone who has been to hospital can’t help but agree with that – and by giving them more responsibility – and more money I might add – it will help take the load from doctors. And it will widen the base available to satisfy the needs of the patient and ideally do it in a more efficient and economic manner. The patient needs to be at the centre of the health loop.

Journalist Q6. The AMA has said this will put patients directly at risk and will create a second-class health system.

Well you know that’s the AMA and their job is to get the best deal for their doctors.

But really, how can patients be put in any greater risk than not being able to receive treatment. The up-skilling of these nurses would clearly widen the medical base available to hospitals to satisfy the needs of patients. Some of these nurses that I am talking about, have got as much or in some cases more education and training that doctors! These nurses could very easily gain the training necessary to become nurse practitioners so they can fulfil some of the rudimentary functions that doctor’s now perform.

Okay, thanks for your time (Laurie ends interview and walks towards parliament).
Laurie Miller High-Spin Script Test Session 2

Journalist Q1. You have suggested there needs to be changes to the way schools are funded – are you opposed to government funding private schools?

Well, I am all for the private and independent school’s ideal for government assistance – that is don’t fund the schools, fund the child! However, there is one big 'but' that I would like to see applied to that from the government's point of view. If private and independent schools want equality in funding then there should be equality in access. Schools should not be able to discriminate on the basis of religious belief.

Journalist Q2. Are you saying you would like to see private schools forced to change core beliefs?

By all means, schools can build their school ethics on religious principles but that should not affect the basis of admittance. Equality in access for equality in funding. And if those schools aren’t willing to meet the criteria then state schools should continue to be compensated for their relative disadvantage.

Journalist Q3. Are you suggesting that funding should be cut to schools that do not comply?

Well look, what I am simply saying is that if there is equality in funding for private and independent schools then these schools should provide equality in access. "Our progress as a state can be no swifter than our progress in education."

Journalist Q4. Mr Miller the AMA have come out and said that the structural changes you are proposing to the health system are dangerous?

I don’t want to change structure of the business of medicine – and that's what it is, a business. I want to change the focus. Who has the need in doctor-patient scenario? It's not the doctor. It is not the doctor's need that needs to be fulfilled – yet that is how our system is structured. It is the patient who has the need and so the patient is open to being held to ransom by the doctor, both in terms of time and money. And our system facilitates that. And that's why we need to change the focus on health. That is why we need a patient-centred health system. The patients don’t have a large and iron-fisted body looking after their needs. They don’t have a powerful lobby group embedded in each and every major party. That is why we need to shift the balance and change the focus of the health system. And the way to do that is to reward the people who are effectively holding the health system together – nurses. Let's upskill our nurses and take the load off doctors – and take the load off the wallets and the waiting time of patients.

Journalist Q5. Are you suggesting nurses should do the work of doctors?

I am an advocate for nurse practitioners. Why not give the ability to nurses – skilled and experienced medical people – to perform those functions that are effectively rudimentary for doctors? As far as I can see, everyone is a winner in that scenario and it
helps shift the focus of the system back onto the patients. Put a level of medical people between doctors and current abilities of nurses. It will take the load off doctors, it will prevent nurses being placed in compromising positions as far as administering drugs and the like is concerned.

**Journalist Q6. The AMA has said this will put patients directly at risk…(Laurie interrupts: that is absolute rubbish)…and will create a second-class health system.**

The AMA is saying that because they’ve got the vested interest of rich doctors to protect. Important changes have always encountered vehement opposition from powerful establishments!

What I am talking about is up-skilling our nurses and taking the load off doctors as well as taking the load of the wallets and waiting times of patients. If you wanted to get your car repainted would you take it to a grand artistic master or an experienced auto spray painter. Sure they can both do the job but the grand master is going to charge you a fortune and take a lot longer. That’s what we are talking about here; taking the load of the wallets and waiting time of patients. What we need to do is to shift the focus of the system back onto the patient.

Thank you (Laurie ends interview and walks towards parliament).
Interviewer: Good evening Steven Turner - thanks for joining us.

Steven: Good evening Dixie

Q1 Interviewer: Steven you have come out in support of a total sprinkler ban - why do you think that’s necessary?

I do support the proposed total sprinkler ban, and I think it should be implemented as soon as possible. There is nothing new about sprinkler bans - we just need a change in community thinking on this. Look, we can’t exist without water. It is truly one of our most precious resources in WA. As a community, we have been doing a good job, but we now need to take the next step.

Q1b What about the nurseries and lawn industries that employ thousands of people – they say a total sprinkler ban will devastate their industry?

Well, there is going to be a period of adjustment, but they have already adjusted to the water restrictions that are in place.

There will also be opportunities to discover and introduce new plants, ground cover, and technologies to operate in this unique WA environment. I think in the long term it will be a good thing for industry and our community.

Personally, I love a big green lawn and an English garden but maybe we need to look at other ways to have beautiful gardens more in keeping with Australia’s climate.

Q2 Interviewer: What about proposals to increase the price of water to those who use excessive amounts?

There is currently a school of thought suggesting we should just put up the price of water to stop people using too much but I believe that is a dangerous path to go down. There should not be any artificial price increases.

We cannot simply increase the cost burden to families - and if we start implementing change now we can avoid that.

The price of water in WA can’t increase to levels as it has in other states; where it looks like they’re getting to the point where people and small business can’t afford to use it. In one recent example Mt Larcom, a country town in near Brisbane, is facing a possible 20-fold increase in water costs. This is the kind of drastic changes that we need to protect against. Cheap water can and must be available. It is a basic essential for everyone in our community and also for our economy.
Q3 Interviewer: Isn’t that a bit far fetched, it sounds like scare mongering, given new plans for desalination or the Kimerley canal?

There are plans in place to supply extra water and we need to continue looking at that but we are one of the fastest growing states in Australia with an increasing population, which our economy is built on. What happens if we have a couple of dry seasons? Look what happened last year to our power supply.

Our industry, our community, and our way of life rely on having plenty of water and we need to make changes now to ensure we have ample supply into the future.

Even when the desalination plant does get up it won’t solve our water problems – our water issues are here to stay and will only be increasing in intensity.

Q4 Interviewer: Don’t you think a sprinkler ban is a bit drastic at this stage?

Well, I don’t think its too drastic because we are facing a declining rainfall; there is less run off; our dams are only 30 percent full; and that’s not going to get any better.

As a community we seem to think that as soon as we get a bit more water in the dams we can simply resume the way we used to use water before. But that never going to happen and we as a community need to change the way we think about our water resources.

Unfortunately, water conservation is here to stay and we have got to implement changes to our water usage and we need to do it as soon as possible.

Q5 Moving on to a different issue, Steven; you have also said you will oppose any recriminalisation of marijuana for personal use. Do you endorse the use of marijuana?

I don’t endorse the use of marijuana just as I don’t endorse smoking, or drinking too much alcohol. The thing is, many people in our community have tried marijuana and certainly there are a lot of our young people who use it - we can’t just throw them in jail and wreck their lives. The fact is that 20,000 people die every year from cigarettes and alcohol but there has not been one reported case of someone dying from using marijuana. I think that speak volumes. And I believe we need to continue to take a moderate approach to this issue.

Q6 What about the argument that it leads to hard drugs?

Well there is no evidence of that. Colin Barnett visited a women’s refuge to try give weight to this and he had a couple of women, who were addicted to hard drugs, saying they had first started using marijuana when they were young. But for a lot of people with drug additions there are a lot of factors in their background that have contributed to it and I don’t think we can’t simply pin it on the marijuana use when they were
teenagers – lots of people in our society have used marijuana and they don’t all turn into drug addicts.

Interviewer: Steven Turner - We’ll leave it there – thanks for talking with us.

Steven Turner: - My pleasure
Interviewer: Good evening Steven Turner - thanks for joining us.
Steven: Good evening Dixie

Q1a Interviewer: Steven you have come out in support of a total sprinkler ban - why do you think that's necessary?

We need a change in community thinking on this. We can’t exist without water. It is truly one of our most precious resources in WA and we are too busy pouring it onto our backyards to notice.

We need to implement small changes to our lifestyle now in order to avoid severe change to our lifestyle in the future.

Q1b What about the nurseries and lawn industries that employ thousands of people – they say a total sprinkler ban will devastate their industry?

Let me just say that, if we were to take that kind of approach to everything, we would never have banned smoking in public buildings because it would have hurt the tobacco industry.

Look, it’s a bitter pill to swallow for all the community but its something that we need to do, and we will adapt.

Interviewer: It’s a bit harsh/ what about other…
Interjects interviewer: There will be opportunities to discover and introduce new plants, ground cover, and technologies to operate in this new environment. But can I say, if we don’t make these changes now the green industries will really be in trouble.

Q2 Interviewer: What about proposals to increase the price of water to those who use excessive amounts?

Look, it’s no use just treading water - we need to get on board with serious water conservation in order to avoid severe change to our lifestyle. If we start implementing small changes now we can avoid price increases.

In some states the cost of water has increase 400 percent. Our State is reliant on the mining, agricultural, and other commercial industries and water is very important. These are the industries that employ and create wealth for all western Australians. Cheap water can and must be available. It is a basic essential for everyone in our community and also for our economy.

If we are faced with a choice between our prosperity and a greener looking backyard lawn – I for one would opt for some decking.
Q3 Interviewer: Isn’t that a bit far fetched, it sounds like scare mongering, given the new plans for desalination or the Kimerley canal?

The question is do we as a community want to live life on the edge and gamble with our prosperity. We can’t just bury our heads in the sand and think the problem will go away.

Even when the desalination plant does get up it won’t solve our water problems – our water issues are here to stay and will only be increasing in intensity – and we need to take steps now.

Let’s implement small changes to our lifestyle now so we can avoid those severe changes to our lifestyle in the future.

Interviewer: Don’t you think…it’s a bit drastic
Interjects interviewer: Let’s not wait until it’s too late like we did with our power supply - when one day, all of a sudden, we simply run out. And everyone was looking around wondering how could this of happened. Well what happened was we buried our head in the sand and thought the problem would fix itself.

Q4 Interviewer: Don’t you think a sprinkler ban is a bit drastic at this stage?

Well, put it this way, if we don’t implement small changes to our lifestyle, then the lack of water will impose severe change to our lifestyle.

We are facing a declining rainfall; there is less run off; our dams are only 30 percent full; and that’s not going to get any better. There is no use in living in a fool’s paradise - pouring our precious water onto our backyards and thinking the problem will just go away.

Water conservation is here to stay and we have got to implement changes to our water usage now in order to avoid severe changes to our way of life in the future.

Q5 Moving on to a different issue, Steven; you have also said you will oppose any recriminalisation of marijuana for personal use. Do you endorse the use of marijuana?

Well the question should be, why is Colin Barnett trying to take us ‘back into the future’ with the re-criminalisation of marijuana use? And I for one do not want to go backwards in the future.

Interviewer: But are you endorsing…do you endorse…
Interjects interviewer: Look, look, look… the fact is that 20,000 people die every year from cigarettes and alcohol but there has not been one reported case of someone dying from using marijuana.

Interviewer: but do you endorse the use of marijuana?

Let me just say that, it important not to confuse tolerance of people’s action with the endorsement of them. But we don’t want to go ‘back into the future’ with the re-criminalisation of marijuana use.
Q6 What about the argument that it leads to hard drugs?

Well Colin Barnett is using this argument because he wants to take us backwards into the future on this issue – there is no evidence that marijuana leads to harder drugs. The use of hard drugs is more likely to be caused by someone’s home life or the environment they live in. We don’t want to go ‘back into the future’ with this proposal to re-criminalise marijuana use.

Interviewer: Steven Turner - We’ll leave there – thanks for talking with us.  
Steven Turner: - My pleasure
APPENDIX N

Information Provision for Study Three

I am a PhD Candidate from Murdoch University investigating the way people respond to political communications. I am particularly interested in the way audiences perceive specific political messages and media interviews.

You can assist with this research by consenting to view a number of political messages over a 5-week period and completing a questionnaire about your responses to these messages. You will also be asked to use a hand-held dial to indicate your response to the messages as you watch them. It is anticipated that this feedback session will take approximately 45 minutes. The test sessions will be video taped, with your permission, and the tapes will be stored securely at Murdoch University.

All information given during the study is confidential, and no names or other information that might identify you will be used in any report or publication arising from this research unless express permission is given. Feedback on the study will be provided to participants at the end of the testing period and results of the research will be provided on the website www.itri.tv/registration.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You can also decide to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any data already collected from you will be destroyed or returned to you, depending upon your wishes, and will not be included in the study. If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor Iain Walker, or myself on 9360 2186. Alternatively, you can contact the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee on 9360 6677.

Thank you,

Dale Hynd
CONSENT FORM

I, ______________________, (the participant) have read the information above. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this activity; however, I know that I may change my mind at any time.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree for these test sessions to be audiotaped/videotaped (if applicable).

I agree that research gathered for this study may be published provided my name or other information, which might identify me, is not used or is only used if express permission is given.

Participant:

Date:

Investigator’s Name: Dale Hynd

Investigator’s Signature:
APPENDIX O

Political Attitude Questions Administered in Weeks One – Five

Week 1

1. Do you support the introduction of daylight savings into WA?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure

2. Who is your preferred Premier?
   a. Geoff Gallop
   b. Colin Barnett

3. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
   a. Labor Party
   b. Liberal Party
   c. Greens
   d. National Party
   e. Australian Democrats
   f. Family First
   g. Independent
   h. Other
   i. Unsure

Week 2

9. Which party do you believe is better able to run the WA economy?
   a. Labor Party
   b. Liberal Party
   c. Greens
   d. National Party
   e. Australian Democrats
   f. Family First

10. Do you believe that retail trading hours in Perth should be deregulated to allow general retail shops to trade for 6 hours on Sunday?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Unsure

11. Who is your preferred Premier?
    a. Geoff Gallop
    b. Colin Barnett
12. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
   a. Labor Party
   b. Liberal Party
   c. Greens
   d. National Party
   e. Australian Democrats
   f. Family First
   g. Independent
   h. Other
   i. Unsure

Week 3

1. Who is your preferred Premier?
   a. Geoff Gallop
   b. Colin Barnett

2. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
   a. Labor Party
   b. Liberal Party
   c. Greens
   d. National Party
   e. Australian Democrats
   f. Family First
   g. Independent
   h. Other
   i. Unsure

3. Do you believe the sentences handed down by the courts are adequate?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure

4. Do you support Mr Barnett's commitment to build a canal from the Kimberley to Perth?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure

5. Do you support Mr Barnett's commitment to build a canal from the Kimberley to Perth regardless of the cost?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure

Week Four

1. Who is your preferred Premier?
   a. Geoff Gallop
b. Colin Barnett

2. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
   a. Labor Party
   b. Liberal Party
   c. Greens
   d. National Party
   e. Australian Democrats
   f. Family First
   g. Independent
   h. Other
   i. Unsure

3. Do you regard speed cameras as useful in helping to save lives, or as a revenue raising measure?
   a. Revenue raising
   b. Saves lives
   c. Unsure

Week Five

1. Who is your preferred Premier?
   a. Geoff Gallop
   b. Colin Barnett

2. If the election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?
   a. Labor Party
   b. Liberal Party
   c. Greens
   d. National Party
   e. Australian Democrats
   f. Family First
   g. Independent
   h. Other
   i. Unsure

3. Do you believe that the West Australian community would benefit if trading hours in the Perth metropolitan area were extended to allow general retail shops to trade until 9pm Monday to Friday?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure

4. Do you believe that the West Australian community would benefit if trading hours in the Perth metropolitan area were extended to allow general retail shops to trade for 6 hours on Sunday?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unsure