

Project Task 2: Executive Summary on Airline Travel Safety

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It has never been safer to fly. Airline safety has only trended to greater safety than ever. The media blitz to portray flying as being more dangerous nowadays is not rooted in fact or in any data. The appropriate way to combat this unfair portrayal is to transmit to the public the overwhelming body of evidence that air travel is safe. The list of odds of death for different activities bombards the viewer with the comparative safety of flying as opposed to doing just about anything else. Reasonable people do not entertain the possibility that they may die from a bolt of lightning. Neither do they need fear air travel. Dying by air travel is more than three times less likely. The bar charts show that the last 15-year period is even safer than the previous 15-year period, completely debunking this new narrative of increasing risk to fly. I employed bar charts with bright colors to clearly accentuate the differences between the first 15-year period and the second. The facts tell us that once one excludes space shuttle and motorcycle travel, all other methods of travel are safe.

Planes carry more travelers on average than ever due to greater seating capacities. The one negative aspect of present-day air travel is that when the rare tragedy occurs, there is a greater chance of mass casualties. This has only shown itself to be true on individual airlines which most travelers will never even travel on. I illustrate this by displaying an exhaustive list of airlines and their individual statistics of sums of fatalities. We must carefully consider how to message the public because the media works itself into a frenzy when there are mass casualties. We cannot dispute the terrible picture of the rare catastrophe, but we must be even-handed in presenting the likelihood of it happening to any single passenger. The chances are so low that a rational individual need not consider the possibility of an accident. I grew up in a culture where two parents would never fly together...for fear of orphaning their children in the event of an accident. This is not prudent because of the almost-null likelihood of such a tragedy.

It will be challenging to debunk this false narrative that air travel is dangerous, as presented by horrific pictures, by asserting boring statistics that a car is a deathtrap relative to an airplane.

One tack to pursue is the “fear of flying”. This plays only a small part in traveler’s fear of flying. As they walk into the airport travelers are bombarded by their fear of crowds and fear of strangers. This is followed by a fear of closed-in spaces and fear of heights. We should discuss making the airport more traveler friendly. Some ideas are creating more open space, hiring more workers to ensure shorter lines, offering complimentary alcohol to relax people, and painting serene murals on the walls and ceiling.

Violent content has infiltrated the media. Violence sells because people are fascinated by it. For this same reason it will require a complex strategy to combat. Notwithstanding that safety is the true picture, we cannot combat the violent images of air travel with serene, safe ones, no matter how true they are. Calm scenes do not sell.

We must consider how to deal with climate activists who get great photo ops by laying down in front of planes and wrecking flying schedules. Further investigation must be done to ascertain

how much of the media campaign of the dangers of air travel is driven by the climate activists, if there exists any connection. Moreover, careful consideration must be given as to how to respond to the activists because they are essentially correct that air travel damages our environment.

Since 1980 air ridership has trended upwards. Only economic, political, and health catastrophe has slowed this growth. This robust growth must be touted to the public to impress upon them the normalcy of air travel. Stakeholders must bear in mind that this growth is not correlate with profits, so we must look to increase ridership even more.

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