Apologies

1

Do Apologies Work?

• What does "work" mean?
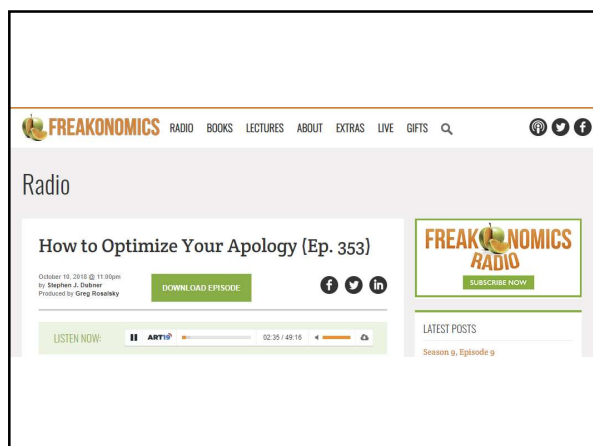
2

Benefits of apologizing

• victims feel validated
• improve victim's evaluations of transgressor
• decrease victim's retaliation
• Increase empathy and forgiveness

3

High-quality apology

• Accept responsibility
• Offer repair
• Don't offer justification
• Don't blame the victim

4

FREAKONOMICS RADIO BOOKS LECTURES ABOUT EXTRAS LIVE GIFTS

Radio

How to Optimize Your Apology (Ep. 353)

October 10, 2018 @ 11:30pm
by Stephen J. Dubner
Produced by Greg Rosalsky

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Ho & List Apology Model

• Apologies more likely in long relationships
• Effective apologies must be costly
• **Basic apology**: things went wrong
• **Status apology**: admit incompetence, ask for forgiveness
• **Commitment apology**: commit to do better in the future.

Halperin, B., Ho, B., List, J. A., & Muir, I. (2019). *Toward an understanding of the economics of apologies: evidence from a large-scale natural field experiment* (No. w25676). National Bureau of Economic Research.
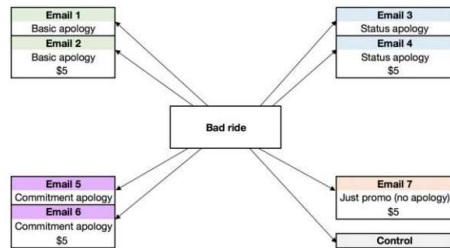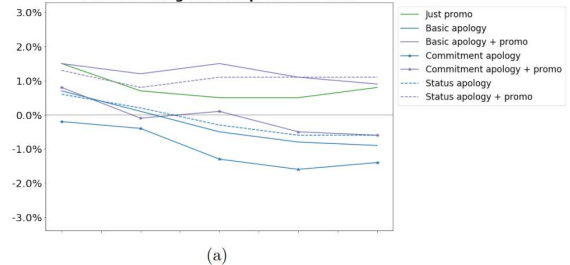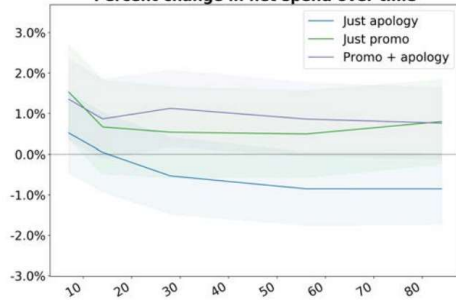
6

Uber Experiment

Figure 3: Treatments

7

(a)

8

(b)

9

Table 4: Log of future number of rides by treatment group over the N days after the bad ride

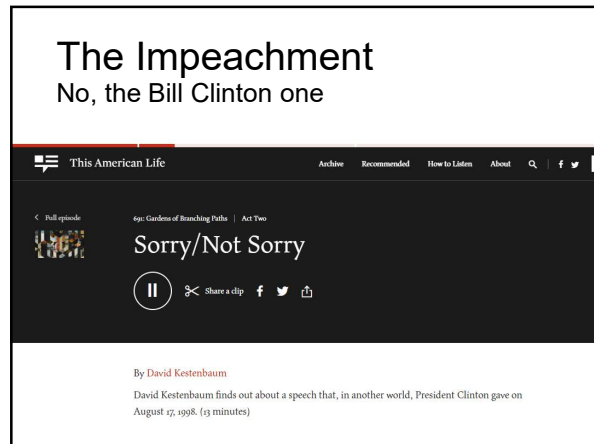|	7d	14d	28d	56d	84d
Basic apology	0.004	0.001	-0.003	-0.005	-0.006
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Basic apology + promo	0.011***	0.01***	0.01***	0.008*	0.007*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Commitment apology	-0.001	-0.002	-0.008*	-0.011*	-0.011*
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Commitment apology + promo	0.008*	0.003	0.002	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Status apology	0.003	2.68e-04	-0.003	-0.006	-0.007*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Status apology + promo	0.01***	0.008**	0.01***	0.01**	0.01**
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Just promo	0.01***	0.007*	0.007*	0.007*	0.008*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Controls	X	X	X	X	X
City	X	X	X	X	X
Date	X	X	X	X	X
Hour	X	X	X	X	X
No. observations	1257788	1257788	1257788	1257788	1257788

10

Multiple apologies backfire
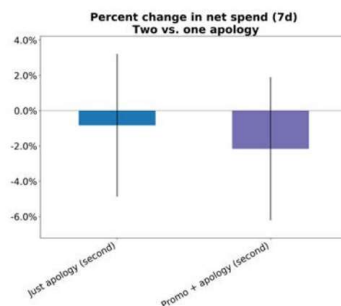
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Optimal Public Apologies

- What apology features predicts polling data?
  - Start with victim
  - End with remorse
- Offender-drive apologies ineffective
  - Explain motivation & context
- Effective formula:
  - Apologize immediately
  - Don't give context
  - Make restitution

Karen Cerulo, Rutgers Sociology

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The Impeachment
No, the Bill Clinton one

This American Life

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Sorry/Not Sorry

Share a clip

By David Kestenbaum

David Kestenbaum finds out about a speech that, in another world, President Clinton gave on August 17, 1998. (13 minutes)

13

Bob Shrum's apology speech

I have fallen short of what you should expect from a president. I have failed my own religious faith and values. I have let too many people down. ==I take full responsibility for my actions==-- for hurting my wife and daughter, for hurting Monica Lewinsky and her family, for hurting friends and staff, and for hurting the country I love. None of this ever should have happened.

Accept responsibility

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More from the speech

Finally, ==I also want to apologize to all of you, my fellow citizens==. I hope that you can find it in your heart to accept my apology. ==I pledge to you that I will make every effort== of mind and spirit to earn your confidence again, to be worthy of this office, and to finish the work on which we have made such remarkable progress in the past six years.

Offer repair

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What's the best apology?

- Content
- Timing
- Audience (public/private)
- Mode (written, spoken)
- Concrete actions (flowers?)

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