Apology and Accountability:
A Systemic Examination of Organizations’ Image Restoration Strategies

By

Dr Frank Yu
City University of Hong Kong

Date: Wednesday, 5 January 2011
Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Venue: M714

All interested are welcome
Apology and Accountability: 
A Systemic Examination of Organizations’ 
Image Restoration Strategies

Abstract
Organizational reputation promotes a healthy organizational identity in soliciting follower commitment and building public trust in the organization (Elsbach, 2006). However, accidents beyond organizational control and scandals provoking public distrust at times occur and sully organizational reputation. To attenuate stigma, organizations employ “image restoration strategies” when organization’s audiences doubt organizations’ reliability or claimed conformity to socially acceptable behaviors, norms, and values (King, 2008). They often deny the wrong-doing, scapegoat someone else within or outside the organization, bolster past good achievements to overshadow the current bad press, differentiate the wrong doing or accident as a random event rather than a regular occurrence, and question its culpability by pointing out the larger systems’ interdependency (Benoit, 1995). Using empirical data and results to substantiate our positions, we address these research questions systematically: What image restoration strategies do organizations most frequently employ and why? What aspects of negative events tend to prompt systematically certain types of image restoration strategies? How do organizational reputation and identity affect their choices of image restoration strategies? How do organizations’ current performances affect their choices of image restoration strategies?

Dr Kuo Frank Yu is currently an assistant professor of Management in City University of Hong Kong. Born in Taiwan and growing up in the US, he received his B.A. in Psychology with honors from Swarthmore College and his Ph.D. in Management of Organizations from Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley. He has been the PDW chair for the Academy of Management’s Practice Theme Committee for the past three years. He is passionate about applying scholarship, producing both relevant and rigorous knowledge. He studied with Karlene Roberts, Kenneth Gergen, and Philip Tetlock, all of whom he owes much of his intellectual development. He examines high reliability and business ethics-related practices and contributes to enhancing corporate social responsibility. He is currently writing a book called “Revolutionary Shifts in Global Business Practices” with Dr Jane Yang.