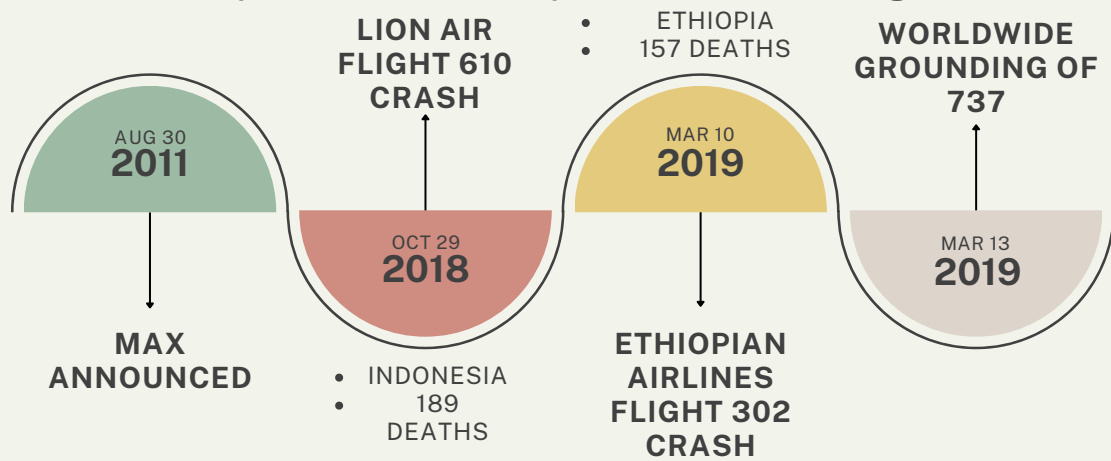


The Boeing 737 MAX Crisis

How Communication Failures Led to Disaster

WHAT HAPPENED?

Two airplane crashes exposed hidden design risks.



Total Deaths: 346

Cause: Automated system called MCAS (Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System), which automatically pushed the plane's nose downward to prevent a stall. Pilots **did not know the system existed**.

KEY COMMUNICATION FAILURES

1. MISSING DOCUMENTATION

Boeing failed to disclose MCAS to pilots and airlines.

MCAS was:

- Not included in pilot manuals
- Not included in training
- Not explained to airlines

One pilot called the manual:

"inadequate and almost criminally insufficient"

Another pilot asked:

"I am left to wonder: what else don't I know?"

2. IGNORED SAFETY WARNINGS

Boeing leadership failed to act on engineers' safety concerns.

Engineers warned

Boeing leadership:

- Single sensor design was unsafe
- Production problems were increasing risk

Warnings were ignored due to cost and schedule pressure.

Research shows:

Bad news often fails to reach decision makers in organizations.

3. LIMITED DISCLOSURE TO REGULATORS

Boeing failed to fully disclose MCAS risks to FAA regulators.

- Boeing employees certified safety on behalf of regulators.
- Important system details were not fully explained.
- Risk decisions were made internally before being shared publicly.

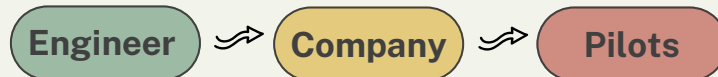
Experts call this the "decide-announce-defend" model of risk communication.

WHY COMMUNICATION FAILED

Technocratic Communication

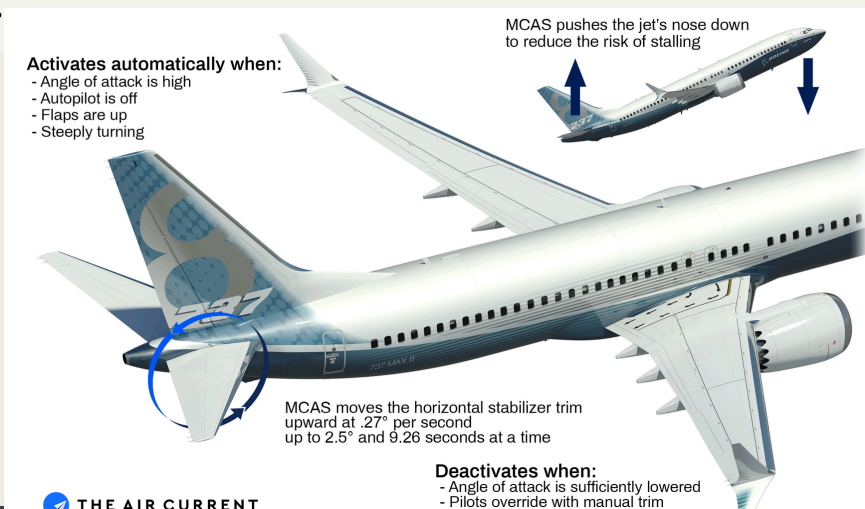
Experts decided what users needed to know.

Information flowed one direction:



Research shows this model tries to make audiences think like experts.

This excluded pilots from understanding risks.



SUPPRESSED INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Engineers and managers interpreted safety data differently.
- Communication requires shared interpretation, not just data.
- Without shared understanding, warnings were ignored.

LESSONS



SOURCES

