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Gratitude Works: Its Impact and the Mediating Role of Affective Commitment in Driving Positive Outcomes

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**GRATITUDE WORKS: ITS IMPACT AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF AFFECTIVE
COMMITMENT IN DRIVING POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

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**GRATITUDE WORKS: ITS IMPACT AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF
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Abstract

After studying the effects of Louisiana’s post-hurricane “thank you” campaigns, the researchers find expressions of gratitude significantly improve perceptions of Louisiana in the midst of its recovery. Through a national survey conducted November 2006, they find that those who saw or heard a thank you advertisement have more positive attitudes toward the state and its people, a greater willingness to pay a premium for its products, services and travel to the state, and spread positive word-of-mouth, thus justifying the use of public funds to support the campaign. The authors investigate the role of participation on the effectiveness of expressions of gratitude and identify the mediating role of *affective commitment* in driving the positive results attributed to expressions of gratitude.

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Be grateful to those who do good to you; be grateful for your blessings. This is something that we teach to our children at the youngest of ages.

– Edward J. Harpham (2004, p. 21)

Expressions of gratitude are abundant in marketing practice. The NFL Network (*The Wall Street Journal* 2006) and ABC News (*The Wall Street Journal* 2007) thank their viewers, and Microsoft (*The Wall Street Journal* 2008) thanks its development partners, in paid advertisements in *The Wall Street Journal*. These, and similar efforts like them, take advantage of the fact that gratitude is seen as a virtue in every culture and society (Komter 2004; McCullough, Kirkpatrick, Emmons, and Larson 2001), and presumably generates positive feelings toward the sponsor of the message.

Expressions of gratitude signal that an exchange has been completed and that the possibility exists for future exchanges (McAdams and Bauer 2004). They also cause the recipient of such expressions to act more prosocially toward the expresser and other unrelated parties (McCullough and Tsang 2004; see also Clark 1975; Goldman, Seever and Seever 1982; McGovern, Ditzian and Taylor 1975). Psychologists study gratitude as an important topic within the domain of “positive psychology” (e.g., Snyder and Lopez 2002), but the topic has received only limited attention in marketing (Morales 2005), especially with respect to underlying mechanisms, even though its use, as demonstrated above, is widespread.

It is clear that expressions of gratitude have positive effects in interpersonal relationships (see McCullough and Tsang 2004 for a review). But it is not clear that the positive effects of expressions of gratitude will be realized through mass marketing or other commercial messages. Further, marketing researchers have not considered the mechanisms which drive the positive benefits assumed to result from such expressions. In this paper we explore the positive effects of

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expressions of gratitude in a mass media context and demonstrate first that gratitude works; that is, expressions of gratitude can have a positive impact on the recipient, and, second, that affective commitment is one mechanism through which expressions of gratitude exert their positive impact. As a research context, we analyze the impact of expressions of gratitude from post-Katrina Louisiana to residents of the U.S. after the August 2005 storm.

Our research context differs from the one within which the topic of gratitude is traditionally studied. Definitions of gratitude suggest that an individual must perceive that he or she has received a benefit (e.g., Emmons 2004; Fredrickson 2004). It follows, then, that expressions of gratitude would come from the direct beneficiary to the original benefactor. In the current research, expressions of gratitude come from an entire state, while only certain portions of it were directly affected. Secondly, expressions of gratitude were delivered to the general population through mass media and other informal channels, not only to those who had participated in relief and recovery efforts (i.e., the original benefactors). We note these differences to suggest that the positive effects of gratitude we find when expressions come from a whole state to a whole nation contribute to the study of gratitude by extending the results beyond the interpersonal domain that has been the primary research context in prior studies.

GRATITUDE¹

We accept Fredrickson's (2004) definition of gratitude as the emotion that arises when an individual (beneficiary) perceives that another person (benefactor) or source (e.g., God, luck, fate) has intentionally acted to improve the beneficiary's well being.

McCullough, Kirkpatrick, Emmons and Larson (2001) develop a framework for understanding the three specific prosocial or moral functions of gratitude.² Gratitude functions

¹ For a comprehensive review of gratitude in the psychology literature we suggest the highly readable *The Psychology of Gratitude* (Emmons and McCullough 2004). Its Appendix includes an annotated bibliography of psychological research on gratitude.

² See McCullough and Tsang (2004) for a summary.

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as a *moral barometer* (feelings of gratitude let us know when we are the intentional recipient of benefits), a *moral motive* (feelings of gratitude encourage us to contribute to the welfare of the benefactor – or even a third party – and to inhibit motivations to do the benefactor, or others, harm), and a *moral reinforcer* (people who have received sincere expressions of gratitude are more likely to act prosocially in the future). The first two roles (barometer and motive) focus on the beneficiary and potentially are drivers of reciprocal actions such as an expression of thanks. Indeed, Becker (1986) suggests that gratitude is the emotional core of reciprocity. In this paper we address the “moral reinforcer” role of expressions of gratitude, which focuses on the impact of an expression of gratitude on the original benefactor. Consistent with the moral reinforcer role of gratitude, expressions of gratitude act as a social reward that encourages future moral action and signal that the opportunity exists for additional “mutually pleasing” exchanges in the future (McAdams and Bauer 2004, p. 86).

Not only is there is a broad consensus that the feeling and expression of gratitude produces prosocial benefits, we find nearly universal condemnation of *ingratitude* from ancient to contemporary writers (c.f., Emmons and McCullough 2004). Solomon (2004, p. vii) writes that “being ungrateful is a sign or symptom of lack of socialization, whether evident in the inability to appreciate what others have done for one, or worse, the grudging resentment of one’s own vulnerability and the refusal to admit one’s debt to others.”

There is a developing literature that demonstrates the positive impacts of the experience, expression and acknowledgment of gratitude in buyer-seller relationships (e.g., Bone, et al. 2008; Carey, et al. 1976; Morales 2005; Palmatier, Dant and Grewal 2007; Raggio, et al. 2008; Soscia 2007). Although there is nascent interest in the topic by marketing scholars, even the psychology research is still limited and in the early stages of development (Tsang 2006). And while scholars have focused on the examination of gratitude within exchange relationships, these

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studies were conducted within an interpersonal context, offering the opportunity to expand the domain of the construct into mass communication. We seek to contribute to this developing literature by investigating the impact of expressions of gratitude beyond the interpersonal context and exploring the mechanisms that make it work.

LOUISIANA’S “THANK YOU” CAMPAIGNS

Louisiana’s Benefactors

Epstein (2006) reports that more than \$3 billion from nonprofit organizations was provided to victims of hurricane Katrina, which affected less than 2 million people in a small geographic area; only the 9/11 terror attacks generated a similar outpouring of response in the form of private funds. By contrast, he finds that only about \$750 million has gone to treat malaria, which affects nearly 300 million people worldwide.

In addition to private funds, the federal government allocated more than \$110 billion to assist the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast (Powell 2007). Nearly \$62 billion (>56%) was allocated to Louisiana’s recovery (Louisiana Recovery Authority 2008). Louisiana residents accounted for about 53% of those eligible for direct FEMA aid (Sherman and Shapiro 2005), but the state of Louisiana received \$10.41 billion of the total \$15.7 billion (>66%) allocated directly to the states in the form of HUD Community Development Block Grant funds. In summary, compared with other crises/conditions, and as a percentage of total disaster funds disbursed, the benefit to Louisiana from public and private sources was great.

Louisiana’s Response as Beneficiary

“Come fall in love with Louisiana all over again,” was the theme for the Louisiana Department of Tourism’s \$7 million campaign, which began in April 2006 and featured well-known celebrities with strong ties to the state, including Emeril Lagasse, John Goodman and Wynton Marsalis, in television ads saying “thank you” to people around the country. A little

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more than 31 percent of the budget was spent on television (only the television executions expressed a “thank you”), the rest on print, radio and other media. Five hundred thirty-four television spots were run on national networks; 10,340 were run regionally.

In an effort not related to the official state campaign, a coalition of Louisiana community, governmental and business leaders developed the grassroots “Louisiana Thanks You!” campaign to “[extend] the gratitude of the people of Louisiana to all Americans and to friends around the globe and [commend] those who gave service, assistance, and unselfish sacrifice toward the recovery effort in Louisiana...” (Schedler, et al. 2006). Elements of the campaign included a resolution by the state legislature and a national promotion campaign involving outdoor advertisements, radio public service announcements, “Louisiana Thanks You!” activities, website, and public relations. Ninety billboards donated by Lamar Advertising (one of the largest owners and operators of outdoor advertising structures in the United States) were placed in locations across the country for three months beginning in June 2006.

Combined, Louisiana’s campaigns sought to thank individuals and organizations (both public and private) for their assistance with relief, recovery and rebuilding efforts. For example, the Louisiana Legislature’s resolution not only thanked individuals for volunteering and donating money and supplies, it also acknowledged the funds and services provided by U.S. citizens through governmental organizations such as FEMA and HUD and specifically thanked the President and Congress for their efforts to allocate this funding.

HYPOTHESES

We focus in this paper on the moral reinforcer role of expressions of gratitude, not simply the feeling or experience of gratitude, in a mass communications context. Expressions of gratitude help the expresser by focusing attention outward (Emmons and McCullough 2004), and help both the giver and receiver by maintaining a “dynamic equilibrium” between the two

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(Heilbrunn 1972). In addition to the Carey, et al. (1976) study which finds that expressions of gratitude have a positive impact on sales and reduce the number of delinquent accounts, Maheux, Legault, and Lambert (1989) demonstrate the positive effects of including “thank you” in mail surveys, and Lynn and McCall (2000) and Rind and Bordia (1995) demonstrate the same effect when written on the back of restaurant checks. Additionally, Clark, Northrop and Barkshire (1988) find that sending “thank you” letters to juvenile case workers assigned to youth in a residential treatment program increases the number of visits to their clients. Most importantly for our purposes, studies find that recipients of sincere expressions of gratitude (benefactors) are more likely to act prosocially toward the expresser (beneficiary) and other parties (see, e.g., McGovern, Ditzian, and Taylor 1975; Goldman, Seever, and Seever 1982) even to the extent of accepting more electric shocks for a confederate than those who were not thanked (Clark, Northrop and Barkshire 1988). As a result, we hypothesize,

H₁: Those who saw or heard ‘thank you’ will be more positive in their responses toward Louisiana³ than those who did not see or hear such messages.

Advertising research finds that advertising messages are more effective when consumers are more involved with the advertisement (Greenwald and Leavitt 1984; Homer and Kahle 1990; Laczniaik, Muehling, and Gorssbart 1989). Consumers are more involved in advertisements when the ad is personally relevant, relating to an important aspect or interest in their lives (Lord and Burnkrant 1993; Zaichowsky 1985). Involvement dictates the information sought and attended to by consumers, how that information is processed, and the degree to which it influences their attitudes and behavioral intentions. To illustrate, Muehling, Laczniaik and Andrews (1993) provide a thorough review of the earliest marketing and advertising research concerning the information processing aspect of involvement. They report highly involved

³ “Responses toward Louisiana” imply all three dependent measures (attitudes; WTP; willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth about Louisiana).

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consumers attend to messages concerning the involved object and consider both advertisement attitudes and brand beliefs when constructing brand attitudes. Further, personal relevance itself encourages consumers to provide more positive responses, form more enduring attitudes, and act accordingly (Andrews, Durvasula and Akhter 1990; Grau and Folse 2007; Lafferty 1996).

Individuals' involvement in the state's relief and recovery efforts are expected to coincide with favorable attitudes toward Louisiana. It is likely that those who participate in relief and/or recovery efforts by donating either time or money find the issue important and should thus demonstrate a higher level of involvement with a 'thank you' ad from Louisiana than would those who did not. As such, we contend that voluntary involvement in recovery efforts demonstrates the relevance of the issue to these individuals and expect them to hold more favorable evaluations of the state. Thus, we formally propose,

H₂: Those who participated in Katrina relief and/or recovery efforts (whether or not they were focused on Louisiana) will be significantly more positive toward Louisiana than those who did not participate in relief and/or recovery efforts.

An important question is whether 'thank you' has an impact beyond the intrinsic benefits of helping and the attention effects of participation, or if the resulting prior positive predisposition acts as a ceiling on the desired effect of 'thank you.' That is, should we expect those who participated *and* see or hear 'thank you' to be more positive toward Louisiana than those who just participated? From a theoretical perspective, we must keep in mind what is happening here. A 'thank you' implies that a benefit has been given. Giesler (2006) demonstrates that in gift-giving systems (he studied exchanges on the music-sharing system Napster) various expectations concerning future exchanges, including reciprocity, are constructed. Immediately upon conveyance of the benefit a (one-sided) relationship exists, with the potential expectation of reciprocal behavior (i.e., a 'thank you') from the beneficiary, receipt

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of which may transform a one-sided exchange into a relationship (Houston and Gassenheimer 1987; Nevin 1995).

Consistent with the rationale above, respondents who participated in relief/rebuilding activities are likely positively pre-disposed toward the state because of their acts of donating, and as a result we may expect that those benefactors are more attuned to messages from Louisiana with the expectation that recognition of benefits may be forthcoming. We expect that the effect of completing the gratitude cycle (Raggio, et al. 2008) or “coming full circle” by expressing gratitude for a received benefit is similar to the “you’re welcome” effect described by Bone, et al. (2008), in which the simple act of acknowledging a customer’s “thank you” has a positive impact on loyalty. When the relief and/or recovery efforts are acknowledged or “repaid” with an expression of gratitude, the reciprocity norm is satisfied, the potential for perceived ingratitude is removed, and the expression of gratitude should produce more favorable outcomes than those produced by involvement alone. Thus, we hypothesize,

H_{3a}: Those who participated in Katrina relief and/or recovery efforts (whether or not they were focused on Louisiana) and saw or heard ‘thank you’ will be significantly more positive toward Louisiana than those who participated but did not see or hear ‘thank you.’

Likewise, it should be expected that participation will have a significant effect above merely seeing or hearing ‘thank you.’ That is, those respondents who both participated and saw or heard ‘thank you’ should be more positive than those who only saw or heard ‘thank you.’

Thus, we hypothesize,

H_{3b}: Those who saw or heard ‘thank you’ and participated in Katrina relief and/or recovery efforts (whether or not they were focused on Louisiana) will be significantly

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more positive toward Louisiana than those who only saw or hear 'thank you' but did not participate

The definition of gratitude implies that *intentionality* is a critical motivator of gratitude (Harpham 2004; Schimmel 2004). But Roberts (2004) suggests that intentionality is subjectively determined and that neither good intentions on the part of the benefactor nor an actual benefit are required for a person to feel gratitude. Indeed, the perception of good intentions may be sufficient. That is, even if a benefactor is unsuccessful in delivering a desired outcome, the benefactor's true motivation is irrelevant as long as the beneficiary perceives benevolence as the motivator. Regardless, in the case of individuals donating money, time, or other resources toward rebuilding and/or recovery efforts, there can be little question that benefits were given intentionally. Only in the case where taxpayers provide assistance indirectly via transfer payments from the federal government to individuals, communities, or organizations could it be said that no intention to benefit must exist. However, we specifically ask respondents whether they participated in relief or recovery efforts in ways "other than paying federal income taxes." As a result, it is clear that citizens of the state should recognize an intent to benefit on the part of many people across the country, which may have the potential to generate a sincere feeling and expression of gratitude.

Solomon (2004) notes that appropriate expressions of gratitude should be *sincere*. In order to be an effective moral reinforcer, an expression of gratitude (like the original intent to benefit) must be sincere, not driven merely by duty, guilt or anger (Harpham 2004). It should have the effect of binding the beneficiary to the benefactor through a *willing* indebtedness (Roberts 2004). Thus, gratitude includes much more than the recognition of a debt based on equity; rather, it is based upon what Roberts (2004, p. 68) calls a "friendly and affectionate reciprocity." Scholars have begun to examine issues of sincerity in various domains related to

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marketing, including consumer-salesperson interactions (Campbell and Kirmani 2000), brand personality (Johar, Sengupta and Aaker 2005) and corporate social responsibility efforts (Bhattacharya and Sen 2004).

The persuasion knowledge model (Friestad and Wright 1994) emphasizes that consumers develop knowledge about specific marketing strategies and tactics. When they suspect insincerity or self-serving motives, they are likely to respond unfavorably. Given the demonstrated benefit to the state (\$61+ billion in Federal aid plus \$3+ billion in private aid) and the demonstrated *intent* to benefit, it is clear that the citizens of Louisiana should experience gratitude and may be expected to sincerely express it. However, given the tenants of the persuasion knowledge model, some may perceive insincerity in the State's "Come Fall in Love..." campaign since it includes a call to action based on increasing tourism to the state, and only the TV executions include a 'thank you.' Further, McCullough, Kirkpatrick, Emmons and Larson (2001) note the potential reactance effects of pairing an expression of gratitude for past economic activity with an invitation to participate in future economic activity by highlighting the fact that subjects in the Carey, et al. (1976) study were less likely to spend more money when an expression of gratitude for a past purchase was paired with an invitation to an upcoming sale than they were when given only the expression of gratitude. Finally, McAdams and Bauer (2004) suggest that excessive expressions of gratitude may cause the recipient to suspect ulterior motives. This could be a problem for the state if individuals in key markets receive a large number of exposures to the Tourism advertising.

Based on Solomon's (2004) comment that appropriate expressions of gratitude should be sincere and the potential reactance to the state's expressions of gratitude we hypothesize,

H₄: Those who perceived a 'thank you' message to be more sincere will be more positive toward Louisiana than those who perceived a message to be less sincere.

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Affective Commitment

It has been posited that the societal norm of reciprocity (and associated fear of appearing ungrateful) contributes to a beneficiary's desire to express gratitude (Becker 1986; Buck 2004; Komter 2004; McCullough and Tsang 2004). But reciprocity is a weak explanation for why expressions of gratitude would produce a desire on the part of the benefactor to further benefit the original beneficiary, or, in our context, have more positive attitudes and behaviors across a wide array of measures such as those we hypothesize toward the state, its people, products and services, and travel. Otherwise, benefactors may never provide the original benefit if they believe that receiving a 'thank you' will obligate them to provide further benefits. In such a case, expressions of gratitude become simply a way to further obligate the benefactor. Instead, some other mechanism must link the beneficiary and benefactor and induce a continuance and deepening of the relationship. We suggest affective commitment as just such a mechanism.

Consistent with Gruen, Summers and Acito (2000), we consider affective commitment an enduring bond, a sense of current and continued belonging or emotional attachment to the state and its people. Conceptualized as the emotional or psychological component of commitment (Allen and Meyer 1990), it is elicited when consumers identify with a company and its values (Morgan and Hunt 1994). The identification can result from reciprocity and personal involvement (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos 2005, Johnson, Herrmann and Huber 2006). More recently, Joshi (2009) demonstrated that communication efforts also promote this bond.

This stream of work suggests expressions or behaviors that promote this felt unity will produce affective commitment. Further, because affective commitment entails an inclination to act in the future and maintain a relationship (Bolton, Lemon and Verhoef 2004), it produces favorable marketplace and citizenship behaviors, making it particularly applicable to the chain of effects between expressions of gratitude and our future-oriented WTP and WOM measures. In

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fact, researchers find a positive relationship between commitment and purchase intentions (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, and Iacobucci 2001; Garbarino and Johnson 1999), including the likelihood to cross-buy additional services from a provider to whom a buyer is committed (Verhoef 2001). Affective commitment also induces behaviors such as conscientiousness and helping (Colquitt et al., 2007). In sum, there is strong evidence that affective commitment can be elicited by communication, such as expressions of gratitude, and result in benefits to the expresser, which in this case is the state and its people.

There is also strong theoretical support for affective commitment as a mediator between marketing activities and positive affective evaluations (e.g., attitudes) (Bolton, Lemon and Verhoef 2004, Joshi 2009). Bolton, Lemon and Verhoef (2004) propose a conceptual model of customer asset management that positions affective commitment as a mediator between marketing instruments and affective evaluations, and suggest that the combination of marketing instruments, affective commitment, and positive affective evaluations will increase relationship length. They note that social programs (compared against economic benefits) as marketing instruments mediated by affective commitment would have the most positive impact on affective evaluations. We propose that the gratitude campaigns we study are not unlike their social programs and should have similar effects, specifically,

H₅: Affective commitment will mediate the relationship between expressions of gratitude and the outcome variables.

DEPENDENT MEASURES

We seek to understand the impact of expressions of gratitude in a mass marketing campaign by assessing the impact of Louisiana's post-hurricanes "thank you" campaigns on individuals' attitudes toward the state, its citizens and brands, the willingness on the part of individuals to buy its brands, pay for those brands and travel, and willingness to spread positive

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word-of-mouth (WOM) about the state. In a broad assessment of effects, these measures are critical to the health of the Louisiana economy and reflect sentiments toward four different aspects of the state: Louisiana's people, government, tourism, and products and services (business output).

We analyze the impacts of expressions of gratitude on three dependent measures. Attitudes toward the people of Louisiana, the state of Louisiana, and the products and services that come from Louisiana (from Ajzen and Fishbein 1980), were combined to form a single attitude measure (Attitudes). Willingness to pay a price premium for products and services from Louisiana and willingness to pay price premium for travel to Louisiana (from Netemeyer, et al. 2004), along with percent price premium willing to pay for products and services from Louisiana and travel to Louisiana were combined to form a single measure of willingness to pay (WTP). Finally, we evaluated willingness to spread positive word-of-mouth about Louisiana (WOM) (Cronin and Taylor 1994). We also collected a measure of affective commitment as developed by Gruen, Summers, and Acito (2000). (Complete scales and reliability measures listed in Appendix.)

Bar-Tal, Bar-Zohar, Greenberg and Hermon (1977) find that the relationship between the benefactor and beneficiary is important. Gratitude is felt most strongly in a relationship that does not involve obligation, specifically when a subject receives help from a stranger rather than a parent or friend. Tsang and McCullough (2004, p. 295) note that researchers should "take into account the relationship between benefactor and recipient when investigating grateful responses to help." In our study, we heed this advice by considering the state in which a respondent lives, their distance from New Orleans, whether that person is a former resident or friends with or related to a current resident, and whether the respondent participated in relief/rebuilding activities. These control measures are described below.

NATIONAL SURVEY

Online surveys were administered to a national panel organized by Beta Research Corp. of Syosset, NY from November 9-17, 2006, 15 months after the hurricane, and after the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism completed its “Come Fall In Love...” campaign. Additionally, others (e.g., New Orleans Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and “Louisiana Thanks You!”) had also run “thank you” ads or radio PSAs, and had completed those campaigns two months prior to the execution of our survey. The goal of the survey was to determine the impact of Louisiana’s “thank you” campaigns to see if the positive effects of gratitude reported in the psychology literature would accrue to an entire state as the result of nationwide marketing campaigns. Our intent was to judge the impact of the ads and ‘thank you’ message in a real-world event study.

Survey Methodology

The respondents for the survey were recruited from the Beta Research Panel, a panel comprised of over 50,000 persons over the age of 18 from across the U.S. Potential respondents for the study were e-mailed an invitation to participate in the study, which included a hyperlink to the survey site, as well as a password unique to that participant, insuring that each respondent could take the survey only one time. Beta Research hosted and managed the online survey.

More than 2,500 out-of-state respondents participated, resulting in 2,325 complete surveys from 49 states (except Louisiana⁴), plus D.C. Of the respondents, 1,246 (53.6%) had participated in hurricane relief or recovery efforts (Question wording: “Other than paying federal income tax, have you participated in Katrina relief and/or recovery efforts [such as contributed money, volunteer work, etc.]?”). Overall, women completed 1,278 surveys (54.97%) and men completed 1,047 (45.03%). The overall mean age of respondents was 43.73 (SD 11.84;

⁴ We collected 364 responses from Louisiana residents, but these were not relevant to the present study and are not reported here.

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range 18-88). Overall average age for men was 44.78 (SD 12.24; range 18-88). Overall average age for women was 42.87 (SD 11.44; range 18-81). Of the 2,325 complete surveys, 550 (23.66%) of the respondents had seen or heard a ‘thank you’ from Louisiana (Question wording: “Have you seen any advertisements or commercials from Louisiana in the past six months that have expressed a ‘thank you?’”).

In order to demonstrate the appropriateness of the online sample and to address issues of non-response bias, we note that the email invitation included only a brief description of the research subject (“consumer tourism survey”); thus, respondents did not know the exact nature of the study before they agreed to participate (or decline). The survey was completed by respondents from all 50 states, plus D.C. Additionally, an independent measure of number of people who saw the “Come Fall in Love...” campaign, completed by the Louisiana Department of Tourism, indicates that approximately 34% of the U.S. population viewed ads from the campaign (Louisiana Department of Tourism 2007), a number somewhat close to our measure, indicating that if anything our sample is biased toward those who did not see the campaign. In addition, we analyze separately the effects on those who saw and those who did not, and were able to collect a wide array of control measures to help ensure the generalizability of the results.

The following single-item control variables were collected (data descriptions and exact question wording available from authors): whether the respondent lived in the state of Louisiana; zip code (to calculate distance from New Orleans); whether the respondent participated in Katrina relief/recovery activities (whether focused on Louisiana or not); whether the respondent was a former resident of Louisiana; whether the respondent was related to or friends with Louisiana residents; whether the respondent had seen or heard a “thank you” ad from Louisiana; the number of times a respondent had seen or heard a ‘Thank You’ ad in a variety of media; age; sex.

SURVEY RESULTS

Tests of Measures

Table 1 reports correlations among survey measures. All scales were reliable as all Cronbach alphas were above 0.84 (see Appendix). A test for discriminant validity was conducted testing whether the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is higher than the squared correlation between that construct and any other (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The test revealed acceptable discriminant validity as the lowest AVE was 0.627 (WTP) and the highest correlation was 0.671 between Attitudes and WOM (squared = 0.45).

Hypothesis Tests

To examine the predictions in H_1 - H_{3b} , we performed a 2 (seen vs. not seen) X 2 (participated vs. not participated) MANCOVA against Attitudes, WOM, WTP, with covariates Age, Sex, Distance, Former, Related, and # Times Seen. The multivariate results reveal a significant interaction between seen and participation ($F(3, 2313) = 5.96, p < .001$) and significant main effects of both seen ($F(1, 2315) = 31.64, p < .001$) and participation ($F(1, 2315) = 15.54, p < .001$). In support of H_1 , univariate results indicate those respondents who had seen or heard ‘thank you,’ were significantly more positive in their responses to all three dependent measures ($F_{\text{Attitudes}}(1, 2315) = 46.35, p < .001, M's 5.65$ vs 4.98 ; $F_{\text{WOM}}(1, 2315) = 86.85, p < .001, M's 5.41$ vs. 4.37 ; $F_{\text{WTP}}(1, 2315) = 42.81, p < .001, M's 2.81$ vs. 2.07). All means are reported in Table 2. Significant covariates include Age (Attitudes, WTP), Sex (Attitudes), Distance (Attitudes, WOM), Former (WTP), Related (Attitudes, WOM), # Times Seen (Attitudes, WOM, WTP).

[Insert Tables 1 & 2 about here]

The number of times participants saw a thank you advertisement (#Times Seen) was the only significant covariate across all three dependent measures ($F_{\text{Attitudes}}(1, 2315) = 8.95, p =$

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.003; $F_{WOM}(1, 2315) = 7.26, p = .007$; $F_{WTP}(1, 2315) = 72.81, p < .001$), and we expect it to have a positive impact on evaluations. We ask respondents how many times they had seen or heard ‘thank you’ across different media: billboard, newspaper, magazine, radio, television. The survey offered the following response options for each medium: 0; 1; 2-3; 4-7; 8-10; 11-20; 21-30; 31-40; 41-50. Our measure of Number Times Seen is a sum across all media, using the midpoint of each range option for computation (e.g., 15 for the 11-20 range). Because of the low number of respondents in the top three groups, we combined these into a single group (i.e., 21-50, $n = 9$). Table 3 reports the mean scores by number of times seen group. It is clear that number of times seen has a positive impact on respondents’ evaluations as they are nearly monotonically increasing as # Times Seen increases (group ‘4-7’ for Attitudes and WOM notwithstanding). It appears that the ‘thank you’ ads do not exhibit wearout effects more than a year after the hurricane. As a result, the concerns about reactance due to including the tourism message (McCullough, et al. 2001) and excessive exposure (McAdams and Bauer 2004) seem unfounded.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Of course, as presented, the data provide equal support for the opposite causality; namely, that people who have more positive prior attitudes toward the state are more likely to notice and remember its advertising.⁵ It is well known that people pay more attention to things that they care more about, and this causal link has been demonstrated repeatedly (e.g., Burke and Srull 1988; Kahneman 1973). To address the issue of a reverse causal link, we focused only on those respondents who are not current or former residents of Louisiana, not related to or friends with residents, and did not participate in recovery/rebuilding activities (listed as “Not Associated” in Table 2). These respondents should have the least prior attachment to the state, and, given the

⁵ We thank a reviewer for pointing this out.

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ease with which individuals could have participated in *any* support activities (e.g., online donation to the Red Cross or the Bush-Clinton Katrina Relief Fund, solicitations through mass merchandisers and grocery chains, churches, community groups, etc.), including those not specifically targeted toward Louisiana, and that more than half of the overall respondents *did* participate in some type of assistance, these respondents have demonstrated a certain degree of detachment, or at least a lack of the kind of attachment that would indicate more positive prior attitudes, etc. The results of a MANCOVA on this group based on whether the respondent had seen or not seen a ‘thank you’ reveals a significant impact of seeing ‘thank you’ on Attitudes and WOM ($F_{\text{Attitudes}}(1, 936) = 9.19, p = .003$; $F_{\text{WOM}}(1, 936) = 12.51, p < .001$); however, WTP was not significant ($F_{\text{WTP}}(1, 936) = 1.92, p = .166$). This result demonstrates a positive impact of ‘thank you’ on two of the three dependent measures, even for those who may not be positively predisposed to Louisiana and potentially less likely than others to pay attention to advertisements from the state. Thus, our result is even more encouraging with respect to the positive impacts of expressions of gratitude in a mass media context, as positive effects spill over to non-targets.

In H_2 , we predict that those who did compared to those who did not participate in the relief and/or recovery efforts would hold more favorable evaluations. The univariate results support this hypothesis across all three dependent measures ($F_{\text{Attitudes}}(1, 2315) = 20.83, p < .001$, M 's 5.37 vs 4.87; $F_{\text{WOM}}(1, 2315) = 38.54, p < .001$, M 's 4.92 vs. 4.27; $F_{\text{WTP}}(1, 2315) = 27.49, p < .001$, M 's 2.38 vs. 2.10) We also hypothesize in H_{3a} that ‘thank you’ will have a positive impact on individuals that participated in relief and rebuilding activities above the effect of mere involvement, and will actually make them even more positive toward the state than those who participated but did not see or hear ‘thank you.’ Though planned comparisons of mean differences for all three dependent measures were significant (all $p < .001$), the univariate interactions between seen and participation was significant only for WTP ($F_{\text{Attitudes}}(1, 2315) =$

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.942, $p = .332$; $F_{\text{WOM}}(1, 2315) = .081, p = .775$; $F_{\text{WTP}}(1, 2315) = 13.151, p < .001$); thus, we report only the planned comparison results for WTP. In partial support of H_{2b} concerning those who participated, seeing or hearing ‘thank you’ (versus not) resulted in higher WTP ($F_{\text{WTP}}(1, 2315) = 65.05, p < .001, M$'s 3.01 vs. 2.12) (listed as “Participated”/ H_{3a} in Table 2). Likewise, in partial support of H_{2c} which considers those who saw or heard a ‘thank you,’ the results of a planned comparison indicate higher WTP among those who did relative to those who did not ($F_{\text{WTP}}(1, 2315) = 25.296, p < .001$) (listed as “Seen”/ H_{3b} in Table 2).

We predict in H_4 that those who perceive the expressions of gratitude as more rather than less sincere will be more favorable in their evaluations. Respondents who indicated that they had seen an ad were asked about the *perceived sincerity* of the ads they saw (“ads were sincere”), producing 550 responses. We divided the respondents who saw or heard ‘thank you’ into three groups based on their level of perceived sincerity (high sincerity ($n = 200, M = 6.57$); medium sincerity ($n = 177, M = 5.05$); low sincerity ($n = 173, M = 3.31$)). We conducted a MANCOVA against Perceived Sincerity for Attitudes, WOM and WTP. In partial support of H_4 , we find Perceived Sincerity has a significant impact on Attitudes and WOM, such that those who perceived the ad to be more sincere had more positive evaluations ($F_{\text{Attitudes}}(2, 507) = 6.127, p = .002$; $F_{\text{WOM}}(2, 507) = 6.089, p = .002$; $F_{\text{WTP}}(2, 507) = 1.1514, p = .221$). Significant covariates are Age (Attitudes, WOM), Sex (Attitudes), Distance (Attitudes, WOM), Former (WTP), Related (Attitudes, WOM, WTP), # Times Seen (Attitudes, WOM, WTP). We regressed Age, Sex, Distance, Former, Related and # Times Seen against perceived sincerity. Interestingly, Age ($p < .001$) and Sex ($p = .017$) are the only significant predictors. Number of Times Seen is insignificant ($p = .193$), indicating no evidence for overexposure.

Affective Commitment as a Mediator of Effects in Survey Data

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In H₅, we predict that affective commitment acts as a mediator between the expressions of gratitude and the outcome measures. Following Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998), we completed four steps to assess its mediating role. Our measures of Seen and # Times Seen serve as predictor variables. Our dependent measures (Attitudes, WOM, WTP) serve as outcome variables, and Affective Commitment serves as the mediator. Table 1 demonstrates significant correlations between both predictor variables and the outcome variables, satisfying Step 1. Table 1 also shows significant correlations between the predictor variables and affective commitment, satisfying Step 2.⁶ Table 4 demonstrates that affective commitment remains a significant predictor of our outcome measures when the predictor variable is entered simultaneously into the regression equation, and the regression coefficients (β s) of the predictor variables decrease significantly when the mediator variable is included, satisfying Step 3. The Sobel test (Baron and Kenny 1986) confirms a significant decrease in the regression coefficients when the mediator variable is included. Table 4 indicates partial mediation in all six tests. In support of H₅, this analysis indicates that affective commitment serves a mediating role in our survey data.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Gratitude is an important topic in the history of ideas. Expressions of gratitude are frequent in practice, and gratitude draws attention from researchers in fields such as psychology, consumer behavior, organizational behavior, anthropology, philosophy, and religion, among others. We have shown that gratitude works: through a national survey, we have demonstrated the powerful impact of gratitude on outcome measures that are important to marketers. Analysis of survey data provides consistent evidence that those who saw or heard ‘thank you’ and those

⁶ We note the moderately strong correlations between Seen and # Times Seen (predictor variables) and affective commitment (.255 and .286, respectively; Table 1). We also note the strong correlations (all > .44) between our dependent measures and Affective Commitment (potential mediator).

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who participated in relief or recovery efforts have more positive evaluations of Louisiana on all three dependent measures. Further, we are able to demonstrate that ‘thank you’ has a positive impact even on those who did not participate and thus may not have been as positively predisposed toward the state and its message. Consequently, our results are encouraging to those marketing managers who may want to publicly thank individuals in a medium that is viewed broadly, as it may have the potential to impact those that did not participate, effectively enlarging the target audience (e.g., the Microsoft ad described in the introduction).

There is evidence that the ‘thank you’ message did not suffer from wearout effects or reactance to the inclusion of a tourism-related message, as positive effects of seeing or hearing ‘thank you’ accrued to even 50 exposures, indicating that viewers may process expressions of gratitude differently than they do other commercial messages. Further, there is no evidence of overexposure, as number of times seen did not affect perceived sincerity. These results confirm the positive impacts of expressions of gratitude found in the psychology literature, extend the results beyond the interpersonal setting and demonstrate the potential for expressions of gratitude in mass marketing messages.

Finally, we show that affective commitment acts as a mediator, indicating that message factors that can increase affective commitment can improve Attitudes, WTP, and WOM. More importantly, given the common core emotional elements of both gratitude and affective commitment along with the exchange basis for their development, we suggest marketers need to consider gratitude in their study of relational exchanges. Here, we find gratitude potentially cements an emotional attachment, which extant work in relationship marketing demonstrates as a relationship strength measure. We suggest it is time for marketers to contribute to a deeper understanding of gratitude by exploring gratitude within the consumer behavior, strategic marketing, and public policy contexts.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Managerial Implications

Viewed from a larger, more conceptual perspective, we believe the theory of gratitude offers significant implications for current business practices. For instance, it contributes to extant knowledge developed in both the business to-business and consumer-brand relationship marketing domains (Dwyer, Schurr and Oh 1987; Fournier 1998). Arguably, it is a fundamental element that should be considered, as it elicits an enduring emotional bond which then contributes to attitudes that benefit the relationship partner. Considering the seminal relationship marketing article by Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987) in which relationship stages and the dyadic nature of relationships are emphasized, the theory of gratitude might offer further rationale as to why consumers move through various stages of a relationship. Expressions of gratitude may encourage a relationship to progress from the expansion stage to the commitment stage. Likewise, perceived ingratitude might cause that same relationship to digress from the stage of expansion to that of mere exploration. Expressions of gratitude may also strengthen consumer-brand relationships. In Fournier (1989), various gradations of relationships such as friendships, kinships and marriages are presented, and the depth of these relationship types is likely altered by gratitude exchanges.

We also believe, given the results concerning sincerity, that gratitude has implications for corporate branding and persuasion management. In regards to corporate branding, 'thank you' messages have the largest impact on those who are directly involved, but we also suspect a positive impact on those who are not involved but see a company or organization as one that readily expresses gratitude to its partners, customers, or employees. Expressions of gratitude become linked to the brand, and such associations can bolster a company's image and strengthen consumer-company identification (Bhattacharya and Sen 2004). However, our results confirm

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that managers should consider the perceived sincerity of their efforts during the development and testing of any campaign, as perceived insincerity has the potential to reduce the benefits of any expression of gratitude.

Public Policy Implications

From a public policy standpoint, it has not been demonstrated that public financing of such goodwill campaigns as those described here have the effects that their sponsors desire. As advances in technology make it possible for individuals to receive messages from corporations or from governmental or other organizations about disasters and crises around the world, it becomes more and more likely that gratitude will be expressed through mass media instead of through more personal communications.

At this writing, Burma has been hit by a terrible cyclone and news reports suggest that the damage may exceed that of the 2004 Tsunami. China is digging out from a devastating earthquake, and two new hurricanes (Gustav and Ike) have devastated areas in Louisiana and Texas. Already we see email and web requests for assistance through various NGOs and other relief organizations. These countries and relief organizations are likely to continue to use electronic mass media to broadcast calls for help and also may benefit from such public expressions of gratitude as those from Louisiana. We have known for centuries that such expressions are the right thing to do. We are coming to realize that they may also have positive long-term effects.

Limitations

Corporate events are rarely (if ever) as large or as engaging as a natural disaster; as a result, a firm thanking its customers for buying its products or services is likely to elicit a different response from customers and the broader public than Louisiana was able to elicit from the US population. We expect that the corporate ‘thank you’ campaigns described at the

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beginning of this article will have less impact than the one from Louisiana. Further, we combined the effects from several different campaigns, including formal and grassroots efforts. Corporate campaigns are likely to be more centrally organized and coordinated among elements. While this is a difference, it is not clear whether coordination will produce a more effective or less believable campaign.

As with all field studies, issues of ecological validity are less of a concern than issues of control. We were not able to assign respondents to conditions or to determine accurately which actually participated in relief or rebuilding activities or saw or heard ‘thank you’ messages from Louisiana and exactly how many times and in what media. Further, although we used a standard frequency measure in the survey, respondents’ estimates of number of times a message was seen across a variety of media are subject to substantial measurement error, especially up to six months after exposure (see Menon [1993] and Menon Raghurir and Schwarz [1995] for research on behavioral frequency judgments). We expect that our estimates of those who participated, saw or heard ‘thank you’ and number of times seen include socially acceptable responses (false positives and overestimates of exposure), but since the numbers are the only ones available, we are forced to use them. We allow that our question was vague enough that respondents could include a variety of activities that would only indirectly benefit the state or its people (e.g., “gave directions to a displaced person”). But these socially acceptable responses were removed from analysis when we considered those not associated with the state, producing a more conservative test of effects.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that a single cross-sectional field study that is highly context-dependent is insufficient to definitively establish causal linkages and directionality of effects. Additional experimental work where subjects can be assigned to conditions and adequate controls exist is needed to support and refine the conclusions drawn here.

Further Research

Although we find no evidence of reactance against the inclusion of a tourism message, Carey, et al.'s (1976) study in a commercial setting indicates that such reactance is a possibility. Further research should explore issues related to the coupling of expressions of gratitude and requests for future economic activity or appropriate temporal separation. It is possible that consumers want to complete a gratitude cycle (Raggio, Walz, Bose and Folse 2008) and have a period of time pass before beginning a new commercial exchange, but it may depend upon the type of benefit provided. For example, a bank customer that has an overdraft charge forgiven may not desire immediately to open a new account or purchase an investment product. On the other hand, a customer that is grateful for the notification of a "preferred customer sale" may appreciate notification of a future sale that accompanies an expression of thanks.

Related to temporal issues, Komter (2004) suggests that an appropriate amount of time must pass between the receipt of a benefit and the expression of gratitude. This is also true in the case of a return gift, "because the resources to be able to return the gift appropriately have to be found and mobilized" (Komter 2004, p. 208). Marketing managers need to know the appropriate lag between receipt of a customer's benefit and its expression of gratitude and whether it is possible to express gratitude too soon or too late to be effective.

In a related stream of inquiry, it is important to understand for how long a beneficiary should say 'thank you' to receive maximum benefit, and if there are any negative effects of continuing the message for too long (McAdams and Bauer 2004). It follows that companies that experience similar disasters or other crises in the future will want to know how to generate the same effects that were produced by expressions of gratitude once the time for such expressions has passed. Affective commitment is demonstrated to be one such mechanism, but we encourage the search for others.

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We noted the large outpouring of support for the state in the form of both public and private funds, in addition to countless hours of volunteer efforts. As a result, the benefits to Louisiana were great and an expression of gratitude was likely expected, resulting in predictably high sincerity scores for the campaigns (7-point scale $m=5.64$; S.D. 1.648). There are few corporate events as catastrophic or of such widespread interest. It will be important for researchers to understand the circumstances which may lead to a corporate expression of gratitude being seen as more or less sincere. Morales (2005) finds that once consumers become aware of the expected positive results of a corporate action, they are less likely to experience gratitude. It remains to be seen whether her results extend to the situation where consumers understand that expressions of gratitude are likely to influence consumer perceptions in favor of the firm that expresses gratitude. It is possible that the moral injunction against ingratitude will only cause consumers to not penalize the firm that delivers such an expression. Either case may represent positive results for the expressing firm: When persuasion knowledge is *not* activated, the expression of gratitude could produce pro-firm evaluations; whereas, when persuasion knowledge *is* activated, the expression of gratitude would remove the negative consequences of the firm been seen as ungrateful.

As with any new field of study, many diverse approaches and perspectives will benefit our understanding of the construct and its implications for marketers, but history, marketing practice, and the empirical results presented here all commend the study of gratitude to marketing scholars.

Table 1.
Correlations Among Survey Measures.

	Attitudes	WOM	WTP	Affective Commitment	Seen	# Times Seen	Age	Sex	Distance	Former	Related
Attitudes	1.000										
WOM	.671 **	1.000									
WTP	.347 **	.499 **	1.000								
Affective Commitment	.441 **	.621 **	.625 **	1.000							
Seen	-.214 **	-.278 **	-.278 **	-.286 **	1.000						
# Times Seen	.158 **	.195 **	.300 **	.255 **	-.490 **	1.000					
Age	.101 **	.045 *	-.066 **	-.033	-.035	-.030	1.000				
Sex	.095 **	.012	-.007	-.038	.031	-.048 *	-.080 **	1.000			
Distance	-.080 **	-.123 **	-.047 *	-.115 **	.026	-.049 *	.041 *	.020	1.000		
Former	-.073 **	-.097 **	-.128 **	-.218 **	.055 **	-.081 **	-.041 *	.023	.119 **	1.000	
Related	-.105 **	-.142 **	-.106 **	-.211 **	.114 **	-.087 **	.014	-.010	.101 **	.240 **	1.000

** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed).

* $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed).

Table 2.
Results from National Survey:
Cell Means for H₁ – H_{3b} and Non-Hypothesized Effects Groups.

DV / Cases	Hypothesis	Condition	n	Mean	Condition	n	Mean
Attitudes		All Respondents		2325			5.137
All Respondents	H ₁	Seen	550	5.646	Not Seen	1775	4.980
All Respondents	H ₂	Participated	1246	5.367	Not Participated	1079	4.872
Participated	H _{3a}	Seen	364	5.758	Not Seen	882	5.205
Seen	H _{3b}	Participated	364	5.758	Not Participated	186	5.425
Not Associated ^a	n/a	Seen	144	5.355	Not Seen	798	4.739
WOM		All Respondents		2325			4.616
All Respondents	H ₁	Seen	550	5.408	Not Seen	1775	4.371
All Respondents	H ₂	Participated	1246	4.916	Not Participated	1079	4.270
Participated	H _{3a}	Seen	364	5.604	Not Seen	882	4.632
Seen	H _{3b}	Participated	364	5.604	Not Participated	186	5.024
Not Associated ^a	n/a	Seen	144	4.931	Not Seen	798	4.078
WTP		All Respondents		2325			2.246
All Respondents	H ₁	Seen	550	2.814	Not Seen	1775	2.070
All Respondents	H ₂	Participated	1246	2.376	Not Participated	1079	2.095
Participated	H _{3a}	Seen	364	3.009	Not Seen	882	2.115
Seen	H _{3b}	Participated	364	3.009	Not Participated	186	2.432
Not Associated ^a	n/a	Seen	144	2.295	Not Seen	798	2.022

^a "Not Associated" refers to out-of-state respondents that did not participate in relief/rebuilding, not a former resident, not related to or friends with those affected by the storm.

Table 3.
Mean Scores on Dependent Measures for Number of Times Seen Groups.

# Times Seen	<i>n</i>	Attitudes	WOM	WTP
0	1,775	4.98	4.37	2.07
1	149	5.52	5.21	2.60
2-3	219	5.63	5.44	2.65
4-7	107	5.57	5.23	2.82
8-10	42	5.96	5.79	3.19
11-20	22	6.09	6.11	4.13
21-50	9	6.47	6.50	5.14

Notes: Table represents mean scores for each group.

Table 4.
Results of Mediation Analysis for Affective Commitment
Using Seen and Number Times Seen as Predictors.

<i>Seen as Predictor</i>	<u><i>Simple Regressions</i></u>		<u><i>Multiple Regressions (with Mediator)</i></u>		<i>Mediation</i>	<i>Sobel z^a</i>
	<i>Seen (β)</i>		<i>Seen (β)</i>	<i>Affective Commitment (β)</i>		
Attitudes	.666 ***		.297 ***	.515 ***	<i>partial</i>	11.923 ***
WOM	1.037 ***		.409 ***	.877 ***	<i>partial</i>	13.274 ***
WTP	.744 ***		.289 ***	.634 ***	<i>partial</i>	13.282 ***
<i># Times Seen as Predictor</i>	<i># Times Seen (β)</i>		<i># Times Seen (β)</i>	<i>Affective Commitment (β)</i>	<i>Mediation</i>	<i>Sobel z^a</i>
Attitudes	.063 ***		.019 **	0.534 ***	<i>partial</i>	11.542 ***
WOM	.092 ***		.019 **	0.909 ***	<i>partial</i>	12.656 ***
WTP	.102 ***		.051 ***	0.626 ***	<i>partial</i>	12.585 ***

^a Sobel z reported are based on Aroian (1944; 1946) version of the Sobel Test (Baron and Kenny 1986).

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .02$

Note: All regression coefficients for the same predictor are significantly smaller when Affective Commitment added to regression.

APPENDIX

Scales used in National Survey

Attitudes – (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) [Cronbach's $\alpha = .915$ across all 3 attitude scales]

Three items using 7 point semantic differential scales anchored by Unfavorable/Favorable;

Bad/Good; Negative/Positive

[People Attitude]: My attitude toward the people of Louisiana is:

[State Attitude]: My attitude toward the state of Louisiana is:

[Product/Service Attitude]: My attitude toward products and services from Louisiana is:

WTP Price Premium – (Netemeyer, Krishnan, Pullig, Wang, Yagci, Dean, Ricks, and Worth 2004)

[Cronbach's $\alpha = .846$ across all 4 WTP scales]

Three items using 7 point scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree

[WTP Products/Services]:

- a. The price of products and services that come from Louisiana would have to go up quite a bit before I would switch to another product or service.
- b. I am willing to pay a higher price for products and services from Louisiana than I am for those from other states.
- c. I am willing to pay a lot more for products and services coming from Louisiana than I am for products and services from other states.

[WTP Travel]:

- a. The price of travel to Louisiana would have to go up quite a bit before I would switch to another destination.
- b. I am willing to pay a higher price to travel to Louisiana than I am to travel to other states.
- c. I am willing to pay a lot more for travel to Louisiana than I am to travel to other states.

One item using 7 point scale : (0%, 5% 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30% or more)

[WTP Products/Services Amount]:

- a. I am willing to pay _____% more for products and services that come from Louisiana over other those that come from other states

[WTP Travel Amount]:

- a. I am willing to pay _____% more for travel to Louisiana than I am for travel to other states

Word of Mouth - (Cronin and Taylor 1994)

[Cronbach's $\alpha = .922$]

One item using 7 point scale anchored by very unlikely and very likely

- a. How likely are you to spread positive word of mouth about Louisiana?

One item using a 7 point scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree

- b. I would recommend Louisiana as a travel destination to my friends.

Affective Commitment – (Gruen, Summers, and Acito 2000)

[Cronbach's $\alpha = .902$]

Six items using 7 point scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree

- a. I feel a strong sense of belonging to Louisiana.
- b. I feel as if Louisiana's problems are my own.
- c. Louisiana has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
- d. I enjoy discussing Louisiana with other people.
- e. I feel like part of the "Louisiana family."
- f. I have little, if any emotional attachment with Louisiana (reversed scored).

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