

## PUBLIC OPINION IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING AND COMMERCIAL SPACEFLIGHT INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

*IMPLICATIONS DE L'OPINION PUBLIQUE POUR L' ENTRAÎNEMENT ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'INDUSTRIE DES VOLS SPATIALS COMMERCIALS*

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**Introduction:** The commercial spaceflight industry currently receives little guidance concerning training required of spaceflight participants (SFPs). However, it is likely that SFPs themselves, as well as the public will have innate expectations regarding such training. We sought to determine the opinions of subjects that participated in simulated suborbital flight regarding the commercial industry, to determine whether they thought their training was sufficient, and whether there was a specific training burden on the industry.

**Methods:** After participation in a larger centrifuge trial, subjects were provided a post-experience questionnaire inquiring about perceptions of training, centrifuge runs, and whether the training was sufficient preparation for spaceflight. They were queried regarding their opinions on the need for training and what such programs should entail, who is responsible for development of programs, and similar industry-related questions.

**Results:** Of the 148 subjects that participated in the centrifuge trials, 143 (96.6%) responded to the questionnaire. Overall, subjects found the training sufficient, independent of cohort length, and felt that they would be prepared for suborbital flight having completed the program. Most felt that further training or focus should be provided on emergency scenarios, and the majority stated that they would not feel comfortable flying with untrained customers. Finally, most respondents felt that the industry was responsible for providing training, but that programs should be certified by known experts in the aerospace field.

**Conclusions:** The results of the survey give insight into the public opinion of commercial spaceflight issues. Whether or not expectations are met may have consequences with regard to public opinion and resultant public interest in investment and participation in commercial spaceflight. Efforts towards meeting public expectation, or alternatively the education of the public concerning improved understanding of spaceflight risk and efforts towards risk mitigation may prove to have a beneficial effect on the public acceptance and interest in the commercial spaceflight industry.