Nevertheless BP engineers and their contractors were challenged by some uncertainty, mostly created by the accident. During abandonment procedures, and just before the accident, there was an attempt to cement the well to seal it from the reservoir. Without knowing more about the accident, the degree to which this seal was disrupted was unknown. Consequently the strength of the connection between the well and the reservoir became a focus of the modeling. While the wellbore architecture was documented, the accident could have damaged that architecture. Depending on that damage there were several possible fluid flow paths up the well from the reservoir, but which path the fluids were taking was unclear. The blowout itself demonstrated that the BOP had failed to close, but the nature of the failure and the resulting obstruction to flow (or “choke”) in the BOP was also unclear. Finally, fluids entering the riser from the LMRP were discharging at several points along the riser, including near the kink located just above the LMRP; engineers also believed the kink itself was likely to be a choke.

BP engineers and their contractors were organized into informal, all-hands workgroups, with less well-defined BP organization charts. Within BP the workgroups had shifting membership and there was a lack of communication between workgroups. \(^{17}\) While horizontal lines of communication were limited, communications of their findings agreed to management were exhaustive, although often informal (e.g., meetings, email, and PowerPoint presentations).\(^{18}\)


\(^{18}\) For example, reserve engineers from the Gulf of Mexico Exploration group sent float results by email to Vice President of Exploration David Remy. (Email from Walt Buehmann to David Buehmann continued).