



*not so fast, Joan....*



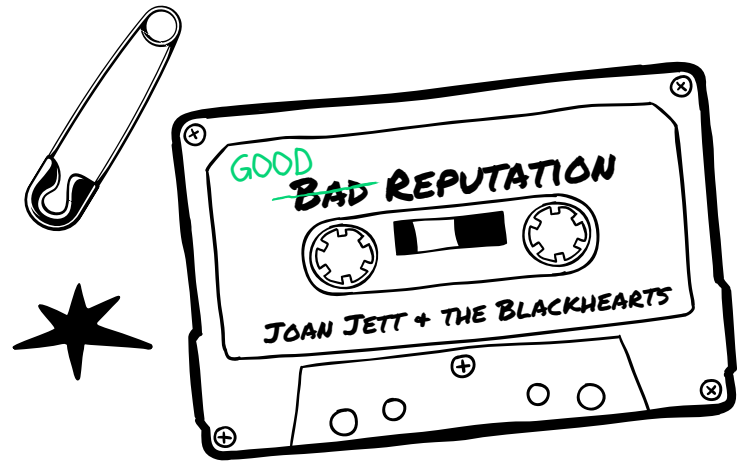
# the ULTIMATE **rePUTAtion** guide

You have a reputation.

Whether or not you *give a damn 'bout your reputation*, it already exists. Big or small, neglected or nurtured, the public develops a general opinion or judgment of your organization, how it operates, and what it offers.

Your reputation encompasses how stakeholders feel, think, and act towards your company.

Notice how we say “stakeholders” instead of “shareholders.” As business becomes more transparent, companies are no longer just responsible to its shareholders, but also to its stakeholders: employees, suppliers and distributors, the community, customers, and even broader society. *Living in the past, it's a new generation...*



And businesses have taken notice: 79% of business leaders are at the mid-stage of discovering, activating, or expanding their understanding of reputation.

We're in the business of reputation. Our advanced reputation tracking platform is always-on, constantly monitoring reputation data on more than 5,000 companies, worldwide. Our reputation database combines and analyzes millions of perception and sentiment data points from online surveys, media, and third-party sources, so users can confidently compare and understand their reputation within their industry and across geographies.

Just as reputation is shared, we're happy to share our methodology with the world. We put all of our knowledge into our tool, and now, we share it with you – for use with or without our platform and advisory team.

Tip #1: Give a damn about your reputation. Everyone else does.

The benefit of an excellent reputation:



**8 OUT OF 10**  
of your key stakeholders **will...**

Buy your products & services

Recommend

Say something positive

Trust to do the right thing

Work for your company

Invest in your company

The cost of a poor reputation:

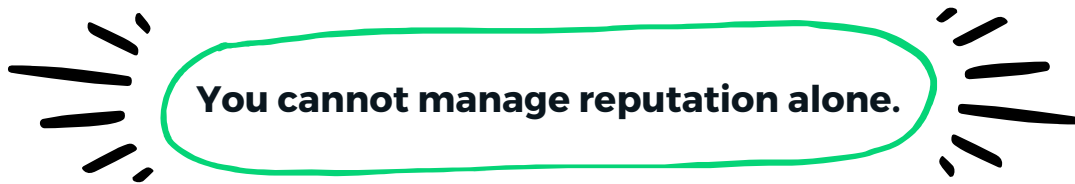


**9 OUT OF 10**  
of your key stakeholders **will not...**



## THE SET LIST

Before your reputation management team starts concocting a plan for new press releases and social posts, there's one thing you should know:



Reputation does not belong to your C-suite or PR agency — it's a shared commodity. "Reputation is influenced on all sides," says RepTrak VP of Advisory Anne Potts. "It's a combined effort across stakeholders, leaders, and cross-departmental collaboration." So don't be stingy with this information and don't take on the burden solo.

Reputation is inherently intangible. It's amorphous in nature, but universally recognized and accepted for its value. This only adds to its mystery, but that doesn't mean it's inaccessible.

We've been in the science of reputation for a long time. With our academic roots, this is how we've come to both understand and measure reputation:

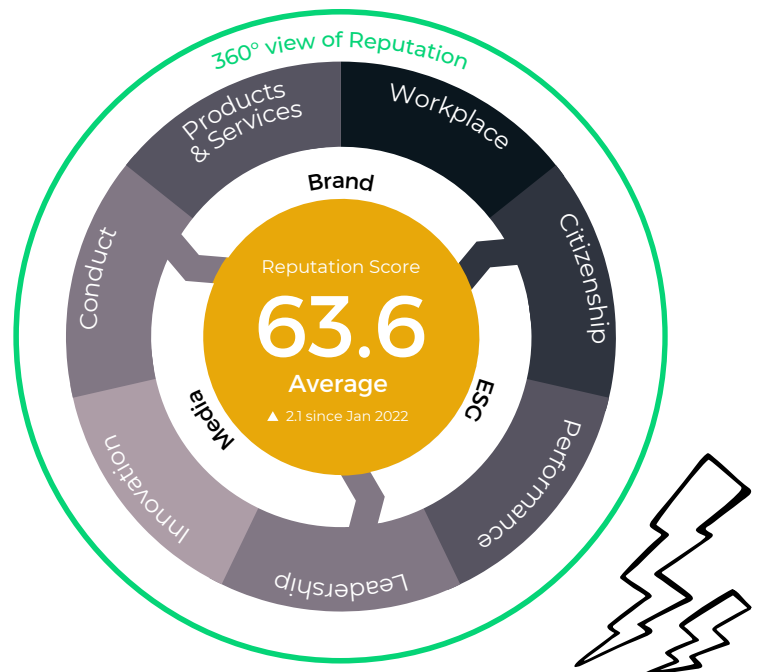
- 7 Drivers of Reputation
- ESG
- Brand
- Media
- The importance of Reputation leaders
- Reputation trends we're anticipating

We'll break down each of these elements to help you build your understanding of your own corporate reputation. When you know where you are, you can confidently move in the right direction.

"Understanding your Reputation enables companies to embody the new maxim of stakeholder capitalism, and not the legacy approach of shareholder capitalism," says Harry Foster, RepTrak SVP, Head of Advisory EMEA. "Increasingly the former, encompassing the requirement to do the right thing, is a central tenant to being successful as a company."

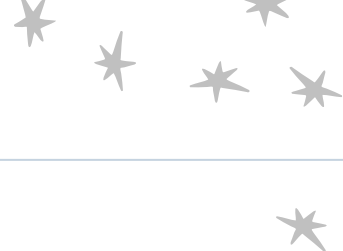
As we say here at RepTrak: doing and saying the right thing is good business.

Skip ahead to purple boxes for quick-tips and to-do lists.



*These factors provide the structure for RepTrak's reputation monitoring platform, providing a Reputation Score on a scale of 0-100. While we always recommend the benefit of objective measurement and near real-time, data-informed insight RepTrak software provides, you can still use these factors to influence and better understand your own corporate reputation.*

**DOING AND  
SAYING THE RIGHT  
THING IS GOOD  
BUSINESS**  
— The RepTrak motto

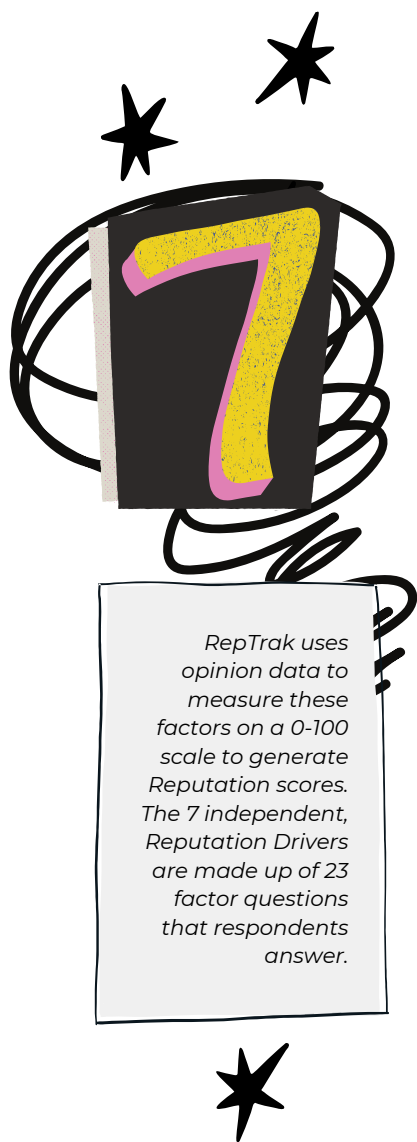


## SEVEN DRIVERS OF REPUTATION

These Reputation Drivers reveal how a stakeholder thinks about a company — encompassing what the public typically considers when formulating and interpreting reputation.

It can be tempting to focus solely on your success as an organization, but in garnering the public's favor, you will need a well-rounded approach to how you communicate your efforts.

We recommend prioritizing and considering these Reputation Drivers:



### Products & Services

The quality and value of its products & services, including customer experience and client support.



### Innovation

How innovative a company is, whether it is first to market, and adapts quickly to change.



### Workplace

The extent to which a company cares for employees' health & well-being, and its ability to offer fair rewards and equal opportunities in the workplace.



### Leadership

A company's vision, the quality of its leader and managers, and managerial effectiveness.



### Conduct

A company's ethics, including fairness, openness, and transparency in its business practices.



### Citizenship

How environmentally friendly a company is, its ability to support good causes, and have a positive impact on society.



### Performance

A company's financial results, including profitability and growth prospects.

Remember, in this era, nothing is secret and little is off-limits. Even without blatant scandal, the public knows more about the inner workings of your organization than you might realize and they consciously and unconsciously incorporate it into their judgment.

And where you are not actively communicating your efforts and successes, your audience is forming opinions on bits of available information. When you don't communicate effectively, you are at the mercy of the public's imagination.



## BRAND

Don't confuse brand with reputation. They're connected, but they aren't interchangeable. Your brand is the unique promise your company makes. Your reputation is how you fulfill that promise.

Brand is developed from the inside out, reputation from the outside in.



Your brand can help enhance your reputation, but a poor reputation can infect a brand. How you manage and fulfill those previously mentioned drivers of reputation will eventually become a part of your brand – sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently.

You own your brand. You co-own your reputation with your stakeholders.

Your brand isn't just logos, fonts, and color palettes (while those elements do affect how stakeholders experience your brand). To better understand your brand and how it impacts your reputation, we recommend taking a deeper look at your brand persona.

A brand persona is a collection of personality traits, attitudes, and values your brand expresses. Is it friendly and genuine? Is it creative or boring? Is it lazy and arrogant? Be honest and then reflect on brand expressiveness. Determine whether stakeholders report a consistent experience, whether the brand stands out from the crowd, and communicates regularly.

We cannot stress this enough: your audience cannot read minds. As you accomplish (or don't accomplish) your goals — especially publicly stated goals and initiatives — update your audience or risk losing both their attention and favor. How you approach and communicate efforts reflects on your brand and reputation.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR BRAND:

- How do stakeholders evaluate your corporate brand?
- How does your corporate brand compare against your competitors?
- How well do you communicate regarding your corporate brand?
- What brand personality traits are most associated with your corporate brand?
- What brand personality traits make your organization unique?
- Does your reputation reflect your brand? What will it take to align them?

*RepTrak's quantitative evaluation tools can help answer these questions in an objective, measurable, and actionable manner, measuring and monitoring brand persona and expressiveness.*



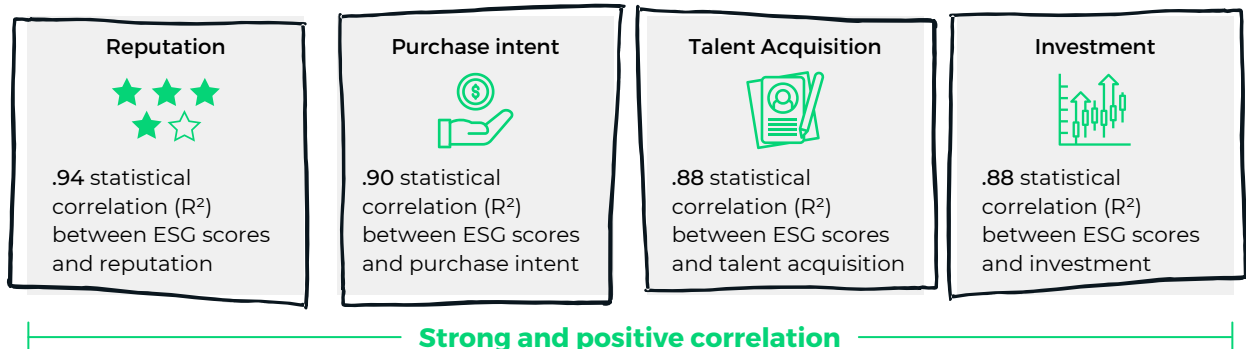
## ESG

ESG (Economic – Social – Governance) is an evaluation of whether an organization is conducting business in an ethical manner. And its importance cannot be understated. It's not just en vogue, it's a new expectation for organizations to go beyond their business practices and acknowledge their broader impact and processes.

It's no longer about what you do, it's about how you do it.



ESG has become a priority for the public and a powerful indicator in consumer behavior. RepTrak monitors and tracks ESG sentiment, rating it on a scale of 1-100. A low ESG score results in a 20% willingness to buy, while a high ESG score results in a 60% willingness.



Before you take too much pride in your recycling initiatives and one-time #BLM Instagram post, remember that perception is reality: RepTrak data reveals that more than 90% of companies studied saw that their ESG efforts did not match the public's perception of their ESG efforts. Have we mentioned the importance of communication yet?

Utilize these factors to analyze your ESG efforts and perception:



ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIAL	GOVERNANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduces environmental footprint</li><li>• Protects the environment</li><li>• Responsibly uses natural resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improves people's lives</li><li>• Cares for its employees</li><li>• Offers equal opportunities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive economic contribution</li><li>• Ethical and fair business practices</li><li>• Operations and supply chain transparency</li></ul>

We've compiled a handy ESG To Do list and ESG themes we recommend exploring.

### ESG TO DO LIST

- Perform continuous, ongoing audits to determine if business and social practices are fair
- Prepare an action plan for addressing major events as they arise
- Determine which actions align with the nature of your business and its practices
- Communicate new and continuous efforts and progress
- Utilize tools like RepTrak's reputation monitoring platform to monitor and measure the impact of corporate activism efforts

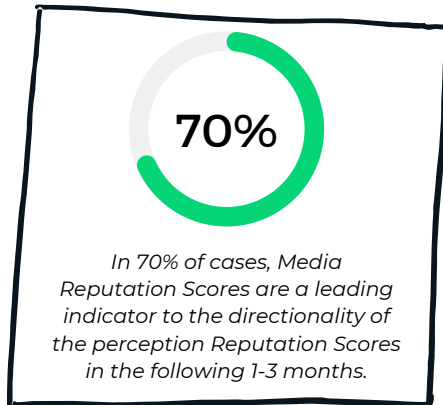
### ESG THEMES TO EXPLORE

- Fair pay, benefits, and working conditions
  - Including independent contractors
- Diversity and leadership representation
- LGBTQIA+ support and representation
- Environmental impact
- Carbon emissions, plastic reduction, green practices, etc.
- Fair treatment on the basis of gender
- Corporate transparency and accountability



## MEDIA

News travels fast. Reputation and media have a powerful cross-influential relationship, influencing and reflecting one another. But it can be difficult to determine what media content is changing hearts and minds, and what your reputation is resilient against.



RepTrak Media Scores track the direct impact of the latest headlines and social media chatter on your reputation. In 70% of cases, Media Reputation Scores are a leading indicator to the directionality of the perception Reputation Scores in the following 1-3 months.

Without a tool like RepTrak, you can still implement tools like Google alerts or other media tracking software. Although it won't illustrate the direct impact on reputation, it will keep you up-to-date on what is being said about you.

To lead media conversations, you must be the master of your own communications. Develop a strong brand identity and communicate your efforts and victories.



### MEDIA TO DO LIST

- Conduct regular reputation audits and efforts to be an organization worth writing positively about
- Lead your reputation narrative by communicating efforts and victories
- Prepare an action plan for addressing major media events as they arise
- Develop organic media relationships – earned media outweighs paid
- Employ media tracking tools to stay up-to-date
- The RepTrak platform monitors media mentions and tracks the direct impact of the latest headlines and social media chatter

## EMPOWERING REPUTATION LEADERS (THAT'S YOU)

Reputation is a shared responsibility. It can be tempting to divert the burden to your communications department or a PR agency, but efforts across your organization influence your reputation – from how your production team sources and delivers your products and services, to how HR team hires, to how your leaders lead.

A shared reputational awareness and effort increases the odds of reputation success and the benefits that come with. As with any initiative, having a team of leaders makes the difference. We recommend internal reputation leaders from across your organization.





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**But here's the advice you probably weren't expecting:** having reputation insight (and especially reputation data) makes *you* look good in the boardroom. Reputation insight is a powerful indicator that is likely not being broadly considered. Being a reputation leader with data and insights could be what gets you the recognition, raise, bonus, or Top Performers' trip.

What can we say? We're in the business of reputation, so we love the wins.

Reputation analysis gives the public a voice on the broader role your organization plays. Spreading that insight and incorporating it into business strategy is a win all around.

When reputation can feel so intangible, we naturally recommend RepTrak to analyze, track, and improve reputation while measuring the impact of efforts. But you can perform your own audits through your own efforts, hire market research teams, or even practice social listening.

Harry Foster is SVP, Head of Advisory EMEA here at RepTrak. He's partial to the RepTrak platform and its benefits, but he touts the value of any reputation data. Here's why he is reputation data-obsessed and an advocate for reputation leaders:



**Harry Foster**

SVP, Head of Advisory EMEA  
The RepTrak Company

1

*Reputation data makes the intangible (or what is perceived as immeasurable), measurable. And if you can measure something, you can manage it...that provides Reputation leaders with information and knowledge (and therefore 'power') others in their organization do not have.*

2

*The nature of good Reputation measurement is that it is relevant to a whole business, and therefore this empowers the Reputation leader to enhance their standing within an organization (with HR, Marketing, Product teams, Innovation, Sustainability, C-suite, and especially the CFO)*

3

*Reputation data enables reputation leaders to drive internal stakeholder alignment around priority stakeholders, priority messaging and ultimately business strategy.*

4

*Understanding your Reputation enables companies to embody the new maxim of stakeholder capitalism, and not the legacy approach of shareholder capitalism. Increasingly the former, encompassing the requirement to do the right thing, is a central tenant to being successful as a company.*



# 5

*With ESG being a key part of Reputation management, and increasingly important to Investors (and therefore by definition, CEOs), it provides Reputation leaders with a voice at the top table.*

# 6

*With Reputation so strongly correlated to business results (license to operate, likelihood to work, benefit of the doubt in a crisis), it is an essential part of business management in 21st century corporate life. A Reputation leader can provide the organization with insight into what will drive stronger likelihood to buy, recommend, work for, give benefit of the doubt in a crisis, and more.*



**Anne Potts**

VP, Advisory  
The RepTrak Company

Whoa. Well said, Harry.

RepTrak VP of Advisory Anne Potts echoes the importance of reputation data and insight. “Communications people bring a combination of strategic know-how and soft skills to navigate both the ups and downs of life on the front line,” says Anne. “They don’t often have data that supports strategy and have to do a lot of convincing to bring leaders and other spokespeople away from their day jobs and into a position to support the narrative a particular moment might need. This is particularly hard after the maelstrom of 2020 and 2021 – knowing what is worth it and when to act has never been harder.”

## REPUTATION ANTICIPATION

Reputation is never stagnant (it’s one of the reasons RepTrak monitors reputation in near real time). It’s not enough to understand where your reputation is at this moment, you must prepare it for the future.

Stakeholder priorities shift over time. So we turned to our Sr. Director of Advisory Services, Elif Güvençer to discuss key trends she sees impacting reputation:



**Employer Branding**



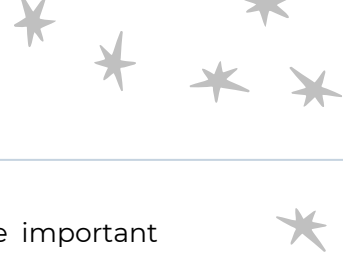
**Consumer Expectations**



**ESG**

### EMPLOYER BRANDING

“One of the key areas that need to be on companies’ radar in 2022 is talent attraction and retention,” says Elif. “It is safe to say we are experiencing the tightest job market in



generations. 'The Great Resignation' shows that employer branding is more important than ever and now comes with further intricacies. A good example is how companies are approaching flexible and remote working. While this is a key benefit attracting talent especially in the pandemic times, if not implemented correctly, it might turn into the very reason causing talent to leave. While looking to meet the new requirements of the 'remote' era, it is important for companies to develop creative and effective ways to foster company culture and strike the right balance between physical and virtual engagement to retain their internal clients; colleagues."

## RIISING CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

"Another important topic is Value for money," continues Elif. "On the backdrop of the pandemic-related challenges of inflation and rise of the cost of living, consumers have higher expectations and are more mindful and diligent towards what they choose to spend money on. To meet these expectations, it is essential for companies to capitalize on the value creation side of the equation. Value creation comes in two-fold. The literal meaning is the value driven by high quality products and services that meet customers' needs. The broader meaning became even more important in the last two years: the value toward society and environment."

## THE VALUE AND DEMAND ON ESG

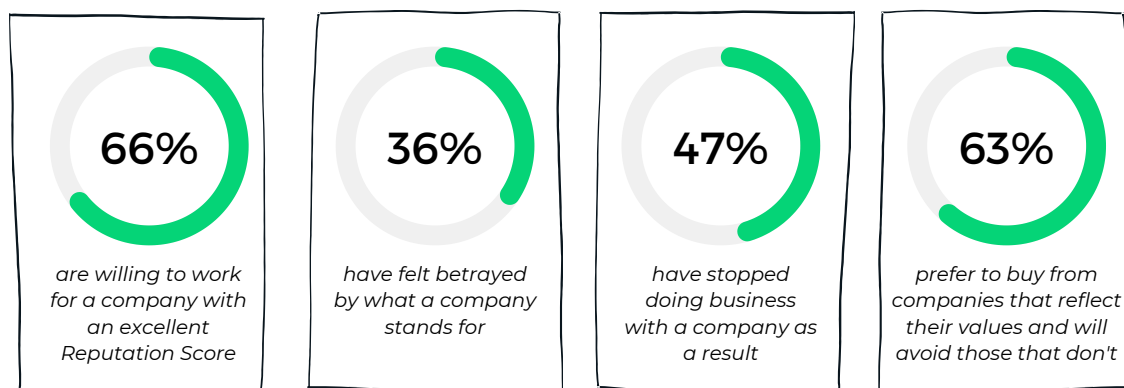
"Being a good corporate citizen established itself as a key driver of purchasing decision and corporate reputation," states Elif. "There too is a delicate balance to strike. Companies must pay attention to their entire stakeholder ecosystem and navigate through competing needs. Environment is an aspect where this complexity becomes very prominent. While progressing on long-term sustainability goals, it is important to keep in mind the financial value and affordability expectations of consumers in the face of inflation and rising costs, to maintain social license to operate in the market."

These trends align with RepTrak data: 66% of the general public is willing to work for a company with an excellent Reputation Score. Meanwhile, 36% of the public have felt "betrayed by what a company stands for," and 47% have stopped doing business with a company as a result. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of global consumers prefer to buy goods and services from companies that "stand for a purpose that reflects their values and beliefs" and will avoid those that do not.



**Elif Güvençer**

Sr. Director, Advisory Services  
The RepTrak Company





## GO FORTH, REPUTATION LEADER

Whew. That was a lot of information. But don't be discouraged or overwhelmed. Reputation is manageable and this guide was a great place to start. Reputation naturally ebbs and flows, continuously audit and nurture your reputation using these handy insights. Reputation is earned — positive, negative, and neutral. And will serve as a direct result of your efforts.

Turn inward with an honesty, listen to your audience, communicate your progress, and monitor results.

### HOW REPTRAK CAN HELP

*RepTrak tracks reputation in near real time, meticulously monitoring your Reputation Drivers, ESG, brand, and Media interactions and how your efforts and communication impact your broader reputation.*



### YOUR REPUTATION TO-DO LIST

- Consider, prioritize, and communicate efforts related to the 7 Drivers of Reputation
- Take a cross departmental approach to
- Reflect on your brand persona and expressiveness, and be honest.
- COMMUNICATE REGULARLY the wins and the shortcomings
- Gather and analyze reputation data wherever you can
- Elect reputation leaders to share and advocate for this data
- Prepare for future trends and demands on reputation
- Consider a tool like RepTrak to monitor, track, and inform reputation management strategy

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SAYING THE  
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