



Where to next for reputation?

10 trends facing organisational reputation
in 2021 – 2022 and your tactical and
strategic opportunities

1. Greater clarity between brand and reputation

Managing your brand is not all about reputation and neither is reputation all about your brand. Knowing where they overlap and differ will allow better communication and a deeper understanding of the risks and levers for each.

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It is time to get the brand and reputation people in one room to define the common areas, determine responsibilities and create task clarity.

2. Lack of control over your operating environment

Gone are the days where your operating environment had a degree of certainty that allowed for stable forward planning. Confidence in what you can influence when the goalposts move is more critical than ever.

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Scope out your operating environment and the degree to which you can influence it. Engage the stakeholders who are better influencers than you and your executives.



3. Old narratives revealing a disconnect

We are seeing outdated organisational narratives that have not kept pace with that of societal expectations. Just like a brand refresh, narratives need a tweak here and there to make sure you aren't perceived as losing touch.

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Ask how your story is playing to different demographics. It's not about being all things to all people, but does your story resonate with community values? It may be time to better understand your community.

4. Just because it is legal doesn't mean it is without risk

What is legally right has not always been the right thing to do, and this boundary is stretching further. Reputational damage can be avoided by understanding where the moral line is in comparison to the legal one.

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It is time to rebalance the weight put on what is legally right. How can your organisation worry less about what you are legally allowed to do and ask what is morally right to do? Get the right advisers in the room to provide that external lens and look to the values of the organisation.



5. A renewed appetite for sovereign capability

This is not about jingoism; it is about being more self-sufficient and being seen to be so. The last year has shown us the competitive advantage of local knowledge, networks and underused infrastructure.

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What are the small steps you can take to support Australian made, or start something new that is all Australian? It does not need to be much, but it has to be local.



6. Community diversity is only heading in one direction

We always think we are inclusive but acting and speaking inclusively goes beyond meeting diversity quotas and is a test not often passed. Truly inclusive practices, environments and communications can boost morale, productivity and give you a competitive advantage.

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Have someone in your comms team who is the diversity & inclusion champion. Speak to people within and outside the organisation about what inclusion means to them and create a check list to ensure your comms are reaching and resonating with all audiences.

7. Stakeholders are the avenue to information and influence

Knowing who your stakeholders are and engaging with them is not new, but the pandemic has emphasised the need to build relationships across different sectors and levels. Stakeholder engagement is part of the job of every executive, starting with the CEO.



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Have you conducted a stakeholder audit or sentiment survey recently? Call us old fashioned but these are always gold for an organisation.

8. Listening to the experts and examine the evidence

There is an increasing role for evidence-based decisions and expert voices. This is in a time where there is a lot of data but little discipline around looking at examples, research and trends. Gathering evidence and expert advice can strengthen your position and your resolve.

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It's time to look beyond who speaks the loudest. Let's get the evidence in the room. What are we seeing in the data? What do the experts say? What do the case studies demonstrate? What are we actually hearing from our customers, the community, investors?



9. There are no more enemies

It's an old adage to know your enemy and keep them close, or something like that. Progressive companies are seeing their enemy not as such but as another key stakeholder. Every insight they give you into their criticisms and motivations can help you identify risks and areas for improvement.



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If what an activist or dissenter says about your organisation rankles, then it's time to engage. Create a basis for dialogue. You don't need to agree, but you do need to talk.



10, Proactive (still) trumps reactive

The last year has changed much. The companies who are doing well with their reputation are proactive with reputation management.

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Here's a guarantee: your reactive issues that dominate your working day will start to fall away with every proactive step you take. It's time to take back the initiative. Any one of the nine previous opportunities is your chance to do so.

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