

**BE AS YOU WISH TO BE SEEN.**

## **AT THE CENTER OF AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT**

Organizations need a partner to lead them into this new era of Authentic Engagement – it represents a unique, separate discipline that requires a new kind of professional, with a mix of old and new skills.

At Fleishman-Hillard, we have managed the uncontrolled dialogue between our clients and their audiences for more than six decades. We work across all disciplines of marketing and communications, government and regulatory relations, employee engagement, sales and customer service. Our core capabilities for achieving Authentic Engagement are rooted in our ability to communicate persuasively across audiences. We work with our clients to map and then shape brand and reputation to drive more successful business outcomes.

**For more information, contact:**

**Marjorie Benzkofer**

Global Lead, Reputation Management Practice

312.729.3613

Marjorie.Benzkofer@fleishman.com

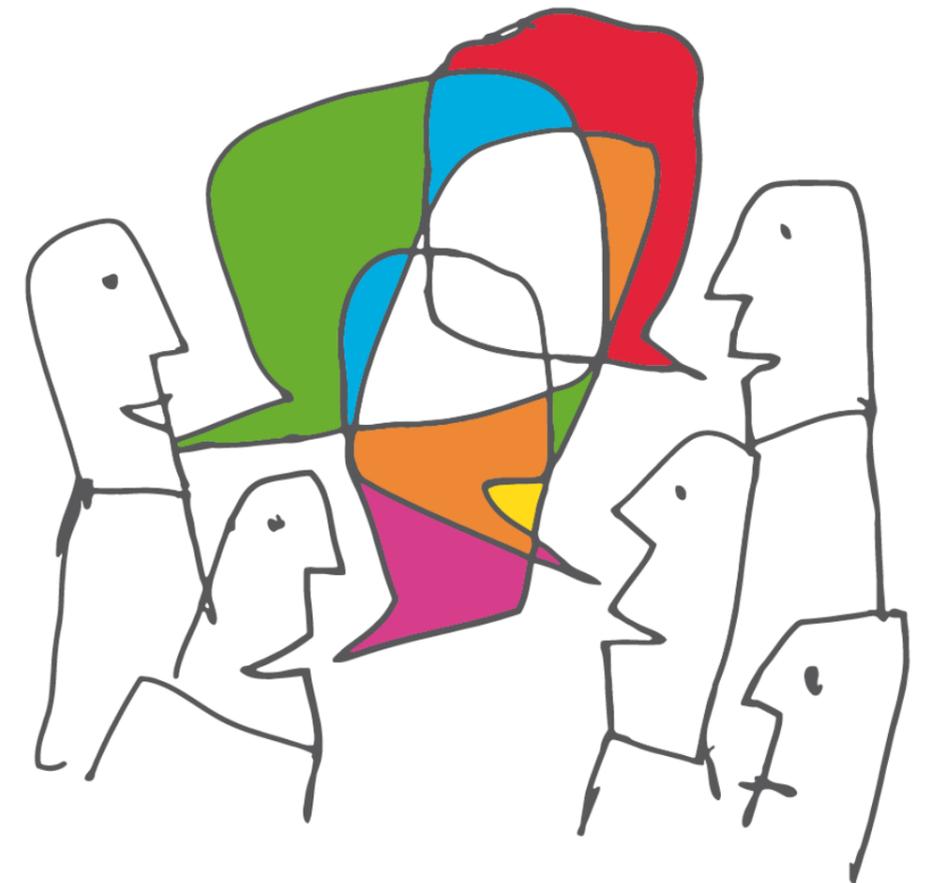
[www.CenterOnReputation.com](http://www.CenterOnReputation.com)



CENTER ON REPUTATION  
& RELATIONSHIPS

# **AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Intersection of Brand and Reputation



**FLEISHMANHILLARD**

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR BRAND AND YOUR REPUTATION ARE NOT ON THE SAME PAGE?

## THE IMPORTANCE OF REPUTATION

Reputation has existed as long as there have been human interactions. It is a fundamental quality of every organization, of its products and services, and of its leaders.

**Reputation is, simply, what your stakeholders believe about you, expect from you and say about you to others.**

A good reputation is an invaluable asset. It drives engagement, creates loyalty and stirs action. It creates opportunity and clears the way for progress. A poor reputation is a liability, creating friction and uncertainty.

An organization's reputation with one stakeholder, or many, can exist even before a conversation begins between them. And reputation lasts long after any individual exchange or transaction is over.

## THE REPUTATION/BRAND DILEMMA

What happens when the actual experiences of your stakeholders, and the expectations they have of your organization, don't match what your organization is saying about itself and what it is actually doing – in other words, with your brand?

Customers don't buy... Legislators don't vote... Employees don't come to work... simply because of what you promise in your brand. Rather, they act because of what they believe. Their experiences. Their expectations. In other words, your reputation.

That collision between brand and reputation creates a barrier to success and growth – and in some cases, a destructive force. It is the central issue that every organization must solve today.

It demands a new solution, one that leads to meaningful, productive, progressive exchange with customers, employees, partners, suppliers, regulators and an organization's entire industry.

**It is what we call Authentic Engagement.**



## AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT

When the alignment between brand and reputation occurs in a planned, managed, proactive and genuine way, it creates Authentic Engagement.

Taking advantage of that opportunity requires a dramatic change in the traditional approach organizations have taken to brand and reputation management, one where managing relationships is central to success.

**Be as you wish to be seen.** Invest in the attributes you want to be known for. Make sure the attributes matter to your key audiences, and communicate them. Behave as the company, or the person, you want your audiences to think you are.

**Work holistically.** In managing brand and reputation, create a culture and an organizational structure that view the two as inextricably intertwined. No organization can afford to have brand and reputation remain divided. No longer can we think of them as separate entities to be managed and measured by separate functions. They must be viewed together. Scope all audiences. Understand that to truly create progress, the viewpoints of all audiences – not just consumers – must be understood and addressed through both the brand and reputation.

**Think in terms of values, value and valuation.** Have good values, and live up to them in decisions, actions and

relationships. Find out whether your organization's decisions and priorities reflect your stated values. Find out whether the company's values are the same as constituents' values. Define the value that is created in each relationship. Make sure it is sufficient to support the valuation you want – whether that is product pricing, talent compensation, stock price, or some other valuation.

**Make it everyone's job.** Make brand and reputation management a part of every discipline – everyone's responsibility – not just a function of communications or marketing.

**Align measurement against specific business outcomes** for both brand and reputation. Everything must have a clear connection to how it helps achieve a business goal.

**WHEN BRAND AND REPUTATION ARE ALIGNED IN A PLANNED AND GENUINE WAY, IT CREATES AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT.**