

Building Reputation Capital in Complex World



**Deepshikha
Dharmaraj**

Chief Executive Officer,
Burson Group India

Building Reputation Capital in a Complex World

Building reputation is a high-stakes game of chess in today's world of rapid change. The rise of AI, dwindling attention spans, and a crisis of authenticity have fundamentally changed how reputation is built and protected. Navigating this complex terrain requires not just skill, but an entirely new playbook that balances technological savvy with purpose-led communication, data analytics with creativity, ambition with authenticity.

Attention

Attention has become the most valuable currency today. With an average person's attention span now shorter than eight seconds, it is not enough for a communicator to relay information. Social media feeds constantly refresh, news cycles churn at breakneck speeds, and viral content emerges and fades within hours. In this frenetic environment, building and maintaining a robust reputation requires more than just quality content—it demands cut-through creativity, strategic timing, format versatility, and an acute understanding of

platform-specific engagement patterns. We need to craft messages that are instantly captivating, make an impact and maintain consistency across a fragmented media landscape. The art of reputation building has thus evolved into a delicate balance of depth and brevity, substance and style, in a world where every second of attention is precious.

Moreover, aligning with a clear purpose and tapping into the right influential voices have become crucial for delivering messages with maximum impact. With a wide range of influential voices available today, we must choose wisely to align with our values and objectives.

Artificial Intelligence

Much is being said every day about the disruption AI has caused in the reputation of business and the business of reputation. On the positive side, AI enables us to gather faster, more accurate insights, engage with audiences more precisely, and create agile, culturally relevant content. These capabilities allow us to respond swiftly to emerging trends and crises, ensuring that our clients' reputations remain robust in an ever-changing environment.

However, the rise of AI has also ushered in unprecedented challenges. We now face issues such as weaponized information and deep fakes, which can potentially devastate reputations in mere moments. The spread of misinformation and disinformation has reached alarming levels, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish fact from fiction.

In this context, our role as stewards of reputation has evolved. We must leverage the positive aspects of technology to counter its negative implications. This means using AI-driven tools and data analytics to monitor sentiment, predict potential reputation risks, and craft proactive strategies. It also involves educating our clients about these new threats and preparing them to respond effectively when faced with AI-generated challenges to their reputation.

Authenticity

Perhaps most importantly, we must recognize that in today's world, reputation is built not only on truth and fact but also on belief. While factual accuracy remains crucial, the perception and emotional resonance of a message often carry equal, if not greater, weight. Our communication efforts must therefore focus on creating narratives that inspire trust and belief. This shift requires a more holistic approach to reputation management and focus on building authentic connections with stakeholders. This involves crafting stories that align with the values and aspirations of our target audiences, inspire meaningful dialogues and demonstrate a genuine commitment to doing well by doing good.

As I mentioned at the beginning, building

reputation capital in today's complex world demands a delicate balance of traditional principles and innovative approaches. We must harness the power of digital platforms and AI while remaining vigilant against their potential misuse. By focusing on creativity, purpose and authentic engagement, we can navigate this new landscape and help our clients build strong, resilient reputations that withstand the test of time and technology.

The key to success lies in our ability to adapt, innovate and maintain unwavering ethical standards. Harold Burson said, "Public relations is fundamentally a problem-solving discipline." Now, more than ever, we should live up to that statement—for our clients and for our people.