The Reader Journey

The twelve chapters of Unlock Reputation outline the argument that reputation has become a condition that requires institutional infrastructure, yet most organizations still treat it as a business function. The book moves from diagnosing the structural conditions that demand this reframing to the architectural elements required for institutions to earn and sustain legitimacy in the Reputation Era.

Unlock Reputation: Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Tension of Corporate Power
Corporations were built to maximize scale and speed, creating velocity gaps where innovation outpaces governance, making competence itself a vulnerability when consequences become visible.

Chapter 2: Reputation Hanging in the Balance
Journalism, regulation, and democratic institutions all fractured simultaneously. Trust fractured with them, leaving reputation as the mechanism through which legitimacy could be negotiated.

Chapter 3: Contesting Corporate Legitimacy
Stakeholders challenge institutional conduct in real time; once consequences are visible, failure to act signals concealment while performative acts deepen skepticism.

Chapter 4: How Reputation Forged Civilization
For two million years, reputation served as the primary human signal for collaboration; modern corporations inherited this system but focused on competence as the structural requirement.

Chapter 5: Before the Rules Arrive
Integrity precedes formal legal structures to create predictability and reliability in uncertain interactions. Reputation is an accountability mechanism that provides early architecture for governance.

Chapter 6: Separate Strategy for Separate Signals

Brand and reputation cannot coexist in the same function; brand signals competence, reputation signals integrity, and conflating them creates a false sense of reputation management.

Chapter 7: Coding Organizational Behavior

Values must be embedded as operational code to shape behaviors (incentives, hiring, capital allocation, etc.). Unclear, misaligned values structures lead to reputation collapsing say-do gaps.

Chapter 8: Tension Along Multiple Dimensions

The reputation ecosystem contains three stakeholder groups (internal, external, institutional) where trust impact cascades and amplifies. Single-stakeholder focus leads to trust breakdowns.

Chapter 9: Reputation Economics

Reputation produces two outcomes, resilience and influence, that most organizations undervalue until it comes under threat.

Chapter 10: The Reputation Audit

Reputational vulnerabilities emerge where external pressures intersect with internal weaknesses. Systematic audits, oversight, and third-party validators help identify risks and strengthen reputation.

Chapter 11: The False Binary: Perform Loud or Stay Silent

Advocacy is not a binary. Consistent values provide the foundation for credible advocacy, allowing institutions to navigate contentious issues without falling into trends.

Chapter 12: Unlocking Reputation

Reputation needs ownership, authority, or accountability. Building a dedicated reputation infrastructure requires overcoming financial, structural, and organizational barriers to make it an institutional capability.

UNLOCK REPUTATION

The Currency of Collaboration

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Core Message

In a fragmented, fast-moving world, success is no longer driven by performance alone, but by an institution's ability to align values, behavior, and leadership. Unlock Reputation reframes corporate reputation as the operating system of collaboration. It explains reputation as a values coded system that enables institutions to earn trust, legitimacy, and the willingness of stakeholders to work with them. The book provides readers with strategic guidance on how to achieve it.

Guiding Principle

Reputation is the currency of collaboration. It governs whether institutions can attract allies, withstand pressure, and operate with legitimacy across society. Built on integrity rather than performance, strong reputations amplify influence, reduce friction, and create the goodwill required to navigate risk, shape outcomes, and endure over time.

About the Author

Roy Persson is a corporate insider writing this book to help institutions adapt and survive the most challenging time in corporate history: The Reputation Era. For over 20 years has advised Fortune 500 companies on reputation, public trust, and institutional legitimacy. His work sits at the intersection of corporate leadership, public affairs, and societal accountability, guiding senior executives as they navigate regulatory scrutiny, activism, crisis, and long-term reputational risk. He has developed multi-stakeholder reputation frameworks that translate values, trust, and evolving expectations into practical guidance for leadership decision-making across complex institutional environments.