

## 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.

## The Book at a Glance:

*What's the one sentence pitch?* This is a business strategy and institutional leadership book about reputation as the operating system of collaboration, written for senior leaders across large organizations, including executives, corporate affairs professionals, policy advisors, legal and governance leaders, and others responsible for managing institutional legitimacy in an era of polarization, activism, and declining trust.

*Who buys this book?* Senior leaders responsible for institutional legitimacy across business, policy, and media.

*Who won't buy this book?* Readers seeking narrowly focused tactical playbooks, such as crisis manuals, messaging tips, employee engagement best practices or other issue-specific reputation manuals.

*What shelf would this book be put on?* Primarily business strategy, with crossover placement in current affairs and sociology. Airports, train stations and other locations where business executives frequent would be an ideal placement.

*What is the story arc?* It begins at the widest aperture, exploring corporate and societal evolution, showcasing pivotal moments in history that shaped how legitimacy was formed or challenged. The lens then narrows to the modern world, examining how technological, political, economic, and cultural forces distort and break today's reputation system. It closes with practical structures and frameworks for understanding, measuring, and managing corporate reputation, offering guidance for rebuilding trust and collaboration in a fragmented world.

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## [Pitching the Book: One Pager](#)

**The Hook:** In a world defined by polarization, technological acceleration, and collapsing trust, reputation has quietly become one of the most powerful and most misunderstood forces shaping institutional success. Strong products, strong brands, and strong performance are no longer enough to guarantee legitimacy, resilience, or long-term growth. Increasingly, institutions rise or fall based on whether they can earn collaboration from the people and systems they depend on most. Unlock Reputation argues that reputation is not a communications tactic, a marketing asset, or a crisis-response tool. Reputation is the operating system of collaboration, an invisible infrastructure that determines whether organizations are trusted, influential, and able to function in an increasingly fragmented world.

**The Big Idea:** Drawing on history, sociology, behavioral science, and real-world corporate advisory experience, Unlock Reputation reframes reputation as a values-driven, multi-stakeholder system rooted in human evolution. Long before brands, contracts, or formal institutions existed, reputation served as the primary signal of trust, integrity, and accountability, governing who could be trusted, who deserved cooperation, and who was excluded. That system enabled civilizations, markets, and democratic institutions to function. Today, the operating system is breaking down. Misinformation, polarization, algorithmic amplification, short-term incentives, and institutional misalignment have distorted reputational signals, making trust fragile, legitimacy contested, and collaboration increasingly difficult.

**Why Now?** Reputation has always governed trust and legitimacy, but this book could not have landed earlier. Twenty-five years ago, institutional success was measured primarily through performance, scale, and brand strength. Integrity was treated as secondary, and reputation was largely conflated with competence. A values-driven, systems-level view of reputation would have seemed too philosophical for business audiences and too corporate for sociological inquiry. That boundary has now collapsed. Technological acceleration, algorithmic amplification, political polarization, short-term incentives, and rising moral expectations have converged faster than institutions can adapt, surfacing visible cracks in the reputation operating system. Trust signals are distorted, legitimacy is contested, and collaboration is unraveling. Leaders respond reactively, seeking to manage optics instead of building alignment, often

deepening risk rather than resolving it. This moment demands a new understanding of reputation, not as perception management, but as institutional infrastructure.

**The Audience:** The book is written for senior leaders responsible for institutional legitimacy across business, policy, and media. This includes executives in corporate communications, public affairs, reputation, ESG, legal, and enterprise strategy, as well as policymakers, advisors, and media professionals shaping accountability narratives. It is not a tactical playbook or marketing manual. Instead, it offers a systems-level framework for understanding how reputation works, why it fails, and how it can be rebuilt. Readers gain practical structures for distinguishing brand from reputation, mapping stakeholder ecosystems, diagnosing reputational risk before crisis, and navigating advocacy and accountability in polarized environments with discipline and courage.

**Differentiation:** Many books underscore the importance of trust, reputation, values, or purpose. Unlock Reputation is different in how it explains why these forces matter and how they function together. Rather than treating reputation as a discipline or functional practice that exists as a subset of brand, communications, or crisis management, the book takes a holistic, systems-level view rooted in anthropology, sociology, and institutional design to show how reputation evolved as a mechanism for human collaboration. By connecting human evolution, institutional behavior, and modern corporate practice, Unlock Reputation offers a big-picture framework that explains not just why reputation matters, but how it shapes economic, political, and institutional life. The book exists to clearly define reputation, remove long-standing conflation and confusion, and articulate what leaders must do to steward reputation effectively. Readers come away understanding that reputation is the currency of collaboration and that the future of institutional success will be enabled not by competence alone, but by integrity.

## [Market Positioning](#)

Unlock Reputation is a serious business and institutional leadership book positioned primarily in business strategy, with crossover appeal in current affairs and sociology. It sits at the intersection of corporate leadership, public trust, and institutional legitimacy, bridging business strategy with societal systems thinking.

Unlock Reputation argues that most reputation crises are symptoms of deeper architectural failures. Typically created by a misalignment between stakeholder values and institutional behavior, unclear or contested values positioning, insufficient stakeholder integration into decision-making, or a gap between stated competence and demonstrated values coherence. The book's unique selling position is how it positions reputation as strategic infrastructure, helping leaders redesign institutional architecture so that crises become preventable rather than manageable. Unlike other books in this space, Unlock Reputation doesn't focus on crisis containment, it gives executives a concrete understanding of how to prevent crisis in a time marked by scrutiny and delegitimization.

This book belongs alongside leading works on trust and reputation, but distinguishes itself by treating reputation as more than just a metric or risk to manage, but as the operating system that enables institutional collaboration.

**Book Inspirations & Comparisons:** *Trust* (Francis Fukuyama), *The Power of Reputation* (Charles Fombrun), *Net Positive* (Paul Polman and Andrew Winston), *Reputation Rules* (Daniel Diermeier), *The Righteous Mind* (Jonathan Haidt)

## Comparable Books

*Net Positive* by Paul Polman and Andrew Winston

Positions the moral case for stakeholder capitalism and values-driven leadership. *Unlock Reputation* complements this work by explaining the reputational and institutional infrastructure that determines whether stakeholder models succeed or fail in practice. Where *Net Positive* focused on purpose driven behaviors, leading to being prescriptive and CEO-centric, *Unlock Reputation* is systematic and diagnostic.

*Reputation Rules* by Daniel Diermeier

Frames reputation as a governance and risk-management challenge focused on prevention and control. *Unlock Reputation* extends this thinking by reframing reputation as a proactive system of collaboration rather than a defensive mechanism, explaining how legitimacy and influence are earned before crises emerge.

*Trust* by Francis Fukuyama

A foundational examination of how trust underpins economic and institutional success. *Unlock Reputation* ladders from this by focusing on modern reputational breakdowns and translating trust theory into contemporary institutional leadership and corporate practice.

*The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt

Explores moral psychology and polarization in modern society. While Haidt explains how moral intuitions divide societies, *Unlock Reputation* focuses on how institutions must bridge morality, navigating divisions, to earn legitimacy across a fragmented stakeholder ecosystem.

*The Power of Reputation* by Charles Fombrun

A canonical academic work on reputation measurement and corporate perception. *Unlock Reputation* differs by moving beyond a ranked and tiered measurement system to define what reputation is, how it functions as a system, and why it has become a core institutional infrastructure rather than a scorecard asset.

## Who This Book is For

This book speaks to people who influence and are responsible for institutional and societal legitimacy.

**Primary Audience:** Senior leaders responsible for institutional legitimacy and long-term risk, including executives in corporate communications, public affairs, reputation, ESG, legal, enterprise strategy, and governance functions. These readers are accountable for navigating trust, legitimacy, regulatory scrutiny, activism, and multi-stakeholder pressure in polarized environments. They are tasked not only with protecting institutions from risk, but with earning the collaboration required to operate, influence, and succeed.

**Secondary Audience:** Policy elites, management consultants, corporate advisors, think tank researchers, and media professionals who shape accountability narratives and advise institutions that are operating at the intersection of business, government, and society.

**Psychographic Profile:** The book has the potential to resonate with intellectually curious readers who gravitate toward history, political philosophy, behavioral psychology, economics, and systems-level thinking. While not the intended audience, these readers are likely to be interested in aspects of the book such as power and legitimacy, the moral authority of institutions, the long arc of capitalism, the rise and decline of civilizations, and the forces that drive cooperation, conflict, and outrage.

## Why Now?

Industrialization and innovation introduced a new rhythm to society, one defined by speed. Technology accelerated progress, unlocked extraordinary prosperity, and solved problems once thought insurmountable. But it also destabilized long-standing governance structures. The world began moving faster than its institutions could adapt, and structural fault lines emerged. This tension between moral evolution and technological acceleration has existed throughout human history. What is new is its scale, speed, visibility, and consequence.

A structured philosophy of reputation grounded in values, integrity, and multi-stakeholder accountability would not have landed credibly twenty-five years ago. At the turn of the century, corporate success was still measured primarily through marketplace strength, focused on competence. Integrity existed on the margins, rarely treated as a strategic variable. Reputation was, and still is, largely misunderstood because it continues to be conflated with competence.

That framework is no longer sufficient.

We are entering a pivotal institutional transition in which competence alone cannot guarantee legitimacy, resilience, or long-term growth. Strong products, efficient operations, market expansion, and financial performance are no longer enough. Mindsets are beginning to shift. Reputation, once viewed as soft or symbolic, is now in the earliest stages of being understood as infrastructure. Leaders are increasingly recognizing that reputation functions as the currency of collaboration, determining whether institutions can withstand pressure and operate with social license in a fragmented world.

Despite this shift, corporate reputation thinking remains underdeveloped. Most organizations continue to treat reputation reactively, activating it primarily in moments of crisis or legal exposure. They rely on narrow frameworks that prioritize campaigns over systems, messaging over behavior, and optics over integrity. Short-term issue management is layered onto legacy structures without addressing underlying alignment. As a result, the broader reputational ecosystem is poorly understood, and the operating system itself continues to fail.

This book could not have worked earlier because it would have resisted easy categorization. It would have been seen as too philosophical for business audiences,

too corporate for sociological inquiry, and too values-driven to be perceived as operationally useful. That boundary has now shifted.

We are confronting a convergence of crises that makes reputational infrastructure unavoidable. Climate instability, political polarization, and rapid technological disruption are reshaping labor, governance, and public trust. In response, employees are demanding alignment, regulators are constricting operational license, boards are increasingly focused on non-financial risk, and investors are reevaluating how sustainability and resilience are defined.

At the center of these pressures is a reputation system that many sense is broken but few have explained in a coherent, interconnected way.

Across industries, geographies, and issues, I have witnessed the same structural weaknesses recur. My career experience has focused on identifying patterns across these dynamics. Rooted in sociological and behavioral analysis and informed by economics and finance, I have partnered with Fortune 500 companies as they navigate reputational crises and long-term legitimacy challenges.

Through my work and extensive research, the conclusion is unavoidable. Reputation is no longer a peripheral concern or a communications function. It is becoming a core operating infrastructure for institutional collaboration. It determines whether organizations can adapt, lead, and endure amid accelerating complexity.

Yet reputation has not been articulated in these terms. This book exists to address that gap.

## Central Thesis and Core Arguments

### **The Reputation Operating System is Broken**

Corporations have become the most influential institutions in modern civilization. They create prosperity at scales once unimaginable. They solve problems governments cannot. They employ billions, shape culture, and move the world forward with a speed and efficiency that no other institution can match. And yet, for all their competence, they face a crisis that no amount of product excellence or operational efficiency can fix.

The crisis isn't one of trust. It is a breakdown in reputation.

Reputation is an invisible infrastructure that allows millions of people who will never meet to coordinate, collaborate, and do business together. For two million years, humans relied on reputation signals to decide who deserved collaboration. Modern corporations inherited this same system, but they never fully integrated it as a structural requirement for maintaining legitimacy.

What emerges is a structural misalignment. As corporations scale, they make decisions that are rational within their operating systems but produce broader societal consequences. Distance from supply chains and workforces expands. Quarterly returns are prioritized over long-term resilience. Monetization takes precedence over accuracy. These are not moral failures. They are rational responses to system incentives. But for the first time, those consequences are highly visible. This visibility translates to scrutiny, which becomes the basis on which legitimacy is granted or withheld. Companies are now being judged not just on performance but on the integrity of how they operate. Over time, a pattern forms. Systems optimized for efficiency and scale can also generate conditions that strain legitimacy when their consequences become visible. In that sense, institutions are not simply responding to reputational crises, they are producing them through their existing operational model. Executives increasingly face a reality in which competence alone is no longer sufficient to secure legitimacy.

As scrutiny intensifies, corporations respond through the tools and structures they already control. They reinforce growth and invest in communication. But reputation is not a product and it is not narrative. It is an architectural system that makes trust scalable. This is the core dysfunction. Business systems should be designed to prevent

legitimacy crises instead of enabling the conditions that trigger them, and then trying to fix those conditions with the very same tools that created them.

Unlock Reputation is a diagnostic and architectural book that answers a single urgent question: what does it mean to rebuild the reputation operating system so that integrity is not a communication function, or a brand asset, but a structural requirement?

The book redefines reputation as legitimacy granted by stakeholders when they believe a corporation acts with integrity. It provides two pathways in which integrity can be implemented into the reputation operating system. First, companies will need to recognize and mitigate the consequences that the business model produces. Second, communications and behaviors must show the company as aligning to stakeholder values. When those two things are missing, the integrity gap widens. As this gap expands, what lands on corporations is something far worse than criticism. They face delegitimization that causes the business to spiral into crisis.

This book is not a morality play. It's not a stakeholder-capitalism manifesto. It's not an indictment of corporations. Instead it is a clear-eyed diagnosis of a broken system and an offering of strategic frameworks for rebuilding legitimacy in the Reputation Era.

## What Inspired This Book

I wrote this book because I have watched countless companies trap themselves in a reputation doom loop, and no one is naming it. This reputation doom loop isn't one thing. It's several mechanisms that reinforce each other, and they're invisible until you see them ruin the most important asset a company has, its reputation.

First, reputation keeps getting measured as a brand. This happens for understandable reasons. Brand is easier to understand, easier to model, easier to move. Business schools teach branding, a lot. Agencies are adept at brand. Executives can point to a brand campaign and see results. So companies want to treat reputation like brand, and they urgently expect brand-like results, that never come, that quickly anyway.

Second, the budgets typically flow from what can be measured. Brand is much easier to measure, so branding gets the bigger budget. Brand gets the talent. Brand gets the infrastructure. While reputation gets resources for a crisis, reactive and always underfunded. This creates a vicious self-confirming logic. Reputation never gets proactive investment, so when it breaks, it can only be treated as a symptom, never as a system that inoculates the business from risk.

Third, there's a distraction effect. When things go well, executives see a strong brand and think they're succeeding. When things go wrong, they finally notice reputation breaking. So they develop a confirmation bias. Brand gets credit for success, reputation gets blamed for failure. Ironically, reputation was never built in the first place to prevent the failure that landed upon it.

And fourth, there's the genuine complexity. Reputation is complicated, it's soft, and it comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes. It never fits neatly into existing corporate structures. Because it's underfunded, taking it on as a crusade is genuinely risky, just ask Paul Polman, former CEO of Unilever. I've seen executives try to make reputation a strategic priority and they fall out of favor, because reputation as an infrastructure isn't understood widely. I've also watched smart executives understand perfectly that reputation matters, and then choose not to act on that understanding, because the effort required is immense and the path to success is unclear. That's not laziness. That's rational self-preservation in a system that hasn't been designed to support that work.

So you have this situation where business leaders fall into a few different categories, they either don't understand it, they think they understand it but they are confusing it with other concepts, they actually understand it but prefer to game it as if it were brand, they understand it but know they can't make the case to change the infrastructure of the business, or they get it completely and they go on a crusade that can put both their career and the business at stake.

My career, and deepest passions, have laid witness to a Shakespearean tragedy.

This book doesn't define and explore the reputation doom loop. It provides the context needed to break the cycle. This book could put the language around reputation that business leaders desperately need. It could be a voice that inspires others to rethink how business infrastructure is architected. At the very least, after this book is written I can go back to work and watch the reputation doom loop continue and feel like I tried to do something meaningful to address it beyond helping my clients get back into "repair mode".

## [Author Platform](#)

Roy Persson is a tenured senior corporate advisor who works with Fortune 500 companies on reputation, public trust, and institutional legitimacy. His work sits at the intersection of corporate leadership, public affairs, and societal accountability, advising executives as they navigate regulatory scrutiny, activism, crisis, and long-term reputational risk. Through this work, he has developed [reputation measurement frameworks](#) that translate values, trust, and stakeholder expectations into practical guidance for leadership decision-making. Roy regularly speaks to senior communications and public affairs leaders on corporate reputation and institutional trust, including engagements with organizations such as AMEC, PRSA, the Public Affairs Council and other industry leadership forums. His thinking on leadership and corporate reputation has also been published at brand and corporate advisory firms, contributing to executive-facing thought leadership on trust, integrity, and institutional resilience.

His platform is built on field credibility and reach among a key corporate target audience, rather than broad audience scale. While sitting as the Head of Reputation at National Research Group, he built the company's reputation measurement framework and thought leadership practice that established his standing in the corporate communications and reputation advisory community. These frameworks are currently in use at Fortune 100 companies and have been presented at industry conferences such as PRSA and AMEC. His work has been published in the Wall Street Journal and PR Newswire. Links to his thought leadership and publications are provided below:

- [Decoding the Paradoxes of Trust](#)
- [Resilience in Reputation](#)
- [CEOs Are All-In on AI](#)
- [Quantifying the Value of Reputation](#)
- [Stakeholders for Reputation Measurement](#)
- [Going Up? Inflation's Impact on Corporate Reputation](#)
- [Customized Reputation Measurement](#)
- [Global CEOs' Perspective on the 2024 Election](#)
- [State of Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Accountable AI](#)
- [KPIs for CCOs](#)
- [Navigating AI Regulation](#)
- [The Myth of Trust](#)
- [Separating Brand from Reputation](#)

His platform is neither massive nor general, but it is highly credible and precisely targeted to those working in reputation, trust and policy related fields.

## [Chapter Outline](#)

### **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: The Invisible Hand**

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

### **Chapter 10: The Reputation Risk Audit**

Reputation breaks down along fault lines where external pressures meet internal vulnerabilities; solutions require systematic audits and third-party validators, not concealment.

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

Authentic advocacy emerges not from messaging volume but from consistent behavioral alignment with stated values; consistency removes paralysis and prevents chasing trending issues.

### **Chapter 12: Unlocking Reputation**

Integrity-based trust requires dedicated institutional accountability structure. This does not predict future capitalistic structures, but serves as a preemption of stakeholder governance codification.

## The Benefits Readers Gain

**A diagnosis of how the reputation operating system broke.** *Unlock Reputation* explains how technological acceleration, fragmented information systems, shifting expectations, and incentive structures have destabilized institutional legitimacy. Readers gain a systems-level understanding of why trust, collaboration, and credibility are becoming more fragile across modern society.

**An understanding of reputation as structural infrastructure.** The book reframes reputation from a communications function into a core operating condition for institutional success. Readers learn how reputation shapes resilience, influence, stakeholder alignment, and the ability to operate effectively under pressure.

**Strategic clarity between brand and reputation.** Readers gain a clear distinction between two, often conflated, concepts. The book explains why brand optimizes competence, while reputation grants legitimacy, credibility, and collaboration.

**Systems for multi-stakeholder alignment.** Rather than managing audiences in isolation, readers learn how to think systemically across employees, regulators, investors, customers, communities, and society. The book provides a framework for understanding how alignment across stakeholders strengthens institutional durability.

**A proactive approach to building legitimacy.** Most organizations engage reputation only after pressure or crisis emerges. Readers learn how legitimacy is built before moments of instability occur, allowing institutions to strengthen trust, reduce friction, and better withstand scrutiny over time.

**Tools to navigate reputational pressure and risk.** The book provides practical frameworks for identifying reputational vulnerabilities, interpreting societal expectations, and navigating legitimacy strain before escalation occurs. Readers learn how to move from reactive damage control toward proactive reputational foresight.

**The courage to lead in polarized environments.** In periods of fragmentation and heightened scrutiny, many leaders default to silence, over-caution, or performative responses. Readers gain the confidence to engage with greater clarity, discipline, and consistency while maintaining institutional coherence and trust.

## The Marketing Plan and Platform

The author's platform is built on field credibility and reach among the key target audience, rather than broad audience scale. Roy Persson, formerly Head of Reputation at National Research Group, built the reputation [measurement framework and thought leadership practice](#) that established his standing in the corporate communications and reputation advisory community. These frameworks are currently in use at Fortune 100 companies and have been presented at industry conferences such as PRSA and AMEC. The book's core audience, which are senior leaders in corporate communications, public affairs, ESG, legal, and enterprise strategy, aligns directly with the communities that Roy already engages with.

His platform is neither massive nor general, but it is highly credible and precisely targeted to the readers most likely to purchase the book and recommend it to peers.

### Conferences:

The primary marketing channel will focus on targeted professional conferences across communications, corporate affairs, ESG, risk management where mid-to-senior practitioners actively manage institutional legitimacy and reputational risk.

- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA ICON)
- Institute for Public Relations (IPR Research Symposium)
- Arthur Page Society
- Corporate Communications & Brand Summit
- Brand Reputation Summit EAST
- International Public Relations Research Conference

### Thought Leadership:

The author will establish and sustain a biweekly Substack focused on reputation frameworks and institutional legitimacy, drawing from the book's core concepts. Each essay functions as both advance positioning and standalone contribution to the field, building an owned audience of practitioners and senior leaders prior to publication.

- Substack
- LinkedIn (Nearly 4,000 followers)

### Podcasts:

The author will pursue guest appearances on industry-focused podcasts that reach senior corporate communications, public affairs, and reputation leadership. These platforms provide direct access to the book's core audience, busy executives and advisors responsible for institutional legitimacy, in a format that allows for substantive discussion of the book's frameworks around velocity gaps, stakeholder asymmetry, and reputation as operability. Podcast appearances will be secured across the pre-publication and launch windows, creating sustained visibility and earned-media engagement with the exact practitioners and decision-makers most likely to purchase and recommend the book.

- Trust Talk (Secured, late August)
- The New CCO Podcast
- Is Business Broken?
- Persuasion by The Pint
- On Top of PR Podcast
- Always On

### Extended Platform Assets

- Guest lectures at Rutgers, Gonzaga, and Boston College
- Companion card game, *Scale & Scrutiny: Profits, Politics, and PR Disasters*, which reinforces the book's concepts through strategic gameplay
- Interactive digital assets (CEO personality assessments and a strategic simulator called *Quarterly Review*) for corporate training and executive education
- Interactive assets and card game will serve as touchpoints across Substack, LinkedIn, speaking engagements, and client consulting

### Blurb & Book Commentary

The author has secured verbal commitments from recognized voices in corporate reputation and institutional leadership, pending final manuscript review. Additional blurb support is expected as marketing collateral and the finished manuscript circulates to broader networks within the corporate communications, public affairs, and academic communities. The author's established relationships across these fields position him to gather substantive endorsements from senior practitioners and thought leaders as the publication process moves forward.

#### Verbally committed:

- [Sarah Myles](#) – McDonald's: Head of Global Communications Strategy
- [Jason McGrath](#) – Ipsos: Executive Vice President, Head of Corporate Reputation
- [Ethan McCarty](#) – Integral: CEO
- [Todd Khozein](#) – SecondMuse: CEO
- [Scott Linklater](#) – TrustBuilder: CEO
- [Paul Abbate](#) – Boston College Carroll School of Management: Professor
- [Geoffrey Sidari](#) – Marketbridge: CIO
- [Cara Buscaglia](#) – Talkwalker, CIO
- [David Pistorino](#) – Amazon: Senior Operations & Product Manager
- [Charles H. Green](#) – Trusted Advisor Associates: Founder

#### Potential blurbs, not yet committed:

- [Julian Crowley](#) – DoorDash: Head of Public Affairs
- [Ray Day](#) – Stagwell: Vice Chair (former CCO IBM)
- [Luke Hartig](#) – Gravity Research: President
- [Johna Burke](#) – AMEC Measurement and Evaluation: CEO
- [Lisa Kaplan](#) – Alethea: CEO
- [Tina McCorkindale](#) – Institute of Public Relations: CEO
- [Nishant Roy](#) – Chobani: Chief Impact Officer
- [Alexis Williams](#) – Target: Chief Corporate Affairs Officer
- [Rana Komar](#) – Ruth: President
- [Wei Xia](#) – Rutgers Business School: Professor
- [Severin de Wit](#) – TrustTalk: Host
- [Kay Brungs Laud](#) – Fairlife: Vice President, Public Affairs

## [Book Back Cover Jacket](#)

Reputation has become one of the most powerful and misunderstood forces shaping modern institutions. In a world defined by polarization, activism, technological acceleration, and collapsing trust, leaders are discovering that strong products, strong brands, and strong performance are no longer enough.

In *Unlock Reputation*, Roy Persson argues that reputation is more than just a communications problem, a marketing function, or a crisis-response tactic. It is the operating system of collaboration, an invisible system that determines whether institutions are trusted, influential, and able to lead in the future marketplace.

Drawing on history, sociology, behavioral science, and real-world corporate experience, the book explains why the reputation system that once governed trust has broken down. It shows how shifts in technology, values, incentive structures, and capitalism have distorted the signals that define legitimacy, leaving organizations reactive, fragmented, and exposed. Traditional approaches to brand, PR, and reputation management have become outdated and attempts to manage reputation through them often only further deepen institutional risk.

More importantly, *Unlock Reputation* offers a new framework for leadership in a trust-collapsed world. It reframes reputation as a values-driven, multi-stakeholder ecosystem that must be deliberately built and protected. Readers learn how reputation creates resilience in moments of crisis, influence in policy and public discourse, internal cohesion across organizations, and the permission required to collaborate and act.

This is not a tactical playbook or a marketing manual. It is a forward-looking, systems-level book for leaders responsible for institutional legitimacy across business, government, media, and civil society, and for anyone seeking to understand how trust, integrity, and power will shape the future of society.

## [Proposed Format and Specs](#)

### **Word Count and Length**

Unlock Reputation is projected to be 75,000–100,000 words, resulting in approximately 300–400 pages. This length allows for comprehensive exploration of the reputation operating system and its architectural failures while maintaining the clarity and analytical rigor essential to the book's systems-level argument.

### **Format and Trim Size**

The preferred format is hardcover trade (6" x 9"), positioning the book as a serious business strategy title for executive and professional audiences. An e-book format will cater to digital readers, and a paperback edition may follow based on market performance.

### **Chapter Structure and Organization**

The book is organized into 12 chapters plus introduction and closing remarks, divided across four sections. Each section builds architecturally on the previous one, moving from diagnosis (what's broken) through history and anatomy (why it's broken) to infrastructure (how to rebuild it). Passages within chapters break complex systems thinking into manageable units while maintaining the load-bearing arguments.

### **Visual Elements**

The book will include the Corporate Legitimacy Curve as the primary visual anchor, along with tables and other frameworks useful for mapping structural shifts, stakeholder ecosystems, and reputation risk architectures. Visuals serve the diagnostic purpose rather than decorative function.

### **Tone and Accessibility**

Serious, architecturally intentional, grounded in systems thinking rather than ideology. Accessible to senior leaders without sacrificing analytical depth. The register is academic-narrative, not prescriptive or moralistic.