The largest asset you never *booked*, and never *staffed*.

Roughly a quarter of public-market value now sits in reputation. It is carried on no balance sheet, insured by no policy, and in most organizations it is owned by no one in particular — until the week it is destroyed. This is what the research says about the cost of that gap.

HELD IN CREDIT THE ASSET

Reputation is already a financial position. It just isn't reported like one.

Valuation research has moved reputation out of the soft-metric column. These are shareholder-value figures, not brand-sentiment scores.

26%
$13.8 trillion

Share of total S&P 500 market capitalization attributable to corporate reputation.

UK REPUTATION VALUATION REPORT, 2025

29%
£730 billion

Equivalent share of FTSE 350 market capitalization — up £11 billion year over year.

UK REPUTATION VALUATION REPORT, 2025

63%

Portion of company market value that global executives themselves attribute to reputation.

WEBER SHANDWICK

$7
trillion · annual

Estimated scale of the global “reputation economy” — the additional shareholder returns strong reputation generates each year across public companies.

BURSON, 2025

Leaders know the risk is there. Very few can size it, and fewer still are staffed for it.

Across four independent global surveys, the same pattern repeats:
high confidence, thin foundations.

14%

Of organizations actively quantify their exposure to their own top-ten risks. For cyberattack — ranked the number-one risk three years running — it drops to 13%.

AON GLOBAL RISK MANAGEMENT SURVEY, 2025 · ~3,000 LEADERS, 63 COUNTRIES

38
point gap

Average distance between the share of CEOs worried about a risk's earnings impact and the share who believe they are genuinely prepared for it. The gap holds consistently across twelve global reports.

FLEISHMANHILLARD

17%

Of executives consider their communications and public affairs function well-equipped for the current operating environment. Confidence falls further at companies over 50,000 employees.

WEBER SHANDWICK

91%

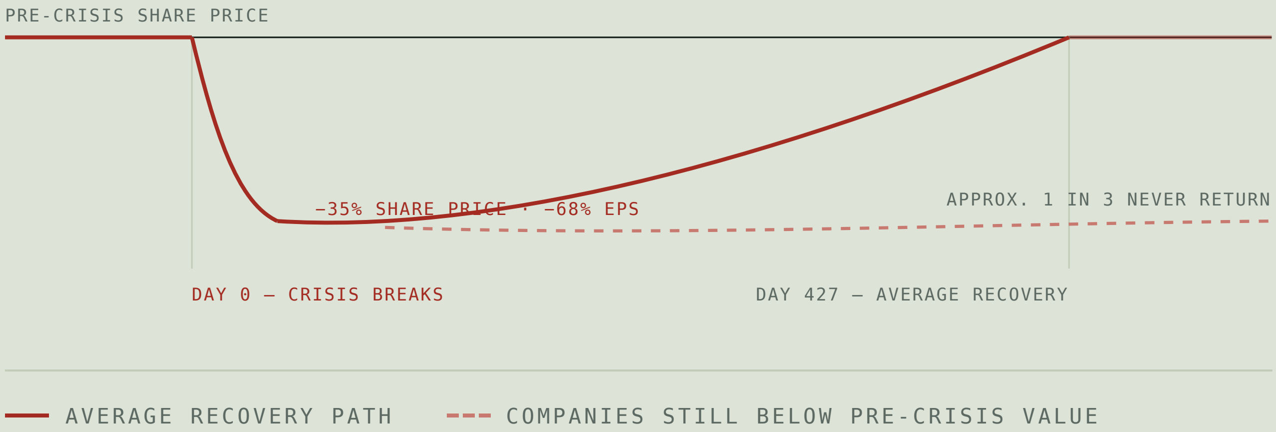
Have already absorbed at least one serious disruption beyond the pandemic — an average of 3.5 disruptions in two years. Yet only about a third report having the foundational elements of resilience in place.

PWC GLOBAL CRISIS AND RESILIENCE SURVEY, 1,812 LEADERS, 42 COUNTRIES

When it goes wrong, it does not go wrong for a news cycle. It goes wrong for fourteen months.

Share price after a major reputational crisis

The average major reputational crisis takes more than a third off the share price and two thirds off earnings per share. Getting back to where you started takes, on average, 427 days — and for close to a third of affected companies, it hasn't happened at all.



SOURCE: SENATESHJ

Four forces making the next one faster, louder and harder to contain.

233%

Rise in social-engineering and fraud claims linked to AI deepfakes, alongside a 53% year-over-year increase in social-engineering incidents. Average cost of a single data breach: $4.88 million.

AON CYBER RISK REPORT, 2025

11%

Of the world's most senior corporate affairs leaders rate their organization's AI governance as adequate — while enterprise AI spending runs to roughly $40 billion.

IPSOS REPUTATION COUNCIL, 2025

20%

Global employee engagement — the lowest reading since the pandemic and a second straight annual decline. Estimated cost of disengagement to the world economy: $10 trillion a year. Internal audiences are now the first place a crisis leaks.

GALLUP, 2026

70%

Of people describe themselves as hesitant or unwilling to engage with those who differ from them; only 10% believe their country shares common values. Every message now lands in a fragmented, low-trust room.

EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER, 2026

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

What the role actually holds

Sizing the exposure

Turning the top-ten risk register into scenarios, positions and pre-cleared language before anyone needs them.

The first six hours

A single accountable voice, so the response is coordinated rather than assembled live from four departments.

Employees first

Internal audiences are stakeholders and witnesses. They hear it before the market does, or they hear it from the market.

Executive readiness

Spokespeople who have practiced under pressure, not just been briefed under calm.

Standing narrative

The credibility you draw down in a crisis is the credibility you deposited in the quiet quarters.

Board-level translation

Reputation reported in the same units as everything else on the agenda: value, exposure, time to recover.

Every organization pays for crisis communications. The only decision is *whether it pays in advance, or at 35% off the share price.*

SOURCES

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