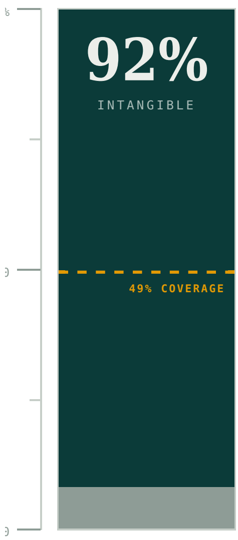
Most of what you're worth isn't on the balance sheet.

Reputation, trust and stakeholder confidence now carry the majority of enterprise value — and roughly half of companies have no documented plan for the day that value comes under attack.



Intangible assets — brand, trust, reputation, IP — account for 92% of S&P 500 market capitalization. In 1975 that figure was 17%.

The dashed line marks a second measure on the same scale: the share of U.S. businesses with a formal crisis communications plan. The gap between what is exposed and what is defended is the argument for a senior communications leader.

- Intangible value — reputation, brand, trust, relationships
- Tangible value — property, equipment, inventory (8%)
- Formal crisis communications plan in place (49%)

EXPOSURE

What is actually at risk

Reputation is a financial asset with no insurance policy.

Executives already price it that way. When crises hit, the damage lands hardest on the relationships and reputation that hold that value in place.

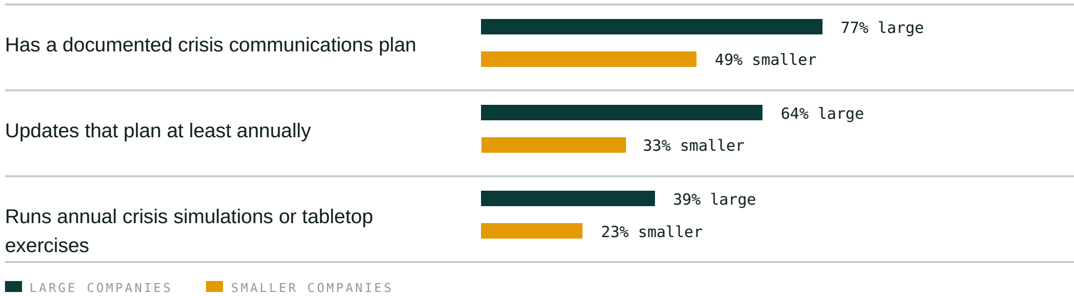
63%	61%	91%
MARKET VALUE ATTRIBUTED TO REPUTATION	CRISES THAT DAMAGED REPUTATION	ORGANIZATIONS DISRUPTED
Global executives attribute an average of 63% of their company's market value to its corporate reputation.	Reputation was among the most common casualties in real crises — behind business relationships (74%), ahead of workforce morale (59%).	91% report at least one significant disruption beyond the pandemic, averaging 3.5 in two years. Crisis is an operating condition, not an event.

READINESS

The gap between plan and practice

Half of companies have a plan. Far fewer have ever used it under pressure.

Documentation is the easy part. The expensive failures come from unrehearsed teams, stale contact trees and no pre-approved language — which is what a dedicated communications leader exists to prevent.



RESPONSE

What preparation actually buys

A crisis is not automatically a loss. Handled well, it is a repricing.

The difference between companies that come out ahead and those that don't is rarely the severity of the event. It is whether someone senior owned the response before it started.

42%

EMERGED IN A BETTER PLACE

Of companies that faced a major crisis, 42% said they ended up stronger afterward — some reporting revenue growth as a direct result. 19% fared worse.

98%

PLANS THAT WORKED WHEN ACTIVATED

98% of leaders who activated a crisis communications plan called it effective; 77% called it very effective. The plan is not theater.

12%

CONFIDENCE WITHOUT A DEBRIEF

Only 12% of organizations that skipped an after-action review felt very confident they could apply what they had learned.

Communication is a growth lever the rest of the year, too.

Employees are now the most trusted institution in society — and the people best positioned to carry a company's credibility outward. That advantage is built in ordinary quarters, not during the emergency.

47%

HIGHER TOTAL SHAREHOLDER RETURN

Companies with the most effective communication practices generate 47% higher total returns to shareholders than those communicating poorly.

78%

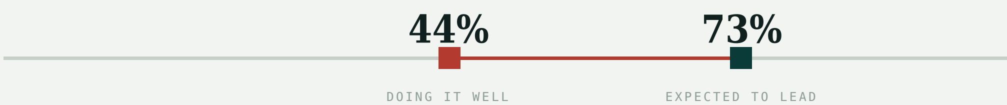
TRUST IN “MY EMPLOYER”

Employers are the most trusted institution — 14 points ahead of business generally (64%) and 25 ahead of government (53%).

73%

EXPECT THE CEO TO LEAD ON TRUST

73% say CEOs are obligated to bridge divides and broker trust. Only 44% think they are doing it well.



The 29-point execution gap. The expectation on chief executives is settled. The capability to meet it is not — and closing that distance is the daily work of a corporate communications leader.

THE ROLE

What it is actually for

OWNS THE FIRST HOUR

Pre-approved language, a named decision-maker and a live stakeholder map, so the company speaks before the narrative sets without it.

PROTECTS THE INTANGIBLE LINE

Treats reputation as the asset class it is: monitored, stress-tested, reported on and defended with the same rigor as any other 90% of enterprise value.

TRANSLATES THE BUSINESS

Turns strategy, results and hard decisions into language employees, customers, regulators, media and investors each actually act on.

MAKES LEADERSHIP LEGIBLE

Builds the CEO and executive team into credible, prepared, visible voices — before a reporter, a regulator or a viral post forces the audition.

SOURCES

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4. Capterra Crisis Communications Survey, U.S. business leaders, 2023
5. Forrester B2B Brand and Communications Survey, 2025
6. Willis Towers Watson / Watson Wyatt communication ROI research
7. 2026 Edelman Trust Barometer (33,938 respondents, 28 countries)

Prepared by Gene Rodriguez Miller

genierod1@gmail.com