

‘Building and protecting your reputation is essential for today’s leaders and ambitious business professionals. This book helps to demystify the art of managing your reputation, and gives many practical insights and strategies to help you stand out in a crowd.’

—**Sir John Peace**, Chairman, Standard Chartered

BUILD YOUR REPUTATION

GROW YOUR PERSONAL BRAND FOR CAREER AND BUSINESS SUCCESS

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*The Reputation
Vault!*

ROB BROWN

WILEY

'In a competitive world of sameness, noise and low trust, Rob Brown's excellent guide to reputation building gives busy corporate executives and professionals the definitive guide to standing out in a crowd.'

Jeff Black, President & CEO, Black Sheep Inc

'Over 100 practical strategies to get your name out there. Just do 10% of what Rob Brown tells, and in a year's time your life, reputation and positioning will be completely transformed.'

Daniel Barnett, Barrister, Broadcaster and Keynote Speaker

'Simply brilliant. A *tour de force* of why and how to build your reputation. An invaluable and intensely practical must-read.'

Steve Pipe, Author of *The World's Most Inspiring Accountants*

'As a thought leader, your reputation is your most valuable asset. Without it, you have no trust and no credibility and no business. If you're an expert looking to stand out in a competitive industry, this is your blueprint to success.'

**Warren Knight, Social Media Strategist, Social Sales Strategist
and Award-Winning Entrepreneur**

'If you want to succeed in business today, you need a strong reputation; people need to know, trust and like you. In this book, Rob Brown sets out exactly how you can stand out giving over 100 strategies that you can use to build your most valuable career and business asset. Rob knows what he is talking about so read this book and set your sights on being the number one go-to person in your field.'

Gavin Ingham, Author of *Motivate People*

'Standing up and standing out for something is one of the few paths to success in life. Few people achieve this, usually because they don't know exactly how. This book by Rob Brown gives you the answers to practically make that happen – a must-read for anyone who wants to get on in life.'

Geoff Burch, International Business Expert, TV presenter and Bestselling Author

'To excel in any business or industry you need to make sure you create and maintain an excellent personal reputation. In this book Rob shares in detail how you go about achieving that brilliantly and gives you a roadmap to success.'

Simon Chaplin, Founder, Socks Up Simon www.socksupsimon.com

'You can't buy a good reputation and building one needn't cost you a fortune either. Rob Brown walks his talk and his reputation will inspire you as you read this book. Make reading it your first step in your journey to a great reputation.'

Robert Ashton, The Barefoot Entrepreneur

'Reputation matters! If you aspire to rise to the top of your "career game", then Rob Brown's book is a must-read for you. This brilliant book guides you on how to strategically create and market your personal brand so you stand out in the competitive world of business as a leader and corporate influencer.'

**Adèle McLay, Business Growth Strategist, Entrepreneur, Investor, Keynote Speaker,
and Author**

'If you want to stand out from the crowd and get ahead, then Rob Brown's excellent guide will give you all the tools you need to build a world-class reputation and network that will get you through any doors.'

Nigel Risner, Award-Winning Leadership Speaker

'Understanding, respecting and leveraging your reputation are key to having a successful career. It's what got you where you are and what will shape your future. This book by renowned reputation authority Rob Brown helps by giving you the tools to take charge of this most valuable asset.'

Adam Harris, Vistage Chair, Business Coach and Speaker

'I have thoroughly enjoyed watching Rob's TEDx Talk on YouTube (twice!), listening to him being interviewed on podcasts, and hearing him talk live. So I eagerly grabbed hold of a copy of his new book at the earliest opportunity. Within minutes of scanning through it I found a brilliant nugget, which I highlighted, and I soon found more. I loved those sudden rushes of dopamine. Rob's book is hugely practical and he writes with delightful playfulness. I'm very happy to recommend it highly.'

Christopher John Payne, Founder, Effort-Free Media

'In a world where building your personal brand matters more than ever before, Rob Brown has produced a book full of practical advice for those individuals who understand that managing their reputation cannot merely be left to chance.'

Grant Leboff, CEO, StickyMarketing.com

'If you want to be an influential and impactful leader, then you are going to need a strong reputation and a strong network. This insightful and practical book will give you the tools and methods you need to build both.'

Simon Hazeldine, Bestselling Author of *Neuro-Sell: How Neuroscience Can Power Your Sales Success*

'In his brilliant new book on building your personal reputation, Rob Brown says that reputation is "what people say about you behind your back". If luck is where preparation meets opportunity, then building your reputation intentionally makes you luckier as you are better prepared, and more opportunities will find you, not the other way round.'

David Gilroy, Director of Stuff & Things, Conscious Solutions

'Rob Brown's reputation book will become a bible for anyone serious about developing their career prospects.'

Robert Craven, Managing Director, The Directors Center

BUILD YOUR REPUTATION

GROW YOUR PERSONAL BRAND FOR
CAREER AND BUSINESS SUCCESS

ROB BROWN

WILEY

This edition first published 2016
© 2016 Rob Brown

Registered office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-119-27445-2 (hbk)

ISBN 978-1-119-27446-9 (ebk) ISBN 978-1-119-27444-5 (ebk)

Cover design: Wiley

Set in 10/14.5pt PalatinoLTStd by Aptara Inc., New Delhi, India
Printed in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall, UK

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INTRODUCTION

'A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well.'

– Jeff Bezos

The new world of reputation

Not so long ago, your circle of influence went as far as you could see. Your reputation extended to people who could physically see you. Contact was frequent and guaranteed. If you did a good job at work, you could easily control what people thought about you.

This was your 'hallway' reputation. People stuck around. Job change was rare. People had a chance to get to know you over an extended period of time. You gained influence gradually and got promoted because you lasted the course.

Now you find yourself in a new world of new rules. The online space means you have to deal with social media, instant news and frightening transparency. Barriers have fallen between countries, cultures and boundaries. Globalization has levelled the playing field. Workforces are much more diverse – multicultural and multilingual.

We live in complex, uncertain, but exciting times. Mobile phones and digital technology give even average people the chance to build a brand around themselves. Anyone can own a business, write a blog and send an opinion round the world. Attention spans have fallen, marketing messages have exploded and noise has increased dramatically.

Jobs for life are rare. Who gets offered tenure these days? Who even wants it? People want passion, freedom, significance and choice. Of course, that's all still there, but there are millions of people looking for it. Which means predatory competition and a brutal, unstable job market. How will you compete?

This book maintains that the ability to market yourself, create career capital and build reputational stock are what will give you the edge that gets you chosen. Your 'in person' and your 'online' reputation are both at stake. If cultivated properly, together they could be your most valuable commercial asset.

A quick definition of terms

Let's get clear on a few key terms before you press on. You'll see these throughout the book.

- **Your job.** What you do every day. It's your job title, your role, your position. What's on your business card. It's what brings the money in. It's what happens between your commutes.
- **Your work.** It's what you do in your job. It's your contribution or why people actually pay you. You swap your skills, expertise, time and labour for a wage. And if you're lucky, they throw in a few other benefits, like pension, flexible working or healthcare.
- **Your career.** Your path towards more meaningful work or a better job. It's your roadmap of increasingly better opportunities and positions. It's your route to more choice, autonomy and freedom in your working life.

- **Your reputation.** What people say about you behind your back. It's your good name. It's a blend of four things:
 1. your professional capabilities and 'on the job' performance
 2. your profile and visibility with the people that count
 3. your positioning and perceived authority in the minds of people that count and
 4. your PBA (Personal Board of Advisors) and the leverage, advocacy and support they bring to your efforts.

Keep these in mind as you journey through the new world of work, leadership and career management.

Your career playbook for a life of fulfilment

This playbook will propel you quickly to the top of your tree. Or at least more quickly along a meaningful and enjoyable career path. If you're already at the top, this is about keeping you there with more control, influence, recognition and engagement. If you're already in a role you love, it's about keeping you there too, with more security, more control and more flexibility. It's about freedom to choose.

This is your fast-track guide to boardroom opportunities, recognition of your brilliance, backing of your potential, investment in your ideas and engagement with your vision. It's a guide to intrapreneurship or how to think and act like an entrepreneur in order to thrive within the constraints of a big corporation or firm.

These things rarely happen by accident or good fortune. That's why this playbook is packed with a ton of practical ways for you to hit your career and leadership goals intentionally and faster. It's not a theoretical work and it's not grounded in a master's thesis or academic research. It's a

pragmatic guide that gives you a variety of ways to become the number one obvious choice for what you do.

It's a career playbook for a life of fulfilment. Sounds a bit grand, but your work probably defines you. If your work is good, you're probably a happy bunny. When people ask you who you are or what you do, you'll probably lead with your job title or the industry you're in. So it's a 'how to' manual for controlling your career and securing work you love on your terms.

This is also aimed at leaders, whether thought leaders or business leaders. I'm calling you a leader since you're probably already in the top 5% of brains and talent in the world right now. After all, you're reading this book! And with this kind of power, you're an influencer and a change agent. That means you're already some kind of leader.

Finally, this book is a time machine. Sure, you'll make it to where you want to be in your career. This will just get you there faster. It's a fast-track mechanism for career progression. The vehicle that will propel you there is called 'career capital' and the key to the car is called reputation.

Although intangible, reputation has a value. And if it has a value, then it also has a cost. *Reward and risk*. Your reputation will take you a long time to build and a moment to ruin. But you can accelerate the building process by intentionally and purposefully doing good things that enhance your good name. After that, it's a case of marketing yourself well enough that good people talk about it. You're a brand, and all brands make good promises and need good promotion.

Problems this book may solve for you

Listen, if you've ever ...

- wondered how to move quickly up the ladder in a big firm, large organization or competitive industry
- watched others get the credit for your ideas

- been overlooked for a project, promotion or opportunity
- struggled for job satisfaction, meaning and fulfilment
- found it hard to convert your talent and potential into tangible career progression
- been frustrated that people don't quite get you, or don't see your brilliance
- failed to make an impact at a key moment
- felt restricted by the control others have over your working conditions
- worked really hard for little or no recognition
- thought people above you are not as good as you
- feared for your job in tough economic times
- been paralysed by too many career choices or job options

... then it's almost certain that this book will help you hugely. It's your playbook to quickly and strategically navigate through the career gears to a higher and higher calling. It will show you how to play the Career Game that most people don't even know they're in. It will show you how to create the necessary personal reputation that will cut through the crap and open the doors to the best jobs and opportunities. Creating a good name and a powerful reputation as a 'go-to' guy or girl is going to further your cause.

You're about to get the low down on how to connect at high levels for valuable advocacy, influence and sponsorship. You're going to learn the dimensions of executive presence – that boardroom gravitas that shows you're a peer of the senior players. And you're going to create a game plan of powerful reputation-building strategies that play to your unique strengths, personality and objectives.

This book in a nutshell

You may not have seen your reputation as a career weapon or leadership platform before now. But you're holding this career playbook and you feel

there's something in it. It makes sense then for you to know exactly what your reputation is and how it works for or against you.

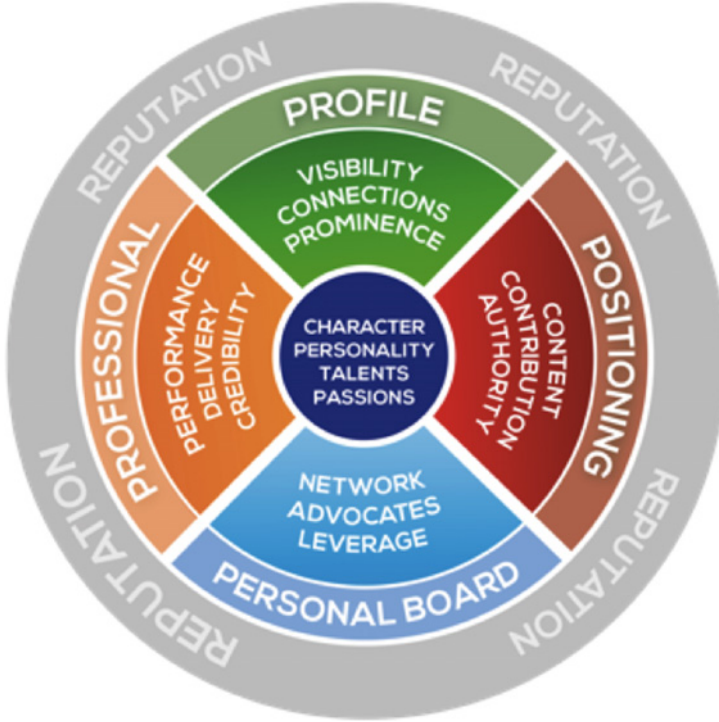
So, in the first part of the book, we'll define reputation properly and make the strongest case for its relevance to your career and business success. You'll get clarity over the difference between your personal brand and your reputation, and even what role your character plays in all that. Then you'll discover how the *unholy trinity* of online, mobile and digital have changed the way your reputation is built and broken.

You'll quickly see that as a leader and influencer (which you are, no matter what you might think) your reputation is an intangible yet critical career asset. In fact, the higher up you go, the more your personal reputation can make or break the people and company you represent. Then we get to the 'meat' of the book ...

The four reputational toolboxes

The second half of this book is the real 'how to' stuff. The nuts and bolts. The specific strategies you can deploy in building your own great name and store of career capital. The way you do it will be different to the way everybody else does it. That's why there are so many strategies to choose from.

Your mission as you read this book is to apply yourself to making it work for you and you alone. What works for you won't necessarily work for your colleague. You've got to play the game with your strengths, your weapons, your game plan. Everyone is different, but the general principles of 'be remarkable, market yourself well and trade smartly' apply to all.



The reputation vault

Everything you need is in this book. Probably. But who knows? You could be one of those hungry people who really get it and want more. You could be a fascinated student of the topic in need of supplementary materials. You could have bigger plans for your reputation than I thought.

That's why you've got the Reputation Vault. It's a hidden resource just for people who have bought the book. You get a bunch of useful worksheets, manifestos and interviews that wouldn't fit into the book. Not because they weren't worthy or instructive. But because there was not enough room.

For instance, the Executive Presence Manifesto does a deep dive into that subtle blend of gravitas, temperament, inner strength, credibility, charisma and skills that gets you viewed as a player and a peer of the top people. Resources like this supplement the book and ground you in the methodology.

You've got unrestricted access to the Vault with our compliments. Go to www.Rep.NetworkingCoachingAcademy.com/repvault and put in the access details supplied in the Additional Resources section at the back of the book.

For now, focus on what you have right here. Forget about the Vault for the moment. Let's just ensure you get the very most out of this book ...

Part One

Laying the Foundations

'More than a great database, a killer product or service, a set of skills, or a particular talent – your reputation is the single biggest factor in whether or not you will be a success on this planet.'

– Rob Brown

Chapter 1

Why Build Your Reputation?

'Life is for one generation. A good name is forever.'

– Japanese proverb

One of the lucky ones

Some people are lucky when it comes to career progression. They seem to fall on their feet and into the 'plum' jobs with huge salaries and massive influence. People say good things about them. They attract the endorsement of influential people. They lead committed, enthusiastic followers. They seem to know and are known by all the right people for all the right reasons.

These people get offered the best positions on the best terms. If they want international travel and an exotic life abroad, they get that. If they want a flexible schedule, an ideal job based in their home town so they can enjoy a great family life, that kind of autonomy seems to be available to them. If they want to lead a team, community or project, they quickly find themselves in charge.

They shoot up the career ladder and end up quickly in key leadership positions. More annoyingly, they somehow end up doing the really enjoyable, fun and interesting stuff. They love their job and they love their life. And you hate them.

How did all this happen? Obviously these people prospered because they were in the right place at the right time, right? They just got lucky. They're

not better than you. They might even be a whole lot worse. They just got the breaks. Or did they?

Success like this is rarely an accident. These are Career Pros. They've always known something you don't. They've networked their way to the top. They've developed a substantial reputation and huge social capital to get them where they are.

The good news is that if they did it, so can you. With very few exceptions, the career approach or success system of the high flyers and influential, respected leaders is duplicable.

Your stagnation or frustration has been because you've never known quite how to replicate that. Until now, that is. Because now you've got the playbook for career acceleration and job fulfilment. And it's all wrapped up in your good name, your personal brand and your reputation.

What exactly is a reputation?

Your reputation is simply the impression that others have of you. You should value it, protect it, shape it and grow it. Done right, it could give you a significant competitive advantage in your career. Your career counts, because it gives you the platform, autonomy and influence to change the world.

Your current reputation may be good, bad or indifferent. But you've got one. If you look up reputation in any good dictionary, you'll find things like this:

1. The general estimation in which a person is held by the public.
2. The state or situation of being held in high esteem.
3. The general opinion of the public towards a person, a group of people or an organization.

4. Your overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general.
5. The perception of you and your name in society.

Ultimately, your reputation is what people say, think and feel about you behind your back. It's the degree to which you are held in high esteem (or otherwise) by others. When all that's left of you is your business card or your last blog post, it's the memory, the impact and the impression you leave behind. Here's my definition.

'Your reputation is what influences people to think, feel and talk about you the way they do.'

The reason everyone pays

Your reputation wins you popularity contests. It makes people choose you and what you do. It makes them hire you or fire you. It's your REP – the Reason Everyone Pays. What exactly do you want people to pay? Three things:

1. **Respect.** A solid reputation encourages people to treat you as a partner and peer rather than worker or commodity. They'll promote you and defend you. They pay you a fair price for what you do, don't haggle and refer you to others.
2. **Attention.** In today's crowded, competitive marketplace, the challenge for you is to stand out just enough to get chosen. A formidable reputation will do that for you. It cuts through the clutter, the rhetoric and the noise so that people notice you more than everyone else.
3. **Money.** A solid reputation makes you desirable, hirable and promotable. All of which means more control, more choices and more money. You might do what you do JUST for the love of it, but I doubt it. Highly reputed individuals can always leverage their status for premium rates, maximum choice and ultimate autonomy. If they

want to build a platform and a following, they will. And because they resolve problems and pain for their followers, they'll make money. Money usually follows pain.

If you want people to pay you respect, attention and money, you're going to need a decent reputation that sets you apart from the pack.

You already have a reputation

Whether you realize it or not, you probably already have a reputation. Whether it's a good one or not, we're not sure yet. The truth is, you probably don't know exactly what your reputation is or what you did to get it. But it's likely you've got one.

You don't have to be famous to have a reputation. Reputation isn't reserved for high-profile leaders or thinkers. It's simply the perception owned by others of who you are and what you do. So if you're appearing on the radars of anyone, they're now making decisions about you.

Your reputation could be neutral, weak and inconsequential, which is bad. When people don't know you (or of you), then you're irrelevant. You don't factor into their hiring decisions. They're not hanging on your words. They don't care.

Your reputation could be negative and inhibitive. This is worse than bad. When people perceive you badly or wrongly, your efforts to get on and get ahead will be severely hampered. This reputation may or may not be of your own making. But you'll need to overturn and overcome it if you're going to get things back on track.

Your reputation could be strong and positive. People speak well of you. Life and work are a whole lot easier. You get perks, favours and shortcuts. Opportunities open up for you. Good things happen to you.

Your name and personal brand are powerful weapons in the corporate career battle. The decision to promote you to partner or the boardroom will be taken when you're not in the room. Your credentials as a leader of people or thinking come down to the power of your name. When you control that, you control your world.

The dangers of a poor (or no) reputation

A bad reputation will kill you. You'll struggle in your career, which will adversely affect your personal life. You'll take on roles and jobs because you have to, not because you want to. You'll find yourself in the despicable position of fulfilling other people's dreams and achieving other people's goals.

A poor reputation means you'll struggle to earn what you're worth. You'll find it hard to secure a job you enjoy in a place you like living with people you enjoy the company of. You'll get frustrated by a lack of voice, a shaky platform for your ideas and no engaged following for your thoughts.

You'll be at risk when you put forward good ideas and suggestions. Your credibility will suffer and people won't take you seriously. It can take you years to eradicate the effects of a poor reputation. People seem to have long memories. Records go back a long way. Stuff online never seems to go away.

It's similar when you have no reputation. Google yourself and see what comes up. If it's nothing on the first couple of pages, you're invisible. In a void of reputational collateral, people make up their own minds. They distrust. They assume. They ask the wrong people about you. They get a distorted picture. You can't afford to be anonymous.

If you don't build your reputation, others will do it for you. If you don't claim that authority space, somebody else will. You can't ignore your

reputation. You don't have the luxury of being ignorant of what others think about you. Shape it yourself. Try to own your personal brand.

There are some suggestions later in the book to help rebuild or restore a broken or bad reputation. The best strategy, though, is to build it true and strong in the first place, and guard it with everything you've got.

Ten big benefits of a stand-out reputation

Your reputation is your personal share price on the stock market of life. It dictates how much people will invest in you. It's your most valuable career asset. It says the people that count should choose you and nobody else.

Your reputation defines how people perceive you. It propels you into positions of leadership and influence. It gives you meaningful work and interesting projects. It lends credibility to your ideas and your inventions.

A good reputation as any kind of high performer, influencer, player, expert, authority or contributor in your space gives you the following 10 benefits.

1. **Stand-out status.** You're not alone. You have competition for openings, placements, projects, places, promotions, deals, mentors, funding, backing, endorsements, sponsorship, perks, privileges. Can you rise above the noise to claim your prize?
2. **Media attention.** Reporters need experts. Journalists require facts, insight, quotations and opinions from people in the know. Media interest seeks out those well-reputed authority figures.
3. **Influence.** Your good name and expert status will make people take action. People are naturally conditioned to respect authority figures. That means people will pay attention to you and what you stand for. They will hunt you down as the ultimate source,

because nobody else will do. That's when you can sell your ideas, your case for promotion and your contribution.

4. **Strategic alliances.** People want to partner with you when you're somebody of significance. They want your ideas, your influence, your endorsement and will want to collaborate with you. This in turn opens you up to new audiences and opportunities.
5. **Prestige and popularity.** In every buying or hiring decision, everyone wants the best. Gold medal, not silver. Top prize, not second. As a stand-out performer, authority or expert, you gain prestige and popularity. People will revere you and rave about you. They will chase you and want to work with you. People admire and share your 'art'. They spread your messages and are privileged to do so. They recommend you to their contacts, friends and lists. Reputation gets you on the podium in life's many popularity contests.
6. **Premium rates.** People with the best reputations and expert authority status have the most control and the strongest bargaining chip in negotiations. They usually earn more and seem worth more.
7. **Satisfaction and fulfilment.** With a good reputation comes choice. Choice to do more significant, enjoyable and fulfilling work. Choice to work where and how you want. Choice to wear or not wear a tie. You get the idea.
8. **Protection and forgiveness.** If your reputation is good, people will guard your actions. They'll back you up and defend you when you're attacked. When you mess up, they'll forgive you and give you the benefit of the doubt.
9. **Open doors.** When your reputation works for you, marketing yourself and your ideas is so much easier. It takes less effort. You gain acceptance and buy-in so much more quickly because of who people think you are – rather than 'I don't know you', they think 'I can't live without you'. Doors open before you that

would otherwise be closed. People will buy you, saying 'where do I sign?' instead of 'who are you?'

10. **When you build a formidable reputation, interesting things happen to you.** Good things. You'll naturally attract influence and connections. You'll gain valuable career opportunities. Life somehow becomes easier and more fun.

Your good name goes before you in ensuring that the best deals, opportunities, promotions and projects come to you instead of your competition. It makes you more and more indispensable.

You might not ultimately land that dream job or carve out that perfect career. But by cultivating your value and your reputation, you increase the chances that it will happen. With all these massive upsides, your reputation is worth investing in and guarding. This book shows you exactly how.

Reputation is the ultimate social proof

The power of social proof is immense. Robert Cialdini's seminal work *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* blew the lid on the power of how people make choices based on what others do and say. You are a social animal. You are influenced and conditioned by other people around you. This is sometimes called the herd mentality.

If one person follows you, others will follow them following you. It just takes one fanatic to start a movement, and one dedicated follower to kick-start a campaign for your election. But it takes a multitude to get you noticed. A crowd is usually louder than a lone voice.

If you get approval, good word of mouth or endorsements from influential people, it boosts your reputation. If you get your thoughts and