



THE AUTHENTICITY GAP: *Working at the Intersection of Brand and Reputation*

The Authenticity Gap insights can be used to address a spectrum of brand and reputation needs, including:

- Strategic business planning
- Differentiating for industry leadership
- Mission, vision, values development
- Cultural integration with employees
- Government and community affairs strategy building
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses for reputation recovery
- KPI in measurement dashboard
- Building business case for additional resources

Reputation is a fundamental quality of every organization – what stakeholders believe, what they expect and what they say to others. Many businesses, however, continue to manage their brands and reputations in separate silos. We believe this disconnect between brand and reputation creates a barrier to success and growth and, in some cases, a destructive force. We understand the evolving space in which brand and reputation intersect.

The Authenticity Gap is a methodology to help companies understand and proactively manage the gap between audiences’ expectations and actual experiences with a company or industry. The insights allow organizations to create true relationships with their audiences – authentic engagement that drives progress and opportunity.

To succeed in a world where organizations and management are under increasing scrutiny, understanding expectations is fundamental. Companies must align what they say and how they behave (the brand) with the shared perceptions of others (the reputation). The pressure to bring brand and reputation together is driving the evolution of a new model, where the intersection of brand and reputation offers executives a new, single view of their organization.



HOW IS THE STUDY CONDUCTED?

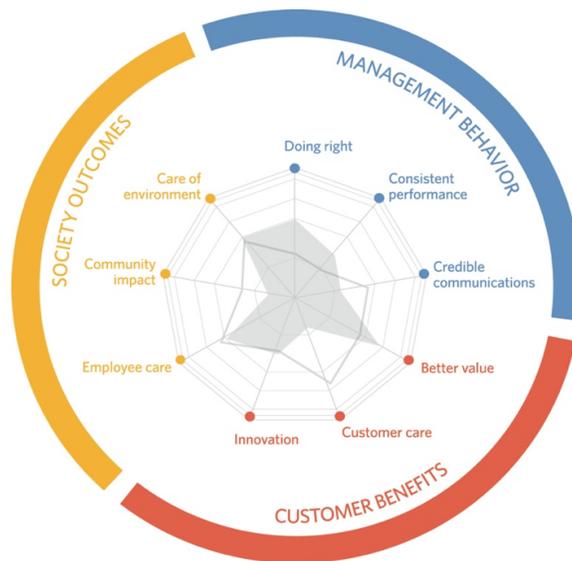
1 Hundreds of companies studied across industry categories around the globe

2 Respondents rank their expectations and experience on Nine Drivers of Authenticity

Our research is framed against the Nine Drivers of Authenticity – those attributes that most shape audiences’ perceptions and beliefs about a company. The drivers are tracked over time to monitor the organization’s current authenticity and changes against the industry and key competitors.

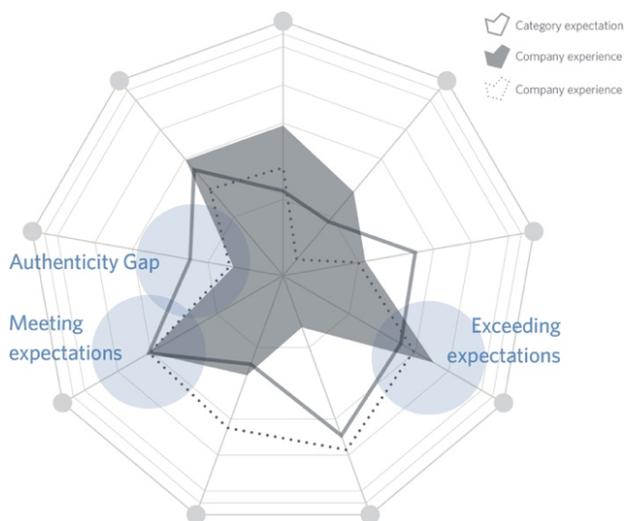
Together, these Nine Drivers provide a map to the agendas of today’s stakeholders and how they engage with a company.

The Nine Drivers fall into three interconnected groups: Management Behaviors, Customer Benefits and Society Outcomes, with each group made up of three individual drivers. In the past a company could choose to target different groups on specific issues – stockholders with messages on performance or NGOs with messages about community. Today companies must tell a holistic story that includes inter-related facets of their business across all three categories of drivers.



3 Expectations and experiences are mapped and used to inform a company’s position in the industry and against competitors

Rather than a list of rankings like so many other research studies, our study gives communications and marketing executives actionable data they can use to shape their brands and business initiatives – thus addressing the Authenticity Gap.



MEETING EXPECTATIONS ON 9 DRIVERS

+

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS ON 1-2 DRIVERS

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