



The CEO and corporate reputation

How leaders promote and
protect their businesses

By Nikki Scrivener and Rupert Cornford



FOURTH DAY

PUBLIC RELATIONS



WHAT IS THIS WHITEPAPER ABOUT?

Many businesses, from the outside at least, seem to be defined by their founders, forever connected with their vision and even their personality.

We don't need to look far for well-known examples of business leaders who have provided a charismatic face and a voice for their business, whether speaking to investors, potential customers or the general public.



CEOs from six technology companies, all at different stages of growth, discuss their attitudes towards personal profile.



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Part 2

Introduction

This whitepaper is the result of numerous conversations, both internally within Fourth Day and with external businesses, about the importance of personal reputation and its impact on organisations.

Over the years we have worked with many natural extroverts – leaders who thrive when placed front and centre as the face of their brand. Those who are as comfortable speaking with one journalist as they are speaking to an audience of 1,000 people.

There is no right or wrong way. In fact, when you speak to people inhabiting these roles, it's obvious that there are many common traits of a great leader, regardless of personality type.

We have also worked with more introverted CEOs who prefer to put the values of the company, and their teams, ahead of their own personal profile. There is no right or wrong way. In fact, when you speak to people inhabiting these roles, it's obvious that there are many common traits of a great leader, regardless of personality type.

In this paper we have interviewed CEOs from six technology companies, all at different stages of growth, about their attitudes towards personal profile. We explore how to find and develop the confidence to be a figurehead; and how to cultivate values within a business to build a reputation beyond one individual.

Also, taking views from outside the business, we speak to a corporate finance expert, a national journalist and media trainer, and also a reputation lawyer to gather some third-party perspectives on the dos and don'ts of personal reputation management.

We would like to thank everyone for their honesty while contributing to this piece. We hope it inspires others as much as it has inspired us.



PHIL JONES OF BROTHER UK

Part 1

Being the face of the brand

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I am very clear about who I am as a person. I'm a boy from Bracknell who worked his way up. But what I have realised is that my purpose and values are closely matched to the business."

PHIL JONES, BROTHER UK

Having a charismatic, outgoing personality can have its advantages. If you are comfortable placing yourself in the public eye, it will be easier to grab the attention of the right people.

You'll be able to pique the interest of journalists, who will help you tell your story to a wider audience, and getting through the door to investors will be that much simpler.

An ability to look outwards has helped Phil Jones of Brother UK as he's attracted the right talent to his organisation. Phil has been managing director of the printer and business solutions provider for nearly seven years and in that time has deliberately become the face of the brand and developed a profile beyond most leaders.

"I make a strong connection between the reputation of Brother and my own reputation," he says. "When apprentices sit here and tell me why they've joined, they have usually studied my social media profile alongside the business; we also discover their parents are heavily involved in the desk research. They want to know who I am as a person leading the business."

This all started back in 2007, when social media began to take off. At the time Phil was sales and marketing director of the business, learning to develop his own profile. He realised, quite quickly, that the digital world was a tool he could use to give the company personality and portray it as an attractive place to work.

For Phil and his leadership team, this journey has been about becoming a workplace brand: he wanted Brother to be an environment where learning and development became a focus to attract people. The more he talked about these topics, the more people asked him to, and the story began to write itself. It has had a 'halo effect' in Brother's supply chain, as the company works with more and more partners that share its values. It has also resulted in a series of awards including 'Investors in People: Platinum.'

Natural born leaders?

While it might seem natural for Phil to put himself out there, and he admits it's something he's willing and able to do, that alone wouldn't tell the full story of why he is comfortable in this role.

In his 30s, Phil worked with the psychologist Steven Sylvester, who wrote the book *Detox Your Ego*. At the time, he describes trying to make his team 'work better', but Steven countered: "no, they will work better when you work better".

"I ended up doing four months with Steven one-to-one, which was incredibly challenging, but probably one of the best experiences of my life. To know yourself, utterly, means you have nothing to fear.

"I am very clear about who I am as a person," he adds. "I'm a boy from Bracknell who worked his way up. But what I have realised is that my purpose and values are closely matched to the business."



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People talk about imposter syndrome a lot, and I think women are very conscious of this when thinking about their visibility and putting themselves forward for things. I don't particularly like public speaking, but I make myself do it because I want to be visible."

GEMMA MCCALL, CULTURE SHIFT



Finding confidence

Other leaders talked about confidence as something they've had to work at. The analogy they used was having to 'develop a muscle' that can be flexed whenever they need to promote the business.

This is certainly true for Gemma McCall, co-founder at Culture Shift – a business in its start-up phase. Gemma has taken the decision to put herself forward to be the figurehead, raising awareness of the business and its offering. But, given that her company has developed technology to combat bullying and harassment in the workplace, this means she regularly finds herself speaking publicly about tough issues.

To do so, she reflects on her own challenges as a mother getting back into the workplace and as a female leader. These are her twin motivators that help her to get up to inspire others.

"I think confidence can be quite gendered," she says. "People talk about imposter syndrome a lot, and I think women are very conscious of this when thinking about their visibility and putting themselves forward for things. I don't particularly like public speaking, but I make myself do it because I want to be visible. So that others will see me and think they can do it too."

Diana Xhumari, chief executive of Tegeria, a global tech company based in Albania, has also had to work hard to push herself out of her comfort zone. As a 30-year-old female CEO, born and raised in a challenging social and political climate, Diana has faced and overcome challenges that have provided critical skills and attributes to facilitate her success. Although naturally an introvert, her passion and self-belief have given her the focus, ambition and determination to move out of her comfort zone.



Gemma and Diana aren't the only ones who have needed to find motivation in order to speak publicly. Michael Teixeira, chief executive at customer generation business MVF, describes himself as an introvert. He confesses that he used to get very nervous before speaking on panels.

He does relish the feeling afterwards, however, and reminds himself of this whenever those nerves creep in before an event. It gives him the fuel he needs to get up and speak confidently about the company's growth.

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You can't fake confidence. You have got to know it deep in your core. You have to be able to sit in a room and put people at ease, even when you're a smaller company."

NICKY WATSON, SYRENIS



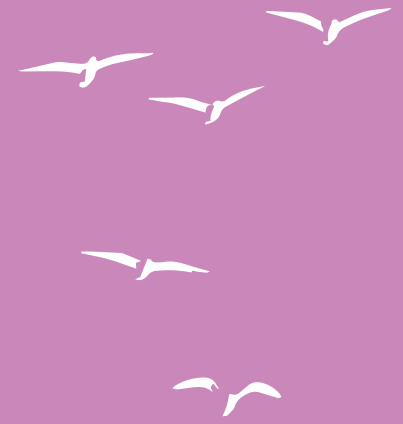
Fake it 'til you make it?

So, should you just 'fake it 'til you make it'? Should you embrace the 'imposter' until you feel comfortable walking in those shoes? Well not quite, according to Nicky Watson of software company, Syrenis, who says it's also about believing in what you're doing.

Nicky is passionate about privacy and her company has developed software for personal information management and stakeholder engagement. In the past three years, the company has grown from £500,000 to £2m turnover.

"If you're an entrepreneur, building something or starting your own business, the thing you need more than anything else is belief," she says. "You have to believe in what you are doing."

That belief flows through to the customer but is also part of a wider story that helps to maintain a feeling of confidence and trust, both inside and outside the business – much like Phil Jones' approach. "You can't fake confidence. You have got to know it deep in your core," she says. "You have to be able to sit in a room and put people at ease, even when you're a smaller company."



Part 2

Separating the brand from the individual

While there are benefits to linking a brand to a charismatic individual, not all CEOs are as comfortable tying the business's reputation to themselves personally. There are also sound strategic reasons why some might want to avoid doing this: if a founder wants to sell up and step away, or makes a mistake that damages the corporate brand, for example.

So, how else can a CEO boost the company's reputation, without assuming the role of the figurehead?

This is something Nicky Watson had to consider after taking the decision to step back from the CEO role and become chair of Syrenis. "As we grow, it can't always be personal. Glenn, our new chief executive is always saying that he can't clone me," she explains.

In answering this question, the business leaders we spoke to claimed that the other people you bring in to represent the brand are crucial. But, they also place significant emphasis on the values you set down to guide those individuals.

Nicky says: "We are capturing all the things I believe in and turning them into processes, defining the way we operate across the company."

"At the beginning, people's perception of Syrenis was me, and now, because of this exercise, it's becoming everyone else."

Setting the example

Matthew Scullion, co-founder of fast-growing software company Matillion, says he has never wanted to be 'the face of the brand' – and he describes himself as a "low key" individual. While he recognises that he still has a job to do when it comes to promoting the company's external profile – as it moves firmly into the scale-up category – it's not all about him.



MATTHEW SCULLION OF MATILLION

"For me, I don't see it being about Matthew. I would much prefer people knew the name Matillion, rather than Matthew Scullion," he says.

With that mindset, Matthew sat down with his business partner Ed Thompson in 2011, on the first day of setting up Matillion, and wrote down a set of values that would set the tone for the business. They wanted to ensure that, no matter what, they stayed "humble, open and transparent." These values have guided the company, and helped protect its reputation, ever since.

"Reputation is perhaps an output of the culture and values of the company and the leadership," says Matthew. "Our culture came from me and our founding team, to some extent, and a by-product of that is our value of 'confidence without arrogance'. We are trying to be bold, smart and confident, but we also try to be humble."

He adds: "I don't spend a lot of time thinking about my reputation, but I do spend a lot of time thinking about my behaviour and the things that support our values. One example is how we protect our culture and reputation through the way we treat customers."

Where's the value in values?

Matthew argues that his value-led approach has had many other benefits. One key advantage has been the ability to bring the right kind of investors on board from the US. That relationship is very much two way: when the values of the company align with

the values of an investor, it allows a partnership to be developed.

"The pastiche of the West Coast venture capital industry differs quite significantly from the reality once you become involved," he says. "One of the pleasant surprises for me is how much investors value the quality of the management team and the organisational health of the company. Ultimately, I don't do anything in Matillion, 'Matillioners' do it all, so the most important thing is the team – not me – and US investors recognise that."

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MATTHEW SCULLION, MATILLION



When it comes to talking to investors, Michael Teixeira at MVF also says he doesn't need to project a big personality. He believes his background, working in the City, has been a help – in its later stages of development, MVF has been backed by private equity from Bridgepoint. "Talking to that community comes easily to me. I can speak about the growth opportunity in a way that is compelling to them," he says.

Michael does, however, also see enormous advantages in having a defined set of values when it comes to managing the culture and reputation of his 500+ person company.

When he joined MVF, as chief financial officer in 2012, the company was much smaller. He says at that stage there weren't many "reputational signals" about the business, other than what he had learned through word of mouth and getting to know the team. But as the company has grown, things have changed.

He explains: "After I joined, I worked with the five founders on the strategy of the business, including codifying our internal values. When one of the founders decided he didn't want to be chief executive anymore, I was in prime position for the role. It wasn't something I had any doubts about because I loved the business and the team."

Given that Michael describes himself as an introvert, a set of internal values has also meant he hasn't needed to augment his personality in order to lead from the front.

"As a leader I want to bring everyone with me; getting the best out of people and making sure they're able to bring their best selves to work. Facilitating that is something I think I am adept at doing without being a massive extrovert."



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MICHAEL TEIXEIRA, MVF



MICHAEL TEIXEIRA OF MVF

Shielding the brand

Michael has since helped MVF go beyond those initial internal values and established business conduct principles that are helping to define the business's moral compass and, as a result, safeguard the business from any potential negative public perceptions.

"As we've grown up, we've been through phases of protecting the business more, because the values are great – but they don't put in processes or controls around your reputation, for example. Last year, we set up a business conduct committee and defined a set of principles. This is to make sure we are doing business in a way which is consistent with our values, whether that's the product / service areas we work in, the clients we partner with, or the marketing campaigns we run." These principles have been endorsed by their investors.

Gemma from Culture Shift is also acutely aware of how her business's reputation could be affected by the people she works with. Because her company is developing technology that's helping people report incidences of bullying and harassment, she wants the investors, and anyone associated with the company to be squeaky clean.

"For our current funding round, I have asked for the CVs of all the people who have invested in the fund," she says. "We plan to be a big business, so we will be in the firing line. I have got to think about the damage that could be done if we bring on board the wrong people. Morally, if it came from a bad place that would be terrible for me and the business."



DIANA XHUMARI OF TEGERIA

Personnel protection

“At Matillion, one of the best ways to build a positive reputation for a brand is to focus on the team you put around you”. For Matthew Scullion, this is a lesson he learned at a very young age.

Matthew explains that as a child he was very competitive when it came to sport, for example, but he was “not particularly good at anything.” Yet, while he knew he wasn’t going to captain a cricket team, he identified he was a pretty good talker. He quickly found that if he surrounded himself with “quality, influential people” he could be competitive in another field and succeed. He has since built a business that has raised millions in venture capital and recruited nearly 200 staff.

For Diana Xhumari at Tegeria, bringing the right people into her business has been hugely empowering – it has given her the confidence to step out and be the face of the brand. Like Michael Teixeira at MVF, Diana describes herself as an introvert. “I have a very technical background,” she says. “I studied computer science and was a very nerdy kid. Because I was always shy, I found other ways to get noticed – by shining at exams. I still focus more on what I do and deliver, rather than how much I am showing myself.”

She claims her success has been based on building a team of like-minded people who, like her, are all focused on working hard to deliver the best service to clients. Diana believes shared ethics and principles to be fundamental to any business relationship.

“In business, I do think you have to make some noise [she hated raising her hand at school] and find a way to get your message across. In the beginning it didn’t feel natural or easy. When I first launched Tegeria, technology was a very male-dominated sector, and I was modifying my behaviour to try to impress my peers.

“But this isn’t healthy, because you don’t take the time to think about whether you want to work with them in the first place.”

Diana found that when she started working internationally, it helped her with inner confidence and the courage to be true to herself. She met people who were more open-minded about her being a young female business owner. So, as she developed confidence, and a team, it was easier to take the time to explore who to work with and where to take the business.

The company today is built on her image and what she cares about, making a positive difference in business and to people’s lives. Having established a presence in more than 18 countries and with the company’s full time employment increasing by 225% in the last twelve months, Diana’s commitment to providing opportunities has also seen her self-fund an academy which has provided training and subsequent career opportunities, not otherwise available, for dozens of young people. Building the right platform and trusting in like-minded people have inadvertently rewarded her with becoming a trusted and reputed figure.

Part 3

Aligning the face with the values



As a company grows and matures, the behaviour of the leader will need to be balanced with the values of the business and what it stands for. If they are not consistent with each other, then people's experience of the business won't match the story being told by the person at the top. This misalignment can shake people's faith in a brand, and it will ultimately damage the business.

"It's always important to be congruent," says Phil Jones from Brother UK. "There is no surprise that we as a business are helping people and businesses to become more successful, more quickly; and as an individual, I want to encourage the unlimited potential in others. There is a direct link between them; I can live and breathe these things and be open to audit."



Phil advises that you start with who you are as a person and marry that to the business. So, while it is important to get out there and not completely hide away, it's also fundamental to consider the knock-on effect for your wider group of stakeholders. It's not all about you, it's about all of us.

Business can be tough, but it's much easier when you are acting from a place of security in who you are and what you stand for, and that others believe what you are saying – on a stage, in a journalist interview, or when pitching to a prospect or investor.

"It's very important that you stay true to the values you have, because you are going to face lots of uncertainty and challenging situations," says Diana from Tegeria. "You have to have that compass and anchor-safe place, no matter what happens, knowing your decisions come from a place of belief and principles."

"Of course, there are going to be moments when you expand outside of your comfort zone so you can maximise opportunities, but at the end of the day you shouldn't trade off things that matter to you."

Five rules to develop your reputation



1. Personality goes a long way

- so develop your outward persona, but stay true to yourself



2. Codify your values

- they will help steer you through choppy waters



3. Match your stories

- the business and its leader must be aligned



4. Believe in your story

- you can't fake confidence; you must have faith in what you're doing



5. Hire the right people

- they will ensure the business stays true to its values



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Appendix

The view from the legal, media and investment worlds

Appendix i

Reputation in the eyes of the law



Throughout our whitepaper we discuss the benefits of leading from the front when it comes to a CEO's personal profile. But the decision to thrust someone into the spotlight should not be taken lightly, and Hanna Basha, media law specialist at Payne Hicks Beach, sounds a note of caution.

"Companies need to think carefully about how much emphasis they put on one individual," says Hanna. "Once you're out there then everything is open to scrutiny, journalists may even try to pry into your private life."

Rather than trying to frighten CEOs off from raising their personal profiles, Hanna is simply keen to share the benefit of her experience, having worked with numerous high-profile individuals in the corporate and celebrity worlds who have had their reputations challenged.

She acknowledges that there's a lot to be gained by having a high profile and that we all like to see individuals at the heart of a story. We want to read about people, not companies, as Michael Dempsey in Appendix ii also highlights – in our interview about reputation and the media. But, at the risk of being cynical, people are sometimes more interested to hear how a high profile person has fallen from a lofty position, than in the story of how they got there.

Hanna explains: "When the media goes on the attack, there are very few stones left unturned. From divorce to tax affairs, political beliefs to what a CEO's children say on social media – basically journalists will seek anything that can be used to paint a picture." Hanna always advises CEOs to sit down with their senior management team and PR advisors to be completely transparent about potential stories and agree how and if they will respond. Anticipate unwanted media attention and plan how you will deal with it.

"For example, one scenario to play out is redundancies," says Hanna. "No-one wants to think they might happen, but the CEO's personal circumstances may be scrutinised if they do. For example, private schools and staff redundancies don't always play well when you are laying off staff, so don't let questions like that catch you off-guard. On the flip side, if the news is good, CEOs and their families might need additional support at times – when the company has been sold for a considerable sum of money, for instance. How will the company ensure personal information is kept out of the story in a situation like that? You should aim to be prepared for all realistic eventualities, even if they feel a million miles away when you're starting out."

How the law protects CEOs

Essentially, the law is there to provide protection for individuals. So, if something is published which is untrue or private then CEOs have every right to take action. Traditional news outlets will be aware of the law and be under pressure to protect themselves commercially. Unfortunately, the grey area continues to be social media. Hanna has written and spoken extensively about how problematic social media can be in the battle to protect reputations. The speed at which defamatory comments and private information can be shared across social media platforms can be frightening, and these comments are often made without any thought given to their legal implications. Online abuse can then attract press attention.

"The ideal scenario is that a defamatory comment is immediately taken down," says Hanna. "But every moment longer this takes to happen is a moment longer for that comment to be shared. Different rules also apply within different territories, which can make matters more complex."

"99% of the time nothing goes wrong, but it's so much better for the individual and their companies to be prepared if they do," says Hanna.

Here are Hanna's five tips for helping to protect your reputation:

1. Confront the skeletons in your closet before you become the face of the business
2. Work with your PR team to prepare for all reasonable eventualities and get a crisis plan in place
3. Resist the urge to use your increased profile to push your own personal views or details of your private life; consider the impact of these on the values of the brand
4. Understand how the law can protect you
5. Act quickly and deal with negative media promptly and proportionately

Appendix ii

Personal reputation and the media



When it comes to building a reputation in the media, it's essential to keep one thing in mind: journalists want to write about people first, companies second. "You have to put a human face on the story or people simply won't remember it", says Michael Dempsey, a business and technology journalist and media trainer. Throughout the course of his career, working with publications including the Financial Times, The

Sunday Times and BBC Online, Michael has interviewed countless chief executives. And it's those that display honesty, integrity and humility that stand out.

"The people at the top are a journalist's way in to finding out about the company," adds Michael. "Outgoing personalities that invest time into getting to know the press can really give their businesses a character."

Michael believes that having a more extroverted personality may naturally make it easier for CEOs to put themselves in the spotlight. "It's true that to want to work in the media you're usually fairly extrovert, so I guess we're guilty of assuming that everyone else must be too," he says.

He recognises this can be more difficult for those who don't feel confident about being the face of the company, and acknowledges there must be stories out there that never get told or heard because of that.

For Michael though, even the shyest of CEOs can use the media to their advantage if they take time to understand how it works. "I've media trained several thousand people and I can only think of two or three occasions where I've advised the PRs not to put someone in front of the press. For the most part, spokespeople just need to understand what it is that journalists need."

Understand what makes a good story

Knowing what makes a story is often the first hurdle for CEOs when they're faced with a media interview. More often than not the real story isn't what the CEO thinks it is or wants it to be. Michael uses the example of the city pages of the broadsheets. "Despite a superficial focus on revenues and results these stories are often driven by people rather than companies," he says. "That's what readers care about."

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If a CEO is not confident, or keeps casting an eye towards their PR advisor, journalists can spot it immediately."

MICHAEL DEMPSEY

That's why Michael urges interviewees to speak from the heart and open up a little about who they are as human beings outside of business hours. In return for this honesty, journalists will often give CEOs the time and column inches to get their messages across. But they must show a genuine personality. "If people are putting on an act, it shows," he says.

Avoid jargon

Michael warns against relying on personality alone, claiming serious interview preparation is vital. "If a CEO is not confident, or keeps casting an eye towards their PR advisor, journalists can spot it immediately."

He adds that an over reliance on corporate or tech jargon can have the same negative effect. "A lot of tech CEOs use jargon or management speak as a safety blanket," he says.

Michael wants the CEOs he trains and interviews to be armed with facts and figures before they walk in, as well as having the ability to tell stories and use humour. "The character of the CEO flows through the business, so think carefully about how you're coming across," he adds.

Build relationships

Michael concedes that there can be a tipping point when companies become over-reliant on an individual, however. This is especially true when things go wrong for the CEO on

While some CEOs fear the repercussions of a bad interview, others thrive in the spotlight. But it doesn't need to be an either or.

a personal level. Suddenly, the relationships they have nurtured with journalists matter more than ever.

"If you've built up strong relationships with the media, and have taken good PR advice, then it can be easier to recover from a crisis," he says. "The key is always to acknowledge a problem and to say how you're going to deal with it. If you already have relationships in place there will be more opportunity for you to have your say."

A two-way street

Ultimately, journalists and CEOs can both benefit from each other. Good relationships can help to promote a company and propel an individual's career. They can also give journalists the best stories, first.

There are numerous examples of CEOs that have successfully used their own personal

reputations to boost the corporate brand and of journalists that have used their contacts to get an exclusive. One of the key factors behind the best relationships is a willingness on the part of CEOs to make themselves available to journalists, not just when they've got something to announce.

As with any successful relationship, open and honest communication is key to media relations. While some CEOs fear the repercussions of a bad interview, others thrive in the spotlight. But it doesn't need to be an either or. As with any situation that we feel nervous about, practice makes perfect.

Appendix iii

Does reputation matter to investors?



The individual profile of a CEO can make a huge difference for start-ups or young companies looking for investment. Paul Billingham, director at Knight Corporate Finance suggests that the ability to secure investment is often completely intertwined with the reputation of the CEO. "In many ways the CEO is the most valuable commodity, especially for companies in early investment rounds. Potential investors need to buy into the leader", he says.

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PAUL BILLINGHAM,
KNIGHT CORPORATE FINANCE



Keep a high profile for investment

Personal reputation matters when you're looking for funding - it might even help you to secure that first introductory meeting. And investors want to see individuals who can demonstrate confidence and experience, as well as solid growth plans.

Having a high-profile CEO is clearly not as important as having a good business plan, but certainly in early stage funding rounds it will often help.

CEOs that are seen as thought leaders in their sectors, that have secured high level media coverage and that regularly speak at industry events are perceived as being more confident and potentially better connected and networked in the industry. There are so many examples, especially in the tech start-up arena, where company brands are inextricably linked with those of their CEOs.

However, there is an argument to say that the bigger the company becomes, the less important the personal brand of the CEO is. And that if you're a company looking to sell then a notable high-profile CEO can start to become a hindrance.

When it comes to an acquisition, the acquirer may be more interested in the strength of the management team than the reputation of the CEO, who may well be exiting as part of the deal.

Keep a low profile for a sale?

"Whilst having a strong personal reputation is extremely valuable when you're growing a business, the opposite can be true when you're trying to sell it," confirms Paul. He argues that, when it comes to an acquisition, the acquirer may be more interested in the strength of the management team than the reputation of the CEO, who may well be exiting as part of the deal. "A company that shows an over-reliance on its CEO is likely to be less attractive to the buyer", he says.



The line between personal and professional

With regards to how 'true' the version of yourself you present in the public domain is, there's no question that CEOs need to consider the line between their personal and professional lives carefully. Our interview with reputation lawyer Hanna Basha also highlights this. CEOs that openly discuss their political beliefs, for example, leave themselves open to criticism. As do those who share too much personal information or preference on social media. "The more you put yourself out there, the more you put yourself up for public scrutiny" confirms Paul.

Some investors will stipulate how visible and opinionated CEOs should be on social media channels and with traditional media, for example.



Some investors will stipulate how visible and opinionated CEOs should be on social media channels and with traditional media, for example. They have ethical guidelines within which companies in their portfolios must operate. This includes what they can and can't say about anything considered too political or partisan. There's a concern that you risk alienating people with your views and inevitably, the values of your company will be bound up with your own personal opinions. Investors can take a dim view of this.

That's why CEOs need to consider how much of themselves they wish others to see. There have been countless examples of CEOs that have been caught up in personal or professional scandals that have had a considerable impact on the reputation of the brand and the company's share price.

"Not all CEOs are constantly 'out there'. We don't really know the CEOs behind companies like Just Eat, for example, and I do wonder whether there's a reason for that", says Paul. "I've worked with CEOs who are absolutely paranoid about PR, probably because they've seen how it can backfire."

Our whitepaper shows that some CEOs prefer the values of their businesses to do the talking rather than the spotlight necessarily being on them. But in truth, there's probably a happy medium. A CEO that can attract positive attention for the right reasons is a valuable asset. It's just important to be mindful that what you're saying, who you're saying it to and where you're saying it all align with the values of the business and what it's trying to achieve.

With thanks to our contributors

Gemma McCall

www.culture-shift.co.uk



Gemma is the CEO and co-founder of Culture Shift, a tech-for-good software development business with a mission to positively change culture in organisations across the world. Its first product

is an online reporting system that allows those who have experienced or witnessed any kind of harassment or abuse to report it and seek support. The software helps organisations to respond to situations as well as monitor and tackle any worrying cultural trends, allowing them to protect their people, their culture and their reputation.

Michael Teixeira

www.mvfglobal.com



Michael is CEO of MVF, a global leader in customer generation; helping ambitious businesses grow by delivering massive volumes of high-quality sales leads on a pay-per-

lead basis. Under Michael's leadership, MVF has maintained exceptional growth, scaling to over 500 people across the US and UK, while establishing MVF as the best place to work in London, as recognised by the Sunday Times. Michael has been with MVF since 2012, initially joining as CFO where he led MVF's previous capital raising process in 2015. Prior to MVF, Michael helped to build the UK challenger bank Aldermore.

Diana Xhumari

www.tegeria.com



For Diana, blending the power of technology with business challenges is the name of the game. Diana started her career as a CRM developer, a tech pursuer with huge motivation in hunting

best-in-class solutions for her clients. Now CEO of Tegeria, a successful global tech company, she leads a team of talented tech experts with wide-ranging knowledge in different areas that create a distinctive advantage for succeeding in everything they do.

Having faced great economic, political and social struggles, born and educated in a time and country which didn't celebrate youth, women or ambition, Diana has overcome huge adversity on her journey to success. She is now an inspiring leader, not only committed to supporting clients on their own success journey, but also providing opportunities for young people.

Nicky Watson

www.syrenis.com



Nicky is the Founder and Chief Architect at Syrenis, as well as Chair of the Board of Directors. Over the last 20 years she has become an established expert in the privacy

market, having partnered with leading enterprises to develop and implement solutions to tackle the latest business challenges. Nicky's innovative leadership and technical capability has enabled Syrenis to develop a strong commercial offering and expedite their growth plans for 2020.

Phil Jones

www.brother.co.uk



Phil is Managing Director of the UK arm of global technology manufacturer – Brother. Joining the business in 1994 as a salesperson, he worked his way up the organisation to be

appointed its head in 2013. Awarded an MBE for Services to Business in 2016, Phil is a Companion of the Chartered Management Institute, a Fellow of the Institute of Directors and a Fellow of the Association for Professional Sales.

Hanna Basha

www.phb.co.uk



Hanna is a partner at Payne Hicks Beach specialising in defamation, privacy and breach of confidence, with a wealth of expertise in reputation and crisis management. In

particular, Hanna advises prominent individuals and corporations to prevent the publication of private, sensitive and confidential information and defamatory allegations in the media and to skilfully manage media storms.

Hanna is highly regarded within her field having acted in a number of landmark defamation and privacy cases. The legal directories describe Hanna as “exceptional” and recognises that she “gains the confidence of clients in sometimes quite difficult circumstances” (Chambers and Partners).

Matthew Scullion

www.matillion.com



Matthew is founder and CEO of Matillion. He co-founded his first start-up at age 18. Before starting Matillion in 2011, Matthew worked in commercial IT and software development

for 15 years at a number of British and European systems integrators. A native of Altrincham, near Manchester, UK, Matthew now spends half of his time in the United States - primarily in Denver (Matillion’s U.S. headquarters), Seattle, New York, and in the Bay Area, at the beating heart of the enterprise software industry.

Paul Billingham

www.knightcf.com



Paul is co-founder and Director of Knight, with Adam Zoldan. Together they have built Knight into a market leading corporate finance boutique focused on telecoms and technology.

Paul leads transactions from preparation through to completion. Prior to co-founding Knight he was Commercial Director at Talk Talk Business and has held various operational and finance roles in the telecoms industry at Martin Dawes Telecommunications, Opal Telecom and Talk Talk. Paul is also a Director of Knight R&D, a R&D tax relief consultancy, and Advisory Board member of fund:tmt, a small TMT investment fund.

Michael Dempsey

www.mediapilot.com



Michael Dempsey is a journalist and media trainer. He has worked for BBC News and writes for the Financial Times, The Economist, The Sunday Times and other national publications. He

has also worked at ITN, the Press Association and CNN. Michael specialises in media training and consultancy, turning his extensive experience as a journalist inside out to explain how the press thinks and acts.

He also works as a copywriter and has written speeches and produced documents, case studies and policy papers for many organisations and individuals including the UK Attorney-General's Office and technology giant HP.

Rupert Cornford

Director, Story Publishing



Rupert is an experienced business journalist, magazine editor and interviewer. He worked at the Press Association, before moving to the Middle East to work for ITP

Publishing in Dubai, and joined Insider Media in Manchester on his return to the UK.

Rupert went on to spend two years working in organisational psychology, developing client relationships, communications, and running workshops (on storytelling, among others). He set up Story Publishing to bring this experience all together and works closely with Fourth Day on written, audio and research projects for clients.

Nikki Scrivener

Director and Co-founder, Fourth Day



Nikki co-founded Fourth Day in 2002. She has 25 years' experience in PR, communications and crisis management, spanning technology, arts and not for profit clients. Fourth Day is a

boutique international agency with a presence in the UK, France, Germany, Canada, Australia and North Africa, and partners across the world.





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