



Reputation Management for New Media Survey  
*How ready are you?*



Sponsored by Trackur and by Marketing Profs  
Conducted by Buzz Marketing for Technology  
Authored by Paul Dunay

## Executive Summary

One of my goals this year was to do a study on reputation management. As we all factor in the effects of new media on our brands, I felt this was a topic with long-lasting appeal to every marketer.

My hypothesis going into the creation of these questions was that B2B marketers (including yours truly) just aren't adequately prepared for an online reputation crisis. Dell wasn't, Wal-Mart wasn't. If those big B2C brands weren't ready, I was betting we weren't ready either. And I was right!

To be totally transparent with you, I wasn't surprised by many of the responses to my survey. The bulk of you are monitoring your reputation in some way, shape or form. But are you poised to respond in the case of an online reputation crisis? 55% admitted you weren't.

Perhaps you need stronger guidelines in place, like a blogging policy. Two-thirds of respondents don't have one!

Many of you are do-it-yourselfers when it comes to monitoring your reputation. Is that perhaps because your company hasn't made this a strategic priority? 53% admitted it wasn't a strategic priority for you – yet!

My goal here is to give you the state of the union when it comes to monitoring reputations online. This data is bound to change, so I hope I get you thinking of ways to close the gap with your organization's reputation!

*Special thanks to my sponsors – Trackur.com, run by the renowned Andy Beal of the blog MarketingPilgrim.com, and Marketing Profs' equally renowned Ann Handley for their support on this survey.*

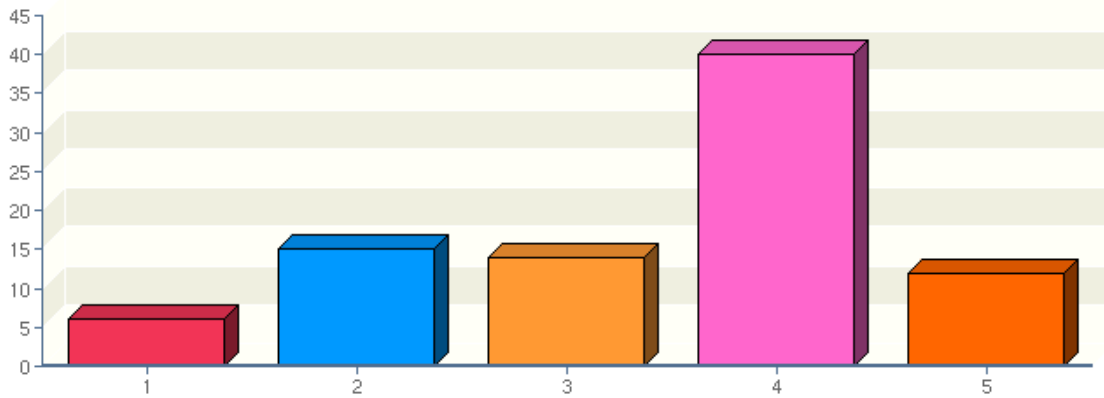
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**1. My organization has a strong understanding of its current reputation.**



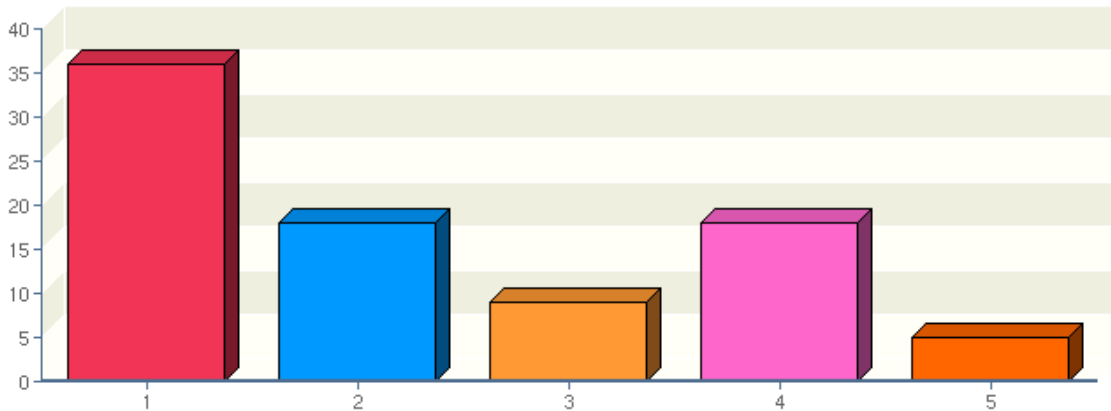
Value	Count	Percent
5. Strongly Agree	12	13.79%
4. Somewhat Agree	40	45.98%
3. Neither Agree or Disagree	14	16.09%
2, Somewhat Disagree	15	17.24%
1. Strongly Disagree	6	6.90%
Total Responses:	87	

**60% Agree**

**Analysis**

To start off the survey I wanted to know if you felt you had a good handle on your current reputation. From the responses it looks like most of you do (60%). Very few of you strongly disagreed with this statement, which leads me to believe there is little room for improvement in this department. In the branding world where I come from, there are many new techniques to getting a handle on this in a very scientific way. Ranking on every attribute of your brand is possible these days.

**2. My organization has a formal policy in place regarding employee blogs.**

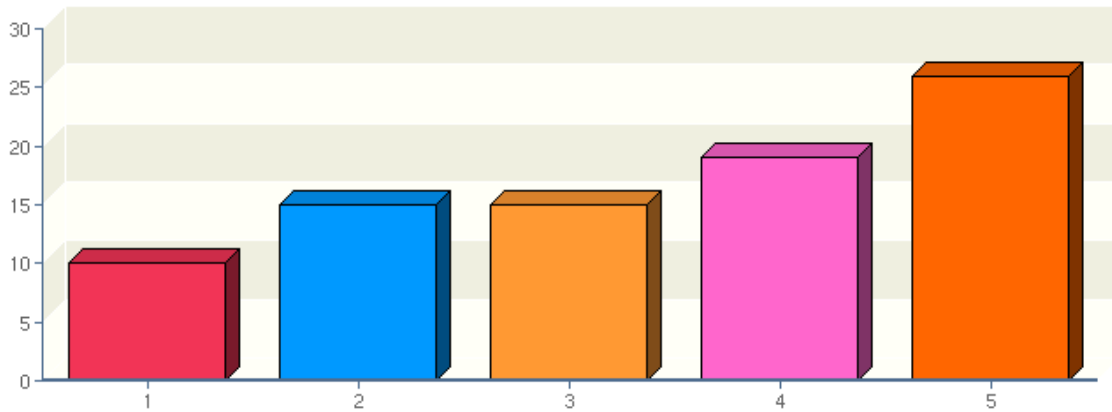


Value	Count	Percent	
Strongly Agree	5	5.81%	
Somewhat Agree	18	20.93%	
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	10.47%	
Somewhat Disagree	18	20.93%	<b>63% Disagree</b>
Strongly Disagree	36	41.86%	
Total Responses:	86		

**Analysis**

63% of you don't have a formal blogging policy in place, which could spell trouble for you. As one of the first blogger for my organization, I got "the call" from our legal department asking about formal blogging policies and, since I was leading the interactive group, whether we would write them. I did a quick Google search on "blogging policies" and found one created by IBM that we used as a baseline for creating our own policy. (Side note: – legend has it that IBM developed its blogging policy in just a few days!) Generally this is not a hard thing to get done. And, I couldn't help but think about how simple the rules basically are, such as don't say bad things about us, don't say bad things about our clients, don't act unprofessionally, etc. It's almost the same thing I tell my kids at home! An interesting twist nowadays is whether to call it a Blogging policy or instead a Social Media policy and expand it to cover commenting and social networks like Facebook. I suggest you do the latter.

**3. Measuring and monitoring my organization’s reputation is a strategic priority in 2008.**



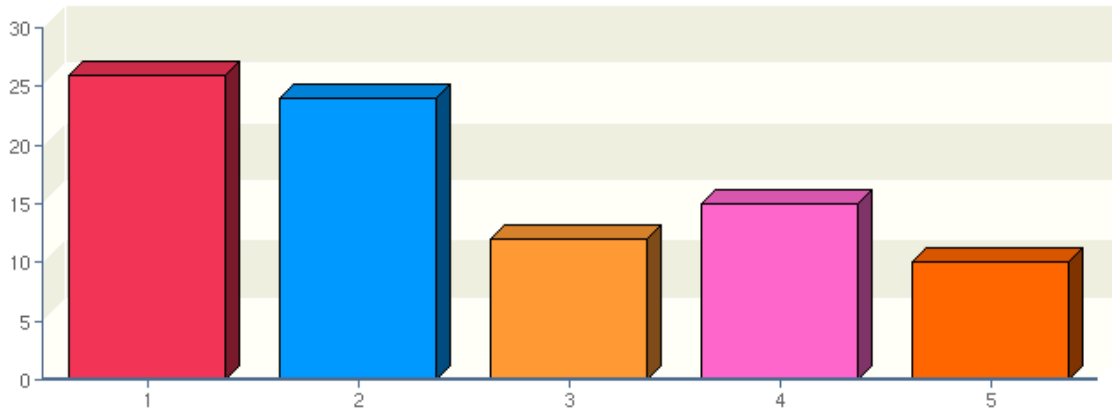
Value	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	26	30.59%
Somewhat Agree	19	22.35%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	17.65%
Somewhat Disagree	15	17.65%
Strongly Disagree	10	11.76%
Total Responses:	85	

**53% Agree**

**Analysis**

53% of you said measuring and monitoring your reputation is a strategic priority! Bravo! If it wasn't, I would really be worried about you. So what about the 29% of you that said it ISN'T a strategic priority? You could be headed for a disaster with your brand and not know it. All it takes is one blogger with a beef to start a new-media frenzy about you. Put down this paper immediately and shoot an email to your senior leadership that reputation and brand are two sides of the same coin. You need to monitor one and build the other (respectively).

**4. My organization has a strategic plan in place to manage its online reputation.**

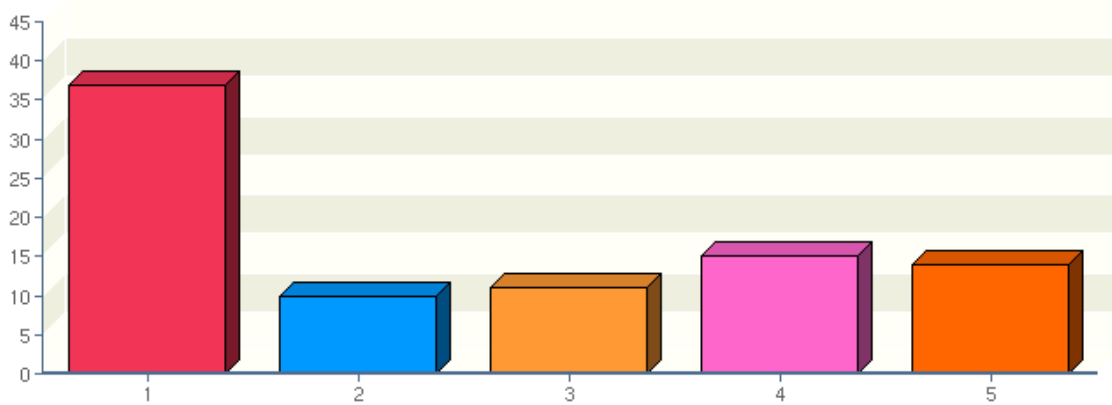


Value	Count	Percent	
Strongly Agree	10	11.49%	
Somewhat Agree	15	17.24%	
Neither Agree or Disagree	12	13.79%	
Somewhat Disagree	24	27.59%	<b>58% Disagree</b>
Strongly Disagree	26	29.89%	
Total Responses:	87		

**Analysis**

We are not in Kansas anymore folks - 58% are asking for trouble! Consider this example: You wake up one morning and get an email from a former colleague to be his friend in Facebook. Should you confirm or ignore? You confirm, and while you are in Facebook you do a quick search on your company name. You discover several groups devoted to hating your brand. Sound the alarm! But now what do you do? Who is on point to respond? What team have you identified, and what strategy and policies have you considered for this or any other new media reputation situation? I would tell you that you should think this through now before it happens because it never happens at a convenient time!

**5. My organization currently uses a service to monitor traditional media (ex Bacons, Burrells).**



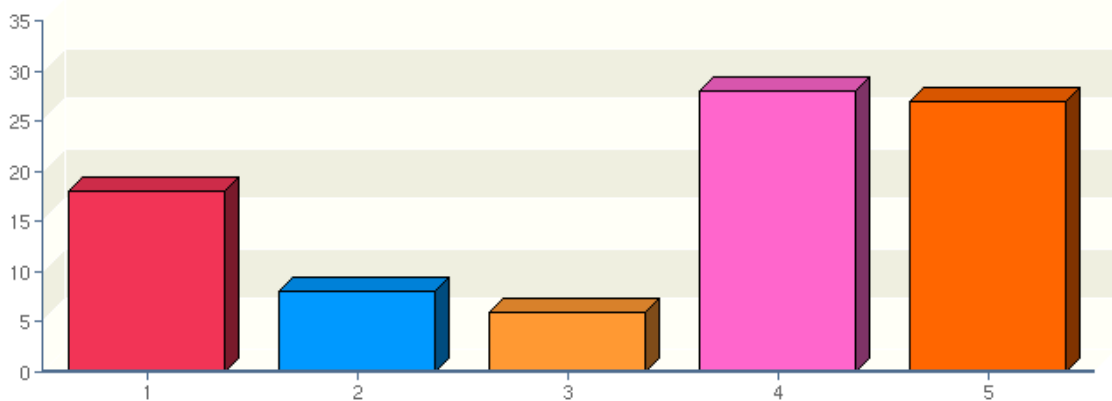
Value	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	14	16.09%
Somewhat Agree	15	17.24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	12.64%
Somewhat Disagree	10	11.49%
Strongly Disagree	37	42.53%
Total Responses:	87	

**54% Disagree**

**Analysis**

54% of you don't monitor using the traditional means anymore. That spells trouble for firms like Bacon's and BurrellsLuce, which have been in that business since before I was even born! Traditional media monitoring is now available online from a variety of sources that offer ways to analyze for tone and sentiment. They even put a price tag on the media value from an impression count. These are worth the investment if you have the dollars and want/need to prove the value of strategic media relations.

**6. My organization currently monitors social media; such as blogs, forums and message boards via free online services. (ex Google alerts, Technorati)**

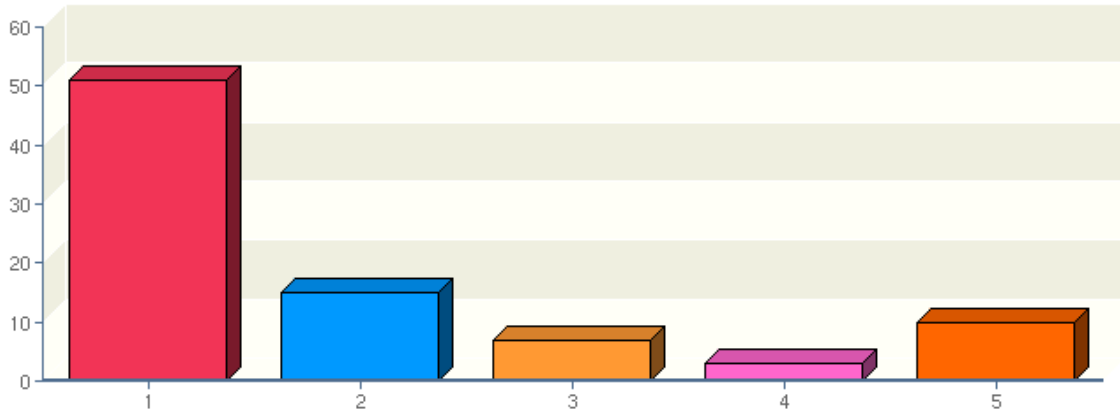


Value	Count	Percent	
Strongly Agree	27	31.03%	<b>63% Agree</b>
Somewhat Agree	28	32.18%	
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	6.90%	
Somewhat Disagree	8	9.20%	
Strongly Disagree	18	20.69%	
Total Responses:	87		

**Analysis**

The survey says 63% agree – and that’s really no surprise. This is very easy to set up, and with a feed reader also very easy to monitor. These services are great. However, they don’t address your need if your brand or product name is, say, Apple, in such a case, you’d want a clear picture of the conversations to make sure they’re about you and not apple farm crops in the Northeast.

**7. My organization currently monitors social media; such as blogs, forums and message boards using a subscription-based monitoring service. (ex Cymfony, BuzzMetrics)**

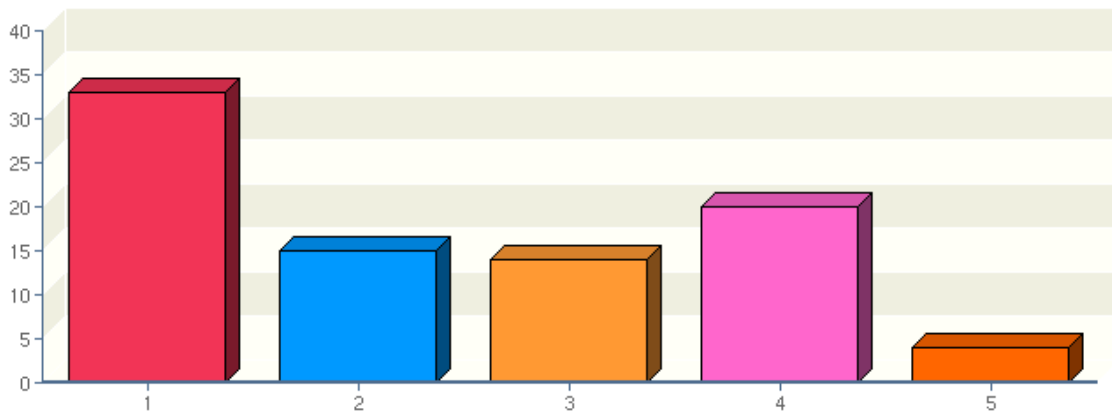


Value	Count	Percent	
Strongly Agree	10	11.63%	
Somewhat Agree	3	3.49%	
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	8.14%	
Somewhat Disagree	15	17.44%	<b>77% Disagree</b>
Strongly Disagree	51	59.30%	
Total Responses:	86		

**Analysis**

77% of you disagree. And to be honest, I disagree as well. While I would love to have a dashboard filled with media indicators from firms like Cymfony and BuzzMetrics, I feel you need a level of activity in new media (and old) that would require you to have this. My volume on a daily basis is not that onerous that it can't be handled by Google Alerts and Technorati feeds. Once you hit a certain level of volume I do think firms like Cymfony and BuzzMetrics make sense.

**8. My organization is effectively leveraging social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, or MySpace as a customer touchpoint.**



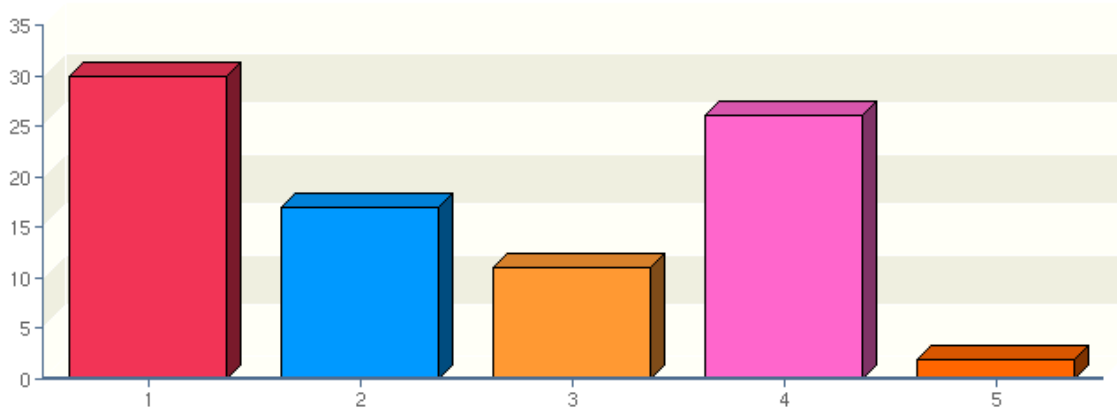
Value	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	4	4.65%
Somewhat Agree	20	23.26%
Neither Agree or Disagree	14	16.28%
Somewhat Disagree	15	17.44%
Strongly Disagree	33	38.37%
Total Responses:	86	

**56% Disagree**

**Analysis**

This is surprising given the level of activity on social networks like LinkedIn and Facebook. MySpace in my opinion is no place for a B2B brand (B2C maybe – ex Nine Inch Nails and Coors – but not for B2B brands). You can “friend” a person but not a company on Facebook, so the site made “fan pages” available for companies in November 2007. Every brand should consider starting its own brand fan page and posting to it all the feeds, photos and videos you can. (BearingPoint has 23 fan sites with hundreds of members). LinkedIn has followed Facebook’s lead, but has more of a business bent to it. Consider doing the same on LinkedIn.

**9. My organization is monitoring its reputation on social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace.**



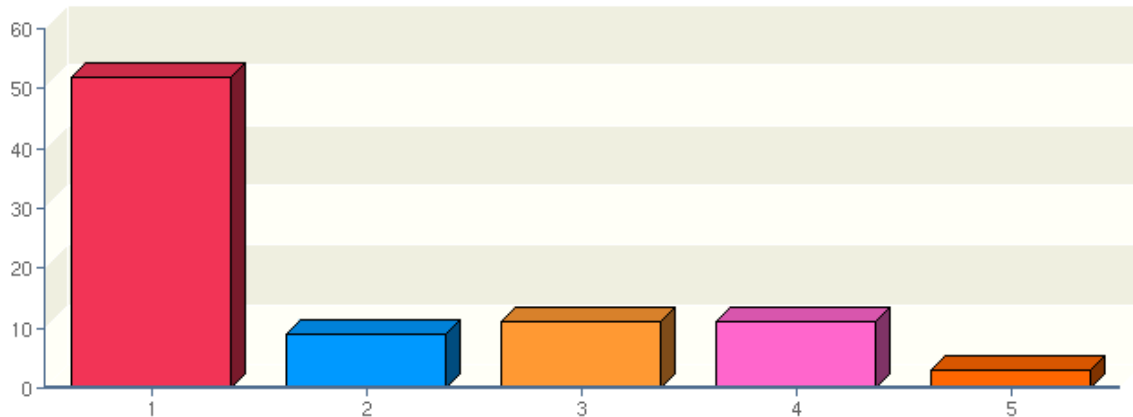
Value	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	2.33%
Somewhat Agree	26	30.23%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	12.79%
Somewhat Disagree	17	19.77%
Strongly Disagree	30	34.88%
Total Responses:	86	

**55% Disagree**

**Analysis**

In all fairness, this question was a red herring. There IS NO WAY to monitor your reputation in social networks – they are password protected so Google and Technorati won't index them. So one-third of you must be doing this by hand. MySpace publishes a "flat file" of its site, so perhaps you are picking that information up via alerts and feeds, but LinkedIn and Facebook don't. Frankly, you may be surprised by what you find about your brand out there. The service I use is from AboutFaceDigital, which specializes in new media marketing techniques. The service has proprietary technology to monitor your brand, like it does for me. In fact, you should look into this if you aren't already.

**10. My organization is developing applications, or widgets, that can be easily installed on social networks and spread virally.**



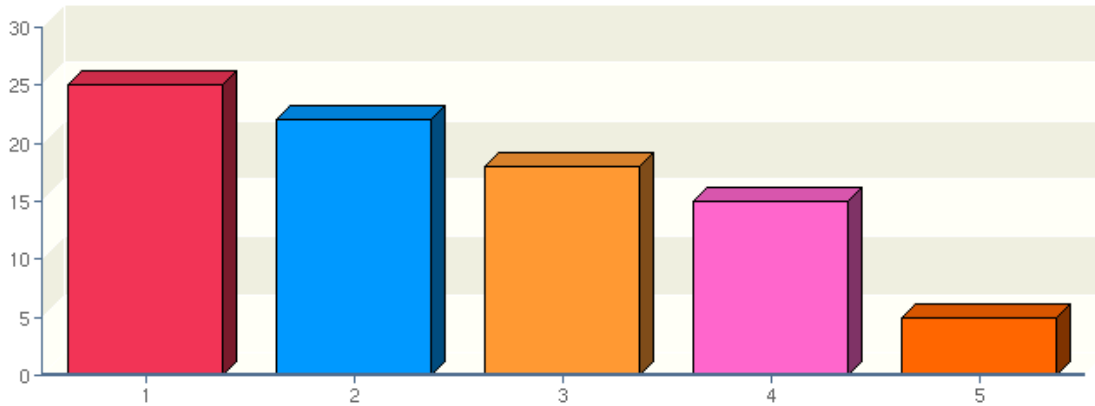
Value	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	3.49%
Somewhat Agree	11	12.79%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	12.79%
Somewhat Disagree	9	10.47%
Strongly Disagree	52	60.47%
Total Responses:	86	

**71% Disagree**

**Analysis**

This part could be a little ahead of the curve, but that's OK. Thank you all for being honest. B2B marketers should consider how to syndicate their content, and widgets could be a very good way of doing that. A recent Forrester article noted that 80% of Web traffic comes through the homepage and 20% comes in to very specific pages. Forrester now is recommending that you plan for 20% of traffic to come from your homepage and 80% to come from very specific pages in your site. That means *start syndicating your content!*

**11. My organization is adequately prepared to manage an online reputation crisis situation.**



Value	Count	Percent	
Strongly Agree	5	5.88%	
Somewhat Agree	15	17.65%	
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	21.18%	
Somewhat Disagree	22	25.88%	<b>55% Disagree</b>
Strongly Disagree	25	29.41%	
Total Responses:	85		

**Analysis**

Frankly, I thought this one would have a lot higher positive response. While I realize I was asking a question to get your opinion, I wonder whether your organization’s senior leadership would agree. These days we wouldn’t think of driving without a seatbelt and airbags in a car. In the future, you wouldn’t consider not having the proper tools and response mechanisms in place for your reputation.

Whatever your situation, I hope this survey gives you a few ideas, sparks some thoughts and helps you close the gap on your reputation management processes, policies and procedures!