

**UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA  
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**A COMPARISON OF ONLINE REPUTATION  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN SELECTED COMPANIES**

**Bachelor's Thesis**

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**UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

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**Bachelor's Thesis**

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## **AFFIRMATION**

I thus declare that the research and writing of this thesis were done entirely by me with the help of Ing. Vladimír Hojdík, PhD, and that all relevant sources have been cited.

.....  
Alina Klygina

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## **ABSTRAKT**

KLYGINA, Alina: Porovnanie online stratégií riadenia reputácie vo vybraných spoločnostiach. [Bakalárska práca] – Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave. Fakulta podnikového manažmentu; Katedra podnikovej ekonomiky. – Školiteľ: doc. Do funkcie sa zapojil Ing. Vladimír Hojdík, PhD., Bratislava: EUBA, 2023, 54 s.

Hlavným cieľom záverečnej práce je porovnať online stratégie riadenia reputácie v spoločnostiach Accenture a Pwc. Prvá časť práce obsahuje teoretické poznatky dôležité pre pochopenie témy. Ďalej práca vysvetľuje dôležitosť reputácie. Tiež môže byť užitočná časť so stratégiami ORM. Praktická časť práce popisuje porovnanie online reputačného manažmentu v Accenture a Pwc. Zámerom poslednej kapitoly je poukázať na dôležitosť reputácie a jej manažmentu. Výsledkom našej práce je záver o tom, ako želanie firiem zlepšiť si reputáciu pomáha svetu a ako vlastne online stratégie riadenia reputácie v Accenture a Pwc.

**Key words:** Online správa reputácie, reputácie, goodwill

**ABSTRACT**

KLYGINA, Alina: A comparison of online reputation management strategies in selected companies. [Bachelor thesis] – University of Economics in Bratislava. Faculty of business management; Department of business economy. – Supervisor: doc. Ing. Vladimír Hojdík, PhD., Bratislava: EUBA, 2023, 54 p.

The main purpose of the final thesis is to compare the online reputation management strategies of Accenture and Pwc. The first part of the thesis contains theoretical knowledge important for understanding the topic. Furthermore, the work explains the importance of reputation. Also, can be useful for the part with ORM strategies. The practical part of thesis describes a comparison of online reputation management in Accenture and Pwc. The intention of the last chapter is to show the importance of reputation and its management. The result of our work is a conclusion about how the wish of companies to do their reputation better helps the world and of cause the online reputation management strategies in Accenture and Pwc.

**Keywords:** Online reputation management, reputation, goodwill

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## **List of abbreviations:**

**ORM-** online reputation management;

**SERM** - search engine reputation management

**PR-** public relations

**ERM-** Enterprise Risk Management

**RM-** reputation management

**SMRM** - social media reputation management

**SEO** - search engine optimization

**SERP** - Search Engine Results Page

**SMM** – social media marketing

## **Introduction**

*“The way to gain good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.”*

Socrates

Every day humanity becomes more and more social. The advent of mobile communications, the Internet, social networks - makes us literally dependent on society. And of course it has its pros and cons. Of the advantages, this is definitely the fact that now it is much easier to express yourself, find the right people, and gain popularity. But one of the main disadvantages is that now it has become even easier to ruin your reputation.

The main problem with reputation these days is that we care more about it than we should. Does reputation matter? Undoubtedly. I really like the quote from Socrates with which my work begins. This very accurately describes the situation. Usually we work very hard on "how we will appear" but not on who we are. I see some humor in this. Because in fact, for a good reputation, it is enough to do good things, or, more simply, to be a good person / enterprise. And as a rule, there are two types of people (or businesses in this case applicable to both) those who care about their reputation and those who try to be a good person. Ironic, isn't it? However, those who care about their reputation are on the right track. Because reputation is really important. It's just important to be, not to seem. The good reputation of the enterprise makes it possible to raise prices without increasing costs. And if at first glance it seems to be something simple, then I want to say that working on reputation is not easy, since it is, first of all, work on yourself.

# 1. The current state of the topic

In this part, we will talk about all the theory that relates to this topic. We will discuss the definitions of reputation, reputation management and online reputation management, as well as talk about strategies and the importance of this topic.

## 1.1. Reputation and online reputation

In this part, we will discuss what reputation is, reputation management, online reputation, who really cares about reputation, and how it can be managed. An online reputation, or e-reputation, is the reputation of a company, person, product, service or any other element on the Internet and digital platforms.

This online reputation is impacted by the content an organization distributes, the reactions of and interactions with web users, activity on social networks, etc. Fore-commerce brands, online reputation is very important, as it can affect their online store's credibility and visibility.

### *1.1.1. Reputation definition*

According to the Cambridge dictionary, reputation is "the opinion that people in general have about someone or something, or how much respect or admiration someone or something receives, based on past behaviour or character." <sup>1</sup> In simple words, reputation is the opinions of other people about someone or something. Reputation can be about someone or something. From the reputation of people to the reputation of places. Initially, the word reputation was used about people. A couple of centuries ago, every person was terribly worried about their reputation, fearing that something wrong would be said about them in society. Now people are less and less worried about their reputation. But on the other hand, this concept is more used for products, institutions and other types of business.<sup>2</sup>

### *1.1.2. Reputation & branding*

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<sup>1</sup> VALE, David, MULLANEY, Stephen and HARTAS, Leo. *The Cambridge Dictionary*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad, A. Z. (2019). *Online reputation management: A practical approach for businesses and individuals*. Springer.

It is important not to confuse the concept of branding and reputation. “Branding is the act of making a product, organization, person, or place easy to recognize as different from others by connecting it with a particular name, design, symbol, set of qualities, etc”<sup>3</sup> according to the Cambridge dictionary. For me branding is the style of your product. What other people think of it is reputation.

In a nutshell, a brand is a "customer centric" idea that focuses on what an organization, service, or good has committed to its customers and what it means to them. Reputation is a "company centric" term that focuses on the trust and respect that a company enjoys across a wide range of stakeholders, including employees, investors, regulators, journalists, and local communities – in addition to customers. In other words, the brand is about being relevant and different (to the customer), whereas a company's reputation is about being legitimate (to a variety of stakeholder groups, including but not limited to customers).

A solid brand aids in demonstrating the company's and its offerings' relevance and special ability to satisfy customer needs. All businesses ultimately rely (directly or indirectly) on the support of the governments and communities in which they operate; thus, having a good reputation is advantageous.<sup>4</sup>

The type of a brand's corporate reputation is influenced by its strategic model. Market-focused PR will result from a strategy that is focused on the market. Building reputation- and relationship-focused PR requires a strategy- and relationship-focused mind-set. At the time of strategy, decisions must be made regarding the variety of stakeholders who are essential to the brand, the balance of one-way and two-way communication in a campaign, the emphasis placed on reputation-building and relationship-building outcomes, the values or critical ethical principles, the general timeframe within which goals will be measured, and what kind of entity the brand sees itself as.<sup>5</sup>

Four key components make up a brand's reputation: dependability, responsibility, credibility, and trustworthiness. Numerous theorists also contend that a brand's culture has a significant impact on the execution, reputation, and

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<sup>3</sup>VALE, David, MULLANEY, Stephen and HARTAS, Leo. *The Cambridge Dictionary*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad, A. Z. (2019). *Online reputation management: A practical approach for businesses and individuals*. Springer.

<sup>5</sup> Meerman Scott, D. (2010). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use news releases, blogs, podcasts, viral marketing, and online media to reach buyers directly*. John Wiley & Sons.

performance of its strategies. Brands should therefore concentrate on creating a fantastic culture. The plan should try to gain public comprehension rather than devotion and repair reputational problems through evolution rather than upheaval.<sup>6</sup>

### *1.1.3. Why reputation is important?*

Because consumers (on average) engage more frequently with a business or organization they trust, a good reputation is essential for businesses to flourish in today's competitive, digital and offline world. A strong internet presence and reputation can serve as a signal of dependability and integrity, which in turn can draw in more qualified candidates for employment and customers. A good company reputation can also boost consumer involvement and boost market value and share for businesses. In addition to boosting a company's profitability, a good reputation can help employers find and keep more talented, devoted workers, which lowers hiring and turnover expenses.<sup>7</sup>

### *1.1.4. How reputation works*

Due to the collective behavior exhibited by consumers, with an average tendency, interact more frequently with a brand they trust, having a good reputation is essential for businesses to flourish in today's cutthroat, digital and offline environment. A strong internet presence and reputation can serve as a signal of dependability and integrity, which in turn can draw in more qualified candidates for employment and customers.<sup>8</sup> A good company reputation can also boost consumer involvement and boost market value and share for businesses. In addition to boosting a company's profitability, a good reputation can help employers find and keep more talented, devoted workers, which lowers hiring and turnover expenses.<sup>9</sup>

A good company reputation is crucial because it might aid in the expansion of your enterprise. It's important to keep an eye on consumer feedback to keep your

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<sup>6</sup>Stokes, R. D. (2019). *eBrands: Building an internet business at breakneck speed*. Thomson Learning.

<sup>7</sup> Dollinger, M.D., Golden, P. and Saxton, T. (1997) 'The Effect of Reputation on the Decision to Joint Venture', *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(2), pp. 127

<sup>8</sup> Grunig, J.E. (2001). Two-Way symmetrical public relations past, present and future, Health. R.L (Ed.). In *Handbook of Public Relations* (pp. 11- 30), USA: SAGE Publications.

<sup>9</sup> Ahmad, A. Z. (2019). *Online reputation management: A practical approach for businesses and individuals*. Springer.

reputation intact. Customers are more inclined to support your firm in the future if they have a favorable perception of it. Additionally, they are more inclined to be pleased with their decision to assist your company and to recommend it to others. All of this may lead to greater success and higher earnings.<sup>10</sup>

The way your business interacts with customers—through marketing—can have a significant impact on its reputation. Marketing can be used as a method to enhance your company's reputation if it isn't as good as you'd like. A brand campaign is one marketing tactic that can help boost a business's reputation. For instance, brand initiatives influence how consumers perceive your business and work to boost brand visibility. It's crucial that the information you provide to customers is consistent and matches the principles of your business.

A pleasant staff experience can be just as crucial as a positive consumer experience. If workers like their time at your business, it will show in their work, which will improve production and quality. Customers' feelings are influenced by employee happiness and their perceptions of your business. Customers can think that your business has good values and puts people before profits if staff like working there. Offering rewards and asking for employee input to enhance the working environment will help you ensure a positive employment experience.<sup>11</sup>

However, most businesses fall short in managing their reputations generally and the threats to their reputations specifically. They frequently concentrate their efforts on addressing reputational issues that have already appeared. This is crisis management, a reactive strategy meant to contain the damage, not risk management. Even highly developed firms have only hazy ideas of how to handle reputational risk due to the absence of clear norms. The current status of operations in well-run businesses is best shown by a significant American pharmaceutical corporation. It has an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) system that is largely

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, K. (2019). *Reputation management: The art of change*. Routledge.

<sup>11</sup> . Reputation and business performance. *Corporate Reputation and Competitiveness*. P. 201–217. DOI 10.4324/9780203218112\_chapter\_9.

based on the COSO framework and is used to manage operational and financial risks as well as threats from outside occurrences, such as natural disasters. The system is managed by the company's vice president of risk management. At the local and product levels, the corporation only arbitrarily—and unevenly—manages reputational concerns. Only when they are faced with important choices, like those involving acquisitions, do its executives take reputational risk into account. Even highly developed firms have only hazy ideas of how to handle reputational risk due to the absence of clear norms. The current status of operations in well-run businesses is best shown by a significant American pharmaceutical corporation. It has an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) system that is largely based on the COSO framework and is used to manage operational and financial risks as well as threats from outside occurrences, such as natural disasters. The system is managed by the company's vice president of risk management. At the local and product levels, the corporation only arbitrarily—and unevenly—manages reputational concerns. Only when they are faced with important choices, like those involving acquisitions, do its executives take reputational risk into account. Even though these strategies are crucial, it is erroneous to equate them with a capacity for controlling reputational risk. First aid training is not the same as health protection.<sup>12</sup>

#### *1.1.5. Influence of reputation in business*

The general impressions of your company's previous interactions and expectations for its future endeavours make up your corporate reputation. In plainer terms, your reputation is built on how previous customers felt about working with you and how they predict the future of your business. Your company's reputation is most likely its most valuable intangible asset. When customers perceive your firm as trustworthy, open, and responsible, it can help you stand out from the competition and provide you a competitive edge.<sup>13</sup> The majority of customers will interact with your business for the first time online, and their decision to do business with you will be based on that interaction. A prospective consumer will be less inclined to make a purchase from your firm if they conduct online research on

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<sup>12</sup> BY ROBERT G. ECCLES, SCOTT C. NEWQUIST, AND ROLAND SCHATZ. *Reputation and Its Risks* [online]. 2007. Available from: <https://hbr.org/2007/02/reputation-and-its-risks>

<sup>13</sup> Grunig, J.E. (2001). Two-Way symmetrical public relations past, present and future, Health. R.L (Ed.). In *Handbook of Public Relations* (pp. 11- 30), USA: SAGE Publications.

it and discover negative news about it, such as lawsuits, workplace discrimination, or unfavourable product reviews. The "brand" of your company is a concoction of how you want customers to view your organization and how they actually do. You need a distinct and consistent brand if you want to be taken seriously. You may use ORM to promote products that are consistent with your branding while removing those that are not.<sup>14</sup>

### *1.1.6. Online reputation*

Online reputation is all that can be found about you on the Internet. Social networks, articles, forum discussions and reviews all form our reputation. Social networks play a very important role nowadays. If you actively maintain social networks, show what you are doing, then you inspire the trust of the public. The number of subscribers, likes and comments also plays a big role in online reputation. We won't order shoes from an Instagram store that has 1 million followers but has 100 likes and 0 comments on posts. The website also plays an important role in our online reputation. What does it look like, does it exist at all, what information does it contain about itself, how convenient is it to use. Also, all reviews, articles, even on Wikipedia - this is all our reputation. I would give this definition of online reputation: online reputation is everything that can be found about us on the Internet and we did not create it ourselves. Managing an online reputation is much more difficult than a regular reputation because online there is a lot of information from people from different parts of the world in different languages. The ability to evaluate also plays a huge role in online reputation. Previously, stars were popular only with hotels, but now there are hundreds ratings. Rating of movies, cafes, shops, taxis, users and sellers. And all this is also an online reputation<sup>15</sup>.

### *1.1.7. For which industries online reputation is important and why?*

In fact, it is difficult to imagine areas where reputation is not important. There are three basic criteria in business: money, time, and quality. Initially, I wanted to

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<sup>14</sup> Dollinger, M.D., Golden, P. and Saxton, T. (1997) 'The Effect of Reputation on the Decision to Joint Venture', *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(2), pp. 127

<sup>15</sup> Ahmad, A. Z. (2019). *Online reputation management: A practical approach for businesses and individuals*. Springer.

say that probably the areas in which the struggle is for the lowest price do not depend so much on reputation. But the knowledge among people that it is cheaper already has a reputation. So I tend to think that everything has a reputation and plays a certain role. The only question is how much you are focused on reputation. There are industries that hire certain reputation managers because it's important to them. And there are those who, for example, make cheap goods, do not spend money on reputation, and earn on quantity. There is a very important ratio between price, quality, and time. If it is observed, then it will already have a reputation. But at the same time, reputation is something that can raise the price of your product or service. Also, reputation can help a business that does not have an advantage over competitors. I want to analyze different areas in which reputation is more important than in others. These are areas in which there is a lot of competition (restaurants, shops, hotels, banks), areas with expensive goods, areas in which quality is important (doctors, care products, medicines), and areas in which purchases are made rarely but for a long time (technology).<sup>16</sup>

## **1.2. Reputation management**

As far as you can understand, reputation is a very important thing. And so companies decided that their reputation should be carefully monitored and that they should always try to improve it. This is how reputation management was born.<sup>17</sup>

### *1.2.1. Definition*

Reputation management is a set of measures for managing reputation on the Internet, including responding to negative reviews, collecting a positive reputation history, removing customized negative reviews, etc.<sup>18</sup> There are a number of cases where the application of reputation management becomes an urgent need:

- when the network accumulates over time or a large number of negative reviews and comments about the company appear in a short period of time;

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<sup>16</sup> Fombrun, C.J. (1996), 'Reputation: Realizing Value from Corporate Image', Harvard Business School Press, New York.

<sup>17</sup> Grunig, J.E. (2001). Two-way symmetrical public relations, past, present, and future, Health, R.L. (Ed.). In Handbook of Public Relations (pp. 11–30), USA: SAGE Publications

<sup>18</sup> Martin, S. J. (2019). Online reputation management: How to manage your online reputation in today's world [2nd ed.]. Independently published.

- if the company is going to improve the quality of service for customers or expand the range of communication tools with potential customers.<sup>19</sup>

The basic concepts of reputation management are "image" and "reputation" (To begin with, let's define the range of concepts applicable in the field of reputation management. ". The modern ethics dictionary defines reputation as an opinion that has developed among others about the moral character of a particular person (team), based on his previous behaviour and expressed in recognition of his merits, authority and what is expected of him in the future, what measure of responsibility he is responsible for and how his actions are evaluated.<sup>20</sup>

Currently, the term "reputation" is interpreted as part of the intangible assets of the company, the difference between its market value and the real value of its assets separately. It turns out that the company's reputation is one of the effective tools of competition for consumers, investments, markets.

It should be immediately clarified that it is the reputation that is meant, and not the image of the company. An image is a company's own "product", which it purposefully works to create, "beautifies", develops and "sells" to the public. In turn, reputation is a product of the public, arising as a "response" to the promotion of the image. In other words, the image of the company can be created, the reputation can only be managed. Reputation is qualitatively different from PR precisely in that it is a long-term "product".<sup>21</sup>

In reputation management, target groups are differentiated, and PR is only a tool for bringing some reputational significant characteristic to a specific group. For example, for staff it means a stable and high salary, for the media it means reliability of data, communicative openness, promptness of information provision)<sup>22</sup>.

### *1.2.2. Reputation Management Tasks*

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<sup>19</sup> Fertik, M., & Thompson, D. (2015). The reputation economy: How to optimize your digital footprint in a world where your reputation is your most valuable asset. Crown Business.

<sup>20</sup> Stokes, R. D. (2019). eBrands: Building an internet business at breakneck speed. Thomson Learning.

<sup>21</sup> Fertik, M., & Thompson, D. (2015). The reputation economy: How to optimize your digital footprint in a world where your reputation is your most valuable asset. Crown Business.

<sup>22</sup> Meerman Scott, D. (2010). The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use news releases, blogs, podcasts, viral marketing, and online media to reach buyers directly. John Wiley & Sons.

Evaluation of the perception of a company or brand by consumers, including potential ones.

Increasing brand or company awareness.

Improving the reputation of the company.

Educating brand loyal users.

Controlling and dealing with negativity.

Maintaining feedback with the target audience.<sup>23</sup>

#### *5 stages of reputation management:*

Audit - we select queries by which potential buyers are looking for information about the brand.

Analysis - we look at the issuance of search engines for queries.

Work with feedback - we react to the negative, remove slander.

Selection of sites - we find sites where you can place positive reviews.

Additional tools - find out which methods work best and use them.<sup>24</sup>

### *1.2.3. Role of RM*

Since the mid 70s. 20th century reputation management has become one of the most important components of strategic planning. In reputation management, three areas are important, and well-coordinated. In the first place is the formation of reputation (changes in business practice, decision-making mechanism, etc.). This is followed by maintaining a reputation (creating a situation in which the whole range of positive information works for the company, including the brand, corporate culture, the degree of employee motivation, the volume of financial turnover, expanding the market niche, weakening the position of competitors, etc.). The work of reputation protection (creation of a new legal infrastructure and reduction of business costs) is nearing completion. In practical life, all three stages exist and act, as a rule, simultaneously. Like communication, reputation management operates with all the tools of public relations - public relations. Reputation management has more opportunities than an advertising and PR company, if only because the latter

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<sup>23</sup> Martin, S. J. (2019). Online reputation management: How to manage your online reputation in today's world [2nd ed.]. Independently published.

<sup>24</sup> KOZLOVA, N.P. Formation of a positive image and business reputation of the company. *Vestnik ASTU. Ser. Economy*. No. 1. 2011. p. 67–68.

are strictly limited in time and can only be used as tools to create a favorable image<sup>25</sup>.

### **1.3. Online reputation management**

ORM or Online Reputation Management - online reputation management - is now becoming one of the priority components of marketing campaigns. Every year the Internet penetrates deeper into the audience of brands, which means that online reputation management cannot be ignored. Marketing studies show that even during economic hardship, consumers are more concerned with brand perception than they are with product cost and quality. If pricing was formerly the primary consideration for many, individuals today are willing to spend more if they are confident in the company's reputation. Online Reputation Management works just to ensure that the company is spoken well. Tips, recommendations, and customer testimonials pop up all the time on social media. Businesses can keep an eye on their online reputation, take control of it, and enhance it thanks to ORM technologies. What will users read first when looking for information about your business online? is the second most crucial query. Before making a purchase, 92% of adult consumers throughout the world look at a product summary. Among these, 48% of those who are mentioned favorably acquire the goods. Another crucial component of ORM is content marketing. It is essential to produce information about your business, publish it online, and take other steps to ensure that users see the material that can increase sales. In ORM, it is customary to divide received mentions of a company, product, or person into three types: positive - mentions that improve the company's reputation on the network; neutral - mentions that do not contain positive information, but are not a threat to reputation; negative - mentions that are a threat to the reputation on the network.<sup>26</sup>

### **1.4. SERM AND ORM**

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<sup>25</sup> Fombrun, C.J. (1996) 'Reputation: Realizing Value from Corporate Image', Harvard Business School Press, New York.

<sup>26</sup> Dollinger, M.D., Golden, P. and Saxton, T. (1997) 'The Effect of Reputation on the Decision to Joint Venture', Strategic Management Journal, 18(2)

SERM - reputation management in search engines. SERM-specialists are engaged in the search for and elimination of negative information about a particular company from the search results, take actions to bring positive reviews to the top lines of the issue.<sup>27</sup>

ORM - reputation management on the Internet. ORM should be understood as a set of measures that includes monitoring mentions of the company on the Internet and interaction with sites that allow maintaining a positive brand reputation.<sup>28</sup>

What is the difference between SERM and ORM?

- ORM involves monitoring Internet resources in search of fresh reviews, while the task of SERM is to track negative publications and remove them, oust or neutralize them.

- The ORM service includes stimulating an increase in the number of positive reviews about the company, including by organizing contests with various prizes, bonuses and discounts.

- ORM professionals competently and with knowledge of the psychology of the buyer respond to negative feedback, trying to neutralize them. SERM specialists, in fact, are engaged in review management, using keywords in their texts related to the name of the customer company or its branded products.<sup>29</sup>

## 1.5. ORM strategies

*Determination of site types in Google:*

- Aggregators - sites for various announcements - for example, about finding a job, buying and selling goods and services, real estate, cars. This type includes sites where users place ads themselves (for example, Amazon, Airbnb), as well as sites that automatically collect ads or offers (Booking.com, AviaSales).

- Online stores - sites that allow you to order or buy goods.

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<sup>27</sup> Roberts, J. A., & Zahay, D. (2013). *Internet marketing: Integrating online and offline strategies*. Cengage Learning.

<sup>28</sup> Roberts, J. A., & Zahay, D. (2013). *Internet marketing: Integrating online and offline strategies*. Cengage Learning.

<sup>29</sup> REPUTATION X. History of reputation management. *Online Reputation Management* [online]. 13 August 2022. [Accessed 18 May 2023]. Available from: <https://blog.reputationx.com/history-of-orm>

- Organizations and business - sites of services and organizations, whose users can place an order for a service offline. For example, this type includes tour operators, car dealers, banks, Internet providers and others.
- Content - sites with content. The content format can be anything - articles, pictures, wiki projects.
- Social networks - such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- Reviewers - sites with reviews of employers and employees.
- News - this type includes both news sites without a specific topic, and sites dedicated to one thing - for example, politics or finance.
- Online games are sites where one or more games can be played online. This does not include game publisher websites, such as Wargaming.net - these are "Representative Offices of Businesses and Organizations".<sup>30</sup>

*Working methods:*

- Manual monitoring of all search engines using the main keys - it is labour intensive and time consuming;
- Automatic monitoring, which is carried out with the help of special programs that search for the specified information on websites, in social networks;
- Formation and optimization of content - the creation of unique content containing popular keywords in order to raise it to the top of the issue and displace possible negative mentions;
- The requirement to block resources and applications that violate the company's copyrights;
- Active reaction to criticism on official and unofficial pages.<sup>31</sup>

It is worth highlighting the main areas in the work of reputation management: SERM (search engine reputation management) - reputation management in search results - a set of works, the task of which is to oust the maximum possible number of unwanted sites from the TOP-30 (first three pages) of search results. SMRM (social media reputation management) - moving positive sites to the top positions,

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<sup>30</sup> Online reputation management strategy guide. *Online Reputation Management Strategy Guide* [online]. [Accessed 18 May 2023]. Available from: <https://www.reputationx.com/reputation-strategy>

<sup>31</sup> Meerman Scott, D. (2010). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use news releases, blogs, podcasts, viral marketing, and online media to reach buyers directly*. John Wiley & Sons.

promoting positive content, shifting negative information from the first page of search results, creating positive sites about the company, creating positive PR and reducing negative PR. The goal of SEO (search engine optimization) is to improve a website's ranking in search engine results for certain user queries. The number of interested search engine users that visit the site increases with its position in the search results. Working with opinion leaders is interaction with loyal consumers who communicate on forums, news portals, blogs and social networks, tell the audience about their experience using the product, or officially respond to complaints from dissatisfied consumers. Legal communication with sites and authors. Dealing with negativity is a set of measures to neutralize negative mentions in the network in order to increase trust in the brand/person. One of the tasks of Online Reputation Manager is to quickly detect and respond from an official to negative comments, posts on social networks, to reduce the positions of pages and sites that damage the brand's reputation using search engine optimization (SEO).<sup>32</sup> Working with positive is a set of measures to promote positive mentions: comments and posts on social networks, pages and sites in search results using search engine optimization (SEO). 9 reasons why online reputation management is important. Here are specific reasons why brands and professionals need to develop a comprehensive online reputation management strategy.<sup>33</sup>

*A well-thought-out reputation management strategy:*

1. Influences the purchase decision. 90% of customers read reviews before purchasing a product or service, and 49% trust online reviews as much as those of people they know personally. 94% of consumers say a bad review convinced them to abandon a purchase.

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<sup>32</sup> Online reputation management strategy guide. *Online Reputation Management Strategy Guide* [online]. [Accessed 18 May 2023]. Available from: <https://www.reputationx.com/reputation-strategy>

<sup>33</sup> RANFAGNI, Silvia and ROSATI, Massimo. Triangulating online brand reputation, brand image, and brand identity: An Interdisciplinary Research Approach to design the pathways of online branding strategies in Luxury Hospitality. *Online Reputation Management in Destination and Hospitality*. 2023. P. 213–235. DOI 10.1108/978-1-80382-375-120231012.

2. Increases trust and authority. Consumers often perceive advertising as info noise and turn to the opinions of "ordinary" people when they want to buy something. Real customer reviews help build trust in your business, and when people trust you, they're more likely to buy and come back.
3. Launches "word of mouth" in the network. Word of mouth works not only offline, it also works great in social networks. People talk about what they like and what disappoints them, and your potential customers see it.
4. Generates valuable business ideas. Many brands spend time and money on online surveys to get their customers' opinions, which is great. But you can learn a lot of valuable information about your business from positive and negative reviews: understand the strengths of your business in the eyes of customers and learn about problems in order to quickly and effectively fix them.
5. Creates a positive brand image.
6. Shows customers the value of their feedback. Feedback is a gift. Clients tell you about their experience instead of leaving forever without telling you anything. By responding to reviews (both positive and negative), you show customers that you hear them and appreciate their opinion.
7. Increases web traffic. A large number of credible reviews, especially positive ones, can boost your search engine rankings. Search algorithms look for social proof just like humans do to make sure your site is trustworthy, and reviews play a very important role in that.
8. Simplifies crisis management. In times of crisis, even the most sustainable business can have problems. You will be better able to deal with the consequences if you have a reputation management plan in place.
9. Systematizes work with negative reviews. There is no delete button for negative reviews about your business, unless they are known to be false and malicious. And that's good for customers - they can see the real flaws and don't have high expectations. Try to respond to negative reviews in a way that shows your customers that you care about them and are in a hurry to fix the problem.<sup>34</sup>

#### Consequences of a bad online reputation

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<sup>34</sup> Meerman Scott, D. (2010). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use news releases, blogs, podcasts, viral marketing, and online media to reach buyers directly*. John Wiley & Sons.

Don't underestimate the power of negative comments and negative reviews - they can ruin the digital image of any brand. Here are a few problems that the lack of an online reputation management strategy can lead to:

- Less income.
- Less profit.
- Low positions in the search.
- Low customer and employee retention.
- Decreased customer engagement.
- Lack of trust and credibility.
- Higher internet marketing costs.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Difference between ORM and PR*

PR can also be attributed to the number of techniques related to reputation management, but there are significant differences between PR and ORM.

PR (public relations, “public relations”) is a strategy for the relationship of the brand and the public, that is, all those with whom the brand considers it necessary to interact.<sup>36</sup>

Issuing press releases, speaking at press conferences, hosting events, formally responding to a crisis, and more are all activities that are part of a PR strategy.

While PR and online reputation management share some commonalities, they are distinctly different, as has been said.

Firstly, PR is open, while ORM is more "behind the scenes". For example, you might see a brand's PR rep in front of the cameras during a press conference, but it's unlikely you'll ever know who's in charge of managing that brand's online reputation.

Secondly, the actions of PR professionals relate to current issues, whether it's an upcoming event, the introduction of a new product or service, a recent event, or

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<sup>35</sup> Martin, S. J. (2019). *Online reputation management: How to manage your online reputation in today's world* [2nd ed.]. Independently published.

<sup>36</sup> Reputation rules: Strategies for building your company's most valuable asset. *Choice Reviews Online*. 2012. Vol. 49, no. 05. DOI 10.5860/choice.49-2765.

something else. A press release issued today may not be relevant tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.<sup>37</sup>

An ORM can also provide almost immediate results if some content goes viral, but still, online reputation management is designed to get results in the long run.

Despite the fact that PR and ORM are different, they complement each other well if specialists act within the framework of a single strategy.<sup>38</sup>

*Develop a reputation management strategy*

Be active and respond quickly to people on social networks. Customers want to feel like they know who you are and what values your brand has. Live social media accounts personalize your company, retain existing customers and attract new ones. If you have a presence on social media, people expect you to respond quickly to questions and comments. Even if this is not a situation where you can quickly resolve the problem, at least show that you hear them.

Increase your business visibility with geoservices. For branded queries, search engine magicians often appear on the first page of the search — Google My Business. If you still don't have a business profile, create one. If there is, make sure that the information in it is complete and accurate. The priority is the address, phone number, instant messengers, working hours. And of course, responses to reviews that customers leave in the organization card.

Pay attention to your personal privacy settings on social networks. What you post personally can influence what people think of your business. Posts with profanity, even if they are private, do not demonstrate your professionalism well. As well as posts promoting conflicting political views, containing hatred and jokes "on the verge". This will turn off potential customers. You can avoid this by changing your social media privacy settings. Make sure your personal account settings are set to "private" or "for friends" to restrict access to your messages. Everything you post should reflect positively on you and your business. Create positive content.

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<sup>37</sup> Meerman Scott, D. (2010). *The new rules of marketing and PR: How to use news releases, blogs, podcasts, viral marketing, and online media to reach buyers directly*. John Wiley & Sons.

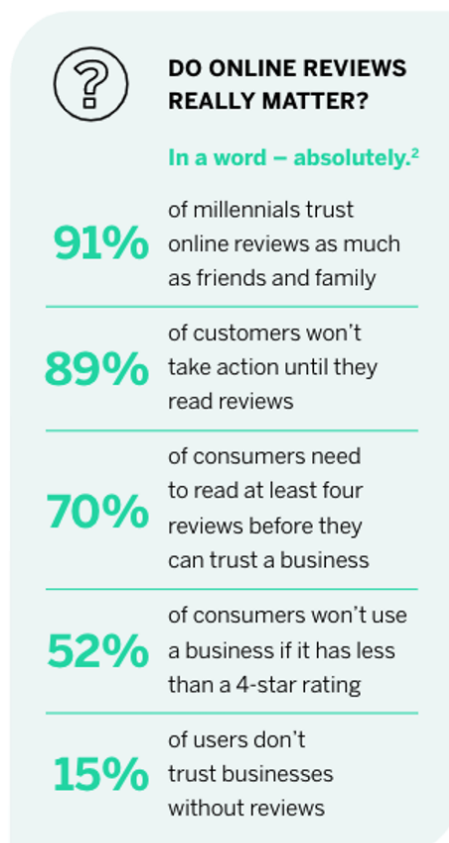
<sup>38</sup> SNIJDERS, Chris and MATZAT, Uwe. Online reputation systems. *The Oxford Handbook of Gossip and Reputation*. 2019. P. 478–495. DOI 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190494087.013.25.

Engage your customers with an active online presence. Post up-to-date information not only on your website, but also on your company's pages on social networks and third-party sites.

Take it one step further and create a company blog. Not only does a blog showcase experiences and give users content to share on social media, but it can also improve search rankings for information queries related to your business.

Remove or push out negative content. If possible, fight negative content - work off negative reviews, come to the comments under materials that are devastating for your business and try to turn the situation to your advantage. Unable to remove - try to displace the negative at least from the first page of the search. Remember that most potential customers rarely scroll past the first page of a SERP.

Ask customers to leave detailed feedback and reviews.<sup>39</sup> Many consumers trust online reviews as much as they trust personal recommendations from friends or relatives.



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<sup>39</sup> Fertik, M., & Thompson, D. (2015). The reputation economy: How to optimize your digital footprint in a world where your reputation is your most valuable asset. Crown Business.

## **Figure 1: Statistical study**

*Source: Initial research*

Reviews are a powerful tool, especially for engaging customers early in the buying cycle. If you have a large customer base, create an email newsletter to encourage customers to leave reviews. Most customers will leave a review if you ask them to. You can stimulate this process with the help of a prize draw or a competition.<sup>40</sup>

Reward Brand Advocates. Use social media to build a base of strong brand advocates. Give your audience a reason to follow and engage with you. Share content they like, start discussions, and run contests. Encourage your audience to share their product experience: user-generated content is highly likely to go viral.

You can also encourage brand promotion within the company. Create a set of employee principles that describe the culture and nature of their online mentions of your brand.<sup>41</sup>

*The next important step is to create an ORM strategy:*

- setting goals to improve the brand's reputation in the network;
- identification of problems and ways to solve them;
- formation of a list of priority platforms for work (social networks, review sites, hr-platforms, etc.);
- development of a content strategy that will help in promoting the brand on external resources;
- understanding how many and what employees are needed to develop the brand's presence on the network (SMM specialist, marketer, SEO specialist, and others);
- if necessary, make a list of services that will help automate workflows (we will mention some below).<sup>42</sup>

Functionality useful for reputation management:

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<sup>40</sup> Lin, H. F., & Hung, W. T. (2012). Effect of online reputation management on offline evaluation criteria in tourism industry. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 17(5), 533-548.

<sup>41</sup> RANFAGNI, Silvia and ROSATI, Massimo. Triangulating online brand reputation, brand image, and brand identity: An Interdisciplinary Research Approach to design the pathways of online branding strategies in Luxury Hospitality. *Online Reputation Management in Destination and Hospitality*. 2023. P. 213–235. DOI 10.1108/978-1-80382-375-120231012.

<sup>42</sup> Fertik, M., & Thompson, D. (2015). *The reputation economy: How to optimize your digital footprint in a world where your reputation is your most valuable asset*. Crown Business.

- selection of keywords and traffic analytics from search engines - track traffic, including brand queries (with the mention of the company name, product, expert);
- analysis of competitors' social networks - get ideas for posts, apply best practices in communicating with your audience;
- comparison of the traffic of your site and competitors' sites - determine your position in the market and opportunities for growth;
- planning and deferred posting in social networks - automate the creation of content for sites where your target audience is. You can find all of these on different servers that are designed to manage your online reputation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> SNIJDERS, Chris and MATZAT, Uwe. Online reputation systems. *The Oxford Handbook of Gossip and Reputation*. 2019. P. 478–495. DOI 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190494087.013.25.

## **2. Aims and methodology**

In this section, we will talk about the goals of this work, as well as the methods for its implementation.

### **2.1. Aims**

The main goal of my bachelor's thesis is to compare online reputation management at Accenture and Pwc. The comparison will give us an example to understand which methods in the ORM are better to use, and which ones are better not to use. At the end of the work there will be a number of recommendations for both selected companies and for all others.

In addition to the main goal, we also have sub-goals that also play an important role in my work. These goals include:

- To study how the desire of companies to maintain a good reputation affects the environment and society. Or how sustainability, philanthropy and awareness help companies to win the sympathy of customers.
- Consider how ethical the struggle for a good reputation is? Do companies act honestly and ethically, or do they only act for a good reputation?

I chose these goals because I think these topics are quite relevant in our time. In my opinion, it will be interesting to look at my topic from this angle. I also believe that my recommendations will help companies improve their reputation. In any case, the performance of this work helped me in the conduct of my business. Namely, I understood exactly how I want to make our reputation better.

### **2.2. Description of the writing process**

The topic of my work is very interesting and multifaceted, as it combines economic, psychological, ethical and social aspects.

For a long time I could not choose the companies that I will compare. But I chose Accenture and Pwc because they are not direct competitors of my company, but also because they are large international companies. Ahead of any doubts about

my objectivity, I want to say that I treat competitors who have reached this level with respect, as my teachers and living examples who have achieved success in my field. I did not have direct contact with the representatives of the companies. However, they came to our university as experts on such subjects as "Success for success " and "SCR" and I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the activity and ask questions. I started writing my practical part in April 2023. However, it helped me a lot that I had been collecting information since November 2022. But I have to admit that I did not give enough time to write this work.

Finally, I want to clarify that raising in my topic the question of the work of companies in the Russian market is only the result of my knowledge of the Russian language and the ease of finding information about this situation. You might get the impression that I have a preference for companies, but I tried to be as objective as possible. Due to the fact that my topic is related to reputation, I allowed myself to express my opinion about companies. Because I think that my opinion, as their possible potential client, is also part of their reputation.

### **2.3. Methods of data collection.**

All information for this work was taken from the following sources:

- **Literature** - books, articles, reviews, dictionaries, research;
- **Internet** - websites of companies, commercial register, websites with employee reviews, social networks of companies, websites with additional information;
- **Lectures at the university** - opportunity to get acquainted with the activities of companies and their representatives.
- **People** - surveys of acquaintances about the importance of reputation, my opinion based on the information collected and my knowledge.
- **Internal documents**

### **2.4. Method used in writing this work**

In my bachelor thesis I used:

- **Analysis** - I used to collect and process information. Used in both.
- **Observation** – I used it for collecting information from social medias of companies.

- **Survey** - personal surveys of acquaintances.

### 3. Results and discussion

In this part, we will compare the two companies. Let's compare their reputation, as well as online reputation management. Also here will be my recommendations for online and offline reputation management.

#### 3.1. About companies

I chose 2 consulting companies to compare their online reputation management. This is Accenture and PwC. Let's talk about these companies separately.

##### 3.1.1. Accenture



**Figure 2:** Logo of Accenture

*Source: official Accenture website*

Accenture is a consulting agency founded in 1989 in Bermuda. The number of employees is 738K people. The headquarters is located in Dublin Ireland. The name of the company comes from the phrase "accent on the future". They operate in 120 countries.

##### 3.1.2. PwC



**Figure 3:** Logo of PwC

*Source: official PwC website*

PwC is a consulting company founded in 1849 and headquartered in London. They have 300K employees. They operate in 158 countries. In 1998, Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand merged to take on its current name.

## 3.2. Company comparison

In this part, we will compare the two companies.

### 3.2.1. Services

Compare the services of the two selected companies. This will let us understand how much they really are competitors, since consulting is a big area.

**Table 1:** Comparison of services

<i>Accenture</i>	<i>PwC</i>
Application Services	Alliances and Ecosystems
Artificial Intelligence	IFRS ()
Business Process Outsourcing	Audit and assurance
Business Strategy	Legal
Change Management	Consulting
Cloud	New Ventures from PwC
Data & Analytics	Deals
Digital commerce	People and Organization
Finance Consulting	Entrepreneurial & private business
Infrastructure	Strategy &
Marketing	Family business services
Metaverse	Sustainable & climate change
Security	Forensics
Supply Chain Management	Tax
Sustainability	Global Crisis Centre
Technology Consulting	
Technology Innovation	
Zero-Based Transformation	
Ecosystem Services	

*Source: internal research*

After analysing this study, we can conclude that Accenture has a greater range of services than PwC. At the same time, Accenture is more focused on technology, while PwC is more focused on audit and finance. Are they competitors? Yes, as they

have a number of the same services. But at this stage, if I was looking for a consulting company and I had to choose between these two, then my reasoning would look like this: if I needed something related to law or taxes or calculations, I would contact Pwc and if I was interested in services related to intellectual property, technology and IT, then I would definitely go to Accenture.

### 3.2.2. In numbers

Let`s compere this two companies in numbers. Here we will speak about revenues, number of workers, investments, countries and clients.

**Table 2:** Comparison of numbers

Criteria	Accenture	PwC
Revenues in year 2022	61.6B \$	50.3B \$
Employers	721 K people	328K people
Investment	5.6B \$	3.1B \$
Countries	120	152
Clients	9 K	191 K
How many ears on market?	34	174
Spend on advertising	171.9 M \$	?
By what % did the company's profit increase from 2022 to 2023	11.38%	11.4%

*Source: internal research*

Having studied these data, we see that in Accenture there is more profit, more employees. And Pwc has more customers and years on the market. Interestingly enough, despite the fact that Accenture has 21 times fewer customers, operates in fewer countries and 140 years later on the market, they still have a profit of 11 billion more. This may be due to various reasons. For example, we also see that Accenture invests more money, in relation to profit, Accenture invests 9% of income, and Pwc 6%. Accenture also sells shares, which can also have a positive effect on their income. Despite even the difference in clients, we understand that

the client is different from the client. A client can come to you once for a small service, or it can be your client all the time. Also, judging by the difference in the number of employees (in Accenture there are 2 times more employees), we can conclude that the amount of work in Accenture is no less than in PwC. And if we divide the income of companies by number of employees, we will see that in Accenture 1 employee on average brings 854 dollars to the company, and in PwC 1533 dollars. From which we can conclude that employees in PwC work more productively.

### 3.2.3. Social medias

In the modern world, if you (as a company) are not on social networks, then this means that you do not exist. Having studied the social networks of the selected companies, we will see how actively they lead a social life, how much the content of their pages is interesting to the audience.

**Table 3:** Comparison of social medias

Criteria	Accenture	PwC
<b>Instagram</b>		
Number of followers	1530	1280
Number of posts	275	143
Average number of likes	43	33
Average number of comments	1	0
Percentage of active people	2,8%	2,5%
<b>Facebook</b>		
Number of followers	5000	4000
Average number of reposts	1	1
Average number of likes	33	21
Average number of comments	1	0
Percentage of active people	0,66%	0,5%

people		
LinkedIn		
Number of followers	12000	10000
Range in LinkedIn	141	529
Average number of reposts	2	3
Average number of likes	87	38
Average number of comments	1	0
Percentage of active people	0,7%	0,38%
Twitter		
Number of followers	549,5K	94
Average number of reposts	14	1
Average number of likes	48	1
Average number of comments	24	1
Percentage of active people	0,009%	1,06%
YouTube		
Number of followers	60,2K	343
Number of videos	222	200
Average number of views	2132	87 232
Percentage of active people	3,54%	25 432%

*Source: internal research*

And so, having studied social networks, we see that Accenture has more subscribers, but it is also worth noting that if all social. We took the networks for Slovakia, but Accenture's tweeter and YouTube are common to all countries. We also remember that Accenture has 2 times more employees, so it's normal that they have more subscribers. The social network with the largest number of engaged

audiences is YouTube. This is due to expert content, short video podcasts, challenges. Also on YouTube, the video can easily get into the recommendations, which will help to gain a large number of views. But other social networks are also important. LinkedIn plays a special role for companies. This social network is designed to work. There, companies can share the results of their research, post vacancies, and observe discoveries that are important to them. If you've noticed, Accenture is ranked 141 on LinkedIn and Pwc is 529. What does that mean? This is the size of the company in employees on LinkedIn. It also includes part time workers and those who once worked for the company.

#### *3.2.4. Sustainability and charity*

Accenture is committed to making a positive impact on the communities where it operates and has a strong record of charitable giving and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Here are some examples of the company's charitable efforts:

**Skills to Succeed:** Accenture's Skills to Succeed initiative is a global program aimed at equipping people with the skills they need to succeed in the digital economy. The program has helped over 3 million people worldwide through partnerships with non-profit organizations and community groups.

**Accenture Foundations:** The Accenture Foundations support a range of charitable organizations focused on education, health, and community development. The foundations have donated millions of dollars to organizations around the world.

**Corporate Citizenship Report:** Accenture publishes an annual corporate citizenship report that highlights the company's efforts to promote sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and ethical business practices. The report also details the company's charitable giving and volunteerism efforts.

**Corporate Volunteers:** Accenture encourages its employees to give back to their communities through volunteerism. The company has a program called "Skills to Succeed in the Community" that provides opportunities for employees to use their professional skills to help non-profit organizations and social enterprises.

**COVID-19 Relief Efforts:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, Accenture donated millions of dollars to organizations supporting relief efforts around the world. The

company also provided pro-bono consulting services to non-profits and government agencies to help them respond to the crisis.

Overall, Accenture is committed to using its resources and expertise to make a positive impact on society, and the company's charitable efforts reflect that commitment.

Here are some examples of PwC's charitable efforts:

**PwC Foundation:** The PwC Foundation is a charitable organization established by PwC that provides funding and support to non-profit organizations in areas such as education, community development, and disaster relief.

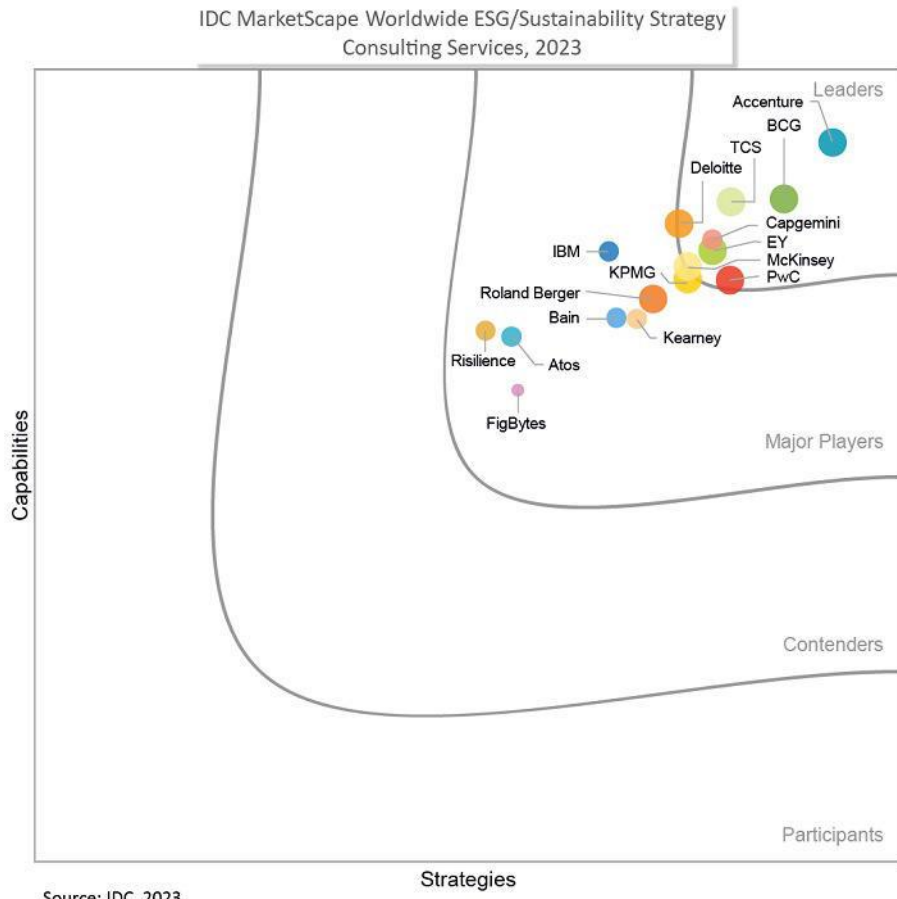
**PwC's Earn Your Future:** PwC's Earn Your Future is an educational program aimed at improving financial literacy and career readiness among young people. The program has reached over 4 million students across the United States and has been recognized for its effectiveness in improving financial literacy.

**PwC's Access Your Potential:** PwC's Access Your Potential is a program that provides STEM education and career readiness resources to underserved high school students. The program has reached over 11,000 students since its launch in 2016.

**Pro Bono Services:** PwC provides pro bono consulting services to non-profit organizations around the world. In 2020, the company's pro bono efforts provided over \$64 million in consulting services to non-profit organizations.

**COVID-19 Relief Efforts:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, PwC donated millions of dollars to organizations supporting relief efforts around the world. The company also provided pro bono consulting services to non-profits and government agencies to help them respond to the crisis.

Overall, PwC is committed to making a positive impact on society and has a strong record of charitable giving and corporate social responsibility initiatives.



**Figure 4:** IDC Market Scape Worldwide ESG/ Sustainability Strategy Consulting Services, 2023

Source: IDC 2023

3.2.5. Others

We will also talk about other factors that affect our topic.

**Table 4:** Comparison of other important information

Criteria	Accenture	PwC
Legal form	LLP (limited liability partnership)	PLC ( public limited company)
Range of happy workers	4.1/5	3.9/5
Is company sustainable ?	Yes	Yes

Source: internal research

The form of ownership is important to us, as it indicates the level of responsibility of the company. For example, an Accenture is an LLP (limited liability partnership). With this type of ownership, they can sell shares, but they must also publicize their financial statements. Which helped me find more information about them. Pwc is a PLC (public limited company) they do not sell shares and do not publish a full financial statement.

The level of happy employees is very important for the company's reputation. According to the estimation, 78% of people prefer to be customers of companies with happier employees. Because happy employees are more welcoming. It also suggests that employees have a regular working day, they do not burn out, they have a number of good benefits. Agree to be a client of such a company is more pleasant than maintaining overtime and low-paid work.

Also, sustainability is very important for the reputation of the enterprise. It works so that when you are a client of a sustainable company, it makes your company more sustainable and vice versa. It's like a chain reaction. Therefore, sustainability is very important in our time.

#### *3.2.6. Prices*

Both companies have no prices on their website. Companies operate without fixed prices for their services. You can call, take a consultation, show them the amount of work that they need to do, after which they will tell you the price. This fact did not give me the opportunity to compare their pricing policy.

### **3.3. Comparison of reputation**

The reputation of a company depends on many factors. From such as: reviews of their clients, reviews of their employees about working with them, cases and collaborations with famous brands, social networks, charity, sustainability, what is written about the company in the news and on the Internet in general. In this section, I propose to compare the online reputation of the two selected companies, as well as online reputation management.

#### *3.3.1. Clients*

I did not find customer reviews about the services of these companies. But let's talk about how the presence of large clients and famous companies in partners affect the reputation and income of companies. Imagine that you are choosing a consulting company. And when you find information about their clients, you see the names of large corporations there. Your trust in this corporation begins to grow. For example, Pwc clients are: JPMorgan Chase & Co. , Bank of America Corp, Johnson & Johnson, Ford Motor Company, The Walt Disney Company, Johnson Controls International, Philip Morris International. According to the observation, if one large client appears in your corporation, then the company's profit and the number of clients grow by 38%. Accenture provides services to more than 9,000 clients worldwide, including 89 of the Fortune Global 100 and more than three-quarters of the Fortune Global 500. They work closely with many different technology companies, such as Adobe, Alibaba, Amazon Web Services, Blue Yonder, Cisco, Dell, Google, HPE, IBM RedHat, Microsoft, Oracle, Pegasystems, Salesforce, SAP, ServiceNow, VMWare, Workday, and many more.<sup>44</sup>

### 3.3.2. *Employees*

As we mentioned earlier, feedback from employees is very important. And you can find a lot of them on the Internet. But at the same time, companies easily adjust their ratings on different sites. Trying to increase the number of positive reviews and reduce the number of negative ones. However, I managed to find some interesting information about Accenture. I found more than one negative review on different sites. And there are moments that repeat. For example, many people wrote that they were hired, and a month later they were fired. I also found information that Accenture is going to reduce the headquarters in the near future. If you remember our calculations, when we considered how much profit one employee brings on average, then you can understand that in this company, the headquarters can really be too large. As for Pwc, I found a lot of complaints about irregular working hours. Many people complain that they worked there for about 50-70

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<sup>44</sup> *Accenture* [online]. [Accessed 18 May 2023]. Available from: <https://www.accenture.com/us-en>

hours a week, that working there is very difficult to find a balance between personal life and work.

### 3.3.3. Sustainability

The stability of a company indicates how the company takes care of the world around it, how ethical and conscious it is in its actions. The sustainability of companies also affects the reputation, for many clients it is important to work with companies that care about the world around them. Both companies I have chosen are quite stable. Both have a "Net - zero by" project that is a pollution reduction project. And such as garbage and air pollution. Accenture plans to complete this project by 2025, Pwc by 2030.



**Figure 5:** Accenture sustainability activity

*Source: official Accenture website*

Also, both companies actively conduct training sessions, both for their employees and for third parties. For example for students. Each of the selected companies pays over a billion dollars to sustainability and charity.

Similarly, part of sustainability is supporting minorities. Both companies support LGBT and women in the workplace. Accenture has a plan to have 50% women in management positions within the next few years. In my opinion, this is extreme. When a company sets strict limits that management positions should be 50/50, it increases competition for men and reduces it for women. As for me, it is

not fair if the position of a manager is taken by a woman, not because she deserved it, but because she is a woman and this is important for statistics. And a man who really deserves it will not be able to get into this position. In my opinion, the position of a manager should be taken by people who deserve it, without any prejudice.

#### *3.3.4. Charity*

A very close theme to sustainability is charity. Of course, not all charity is talked about openly, but since it greatly affects the reputation, more and more companies began to talk about their good deeds. Charity has such a psychological effect that when a client goes to a company and sees that it is doing charity work, the client gets the feeling that by paying for the services of this company, he is doing a good deed.

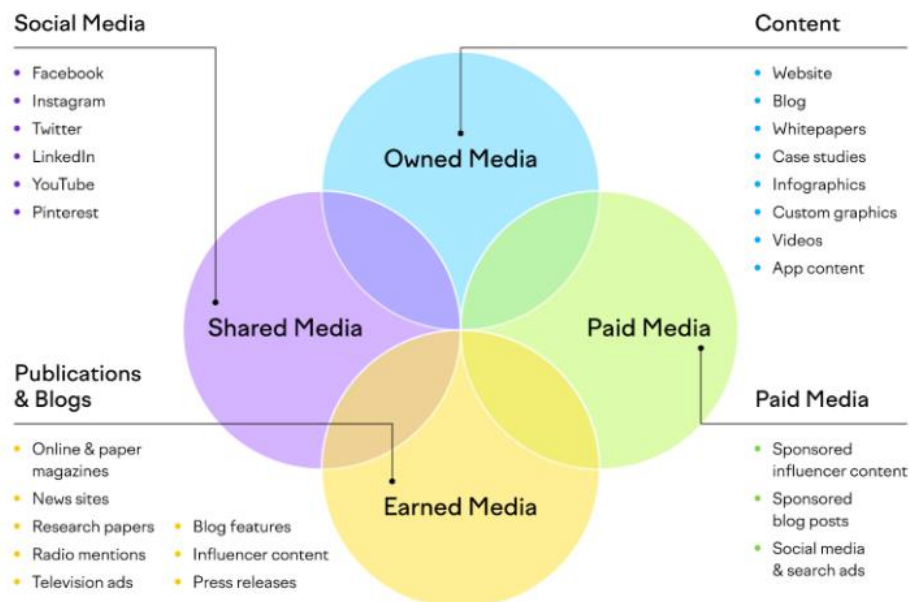
Let's take the currently popular sphere of charity "support for Ukraine". For a year now, the flag of Ukraine can be found on the websites of millions of companies. From small coffee houses to large corporations. It is very sad to talk about it, but support for Ukraine has become a form of PR. And the Ukrainian companies also. On the example of the selected companies, we can see that both companies published on their pages that they help Ukraine. Accenture had an action plan on its website for refugees from Ukraine who arrived and don't know what to do now. There were help points, hotline numbers. They also donated money to help Ukraine. Assisted in the logistics of humanitarian aid. In Pwc, they also published useful phone numbers and links for Ukrainians. They also donated money and sent parcels with help.

It is important to understand that charity plays a very important role in the company's reputation indeed. I had the opportunity to ask an Accenture employee on what basis they choose which charitable area to donate money to. And she answered me that, firstly, this area should carry its own value for the future of the company. For example, the benefit of donating to Ukraine is, firstly, Ukraine protects Europe, and if it is captured, then the war will be one step closer to Europe. Secondly, if the war in Ukraine ends, it will help the global economy. The second principle by which companies choose the sphere of charity is the urgency of the problem. Because, as she said, if there are already enough companies that are harvesting trees, then we'd better do something else.

Also in this section we will raise the topic of sponsorship. This reputation is very sensitive. When you sponsor some kind of social event, it has a good effect on your reputation. But this has the risk that if something bad happens at this event, it's also bad for your reputation.

### 3.3.5. Information from internet

Of course, the main part of a company's online reputation is what we can find about it in a search engine. The company has owned media, paid media, earned media, shared media.



**Figure 6:** Types of medias

Source: LYONS, Kelly. *A Beginner's Guide to Online Reputation Management*. . December 2022.

But there are also media independent of the company. For example, sites that simply write about the activities of companies, perhaps about their scandals, or about some interesting facts. In this part, I would like to analyze specifically independent media. Let's return to the situation with Ukraine and Russia. I did some research and found out that both companies had subsidiaries in Russia. And both companies announced that they would stop working in Russia. This is a step that

greatly affects the reputation of companies. At what we all understand that by abandoning the Russian market, they lose money, why did they do this? Because maintaining work with Russia would bring much more losses. Firstly, because of the sanctions. Secondly, because of the reputation, a lot of people refuse to cooperate with companies that support Russia.

But if you dive deeper into this topic and start researching what happened to the divisions of these companies in Russia, you can find a lot of interesting things. I have searched a bunch of sites to figure this out. And so, when entering in the search engine "Accenture Services Moscow" we can find the site "Axenix". The site on the main page of which is written: "assignee ACCENTURE". For a very long time I tried to figure out what exactly the relationship between these companies consists of. I found out that in September 2022 Accenture was renamed to Axenix. In fact, all customers remained with the same company only with a different name. But I also found out that the Russian director, along with the board of directors of the former Accenture, bought the company, and now it is really not connected with Accenture.

As for Pwc, the situation is more complicated. Now there is a company "Trust Technology". On the website of which there is not a word about Pwc, but at the same time, according to the trade register, the company was also renamed from Pwc to Trust Technology. At the same time, the legal address, phone numbers, employees and customers remained the same. And I have not found information about the change of owner anywhere. That is, Pwc is on the Russian market under a different name. Why am I talking about this? Because this is one of the strategies for building an online reputation. Initially, the announcement of the termination of work in Russia makes a positive impact on the reputation. A very interesting point is that, using the example of Accenture, we see a mention of the previous company on the website of a new Russian company. And in doing so, it builds a more transparent relationship with the client. Saying that yes, we have worked with Accenture is our experience, but now we are a different company, with old knowledge. By the way, if you go to the accenture.com domain, then there will be information that the domain is for sale. I see this situation in such a way that Accenture is not afraid of its past, and can openly say that yes, we worked with Russia, yes, the company really remained there, but we sold it. As for Pwc, they hide the connection between them and the company Tech Trust. But at the same

time, they did not even change the domain. But they perfectly understand that if the information that they are still working in Russia comes to light, then they will have problems with their reputation. Therefore, the opportunity to find anything about the connection between Pwc and Trust Technologies is only available in Russian. All sources are in English, they talk about the termination of work. It looks like a desire to sit on two chairs. Because they don't lose Russian customers, they show them "we had to change the name, but we stay with you", and for everyone else they show that they left the Russian market. Moreover, accenture will also be able to buy the Russian company back after the end of the war, without losing customers.

### **3.4. Recommendations**

After doing all the research, I have recommendations for companies. I want to present my recommendations through the concept of goodwill. Goodwill is the price of your reputation. This is when you can put the price of your product / service above the market, not because it is the best quality, but because YOU do it. Goodwill includes all of your intangible assets. Such as your name, reputation, business connections, clientele, social networks. Therefore, I want to make recommendations that will not only help you raise your reputation, but also make money on it.

#### **A) Frankness**

In my opinion, it is important to focus not on reputation, but on your actions. On the values that you bring to people, on your ideas, on stability and charity, on your clients and employees. You need to get better, every day, not so that you would be paid more for your reputation, but so that you would be useful to this world. If you do good deeds, if you treat your customers well, respect your employees, help those in need and do everything from the heart. Then I'm sure you won't have reputation problems. I am very repulsed by companies that all the time show how good they are, how much they help people. And when you start to study it more, you realize that they say a lot more than they do. I am sure that transparent relations with clients and society strengthen the reputation of firms. By "transparent relationships" I mean the ability to openly share your values, goals, show your plans and another very important fact, this is the ability to openly admit a mistake. Because mistakes are not made intentionally. The company didn't want this. And in my case, instead

of deleting all the news from the Internet, it is better to come out with a statement and explain how it happened. Of course it all depends on the situations, but in most cases I welcome the truth.

#### B) Work with big clients

You spend the same amount of time working with small and large clients, only the result is different for you. When working with large clients, you can place them in our clients section. That will definitely increase the confidence of the audience. This is very good for scaling. Because usually after big companies become your cases, you get more clients. And this is a good reason to expand. Also show on social media networks what you do for your clients, work process, results, reviews.

#### C) Customer-oriented approach

Customers are the main component of the reputation. Do everything that they would like to return to you, that they would recommend you to their friends, that they would write about you in their social networks. Treat each client as if they are your one and only client. People love to be treated well. They like to feel that you are interested in them. Like their posts, reply to their stories, congratulating them on their new achievements, email them with special offers specifically for this person. They should have the most positive memories of working with you.

#### D) Social media

Show on social networks not only professional content, but also the life of your company from the inside. All your team building, joint jokes, how you celebrate common achievements. People want to see not just a picture of a successful company, but the people behind it. Manage your social networks so that people would come to you, because they would like to interact with your team, and also become part of your atmosphere.

#### E) Connections

Always answer all messages, all letters. Unless it's spam of course. You never know who will be your customer tomorrow. And you also risk missing some important offer. Treat all people with respect, if this person does not become your client, then maybe his friend will. It all makes your reputation. Meet new people, communicate, write to people you are interested in, do not be afraid to communicate. Don't be afraid to ask for advice, ask or make suggestions. The more people you communicate with, the less you will need to spend on advertising. Word

of mouth is power. According to research, the most productive advertising is when your customers tell their friends and acquaintances about you.

## 4. Conclusion

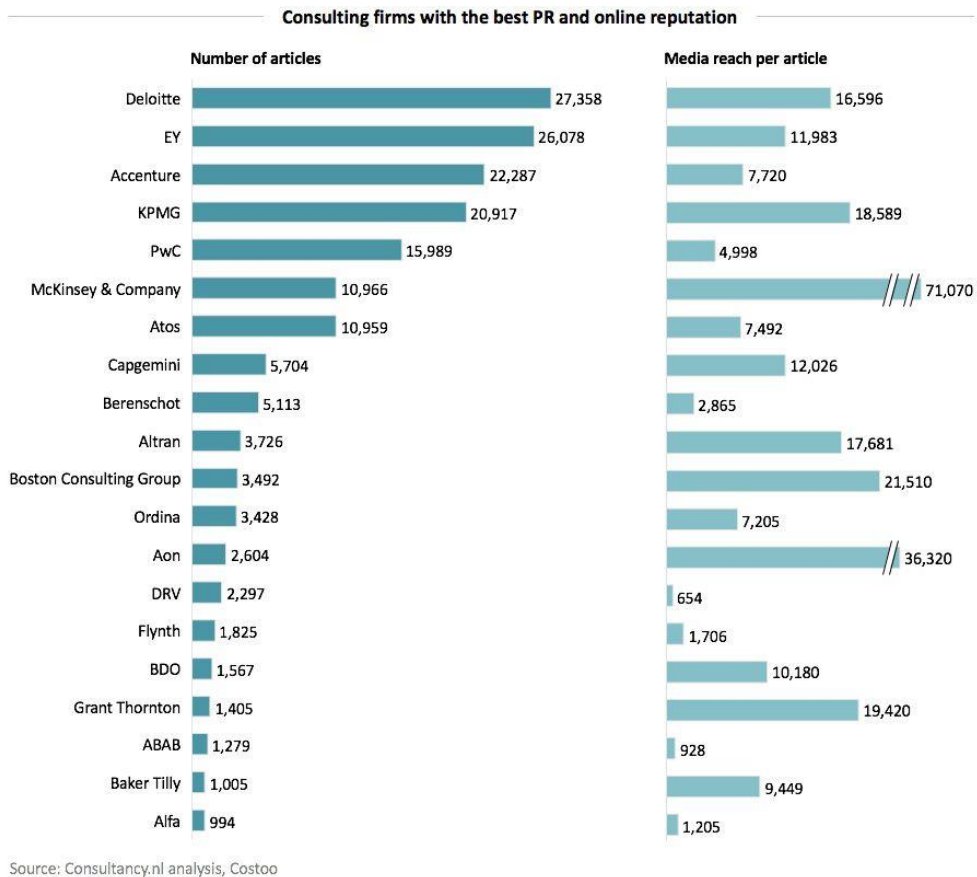
Let's sum up our work. Reputation is very important for every company. Most companies intentionally work on their reputation in an attempt to fix it. ORM is especially popular in such situations. It is usually used to monitor reviews on the Internet, minimizing negative ones and adding positive ones. It also includes maintaining social networks, updating information on the site, finding potential ambassadors via the Internet.

One of the main problems of reputation management is that we try to seem good as much as possible and forget to be good. However, this also has its advantages. Since there are areas in which it is not so difficult to check whether a company is really doing what it says. Specifically, this is the area of sustainability. In pursuit of a good reputation or with a pure heart, but companies somehow care about the planet, society, sustainability. We have personally been an example of the Skills for Success course, and this is considered an example of sustainability.

But at the same time, many companies are trying to sit on two chairs. And so sometimes their actions are not ethical. From time to time we find similar news in the newspapers. I'm not talking specifically about the selected companies. Since there is no concrete evidence of their unethical behavior, however, we also cannot say that the situation is the same in all world companies.

Also, after the research, we can see the direct impact of reputation on company profits. When exiting the Russian market, both companies should have lost % of their annual profits, while the performance of the companies not only managed to maintain their positions, but also grew by almost 12% for both companies. And judging by their reports, this is not related to the sale of Russian branches. So sometimes it is better to give up one thing (the Russian market) in order to acquire something else (profit growth).

As far as online reputation management is concerned, the two companies are very similar. However, according to the data I could find, Accenture's ORM is better than Pwc's.



**Figure 7:** Consulting firms with the best PR and online reputation  
*Source: Consultancy.nl analysis, Costoo*

Here we can see that Accenture is posting more articles on their site and this is attracting a lot of people. Also they has more media reach per article. But in principle, their strategies are almost the same, only different volumes.

## Resumé

Témou mojej práce je „Porovnanie online riadenia reputácie dvoch podnikov“. V teoretickej časti hovoríme o tom, čo je online reputačný manažment a prečo je pre firmu dôležitý. Reputácia je niečo, čo môže viesť k úspechu aj neúspechu. Od našej povesti závisí počet a návratnosť zákazníkov, cena dobrého mena, teda zisk firmy. Recenzie, komentáre, názory iných na vaše aktivity sú súčasťou vašej povesti. Preto je zrejmé, že podnikatelia si už dávno uvedomili dôležitosť reputácie a zaviedli do podnikania pojem „riadenie dobrej povesti“. Reputační manažéri sú ľudia, ktorí sledujú všetky novinky, recenzie, články, názory na činnosť svojej firmy a robia kroky na zlepšenie. To všetko je súčasťou PR manažmentu. Samozrejme, nie každá spoločnosť má PR manažéra a ešte viac reputačného manažéra. Každá spoločnosť však myslí na svoju povesť. Prečo ešte nemajú takých manažérov? Pretože rekatatsiya sa dá zaradiť prirodzeným spôsobom. Na to, aby ste mali dobré meno, stačí robiť svoju prácu efektívne a svedomito. Na dobrú povesť to stačí, ale na to, aby ste mali dobrú vôľu, musíte skúsiť trochu lepšie. Na to slúži reputačný manažment. Zvyčajne zahŕňa zbavenie sa negatívnych verejných vyhlásení. Ako sú recenzie, články, internetview, recenzie. Rovnako aj vytváranie pozitívnych. Riadenie reputácie tiež zabezpečuje, že zákazníci dostanú viac, ako očakávajú. Darčeky k narodeninám, alebo pri kúpe niečoho, príjemná obsluha, možno nejaká zľava. Čo sa týka online reputačného manažmentu, to je všetko, čo o firme na internete nájdeme. Ide o recenzie zamestnancov, webové stránky, sociálne siete, recenzie v Google mapách, fórach, sociálnych sieťach, blogoch, novinkách, článkoch. Jedným z hlavných cieľov online správy reputácie je zbaviť sa zlého a vytvoriť dobré. Stratégia riadenia online reputácie zahŕňa: udržiavanie sociálnych sietí (poskytovať ľuďom užitočný obsah, ukazovať interný život spoločnosti, zábavný obsah, prípady a recenzie), pracovať na webovej stránke (aby bola jedna z prvých vo vyhľadávaní), písanie článkov na zvýšenie návštevnosti stránky bolo dlhšie, popisovanie udržateľnosti a filantropie), štúdium recenzií.

Pre svoju prácu som si vybral dve poradenské agentúry Accenture a Pwc. Vo svojej práci som konzultoval ich online reputačný manažment. Konkrétne nastolila také témy ako: recenzie zamestnancov, udržateľnosť a charita, správy o odchode z ruského trhu a kontrola, či je to naozaj tak, sociálne siete. Podľa môjho výskumu:

Veľa ľudí sa sťažuje, že tam odpracovali okolo 50-70 hodín týždenne, že práca tam len veľmi ťažko hľadá rovnováhu medzi osobným životom a prácou v Pwc. A v Accenture veľa ľudí napísalo, že ich prijali a o mesiac neskôr ich vyhodili. Našiel som aj informáciu, že v najbližšom období sa spoločnosť Accenture chystá zmeniť sídlo.

Obe spoločnosti, ktoré som si vybral, sú pomerne stabilné. Obe majú projekt „Net – zero by“, ktorý je projektom na zníženie znečistenia. A ako sú odpady a znečistenie ovzdušia. Accenture plánuje dokončiť tento projekt do roku 2025, Pwc do roku 2030. Obe spoločnosti tiež aktívne vedú školenia pre svojich zamestnancov aj pre tretie strany. Napríklad pre študentov. Každá z vybraných spoločností platí viac ako miliardu dolárov na udržateľnosť a charitu.

Urobil som prieskum a zistil som, že obe spoločnosti majú dcérske spoločnosti v Rusku. A obe spoločnosti oznámili, že prestanú pracovať v Rusku. Ide o krok, ktorý výrazne ovplyvňuje reputáciu firiem. Čomu všetci rozumieme, že opustením ruského trhu prichádzajú o peniaze, prečo to urobili? Pretože zachovanie spolupráce s Ruskom by prinieslo oveľa viac strát. Po prvé kvôli sankciám. Po druhé, kvôli povesti veľa ľudí odmieta spolupracovať so spoločnosťami, ktoré podporujú Rusko.

Ak sa ale ponoríte hlbšie do tejto témy a začnete skúmať, čo sa stalo s divíziami týchto spoločností v Rusku, môžete nájsť veľa zaujímavých vecí. Hľadal som veľa stránok, aby som to zistil. A tak pri zadaní do vyhľadávača „Accenture Services Moskva“ nájdeme stránku „Axenix“. Stránka, na ktorej hlavnej stránke je napísané: „nadobúdateľ ACCENTURE“. Veľmi dlho som sa snažil prísť na to, z čoho presne pozostáva vzťah medzi týmito spoločnosťami. Zistil som, že v septembri 2022 bol Accenture premenovaný na Axenix. V skutočnosti zostali všetci zákazníci tej istej spoločnosti len s iným názvom. Dozvedel som sa ale aj to, že ruský riaditeľ spolu s predstavenstvom bývalého Accenture kúpili firmu a teraz už naozaj nie je prepojená s Accenture.

Čo sa týka Pwc, situácia je zložitejšia. Teraz existuje spoločnosť "Trust Technology". Na stránke ktorej o Pwc nie je ani slovo, no zároveň podľa obchodného registra došlo aj k premenovaniu firmy z Pwc na Trust Technology. Zároveň zostala nezmenená adresa sídla, telefónne čísla, zamestnanci a zákazníci. A nikde som nenašiel informáciu o zmene vlastníka. To znamená, že Pwc je na ruskom trhu pod iným názvom. Prečo o tom hovorím? Pretože toto je jedna zo

stratégií budovania online reputácie. Oznámenie o ukončení práce v Rusku má spočiatku pozitívny vplyv na povest'. Veľmi zaujímavým bodom je, že na príklade spoločnosti Accenture vidíme zmienku o predchádzajúcej spoločnosti na webovej stránke novej ruskej spoločnosti. A tým sa buduje transparentnejší vzťah s klientom. Povedať, že áno, spolupracovali sme so spoločnosťou Accenture, je naša skúsenosť, ale teraz sme iná spoločnosť so starými znalosťami. Mimochodom, ak pôjdete na doménu accenture.com, potom tam bude informácia, že doména je na predaj. Túto situáciu vnímam tak, že Accenture sa svojej minulosti nebojí a môže otvorene povedať, že áno, spolupracovali sme s Ruskom, áno, tá firma tam naozaj zostala, ale predali sme ju. Čo sa týka Pwc, skrývajú prepojenie medzi nimi a spoločnosťou Tech Trust. No zároveň nezmenili ani doménu. Dokonale však chápem, že ak vyjdú najavo informácie, že stále pracujú v Rusku, budú mať problémy so svojou povest'ou. Možnosť nájsť čokoľvek o spojení medzi Pwc a Trust Technologies je preto dostupná len v ruštine. Všetky zdroje sú v angličtine, hovoria o ukončení práce. Vyzerá to ako túžba sedieť na dvoch stoličkách. Keďže ruských zákazníkov nestrácajú, ukazujú im „museli sme zmeniť názov, ale zostávame s vami“ a všetkým ostatným ukazujú, že odišli z ruského trhu. Okrem toho bude spoločnosť Accenture schopná po skončení vojny odkúpiť ruskú spoločnosť späť bez straty zákazníkov.

Pokiaľ ide o moje odporúčania, hlavnou vecou, ktorú odporúčam, je byť k svojim klientom úprimný a robiť všetko zo srdca a nie za účelom zisku. Hlavným pravidlom dobrej vôle je urobiť pre klienta vždy viac, ako očakáva. Dôležitý je aj zákaznícky orientovaný prístup. Každý klient by mal mať zmysel pre individualitu a výnimočnosť, ako keby bol vašim jediným klientom. V prípade online správy reputácie to možno vykonať nasledujúcim spôsobom. Sledujte každého klienta na sociálnych sieťach, a keď tam napíše o svojich úspechoch, dovolenkách, víťazstvách, gratulujte mu. Tiež vám to umožní pochopiť, čo sa deje v živote človeka, a pochopíte, kedy mu môžete dať takú ponuku, že nemôže odmietnuť. Ďalším odporúčaním je pracovať viac s veľkými klientmi, ktorí robia vašu reputáciu. Veľkým aj malým strávite rovnaký čas, no tí veľkí vám potom prilákajú viac zákazníkov. Len vďaka tomu, že ich meno je vo vašich prípadoch.

Podme si teda zrekapitulovať. Moja práca je taká, že reputácia má veľký vplyv na spoločnosť a predovšetkým na príjmy spoločnosti. Môžete mať perfektné výpočty zisku a predpovede, ale ak sa vám pokazí reputácia, bude to mať na

svedomí daň. Sledujte preto svoju povesť a zamyslite sa nad svojimi činmi nielen z hľadiska výhod, ale aj z hľadiska vplyvu na svet okolo vás.

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