

# STUDY HIGHLIGHTS: AI, REPUTATION, AND THE CHANGING COMMUNICATION LANDSCAPE

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Technology, reputation, and human behavior are all in flux – and they are changing faster than most organizations can keep up. Recent studies point to mounting pressure on organizations, a widening gap between AI capability and governance, and shifting expectations among employees and audiences alike. The reports gathered here cover AI developments, reputation, corporate affairs, media habits, and workforce trends, offering insights for shaping strategy, storytelling, and influence in an environment that is growing more fragmented and harder to control.



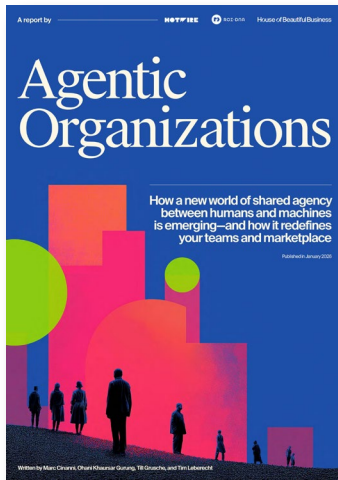
**Read the full report:** Sajadieh, S., Fattorini, L., Perrault, R., Gil, Y., Parli, V., Santarlasci, L., Pava, J., Maslej, N., Altman, E., Brynjolfsson, E., Brodley, C., Clark, J., Dignum, V., Kumar, V., Landay, J., Lyons, T., Manyika, J., Niebles, J. C., Shoham, Y., Tabassi, E., Wald, R., Walsh, T., & Weld, D. (2026). The AI Index 2026 Annual Report. AI Index Steering Committee, Institute for Human-Centered AI, Stanford University. <https://www.aiindex.stanford.edu/report/>

## AI-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

### Artificial Intelligence Index Report

The *Artificial Intelligence Index Report* by Stanford University compiles a comprehensive range of global data on AI development, tracking technological progress, industry adoption, and societal impact. The 2026 report highlights the widening gap between AI capability and preparedness of managing it. The most capable models are now the least transparent and safety measurement is lagging behind performance: Hallucination rates across leading models range from 22% to 94%, and reporting on responsible AI benchmarks remains inconsistent despite extensive capability tracking.

At the organizational level, governance structures are gradually emerging, with AI-specific roles increasing by 17% in 2025 and the share of organizations without formal responsible AI policies falling to 11%. Significant barriers remain, however, including limited expertise, budget constraints, and regulatory uncertainty. The report also points to growing ambivalence around AI: The share of respondents who believe AI delivers more benefits than drawbacks has increased to 59%, while 52% now say that the technology makes them feel nervous.



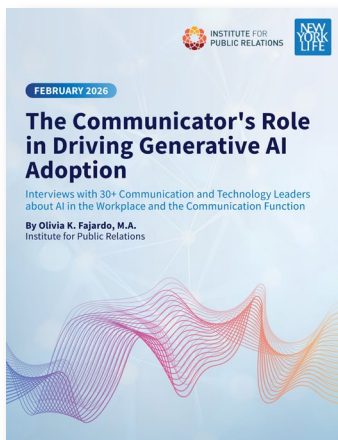
**Read the full report:** Cinanni, M., Gurung, O. K., Grusche, T., & Leberecht, T. (2026). *Agentic Organizations*. Hotwire Global. <https://www.hotwireglobal.com/agentic-organizations>

## Agentic Organizations Report 2026

“In thousands of organizations, AI is now acting on its own by shaping outcomes long before anyone realizes,” states the *Agentic Organizations Report 2026* by Hotwire. It explores how AI is reshaping organizations into agentic systems, where humans and AI jointly influence decisions, workflows, and brand interactions. Based on a mixed-method approach, including a survey of around 900 business and marketing professionals across North America, Europe, and Asia, as well as in-depth expert interviews, the study examines how this shift unfolds both inside organizations and in the wider marketplace.

At its core, the report highlights a dual transformation: Within companies, AI is increasingly sharing tasks and redefining what it means to contribute, lead, and make decisions; externally, algorithms are becoming active intermediaries in how customers discover, evaluate, and engage with brands.

For instance, while 69% of respondents report feeling more empowered by AI, many also point to growing tensions around agency, with over half believing AI could perform most of their job within five years. Strikingly, 21% already describe AI as a colleague, and 14% even as a decision-maker, underscoring how quickly the boundaries between human and machine roles are dissolving.



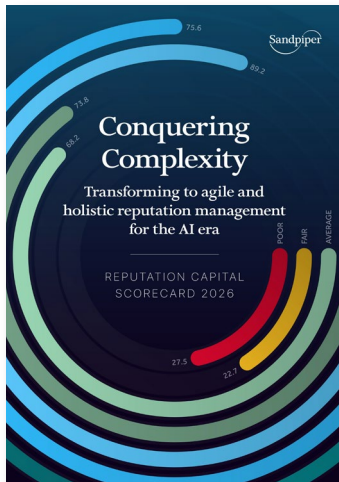
**Read the full report:** Fajardo, O. K. (2026). *The Communicator's Role in Driving Generative AI Adoption*. Institute for Public Relations. <https://instituteforpr.org/the-communicators-role-in-driving-generative-ai-adoption/>

## The Communicator's Role in Driving Generative AI Adoption

*The Communicator's Role in Driving Generative AI Adoption* by the Institute for Public Relations examines how communication leaders are helping organizations implement GenAI. Based on interviews with more than 30 communication and technology leaders, the report outlines different stages of AI maturity and identifies practical strategies for scaling adoption.

The report highlights a shift in the role of communicators, who increasingly act as connectors between technical teams and the broader organization. While IT often leads implementation, communicators help translate complexity and build trust. Productivity and efficiency are the primary drivers of adoption, yet success depends on strong leadership involvement, as well as clear governance, communication, and training.

At the same time, organizations are still navigating risks such as inaccuracies, misinformation, bias, and overreliance on AI. Many lack measurement frameworks, and human oversight remains essential, particularly in external communications, where AI should primarily be used for ideation and drafting rather than final output.



**Read the full report:** Sandpiper (2026). *Conquering Complexity: Transforming to agile and holistic reputation management for the AI era. Reputation Capital Scorecard.* <https://sandpipercomms.com/research/sandpiper-reputation-capital-scorecard-launches-in-davos/>

## Reputation Capital Scorecard 2026: Conquering Complexity

The *Reputation Capital Scorecard 2026* by Sandpiper explores how organizations are managing reputation in an increasingly complex, AI-driven global environment. Based on a survey of more than 3,000 CEOs, C-suite executives, and corporate affairs leaders across 27 markets, the report shows that reputation has firmly moved to the top of the executive agenda. Nearly all aspects of reputation management have increased in importance over the past year, with 72% of CEOs saying reputation is critical to commercial success. Yet despite this recognition, many organizations remain unprepared for the implications of AI on reputation management, with fewer than half describing their approach as effective, agile, or adaptable. Beyond AI, significant gaps in preparedness are also evident in other key reputational risk areas, including ESG and sustainability pressures and employee activism.

The report also points to growing strain in stakeholder relationships and a widening perception gap within the C-suite. CEOs and communications leaders often disagree on how strong reputation really is and how well it is being managed, revealing a disconnect between strategic intent and communications reality.



**Read the full report:** DHR Global (2025). *Workforce Trends Report 2026.* <https://www.dhrglobal.com/insights/workforce-trends-report-2026/>

## WORKFORCE, AUDIENCE, AND VALUE SHIFT

### Workforce Trends Report 2026

Employee engagement is under increasing pressure as organizations navigate rapid shifts in work models, technology, and expectations. The *Workforce Trends Report 2026* by DHR Global draws on a survey of 1,500 corporate professionals across North America, Europe, and Asia to explore how AI, hybrid work, and cultural change are reshaping the employee experience.

Across regions, engagement has fallen sharply year over year, with only 64% of workers describing themselves as highly engaged, down from 88% in 2025. At the same time, 83% report experiencing at least some level of burnout, driven primarily by heavy workloads and long working hours.

While workplace culture remains a key factor in the employee experience, only 36% of respondents say it is clearly defined and translates into performance. Employees highlight recognition, flexibility, and professional development as the most important levers for improving workplace culture and engagement.



## Chief Communications/Corporate Affairs Officer Turnover Study 2026

The study by the Corporate Affairs Search Alliance (CASA) measures turnover trends among senior communications leaders globally, based on data from 1,102 companies. The report indicates that, while the overall turnover in the US and in Europe has stabilized, significant national variations persist. Most notably, there is a high churn in the UK, where nearly one in six CCO positions is affected. At the same time, companies are rethinking how they fill top communications roles – external hires are gaining ground in Europe, whereas US firms are increasingly promoting from within. Despite these differences, demand for highly capable CCOs remains strong. The role is defined by the ability to navigate complex stakeholder environments with speed and confidence, while translating external developments into strategic insight at the highest level of management.

**Read the full report:** CASA (2026). Chief Communications / Corporate Affairs Officer Turnover Study 2026. <https://casa-partners.com/news/casa-uk-2026-report/>

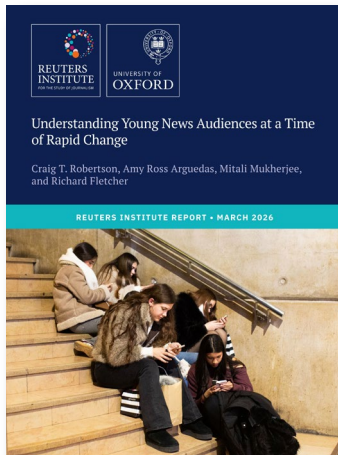


## Corporate Affairs in a World Without Narrative Slack

The report by FTI Consulting examines how corporate storytelling operates in a context where there is little to no room for narrative slack. Based on a survey of corporate affairs and reputation leaders and board-level interviews, it highlights that statements around strategy, technology, AI, sustainability, or corporate values are no longer seen as statements of intent, but as immediate commitments that are quickly measured against actual performance. As much of reputation-building now unfolds outside direct corporate control, gaps between claims and reality can quickly erode trust, both internally and with regulators and policymakers.

The findings also point to growing pressure on corporate affairs functions, which are often brought in too late in decision-making processes despite rising expectations from boards to manage trust and exposure. While the remit of corporate affairs has expanded to include reputation, regulation, investors, employees, and license to operate, many organizational structures and ways of working have yet to fully adapt.

**Read the full report:** FTI Strategic Communications (2026). Corporate Affairs in a World Without Narrative Slack. <https://fticomunications.com/corporate-affairs-in-a-world-without-narrative-slack/>

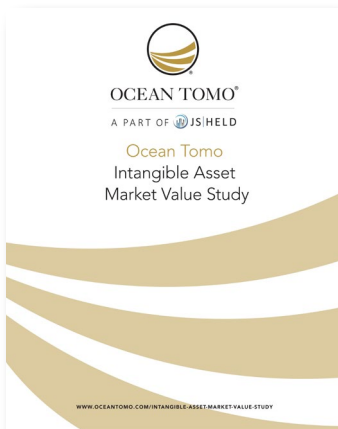


**Read the full report:** Robertson, C. T., Ross Arguedas, A., Mukherjee, M., & Fletcher, R. (2026). Understanding young news audiences at a time of rapid change. <http://reuters-institute.politics.ox.ac.uk/understanding-young-news-audiences-time-rapid-change>

## Understanding Young News Audiences at a Time of Rapid Change

Younger audiences are not turning away from news – they are redefining how they access and engage with it. The report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism highlights a mismatch between journalistic output and the expectations of young audiences, with some describing traditional news as irrelevant, difficult to understand, or unfairly biased against their demographic.

Drawing on a decade of research combining longitudinal audience data, surveys, and qualitative insights, the report shows how younger audiences consume news in a fragmented, platform-driven environment. Key findings include the fact that 18–24-year-olds are gravitating towards audiovisual platforms and turning to TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube as key sources of news. On these platforms, 51% say they pay more attention to individual creators than to traditional news brands (39%). At the same time, younger audiences also show greater openness to AI, using it to navigate and simplify complex topics. Around 15% access news via AI tools weekly, compared to just 3% of those aged 55+.



**Read the full report:** Ocean Tomo (2026). Intangible Asset Market Value Study <https://oceantomo.com/intangible-asset-market-value-study>

## Intangible Asset Market Value Study

Over the past five decades, the sources of corporate value in global capital markets have shifted dramatically from physical to intangible assets. The *Ocean Tomo Intangible Asset Market Value Study* examines this evolution using long-term financial data from global indices, including 50 years of U.S. market data and 20 years of data from international markets.

In 1975, tangible assets such as property, plant, and equipment accounted for 83% of the S&P 500's market value, with intangible assets making up just 17%. By 2025, this relationship had fully inverted: Intangibles now represent around 92% of total market capitalization, while physical assets have fallen to just 8%. The study describes this shift as an “economic inversion,” reflecting a structural move in value creation from physical assets toward knowledge, innovation, brand, and other intangible drivers.

## AUTHOR



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