



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**MANAGING THE REPUTATION OF DHS AND ITS  
COMPONENTS**

by

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June 2009

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**MANAGING THE REPUTATION OF DHS AND ITS COMPONENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Department of Homeland Security and some of its components have gained less than favorable reputations since DHS was stood up in 2003. Based upon the available literature on reputation and upon data collected from a Delphi survey of public affairs officers within DHS and its components, this thesis addresses the value, measurement, and management of reputation for DHS and its components. It also looks at the relationship between the reputation of DHS and that of its components. This thesis shows that reputation has a strong impact on such areas as public trust, Congressional funding, and employee morale. It offers several recommendations for how DHS and its components can manage their reputations more effectively. These recommendations include understanding the value of reputation, identifying key stakeholders, measuring stakeholders' perceptions, and addressing "reputation spillover." It also adds to the available literature on reputation, which comes primarily from the private sector.

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## I. INTRODUCTION TO REPUTATION

*In less than a month, Kate would be graduating near the top of her class from the Harvard Business School (HBS). Her prestigious MBA degree was already starting to bear the fruit of the school's good reputation: Kate had been offered positions with several top firms all around the U.S. Also, HBS had nominated her for the Presidential Management Fellows program with the federal government, and she'd just received offers from the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, both in Washington, D.C. Although the six-figure salaries being offered by the private sector were tempting, Kate had always desired to enter public service. Now all she had to do was make a choice between two very different prospective employers. A bit of research and asking around told Kate all she needed to know to make a decision. From what she'd heard and read, employees at DOS were very pleased with their employer, while employees at DHS were quite disgruntled. She also came across some recent surveys showing that the American public had a much more favorable opinion of DOS. Even though Kate didn't put much stock in these kinds of surveys that sometimes amount to little more than popularity contests, she couldn't shake the feeling that if both the public and the employees of DHS were unhappy with that organization, she would be too. And although she'd never admit this to anyone but herself, Kate preferred not to work for an organization that was constantly the butt of Leno and Letterman jokes or fodder for Saturday Night Live skits. Her decision made, Kate emailed the Presidential Management Fellows program coordinator with DOS and accepted the position.*

*After graduation, Kate packed up her small studio apartment in Boston's Allston neighborhood and shopped around for a moving company. She'd heard that some movers actually hold customers' belongings hostage and demand more money before releasing them. Not wanting to fall victim to a moving scam, Kate chose a slightly higher-priced company that was recommended by friends and topped the list of Google searches for "reputable moving companies." Her choice turned out to be the right one: her furniture and boxes arrived on the promised delivery day, with everything accounted for and in perfect condition, at her one bedroom apartment in the hip Arlington district of*

*Clarendon. Clarendon's low crime rate, urban village design, and artsy vibe had drawn Kate to Arlington, and as she gazed out her bedroom window down onto Wilson Boulevard, she thought of all the Zagat-recommended restaurants she wanted to try.*

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Although the story above is fictional, it serves to illustrate an important point: Many of the most important decisions people make in life are either entirely or partially based upon reputation. Reputation helps people make choices about what schools to attend, employers to work for, businesses to trust, neighborhoods to move to, restaurants to try, health insurance companies to pick, and churches to attend. Americans have so many choices in life that it is often difficult to make one. Whether accurate or inaccurate, the reputation of a person or thing is often the deciding factor.

Reputations can be categorized broadly as “good” or “bad” or can be a particular characteristic. For example, Southerners have a reputation for hospitality, the CIA has a reputation for secrecy, and Toyota has a reputation for reliability. Sometimes a person or thing can have several different reputations; for example, Wal-Mart has a reputation for low prices, but it also has a reputation for poor employee relations.<sup>1</sup> Some reputations are inherent and unchangeable, such as a cheetah's reputation for speed. However, other reputations can be lost or changed completely. For example, a comedian would lose his reputation for being funny if he stopped telling jokes. An employee who is known for always being late to work could change her reputation by showing up on time every day. Although reputations do not change overnight, efforts can be made to maintain a good reputation or improve a bad one.

#### **A. BACKGROUND ON THE REPUTATION OF DHS AND ITS COMPONENTS**

Whether warranted or not, since its inception in 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and some of the agencies it absorbed or created have developed less than ideal reputations. Although the focus of homeland security is on

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<sup>1</sup> Pallavi Gogoi, “Wal-Mart: A ‘Reputation Crisis,’” *Business Week*, October 31, 2006, [http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/content/oct2006/db20061031\\_471519.htm?chan=top+news\\_top+news+index\\_top+story](http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/content/oct2006/db20061031_471519.htm?chan=top+news_top+news+index_top+story) (accessed November 2008).

preventing, protecting, responding to, and recovering from a variety of physical threats,<sup>2</sup> DHS and its components should also consider the threat that a bad reputation can pose and make efforts to improve their reputations. As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, an organization's reputation is created by the perceptions of all of its stakeholders. For DHS and its components, these stakeholders include employees, Congress, the media, other agencies, and the public.

## **B. EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION**

Based upon recent surveys, DHS is poorly regarded by its employees. In 2004, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducted a survey to measure federal employees' "perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies."<sup>3</sup> The results for DHS were disheartening; the Department ranked 30<sup>th</sup> out of 30 government entities in 39 of the 78 questions asked. For 18 of the questions asked, it ranked 29<sup>th</sup> out of 30, and for 7 of the questions, it ranked 28<sup>th</sup>. OPM conducted another survey with similar questions in 2006, the results of which showed that employee perceptions of DHS had actually worsened. This time around, 36 federal agencies/departments participated in the survey. DHS ranked 36<sup>th</sup> on both the Job Satisfaction index and the Performance Culture index. It placed 35<sup>th</sup> on the Leadership and Knowledge Management index, and 33<sup>rd</sup> on the Talent Management index.<sup>4</sup>

DHS conducted its own employee survey in late 2007 similar to the OPM survey. The results of this survey showed a two percent improvement in both the Leadership and

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<sup>2</sup> Homeland Security Council, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington, D.C.: Homeland Security Council, 2007), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Scott Lilly, *An Analysis of Employee Attitudes at Federal Departments and Agencies* (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, n.d.), 1-3, [http://www.nbpc.net/dhsrules/cap\\_personnel\\_report.pdf](http://www.nbpc.net/dhsrules/cap_personnel_report.pdf) (accessed September 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Annie Jacobsen, "DHS Rated Worst of Federal Agencies by Employees," *The Aviation Nation*, January 31, 2007, <http://www.theaviationnation.com/2007/01/31/dhs-rated-worst-of-federal-agencies-by-employees/> (accessed September 2007).

Knowledge Management index and the Results-Oriented Performance Culture index. However, both the Talent Management and Job Satisfaction indices remained the same.<sup>5</sup>

Another study, conducted in 2007 by the Partnership for Public Service in conjunction with American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation, evaluated federal agencies to determine the best places to work in the federal government. Out of the 30 large agencies evaluated, DHS came in at number 29. Out of the 222 federal agency subcomponents evaluated, the following DHS components ranked in the bottom 100.

- Office of the Under Secretary for Science and Technology–222<sup>nd</sup>
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)–220<sup>th</sup>
- DHS Headquarters–215<sup>th</sup>
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)–213<sup>th</sup>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)–211<sup>th</sup>
- Defense Nuclear Detection Office–208<sup>th</sup>
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)–195<sup>th</sup>
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)–147<sup>th</sup>

These DHS components ranked in the top 100.

- Office of the Inspector General–91<sup>st</sup>
- U.S. Secret Service (USSS)–66<sup>th</sup>
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)–40<sup>th</sup>
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)–38<sup>th</sup>
- U.S. VISIT–30<sup>th</sup><sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Elaine C. Duke, "DHS Employee Survey Results – Employees Matter," *DHS Leadership Journal* (2008), <http://www.dhs.gov/journal/leadership/2008/04/dhs-employee-survey-results-employees.html> (accessed November 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Partnership for Public Service and the Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation, *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* (Washington, D.C.: Partnership for Public Service, 2007).

Rates of attrition might also indicate employees' perceptions of their organization. The average rate of attrition for all cabinet-level agencies is four percent. At over seven percent, DHS had the highest rate of attrition for federal entities in 2007. This rate is due in large part to the high attrition rates of TSA's transportation security officers.<sup>7</sup>

### C. CONGRESSIONAL PERCEPTION

The General Accountability Office (GAO), Congress's investigative arm, often criticizes DHS and its components. The GAO stated the following in a report on DHS's and FEMA's efforts to respond to disasters:

DHS has not made its management or operational decisions transparent enough so that Congress can be sure it is effectively, efficiently, and economically using the billions of dollars in funding it receives annually, and is providing the levels of security called for in numerous legislative requirements and presidential directives.<sup>8</sup>

Lack of transparency is often Congress's criticism of DHS and its components. A report in September of 2008 stated that DHS has failed to follow a "transparent process" in its Visa Waiver Program.<sup>9</sup>

In another report on DHS purchase cards, the GAO discovered that 45% of card transactions were not properly authorized and that many fraudulent, improper, and abusive transactions had occurred. Some questionable transactions that outraged the public included the purchases of a beer brewing kit and a 63-inch plasma television that was still in its original box six months after purchase. The GAO also discovered that tens of thousands of dollars had been charged to DHS purchase cards for training at golf and

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<sup>7</sup> Government Accountability Office, *DHS's Actions to Recruit and Retain Staff and Comply with the Vacancies Reform Act* (Washington, D.C.: GAO, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Observations on DHS and FEMA Efforts to Prepare for and Respond to Major and Catastrophic Disasters and Address Related Recommendations and Legislation* (Washington, D.C.: GAO, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Visa Waiver Program: Actions are Needed to Improve Management of the Expansion Process, and to Assess and Mitigate Program Risks* (Washington, D.C.: GAO, 2008).

tennis resorts. The GAO also concluded that DHS cardholders did not practice prudent comparison shopping and paid more than retail price for many items, thus wasting government funds and taxpayer dollars.<sup>10</sup>

DHS has also been previously criticized by Congress for how and where it chooses to allocate counter-terrorism funding. Critics allege that the Department does not make good judgments on potential threats and risks, stating that it downgrades high-risk locations such as San Diego and Sacramento while keeping such places as an Amish popcorn factory in Indiana and the Kangaroo Conservation Center in Georgia on its list of vulnerable assets.<sup>11</sup> The Department has also been heavily criticized by lawmakers for its relationship with questionable contractors, such as Shirlington Limousine and Transportation, Inc., which has been investigated for providing prostitutes to public officials.<sup>12</sup> The House Committee on Homeland Security has reported that since DHS was stood up in 2003, “contracting abuses, poor leadership, and low employee morale have been endemic.”<sup>13</sup>

#### **D. MEDIA PERCEPTION**

DHS and its components are also often negatively portrayed in various forms of media. From newspapers to news programs to political blogs to Hollywood, DHS repeatedly comes under fire. For example, the *Washington Post* has often criticized DHS since 2003. In October of 2004, the highly-circulated paper condemned DHS and CBP for drafting a public relations strategy designed to change the public’s perception about the state of homeland security in the U.S., particularly related to the country’s borders. The *Post* implied that the timing of the strategy’s creation was suspicious due to the 2004

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<sup>10</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Purchase Cards: Control Weaknesses Leave DHS Highly Vulnerable to Fraudulent, Improper, and Abusive Activity* (Washington, D.C.: GAO, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Chris Strohm, “DHS Responds to Criticism of Database on Vulnerable Infrastructure,” *Government Executive*, <http://www.govexec.com/storypagepf.cfm?articleid=34581&printerfriendlyver=1> (accessed September 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Chris Strohm, “House Passes DHS Spending Bill as Outcry Continues over Grants,” *Government Executive*, <http://www.govexec.com/storypagepf.cfm?articleid=34259&printerfriendlyver=1> (accessed September 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Majority Staff, *Critical Leadership Vacancies Impede United States Department of Homeland Security* (Washington, D.C.: Committee on Homeland Security, 2007).

Presidential election.<sup>14</sup> The *Washington Times* has also been critical of DHS and CBP. In an October 2007 article, the paper criticized both for failing to intercept a Mexican national border crosser with a dangerous strain of TB. The man had crossed the border by land 76 times before he was stopped. The paper also claimed that DHS had failed to alert TSA in a timely fashion, which enabled the man to take several domestic flights within the U.S. The *Times* did report that TSA took immediate action upon learning of the man's condition, placing him on its "no-board" list.<sup>15</sup>

Other DHS agencies have also come under fire from the media. FEMA was disparaged in multiple media outlets for its perceived failings during Hurricane Katrina, and TSA is often ridiculed for its seemingly inconsistent and pointless security measures at airports. USCIS has been criticized by popular conservative blogger Michelle Malkin for lowering its background security check standards to approve more benefit applications.<sup>16</sup> The *Huffington Post*, one of the most popular liberal blogs, often condemns ICE's detention and removal procedures, calling the agency "Neanderthal."<sup>17</sup>

In addition, Hollywood rarely portrays the Department as heroic. In 2006 and 2007 alone, DHS was not only negatively represented, but was often the actual antagonist in television shows and films. The following plot synopses are examples of how poorly DHS has been characterized in television dramas:

- *Jericho*: In this CBS drama, nuclear explosions destroyed several major U.S. cities; it was later revealed that the Secretary of DHS was the mastermind behind the attacks.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Scott Higham and Robert O'Harrow, Jr., "Homeland Security Disavows Document Touting Successes," *Washington Post*, October 29, 2004, Section A21.

<sup>15</sup> *Washington Times*, "Man Crisscrossed Border with TB," *Washington Times*, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2007/oct/18/man-crisscrossed-border-with-tb/> (accessed November 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Michelle Malkin, "Homeland Insecurity Watch: The Naturalization Stampede," <http://michellemalkin.com/2008/03/07/homeland-insecurity-watch-the-naturalization-stampede/> (accessed November 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Marisa Trevino, "ICE Declares Self-Deport Program a Failure," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marisa-trevi/ice-declares-self-deport\\_b\\_120628.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marisa-trevi/ice-declares-self-deport_b_120628.html) (accessed November 2008).

<sup>18</sup> *Jericho*, "One Man's Terrorist," <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/jericho/recaps/117/> (accessed November 2008).

- *Traveler*: This drama centers around two graduate students who are framed for a terrorist attack on a New York City museum. The real culprit, of course, is the Secretary of DHS, who has concocted an elaborate scheme to destroy incriminating evidence against the federal government.<sup>19</sup>
- *Crossing Jordan*: In one episode, DHS secretly arrests one of the Boston Police Department's medical examiners on suspicions of terrorist activity. The DHS agents are portrayed as violent, ruthless, argumentative, unreasonable, racist, and incompetent. The episode alleges that the medical examiner was arrested simply because he was a doctor from India.<sup>20</sup>
- *Heroes*: DHS hunts down and kills people with special abilities, regardless of whether or not the individuals are an actual threat to homeland security.<sup>21</sup>
- *The Closer*: The Los Angeles Police Department is mandated by DHS to drastically cut back on its budgets in all units in order to enlarge its counter-terrorism bureau. The show highlights how the LAPD's traditional role of fighting crime is severely limited by DHS's mandates.<sup>22</sup>

These fictional media stories illustrate that producers and screenwriters in Hollywood think their negative representation of DHS on screen is believable, which suggests DHS does indeed have a bad reputation among the viewers. Even though these stories are fictional, they could help feed the misconceptions of the American public.

## **E. PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

A recent *Associated Press* public opinion poll revealed that two of DHS's component agencies, FEMA and TSA, are viewed unfavorably by the public. FEMA ranked as the least-liked federal agency by the public; TSA ranked second to last.<sup>23</sup> In

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<sup>19</sup> *Traveler*, "The Exchange," <http://www.tv.com/traveler/show/58473/episode.html> (accessed November 2008).

<sup>20</sup> *Crossing Jordan*, "Post Hoc," [http://www.tv.com/crossing-jordan/show/2921/episode\\_guide.html?season=6&tag=season\\_dropdown%3Bdropdown](http://www.tv.com/crossing-jordan/show/2921/episode_guide.html?season=6&tag=season_dropdown%3Bdropdown) (accessed November 2008).

<sup>21</sup> *Heroes*, "Five Years Gone," <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0988309/plotsummary> (accessed November 2008).

<sup>22</sup> *The Closer*, "Dumb Luck," [http://www.tv.com/the-closer/show/28972/episode\\_guide.html?season=3&tag=season\\_dropdown%3Bdropdown](http://www.tv.com/the-closer/show/28972/episode_guide.html?season=3&tag=season_dropdown%3Bdropdown) (accessed November 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Eileen Sullivan, "FEMA is Lowest in Public-Approval Poll," *Associated Press*, December 20, 2007, <http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2007Dec20/0,4670,FEMAPublic,00.html> (accessed December 2007).

addition, DHS as a whole was viewed unfavorably by 34% of the respondents.<sup>24</sup> Since the public's perceptions are often formed by the media and Hollywood, these poll results are not surprising.

## **F. PURPOSE OF THIS THESIS**

This thesis investigates why the reputations of DHS and its components matter and offers recommendations for how these reputations can be better managed. It addresses the following research questions.

- How does reputation affect the success of DHS and its components?
- How are the reputations of DHS and its components measured?
- What does DHS do to manage its reputation?
- What do the components of DHS do to manage their individual reputations?
- What is the relationship between the reputation of DHS and the reputations of its components?
- How should DHS and its components more effectively manage their reputations?

What this thesis *does not* do is suggest that the reputation of a federal department or agency should be manipulated or “spun” to make stakeholders believe something that is not true. Unlike companies in the private sector, organizations in the public sector must be cautious about how much they influence through the information they provide. Therefore, this thesis emphasizes performance-based reputation management recommendations, because as the saying goes, “You can put lipstick on a pig, but it’s still a pig.”

## **G. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

The next chapter of this thesis looks at the available literature on reputation. It uses the literature to help answer the research questions primarily from the perspective of the private sector, since literature on this topic from the public sector is greatly lacking. Chapter III discusses the method employed by this thesis to answer the research questions

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<sup>24</sup> Ipsos Public Affairs, *The Associated Press Poll Conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs*, Project #81-5681-71, <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm?id=3764> (accessed December 2007).

specifically from the viewpoint of DHS and its components. The methodology is both quantitative and qualitative, involving a two-part Delphi survey administered to public affairs experts within DHS and six of its most publicly-visible component agencies. Chapter IV presents and analyzes the results of the Delphi survey. The fifth and final chapter of this thesis compares the results of the Delphi survey with the literature on reputation, provides recommendations for how DHS and its components can better manage their reputations, and discusses the significance of this thesis.

## II. REPUTATION IN THE LITERATURE

The majority of the literature on reputation comes from the perspective of the private sector. Very little information is available regarding reputation and the public sector. This section includes a review of the literature on reputation to help the reader understand what reputation is, why it is significant, how it can be measured, how relationships impact reputation, and how reputation can be managed.

### A. WHAT IS REPUTATION?

*Reputation, reputation, reputation! O! I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial.*

-Cassio in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Act II, Scene iii

Reputation has been a concern in organizational research in accounting, economics, marketing, strategy, and sociology.<sup>25</sup> Definitions of reputation come from books, scholarly articles, and studies of reputation in the private sector. As with many terms, reputation has different, and sometimes conflicting, definitions. One fairly agreed-upon definition of reputation is “what other people think of us” and is based on external perceptions. It is not what people think of themselves or what they think their reputation should be; rather reputation is based upon what society thinks.<sup>26</sup> Social identity theorists see reputations as judgments that are collectively constructed by a group based upon some standard. These standards can be found within categories. For example, the category “Catholic” automatically provides a certain set of standards by which to judge the individual claiming to be Catholic. On an individual level, the community makes a judgment of the person by measuring the individual’s public self against the standards created by the category.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Pekka Aula and Saku Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management: Towards a Company of Good* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 23.

<sup>26</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management* (Oxford: Capstone Publishing, 2002), 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> Nicholas Emler and Nicholas Hopkins, “Reputation, Social Identity and the Self,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, ed. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), 128-129.

On an organizational level, reputation is also based more on perception than on reality, according to some scholars. Charles Fombrun, the most-cited author and world-renowned expert on reputation, states that corporate reputations “reflect the general esteem in which a firm is held by its multiple stakeholders.”<sup>28</sup> In the private sector, these stakeholders include the organization’s employees, partners, customers, and investors.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, an organization’s reputation is judged by its past actions, current state, and future prospects.<sup>30</sup>

Central to the literature’s discussion of reputation are the elements of identity, brand, and image. Although this thesis focuses on the larger concept of reputation, these terms cannot be ignored when discussing this topic since they are a part of reputation. It is important to distinguish these terms from reputation and from each other, so that the reader will have a clear understanding of what is meant throughout this thesis when the terms are used.

On the corporate landscape, *identity* describes who a company is, what it does, how it does it, and where it wants to go. In the past, corporate identity did not include internal stakeholders. However, in the current definitions, employees are considered one of the audiences that must be targeted in corporate identity programs.<sup>31</sup> The visual or tangible aspects of a company’s identity include its buildings, logos, designs, architecture, and décor. The strategic or intangible aspects of identity are the company’s

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Fombrun and Violina P. Rindova, “The Road to Transparency: Reputation Management at Royal Dutch/Shell,” in *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, ed. Majken Schultz, Mary Jo Hatch, and Mogens Holten Larsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78-79.

<sup>29</sup> Janet M. Dukerich and Suzanne M. Carter, “Distorted Images and Reputation Repair,” in *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, ed. Majken Schultz, Mary Jo Hatch, and Mogens Holten Larsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98-99.

<sup>30</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 24.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz, “Scaling the Tower of Babel: Relational Difference Between Identity, Image, and Culture in Organizations,” in *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, ed. Majken Schultz, Mary Jo Hatch, and Mogens Holten Larsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.

philosophy, vision, and mission.<sup>32</sup> Identity is “what the organization stands for above all else.”<sup>33</sup> According to Fombrun, identity and reputation are inextricably linked: How an organization believes itself to be influences how it is perceived.<sup>34</sup>

*Branding* is the “selling proposition that incorporates vision and culture and is aimed at different organizational constituents including management, employees, customers, shareholders, media and other stakeholders.”<sup>35</sup> Brands are generally related to specific products of a company and how customers assess those products.<sup>36</sup> Brands can be product names or corporate names. These names help consumers make a choice between products or services and give the consumer a sense of consistency. Consumers feel that a brand will ensure them of getting the same thing today that they received yesterday.<sup>37</sup> Branding is considered a “subset” of reputation management.<sup>38</sup> Based upon its identity, an organization creates brand names in order to present itself and project certain images to its stakeholders (primarily its customers).<sup>39</sup>

The public relations and marketing components of an organization create the bridge between identity and *image* by attempting to shape the public’s impression of who the organization is and what it does.<sup>40</sup> As with the term reputation, the literature does not agree on the definition of image. According to some experts, image is how organizational members *perceive* that external audiences see the organization.<sup>41</sup> Often

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<sup>32</sup> Hatch and Schultz, “Scaling the Tower of Babel,” 14.

<sup>33</sup> John Doorley and Helio Fred Garcia, *Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 5.

<sup>34</sup> Fombrun and Rindova, “The Road to Transparency,” 95.

<sup>35</sup> Rumina Dhalla, “The Construction of Organizational Identity: Key Contributing External and Intra-Organizational Factors,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 10, no. 4 (2007): 247.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Fombrun and Cees Van Riel, *Fame and Fortune: How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Wally Olins, “How Brands are Taking over the Corporation,” in *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, ed. Majken Schultz, Mary Jo Hatch, and Mogens Holten Larsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 61.

<sup>38</sup> Fombrun and Van Riel, *Fame and Fortune*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Dhalla, “The Construction of Organizational Identity,” 247.

<sup>40</sup> Michael L. Barnett, John M. Jermier, and Barbara A. Lafferty, “Corporate Reputation: The Definitional Landscape,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 9, no. 1 (2006): 34.

<sup>41</sup> Dukerich and Carter, “Distorted Images and Reputation Repair,” 103.

organizational members have an inaccurate view (positive or negative) of how the organization is perceived by external stakeholders, which means the organization's reputation and image do not always match.<sup>42</sup> Other scholars disagree with this description of image. Some see image as the general impression that observers (internal or external) actually have of an organization's symbols, such as its name and logo.<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere in the literature, image is merely the organization's publicity—the way it portrays itself to the media, regardless of the true nature of the organization. Still other experts disagree and believe that image is based on reality—the real character of the organization.<sup>44</sup> An organization may be different things to different people, having a unique image among each of its stakeholders. Much of the literature states that the sum of these different images equals reputation.<sup>45</sup>

After researching the various definitions of identity, brand, image, and reputation, the following workable definitions have been chosen for purposes of this thesis.

- Identity: Who an organization is and what it stands for
- Brand: The names used by an organization to present itself and promote its identity
- Image: Each stakeholder's impression of the organization's brand names and self-presentations
- Reputation: The sum of all images held by the organization's stakeholders

## **B. WHY DOES REPUTATION MATTER?**

*The purest treasure mortal times afford is a spotless reputation.*

-Thomas Mowbray in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Richard II*, Act I, Scene i

Although scholars cannot agree on the definition of reputation, most all agree that reputation matters. The literature is filled with reasons why reputation is significant to an organization. Once again, private sector corporations have led the way in identifying the

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<sup>42</sup> Dukerich and Carter, "Distorted Images and Reputation Repair," 98-99.

<sup>43</sup> Barnett, Jermier, and Lafferty, "Corporate Reputation: The Definitional Landscape," 34.

<sup>44</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 26-27.

<sup>45</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 68.

value of reputation. The private sector's concern with reputation can be seen in *Forbes* magazine's annual list of the most reputable companies, the creation of the Reputation Institute by Charles Fombrun, the number of public relations companies who specialize in reputation management, and even in internal corporate positions created specifically to address reputation (for example, the Vice President of Communications and Reputation at Dow and the Vice President of Corporate Image and Reputation at GSK).<sup>46</sup>

The primary method that the literature uses to discuss the value of reputation is through case studies, such as the Pan Am bombing of 1988, the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989, President Clinton's approval ratings after the Monica Lewinski scandal, and Michael Jackson's music sales after the child sex abuse scandals. No matter the degree of innocence or guilt in these situations, the reputations of those involved suffered and led to negative consequences.<sup>47</sup> Probably the most referenced case study regarding reputation is that of Shell and its 1995 run-in with Greenpeace, regarding the disposal of one of the oil company's North Sea oil rigs. Shell, one of the world's three largest corporations, planned to dispose of the Brent Spar by sinking it into the sea, which Shell had determined to be the most environment-friendly means of disposal. However, the NGO Greenpeace decided that Shell's proposed method of disposal was motivated only by greed. When Greenpeace activists boarded the Brent Spar in protest, the massive media coverage led to boycotts of Shell products and eventually caused Shell to back down on its plan. As a result of this incident, Shell suffered public humiliation and a major blow to its reputation, becoming known as a symbol of corporate evil and corruption.<sup>48</sup>

According to the literature, the intangible asset of reputation is shown to have a direct impact on the tangible value of an organization.<sup>49</sup> In the private sector, reputation affects the "bottom line" of a company's finances. For example, a joint manufacturing

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<sup>46</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management: Gaining Control of Issues, Crises & Corporate Social Responsibility* (London: Kogan Page, 2008), 9.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Fombrun and Rindova, "The Road to Transparency," 77.

<sup>49</sup> Olins, "How Brands are Taking over the Corporation," 65.

venture between GM and Toyota in the 1980s resulted in the production of two almost identical cars, made on the same production line. The GM Geo Prizm sold for a little less than the Toyota Corolla, yet the Corolla depreciated more slowly. Buyers believed that the car with the Toyota name would be of better quality than the same car with the GM brand. As a result, Toyota made \$128 million more on the Corolla than GM made on the Prizm, and today the Geo Prizm is no longer manufactured.<sup>50</sup>

Reputation has such a tangible effect on a company that the literature actually labels it as capital or “invisible money” and calls the economic benefits “ROR”—Return on Reputation. Various studies have shown that a good reputation increases sales and attracts investors.<sup>51</sup> Weber Shandwick, the world’s largest public relations firm, recently conducted globe-spanning research aimed at determining the true value of reputation. The firm warned: “It’s life under the magnifying glass today for companies and their leaders. No ethical lapse, no moral misstep or other corporate misdeed—real or perceived—goes unnoticed.”<sup>52</sup> The results of Weber Shandwick’s survey show that reputation accounts for 63% percent of a company’s market value and that recovering from a wounded reputation takes about three and a half years.<sup>53</sup> Using a PR firm’s research to establish the value of reputation could be a bit of a conflict of interest, considering that a PR firm makes money by selling its services to businesses that are convinced reputation matters. However, the scholarly articles and studies in the literature overwhelmingly back the findings of Weber Shandwick. For example, in recent years, studies published in the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, the *Southern Economic Journal*, *Corporate Communications*, and *Corporate Reputation Review* all demonstrate that reputation directly impacts a company’s financial success.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Grahame Dowling, *Creating Corporate Reputations: Identity, Image, and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>51</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 44-45.

<sup>52</sup> Weber Shandwick, “Safeguarding Reputation,” Weber Shandwick Website, <http://164.109.94.76/Default.aspx/Insights/ThoughtLeadership/ResearchInitiatives/SafeguardingReputationSurvey> (accessed September 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 21-22.

Not only does reputation impact the bottom line, it also gives a company a competitive edge in attracting the best recruits and retaining them.<sup>55</sup> Annual student surveys show that MBA graduates are drawn to jobs in higher-reputation companies. Better-regarded companies become the “first choice” of employees, customers, and investors.<sup>56</sup> Studies also show that employees will accept positions in organizations with better reputations rather than take a promotion in their current position with a less reputable organization.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the literature agrees that reputation increases employee morale and adds psychological value (e.g., public trust; consumer confidence) to a company’s goods or services.<sup>58</sup> The credibility that reputation creates for a company tells its consumers that they will get what they are promised.<sup>59</sup> It can even serve as a deterrent to competitors seeking to enter the market on a particular product or service.<sup>60</sup> A company’s reputation also impacts its relationship with its business partners, such as advertising agencies, suppliers, and contractors. For example, ad agencies want to work with companies with good reputations because they can “borrow” the reputation of their clients, thereby improving their own reputation as an ad agency. The literature states that reputation “acts as a performance bond when the firm contracts with other business enterprises... .”<sup>61</sup>

The literature even states that a good reputation will give a company a “second chance” if/when a crisis emerges.<sup>62</sup> For example, it is widely believed that Johnson & Johnson’s excellent reputation enabled its market share to recover after the two Tylenol cyanide incidents of the 1980s.<sup>63</sup> A company’s reputation can form a “protective shield” around it, which lessens the negative effects of a crisis. Furthermore, the media is more

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<sup>55</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 44-45.

<sup>56</sup> Fombrun and Rindova, “The Road to Transparency,” 79.

<sup>57</sup> Monika Hamori, “The Impact of Reputation Capital on the Career Paths of Departing Employees,” *Journal of Intellectual Capital* 4, no. 3 (2003): 304.

<sup>58</sup> Dowling, *Creating Corporate Reputations*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> Hamori, “The Impact of Reputation Capital,” 304.

<sup>61</sup> Dowling, *Creating Corporate Reputations*, 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 29.

likely to trust the information coming from a company with a good reputation.<sup>64</sup> Fombrun writes, “We trust those companies that we respect, so we grant them the benefit of the doubt in ambiguous situations.”<sup>65</sup>

Looking at reputation’s value from the negative angle, a company’s poor reputation can cause market analysts to undervalue its share price. Also, journalists tend to put companies with poor reputations under their microscope and play down any good done by those companies. In addition, customers are more sensitive to the costs of goods or services provided by disreputable companies, and employee morale is lowered by the poor reputation of the employer.<sup>66</sup>

The preceding discussion on the significance of reputation comes completely from the private sector. Literature from the public sector on this topic is greatly lacking. Some literature, however, is available. The RAND Corporation recently published a book about using a “Madison Avenue” approach to earn the public’s support for U.S. military operations. The book addresses internal and external identity and discusses the importance of public support.<sup>67</sup> A recent article in *Corporate Reputation Review* introduces the concept of neutral reputation for public sector organizations. The article argues that public sector organizations should seek to have neutral reputations, rather than excellent ones.<sup>68</sup> Although the author agrees that reputation is important to a public sector organization, she maintains that an excellent reputation only sets the organization up for a fall when it fails to meet the expectations of its diverse stakeholder groups. The author proposes: “... for public sector organizations the target level of reputation should be a realistic and healthy one, that is, it should be high enough for the organization to be trusted or taken seriously, but neutral or even low enough to acquire the necessary

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<sup>64</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 9.

<sup>66</sup> Dowling, *Creating Corporate Reputations*, 13.

<sup>67</sup> Todd C. Helmus, Christopher Paul, Russell W. Glenn, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 77-81.

<sup>68</sup> Vilma Luoma-aho, “Neutral Reputation and Public Sector Organizations,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 10, no. 2 (2007): 124.

operating distance necessary especially in times of crisis.”<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, she believes that the financial value the private sector sees in reputation is not applicable to the public sector.<sup>70</sup> However, another article in *Corporate Reputation Review* states that the bottom line and cost-benefit issues do matter to public sector organizations largely because of privatization and out-sourcing.<sup>71</sup>

Although a few authors express concern about a public firm seeking a good reputation, the literature overwhelmingly agrees that reputation matters, for both private and public sector organizations. This discussion on the significance of reputation has shown that the effects of reputation are financial (e.g., sales, investments, funding), physical (e.g., recruitment and retention), and psychological (e.g., credibility, trust, morale). Since reputation matters, it is very important that an organization knows how to measure its reputation.

### C. HOW CAN REPUTATION BE MEASURED?

*I am better than my reputation.*

-Friedrich Schiller, *Mary Stuart*,  
Act III, Scene iv

Measuring reputation is a common theme in the literature. If an organization understands the value of reputation in general, it must know what its own reputation is specifically in order to do something about it. The literature stresses that reputation should be measured, monitored, and managed. However, because most organizations do not understand the real value of their reputation, they do not have a measurement system in place. If they have no idea what their reputation is, they are missing opportunities to improve it.<sup>72</sup>

An organization has many different stakeholders (e.g., customers, investors, employees, and partners), and each stakeholder makes assessments regarding the

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<sup>69</sup> Luoma-aho, “Neutral Reputations,” 129.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>71</sup> Hans Krause Hansen, Roy Langer, and Dorte Salskov-Iversen, “Managing Political Communications,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 4, no. 2 (2001): 167.

<sup>72</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 4.

reputation of an organization. These assessments can be measured through the media, public forums, opinion polls, and buyer purchasing behavior. As these assessments are made known, members within the organization use these “cues” to form their understanding of how outsiders perceive the organization.<sup>73</sup> Involvement with the community also helps organizational members to understand what the organization’s reputation is to the outside. Of course, an organization might receive many negative cues from external stakeholders; however, the organization should not perceive every cue as a threat to its reputation.<sup>74</sup> If members perceive the organization’s image is negative, they will attempt to repair it. This response is a good thing, if indeed the reputation is negative; however, the organization may spend unnecessary time, money, and resources trying to repair its reputation when it might not need repairing. Conversely, if the members perceive the organization’s image is good, they will not spend time, money, and resources repairing it, even if the reality is that the reputation is bad. This misidentification of an organization’s reputation can be very harmful, which is why the organization must have appropriate methods of measurement in place to gauge the image held by each stakeholder accurately.<sup>75</sup>

In the literature, three predominant approaches to measurement emerge: social expectations, corporate personality, and trust-based measures. In the social expectations approach, companies are ranked by different stakeholders’ expectations of a company’s activities. The rankings are usually based upon criteria such as the quality of the company’s product, how its employees are treated, and the financial performance of the company.<sup>76</sup> The company can then be compared to similar companies. A good example of such a ranking is *Fortune* magazine’s annual survey “America’s Most Admired Companies.” The downfall of this survey, however, is that not all stakeholders are

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<sup>73</sup> Dukerich and Carter, “Distorted Images and Reputation Repair,” 99.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-105.

<sup>76</sup> Sabrina Helm, “Designing a Formative Measure for Corporate Reputation,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 8, no. 2 (2005): 96.

questioned. Only three groups are surveyed by *Fortune*: senior executives, board members, and securities analysts. The survey is based upon the following attributes of corporate reputation.

- Innovativeness
- Management quality
- Employee talent
- Financial soundness
- Use of corporate assets
- Long-term investment value
- Social responsibility
- Quality of products/services<sup>77</sup>

Another important annual survey on reputation is the Harris-Fombrun Reputation Quotient, which surveys many different audiences in order to measure an organization's reputation. This social expectations assessment evaluates the following "dimensions of reputation."

- Products and services
- Financial performance
- Workplace environment
- Social responsibility
- Vision and leadership
- Emotional appeal<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the social expectations approach, another method of measuring an organization's reputation is by looking at its corporate personality. Just as an individual's behavior can sometimes be explained by his or her personality, metaphorically an organization's activities can be explained by its corporate personality. In this approach, the personality of the stakeholder influences whether he or she views the personality of

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<sup>77</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

the organization positively or negatively. For example, if the stakeholder's personality is laid-back and informal, then he or she will view informality in an organization in a positive light. The dimensions measured in this construct are the following.

- Agreeableness (warmth, empathy, integrity)
- Enterprise (modernity, adventure, boldness)
- Competence (conscientiousness, drive, technocracy)
- Ruthlessness (egotism, dominance)
- Chic (elegance, prestige, snobbery)
- Informality (casual, simple, easy-going)
- Machismo (masculine, tough, rugged)<sup>79</sup>

The third most dominant approach to measuring reputation is trust-based. This approach focuses on predicting the actions of an organization. It is measured according to three dimensions.

- Reliability
- Honesty
- Benevolence<sup>80</sup>

The first two measures relate to the perception of the organization's sincerity and whether or not it will keep its promises; the third deals with an organization's cooperative spirit, regardless of what it promises.<sup>81</sup>

Of the three approaches for measuring reputation, the literature largely agrees that social expectations assessments are the most practical for an organization that desires to learn about the perceptions of its stakeholders.<sup>82</sup> However, the literature warns that leaving out any stakeholders in the measurement alters the results.<sup>83</sup> Since different stakeholders have different opinions of what constitutes a good reputation for a particular

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<sup>79</sup> Guido Berens and Cees B. M. van Riel, "Corporate Associations in the Academic Literature: Three Main Streams of Thought in the Reputation Measurement Literature," *Corporate Reputation Review* 7, no. 2 (2004): 169-171.

<sup>80</sup> Berens and van Riel, "Corporate Associations in the Academic Literature," 172.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>83</sup> Helm, "Designing a Formative Measure for Corporate Reputation," 99.

organization, the organization must determine which stakeholders' views are the most important. In the private sector, the two stakeholders whose opinions matter most are usually the employees and the customers.<sup>84</sup>

Tracking the various perceptions of different stakeholder groups can be difficult and time-consuming. However, technology offers many solutions, such as tracking the number of sites that pick up an organization's press releases and the stories that ensue.<sup>85</sup> Polling stakeholders can also be beneficial, although polls might produce the perceived desired response rather than the truth. Looking at the company's bottom line (sales) should also be a part of the measurement process.<sup>86</sup> This latter method could be deceiving, however. For instance, Ryanair has been named "the world's least favorite airline" due to its unfriendly staff, delays, and limited legroom. Yet the company continues to turn huge profits and is viewed as a financial success. In this example, though, the airline's reputation for low prices is the driving force behind its success.<sup>87</sup>

#### **D. HOW DO ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AFFECT REPUTATION?**

*A man is known by the company he keeps.*

-Euripides, *Temenidae*, Fragment 809.

Since this thesis is exploring how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its agencies should manage their reputations, it is important to understand how one organization's reputation can affect another. The literature is scarce on this concept of "reputation spillover," but its presence in at least some of the most recent literature suggests that it is becoming an issue that should be examined and considered when looking at the reputation of an organization with distinct, well-known components. Besides DHS, another example in the public sector would be the Department of Defense,

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<sup>84</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 31.

<sup>85</sup> Andrea Coville and Ray Thomas, "New Media," in *Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication*, by John Doorley and Helio Fred Garcia (New York: Routledge, 2007), 115.

<sup>86</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 14.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

with its three core branches (Army, Navy/Marine Corps, and Air Force). In the private sector, an example is Ford Motor Company, which is the umbrella corporation that currently comprises Lincoln, Mercury, Volvo, and Mazda.

The literature warns “A change in an organization’s reputation has consequences and implications that may go beyond that organization’s boundaries.”<sup>88</sup> An organization’s reputation and its performance can be affected by the reputation of surrounding organizations, and it must learn how to manage this reputational interdependence.<sup>89</sup> To determine the level of impact that one organization can have on another, the available literature suggests that proximity and structural equivalence will be the determining factors.<sup>90</sup> Proximity is determined by the degree and frequency of contact and communication between two organizations. Structural equivalence is determined by shared core attributes, such as mission, authority, technology, and marketing.<sup>91</sup> For example, all organizations in the same industry can be impacted by the reputation of just one of their fellow organizations. An Amoco executive once remarked, “We are still an oil company, and we still have to live with the sins of our brothers. We were doing fine until Exxon spilled all that oil. Then we were painted with the same brush as them.”<sup>92</sup>

Social network theory helps to show how reputation can travel across the links between organizations. The literature posits that reputation spillover occurs more when an organization has high network centrality. When a reputational crisis emerges in a highly central organization, the stakeholders cannot distinguish the central organization from those closest to it or most similar to it and form their opinion based upon stereotyped perceptions of the central organization.<sup>93</sup> Crises often involve ambiguity,

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<sup>88</sup> Tieying Yu and Richard H. Lester, “Moving Beyond Firm Boundaries: A Social Network Perspective on Reputation Spillover,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 11, no. 1 (2008): 94.

<sup>89</sup> Michael L. Barnett and Andrew J. Hoffman, “Beyond Corporate Reputation: Managing Reputational Interdependence,” *Corporate Reputation Review* 11, no. 1 (2008): 1.

<sup>90</sup> Yu and Lester, “Moving Beyond Firm Boundaries,” 95.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>92</sup> Barnett and Hoffman, “Beyond Corporate Reputation,” 1.

<sup>93</sup> Yu and Lester, “Moving Beyond Firm Boundaries,” 95.

and stakeholders' uncertainty about the crisis can prevent them from distinguishing one organization from any other organizations that are linked to it either through proximity or equivalence.<sup>94</sup> This reputational spillover is one of the many concerns that should be addressed by an organization when it is seeking to manage its reputation.

#### **E. HOW CAN REPUTATION BE MANAGED?**

*For the mob is varied and inconstant, and therefore if a reputation is not carefully preserved it dies quickly.*

- Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 58

According to psychologists, if a person is cognizant of his reputation, he will attempt to manage it.<sup>95</sup> The literature states that a business must also practice such “enlightened self-interest.” It must help its stakeholders, but it must also keep in mind that if it does not promote itself and its business, then it will not survive to help its stakeholders.<sup>96</sup> Although the concept of individual reputation dates back to biblical times, the discipline of reputation management is a relatively new one on the corporate landscape.<sup>97</sup> As with the preceding discussions in this section of the thesis, the literature on the concept of reputation management comes primarily from the private sector. Books, scholarly articles, surveys, and editorials abound on the topic of reputation management. The literature overwhelmingly agrees that an organization does not have the luxury of leaving its reputation to chance because heightened visibility allows stakeholders the ability to scrutinize every move a company makes.<sup>98</sup>

Reputation management is a way to change an organization's reputation by changing its actions and the communication of those actions.<sup>99</sup> Reputation management provides tangible, quantifiable rewards, not just “soft, feel-good” outcomes. Likewise, actions that damage an organization's reputation can cause a spectrum of negative

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<sup>94</sup> Yu and Lester, “Moving Beyond Firm Boundaries,” 98.

<sup>95</sup> Emler and Hopkins, “Reputation, Social Identity and the Self,” 128.

<sup>96</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>98</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 18.

<sup>99</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 12.

consequences, from “soft” embarrassment to the death of the organization.<sup>100</sup> The literature stresses that the technology of the digital age poses the greatest threat to a company’s reputation. Therefore, information must be properly managed by the organization and disseminated to its key audiences.<sup>101</sup> The internet gives anyone access to previously privileged information and is a driving force behind public opinion.<sup>102</sup>

Because of the easy accessibility of information, people have very high expectations of what information an organization shares with them.<sup>103</sup> It is estimated that the average U.S. citizen receives between 5,000 and 10,000 pieces of information daily. Technology has enabled the media to operate on a 24/7 basis, creating a major challenge to a company’s reputation. These 24/7 news outlets scrutinize a story or incident at a far deeper level than an hourly news program on a network in order to fill up 24 hours with information.<sup>104</sup> This means that organizations stay under the microscope longer.

In addition, these news channels rush to get breaking news on the air before all the facts have come in and have been analyzed. Citizen journalism is also a challenge, since eye-witness accounts of an incident are just a text- or picture- message away from being broadcast on news channels while the incident is taking place. Newspapers now generally have online editions as well, which require their journalists to be finding stories on a 24/7 basis. Freelance journalists are the trend at newspapers, which puts additional pressure on the reporter to find a sensational story in order to get paid and offered more work.<sup>105</sup>

Although recent polls suggest that the media is less trusted than governments and businesses in most countries, the literature argues that polls are misleading and that most people do not conduct additional research on their own to confirm or disconfirm a media

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<sup>100</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, ix.

<sup>101</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 28.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>103</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 35.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

story. Therefore, their perception of an incident is often what they have been told by the media. The literature stresses that understanding the media is “fundamental to managing reputation.”<sup>106</sup>

The review of the literature so far has shown that reputation matters to an organization because it gives it a competitive advantage that attracts investors, customers, and employees.<sup>107</sup> An organization’s reputation can be threatened by the advancement and prevalence of new technologies and by the aggressiveness of the media to lead with a story that “bleeds.” Therefore, reputation management is necessary for an organization to survive and be successful. But who is responsible for reputation management? Since not all organizations seem to understand what reputation management really is, they may not understand who should be responsible for it. One senior communications professional who participated in a study on reputation stated, “I don’t like the term reputation management, and I try to avoid it. It implies that it is in the hands of the few, whereas, of course, it is in everyone’s hands.”<sup>108</sup> Although every member has an impact on the organization’s reputation, the majority of the literature agrees that specific entities within an organization should be the driving forces behind reputation management.

Some experts state that senior management is responsible for reputation management and that the employees are responsible for implementing it because they have the most to lose or gain from their organization’s reputation.<sup>109</sup> Fombrun states that a strong executive role is key in managing reputation.<sup>110</sup> The previously-mentioned Weber Shandwick survey on corporate reputation agrees: Sixty percent of business executives blame the CEO for damage to a company’s reputation.<sup>111</sup> In addition to the key role the executive has, most experts on reputation management are of the opinion that

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<sup>106</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 42-43.

<sup>107</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 20.

<sup>108</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 19.

<sup>109</sup> Dowling, *Creating Corporate Reputations*, viii.

<sup>110</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 12.

<sup>111</sup> Weber Shandwick, “Safeguarding Reputation,” Weber Shandwick Website, <http://164.109.94.76/Default.aspx/Insights/ThoughtLeadership/ResearchInitiatives/SafeguardingReputationSurvey> (accessed September 2007).

the public affairs/relations office of an organization is the primary manager of its reputation.<sup>112</sup> The management of communication between an organization and its stakeholders is a responsibility of public relations, and this centralized management of communication is a “critical contributor” to the reputation of an organization.<sup>113</sup> Since reputation should be measured, monitored, and managed, a long-term strategy to manage reputation must be adopted by the communications department of the organization. The strategy must be tailored to each of the organization’s constituencies and must be “in synch” with the organization’s intrinsic identity. Public relations, especially corporate communications, are able to significantly impact reputation.<sup>114</sup> The organization must make a sound assessment of its objectives and how its activities are meeting those objectives. The organization must know itself internally before it can manage its external reputation.<sup>115</sup> This internal aspect to reputation management has led some experts to add in an organization’s human resources department as one of the key players in reputation management.<sup>116</sup>

Reputation management has four primary elements that lend themselves to be the responsibility of both senior management and public affairs offices. These elements of reputation management that emerge from the literature are communication, crisis management, issues management, and corporate social responsibility.

## **1. Communication**

Recent literature on this topic discusses reputation as “narrative”—the stories that are told about an individual or corporation. These stories give value to or detract value from their subjects.<sup>117</sup> Communication, the first element of reputation management, is the method whereby these stories travel throughout networks. Expressive communication, which seeks to represent the organization’s identity rather than create

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<sup>112</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 7.

<sup>113</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, ix.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>115</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 9.

<sup>116</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 9.

<sup>117</sup> Aula and Mantere, 182.

favorable impressions, is the key to transparency.<sup>118</sup> Organizations need to take proactive steps in issues that are important to consumers and build their trust. “Clear and consistent communication” is absolutely necessary for successful reputation management.<sup>119</sup>

Unfortunately, organizations often misunderstand the role that communication plays in reputation management. It is not meant to make poor performance or behavior seem better. If the organization’s performance and behavior are lacking, there is nothing the communication department can do about it. Performance, behavior, and communication must be aligned. For example, Enron’s CEO Kenneth Lay told his public relations officer, “The reason we can’t right the ship is we’re not doing a good job dealing with the press.” Lay blamed communication, rather than performance and behavior, as the reason for Enron’s failings, which is obviously not the case. Enron had a performance/behavior problem, not a press problem.<sup>120</sup> Communication is a critical factor in reputation management, but “in the contest between the steak and the sizzle, steak will, inevitably prove more important.”<sup>121</sup>

Not only should an organization communicate with its stakeholders, but it should be consistent in its message and in its actions; it should be the central figure disseminating information about itself. If not, the information vacuum will be filled by other sources via the internet, which is likely to help spread inaccurate information.<sup>122</sup> Misinformation about the organization must be corrected.<sup>123</sup> In addition, communication is an important ingredient in the second element of reputation management—crisis management.

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<sup>118</sup> Fombrun and Rindova, “The Road to Transparency,” 94.

<sup>119</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 45-46.

<sup>120</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 11.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>122</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 46-47.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

## 2. Crisis Management

At some point in its existence, every organization will go through some sort of a crisis or event that could have damaging effects on its reputation. An effective response to a crisis can actually enhance an organization's reputation.<sup>124</sup> For instance, Johnson & Johnson is one of the most reputable companies in the world, and its reaction to the Tylenol cyanide poisonings in the 1980s is hailed by much of the literature on reputation management as a perfect example of how to manage a crisis. When the crisis occurred, Johnson & Johnson took these four immediate steps that helped save and cement its excellent reputation.

- Recalled all outstanding Tylenol inventory
- Established hotlines for the public
- Initiated an advertising campaign
- Offered rewards for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator<sup>125</sup>

Conversely, a poor response to a crisis will severely damage an organization's reputation. For example, after the 11-million-gallon spill of crude oil off the shores of Valdez, Alaska in 1989, Exxon's stock plummeted, and the company was rebuked for the following crisis management failures.

- No quick or decisive action (analysis over action)
- Lack of believable concern for the victims
- Refusal to accept responsibility
- Poor communication with the media (avoided visibility and publicity)
- Centralized decision-making, which prevented local responsiveness<sup>126</sup>

Although the literature discusses crisis management almost exclusively from the perspective of the private sector, it does reference one public sector agency as an example of how a crisis should *not* be managed. The delayed and seemingly indifferent response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to Hurricane Katrina led to

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<sup>124</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 326.

<sup>125</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 29.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

record lows in President Bush's approval ratings, to the resignation of FEMA's administrator Michael Brown, and to a severely tarnished reputation for the agency.<sup>127</sup>

The public and media love to "wallow" in a good crisis, but a crisis can actually be managed effectively for a few reasons. First, managing a crisis usually involves implementing advanced preparation. Everyone has a job to do and should have been prepared in advance to do it. Even if the response is not as seamless as the preparation, another reason crises can be managed effectively is that the public is on the organization's side initially. For example, at the outset of a plane crash, the public will generally rally around and cheer for all those involved in responding to the crisis, including the airline company.<sup>128</sup> It is crucial for the organization involved to use this initial supportive period to its advantage by properly communicating with its stakeholders.

The literature stresses that communication in crisis management is about substance, not spin. It should communicate actions, not just words. The organization's spokesperson should communicate what the organization is doing to help those impacted by the incident and what the organization will do to make sure a similar incident does not occur in the future. Communication specialists agree that an organization must let people know what it is doing *as it is doing it*.<sup>129</sup> The literature on this element of reputation management suggests some variation of the following strategy to manage a crisis effectively, which will help preserve the organization's reputation.

- All information that will eventually be known should be given at once, rather than trickled out; however, the organization should only reveal what is legal and prudent to say at the time.
- The organization should be the first to reveal the news to the public.

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<sup>127</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 327-328.

<sup>128</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 81.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

- As soon as possible in the crisis, the organization must reveal the steps, or at least the general plan, that it is pursuing to address the crisis.
- For those not involved in the crisis or communication, normal duties should be resumed, even while the crisis is ongoing.<sup>130</sup>

### **3. Issues Management**

As a corporate activity, the literature states that issues management is central to reputation management, although organizations have had a tendency to set it aside to focus on the urgency of crisis management.<sup>131</sup> The lesser role that organizations give this element of reputation management is a mistake because both a crisis and an issue can have devastating effects on an organization's reputation. The main difference between the two is space and time to work on the problem. For example, a building on fire would be a crisis, and a building contaminated with asbestos would be an issue. Obviously there is more of a sense of urgency around the burning building, yet both fire and asbestos are dangerous, serious, threats to public safety, as well as to the building owner's reputation. It is important to remember that issues (chronic risks) can quickly become crises (acute risks).<sup>132</sup> For those organizations who have embraced issues management as part of their overall reputation management strategy, these three activities should be practiced.

- Environmental scanning (looking for "weak signals" on the radar that could indicate a chronic problem)
- Issue interpretation (monitoring issues that have already been detected to see if they become larger, more pressing matters)
- Issue response pattern (addressing the most urgent of the identified issues)<sup>133</sup>

### **4. Corporate Social Responsibility**

The fourth element of reputation management is corporate social responsibility (CSR). This element relates specifically to the "social, philanthropic and community

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<sup>130</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 336-337.

<sup>131</sup> Steven L. Wartick and Pursey P.M.A.R. Heugens, "Future Directions for Issues Management," *Corporate Reputation Review* 6, no. 1 (2003): 7.

<sup>132</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 111-112.

<sup>133</sup> Wartick and Heugens, "Future Directions for Issues Management," 9.

focused responsibilities of business.”<sup>134</sup> Organizations are held responsible for taking care of their employees, the community, social issues, and the environment. They should be good “corporate citizens.”<sup>135</sup> The literature largely agrees that CSR should be an element of reputation management; however, the level of impact that CSR has on reputation is debated. Some leading thinkers in the field of reputation management see CSR as necessary but posit that it is a “lose-lose” scenario. For instance, if a company is not socially responsible, it is viewed in a negative light, but if it does engage in CSR, it is perceived as trying to cover up its flaws.<sup>136</sup> However, the majority of experts in the field of reputation management believe that a corporation’s reputation is greatly enhanced when it pursues human rights and environmental initiatives. Such activity and the enhanced reputation that comes along with it can positively impact productivity, employee morale, shareholder value, and revenue.<sup>137</sup> The consensus of the literature is that an organization must do *good* and do *well* in order to manage its reputation effectively.<sup>138</sup>

Although the literature stresses these four elements of reputation management (communication, crisis management, issues management, and corporate social responsibility), it does acknowledge a few potential dangers in such activity. First, organizations that are strongly committed to managing their reputations might overreact to what they perceive to be negative cues from their stakeholders. These overreactions might actually damage the organization because stakeholders might begin to believe something truly is wrong with the organization to cause it to react so strongly. To

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<sup>134</sup> Carola Hillenbrand and Kevin Money, “Corporate Responsibility and Corporate Reputation: Two Separate Concepts or Two Sides of the Same Coin?” *Corporate Reputation Review* 10, no. 4 (2007): 265.

<sup>135</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 138.

<sup>136</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 141.

<sup>137</sup> Lynn Appelbaum and Gail S. Belmuth, “Global Corporate Communication,” in *Reputation Management: The Key to Successful Public Relations and Corporate Communication*, by John Doorley and Helio Fred Garcia (New York: Routledge, 2007), 259.

<sup>138</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 156.

counter this potential weakness of reputation management, the organization must have an accurate perception of its reputation to gauge properly the level of reputation management that is needed.<sup>139</sup>

Another caution regarding reputation management is that people tend to automatically assume that it is “spin” or “just PR.”<sup>140</sup> Although they are in the minority, a few critics are against public relations of any form. They believe the practice is unethical because they claim it mixes truth in with lies and spins the truth. Some of these critics even oppose press releases, labeling them “sinister” or “misleading.” However, it should be noted that corporations are required by law and regulation to publicly announce certain activities.<sup>141</sup>

Despite the few critics of public relations in general and reputation management in particular, there is a wealth of literature that supports proactive reputation management at the organizational level. Having an actual reputation management strategy significantly impacts how the organization communicates with and listens to its stakeholders.<sup>142</sup> The literature offers several variations of a reputation management strategy. For example, Gerry Griffin suggests these ten steps for reputation management.

- Review business objectives
- Assess corporate culture
- Review business actions
- Set communication objectives
- Assess current communication activities
- Assess the mindset and behavior of key audiences involved
- Develop key messages
- Select the best delivery options

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<sup>139</sup> Dukerich and Carter, “Distorted Images and Reputation Repair,” 109.

<sup>140</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 30.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>142</sup> Fombrun and Rindova, “The Road to Transparency,” 87.

- Align messages with delivery options
- Develop a tactical plan<sup>143</sup>

Fombrun and Rindova recommend three steps.

- Assess the current state of the company's reputation and that of its rivals
- Analyze the desired future state of the company's reputation
- Articulate the projections that can move it from one configuration to the other<sup>144</sup>

Doorley and Garcia state that their strategy helps move the reputation of the organization closer to its intrinsic identity. Their strategic plan includes the following.

- A summary of internal and external audits
- Measures of reputational capital
- A statement of the reputation challenges and potential problem areas by company or unit
- The respective goals and opportunities
- Corporate or organizational message strategies<sup>145</sup>

Although recent literature provides several acceptable strategies for reputation management, one strategy has stood the test of modern time and is a bedrock in the public relations community. When Arthur Page became the vice-president of AT&T in 1927, he made public relations one of the priorities of the company and stated that the company's performance would be a result of its reputation. He stated, "All business in a democratic country begins with public permission and exists by public approval. If that be true, it follows that business should be cheerfully willing to tell the public what its policies are, what it is doing and what it happens to do. This seems practically a duty."<sup>146</sup> Although the concept of reputation management did not exist in Arthur Page's day, his belief that reputation was the key contributor to an organization's performance prompted him to create the following seven principles that can still be used today in any reputation management strategy.

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<sup>143</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 103.

<sup>144</sup> Fombrun and Rindova, "The Road to Transparency," 81.

<sup>145</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 11.

<sup>146</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 22.

- Tell the truth
- Prove it with action
- Listen to the customers
- Manage for tomorrow
- Conduct public relations as if the whole company depends on it
- Realize a company's true character is expressed by its people
- Remain calm, patient and good-humored<sup>147</sup>

This review has sought to give the reader an understanding of reputation management based upon the literature. Overall, it has looked at reputation through the lens of the research questions that this thesis seeks to answer. In the next chapters, the reader will see how the literature on this topic has been applied to the design of this study of reputation and reputation management in DHS and its agencies.

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<sup>147</sup> Arthur Page Society, "About the Society," [www.awpagesociety.com/site/about/](http://www.awpagesociety.com/site/about/) (accessed September 2008).

### III. METHOD

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the concept of reputation from the perspective of a public sector organization, namely the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and to ultimately provide recommendations for how DHS and its components can better manage their reputations. This thesis employs a two-part qualitative and quantitative methodology designed to answer the research questions regarding the value, measurement, and management of reputation for DHS and its components, as well as the relationship between the reputation of DHS and that of its components. A review of the literature shows that the public affairs office of an organization is generally regarded as the manager of that organization's reputation.<sup>148</sup> Therefore, this study included a preliminary interview with a senior-level spokesperson at the Office of Public Affairs within DHS and a Delphi survey involving a panel of public affairs experts who work for DHS or one of its components. Considering the sensitivity surrounding *image*, *perception*, and *reputation* in the public sector, most all of the participants in this research preferred to be anonymous; therefore, the identities of participating organizations will be named, but the specific individuals who participated will not be identified.

#### A. PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

After an initial review of the literature, the next phase of the research involved a preliminary interview to gain background information regarding the role that reputation has for DHS. A senior level spokesperson within DHS's Office of Public Affairs was chosen as the subject of the interview because the literature states that the communications component of public relations plays the key role in reputation management.<sup>149</sup> The interview took place at DHS's Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and lasted one hour. It was recorded on a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed in full. Based upon the preliminary interview, as well as the literature, questions were crafted for the next phase of the research: the Delphi survey.

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<sup>148</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 7.

<sup>149</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, ix.

## B. DELPHI SURVEY

Considering the intangibility of reputation and the lack of knowledge about it from a public sector perspective, a Delphi survey was chosen as the primary research methodology for this thesis. The Delphi method was developed by The RAND Corporation over 50 years ago as a means to achieve a consensus among experts, and it is used in situations “where judgmental information is indispensable.”<sup>150</sup> The first main attribute of this method is anonymity. Not only are the participants kept anonymous from readers of this thesis, but they are also kept anonymous from each other. Keeping the respondents anonymous helps prevent a dominant expert’s opinion from swaying the opinion of the other experts involved.<sup>151</sup> The second attribute of this method is controlled feedback. The feedback is controlled through two to three rounds of questioning (more if necessary). Responses to the first round are used to craft the questions for the second round. If a third round is needed, the responses from the second round form the basis of the next round of questioning.<sup>152</sup> The third attribute of the Delphi method is group response, which allows the opinion of each respondent to be taken into account in each round of questioning.<sup>153</sup> The final results from the responses are then presented.<sup>154</sup>

The first step in conducting a Delphi survey for this thesis was the selection of participants. This step was critical, considering it is the opinions of these participants that would provide the data regarding recommendations for how DHS and its components should manage their reputations. Public affairs specialists in DHS and its components were chosen as the panel of experts who would participate in the survey. These specialists were identified through a public affairs directory created by one of the components and through recommendations by the DHS spokesperson who was

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<sup>150</sup> Chitu Okoli and Suzanne D. Pawlowski, “The Delphi Method as a Research Tool: An Example, Design Considerations and Applications,” *Information and Management* 42 (2004): 16.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>152</sup> Marvin A. Jolson and Gerald L. Rossow, “The Delphi Process in Marketing Decision Making,” *Journal of Marketing Research* 8, no. 4 (1971): 444.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Wolfgang Scholl, Christine Konig, Bertolt Meyer, and Peter Heisig, “The Future of Knowledge Management: An International Delphi Study,” *Journal of Knowledge Management* 8, no. 2 (2004): 20.

interviewed in the first stage of the research. Of the 16 major components of DHS,<sup>155</sup> public affairs specialists from the seven most publicly visible and well-known agencies were asked to participate: The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the United States Secret Service (USSS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), as well as experts within DHS itself. Before sending out the first round of questions, an email was sent to 50 identified specialists to gauge their interest in participating (see Appendix B). The email described the purpose of the thesis, the characteristics of a Delphi survey, and the estimated time required for participation. Of the 50 who received the initial email, 42 public affairs specialists agreed to participate (representing DHS, CBP, ICE, USCIS, FEMA, TSA, and USCG).

In August of 2008, the first round of the survey was sent to the 42 public affairs experts who agreed to participate. The survey was administered in a WORD attachment via email to ensure immediate delivery and receipt (see Appendices C and D). The respondents were asked to complete the first round in a two-week period. Of the 42 experts who received the first round, 21 actually completed and returned the survey, resulting in a 50% response rate. The majority of the 21 who responded completed their surveys in the given two-week period; a few requested an extension. A reminder email was sent to those who did not complete the survey by the original deadline. Although 42 experts had agreed to participate, it is believed that most of the 21 who did not return the survey were unable to do so because of competing, urgent demands in their jobs, especially considering the hurricane activity of August, in which some of the specialists were involved. In addition, the open-ended questions of round one perhaps required more time and deliberation than some were able to give. Also, two experts stated that after reviewing the questions of round one, they felt they did not have the necessary knowledge to answer the questions accurately.

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<sup>155</sup> Department of Homeland Security, "About the Department," <http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/structure/index.shtm> (accessed October 2008).

The first round consisted of six open-ended questions and two rating questions using a five-point Likert scale. Because some of the respondents represented components and others represented DHS, two versions of round one were created; the questions were the same on each with the exception of the use of “DHS” or “your agency,” depending upon where the respondent worked. The eight questions that were asked and the research question to which each corresponds can be seen in Table 1.

ROUND ONE QUESTION	RESEARCH QUESTION
1. In what ways does the reputation of DHS/your agency impact its effectiveness?	How does reputation affect the success of DHS and its components?
2. On a scale of 1-5, what kind of an impact does your agency’s reputation have on the reputation of DHS as a whole? (The scale ranged from “Strong Negative” to “No Impact” to “Strong Positive.”)  3. Give an example to illustrate how the reputation of your agency has impacted the reputation of DHS.  4. On a scale of 1-5, what kind of an impact does the reputation of DHS have on the reputation of your agency? (The scale ranged from “Strong Negative” to “No Impact” to “Strong Positive.”)  5. Give an example to illustrate how the reputation of DHS has impacted your agency’s reputation.	What is the relationship between DHS’s reputation and the reputation of the components?
6. (A) How does your agency monitor its reputation? (B) Do you have a formal measurement system in place? (C) If so, what do you assess and how do you measure?	How are the reputations of DHS and its components measured?
7. What are the challenges your agency faces in managing its reputation?  8. How could your agency manage its reputation more effectively?	What does DHS do to manage its reputation?  What do the components do to manage their reputations?  How should DHS and its components more effectively manage their reputations?

Table 1. Delphi Survey: Round one questions.

When the surveys were completed and returned, the responses to the open-ended questions were classified according to categories, key words, and frequency. The responses to the two rating questions will be discussed more in-depth in Chapter IV when the final results of the survey are presented. Since the responses to the open-ended

questions contained a broad spectrum of terms and word choice, the responses were categorized according to similarity. For example, a common response to question one was that the agency’s reputation impacted the level of “public trust” in that agency. A similar response to “public trust” was “public confidence.” The responses were categorized as similarly as possible without detracting from the idea each respondent attempted to convey; these responses are discussed in more detail in Chapter IV. Table 2 shows the categories and key words of responses to each of the six open-ended questions.

<p><b>1. Impact of Reputation</b></p> <p><u><b>On the Public</b></u>  <i>Public trust</i>  <i>Public support</i>  <i>Public cooperation</i></p> <p><u><b>On Enemies</b></u>  <i>Deterrence</i></p> <p><u><b>On Relationships</b></u>  <i>Local, state, federal partnerships</i>  <i>Information sharing</i></p> <p><u><b>On Congress</b></u>  <i>Funding</i>  <i>Support</i>  <i>Legislation</i>  <i>Inquiries</i></p> <p><u><b>On Employees</b></u>  <i>Recruitment</i>  <i>Retention</i>  <i>Morale</i></p> <p><u><b>Other</b></u>  <i>No impact</i>  <i>Does not know</i></p>	<p><b>6. Measuring Reputation</b></p> <p><u><b>Traditional Media</b></u>  <i>Monitor content of news media</i>  <i>Measure space in newspapers</i>  <i>Measure minutes of airtime</i></p> <p><u><b>New Media</b></u>  <i>Monitor internet content (blogs, websites, etc.)</i>  <i>Measure space on websites</i>  <i>Count hits on agency website</i></p> <p><u><b>Stakeholder Interaction/Outreach</b></u>  <i>Congressional</i>  <i>Media</i>  <i>Community</i>  <i>Partners</i>  <i>Employee surveys</i>  <i>Customer surveys</i>  <i>Customer service center</i></p> <p><u><b>Reports</b></u>  <i>Congressional</i></p> <p><u><b>Formal Measurements</b></u>  <i>None</i>  <i>Media-monitoring software</i>  <i>Email/letter analysis</i></p>
<p><b>3. Example of agency reputation affecting DHS reputation</b></p> <p><u><b>Positive Effects</b></u>  <i>Response to natural disasters</i>  <i>Saving lives</i>  <i>Protecting environment</i>  <i>Protecting U.S. from threats</i>  <i>Employee conduct</i>  <i>Public interaction</i>  <i>Humanitarian efforts</i>  <i>Use of technology</i></p> <p><u><b>Negative Effects</b></u>  <i>Poor response to natural disasters</i>  <i>Failure to detect some threats</i>  <i>Use of advanced technology</i>  <i>Carrying out controversial mission</i></p>	<p><b>5. Example of DHS reputation affecting agency reputation</b></p> <p><u><b>Positive Effects</b></u>  <i>Clear identity/mission</i>  <i>Preventing attacks</i></p> <p><u><b>Negative Effects</b></u>  <i>Employee problems</i>  <i>Cumbersome bureaucracy</i>  <i>Poor leadership</i>  <i>Failure to follow-through on plans/promises</i></p> <p><u><b>Other</b></u>  <i>Little/no impact</i>  <i>Does not know</i></p>

7. Challenges to Reputation Management	8. Managing Reputation More Effectively
<p><b><u>Media</u></b>  <i>Bad press</i>  <i>Inability to share sensitive/classified information</i></p> <p><b><u>Public</u></b>  <i>NGOs/advocacy groups</i>  <i>High visibility</i>  <i>Misconceptions</i>  <i>Unsatisfied customers</i>  <i>Transparency</i>  <i>Unclear roles of government agencies</i></p> <p><b><u>Performance</u></b>  <i>Perceived inconsistencies</i>  <i>Reactive, not proactive</i>  <i>Controversial policies/practices</i>  <i>Poor performance</i>  <i>Environmental issues</i></p> <p><b><u>Internal Issues</u></b>  <i>Mission/policy changes</i>  <i>Poor leadership</i>  <i>Employee behavior</i>  <i>Staffing shortages in PA offices</i></p> <p><b><u>Other</u></b>  <i>Congressional criticism</i></p>	<p><b><u>Media</u></b>  <i>Monitor traditional media more</i>  <i>Monitor “new” media more</i>  <i>Increase presence online</i>  <i>Correct online “conversations”</i>  <i>Refute inaccurate media messages</i>  <i>Work with various media in agency portrayal</i></p> <p><b><u>Public</u></b>  <i>Be more proactive</i>  <i>Share success stories</i>  <i>Increase transparency</i>  <i>Clear up public misconceptions</i>  <i>Interact with the public</i></p> <p><b><u>Performance</u></b>  <i>Improve agency performance</i>  <i>Demonstrate concern for environment</i>  <i>Present a more unified image</i></p> <p><b><u>Internal Issues</u></b>  <i>Hire more public affairs officers</i></p> <p><b><u>Stakeholders</u></b>  <i>Better communication</i>  <i>Stay on message</i>  <i>Get stakeholder input before implementation</i>  <i>Build stronger relationships</i></p> <p><b><u>Other</u></b>  <i>Streamline Congressional oversight</i>  <i>No improvement needed</i>  <i>Does not know</i></p>

Table 2. Response categories from Delphi round one.

The questions for round two were based upon these categories and keywords from round one. In September of 2008, the second questionnaire was sent to 37 public affairs specialists, including the same 21 experts who participated in the first round, as well as 16 others from the original group of 42 experts who stated they would participate. The remaining five experts from the initial group of 42 had indicated that they no longer wished to be involved. Again, the survey was sent via email, and the participants were given one week to respond (see Appendices E and F). Most responded within that timeframe; a few asked for an extension. A reminder email was sent to those who did not complete the survey by the original deadline. Of the 37 experts who received the second round, 25 completed and returned the survey, resulting in a 68% response rate.

The questions for round two also linked directly to the six overarching research questions that this thesis seeks to answer. A total of six main questions were asked in

round two, although the first five rating questions had several parts to each. For example, question one of round two builds on the first open-ended question of round one regarding the impact of reputation. Participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5 (no impact to high impact) nine specific ways in which reputation might have impact, all of which were derived from the responses in round one (see Table 3).

1. On a scale of 1-5, how great of an impact does your agency's reputation have on each of the following?	No Impact 1	2	Medium Impact 3	4	High Impact 5
Public trust in your agency					
Public support for your agency's mission					
Public cooperation with your agency's activities					
Deterring criminals and/or terrorists from carrying out their activities					
Relationships with other governmental agencies (local, state, and/or federal)					
Congressional funding/support for your agency					
Recruitment					
Employee morale					
Employee retention					

Table 3. Example question from Delphi round two.

The other four rating questions were formatted similarly to question one and are summarized in Table 4. Again, because some of the respondents represented components and others represented DHS, two versions of round two were created; the questions were the same on each with the exception of the use of “DHS” or “your agency,” depending upon where the respondent worked.

PRIMARY QUESTION	RATED SUB-QUESTIONS
<p>2. On a scale of 1-5, how frequently does your agency engage in the following activities to measure its reputation?</p> <p>1 = Never 3 = Occasionally 5 = Frequently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Manually monitors traditional media</li> <li>-Manually monitors “new” media (e.g. websites)</li> <li>-Uses software to monitor various forms of media</li> <li>-Monitors Congressional reports/feedback</li> <li>-Interacts with members of the media to gauge perceptions</li> <li>-Interacts with the community to gauge perceptions</li> <li>-Measures minutes of airtime coverage, space in newspapers, etc.</li> <li>-Administers employee surveys</li> <li>-Administers customer surveys</li> <li>-Tracks customer complaints</li> <li>-Uses a formal measurement system (e.g., Vocus)</li> </ul>
<p>3. On a scale of 1-5, rate the extent to which each of the following poses a challenge to effective reputation management for your agency.</p> <p>1 = No challenge 3 = Moderate challenge 5 = Significant challenge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Negative representation of your agency in traditional media</li> <li>-Negative representation of your agency in “new” media</li> <li>-Negative representation of your agency in television and films</li> <li>-Poor and/or inconsistent agency performance</li> <li>-Public misconceptions of your agency’s mission/activities</li> <li>-Public dissatisfaction with mission outcomes</li> <li>-Policy changes and/or controversial policies</li> <li>-Leadership problems</li> <li>-High public visibility</li> <li>-Congressional criticism</li> <li>-Poor employee behavior</li> <li>-Inability to reveal sensitive/classified information to the public</li> <li>-Staffing shortages in public affairs offices</li> <li>-Opposition from NGOs and/or advocacy groups</li> </ul>
<p>4. On a scale of 1-5, rate the extent to which your agency should do the following activities to manage its reputation more effectively.</p> <p>1 = Do less 3 = Status quo 5 = Do more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Monitor traditional media</li> <li>-Monitor “new” media</li> <li>-Refute inaccurate media messages</li> <li>-Correct online “conversations” (e.g., blogs)</li> <li>-Hire public affairs officers</li> <li>-Be proactive in its public affairs</li> <li>-Share success stories with the public</li> <li>-Work with different types of media to accurately portray agency</li> <li>-Improve agency performance</li> <li>-Demonstrate concern for the environment</li> <li>-Be transparent with the public</li> <li>-Stay on message (message repetition)</li> <li>-Communicate with stakeholders</li> <li>-Get stakeholder input before implementing new plan/program</li> </ul>
<p>5. On a scale of 1-5, to what extent do the following reputations need to be improved?</p> <p>1 = Not at all 3 = Moderately 5 = Significantly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The reputation of your agency</li> <li>-The reputation of DHS</li> </ul>

Table 4. Delphi Survey: Round two questions.

The sixth and final question of round two was an open-ended question asking the respondents if/how their agency works with DHS in managing both the reputation of

DHS and the reputation of their agency; the responses to this question are discussed in Chapter IV. Delphi surveys typically consist of two to three rounds of questioning. Because the responses to the two rounds of the survey yielded sufficient data to answer the thesis's research questions, a third round was not necessary.<sup>156</sup> A detailed presentation of the results of both rounds is presented in the next chapter and analyzed according to the frequency of responses from round one and the means and standard deviation of the responses from round two.

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<sup>156</sup> Okoli and Pawlowski, "The Delphi Method," 19.

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## IV. SURVEY RESULTS

This thesis examines how reputation impacts the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its components, the relationship between DHS's reputation and that of its components, how these reputations are measured, how they are currently managed, and how they can be managed more effectively. To answer these research questions, a two-round Delphi survey was conducted involving public affairs specialists from DHS and six of its most publicly visible component agencies—U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Twenty-one public affairs specialists participated in round one, which asked six open-ended questions and two rating questions. The panelists' responses to the open-ended questions of round one formed the basis of the more focused ratings-based questions in round two. Twenty-five public affairs specialists (19 of which participated in the first round) participated in the second round, which asked five rating questions and one open-ended question.

Since the panelists' short answer/essay-type responses from the first round's open-ended questions formed the basis of the second round's rating questions, the results of each open-ended question from round one are presented in conjunction with the corresponding responses from round two. In addition, the responses to the two rating questions from round one are presented separately, as are the results of the one open-ended question from round two.

### **A. IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR AGENCY'S REPUTATION IMPACT ITS EFFECTIVENESS?**

The participants' responses to this open-ended question in round one yielded nine ways in which reputation affects DHS and its components. In round two, the participants rated the impact of reputation on the nine areas on a scale of 1 to 5 ("no impact" to "high impact"). The results show that over 50% of the respondents believe that their agency's

reputation has a somewhat high or high impact in all nine areas. Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation for each of the nine ways in which reputation impacts DHS and its components, according to the survey participants. All but one of the nine areas of impact averaged 4 or higher on a five-point Likert scale, demonstrating how great of an impact reputation has in each of these ways.

<b>Areas Impacted by Reputation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Public trust in agency	4.7	0.6
Public support for agency's mission	4.4	0.8
Congressional funding for agency	4.4	0.9
Relationships with other agencies	4.2	0.9
Employee morale	4.1	0.8
Recruitment	4.0	0.9
Employee retention	4.0	0.9
Public cooperation with agency's activities	4.0	1.2
Deter criminals/terrorists	3.7	1.3
<i>Note: Means based on a scale of 1 (no impact) to 5 (high impact)</i>		

Table 5. Results for question one: Areas impacted by reputation.

According to the results of both rounds of the survey, an agency's reputation impacts its effectiveness most strongly in the area of public trust in the agency. This response occurred with the most frequency in round one (mentioned by 52% of the experts) and was rated highly by 96% of the experts in round two. One respondent stated, "The trust and credibility (or lack thereof) held by populations affected by disasters for emergency response organizations has a direct influence on whether or not such populations respond appropriately to guidance, directives and advice." Another respondent remarked, "If our agency has a bad reputation, community residents are far less likely to trust us and/or contact us when they see suspicious activity."

The second highest impact of reputation was on public support for the agency's mission. This was cited by 33% of the experts in round one and 88% of the experts in round two as being highly impacted by the agency's reputation. The third most cited area of impact in round one should come as no surprise to the business world, which strongly believes that reputation impacts a company's bottom line.<sup>157</sup> Thirty-three percent of the

<sup>157</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 44-45.

experts remarked in the first round that their agency's reputation affects the amount of funding it receives from Congress. In the second round, 84% of the experts agreed that reputation has a somewhat high to high impact on how much Congressional funding their agency receives. One respondent observed that an agency's reputation "feeds into the way that members of Congress view us which leads to financial support for the agency's operations." Eighty-four percent of the participants also responded that reputation has a somewhat high to high impact on their agency's working relationships with other governmental agencies at the local, state, and/or federal level. One respondent remarked that reputation "factors into the compatibility, or working relationships an agency has with strategic partners in the field, i.e., joint operations, task forces, information sharing, etc."

The results of the survey also agreed with the prevailing literature on reputation, which states that the reputation of an organization also matters significantly to current and prospective employees. Seventy-six percent of the panelists stated that reputation highly impacts recruitment, and 72% agreed that reputation has a somewhat high to high impact on employee morale. One panelist stated that a good agency reputation impacts its effectiveness because it helps "employees know that their work is validated, appreciated, and needed." Seventy-two percent also agreed that reputation highly impacts the level of public cooperation with the agency's activities. Sixty-four percent responded that reputation has a somewhat high to high impact on employee retention. Reputation also has a significant impact on deterring criminals or terrorists, according to 56% of the respondents. Figure 1 shows how each response from round one was rated in round two.

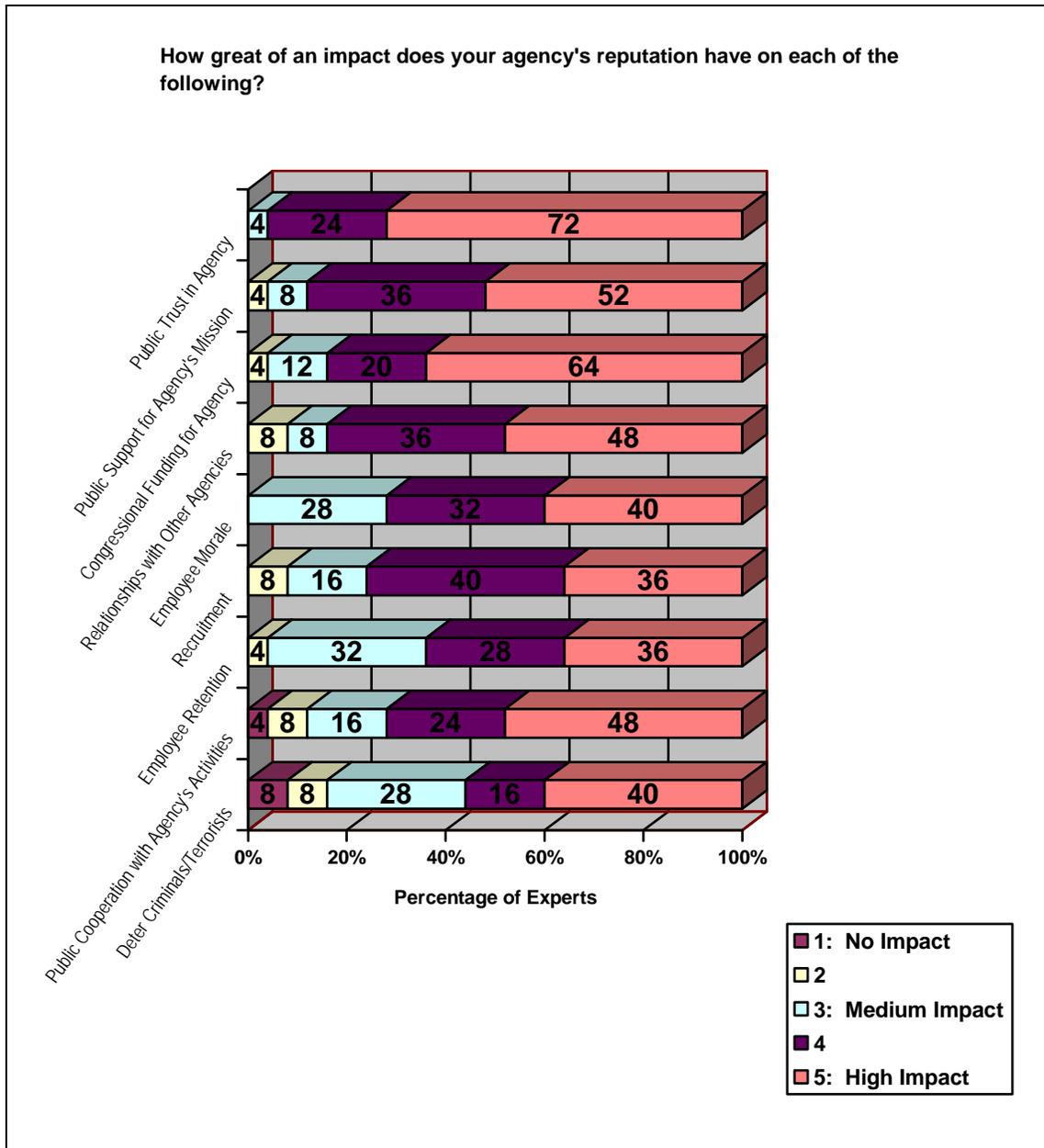


Figure 1. Impact of reputation by percentage.

**B. WHAT KIND OF IMPACT DOES YOUR AGENCY'S REPUTATION HAVE ON THE REPUTATION OF DHS AS A WHOLE?**

This question was one of two rating questions asked in round one and does not have a corresponding question in round two. As can be seen in Table 6, 76% of the 21 experts who participated in round one believe that their agency's reputation has a positive or strong positive impact on DHS's reputation. Ten percent see a negative impact, but no

one responded that his/her agency’s reputation has a strong negative impact on the reputation of DHS. Only one panelist responded that his/her agency’s reputation has no impact on the reputation of DHS. It is also interesting to note that two panelists chose not to answer this question.

<b>Impact of Agency on DHS</b>	<b>Percentage of Experts</b>
5: Strong positive	24%
4	52%
3: No impact	5%
2:	10%
1: Strong negative	0%
No response	10%

Table 6. Impact of agency reputation on DHS.

**C. GIVE AN EXAMPLE TO ILLUSTRATE HOW THE REPUTATION OF YOUR AGENCY HAS IMPACTED THE REPUTATION OF DHS.**

This question was posed as a follow-up to question two to show by example how a particular agency’s reputation has affected the reputation of DHS (positively or negatively). Since the responses to this question were specific to the agency for which the respondent works, it was not reasonable to craft a rating question for round two from this open-ended question. For example, respondents from FEMA and the USCG generally cited their agency’s reputation from Hurricane Katrina as having a direct effect on the reputation of the Department (positively and negatively). Respondents from the USCG commented on their agency’s concern for the environment and humanitarian efforts that often gain public approval. USCG panelists also agreed that their agency’s strong leadership throws a positive light on the Department. One respondent from ICE mentioned the agency’s reputation for the treatment of alien detainees as having a negative impact on DHS, but its illegal worker raids on plants have been received positively by some audiences. Most of the TSA respondents referenced TSA’s reaction to the London airline bombing plot of 2006 as having had a positive impact on the reputation of DHS. A respondent from CBP stated that CBP’s failure to intercept border crossers with dangerous strains of tuberculosis has negatively affected DHS’s reputation. Another panelist from CBP commented that his/her agency’s success stories are often

highlighted on DHS’s website and make both the agency and the Department look good. Respondents from different components stated that their agency’s use of advanced technology makes both the agency and the Department look impressive.

**D. WHAT KIND OF AN IMPACT DOES THE REPUTATION OF DHS HAVE ON THE REPUTATION OF YOUR AGENCY?**

As with question two, this rating question from round one does not have a counter-part in round two. The responses to this question are especially interesting in comparison to the responses to question two and shed some light on the research question “What is the relationship between DHS’s reputation and the reputation of the components?” Although 76% of the respondents stated that their agency’s reputation has a positive or strong positive impact on the reputation of DHS, the reciprocal relationship is not as positive (see Table 7). Only 48% of the respondents believe that DHS’s reputation has a positive or strong positive impact on the reputations of its components. Some respondents believe that DHS’s reputation has “no impact” on their agency, and 20% feel that DHS’s reputation has a negative or strong negative impact on their agency’s reputation. Two panelists did not respond to this question.

<b>Impact of DHS on Agency</b>	<b>Percentage of Experts</b>
5: Strong positive	10%
4	38%
3: No impact	24%
2:	10%
1: Strong negative	10%
No response	10%

Table 7. Impact of DHS reputation on agencies.

**E. GIVE AN EXAMPLE TO ILLUSTRATE HOW THE REPUTATION OF DHS HAS IMPACTED YOUR AGENCY’S REPUTATION.**

Like question three, this question was asked to generate examples of the relationship between DHS’s reputation and that of its components. Several respondents stated that DHS’s reputation as a cumbersome bureaucracy has had a negative impact on their agency’s reputation. One participant specifically noted, “DHS’s perceived

reputation of being just another government bureaucracy incapable of effectively discharging its duties for which it was created impacts the daily performance of officers with [my agency] because we spend an inordinate amount of time and effort attempting to correct and dispel this image... .” Another remarked, “DHS is seen as a larger, impersonal, bureaucratic organization that exists in a far off place and sometimes tries to dictate what is best for the local community.”

Others claim that being under the umbrella of DHS has clarified their agency’s security role, which has had a positive effect on their reputation. One respondent disagreed and stated that his/her agency’s presence in DHS confuses the public as to DHS’s role, which has had a negative effect on the agency’s reputation. Several respondents made an interesting observation regarding relationship: The poor reputations of certain agencies within DHS tarnish the reputation of the Department as a whole, which then trickles back down and negatively impacts the reputations of other agencies in DHS. Leadership mistakes within DHS were also a commonly cited negative impact. One respondent remarked that DHS leadership has issued poorly-received instructions during incidents and that the components can “only look as smart as our leadership.” Another panelist stated that Congress has “voiced negative views regarding the leadership of DHS and their ability to follow-through on the direction that Congress has given them. This negative reputation that DHS has with Congress has carried over to [my agency].”

### **1. How Does Your Agency Monitor Its Reputation?**

The sixth question of round one asked three separate but related sub-questions aimed at determining how an agency knows what kind of reputation it has. Based upon the experts’ responses in round one, 11 different activities for monitoring reputation emerged. When the respondents rated how often their agency engages in these 11 activities in round two from “Never” to “Frequently,” seven activities received a mean rating of 4 or higher on a 5-point scale. Three of the activities had a mean rating between

3 and 4, and only one received an average score under 3, as can be seen on Table 8. These results suggest that DHS and its components actively engage in monitoring and measuring their reputations.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Manually monitors traditional media	4.8	0.7
Monitors Congressional reports/feedback	4.7	0.7
Interacts with members of the media to gauge perceptions	4.5	0.9
Manually monitors “new” media (e.g., websites and blogs)	4.2	1.0
Interacts with the community to gauge perceptions	4.0	1.1
Tracks customer complaints	4.0	1.2
Uses software to monitor various forms of media	4.0	1.3
Measures minutes of airtime coverage, space in newspapers, and/or online, hits on website, etc.	3.7	1.3
Uses a formal measurement system (e.g., Vocus or Factiva)	3.3	1.7
Administers employee surveys	3.1	1.3
Administers customer surveys	2.9	1.3
<i>Note: Means based on a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (frequently)</i>		

Table 8. Activities for measuring reputation.

In response to the first part of question six, 33% of the panelists in round one stated that the primary way in which their agency monitors its reputation is through manual monitoring of traditional media, such as newspaper articles and news programs. One expert remarked, “Our full time Public Affairs office scours articles every day. When positive articles appear, we look at those as a sign of success. If they are mediocre or negative, we ask ourselves how we could improve changing that perception.” Another expert stated that his/her agency has personnel who monitor the news on a 24/7 basis. In the second round, 96% of the panelists responded that their agency often engages in this activity. As can be seen in Table 8, the mean response in round two for this activity was high and the standard deviation low, showing that the experts largely agreed that monitoring traditional media is the primary way in which an agency determines the state of its reputation.

The second most important activity is monitoring Congressional reports and/or feedback. Although only 24% of the panelists in round one remarked that their agency engages in this activity, 88% of the panelists in round two claimed that their agency does

this at least somewhat frequently (frequency distributions are presented in Figure 2). One of the panelists stated that the purpose of monitoring the media and Congressional reports is “to determine the level of public confidence in the agency’s ability to carry out its mission.” It is no surprise that DHS and its components spend a significant time monitoring their reputations with Congress, considering Congressional funding was the second most important way in which reputation impacts an agency.

Respondents also stressed the need for an agency to not only monitor media stories but to also interact with members of the media to determine how the agency is viewed. In round one, only 14% of the experts responded that their agency interacts with the media; however, when this activity was presented as a rating question in round two, 92% of the respondents agreed that their agency engages in this activity somewhat frequently to frequently.

Other monitoring activities mentioned in round one included manually monitoring “new” media (such as websites and blogs), using software to monitor media, and interacting with the public to gauge perceptions. All three of these activities received a mean rating of at least 4, but their standard deviations from the mean suggest less agreement among the experts regarding these activities. It is also interesting to note that DHS and its components spend more time interacting with the media than they do with the public.

## **2. Do You Have a Formal Measurement System in Place?**

In response to the second part of question six in round one, 48% of the panelists stated that their agency does not have a formal measurement system in place or they were unsure if such a system exists. In round two, 60% responded that they either did not know, that their agency never uses a formal measurement system, or that it does so only on occasion.

## **3. If So, What Do You Assess and How Do You Measure?**

Those who responded that their agency does have a formal measurement system in place were also asked to explain what is measured and how. Responses in round one

largely centered on conducting surveys (both customer and employees), tracking complaints, and measuring media coverage in terms of minutes of airtime, space in newspapers, and hits on websites. These quantitative measurement activities received lower scores in round two than the more qualitative monitoring activities such as media interaction. This demonstrates that DHS and its components rely more on human interaction and impressions than on polls, surveys, and technology to gauge their reputation.

How frequently does your agency engage in the following activities to measure its reputation?

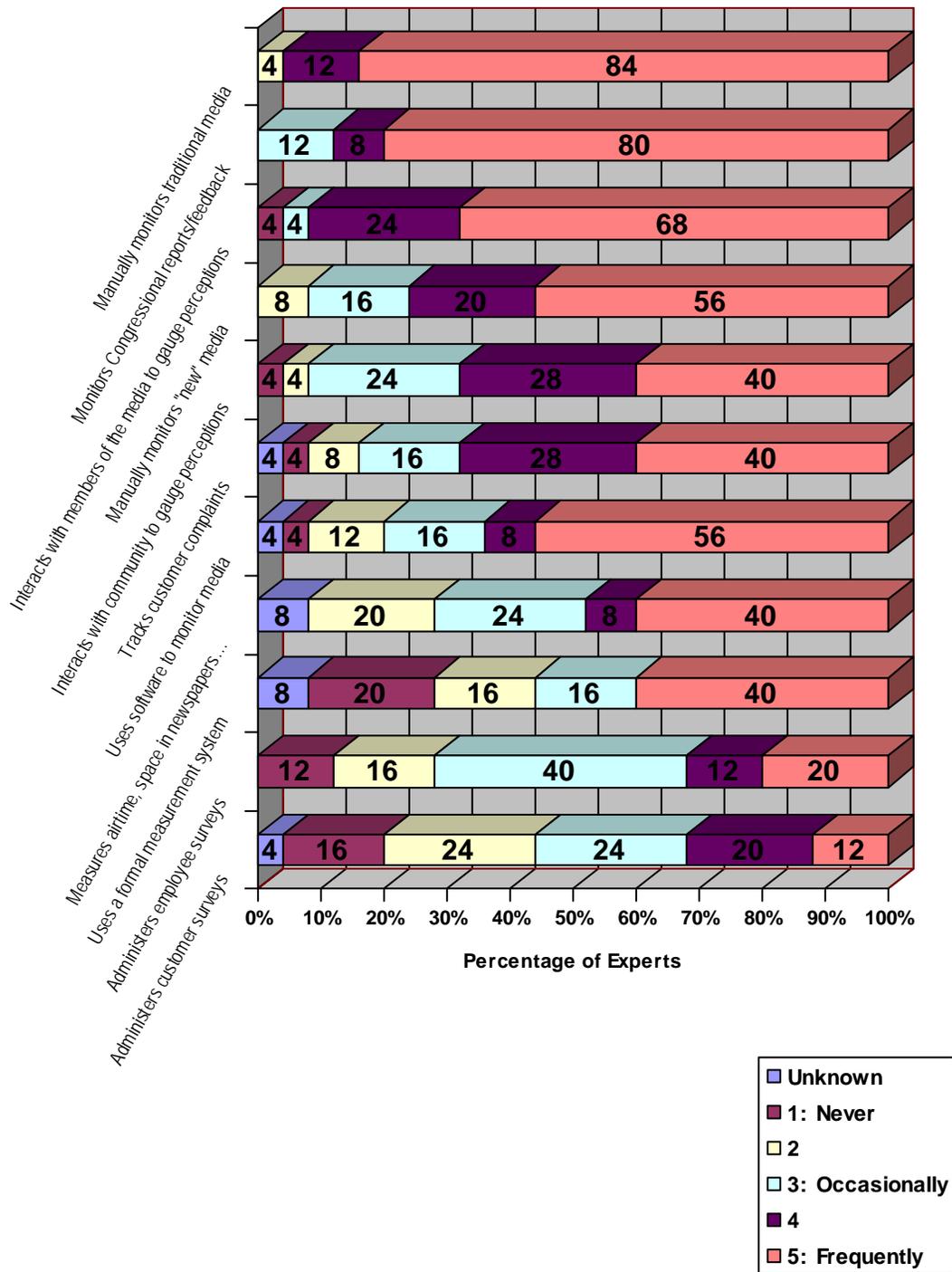


Figure 2. Measurement activities by percentage.

**F. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES YOUR AGENCY FACES IN MANAGING ITS REPUTATION?**

According to the responses from round one, DHS and its components face several challenges in managing their reputations. The panelists shared 14 distinct challenges that make maintaining a good reputation difficult. Most of these challenges fit under the broad categories of challenges with the media, performance, employees, the public, and Congress. When all 14 challenges were rated in round two from “No challenge” to “Significant challenge,” seven received a mean of 4 or higher on a 5-point scale, six had a mean rating between 3 and 4, and only one challenge received a mean rating under 3 (see Table 9). These results suggest that the majority of challenges faced by DHS and its components in managing their reputations are at least somewhat significant.

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Public misconceptions of agency’s mission/activities	4.3	1.0
Congressional criticism	4.1	0.9
Policy changes and/or controversial policies	4.1	0.9
Negative representation of agency in traditional media	4.1	1.0
Public dissatisfaction with mission outcomes	4.0	1.1
High public visibility	4.0	1.2
Poor and/or inconsistent agency performance	4.0	1.3
Negative representation of agency in “new” media	3.8	0.9
Leadership problems	3.8	1.3
Negative representation of agency in television and films	3.8	1.4
Poor employee behavior	3.7	1.3
Staffing shortages in public affairs offices	3.5	1.1
Inability to reveal sensitive/classified information to the public	3.2	1.1
Opposition from NGOs and/or advocacy groups	2.9	1.1
<i>Note: Means based on a scale of 1 (no challenge) to 5 (significant challenge)</i>		

Table 9. Challenges to reputation management.

According to the survey, the most significant challenge to reputation management for DHS and its components is the public’s misconception of an agency’s mission and activities. Thirty-eight percent of the panelists gave this response to the open-ended question in round one. This challenge was described by one respondent as “ensuring that all of our stakeholders understand the benefits of the services we provide.” Respondents

opined that the public is unaware or misinformed about agency names and the unique responsibilities of each agency. One expert stated that the public assumes that his/her agency is responsible only for certain activities, so when the agency acts outside of that perceived scope, its reputation is damaged in the eyes of the misinformed public. In round two, 80% of the panelists rated public misconception in one of the top two categories of significance (see Figure 3).

Seventy-two percent of the respondents believe that Congressional criticism, controversial policies or policy changes, and negative representation of the agency in traditional media are all major challenges to their agency's reputation. Several experts explained that the very essence of their agency's purpose and mission is highly controversial, and even when its policies are enforced appropriately, its reputation takes a significant hit with the media and the public. Regarding the media in particular, one respondent remarked in round one, "It is a challenge in such a large metropolitan area to seek positive recognition from the public through the media when the competition for attention is high in such a large media market." Although only five percent of the respondents remarked in the first round that his/her agency's poor performance poses a challenge to its reputation, 72% from round two admitted that their agency's poor and/or inconsistent performance is a major problem as well. For example, a respondent from round one indicated that FEMA's response to Hurricane Katrina continues to be a "lingering" challenge to FEMA's reputation.

Other notable significant challenges are high public visibility (68%), public dissatisfaction with mission outcomes (68%), and negative representation of an agency in television and films (64%). Sixty percent cited leadership problems and 56% claimed that poor employee behavior is at least a somewhat significant challenge to their agency's reputation. Even though the literature on reputation management stresses the dangers that "new" media poses to an organization, experts from DHS and its components do not appear to be quite as concerned about web-based challenges such as blogs. Only 56% labeled this a somewhat significant or significant challenge. The inability to reveal sensitive/classified information to the public was also a low-rated challenge, cited by only 36% of the respondents as being a major challenge. This result is surprising

considering that DHS and its components might be able to improve their reputations if they could share more details of successful mission outcomes. Only 48% of the panelists believe that their agency's shortage of public affairs officers is a significant problem.

The lowest-rated challenge involves NGOs and advocacy groups. The private sector often references these groups as posing a major challenge to managing a company's reputation; however, in the public sector, they do not appear to be as much of a challenge. Forty-four percent of the panelists in round two responded that these groups are not much of a challenge or no challenge at all. Only 24% called them at least a somewhat significant challenge. It is also noted that one panelist stated that he/she did not know how to respond to any of the parts of this question because these challenges are addressed at the agency's headquarters, not in the public affairs field office. This panelist's "response" is categorized as "unknown" in Figure 3.

Rate the extent to which each of the following poses a challenge to effective reputation management for your agency.

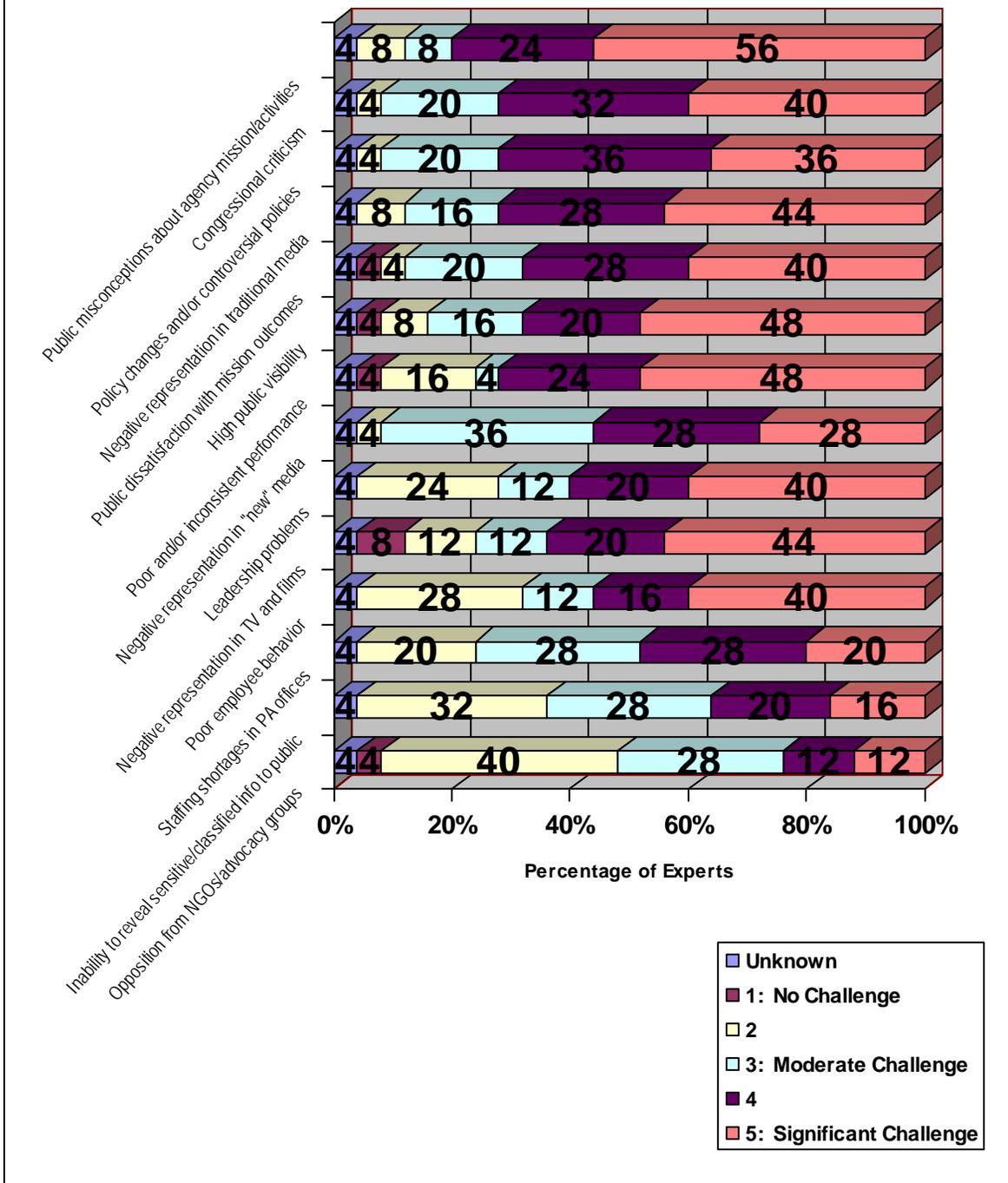


Figure 3. Challenges to reputation management by percentage.

**G. HOW COULD YOUR AGENCY MANAGE ITS REPUTATION MORE EFFECTIVELY?**

In response to this open-ended question in round one, the panelists suggested 14 major ways in which their agency could manage its reputation more effectively. Two of the 21 panelists from round one responded that they did not know how this could be done, but the majority made suggestions that correspond to the challenges their agency faces regarding its reputation. In round two, these activities were rated according to whether the respondent’s agency should “Do less,” the “Status quo,” or “Do more.” Half of these recommendations had a mean rating of 4 or higher on a 5-point scale in round two, while the other half had a mean between 3 and 4. None had a mean rating below 3 in round two, indicating that DHS and its components agree that how they are currently managing their reputation is insufficient (see Table 10).

Activity	Mean	Std. Dev.
Work with different types of media to accurately portray agency (e.g., Hollywood)	4.3	0.9
Improve agency performance	4.2	0.8
Share success stories with the public	4.2	0.9
Be proactive in public affairs	4.2	0.9
Communicate with stakeholders	4.0	0.7
Refute inaccurate media messages	4.0	0.8
Hire public affairs officers	4.0	1.0
Be transparent with the public	3.9	0.8
Stay on message	3.8	0.7
Get stakeholder input before implementing new plan/program	3.8	0.9
Monitor “new” media	3.6	0.8
Demonstrate concern for the environment	3.5	1.1
Correct online “conversations” (e.g., blogs)	3.5	1.2
Monitor traditional media	3.4	0.7
<i>Note: Means based on a scale of 1 (do less) to 5 (do more)</i>		

Table 10. Activities to better manage reputation.

In round one, the most cited way that DHS and its components could better manage their reputations included messaging to clear up misconceptions about the agency (mentioned by 33% of the participants). One respondent noted, “We must continue to get our message out to the public... to tell the public what we are doing and why... .” Staying on message and communicating who the agency is and what it does

were common themes in round one. Another panelist remarked that telling the agency's story makes people aware of why things happen and reduces misunderstandings. Since messaging is a broad category and can be accomplished in various ways, round two asked the respondents to rate more specific ways in which their agency could message, or communicate, to better manage its reputation. In fact, the majority of the 14 recommendations contain a communication element.

According to round two, the best ways for DHS and its components to manage their reputations include improving performance (mentioned by 76% of the respondents) and working more with different types of media, including Hollywood to portray accurately the agency (72%) (see Figure 4). Regarding the impact performance has on reputation, one expert noted, "Doing our job, doing it well, overcoming challenges is what will maintain or enhance our reputation." Sharing more success stories with the public was recommended by 68% of the experts, and 72% agreed that their agency should engage in public affairs more proactively. One respondent commented that every agency should "proactively plan for potential challenges to organizational credibility." Communicating more with stakeholders, refuting inaccurate media messages, and hiring more public affairs officers were activities recommended by 72% of the respondents. Sixty-eight percent agreed that DHS and its components should be more transparent with the public to better manage their reputations. In round one, respondents stressed that all messaging and communication should be honest. The majority of the experts (64%) also recommended that stakeholder input should be sought more actively before the agency implements a new plan or program and that online "conversations," such as blogs should be corrected by the agency more often.

For the remaining reputation management activities, the majority of the respondents indicated that what their agency is currently doing is appropriate or that their agency should engage less in the activity. As suggested by the responses to previous questions in the survey, 76% of the panelists think that their agency is doing just the right amount of traditional media monitoring, and 52% think that additional monitoring of "new" media is not needed. Fewer than half of the experts (44%) feel that their agency

should demonstrate more concern for the environment, even though the literature from the private sector overwhelmingly agrees that this is one of the most important reputation management activities (see Figure 4).

Rate the extent to which your agency should do the following activities to manage its reputation more effectively.

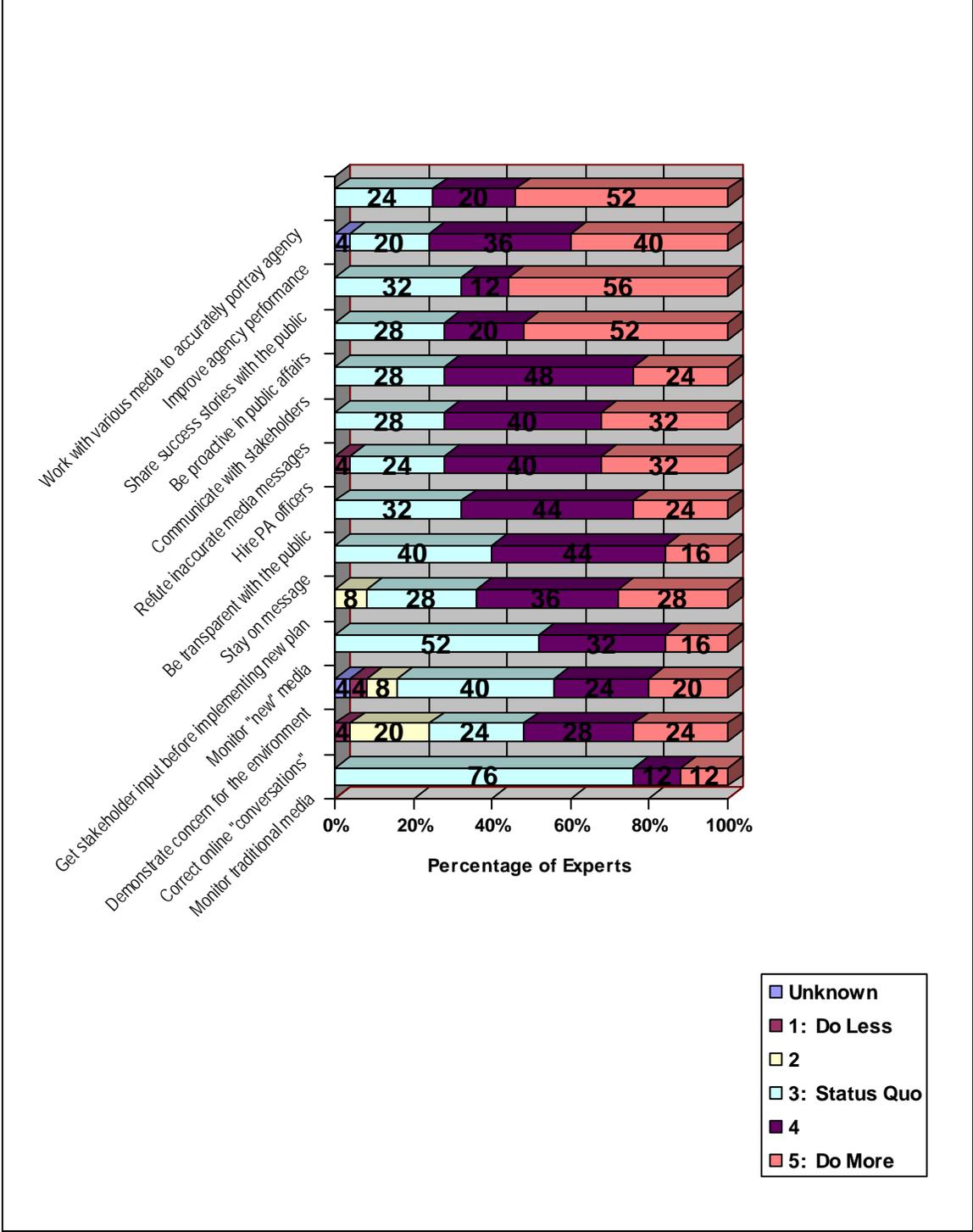


Figure 4. Recommendations for better reputation management by percentage.

## H. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Round two contained two questions that were not asked in round one. The first was a rating question: On a scale of 1-5, to what extent do the following reputations need to be improved (from “Not at all” to “Significantly”)? The 25 panelists were asked to rate their own agency, as well as the Department. Table 11 below illustrates that the panelists agree the reputation of DHS is in more need of improvement than the reputations of the components.

Category	Mean	Std. Dev.
The reputation of your agency	3.4	1.3
The reputation of DHS as a whole	4.0	0.9
<i>Note: Means based on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (significantly)</i>		

Table 11. Reputation improvements needed.

As illustrated in the frequency chart in Figure 5, 46% of the respondents believe that their agency’s reputation needs to be more than moderately improved, while 64% of all respondents feel that the reputation of DHS requires more than moderate improvement. These responses corroborate the responses to questions two and four of round one, in which panelists stated that the reputation of DHS has a more negative effect on the reputations of the components than they have on the Department.

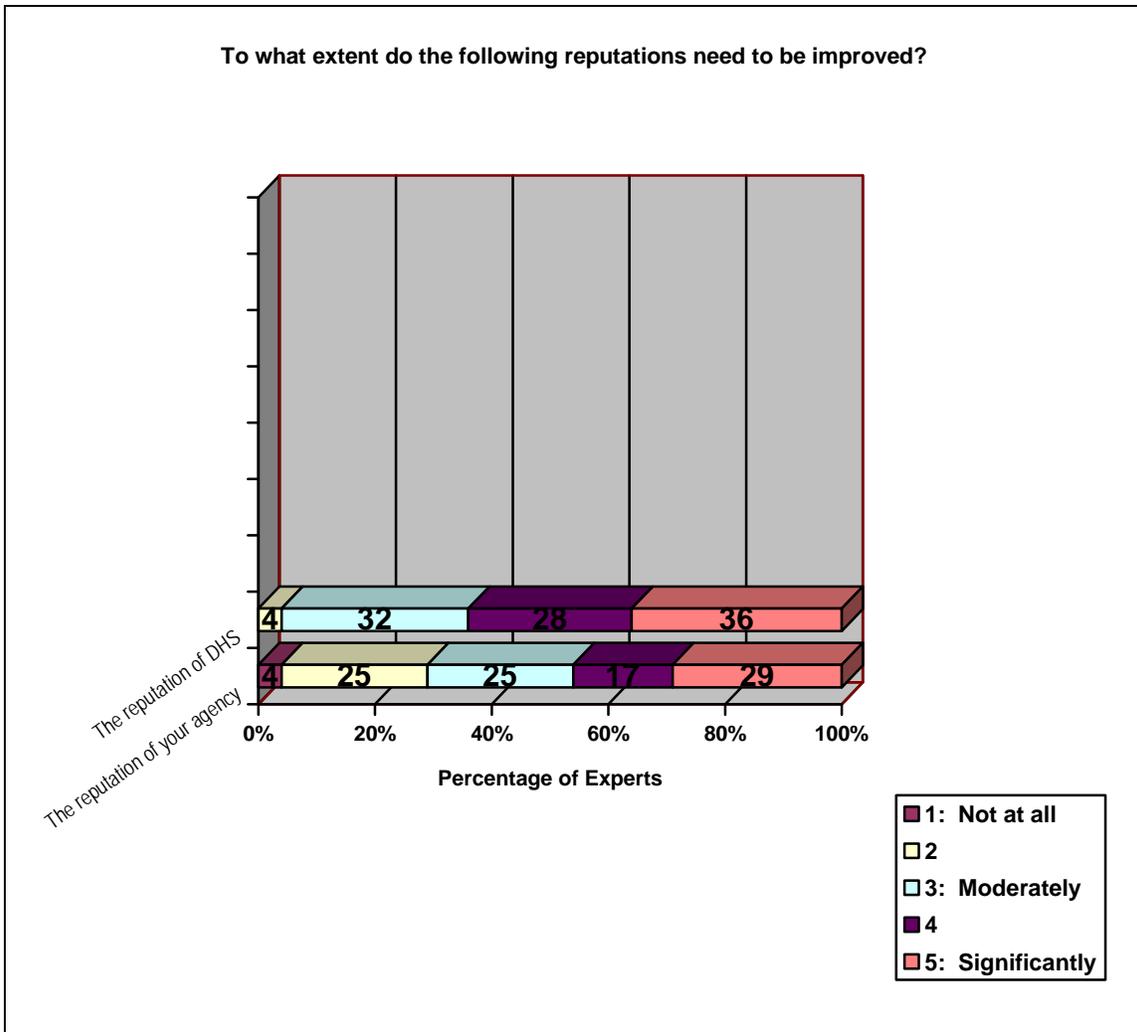


Figure 5. Reputation improvements needed.

Lastly, the final question of round two was an open-ended question that asked if the components and DHS work together in managing the reputations of each. The responses were brief and fell into easily-defined categories. The majority of respondents (52%) stated that DHS and their agency work together closely on external communications (e.g., messaging; press releases). One respondent stated, “We coordinate on messaging very closely and every significant media effort must be vetted through DHS.” Another commented that his/her agency “works closely with DHS public affairs and engages in a variety of proactive and reactive media endeavors to offer the public a transparent understanding of the Department’s (including our agency’s) efforts to protect the American public.”

A few respondents (16%) who work in field offices stated that their agency headquarters works with DHS's Office of Public Affairs. Thirty-two percent either responded that their agencies do not work with DHS or they were unsure of the relationship. One panelist remarked, "This level of coordination is not apparent/visible at the regional level" and that messaging is a one-way street from the DHS Office of Public Affairs at the top, down to the agency's headquarters for public affairs.

The final chapter of this thesis relates the results of the Delphi survey with the available literature on reputation management. It shows how in some instances, the survey results are in line with the literature, and in others the two do not agree. It also adds to the available literature by showing aspects of reputation that are unique to the public sector and have not already been identified by reputation management experts in the private sector. Chapter V also offers recommendations for how DHS and its components could more effectively manage their reputations.

## V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V compares the results of the two-round Delphi survey with the literature on reputation in order to answer the research questions posed by this thesis. Since the final research question asks how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its components can more effectively manage their reputations, this chapter also gives recommendations for how they can do so. In addition, it discusses the significance of the thesis and how it adds to the available literature on the topic of reputation.

### A. HOW DOES REPUTATION AFFECT THE SUCCESS OF DHS AND ITS COMPONENTS?

The survey results indicate that reputation affects the success of DHS and its components in nine specific ways: public trust, public support, public cooperation, deterrence of criminal/terrorist activity, relationships with other agencies, Congressional funding, employee morale, recruitment, and retention. The survey participants rated the impact of each of these nine areas on a scale of 1 to 5 (“no impact” to “high impact”). Over 50% of the survey participants agreed that their agency’s reputation has a somewhat high or high impact in all nine areas; all but one of the areas had a mean rating of 4 or higher on a five-point scale.

Regarding the impact of reputation on an organization, the survey results mostly agree with the literature. Although both reveal that reputation greatly affects an organization financially, they differ on how the intangible asset of reputation reaps tangible, financial rewards. In the private sector, the reputation of a company directly impacts whether or not a customer purchases that company’s goods or services and whether investors invest in the company.<sup>158</sup> The reputation of a public sector organization has an economic value as well, but not in the same way as the private sector. For DHS and its components, their reputation helps influence the amount of funding given by Congress, which enables them to fulfill their responsibilities and carry out their missions.

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<sup>158</sup> Aula and Mantere, *Strategic Reputation Management*, 44-45.

Trust is another benefit of reputation. For the private sector, a good reputation creates consumer trust in a product or service so that customers choose what one company offers over another.<sup>159</sup> The survey panelists concurred that public trust is a product of a good reputation in the public sector as well. However, for DHS and its components, this reputation-based trust has far more critical implications than simply winning over customers and beating the competition in sales. When it comes to making the U.S. secure, DHS and its components do not have to worry about outselling competitors and enlarging their consumer base. Yet, they do need to be concerned with earning the public's trust so that the public listens and responds appropriately to the advice and instructions given in preparation for and in response to an incident. A good reputation helps to build that trust, just as a bad reputation can cause the public to dismiss the Department and its recommendations or guidance.

Furthermore, the reputation of DHS and its components contributes to the support and cooperation that the public gives. It is not enough that the public trust DHS, they must also support its mission and cooperate with its activities when needed. The worse DHS's reputation is, the less likely the public will stand behind its policies or work with the Department or its components. Homeland security is a "concerted national effort"<sup>160</sup>—it is everyone's concern. Since public support and cooperation are not generally necessary for a business's success, the private sector literature does not address these two effects of reputation. The literature also does not look at deterrence in the same way as the survey participants. In the literature, a company's reputation can deter competitors from entering the market for a certain product or service.<sup>161</sup> For DHS and its components, their reputations can deter terrorists and criminals from attempting to carry out their plans.

The literature and the survey also agree that reputation is beneficial in the areas of employee morale, recruitment, and retention. Both also discuss the impact an

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<sup>159</sup> Fombrun, *Reputation*, 3.

<sup>160</sup> Office of Homeland Security, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Philadelphia: Pavilion Press, 2002), 25.

<sup>161</sup> Hamori, "The Impact of Reputation Capital," 304.

organization's reputation has on its partnerships. For the business world, these partners include suppliers and contractors.<sup>162</sup> For DHS and its components, these partners include local and state law enforcement, other federal departments and agencies, and Public Health. A good reputation encourages information sharing and cooperation among these various entities, which enables DHS and its components to operate more effectively.

## **B. HOW ARE THE REPUTATIONS OF DHS AND ITS COMPONENTS MEASURED?**

The literature stresses that an organization must know what its reputation is in order to properly manage it. Therefore, the literature offers several different methods of measurement, which were discussed in detail in Chapter II. These methods most often involve surveying the various stakeholders to determine how each views a particular company, because reputation is the sum of all images held by the stakeholders.<sup>163</sup> In the private sector, these stakeholders include the organization's employees, business partners, customers, shareholders, and the media. The results of the Delphi survey show that, for public sector organizations such as DHS and its components, Congress and the American public at large are also included on this list of stakeholders.

DHS and its components do not all appear to place the same degree of emphasis on stakeholder surveys as the private sector does. Although DHS conducts surveys on all employees throughout the Department and the component agencies, only a few of the panelists stated that their agency conducts customer surveys, and no other stakeholders (e.g., Congress) are surveyed. Instead, the experts largely agreed that their agencies monitor feedback and reports from Congress instead of conducting surveys in order to gauge how Congress views their agency. Of course, the literature does not label Congress as a stakeholder for private sector businesses and therefore does not offer recommendations for how Congressional perception can be measured.

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<sup>162</sup> Dowling, *Creating Corporate Reputations*, 12.

<sup>163</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 68.

The literature does, however, recommend that a company also measure its reputation by using technology that monitors the internet for stories about the firm.<sup>164</sup> DHS and its components do use some technology to measure their reputations, but the results from the Delphi survey suggest that they overwhelmingly prefer interaction with their stakeholders rather than formal measurement systems. Nonetheless, the literature warns that relying on impressions of what stakeholders think could cause a company to misread how it is perceived, resulting in either too much reputation management in one specific area or not enough in another.<sup>165</sup>

### **C. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DHS'S REPUTATION AND THE REPUTATION OF THE COMPONENTS?**

The Delphi survey yielded interesting results to this research question, especially considering that the literature is only just beginning to explore the concept of “reputation spillover,” which is the impact that one organization’s reputation has on the reputation of another organization that is close to it in proximity and/or similar to it in structure.<sup>166</sup> For example, in the private sector, the reputation of General Motors (GM) can impact the reputation of its subsidiaries Chevrolet, Pontiac, and Saturn, and the reputations of these subsidiaries can affect the reputation of their parent corporation, GM. More specifically, the reputation of one particular Chevrolet car model (e.g., the Malibu) can have an effect on the reputation of another model (e.g., the Impala).

The degree and frequency of communication between DHS and its components create proximity,<sup>167</sup> and although they have separate and unique operations and responsibilities, they are structurally unified by their core missions of prevention, protection, response, and recovery.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, the possibility for “reputation spillover” is high. The panelists’ responses to questions regarding the relationship between the reputation of DHS and that of its components reveal that this spillover has

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<sup>164</sup> Coville and Thomas, “New Media,” 115.

<sup>165</sup> Dukerich and Carter, “Distorted Images and Reputation Repair,” 103-105.

<sup>166</sup> Yu and Lester, “Moving Beyond Firm Boundaries,” 95.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>168</sup> Homeland Security Council, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, 1.

indeed taken place. What is particularly noteworthy, though, is the direction and degree of the spillover. The panelists indicated that DHS's reputation more negatively impacts the components and that the components' reputations more positively impact the Department. Furthermore, several respondents noted that if one component has a bad reputation, the whole Department is viewed negatively and that negative light then reflects back poorly on each agency within DHS. These responses indicate that the "reputation spillover" within DHS occurs in all directions—directly from the top-down and bottom-up and indirectly across agencies, but it is more pronounced from DHS down to the components. Of course, it should be noted that this spillover can only occur if the public is aware of which agencies are a part of DHS. For example, the public might assume that the U.S. Coast Guard is always a part of the Department of Defense (rather than only during times of war) and therefore credit or discredit DOD instead of DHS for the activities of the USCG.

**D. WHAT DO DHS AND ITS COMPONENTS DO TO MANAGE THEIR REPUTATIONS?**

Although DHS and its components do not use the term "reputation management," they do currently engage in some activities that fit the description. For instance, they monitor traditional and "new" media, such as newspapers, news programs, and blogs in order to see what the media and public think. Sometimes inaccurate stories or details are refuted and corrected. The literature agrees that monitoring and correcting stories about the company is necessary for managing reputation.<sup>169</sup> DHS and its components also work closely together on messaging and external communications, so that they present a consistent, accurate message about their activities to their stakeholders. Again, the literature is in agreement, stating that "clear and consistent communication" with stakeholders is an essential element of reputation management.<sup>170</sup>

In addition, the literature discusses three other ingredients of reputation management besides communication (see Chapter II for details). Although the term

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<sup>169</sup> Andrew Griffin, *New Strategies for Reputation Management*, 42-43.

<sup>170</sup> Gerry Griffin, *Reputation Management*, 45-46.

*crisis management*<sup>171</sup> was not used by the survey participants, DHS and its components reactively respond to incidents that occur, which is part of crisis management. However, the survey results indicate that *issues management*, which involves monitoring and addressing long-term concerns within an organization rather than simply “putting out fires” as they come, is not a part of the reputation management efforts of DHS or its components. The literature remarked that many companies mistakenly overlook this element of reputation management (to their detriment) because they are so focused on crisis management.<sup>172</sup> The final piece of reputation management, according to the literature, is *corporate social responsibility* (CSR), which involves humanitarian and environmental initiatives undertaken by an organization in order to be good “citizens” of their local community and society as a whole.<sup>173</sup> Only the respondents from one DHS component stressed their agency’s concerns for environmental issues. Although other components might also practice some form of CSR, the survey participants did not mention such activities.

#### **E. HOW SHOULD DHS AND ITS COMPONENTS MORE EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THEIR REPUTATIONS?**

The literature offers many different recommendations for how a private sector company can manage its reputation. These suggestions almost always include the previously mentioned activities of communication with stakeholders, crisis management, issues management, corporate social responsibility, as well as measuring stakeholders’ perceptions, monitoring various forms of media, identifying challenges to reputation, and improving performance. The survey results were mostly consistent with the literature on reputation management. The survey did, however, offer one key addition that is not present in the literature. DHS and its components recognize the need to work more closely with different types of media, including Hollywood, to correctly portray the agency, its mission, and its activities so that both the media and public have an accurate perception of who each agency is and what it does.

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<sup>171</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 326.

<sup>172</sup> Wartick and Heugens, “Future Directions for Issues Management,” 7.

<sup>173</sup> Appelbaum and Belmuth, “Global Corporate Communication,” 259.

Based upon the various reputation management strategies present in the literature and upon the results of the Delphi survey, this thesis offers the following recommendations for how DHS and its components can more effectively manage their reputations.

- Understand the value of reputation. This thesis has shown that reputation does indeed matter for DHS and its components, and its importance should encourage them to take steps to manage their reputations. If they do not understand or accept the value of reputation, they will overlook opportunities for improvement or minimize the consequences of a bad reputation.
- Identify the stakeholders whose perceptions help shape the overall reputation of DHS and its components. As previously discussed, these stakeholders include Congress, employees, partners, the public, and the media.
- Measure the perceptions of each of these stakeholders. DHS and its components should more aggressively survey certain stakeholders (e.g., the public and partners) and determine alternate methods of measurement if surveys are not appropriate for other stakeholders (e.g., Congress). Although administering polls and surveys to certain stakeholders might not be permitted for a federal department, existing survey data from organizations such as the Pew Research Center can provide valuable insight.
- Involve more units/divisions in addition to the public affairs offices. Since DHS and its components have a variety of stakeholders, the offices that deal specifically with certain stakeholders should be involved in reputation management activities. For instance, the Congressional relations offices within each agency should be actively involved in measuring and managing the reputation of the agency with Congress. The personnel offices within each agency should help measure and manage the agency's reputation among its employees. The public affairs offices should continue focusing on the reputation of the agency among the public and media.
- Compile "reputation reports" from each division within the agency (e.g., public affairs, Congressional relations) to gauge the perceptions of each stakeholder. As the literature states, the sum of these perceptions equals the reputation of the organization.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Doorley and Garcia, *Reputation Management*, 68.

- Address both reputational strengths and weaknesses based upon the reputation reports. If the agency has a good reputation with a certain stakeholder, it should continue the activities that generated that good reputation. If the agency has a bad reputation with a certain stakeholder, it should take appropriate steps to improve, if possible.
- Partner with universities to conduct further research on reputation in the public sector and for DHS and its components in particular. Universities look for research opportunities such as this and could help the Department develop reputation management metrics.
- Improve performance. Although this recommendation is self-evident and is necessary for reasons far beyond reputation management, it bears repeating that DHS and its components cannot have positive reputations if they do not do their jobs well.
- Work together to address the “reputation spillover” that occurs between the components and the Department. What one part of DHS does directly impacts another part of the whole. Not surprisingly, the Delphi survey revealed that the components within DHS that have the best reputations are the ones who more proactively engage in reputation management activities. These components should help the less reputable components improve their reputations by sharing lessons learned and strategies for improvement. Reciprocally, those agencies with less than ideal reputations should share their lessons learned as well so that all agencies can benefit from their experiences.
- Tell their story proactively and truthfully. This includes the narrative of who the agency is and what it does, as well as individual, operational success stories. In no way should the story be embellished or untruthful. However, the stakeholders need to know what is going on with DHS and its components (to the degree possible within the confines of national security). If DHS and its components do not tell their own story, then the stakeholders could seek information from less than credible sources.

## **F. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS THESIS**

A great deal of literature exists regarding the impact of reputation on private sector organizations; however, literature is greatly lacking when it comes to the significance of reputation for the public sector. Furthermore, no research has been found on the impact of reputation specifically to the Department of Homeland Security and its component agencies. As a result of the two-round Delphi survey, which involved 21 public affairs experts in the first round and 25 experts in the second round (from DHS and six of its components), this thesis adds to the available literature on reputation in at

least three specific ways. First, it shows that reputation does indeed have value in the public sector in many of the same ways as the private sector and even has additional merit that the private sector does not generally consider. Specifically, this thesis demonstrates that a good reputation increases Congressional funding for the agency's activities and encourages the public's support for and cooperation with the agency. Second, this thesis further expands upon the new concept of "reputation spillover" by looking at the effects of a parent organization's reputation on its components, the effects of the components' reputation on the parent organization, and the effects of components' reputation on sibling agencies. Lastly, the literature offers many different recommendations for private sector organizations to manage their reputation, but no literature currently exists that proposes ways in which a public sector organization can manage its reputation. This thesis has provided recommendations that, though similar to the strategies used in the private sector, are tailored specifically to the unique responsibilities of a public sector organization.

In addition to the contribution made to the literature on reputation, this thesis benefits its immediate consumers, the Department of Homeland Security and its components, by assessing the significance and importance of their reputations and providing recommendations on how they can better manage those reputations. The recommendations provided by this thesis are specific to DHS and its component agencies. Nonetheless, public sector organizations in general and other homeland security professionals specifically can benefit from the research and recommendations provided and can extrapolate from them a basic guideline for reputation management that can be tailored to fit their specific needs.

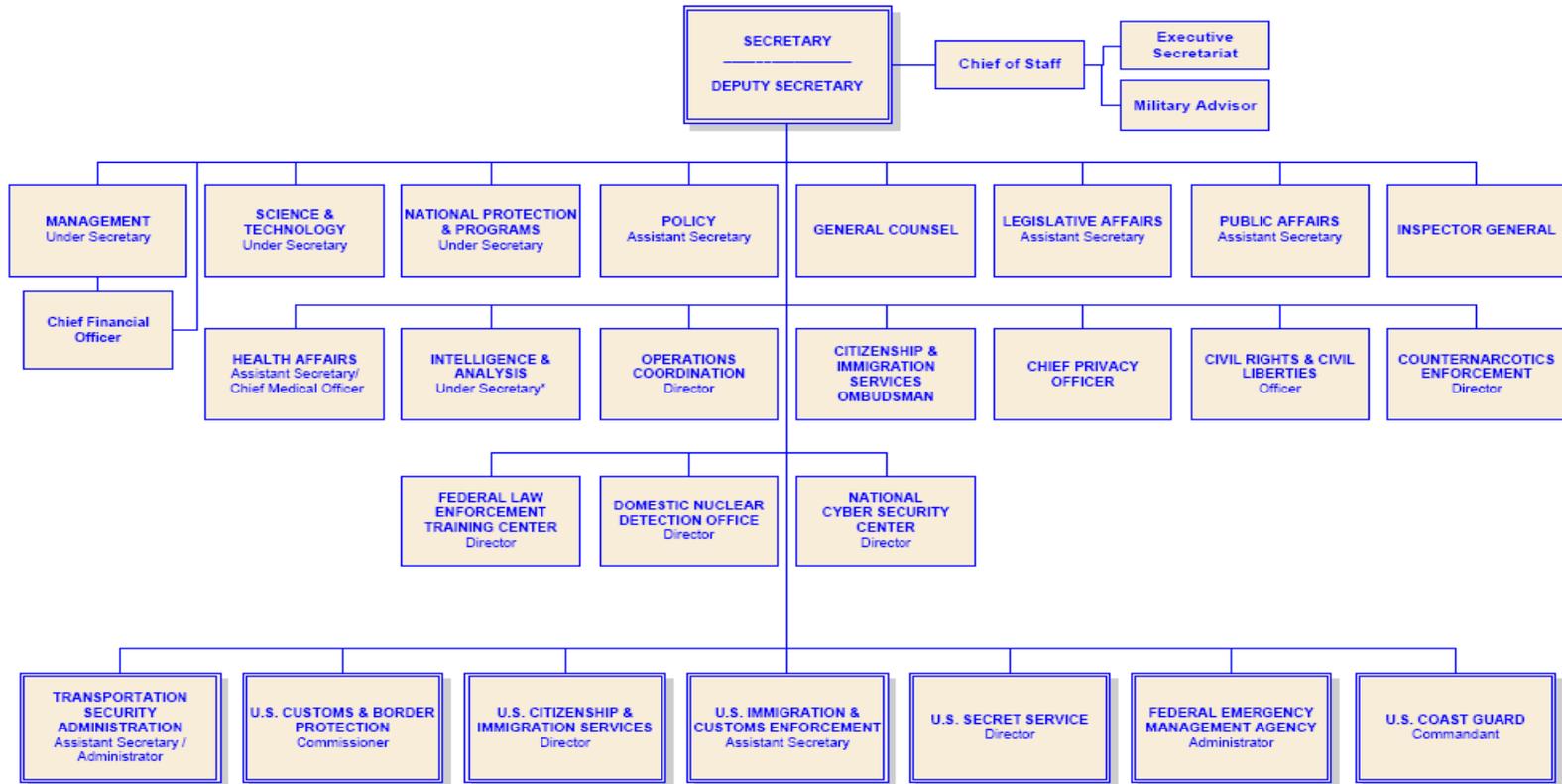
## **G. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This thesis has looked at many aspects of reputation, including identity and image, from both a private sector and public sector perspective. The focus of this thesis has been primarily on reputation from a public affairs point of view. Future research should look more specifically at the identity issues plaguing DHS and its components. The perceptions held internally by the employees contribute to the overall reputation of

the organization, and these perceptions are partially shaped by internal identity. DHS is a rather young organization with several disparate components and functions. DHS must know itself internally and address internal reputation challenges to employee morale and retention. Addressing internal reputation and identity issues could also help external audiences understand its mission, function, and varied responsibilities.

# APPENDIX A. DHS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY



\* Under Secretary for Intelligence & Analysis title created by Public Law 110-53, Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007

Approved 3/20/2008

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## **APPENDIX B. DELPHI STUDY INTRODUCTORY EMAIL**

Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

I work for USCIS HQ, and I am in a DHS Master's program through the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey. I am wondering if you would be willing to participate in a Delphi survey that I am conducting for my thesis.

My thesis is exploring the connection between an organization's reputation and its effectiveness. I will specifically be looking at the reputation of DHS as a whole, the reputation of component agencies, and what steps can be taken to manage those reputations.

The survey will consist of two to three rounds, with only about six questions per round. I will keep the participants of the survey anonymous, unless you authorize me to quote or reference you. The survey will be conducted via email, and only I will have access to the raw data. Would you be willing to participate? If you have more questions about what this would entail, please call or email me.

Thank you so much for your time!

Bobbie L. Johnson  
Service Center Operations  
20 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20529  
Phone: 202-272-8165

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## **APPENDIX C. DELPHI STUDY ROUND ONE EMAIL**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my survey regarding reputation management for DHS and its component agencies. For purposes of my thesis, “reputation” refers to the public image of DHS and its agencies.

Attached is the first round of the survey. There will be 2 to 3 rounds of data gathering. Each round will take less than an hour to complete. Each successive round will build upon what I learn from prior rounds. All individual responses will remain anonymous. Data will be aggregated and summarized to protect the confidentiality of the participants. When my study is complete, I will share a summary of the results, as well as my thesis, with you.

Please return the completed survey to me via email by Friday, August 22nd. I will then analyze the results of the first round and send you the second round of questions shortly thereafter. If you have any questions/concerns about the survey, please don’t hesitate to call or email me.

Again, I am grateful for your participation and look forward to your input. Thank you so much for your time!

Bobbie

Bobbie L. Johnson  
Service Center Operations  
20 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20529  
Phone: 202-272-8165

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## APPENDIX D. DELPHI SURVEY ROUND ONE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Reputation Management for DHS Agencies Delphi Survey, Round 1

1. In what ways does your agency's reputation impact its effectiveness?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, what kind of an impact does your agency's reputation have on the reputation of DHS as a whole? (Please mark only one box.)

A horizontal line with a solid black dot at each end. Five vertical tick marks divide the line into four equal segments. Below the line, there are five checkboxes. The first checkbox is under the first tick mark, the second under the second, the third under the third, the fourth under the fourth, and the fifth under the fifth. Below the first checkbox is the number '1' and the text '(Strong Negative)'. Below the second checkbox is the number '2'. Below the third checkbox is the number '3'. Below the fourth checkbox is the number '4' and the text '(No Impact)'. Below the fifth checkbox is the number '5' and the text '(Strong Positive)'.

3. Please give an example to illustrate how the reputation of your agency has impacted the reputation of DHS.
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, what kind of an impact does the reputation of DHS have on the reputation of your agency? (Please mark only one box.)

A horizontal line with a solid black dot at each end. Five vertical tick marks divide the line into four equal segments. Below the line, there are five checkboxes. The first checkbox is under the first tick mark, the second under the second, the third under the third, the fourth under the fourth, and the fifth under the fifth. Below the first checkbox is the number '1' and the text '(Strong Negative)'. Below the second checkbox is the number '2'. Below the third checkbox is the number '3'. Below the fourth checkbox is the number '4' and the text '(No Impact)'. Below the fifth checkbox is the number '5' and the text '(Strong Positive)'.

5. Please give an example to illustrate how the reputation of DHS has impacted your agency's reputation.
6. (A.) How does your agency monitor its reputation?  
  
(B.) Do you have a formal measurement system in place? If so, what do you assess and how do you measure?
7. What are the challenges your agency faces in managing its reputation?
8. How could your agency manage its reputation more effectively?

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## **APPENDIX E. DELPHI STUDY ROUND TWO EMAIL**

Thank you again for your participation in my thesis research! Attached is the second round of the survey. This round is really quick—there are only 6 questions, which should take less than 15 minutes to complete. These questions are based upon the responses received from the first round, so you might find the questions themselves to be quite interesting. Please keep in mind that this type of survey (Delphi) seeks the opinion of the experts chosen to participate. It is understood that your responses are from your perspective and knowledge only. Remember that all participants will be kept anonymous.

Depending on the outcome of this second round, there may or may not be a third and final round of questions. Once the responses from all rounds are analyzed, I'll be able to share with you the aggregate results and will, upon your request, send you my thesis when it's completed. Of course, Round 2 is indicative of the results of the first round.

Please complete the survey and return it to me via email by Friday, September 19th. I look forward to your responses!

Thank you!

Bobbie

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# APPENDIX F. DELPHI SURVEY ROUND TWO QUESTIONNAIRE

## Reputation Management for DHS Agencies Delphi Survey Round 2

Place an *X* in the appropriate boxes below.

1. On a scale of 1-5, how great of an impact does your agency's reputation have on each of the following?	No Impact 1	2	Medium Impact 3	4	High Impact 5
Public trust in your agency					
Public support for your agency's mission					
Public cooperation with your agency's activities					
Deterring criminals and/or terrorists from carrying out their activities					
Relationships with other governmental agencies (local, state, and/or federal)					
Congressional funding/support for your agency					
Recruitment					
Employee morale					
Employee retention					

2. On a scale of 1-5, how frequently does your agency engage in the following activities to measure its reputation?	Never 1	2	Occasionally 3	4	Frequently 5
Manually monitors traditional media					
Manually monitors "new" media (e.g. websites and blogs)					
Uses software to monitor various forms of media					
Monitors Congressional reports/feedback					
Interacts with members of the media to gauge perceptions					

Interacts with the community to gauge perceptions					
Measures minutes of airtime coverage, space in newspapers and/or online, hits on website, etc.					
Administers employee surveys					
Administers customer surveys					
Tracks customer complaints					
Uses a formal measurement system (e.g. Vocus or Factiva)					

<b>3. On a scale of 1-5, rate the extent to which each of the following poses a challenge to effective reputation management for your agency.</b>	<b>No Challenge 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Moderate Challenge 3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Significant Challenge 5</b>
Negative representation of your agency in traditional media					
Negative representation of your agency in "new" media (e.g. websites and blogs)					
Negative representation of your agency in television and films					
Poor and/or inconsistent agency performance					
Public misconceptions of your agency's mission/activities					
Public dissatisfaction with mission outcomes					
Policy changes and/or controversial policies					
Leadership problems					
High public visibility					
Congressional criticism					
Poor employee behavior					
Inability to reveal sensitive/classified information to the public					
Staffing shortages in public affairs offices					
Opposition from NGOs and/or advocacy groups					

<b>4. On a scale of 1-5, rate the extent to which your agency should do the following activities to manage its reputation more effectively.</b>	<b>Do Less</b>		<b>Status Quo</b>		<b>Do More</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Monitor traditional media					
Monitor "new" media					
Refute inaccurate media messages					
Correct online "conversations" (e.g. blogs)					
Hire public affairs officers					
Be proactive in its public affairs					
Share success stories with the public					
Work with different types of media to accurately portray your agency (e.g. Hollywood)					
Improve agency performance					
Demonstrate concern for the environment					
Be transparent with the public					
Stay on message (message repetition)					
Communicate with stakeholders					
Get stakeholder input before implementing new plan/program					

<b>5. On a scale of 1-5, to what extent do the following reputations need to be improved?</b>	<b>Not at all</b>		<b>Moderately</b>		<b>Significantly</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The reputation of your agency specifically					
The reputation of DHS as a whole					

**6. Do your agency and DHS work together to manage the reputation of your agency and of the Department? If so, how?**

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