



# **Trust in Real Time: The 2026 Reputation Playbook**

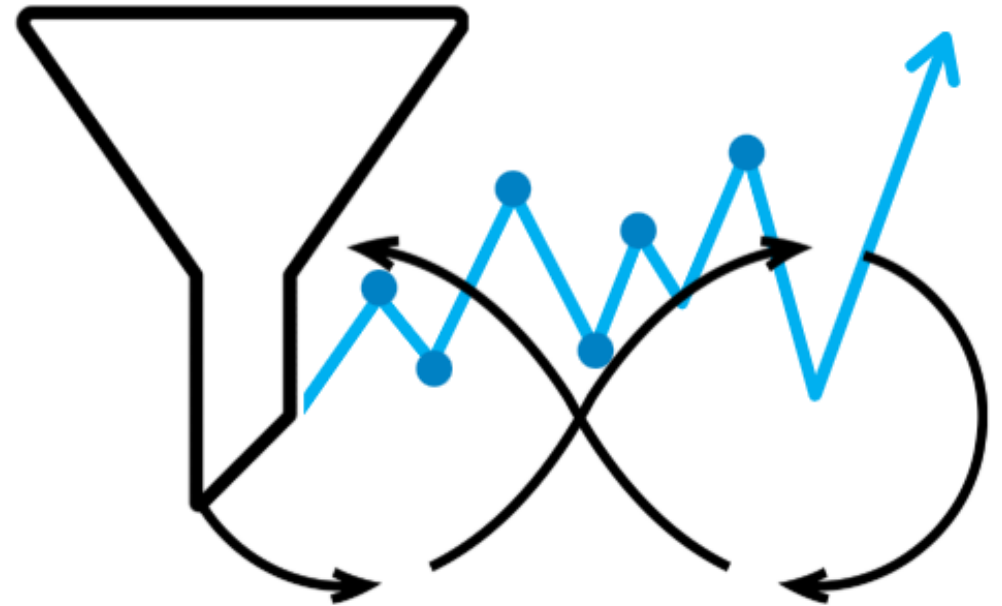
echo

**Five Insights from Echo's Client Advisory Board**

# Why This Matters Now

## The World Has Accelerated

- Decisions once measured in quarters are now made in moments
- Artificial intelligence, political volatility, and social division are rewriting the rules of reputation
- Echo's Client Advisory Board convened to explore how organisations can maintain legitimacy and trust and manage risks - in real time
- The traditional marketing funnel is dead; replaced by continuous feedback loops
- Marketing is now prediction, not persuasion
- *"Reputation and Trust need to be measured like a living asset"* – Echo Client Advisory Board Member





# 1. In the new world, politics drives economics

**Geopolitical volatility is now a core business risk and reputations rise or fall on how leaders respond**

- Political agendas increasingly drive market outcomes
- Organisations must anticipate shocks and adapt policy as strategy
- Echo's Advisory Board urges focus to *"understand political actors and geopolitics so as to understand policy"*



## 2. Crisis is a Chronic Condition

### We're beyond perma-crises now

- We're in a 'chronic' crisis era – crises are constant now but manageable, not curable
- Bad things often happen to protect 'good' reputations
- Reputation management is 'continuous care'
- *"Readiness / preparedness is the new resilience" – Echo Client Advisory Board Member*



### 3. Gen Z: Future-Ready or Future-Risk

#### Mind the reality disconnect

- Gen Z represents both promise and paradox – vocal about values but inconsistent in behaviour
- Their influence is growing, yet their actions (from crypto enthusiasm to cheap-flight habits) reveal the gap between ideals and decisions
- *“Bridging the Values–Behaviour Gap is the next trust frontier” – Echo Client Advisory Board Member*



## 4. AI & the Trust Gap

### Untrustworthy – yet unstoppable

- AI democratises access, empowering a new DIY generation of creators
- But unverified data breeds misinformation and mistrust and creates risk at speed
- When intimacy declines and self-interest rises, trust depreciates. The new differentiator is empathy - Trust's human face
- When combined with human judgement, AI unlocks the 3 I's: **Imagination + Integration with Integrity**
- *"AI won't replace judgement - it will test it."* - Echo Client Advisory Board Member





## 5. From Insight to Foresight

### Risk Ownership to Consequence Clarity

- As the world accelerates, leadership must be measured in trust, not time
- Are leaders truly accountable - legally, ethically, reputationally - for the choices they make today?
- The advantage now lies in foresight - Echo helps leaders see tomorrow's issues and risks today with the intelligence to interpret early signals and turn insight into preparedness
- The evidence is there - it's how we use it that matters

Echo's Client Advisory Board consensus: *"The future of trust depends on how well leaders close these gaps - between words and actions, technology and judgement, decision and accountability."*



## Echo Client Advisory Board Voices



*We need to  
measure  
reputation and  
trust as a living  
asset*



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**Andrew  
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**James  
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**Kai  
Boschmann**  
  
**Advisory  
Board  
Member**



# Building Future-Ready Organisations with Evidence and Insight



## **AGILITY**

to move fast and think deeply



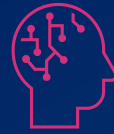
## **RISK READINESS**

to manage the next disruption



## **LEGITIMACY**

to act with purpose and permission



## **FUTURE FOCUS**

to anticipate shifts



## **CONFIDENCE**

to lead through uncertainty



## **LANGUAGE SENSITIVITY**

to communicate without polarising

# echo

Experts in communication,  
brand and reputation research

**RESEARCH INSIGHT ADVISORY**

**Meaning to the past**



**Clarity to the present**



**Direction to the future**

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