

APPROACHING THE FUTURE 2021

TRENDS IN REPUTATION AND INTANGIBLE ASSET MANAGEMENT

TOP 15+1 LESSONS LEARNT



2021
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TRENDS IN REPUTATION AND
INTANGIBLE ASSET MANAGEMENT

#1 **80.3% of surveyed organisations are making progress in adapting to the context of a pandemic marked by uncertainty**, and they are dedicating the most efforts to this area. For organisations, the pandemic has generated major changes in the workplace (86.8%), in communications (64%), and products and services (52.9%).

#2 **Strengthening responsible leadership is the most relevant trend for professionals, with a relevance score of 8.4 out of 10**. 69.9% of professionals claim that the pandemic has changed the leadership style in their organisation. Qualities required to achieve the new required leadership style include empathy (74.1%), transparency (69.6%), and long-term vision (69.6%).

#3 Managing reputation and reputational risk is the third most relevant trend in business management (8.3 out of 10). Specifically, **33.7% of professionals confirm that their organisations are working on reputation management** and, of these, 69.7% claim that reputation is perceived as a more important factor for their organisation than it ever was before the pandemic.

#4 **Activating corporate purpose is the new challenge**. This is one of the most relevant trends for professionals (8 out of 10). Up to 35.7% of professionals claim that their companies are working on its corporate purpose. Experts believe that to activate their purpose, organisations must focus on the integration of purpose in the business strategy (64.7%), followed by brand positioning (57.5%) and the communication of purpose to stakeholder groups (56.9%).

#5 **Professionals confirm that their organisations will dedicate the most resources to digitalisation over the next three years**. To this end, companies prioritise the development of internal procedures for work planning and the improvement and efficiency of processes (74.4%).

#6 **New ways of working are here to stay**. 29.9% of organisations are prioritising this area, and it is in the top two areas in which their organisation will invest the most resources over the coming years. Areas that will be prioritised include talent and training (52%), the development of new agile methodologies (47.3%), the digitalisation of management processes (44.7%), remote work (44%), and flexible hours and the work-life balance (42%).

#7 **For professionals, stakeholder demands and expectations have the biggest impact on the corporate communications strategy in their organisation**. 72.9% of professionals consider the role of corporate communications to be even more relevant than in previous years, and 44% confirm to be working on developing of new communication models.

#8 **Citizens hope that brands will offer relevant solutions to global challenges. Nonetheless, only 17.3% of organisations indicates that they are working on brand activism**. Professionals believe that an activist brand should meet four main criteria: create value for people and the planet (69%); offer products and services with a positive social and environmental impact (62.1%); include stakeholder groups in the development of products and services (40.2%), and publicly defend social and environmental issues through advocacy and lobbying actions (35.6%).

#9 **Key areas for the future business model, such as the climate emergency and the 2030 Agenda, obtained lower relevance scores due to the impact of COVID-19 on the business priority map**. In the previous edition of this report, the 2030 Agenda was revealed to be the second most relevant trend for organisations, with 41% affirming that they were making progress in this area. This figure has dropped to 25.1% in 2021. Similarly, the climate emergency, which was one of the most relevant trends in 2020, has fallen to eleventh place this year.

#10 **Despite fewer resources being allocated, 63.7% of professionals indicate that the relevance of sustainability has increased in their organisation since the pandemic, compared to levels before the COVID-19 crisis**. Over half of professionals (56.5%) indicate that their entity aligns its business strategy with the 2030 Agenda, and 6 out of 10 companies (63.7%) have defined quantifiable objectives with specific deadlines to measure their contribution and impact.

#11 **In 2020, 81% of sustainable indices performed better throughout the year than their non-sustainable counterparts**. However, according to professionals, the percentage of companies that are prioritising work in the area of sustainable investment is relatively low (15.3%).

#12 **40% of professionals confirm that the main obstacle to achieving greater equality and inclusion lies in the corporate culture itself**. Measures cited as being used for promoting diversity in organisations include senior management commitment to diversity and equality (61.7%); the development and implementation of an equality plan (56.7%); and employee equality and diversity training (55.8%).

#13 **32.1% of those surveyed confirm that cybersecurity is among the leading trends their organisation is working on**, and they claim that it is in the top three areas in which their organisation will invest the most resources over the coming years. There are significant differences between Spain, where 37.8% of entities are working on cybersecurity, and Latin America, where only 26.2% of respondents make this claim.

#14 **Corporate governance now faces the challenge of integrating ESG criteria to respond to the demands of a new environment**. Still, only 18.3% of organisations are currently working on this area. Specifically, these companies are primarily advancing in the integration of new social expectations (38%), the adoption of new regulations (29.3%), and the creation of ESG or sustainability committees (27.2%).

#15 **Professionals reiterate the same challenges for non-financial reporting as they did in 2020**: data collection and coordination with business areas (50%); a lack of non-financial metrics and indicators (44.1%); and the absence of a standardised methodology for defining qualitative indicators (42.6%).

#16 **In terms of sentiment and the mobilisation of large audiences, the most relevant trends in digital ecosystems are digitalisation, sustainable investment, and driving new ways of working. Cybersecurity** has also been highlighted due to the high level of negative sentiment that it elicits and the large volumes of audiences it reaches. **Climate change and reputation and reputational risk** are also highlighted, and both elicit increasingly positive sentiments as the rate of interactions increases. All these areas can be seen as an opportunity to promote the role of leadership in organisations, taking into account the main areas of general interest.

	MACROTRENDS		REPUTATION AND BRAND TRENDS
	SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS		ETICS AND TRANSPARENCY TRENDS

Approaching the Future. Trends in Reputation and Intangible Asset Management is an annual report created by Corporate Excellence - Centre for Reputation Leadership in collaboration with CANVAS Estrategias Sostenibles. The report analyses the biggest trends that define the present and future of intangible asset management, with particular focus on reputation, brand, sustainability, ethics, and transparency.

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