

Shannon Wilkinson, Expert Defamation Witness

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Founder & CEO, Reputation Communications

Expert Defamation Witness



REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Reputation Communications – Founder & CEO

Shannon Wilkinson is a nationally recognized expert in online reputation management. Her firm, Reputation Communications, advises clients on all aspects of reputation management. She serves as an Expert Witness in defamation and related types of lawsuits.

Founded in 2009, Reputation Communications was one of the first companies to specialize in online reputation management. It is the only online reputation management firm to specialize in the needs of influencers: individuals with newsworthy or industry-wide impact in business, politics, or social issues.

Clients we have served include Forbes 400 philanthropists, Fortune 500 leaders, Investment, FinTech & financial services firms, Silicon Valley tech founders and others.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERT WITNESS CASES

- **U.K. Tabloid:** Retained by a law firm representing a U.K. newspaper, Ms. Wilkinson evaluated the Plaintiff's claim that the newspaper's reporting had irreparably damaged their reputation by publishing an image widely accessible on Google. Relying on screenshots and search data, Ms. Wilkinson demonstrated that the photograph in question had negligible search ranking and visibility, leading to the conclusion that it lacked the reach necessary to cause reputational harm.
- **Entertainment Celebrity:** Engaged by counsel for a publishing company in a case where the Plaintiff alleged \$30 million in reputation damage from statements in an entertainment celebrity's book, Ms. Wilkinson prepared a rebuttal report. She established that the Plaintiff's reputation was not substantiated by any publicly available accolades, achievements, or professional stature. Additionally, her analysis showed that online references from the Defendant to the Plaintiff were minimal, rendering the damages claim unsubstantiated. The matter was settled out of court.
- **Multinational News Organization:** For a multinational news organization facing a \$200 million defamation claim, Ms. Wilkinson was retained to assess alleged reputation harm. Her investigation revealed that the Plaintiff's reputation had been previously compromised by the Plaintiff's own highly publicized actions, as acknowledged by the Plaintiff in media interviews. The case was dismissed.
- **Higher Education Institute:** Retained by a major institute of higher education, Ms. Wilkinson was tasked with evaluating a Plaintiff's claim that public commentary regarding an employment issue had caused tens of millions of dollars in reputational damage. Her online research established that the commentary in question was preceded by a televised news report on the same issue, thereby undermining the Plaintiff's assertions. The case was dismissed.

REPRESENTATIVE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT CASE STUDIES

- **Business Icon:** A business icon sought a plan for a range of potential crisis scenarios that could damage his reputation. We developed a comprehensive plan that could be enacted at any time and are on call to execute a crisis management plan if one is needed.
- **Industry veteran:** An industry veteran suffered reputation damage. We implemented an online reputation repair program over a period of three months and recommended communications strategies for his crisis advisors to take for SEO reasons.
- **International Organization:** This organization sought an analysis of online accusations against it. We delivered an analysis that included a comprehensive PR plan for strategically developing content that would replace the negative content.
- **Luxury Brand:** A luxury brand engaged us to create a crisis response plan and conduct online reputation repair. We ensured the crisis did not impact their Google search results or reputation.
- **Company Founder:** A company founder was the focus of “fake news.” We developed and implemented a content creation and SEO program to expand the founder’s online presence with appropriate material. It minimized the incorrect information and relegated it to a minimal position online.
- **Professional:** A professional faced inappropriate personal issues reported in the news that dominated his search results. We provided a strategic plan for his SEO consultant to implement that resolved the issue.

MEDIA COVERAGE

INTERVIEWS

Ms. Wilkinson’s thought-leadership has attracted interviews with many media outlets on issues relating to reputation management, celebrity and corporation scandals, and other crises.

Reputation Management Webinar May 2024

Interfor Academy

Shannon Wilkinson, CEO of Reputation Communications, and Don Aviv, President of Interfor International, discuss all aspects of reputation management and reputation monitoring in this 30-minute webinar.

Models In Mentoring January 2024

SHRM, the HR Platform

SHRM’s new article on the importance of mentoring includes an interview with Sandi Webster, board member of the New York City chapter of NAWBO, and CEO Shannon Wilkinson about their successful mentorship during the start-up years of Reputation Communications.

Beverly Hills Bar Association September 2021

Online Reputation Management: Litigator’s Corner Interview

Hillary Johns, Trial Lawyer and Beverly Hills Bar Association Litigation Committee Chair, interviewed Reputation Communications CEO Shannon Wilkinson about what attorneys and law firms need to know; and Wilkinson’s work as an expert reputation witness.

Canadian Family Offices July 2021

Family reputation is everything: How to keep yours intact

CanadianFamilyOffices.com, a thought leader in topics of interest to ultra-high-net-worth Canadians, interviewed Shannon Wilkinson about how high net worth individuals can proactively protect the family name.

Boston Private Podcast October 2020

Family Office Connections: Managing Your Online Reputation

Edward Marshall, Managing Director, is joined by Shannon Wilkinson, CEO at Reputation Communications, to discuss Boston Private's family office risk survey findings.

The Guardian February 2020

Commentary about the Harvey Weinstein trial

Journal of Media Ethics July 2019

Evaluating the Reputation Management Industry through the Lens of Public Relations Ethics

CNBC October 2017

Fallout from Harvey Weinstein scandal

BravoTV/NBC Universal September 2017

How celebrities are successfully managing divorces

Huffington Post April 2017

The nuances and importance of modern reputation care; the lack of "right to be forgotten" laws in the U.S.; privacy issues that can result in personal security threats

Philadelphia Inquirer September 2015

Examining Volkswagen reputation troubles

The Wall Street Journal April 2015

The risks and rewards that social media poses to executives; best practices; making social media an important addition to brand and media management strategies

EXPERT COMMENTARY

The Wall Street Journal – "Crisis of the Week" Commentator

As a featured expert in the former column "Crisis of the Week," Ms. Wilkinson assessed how well leading corporations were managing their public relations and reputation crises. Corporations covered include:

- Equifax
- Ohio State University
- Purdue Pharma
- Sanofi
- Uber
- Whisper
- Korea Air
- Biogen Inc.
- AbbVie
- APA Group
- LendingClub
- NBC
- AOL
- Lululemon
- Mozilla
- Microsoft
- NFL

ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

You(Online): The Magazine – Chief Blogger

You(Online): The Magazine is published by Reputation Communications to help educate CEOs, C-Suite executives, rising stars, and high net worth individuals about all aspects of digital reputation management with regular blogs, articles, and resources.

Reputation Reboot: What Every Business Leader, Rising Star & VIP Needs to Know

Ms. Wilkinson is the author of this 50-page guide that shares insights about the Internet and social media cultures and the distinct ways they impact high-profile individuals.

OTHER WRITINGS

Ms. Wilkinson has contributed her writing to many other journals, online magazines, and news outlets:

New York Law Journal November 2021

When Deep Fakes and Online Defamation Attack You and Your Practice

How attorneys are among those whose names, work and reputations may be attacked by deep fakes, online defamation, and domain squatting.

New York State Bar Association Journal August 2019

Online Reputation Management for Attorneys and Law Firms

Risk Assistance Network & Exchange (RANE) June 2018

Online Reputation Management: The Essential Internet “Digital Defense”

A comprehensive overview of what every risk professional needs to understand about what online reputation resolves and why it is in such demand

Security Management Magazine December 2017

A New Social World (co-author: Interfor International COO Don Aviv)

The importance of corporate social media policies

Police One Magazine September 2017

Coptics: The optics of policing in the digital age (co-authored with Hetty Group COPTICS Team)

How law enforcement professionals can be more effective in connecting with a digital media savvy public

Risk Management Magazine/Blog January 2015

The New Reputation Risks: What You Need to Know for 2015

Changes to the Online Reputation Management landscape in 2014; predictions for 2015's biggest potential reputation-related crises

National Cybersecurity Institute Journal September 2014

The New Demands of Online Reputation Management

An overview of the current state of online reputation management; the leading online reputational threats faced by U.S. companies; explaining how reputation threats unfold, the motivations behind them, and how they can be protected against and resolved.

Forbes June 2014

Crisis Communication 2.0: Mary Barra Strong In Adversity

GM CEO's Mary Barra's strategies she has brought to crisis management, integrating multiple digital media platforms into her communications initiatives

Forbes April 2014

Image Rx: Online Reputation Management For Rising Executives

Strategies for making photographs an effective part of your online image

Forbes March 2014

From Mocking To Hacking: How To Protect Your Digital Reputation

The challenges celebrities, industry leaders and such public figures as politicians and philanthropists face in managing their digital footprints

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Women Presidents Organization May 2025

Presented to this membership organization for women leaders of privately held, multi-million-dollar companies on reputation management in an AI era.

Podcast Interview: The First Business Series June 2022

Sandi Webster Podcast

The First is a podcast by Sandi Webster that features founders and innovators who have unknowingly paved the way for others without knowing it, or acknowledging it. They share their stories to help others walk in their footsteps.

In Episode 32, Shannon Wilkinson discusses being among the first in the industry to establish an online reputation management (ORM) firm, and how she shares her knowledge by publishing extensive thought-leadership to educate the greater public and new prospects about how Google and online reputation management work.

Risk Assistance Network & Exchange (RANE) Webinar May 2019

Reputational Diligence in the Digital Economy

Discussed the evolving landscape of reputational diligence; ways organizations can mitigate risks to their brand

Global Security Exchange Conference Las Vegas, NV September 2018

Presented on social media risk at annual conference attended by over 22,000 security professionals

Podcast: Komando on Demand August 2018

How to Restore a Ruined Online Reputation from the Ground Up

Finding solutions to the problem of destroying someone's reputation

Online Panel: Business Insurance March 2013

Social Media Crucial to Corporate Risk Management

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Reputation Risks Facing High Net Worth Families August 2020

A three-part series of live, 30-minute briefings with reputation management, Internet law, investigations, due diligence and risk mitigation experts, hosted by Reputation Communications and moderated by Ms. Wilkinson.

Participants included: Don Aviv, President of Interfor International; Tim Murphy, President & CEO of Consortium Networks; David Niccolini, Co-Founder of TorchStone Global; Christine Rafin, Associate General Counsel – Media and Compliance at American Media in New York City; Dan Shefet, Individual Specialist to UNESCO, and Adviser to the Council of Europe on the Internet Ombudsman; and an expert in Internet law; and Arun Rao, President of IGI.

PRIOR POSITIONS

Public Relations Consultant – President, Cultural Communications 1990-2009

EDUCATION

Streetwise MBA – NYU Business School 2014-2015

Business program offered to entrepreneurs through the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment

BFA, Communication Design – Parsons School of Design 1984

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