

Savanta:

COVID-19 and BREXIT:
A turning point in how
organisations manage
their **Reputation & Risk**

Stakeholder Reputation Research

Autumn 2020





COVID-19 and BREXIT: A turning point in how organisations manage their Reputation & Risk



COVID-19 represents a major turning point for all organisations. Whole sectors are being transformed and existing trends are being accelerated.

At the same time, as we approach the end of the **Brexit** transition period, it is also more important than ever to understand business reputation, and therefore what mandate you have for shaping the future direction of your organisational strategy in a post-Brexit environment.



Managing stakeholder relationships during this time of transition is essential, as they shape the environment in which organisations operate, from influencing regulation, reputation and government support, to addressing key sector issues in the media.

Understanding the post-pandemic and post-Brexit priorities of key stakeholders is critical, as stakeholder perceptions are often formed at these key moments where an organisation's behaviour becomes visible or is put under stress.

Adapting your communications approach to highlight points of success and mitigate areas of challenge is essential to building strong relationships at this critical time.

Savanta will empower you to take an evidence-based approach to your stakeholder communications.



Reputation Management

Our expert consultants will explore your organisation's reputation across all perspectives

Through providing insight into stakeholder perceptions, we will support you to effectively engage with key stakeholders on their key priorities in a way that allows you to achieve organisational objectives.

Old normal

- How was your organisation perceived before the pandemic/Brexit?
- What were the key pre-pandemic sector issues?
- What were the key pre-pandemic issues for your organisation?



Lockdown

- What do stakeholders perceive the impact of lockdown as on your organisation?
- What behaviours, actions and communications were visible to stakeholders?
- How has this impacted perceptions of the organisation?



New normal/Brexit/

- What 'new normal' elements impact your organisation?
- Has the pandemic/Brexit accelerated or intensified any previous themes or issues?
- What are stakeholders' priorities for your organisation post-pandemic/Brexit?



Restart

- What do stakeholders know about your organisation's restart activity?
- What are the opportunities and threats to opening up?



Regulatory Risk

One of our strengths as a research partner is our experience of working in highly regulated sectors and in areas with active policy interventions.

We are experts in our sectors, and work with regulators directly, meaning we know what is on the horizon from a regulation and risk perspective and bring this to help inform and shape client strategy.

Technology



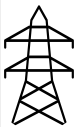
- The EU and overhaul of the digital single market
- Data privacy
- Fake news & impact on democracy
- The geopolitics of 5G and social media platforms
- Monopolisation of global tech

Financial Services



- New guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers
- New business interruption insurance for SME's
- Operating effectively in the wake of COVID-19
- (No deal) Brexit and future relationship with Europe

Energy & Utilities



- Regulatory intervention to ensure consumers get a good deal
- Caps on household energy bills & supporting vulnerable
- Climate change, decarbonisation, net zero targets,
- Tory 'Green Revolution' Proposed regulatory intervention on company profits vs. investor management

Transport & Rail



- Operating effectively and safely in the wake of COVID-19
- Airspace modernisation strategy
- Protecting consumer choice and safety
- The move towards a contract-based system
- Electric vehicles and potential target to phase out petrol/diesel by 2030

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COVID-19 has posed an existential threat to many organisations and industries and the reaction of stakeholders has been highly diverse. Our stakeholder projects reflect this by tailoring our approach to every engagement, whilst following key principles.

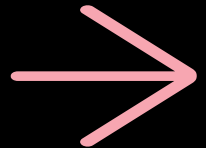
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Why conduct stakeholder reputation research?

At this critical time of market challenge and disruption, it is more important than ever for organisations to understand stakeholder perceptions in order to inform strategy that will:

- **Manage investor and City confidence**, including through the press, during challenging trading conditions.
- **Build confidence** around the organisation's strategy.
- **Manage communication challenges** surrounding inevitable tough business decisions.



How well do your stakeholders know your organisation?

What are their key priorities for your organisation next year?

What do they think of your organization's performance?

What do they think about your social and environmental impact?



Your key stakeholders by nature

We will engage the individuals that matter most to your organisation and sector; and provide you the critical insights needed to take positive decisions.

Whether your organisation needs to reset its stakeholder engagement, adapt current plans or address key challenges we will tailor the audience, discussions and reporting around your needs.

Audiences we access include:



MPs



Peers



Regulators



Civil Servants



Investors



Journalists



Trade Press



NGOs &
Charities



Think Tanks



Membership
Bodies



Industry
Bodies



Academics



Our core approach

Nothing frustrates us more than research that sits gathering dust, failing to drive positive actions. Based on our extensive experience, we have therefore developed a tried and tested research framework that includes:

Immersion interviews

Gaining a detailed understanding of your professional and organisational objectives to ensure that the research delivers the insight you need

Expert research design

Tailored research approach centred around the organisation's objectives

Robust KPI tracking

Monitoring and benchmarking key KPIs across target audiences and markets to evaluate performance and advise recommendations

In depth interviews

To capture a depth of unanticipated insight from influencers, peers, policy makers, decision makers and consumers

Accessible reporting

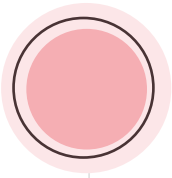
Thematic analysis of key findings, bespoke dashboards, communications grids, stakeholder pen portraits and recommendations

Workshops to activate insight

Ensuring research projects have tangible impacts within our clients' organisations

CASE STUDY

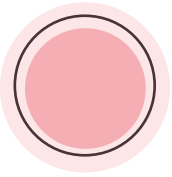
High street bank: Responsible business research



Investigation

A high street bank wanted to understand what behaviours drive perceptions of a responsible business in order to revamp its approach to communications and community relations.

Whilst part of the research focused on activity currently being undertaken, a large proportion was ideational – and looking to generate insight into how a responsible business behaved in general.



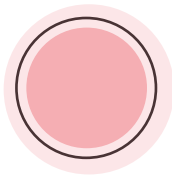
Implementation

Savanta conducted research amongst the bank's three key audiences:

- Stakeholders
- Customers
- Local representative communities across the UK

The customers and the communities were polled online using our proprietary online panel and platform, while stakeholders were interviewed by phone.

Stakeholders included MPs, senior industry & trade professionals, charity sector execs, think tanks and academics.



Impact

Savanta delivered clear guidance as to how the bank should develop its responsible business activity, including specific behaviours and initiatives it could adopt. This has shaped the bank's actions and communications to key stakeholders.

CASE STUDY

Regulator: COVID-19 stakeholder

A financial services regulator wanted to explore stakeholder perceptions of their performance during the pandemic, including COVID-19 related regulatory actions and their wider key areas of focus.

They also wanted to understand the extent to which those key areas of focus need to change to reflect post-pandemic priorities. Whilst the Regulator had recently conducted a comprehensive stakeholder audit – it knew that the pandemic was potentially a ‘turning point’ moment, in which attitudes towards the regulator could improve or worsen.

To meet the objectives of the research, Savanta ComRes has committed to deliver 35 in-depth telephone interviews with the Regulator’s key stakeholders. These include senior individuals from the industry, relevant trade bodies, MPs and the government. The discussion guide is tailored to understand attitudes towards the Regulator, its strategy, key regulatory

actions during COVID-19, and areas of focus. As we understand the importance of delivering timely insight, the project is being conducted on a tight turnaround basis.

Savanta ComRes will present the findings to the Board of the Regulator, and key findings will be integrated into the Regulator’s strategic review to help shape how it communicates with stakeholders in the aftermath of the pandemic.

A core team of experts

Our senior team has experience working across sectors for major corporations, public sector bodies and regulators.



Meghan Oliver
Director

Meghan has extensive experience of undertaking reputation and stakeholder research with organisations ranging from regulators and trade associations through to FTSE500 companies and in sectors as diverse as financial services and consumer goods.

Meghan has undertaken this work both within the UK, as well as globally.



James Rentoul
Director

James oversees Savanta's work in the infrastructure sector for clients across transport, utilities and the built environment, including ORR, EDF, Heathrow and RICS.

He has extensive experience in conducting quantitative and qualitative research among senior stakeholders including MPs, business leaders and civil servants.



Max McEwan
Senior Consultant

Max works across a range of industries to deliver insight to communications professionals. He has managed stakeholder research projects for RBS, Lloyds, HSBC, Nominet, M&S, FoodDrinkEurope and is passionate about advocating for an evidence led approach to corporate communications.



Katy Owen
Associate Director

Katy is Associate Director at Savanta specialising in policy, communications and reputation research.

A mixed methodologist, she has strong experience in both quantitative and qualitative design, fieldwork and analysis.

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