



**T**o state the obvious, reputation matters, especially in business. However, many still don't realize just how reputation is being impacted through their online efforts or lack thereof.

A recent Harris Interactive survey on behalf of Careerbuilder.com suggests more than 22 percent of hiring managers screened job candidates via social networking profiles. Thirty-four percent of those managers found content that caused them to dismiss the candidate, while only 24 percent found something positive.

This social media review of reputation isn't restricted to human resources. Many businesses are reviewed on-line prior to getting the contract or purchase. Searching customer-driven forums on-line to gauge customer satisfaction is becoming more commonplace.

This begs the question: Are you ready to participate in the "reputation economy"?

In many cases, you already are and may not exactly realize the impact and how real the dangers are of getting it wrong. For example, imagine you're **John Favreau** and you've been asked to be the lead speech writer for U.S. president-elect **Barack Obama**. Then imagine you're blowing off some steam with some of your campaign colleagues and happen to grab—in a provocative way—a cardboard cut-out of Secretary of State-designate Senator **Hillary Clinton**. Now, imagine a picture being taken and put up on Facebook. While you're cringing and shaking your head in disbelief, it does get worse: The now infamous Favreau-grabbing-Clinton picture is "exposed" on CNN. Calls to fire him are rampant. Of course, this whole issue is impacting Obama's virtually flawless reputation... and, despite Clinton being the victim of this prank, feminist groups are calling her out for not being more harsh in her response to the momentary lapse in judgement by the Democrat writer.

Reputation 2.0 is clearly real. Businesses and organizations need to be aware that one lousy customer experience or off-the-cuff comment made by a politician can turn into



a wild-fire of negative on-line chatter. **Mike Mack** of X5 Management Inc., a management consultant here in Edmonton, notes that he often sees damage to reputation start as a result of "over promising and under delivering. Perception is reality and all it takes is one bad experience." Factor in that social media is a powerful amplifier of the message—good or bad—and you better have your next action ready to go. The list of brands that have been blindsided by this phenomenon is long and ever growing.

Now that you're more aware of the need to manage your reputation on-line, I'd like to provide you with an interesting opportunity to boost your image. In December, fusedlogic inc. partnered with Edmonton's Food Bank to launch the "fusedlogic Food Bank Challenge." This is the perfect way to enter the on-line community on a positive note.

The Challenge is a "social" media experiment, designed to be simple while proving that social media does work and is measurable. It also hopes to prove that we as human beings care about others. The goal of the project is to generate one million pictures of one million food bank donations in one year.

I approached **Marjorie Benz**, executive

director of Edmonton's Food Bank with the idea and she loved it. If you are fortunate enough to not have to rely on the Food Bank, you may not know that it provides food for more than 250,000 meals and snacks per month to people in need.

Participating in the challenge is simple: Make a food or monetary donation to the Edmonton Food Bank and take a picture while doing so. No donation is too small or too big. Then upload the picture as one of the million we need to either the Facebook or Flickr group, entitled "fusedlogic Food Bank Challenge". That's it. Feel free to take credit for your generosity by tagging the photo with the name of your company or organization and location. If you choose to remain anonymous, that's cool too.

Just remember: The next time you're at the grocery store buy a hamper, then take a picture as you put it in the Food Bank box. You'll be part of a growing global on-line community... building your reputation in a positive way. Social media at its best. ✓

*Walter Schwabe is the Chief Evolution Officer of fusedlogic inc., a social media strategy firm and Alberta company since 2000. You can learn more at [www.fusedlogic.com](http://www.fusedlogic.com)*

## On the HORIZON

### JANUARY

January to February  
Imagining Science  
Art Exhibit, Book Launch  
and Panel Discussions  
GE3LS Alberta team  
Art Gallery of Alberta  
[www.festivalofideas.ca/imagining-science.cfm](http://www.festivalofideas.ca/imagining-science.cfm)

January 13  
THECIS Breakfast Club  
Foresight: Strategic Resilience Tools  
for Preparedness and Security  
Speaker Jack Smith, Defense R&D  
Canada  
7:00 am to 9:00am—Breakfast  
Royal Glenora Club  
Register [www.thecis.ca](http://www.thecis.ca)

January 20  
BusinessLink Monthly  
Networking Event  
Internet Security with David Papp,  
Microtek Corporation  
2:30 to 4:00 pm  
#100, 10237 – 104 Street  
[www.canadabusiness.ca/alberta](http://www.canadabusiness.ca/alberta)

January 28  
AWE and WISEST, SET for Success  
Speaker Series  
Jodi McDonald, Owner of Keystone  
Labs  
4:00 to 5:30 pm  
UofA Faculty Club  
[www.awebusiness.com](http://www.awebusiness.com)

### FEBRUARY

February 8-10  
Bio Partnering: North America  
Supported by Canadian Trade  
Commissioner  
Westin Bayshore Resort, Vancouver  
[www.biopartnering.com/home/home/section.htm](http://www.biopartnering.com/home/home/section.htm)

February 10, 2009  
Alberta Women Entrepreneurs  
Association Information Session  
for Your Business  
12:15 to 1:00 pm  
Suite 100, 10237-104 Street  
[www.awebusiness.com](http://www.awebusiness.com)

Continued from page 5

With his limited start-up funding, progress had been slower than Precht had hoped, but considerable advancements had been made in the past year. "Early on we could have sold off for pennies, or lost control for pennies. But now, we've validated our efforts. Last fall, we were issued our U.S. Patent for exSALT silver coating technology."

Precht credits TEC Edmonton and Dr. Randall Yatscoff for being instrumental in facilitating the injection of additional funding. TEC Edmonton, a joint venture of the University of Alberta and the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, provides executive support as required to emerging technology companies. It places people on the boards and helps management get on their feet.

Yatscoff, the Alberta Heritage

Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) executive-in-residence for TEC Edmonton, assumed the position of executive chairman on Exciton's board. He spends roughly two days a week with Precht's team, and brought in business colleagues and Angel investors.

At the end of October, The AHFMR awarded Exciton \$500,000 toward commercialization of Exciton's advanced wound care dressings.

"Exciton is one of the most successful companies in the TEC Edmonton portfolio that was non-university based. It was community based," says Precht. Yatscoff adds, "It shows that TEC Edmonton not only services the university community but the community as a whole."

However, the commercialization phase for Exciton is still a challenge. There is still the need to get partners on board, solidify

the supply chain and introduce products.

"Marketing partners don't pay for R & D. We still have to use funds to get through the regulatory process—expected to take about six to nine months—and prove we can bring product to market, including establishing manufacturing capability."

In the meantime, Precht is actively negotiating partnerships for marketing, distribution and licensing deals. "Closing on deals is dependent on us getting through the regulatory process: FDA in the U.S. and Health Canada. We expect to have our product to market about this time next year."

Rod Precht, P.Eng., president and CEO never stops. His team is currently working on exSOL, a silver solution technology—one that can attach to hard surfaces and be added to cleansers.

In fact, word is just in that Exciton has

signed a manufacturing and partnering agreement with Ostrem Chemical Ltd., Edmonton for the exclusive rights to manufacture a silver disinfectant hard-surface cleaner that incorporates Exciton's exSOL technology. Over the next year, Ostrem will participate in obtaining regulatory approvals for the product and securing a leading marketing and distribution partner in North America.

Finally, silver linings in those clouds of uncertainty. ✓

*Greg Gazin, "The Gadget Guy", is a serial entrepreneur, freelance technology columnist, small business speaker, an avid Podcaster and producer of Toastcaster.com. Greg can be reached at 780.424.1881 or [greg@gadgetguy.ca](mailto:greg@gadgetguy.ca)*

[www.excitontech.com](http://www.excitontech.com)

