The Value of Knowing What They Say About You

Feedback & Market Perception

The Reality of Executive Reputation

At the senior level, decisions are rarely driven by what's on paper. They're shaped by what people hear when your name comes up. Market perception isn't based on formal reviews or coaching, but on the informal narrative that circulates among boards, investors, search firms, and operators. It's the part you don't see, and often can't be there to shape, but others use to size you up. These stories may be outdated or inaccurate, but they still influence who calls, hires, or backs you.

Why Market Perception Matters

- **Market Reputation drives deal flow.** Executives with unclear or dated reputations often miss out on opportunities without ever knowing they were being discussed. Whether you're seen as "too commercial," "too quiet," "too startup," or "too corporate," assumptions are being made before the first call is even scheduled.
- **You can't influence what you don't know.** Without clarity on how others perceive you, you cannot adjust your story or correct misconceptions. That gap becomes a hidden barrier to progression.
- **Perception shifts over time.** What was true five years ago may no longer be the case. But unless someone updates the narrative, your "credit score" stays stuck. If the market sees you as a turnaround exec, a corporate lifer, or a safe pair of hands, that's the lane you'll keep getting put in, even if you're ready for something else.
- **Do you know their starting point?** When you walk iThe nto a room, virtually or in person, the decision-maker often already has an opinion. The most important question is: do you know what that opinion is? And does your current narrative reinforce or challenge it?

What Real Feedback Looks Like

True reputational insight comes from unmuffled market signals, not filtered internal commentary. The types of input we gather include:

- Off the record views from investors, board members, and members of search teams
- Reflections from former employers and leadership colleagues

- Comments shared during diligence or selection committee conversations
- Perceptions that never make it into formal feedback
- Absence of mention in key rooms or conversations

We look for:

- Strengths that others observe but you may not
- Traits or behaviors that others flag as liabilities
- Gaps between how you present yourself and how others interpret your story
- Labels that no longer reflect your work but continue to define your reputation
- Silence that signals missed visibility when your name should be in the mix

First impressions also carry disproportionate weight. As Malcolm Gladwell notes in Blink, people make snap judgments in as little as two seconds, forming lasting opinions before a conversation even unfolds. Those instant assessments feed into the broader narrative about who you are as a leader, which is why understanding and shaping market perception is so critical.

How Banff Works with Executives

We help leaders uncover what the market is actually saying and then translate that insight into strategy.

Our process includes gathering feedback from the people who shape executive decisions. We identify themes, surface blockers, and build a strategy that aligns your current trajectory with future goals.

We focus on signal over volume. The goal is clarity. When you understand how you are perceived, you can take deliberate steps to reinforce or reshape your story.

How Banff Can Help

Reputation shapes outcomes whether you are aware of it or not. We help surface the perceptions influencing your opportunities and give you the tools to evolve or strengthen your narrative.

We work directly with executives to uncover reputational signals, interpret them with strategic clarity, and put that insight into action.

If you are interested in exploring how market perception and narrative strategy could support your next move, we can connect you with our in-house executive brand strategist.