

# REPUTATIONAL IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

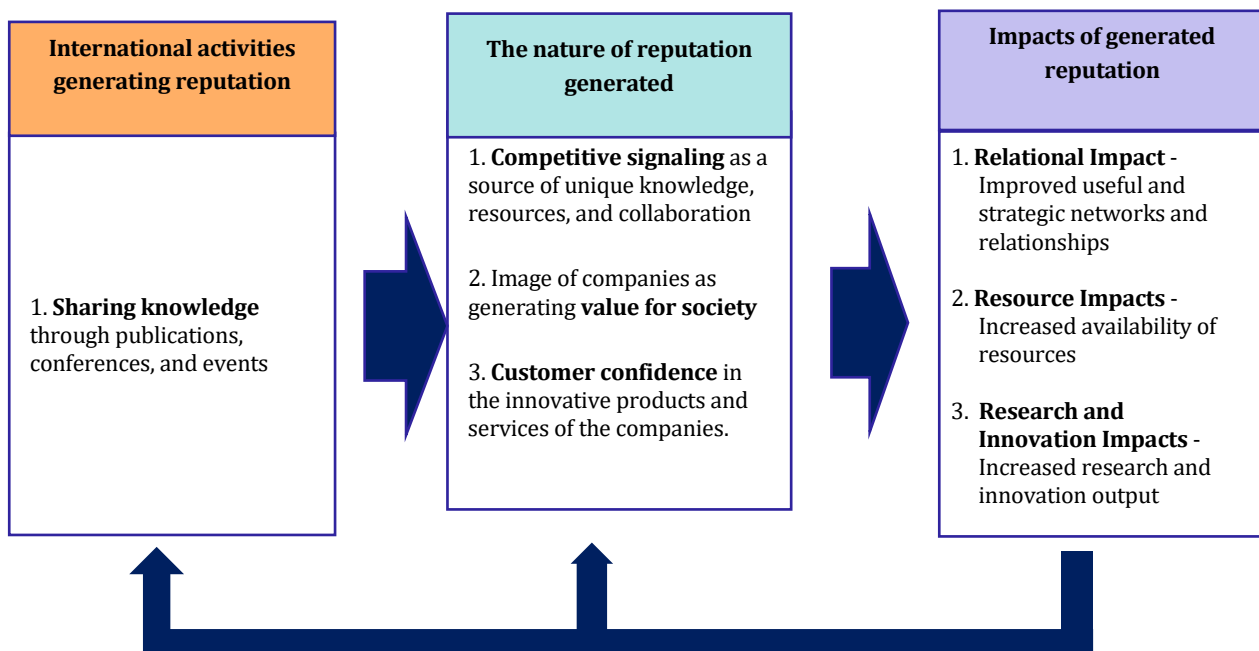
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## 2.2. Company-focused international knowledge sharing engagements

Firms are engaged in sharing their knowledge and expertise through various channels, such as publications and attendance at events and conferences. International knowledge sharing could generate reputation of competitive signaling as an important source of knowledge and collaboration and socially responsible business, and ensure customer confidence in innovative products and services. This reputation building could generate relational, resource, research and innovation impacts (Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2: Company-focused international knowledge sharing engagements generating reputational impacts**

### 2.2.1 International activities

#### » Sharing knowledge through publications, conferences and events

Participating in national and international conferences and events allows firms to showcase their latest research findings and innovations, and establish themselves as influencers and thought leaders in their industry. Firms encourage their scientists and engineers to publish their research output often in collaboration with national and international academic institutions in scientific journals, at leading conferences and events, and in industry reports to enhance their visibility while allowing participation in the broader scientific community (Gassmann et al., 2009). Gaining visibility within specialist and strategically advantageous communities is one of the most significant purposes of international knowledge sharing (Joly & Mangematin, 1996).

For example, AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the UK's leading pharmaceutical and healthcare companies, share their inventions and research output in scientific peer-reviewed journals across the fields of medicine, pharmacology, and biotechnology. They also participate actively in international conferences offering opportunities to build personal connections with professionals working in similar companies, which helps structure social capital (Majuri, 2022) and facilitates further collaborations on international projects.

Similarly, British Petroleum (BP) publishes research in the areas of energy, sustainability, and environmental science, with a focus on advancements in oil, gas, and renewable energy technologies (Gassman et al., 2009). Siemens, through its 'Pictures of the Future' magazine, effectively showcases its technological advancements. Such international knowledge sharing is facilitated through a structured media strategy, which ensures consistent and effective communication of a company's innovations and research developments (Gassman et al., 2009).

### 2.2.2 The nature of reputation generated

#### » Competitive signalling as a source of unique knowledge, resources, and collaboration

By presenting research findings through publication in high-profile international media outlets and peer-reviewed journals, and participating in discussions at international conferences or events, firms signal their cutting-edge expertise, R&D achievements, and leadership in their field. These activities demonstrate their capacity for global innovation and thought leadership, establishing them as key players in their industry. When companies actively share knowledge and communicate their strengths and capabilities, this visibility highlights the unique resources and innovative capabilities of their R&D labs, positioning them as attractive partners for international and national collaboration. Popular media coverage acts as a platform to inform

the public and industry stakeholders about the company's strengths, fostering a perception of reliability and resourcefulness as a research and innovation collaborator, which in turn enhances its competitive position and attracts potential partners, collaborators, and investors (Gassman et al., 2009; Majuri, 2022).

### » Image of companies as generating value for society

A well-crafted international knowledge-sharing and media strategy allows companies to effectively communicate their contributions to societal well-being. This enhances their reputation as organizations committed to creating positive societal impacts, which can attract customers, investors, and partners who value corporate social responsibility. Through this strategy – which reinforces the image of companies as generating value for society – companies generate customer confidence in their innovative products and services (Wittneben & Kiyar, 2009; Oake et al. 2013).

For instance, Roche, a well-known company recognised as an innovation leader in the healthcare, science, and R&D sectors, strategically launched a “targeted media campaign”, a remarkable knowledge-sharing strategy aimed at a defined audience. One of its recent media campaigns focused on engaging the “concerned citizen” has been a successful disease awareness campaign targeted at a selected segment of the general public. This campaign has generated 4.4M impressions (incl. 1.3 mill video views), 82K users (99% new users and 12% of all users on roche.com during campaign period), and 121K pageviews (>100K unique pageviews). By showcasing its contributions to healthcare and society, Roche builds an image of a company that creates significant societal value. Through its targeted campaign, Roche demonstrates its commitment to reducing the healthcare burden of society and enhancing awareness, thereby reinforcing its reputation as a socially embedded innovator and a leader in the healthcare industry.

### » Confidence of customers in innovative products and services offered by the companies

Promoting the publication of research in international peer-reviewed journals and participation in scientific conferences that attract a global audience enhances the credibility and perceived quality of a company's products and services, awareness of the company's scientific achievement, and the perception that the company is at the forefront of innovation. As publications are peer-reviewed, these generate awareness of the robustness of GSK's R&I activities. Since healthcare is a susceptible and regulated area of R&I, such reputation building of robustness of their R&I plays a greater role in building customer confidence. Additionally, multiple methods used by corporations to raise awareness of their international R&I activities enhance customer confidence and loyalty of firm innovation (Peacock 1993) Enhanced

awareness, bolsters confidence in the reliability and superiority of the company's offerings among customers, including other businesses, leading to increased customer trust and loyalty as well as market positioning (Gassman et al., 2009; Barnett and Storey, 2000; Birchall et al., 1996).

### 2.2.3 Impacts of generated reputation

Table 2.2: Impacts of reputation generated through international knowledge sharing engagements

Types of Impact	Specific Impacts
<b>1. Relational Impact</b> - Improved useful and strategic networks and relationships	Acceptance within the broader international scientific community  Reducing partners' uncertainty of firms' capabilities
<b>2. Resource Impacts</b> - Increased availability of resources	Increased likelihood of becoming a source of valuable knowledge in the future
<b>3. Research and Innovation Impacts</b> - Increased research and innovation output	Increased partners' willingness to enter partnerships

## Case Study: British Petroleum (BP)'s knowledge sharing strategy

British Petroleum (BP) is a leading global energy company, operating in more than 70 countries worldwide. It is known for its extensive operations as a n international producer of oil and gas and renewable energy. BP has adopted a remarkable strategic approach to knowledge sharing by effectively leveraging publications, conferences and industry events. While there may be no objective analysis definitively proving that this strategy increases trust and loyalty among its stakeholders including other businesses, customers and overall society, it offers valuable insights into the reasoning behind BP's decision to invest in such an approach. By examining BP's strategy and its impacts, we can better understand how the company aims to build an international reputation that enhances trust in its resources and capabilities, ultimately positioning itself for successful international collaboration.

### »» *International R&I activities:*

BP disseminates its research, expertise and innovation through its publications, such as the BP Energy Outlook, and its publications in Digital Energy Journal. BP Energy Outlook explores the key trends and uncertainties, surrounding the energy transition, as well as explores the possible implications of different assumptions concerning the nature of energy transition based on existing technologies and predicting scenarios- for example, current trajectory and Net Zero. Digital Energy journal where it shares the latest discoveries and innovations in drilling, production, and related technologies. Since 1952, BP has produced a comprehensive review of the energy industry through its Statistical Review of World Energy, providing objective data and analysis on world energy markets. BP also shares valuable insights into its strategic initiatives, sustainability efforts, and financial performance through its Annual Report and sustainability reports. By leveraging high-quality and data-driven publications and addressing multiple stakeholders, BP solidifies its reputation and establishes itself as a thought leader in the energy sector. BP is also an active participant in major industry conferences, such as Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERAWeek), the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC), and the World Petroleum Congress (WPC) as well as international aviation and sustainability conferences and exhibitions.

### »» *The nature of reputational impacts generated:*

These knowledge-sharing activities provide BP with more opportunities to showcase its latest technological advancement, share best practices, and discuss trends in the energy industry and global energy landscape. Thereby, BP contributes to influential forums and demonstrates its leadership role in shaping the future of energy. For instance, BP's Energy Outlook has a significant global readership, attracting a wide audience interested in the future of energy markets and the energy transition. The report is widely used by policymakers, industry leaders, academics, and analysts to understand key trends and uncertainties in the global energy system. The 2024 edition of the Energy Outlook was viewed by over [20,000 people during its online launch](#). The reputation built on sharing insights, sustainability efforts, and technological advancement enhances the likelihood of increased trust among potential partners regarding the company's expertise and long-term visions. This underscores the company's reputation as a source of knowledge, unique resources, and collaboration, generating value for society with greater credibility in international R&I.

Source:

<https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/sustainability.html>

<https://ceraweek.com/index.html>

<https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics.html>

<https://www.bp.com/en/global/air-bp/news-and-views/air-bp-news>



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## About the Innovation and Research Caucus

The IRC supports the use of robust evidence and insights in UKRI's strategies and investments, as well as undertaking a co-produced programme of research. Our members are leading academics from across the social sciences, other disciplines and sectors, who are engaged in different aspects of innovation and research system. We connect academic experts, UKRI, IUK and the ESRC, by providing research insights to inform policy and practice. Professor Tim Vorley and Professor Stephen Roper are Co-Directors. The IRC is funded by UKRI via the ESRC and IUK, grant number ES/X010759/1. The support of the funders is acknowledged. The views expressed in this piece are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the funders.

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