

The Amber Heard and Johnny Depp case: Demonstrating the power of social media

 By [Regine le Roux](#)

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On TikTok, the hashtag #JusticeForJohnnyDepp had 19.5 billion views, while #JusticeForAmberHeard had 75 million. Social media played a massive part in the Amber Heard and Johnny Depp Case, showing just how powerful a tool it can be in building and ruining reputations.



Source:© NDTV [NDTV](#) Social media played a massive part in the Amber Heard and Johnny Depp Case

It's no denying that social media has and will always play a big role when it comes to building and ruining reputations, and it certainly has come into play in this case.

No slacking off

I have always said that when it comes to building a reputation, it's like comparing it to getting fit. The fitter you are the better you will feel, the more you get done, the quality of your life improves and in general, the people that you start hanging out with will contribute to your overall wellbeing.

It does not mean you will never injure yourself or get sick, but, if you do, you will recuperate considerably quicker.

When you have a good reputation, people want to be associated with you and your brand, they will spend their hard-earned cash on your products and services and give you the benefit of the doubt during trying times because you are able to tap into your reputation stamina.

We all know that it takes consistent effort over a fair period of time to get fit, and just one week of being lazy to set your fitness level back to a point where it feels like you need to start your fitness regime from scratch.

The same goes for your reputation, you consistently need to build it, no slacking off. And, as much as we wish we could, you can't buy yourself fit or buy a good reputation, you need to put in the work.

Three of the key underlying contributors to a healthy and strong reputation are: respect, trust and authenticity.

With a better understanding behind building a reputation, here's my take on Depp and Heard.

Not squeaky clean, but authentic

Johnny Depp has built his reputation on an incredibly successful acting career, leveraging off the whacky, off beat, endearing, characters that people have resonated and loved for many years.

He has never shied away from admitting to his alcohol and drug dependency, or that he really does not enjoy the limelight. Although he is not a squeaky-clean character, he is authentic, which equates to his strong, tenacious reputation.

Amber: reputation fitness dead in the water

Amber Heard has also built a reputation for herself, unfortunately, hers is built on being consistently inconsistent. The biggest thing tarnishing her reputation, is that she does not come across as authentic.

In her court appearances, she lost a lot of respect with her verbal account of events, mannerisms, and inconsistencies in her story, all of which led us to question whether she can be trusted at all.

Therefore, the three key pillars to a reputation: authenticity, respect and trust, appear to be missing in her case. Sadly, her reputation fitness is dead in the water.

The question of moral judgement

In an [USA Today](#) article published in May 2022, they raise the question of moral judgement.

David Pizarro, a professor in the Department of Psychology at Cornell University shares: "The question about why we see different things in this case is deeply influenced by the moral judgment that we make first."

He says that judgment kicks in a number of motivated processes.

"When you already want to believe something, you need less evidence to keep believing it and you're more willing to accept any evidence that is in favour of it without thinking more deeply about it.

"When you're presented with information that goes contrary to what you believe, then you actually start thinking more deeply about it in order to counterargue," he says.

According to Pizarro's framework, if someone makes the moral judgment that Depp is likely an example of a man falsely accused, they will look for information that confirms that belief and evaluate it less carefully than the information that disproves it, which they have to work harder to dismiss.

The same process occurs for the person who makes the moral judgment that Heard is likely an abused woman unfairly

criticised by the public when she should be believed.

Social media and reputations

The TikTok figures, in the *USA Today* article quoted above, show that people will go out of their way to support the people that they resonate with and will actively look for information confirming their own beliefs, be it true or not. The article says: "Social media reaction to the case has been cruel and derisive."

It is important to mention that when people have a strong viewpoint to share, social media is the likely place where they will do this, adding to the views, likes, and shares of information that is already in circulation.

And social media influences people's opinions. It's true, the bigger the marketing budgets, the more noise will be created. But just as you can't buy fitness, you can't buy your reputation either.

Money can't buy you credibility if your foundation is built on being unauthentic, people will very quickly see through you and turn on you. Your campaign and reputation will fizzle out incredibly quickly if it is not built on authenticity, respect or trust.

ABOUT REGINE LE ROUX

Regine is a reputation specialist. She founded Reputation Matters in 2005; where they measure and manage companies' reputations using their unique Repudometer® measurement tool.

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