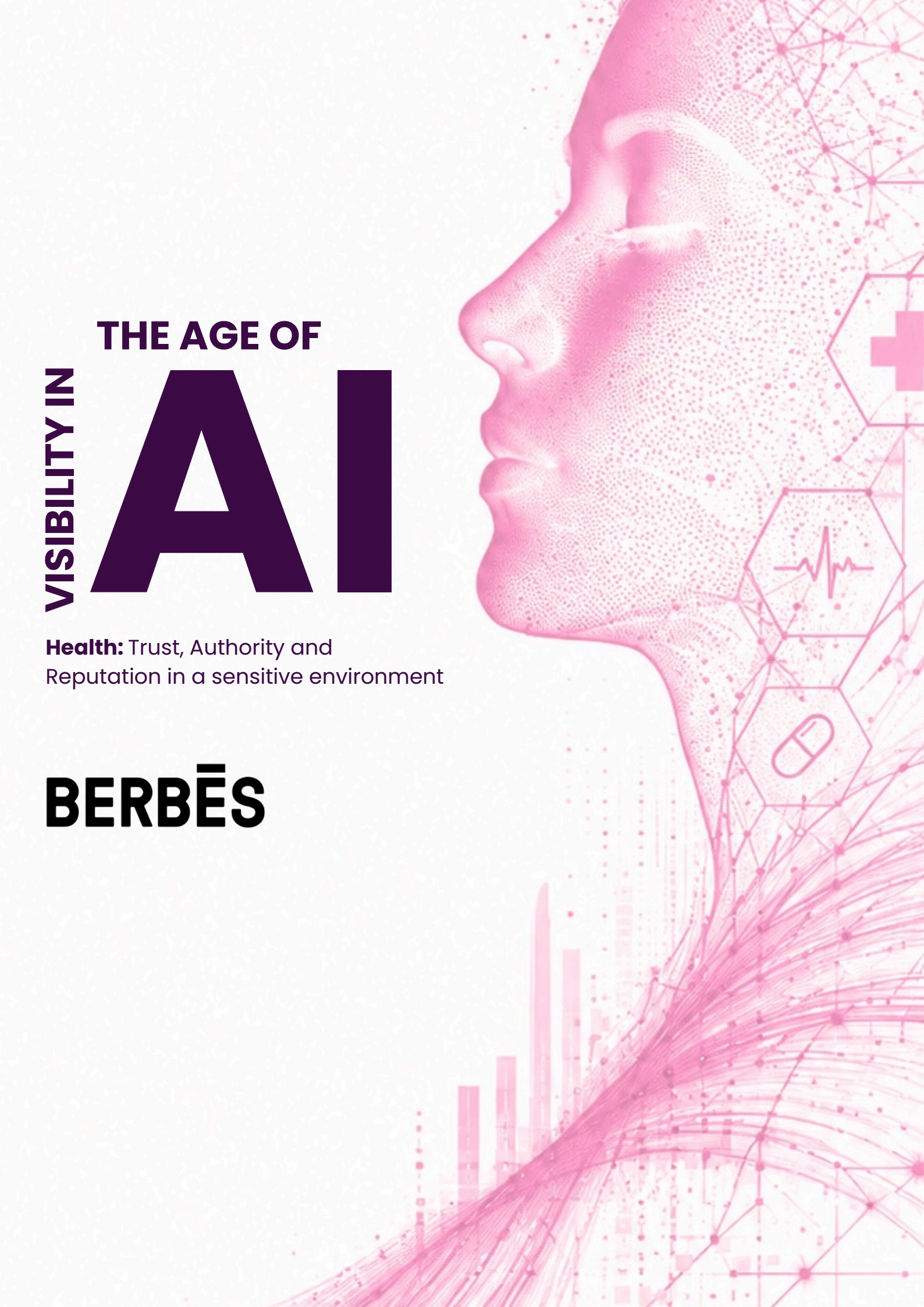
VISIBILITY IN THE AGE OF AI

Health: Trust, Authority and Reputation in a sensitive environment

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HEALTH: TRUST, AUTHORITY AND REPUTATION IN A SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

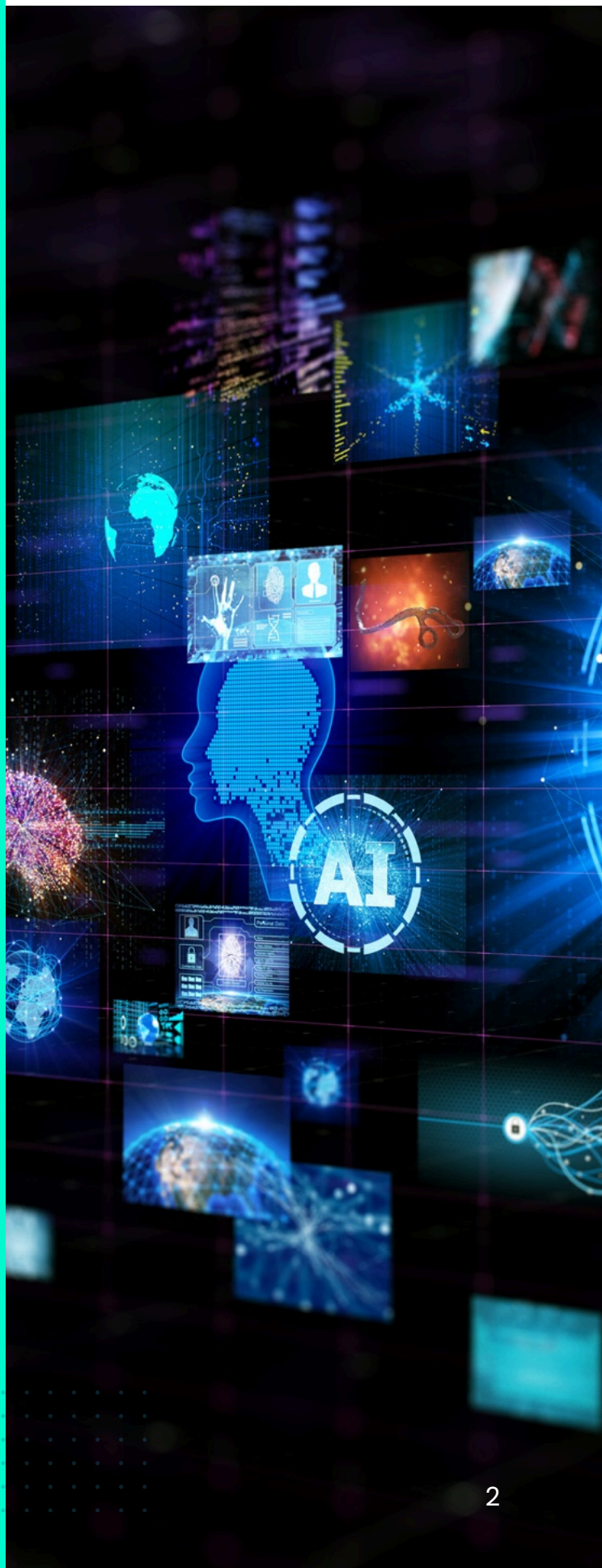
In any AI visibility strategy, authority matters. But in healthcare, it matters in a different way.

It is not enough for an organisation to be visible, recognisable or active online. To be part of a credible response, it must be perceived as a reliable, legitimate and prudent source. This distinction is crucial because health information can influence perceptions, expectations, decisions or behaviours relating to people's wellbeing.

AI systems do not eliminate this requirement. They amplify it. When a response incorporates information about a medical condition, a biomedical innovation, an active ingredient, a healthcare technology, a pharmaceutical company, a scientific society or a public health campaign, the user receives that information as part of a seemingly objective summary.

If the source is inaccurate, promotional or taken out of context, the risk is not just to search engine rankings. It is a reputational risk.

That is why, in healthcare, the question should not simply be how to appear in AI environments, but under what conditions it makes sense to appear.



From E-E-A-T to reputational authority

For years, the EEAT concept — experience, expertise, authority and trust — has been used to explain how search engines evaluate certain content, particularly in sensitive areas.

Its underlying rationale: authorship, peer review, sources, update dates, editorial transparency and clear corporate information are still essential indicators.

But the generative landscape forces us to broaden our perspective. It is not just about demonstrating quality within a single page. It is about building a recognisable authority across multiple contexts.

An organisation is more readily regarded as a reliable source when its expertise is not presented in isolation, but is corroborated by various elements of the ecosystem: the media, scientific or technical publications, professional bodies, reports, industry events, institutional partnerships, interviews, opinion pieces and expert voices.

In healthcare, trust does not depend solely on the brand. It also depends on the context in which the brand appears. A promotional claim carries less weight than information published in a specialist publication, explained by an expert or presented within a scientific or institutional discussion.



The brand as a trustworthy entity

For an AI system to be able to correctly identify, assess and utilise information about an organisation, it needs to clearly recognise what the organisation is, what it does, where it operates, what level of specialisation it has, and in which discussions it is relevant.

In the health sector, that definition must be precise. A pharmaceutical company, a biotechnology firm, a healthtech company, a patients' organisation, a scientific society, a foundation, a hospital or a specialist agency do not all occupy the same position. Each has different functions, limitations, legitimacy and target audiences.

When that identity is unclear, the interpretation is weakened. The brand may come to be associated with issues that are too broad, concepts that lack clear distinction, or contexts that do not apply to it. In AI, such ambiguity can result in reduced coverage, inaccurate associations or a loss of authority.

Consistency is not a matter of style. It is a prerequisite for interpretability.

Scientific, corporate and institutional communication

Generative visibility in healthcare is built at the intersection of scientific, corporate and institutional communication. Scientific communication brings rigour, evidence and precision. Corporate communication explains who is driving an initiative, what role they play within the sector and how they engage with their audiences. Institutional communication situates the organisation within the context of policies, public priorities, partnerships and sector-wide discussions.

When these dimensions are treated separately, the brand becomes fragmented. When they are aligned, they build a much stronger identity. For AI systems, this consistency helps to connect the organisation, its areas of expertise and the sources that validate its role.

In this regard, agencies specialising in healthcare have a clear advantage: they understand the sector, the target audiences, the regulatory constraints, the specialist media, and the need to translate complex information without compromising accuracy. In an environment where authority cannot be improvised, this ability to organise and convey messages effectively is strategic.

Expert spokespersons and human authority

In the healthcare sector, authority is not built solely on the basis of brands. It is also built on the people who represent them.

Doctors, researchers, pharmacists, scientific leaders, managers, representatives of professional bodies, practitioners, patients, experts and institutional spokespersons can have a significant influence on how an organisation is perceived. AI, just like users, looks for signs of trust in authorship and track record.

This does not mean turning every expert into a content creator, nor does it mean forcing them into the public eye if that does not suit their profile. It means strategically deciding who should speak, on which topics, in what contexts and in how much detail.

Human authority is particularly valuable in an environment where many responses may seem impersonal. Systems process information, but trust continues to be built on the basis of track records, experience and recognition.

The limits of health communication

Visibility in AI cannot be considered in isolation from the regulatory and ethical framework governing health communication. Not everything that could boost one's standing should be communicated. And not everything that generates interest can be treated in the same way.

Medicines, medical devices, treatments, medical conditions, prevention, research, innovation, active ingredients and awareness campaigns all follow different rationales. Discussing an active ingredient from an informative or scientific perspective is not the same as promoting a specific medicine. Nor is addressing healthcare professionals the same as addressing the general public.

Optimising for AI in healthcare does not mean making content more aggressive, more eye-catching or more attention-grabbing. It means making it clearer, more verifiable and safer from a reputational point of view.

PR as an infrastructure of authority

One of the major implications of generative AI is that brands no longer control the user's first point of contact with information. A person may ask a conversational system about a medical condition, a company, a healthcare technology, a controversy or a trend before visiting an organisation's official website.

This means we need to take a proactive approach to reputation management. It is not enough simply to react when a public discussion arises. We must have already established a clear, reliable and consistent information ecosystem.

In this context, public relations is no longer merely a tool for one-off visibility. It becomes part of an organisation's infrastructure of authority. It does not replace SEO, content or digital analytics. Rather, it integrates with them to build robust, coherent and verifiable narratives.





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