The Principles of PR Measurement

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NOTE FROM
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Public relations has evolved at an extremely rapid pace over the past decade, and with that evolution must come a comprehensive and effective way of measuring its value.

In the past, the value of PR was often compared to advertising. Many organizations measured their PR effort with Advertising Value Equivalents (AVEs)—or didn’t measure it at all. The PR industry has since done away with AVEs and moved toward sophisticated and strategic measurement practices.

As we work to help drive change in our industry, we’ve put together this measurement guidebook outlining the latest Principles of PR Measurement. These Principles have now been adopted by hundreds of companies around the world. The Barcelona Principles, summarized here, provide reasons behind the shift in measurement and evaluation, and the recommended replacements to AVEs.

We appreciate your interest in proving the ROI of public relations and look forward to maintaining a dialogue with you.

Best,
David

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INTRODUCTION

Advertising value equivalents (AVEs) have traditionally ruled PR reporting across the globe. Yet in 2010, PR practitioners from 33 countries gathered in Barcelona and agreed on seven principles of measurement, including the abolishment of the use of AVEs.

Yet, AVEs are still used in PR reporting; the educational process, for both agencies and clients, is a journey still being travelled. AVEs effectively “dumb down” measurement and give an inaccurate value for PR that could be just as easily guessed. That is not to say that there is one replacement for the AVE; PR is a complex field, used for many purposes and audiences. It is not surprising that internal communications, reputation building, brand marketing, and other forms of PR require different metrics. Therefore, different metrics and measurement will be required depending on what is to be achieved.

SO WHAT ARE THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES? IN SHORT FORM

- Importance of **Goal Setting** First
- Measuring the **Effect on Outcomes** is Preferred to Measuring Outputs
- The **Effect on Business Results** Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible
- Media Measurement Requires **Quantity and Quality**
- AVEs are not the **Value of Public Relations**
- **Social Media** Can and Should be Measured
- **Transparency** and **Replicability** are Paramount to Sound Measurement

What the Principles brought into effect was a move from debating the evergreen topic of measurement, to reaching a consensus on what works and what doesn’t. But this brought about the question of what metrics do you use if not AVEs? And, how does social media fit into this mix?

With this in mind, KGRA, and its international network of communication and research experts, have developed a number of measurement tools for clients to provide more in-depth reporting of campaigns from media results to financial ROI. Here’s how to apply the Principles:
PRINCIPLE 1: Setting Goals

Having a clear set of goals in place is key to understanding what you want to achieve and hence measuring it. Ensure goals are specific and take into account:

Reach:
What portion of the target audience do you want to reach and with what messages?

Awareness:
What should the target see, hear or read that they haven’t before?

Comprehension:
What should the target understand that they didn’t before?

Attitude:
What should the target believe and feel?

Behavioral:
What should the target actually do as a result of communications?

What is the overarching business goal to be supported by communications?
What are the desired (measurable) changes in the target group as the result of communications?
- **Coverage:** Number of articles in target group (media), penetration of messages
- **Awareness/Familiarity:** Brand awareness, recollection of topics
- **Comprehension:** Credibility of content, connection to company, understanding key facts
- **Attitude:** Brand loyalty, increased employee motivation
- **Behavior:** Purchase decisions, project involvement

To write measurable goals, answer: Who? What? How much? By when?
Goals should be defined as quantitative as possible
PRINCIPLES 2 AND 3: 
PR is measured on three levels

Outputs
Contact/response level
REACH, CONTENT
- Frequency
- Visits
- Prominence
- Reader contacts
- Tonality
- Message impact
- Share of voice
- Journalist inquiries

Outcomes
Perceptions/behavioral levels
KNOWLEDGE, OPINIONS, ATTITUDES
- Awareness
- Comprehension
- Recollection
- Recognition
- Credibility
- Image changes
- Recommendations
- Purchasing intentions

Business Results
Business level
ADDED VALUE
- Revenue/turnover
- Contracts closed
- Reputation value
- Brand value
- PE Ratio
- Market share
- Stock price
- Employee retention
- Purchasing intentions

"HOW TO" TIPS

Outputs — assign a scoring system based on the reach to your target audience, tone, prominence, message delivery, and inclusion of a recommendation or endorsement.

Outcomes — ask whether the company already has any kind of tracking survey. It can be fairly simple to add 2-3 questions to such surveys and measure whether the PR activity is affecting audience change. If such a survey does not exist, there are a number of low cost ways to do survey research that may be useful.

Business results — these are estimated by marketing analytics approaches or through the same survey used for outcomes. Most companies tend to have departments which measure what is driving their sales. Bringing PR into that mix is the aim, and often more easily accomplished than one might expect.
PRINCIPLE 3:
The Move Toward Analytics

The demand for business results from PR moves measurement toward a more analytical space. Analytics is the application of a number of statistical approaches which have been in use by many marketing and other disciplines for many decades. It now moves to the forefront of PR measurement as the industry seeks to demonstrate the monetary value from earned media and other types of communications.

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE TYPES OF RESULTS ANALYTICS GENERATES:

- For the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, we were able to isolate the effects on volunteer fund-raising from various channels such as radio advertising, direct mail, point-of-sale promotions, and online earned media. We found that they would raise more money for blood cancers research if they began to shift money toward online earned media and point-of-sale promotions. And, within point-of-sale, we found a specific approach that would work best.

- For a manufacturer of a healthy frozen food entre, we determined how social media was driving sales. As it turned out, there was no observable direct effect on sales, but twitter activity is driving potential consumers to their website, and website visits in turn is driving sales.

- With a global chemical company, we’ve been able to determine how different messages and channels of communication are affecting their reputation. And, as a chemical company, they are often the subject of environmental criticism. So, we could determine what types of facts and information are most important to encouraging influential citizens to speak more positively on their behalf when engaged in conversations that are critical of the company.

- As the Anti-Defamation League reaches its centennial anniversary, it is seeking the best way to continue to be effective in battling hate around the world. Should it focus its communications on civil liberties in general, cyber-bullying, religious freedoms, or law enforcement training to recognize hate crimes, as examples? Daunting and important questions, but ones that are answerable using analytics to not necessarily re-shape their message or mission, but to ensure ADL is focused on the proper elements of their mission and messages in communicating.
PRINCIPLES 4 AND 5:
Measure Media Quantity and Quality, Not AVEs

AVEs have been traditionally used by PR professionals who have struggled to assign a value to clips. Essentially, an AVE places a monetary value on a public relations placement by using the currency amount paid for an equivalent advertising space. So why ban AVEs? The main reason is that the cost of advertising is not the value of PR. Also, AVEs:

- Cannot capture the outcome of a PR campaign, limiting PR value to its placements in the media.
- Cannot measure the variety of messages delivered in the media in relation to the tamed messages in advertisements.
- Cannot measure the value of keeping a client out of the media spotlight.
- Cannot properly distinguish between placements in noteworthy columns or sections of a publication and generic or less desirable areas of a publication.
- Cannot measure social media in many forms, such as blogs and message boards.

MEDIA RESULTS APPROACH: AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO MEASURE QUALITY OF MEDIA RESULTS

- Overall clip counts and general impressions are usually meaningless.
- Media analyses, whether of traditional or online channels, should focus on the quality of the media coverage.
- Goal-definition and benchmarking are vital for robust results and to track changes over time.
- Experimenting and testing are potentially successful approaches, for example in the development of (new) key figures/indicators.
PRINCIPLES 4 AND 5:
Measure Media Quantity and Quality, Not AVEs

• WHAT ABOUT MEASURING THE COST EFFICIENCY OF PR VERSUS ADVERTISING?

Consider applying cost per thousand (CPM) calculations against the “Intermediary Effect” and “Target Audience Effect” metrics. CPM is calculated by dividing the total cost by the relevant number to get cost per message, cost per article, etc.

Approaches using gross rating points (GRP), which measure reach against percent of total population, and target rating points (TRP), which measure reach against percent of targeted population, can also be applied to “Intermediary Effect” metrics if relevant population numbers are available.

• IN SEARCH OF VALID METRICS TO USE?

Go to www.Amercorg.com and find charts like this one to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Consideration</th>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Content creation</td>
<td>- Key message alignment</td>
<td>- Key message alignment</td>
<td>- Endorsements by journalists or influencers</td>
<td>- Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traditional media engagement</td>
<td>- Frequency of (positive) mentions</td>
<td>- Frequency of (positive) mentions</td>
<td>- Rankings on industry lists</td>
<td>- Market share</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Social media engagement</td>
<td>- Expressed opinions of consideration</td>
<td>- Social network Followers</td>
<td>- Expressed opinions of preference</td>
<td>- Cost savings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Influencer engagement</td>
<td>- Social network</td>
<td>- Social network fans</td>
<td>- Social network fans</td>
<td>- Leads generated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>- Share of voice</td>
<td>- Likes</td>
<td>- Likes</td>
<td>- Customer loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Events/speeches</td>
<td>- Audience reach (traditional &amp; social)</td>
<td>- Endorsements by journaliers or influencers</td>
<td>- Links to site</td>
<td>- Response time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impressions/Target audience impressions</td>
<td>- Number of articles</td>
<td>- Rankings on industry lists</td>
<td>- Tri</td>
<td>- Contact information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Video news</td>
<td>- Prominence</td>
<td>- Expressed opinions of preference</td>
<td>- Trial</td>
<td>- Feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Frequency</td>
<td>- Share of voice</td>
<td>- Articles</td>
<td>- Product/service</td>
<td>- Training</td>
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</tbody>
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Public Relations Activity

Intermediary Effect

- Unaided awareness
- Aided awareness

Target Audience Effect

- Knowledge of company/product attributes and features
- Brand association and differentiation

- Relevance of brand to consumer/customer
- Visitors to website
- Click-thru to site
- Time spent on site
- Downloads from site
- Calls
- Event/meeting

- Attitude uplift
- Stated intention to buy
- Brand preference/Loyalty/Trust
- Endorsement
- Request for quote
- Links to site
- Trial

www.Amercorg.com
PRINCIPLE 6: 
Social Media Can and Should be Measured

MONITORING VS. MEASURING

Social media has become an intrinsic part of PR campaigns and an important method of engagement. Therefore, not only should conversation in social media platforms be monitored, but social media needs to be incorporated into PR measurement and reporting.

MONITOR

• Look for issues to which your organization or brand might want to react
• Identify trends in consumer opinion, desired content/features, etc.
• Provide a qualitative analysis of content

MEASURE

• Quantify reach, tone, recommendations, etc.
• Identify top users
• Benchmark in advance of interactive activity to track changes over time
PRINCIPLE 7:
Transparency and Replicability are Paramount to Sound Measurement

PR measurement should be done in a manner that is transparent and replicable throughout all steps in the communications process. This includes:

MEDIA MEASUREMENT

- Source of the content (print, broadcast, internet, consumer generated media) along with criteria used for collection
- Analysis methodology – for example, whether human or automated tone, scale, reach to target, or content analysis parameters

SURVEYS

- Methodology – sampling frame and size, margin of error, probability or non-probability
- Questions – released as asked (wording and order)
- Statistical methodology – the calculation of specific metrics
THE 10 GOLDEN RULES OF MEASUREMENT

1. ESTABLISH WRITTEN GOALS
2. MEASURE THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF MEDIA
3. UNDERSTAND THE SAME PRINCIPLES APPLY TO TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA
4. DO NOT USE AVE AS THE VALUE OF PR
5. ADD PR QUESTIONS TO TRACKING SURVEYS TO EASILY CAPTURE OUTCOMES
6. COLLECT MEDIA DATA IN A MANNER USABLE FOR MARKET MIX MODELING
7. RECOGNIZE THAT ANALYTICS IS THE FUTURE OF PR MEASUREMENT—ROI IS THE ANSWER
8. MAKE SURE ALL MEASUREMENT IS TRANSPARENT
9. USE MEASUREMENT TO TRACK PROGRESS AND TO DESIGN PROGRAMS BETTER
10. REALIZE THAT COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS ARE NOT NECESSARILY MEASUREMENT EXPERTS
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Ketchum has the largest research and measurement group in the public relations industry, Ketchum Global Research & Analytics (KGRA). We have global presence with local expertise, providing state-of-the-art services for our clients. We are thought leaders in the industry, emphasizing the importance of goal setting and measurement. Ketchum led the creation of PR measurement standards, called the Barcelona Principles, aligning with our practice over the past ten years to measure the quality of media coverage, track outcomes, and incorporate advanced analytics tools to tie PR to return on investment (ROI).

Our Global Research & Analytics team is a core group of 150 professionals across 18 cities, committed to the use of research in all phases of the branding process, from planning and program development to tracking and evaluation. Our research approaches are focused on informing communication strategies that will ultimately impact satisfaction and desired behaviors among target audiences. We therefore apply and analyze research to inform communication and strategic objectives.