## Introduction

### About This E-Book

It's hard to understate the importance of monitoring and measuring your PR efforts, but let's put it this way: A PR strategy that *doesn’t* include monitoring and measurement isn't a strategy at all. After all, there's nothing particularly strategic about throwing a bunch of messages out and hoping something sticks, assuming it does and calling it a day. (Not to say we don't wish that's how it worked. Our jobs would be a lot easier if it did.)

Think about it: How can you know if your efforts are making any sort of impact if you're not measuring them? How can you create any sort of strategy without any awareness of where you started? And at a time when resources are stretched thinner than ever, how can you expect to secure a bigger budget if you can't show the business results of your work?

While there's no silver bullet solution to PR measurement, the steps outlined in this e-book can act as a general framework to help guide your measurement program.
Step 1: Create Your Goals.

The very first rule of the Barcelona Principles, which many consider the industry standard guidelines for PR measurement, is: “Setting goals is an absolute prerequisite to communications planning, measurement and evaluation.” Establishing clear goals helps you identify which metrics to track and gives you a clear focus for developing your strategy. Make sure your goals are aligned with the objectives of your internal and external stakeholders, and consider collaborating with your marketing and social teams to ensure you’re working with – not against – one another.
Step 2:
Choose Your Metrics – Carefully.

Traditionally, PR and comms teams have relied on metrics like advertising value equivalency (AVE) and unique visitors per month (UVPM) to measure the success of their outreach efforts, but there are shortcomings to only using these metrics.

For one thing, comparing earned media mentions and advertising is like comparing apples to oranges once you take into account all the nuances. Not to mention that people generally trust earned media more than paid ads, so AVE has the potential to undervalue the impact of PR.

So which metrics should you track?

While UPVM and AVE can provide insights, you can get an even better idea of your true reach when you add the following metrics to your measurement strategy.

1. **Total mentions**

While the quality of mentions is critical, there’s still something to be said about quantity. Tracking total mentions helps you predict when there may be peaks or lulls in coverage and to plan accordingly. It’s also important to look at the direct link between mentions and true conversion in order to help your teams and leadership understand which numbers are most important to monitor. Remember: It’s not just about the number of mentions, but what happened after you earned those mentions.
So which metrics should you track?

2

PR referral web traffic

This refers to how many people went directly to your website as a result of media coverage, along with what actions they took on your site. This metric helps you identify which specific publications and articles converted to real leads – and which outlets and reporters are worth putting your time and energy into pitching.

3

Social media

As discussed during the Cision 2021 State of the Media Summit, social listening is a critical part of any modern communicator's strategy, and that starts, at the most basic level, with keeping track of which articles are being shared most on social media and – more importantly – the type of engagement your coverage got.

When looking at social media metrics, try to identify any common themes among the articles users are sharing and engaging with the most, and integrate those themes into future pitch plans. (It's also helpful to look at which reporters and publications you've worked with that get strong engagement on social media and consider this when building media lists.)
So which metrics should you track?

4 Brand sentiment

This refers to the tone – positive, negative or neutral, for instance – of the conversation around your brand and your competitors. Sentiment can help you determine what you’re doing right, where you need to improve and what your competitors are (or aren’t) doing right, as well.

5 Share of voice

How many mentions is your brand getting in comparison to your competitors? This is another great metric for learning what your competitors are doing well (and who’s covering them) and use that intel to inform campaign strategy and outreach efforts.
Step 3: 
Put Your Resources to Work

Now it’s time to take action. Use the resources at your disposal to track the above metrics. Maybe you have an in-house team who can devote time to monitoring and measurement. There are a variety of free online tools to help you measure your PR efforts, such as Google News (where you can set up real-time alerts), Google Trends and BuzzSumo, to name a few. Or, depending on your goals and the scope of your campaign, consider investing in a PR software solution to do the heavy lifting for you. Look for a partner that has expertise to help you identify the right metrics for your situation, and the software capabilities to effectively monitor, measure and report your findings in one place.
Step 4: Take Inventory and Analyze

You’ve pulled the data. Now comes the fun(ish) part. Whether it’s on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual basis (and it will likely depend on the metric and your goals), review what you’ve pulled and see what insights you can glean. First of all, are you meeting your goals? If not, what could you be doing more of, less of, or in a different way? What are your competitors doing well, and can you apply some of those strategies to your own? Which journalists and media outlets are covering you? Which ones are covering your competitors? Chances are, you’re going to find areas for improvement while also uncovering new opportunities and tactics you hadn’t considered before. (You may even discover that you need to adjust not just your strategy, but your goals as well.)
Now it’s time to put insight into action. Make the necessary adjustments and execute accordingly. Then measure again. (And be consistent with how you measure, so you can make accurate comparisons over time.) Keep measuring, keep evaluating, keep tweaking.

It should come as no surprise that measurement is not a one-and-done effort. The efforts should be ongoing, but if you keep at it, the payoff will be, too.
Conclusion

“All of this seems like a lot of work,” you may be thinking at this point. And the truth is, you’re not wrong. But like most things in life, monitoring and measurement gets easier with practice (and the right tools). If you’re ready to take the next step in measurement and proving your impact, Cision can help you get started.

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ABOUT CISION

As a global leader in PR, marketing and social media management technology and intelligence, Cision helps brands and organizations to identify, connect and engage with customers and stakeholders to drive business results. PR Newswire, a network of over 1.1 billion influencers, in-depth monitoring, analytics and its Brandwatch and Falcon.io social media platforms headline a premier suite of solutions. Cision has offices in 24 countries throughout the Americas, EMEA and APAC. For more information about Cision’s award-winning solutions, including its next-gen Cision Communications Cloud®, visit www.cision.com and follow @Cision on Twitter.