



Onclusive

# The Growth PR Playbook

How data-driven PR can transform your organization and business



# Introduction

What a few years it's been for Public Relations.

Although PR and communications have always been and will always be about telling company and brand stories and managing reputation, the ways of creating, controlling, and amplifying those stories, in addition to how and when success is best measured, has shifted.

The focus is no longer on campaigns that are based on opinion, but on data-driven, real-time, iterative storytelling with metrics that help to manage crises, get ahead of the competition, and accelerate activities that impact the business bottom line.

Here you'll find practical PR plays that you can start implementing today which are driven by metrics, data, and insights.

Onclusive has been working with leading global brands on their data-driven communications and content marketing for over a decade. We've seen the evolution of what the C-Suite is looking for, how multi-channel communications has impacted the work of a PR pro and how measurement has evolved from AVEs to business impact.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by massive amounts of data, little time to produce content and confusing metrics, this playbook can help.

Let's get started.





# The Evolution

## Seismic changes and their data-driven impact on PR's role

Although it is probably evident to you that PR has radically changed, you may not be aware of the catalysts that have caused this evolution. It's important to understand the two major outside forces fueling this profound shift:

### CATALYST 1:

#### Too much noise across too many digital channels

Our computers, smart phones, televisions and other devices are inundated with information: from news articles and blog posts, to Tweets, Facebook posts and messages on dozens of other social networks, to emails and newsletters.

As communicators, although we now have open access through our owned media and earned media, we are presented with a huge challenge: How do we reach a target audience when they are consuming messages in myriad ways and we are competing for attention with more sources than ever?



# Impact

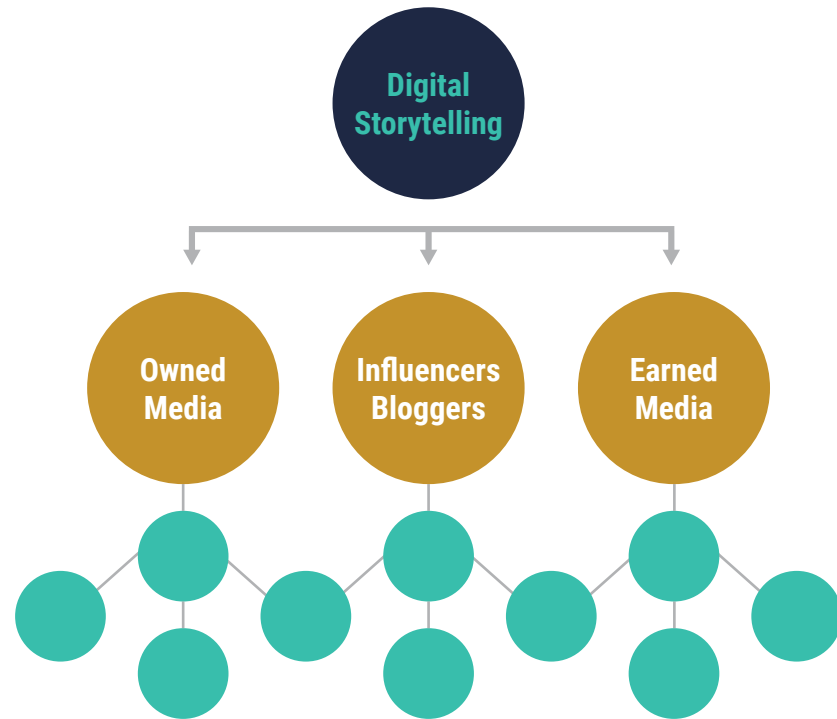
Activity-based public relations no longer works. The job of the PR team is to drive the many-to-many business conversations with customers and partners.

## Activity Based PR



One-to-Many Conversations

## Growth PR



Many-to-Many Conversations





## CATALYST 2:

### **If sales, finance, and marketing are measured to business impact, so will PR and communications**

PR coverage has typically been measured by media outlet audience size. For example, if PR pros garnered coverage for their brand in Forbes, they may report the circulation of Forbes as the potential audience size that saw the message. This method of measurement does not tie back to business objectives and these softer metrics often do not resonate with the C-Suite. The MarTech and AdTech revolutions have forever changed the way marketers work and measure their success. The methods they use to attribute business achievements and even revenue to marketing efforts have given birth to bigger budgets and new skills.

Public relations professionals are discovering that they need to figure out how to attribute their campaign success to business objectives to stay relevant in today's world of marketing attribution.



# Impact

With this explosion of content and demand for measurement, Earned Media and Owned Media are digital channels measured among the larger marketing mix across brand and sales-driven key performance indicators (KPIs). You are no longer accountable for just impressions and AVEs, but web traffic, customer engagement and conversions. PR involves business indicators and funnel acceleration to drive GROWTH. With limited time and budget, this could be a big challenge. Fortunately, we have two major tools at our fingertips: data and insights.

Activity-Based Attribution Solutions = Activities + Impressions	Growth PR-Based Attribution = Business Indicators + Funnel Acceleration
Impressions and AVEs	Site Visitor Traffic (Potential Customers via User Tracking), Owned Media Readership
Site Visitor Traffic (sampled panel data)	Customer Interactions (Calls To Action), Conversions
Share of Voice	Power of Voice™
Media Hits	Influential Coverage
Message Pull-Through	Message Resonance

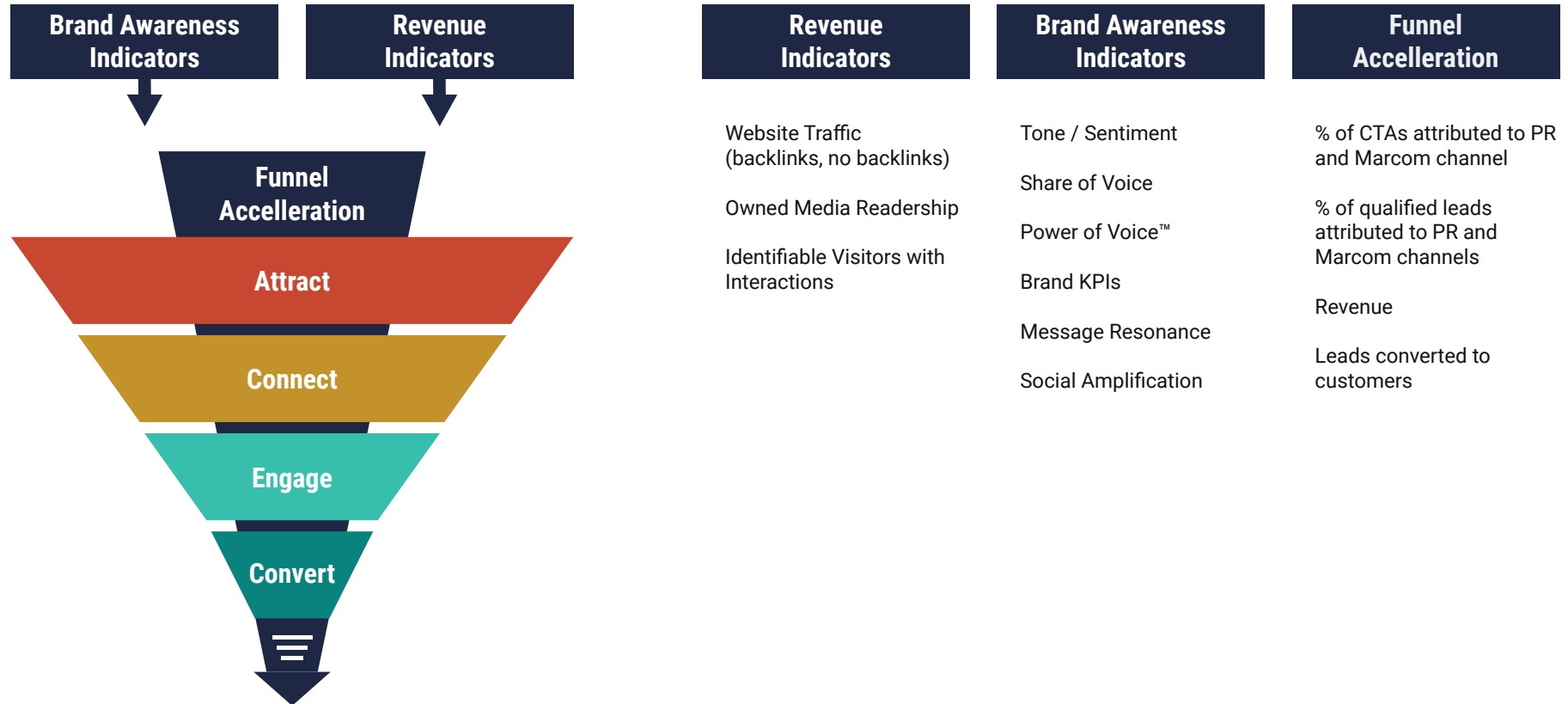


**Growth PR** starts with Brand Awareness Indicators (like tone/sentiment and power of voice) and Revenue Indicators (like website traffic and owned media readership) and ties those early indicators back to Funnel Accelerators (like conversions, calls-to-action and qualified leads). Connecting the dots between key brand messages, PR and marketing activities that drive those messages, and ultimately, the impact it has on business and revenue indicators is paramount to the future success of the practice of PR.

## Communications Maturity Model



# Growth PR = Business Indicators + Funnel Acceleration





## Authority

Optimized Content  
Shareable Content  
Engaging Content  
Google Authorship

## Paid Media

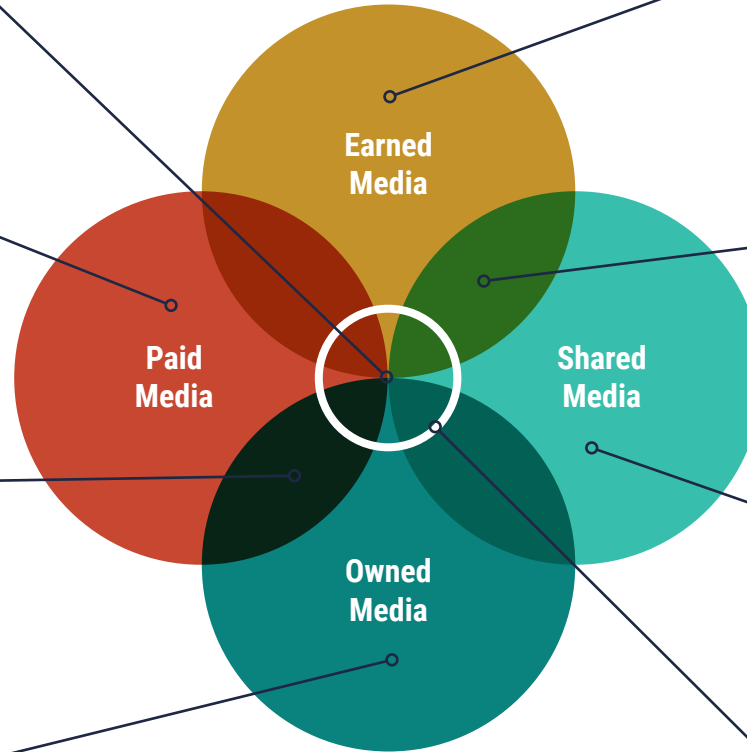
Fb Sponsored Posts  
Sponsored Tweets  
Twitter Cards  
Fan Acquisition  
Lead Generation  
Outbrain

## Incentive

Affiliates  
Brand Ambassadors  
Sponsored Content  
Native Advertising

## Content

Created By Experts  
Employee Stories  
Customer Stories  
User-Generated Content  
Reviews  
Brand Journalism  
Webinars, Videos, Podcasts



## Publicity

Media Relations  
Blogger Relations  
Investor Relations  
Influencer Relations

## Influencer Engagement

Response to Detractors  
Detractors Turned to Loyalists  
Loyalists Turned to Advocates

## Social Media

Facebook  
Twitter  
Linkedin  
Youtube  
Pinterest  
Instagram  
TikTok  
Clubhouse

## Partnerships

Charity Tie-Ins  
Community Service  
Co-Branding



# The Four Pillars of Growth PR





# 1

## Pillar One

### Create The Right Message

During a time when, as consumers, we are inundated with content – from news stories, to advertisements, to Facebook pictures of our friends’ children, to memes of kittens and Nicolas Cage – creating the right message is the single most important element for a PR pro to rise above the noise.

PR pros need a concise message that every storyteller can understand and support. This message must be simple, ideally less than ten words. The message must also be compelling to the audience, especially in today’s noisy world. It helps to brainstorm and solidify provocative soundbytes to highlight that message.

Renowned psychologist Paul Ekman determined that there are six basic emotions that are shared by people in all cultures: anger, happiness, surprise, disgust, sadness and fear. As you develop your key messages and story ideas, focusing on the emotions that will drive interest like excitement, curiosity, amusement and learning will help your message resonate in a world with too many messages and too little time.

Finding a message that drives emotion and interest – and resonates with your audience – will drive consumer behavior, SEO, website traffic, brand awareness, and ultimately, sales.

In the past, message creation for PR pros has been a guessing game, with very little data available. Creativity and gut instinct have driven the strategy for a brand’s message. Today, however, we are able to A/B test messages, examine message pull-through with our core audiences, identify topics, publications and authors that are influential in a particular topic, and test how our messages perform against our competitors. These insights take a lot of the guesswork out of message creation, save you time and allow you to make data-driven decisions as you build your brand’s story.



Identifying the messages that help build audience instead of just analyzing SEO impact is how you can really begin using data to drive long-term, effective, measurable, audience-building business impact.

## PR PLAY

### Test Your NEO™.

Use NEO™ (News Engine Optimization) to A/B test messages (soundbytes) that are important to your brand. NEO™ determines which soundbytes are being amplified by news articles and blogs, in addition to the social amplification of articles and soundbytes. This can allow you to test new messages against your normal SEO key terms.

### Research Trends™ For Story Ideas.

Examine Onclusive Enterprise's Research Trends to look at successful messages, themes, topics and upcoming trends to utilize for story ideas. Data-driven insights can help you identify co-mentioned terms to your key messages and what messages are garnering the most amplification.

### Track Competitors' Key Messages.

Examine topics, messages and authors that are resonating for your competitors. Share of Voice is not enough on its own - examining Power of Voice™ by key competitors will give you an idea of which competitors are building messages that build audience, amplification and awareness. Think of Power of Voice™ as the authority of your coverage and your competitors' coverage - measuring the reputation and credibility of the people talking about your brand.





# 2 Pillar Two

## Control The Message

Controlling and distributing your message used to be the most difficult part of a PR pro's job. Starting with a press release (which likely does not result in any press coverage) or a pitch to a journalist (who could then change the message and change the coverage), getting attention for your message has, in the past, been a risky challenge.

Enter owned media. You have much more control of your message when it is published on your own blog, LinkedIn Pulse channel (for B2B), Medium or Facebook (for B2C), or by a specific trusted journalist or blogger for an exclusive. For many brands, owned media has become a much more effective channel for controlling and distributing news than traditional channels like print, TV or radio.

Your owned media can turn you into a media company. Many brands find their owned media produces greater amplification, conversions and responses to calls-to-action than their earned and paid media efforts combined.

Above all, however, publishing your core messages and stories on your owned media gives you control over your message and makes you the source of the truth. Additionally, because you have control over your owned media, you have greater control over your customer journey, all the way down to the message they see and the call-to-action they engage with on your site. Owned media is a fundamental piece of Account Based Marketing (ABM) because it truly allows you to control your message and customize your message account by account, visitor by visitor, providing the experience that each person seeks when they come to your site.



## PR PLAY

### Create a “Dark Article”.

If you have a huge story, post it on your owned channel first with a hidden embargoed link for journalists to refer to (as if it were a press release), so that they have the option to link to your story, and drive SEO. A press release can't do that. Don't commoditize your own news.

### Check Out Your Competitors' Owned Media.

Analyzing how owned media and shared media are performing for your competitors can help not only identify your own gaps, but your differentiators as well. In addition to your competitors' websites and blogs, look at their LinkedIn page, their Twitter, their Facebook and other social networks. What are they doing effectively? What are they missing that you can double down on? Software like Onclusive can help you quickly analyze what your competitors are publishing that is resonating with your audience.

### Regularly Analyze Your Impact.

List performance of your owned media. This can help not only guide you on what's working and what's not, but help the C-Suite and other stakeholders understand how important investing in owned media is to building an audience and impacting the bottom line.





# 3

## Pillar Three

### Pitch & Amplify The Message To The Right Channels

There are millions of publications, outlets, journalists, and influencers to pitch across blogs, online news, print, and broadcast outlets. In addition, millions of social influencers have given rise to influencer marketing. In fact, many marketers believe that influencer marketing is tied with email marketing as their most effective channel. This has become a key element of Growth PR. Influencers are often more effective than traditional media at getting your messaging across, and reaching and engaging your target audiences.

Although there are plenty of journalists to pitch and influencers to target to amplify your message, the sheer number of possibilities makes the task of pitching overwhelming. Who can most effectively amplify my message? Who has a voice that resonates with my community? Who is most likely to write about my brand and my message? How can I most effectively utilize my time?

Fortunately, once again, data and insights can help surface the contacts that are most impactful to your business. By examining not only who writes about a particular topic that has the greatest audience, but who writes about topics with the greatest influence and ability to garner social amplification, you can create a target list of the tastemakers that are most likely to write about your brand and have an impact on your results.



## PR PLAY

Use Onclusive Enterprise's Research Trends to determine which journalists cover current events surrounding your topics, as well as their ability to get social amplification of their posts.

### **Look At Your Demand Generation Efforts.**

Tools like Onclusive can help you examine your data and figure out what owned and earned content drives demand gen. (e.g. website potential customer traffic, and website interactions) and brand awareness (e.g. social amplification, share of voice and Power of Voice™). This will help you understand your marketing and sales funnel more effectively and identify what content resonates at which stage of the funnel.

### **Analyze The Earned Media And Influencer Efforts Of The Competition.**

Examine your competitors and the publications and authors that are garnering the most attention and engagement. Which influencers are they working with that are getting attention for their brands? You can also discover who your biggest advocates are by finding out which influencers are talking about you - and not your competition. Devote effort to maintaining those relationships.







# 4 Pillar Four

## Analyze Business Impact

By understanding the purpose and objectives for creating and amplifying a brand's message and story, PR professionals can adjust stories and messages in real-time. They use data and technology to understand a message's resonance, the most effective channels for amplification, and how the strategy impacts the bottom line.

Without PR measurement and PR Attribution™, communicators only know their impact on the top of the funnel, i.e., which publications wrote about their brand. But with PR Attribution™, one can see how efforts impact goals and metrics aligned with the lower part of the funnel such as whether or not those articles prompt downloads, convert leads into customers, and so forth.

For communicators to continue to have a seat at the table, understand the effectiveness of their efforts, and make data-driven decisions in PR planning, utilizing technology to sift through and analyze mountains of non-normalized data sets has become paramount.

Increasingly, CMOs and CEOs are looking for integrated marketing communications measurement. They want to see how efforts across paid, earned, shared, and owned media are impacting the bottom line and driving business results. PR is responsible for digital storytelling, earned media and, increasingly, owned media. These efforts are part of an integrated measurement program that has clearly defined KPIs.





In the past, PR pros have not had access to these metrics, data and insights. Today, software like Onclusive helps pull together the pieces to accurately measure earned and owned media and tie it back to business objectives and revenue in a measurable, quantifiable way.

## PR PLAY

### Iteration Is Key.

Analytics and insights are not just for reports to send to your C-Suite. Look at your previous data. See what worked and what did not for the interaction/engagement/impact you wanted and utilize those insights for future campaigns and strategies.

### Determine Your KPIs At The Beginning.

Know what you are measuring before you even launch a campaign. Who are you targeting? Is it recruiting job applicants? Lead generation (like demo sign-ups or webinar registrations)? Brand awareness/consideration (social mentions and buzz)? Consideration (potential customers with website interactions)? Knowing what you are measuring ahead of time will allow you to benchmark, iterate throughout a campaign, and tweak messaging and other strategies as you progress.

### Determine What Content Works For Different Parts Of The Funnel.

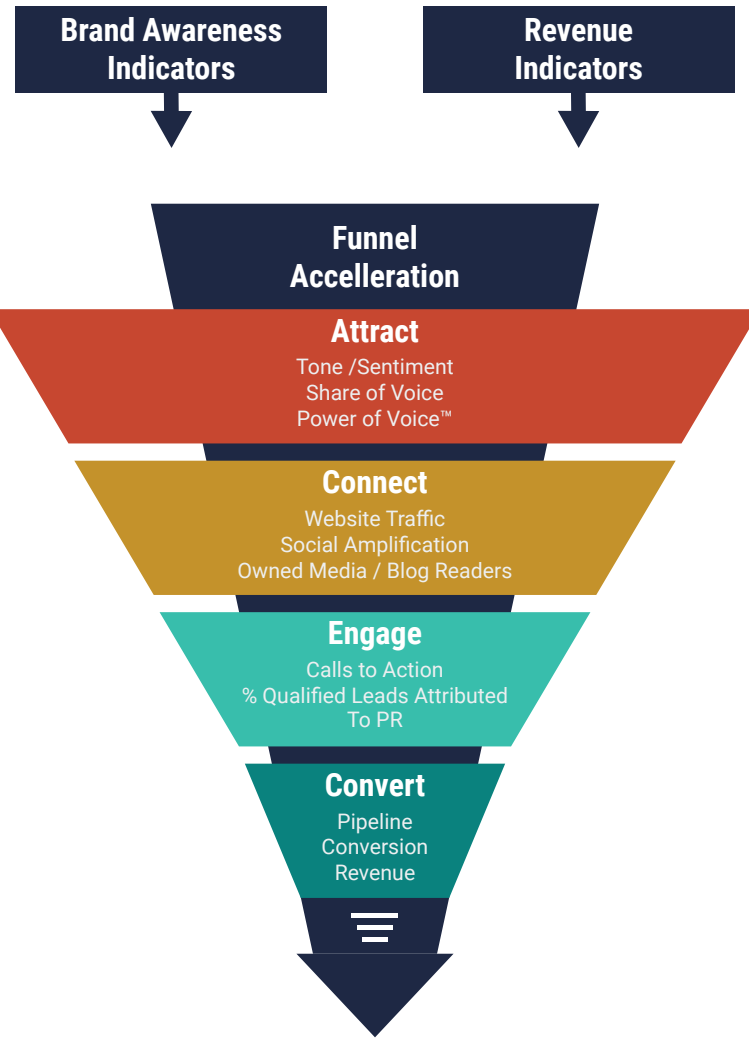
Social engagement and influencer mentions may be a great concept for awareness at the top of the funnel, blog posts and webinars may help with connecting, calls-to-action (like demos and landing pages) and account-based content will drive engagement, which can be reinforced with “how-to” guides and product tours during conversion. Understanding why you are producing content and what you are hoping to achieve will help you measure it.



# Metrics & KPIs To Measure Success For Earned And Owned Media:

- Social amplification
- Share of Amplification™
- Website visitors driven with resulting website interactions completed
- Leads driven
- Leads converted to customers
- Percentage of qualified leads attributed
- Revenue attributed
- Owned media readership
- Share of Voice
- Power of Voice™
- NEO™ (News Engine Optimization) message resonance





# 10 PR Plays For Growth PR

In addition to the PR plays included in the four pillars, here are ten examples of real PR plays you can implement today to help enhance your PR efforts and rise above the noise:

# 1 Add Paid Media In The Mix

Expand the reach and engagement of your earned media coverage. Decide when to amplify a message further, based on performance data about which content has organic results. For example, if your key message pull-through is high in a piece of coverage, consider amplifying that content on media sites or via Facebook ads. Then, use data to measure your effectiveness with different types of content.

# 2 Utilize Influencers Throughout Every Stage Of Your Campaign

When you create a message, use influencers to test the effectiveness and resonance of that message. Work with them to simultaneously amplify once your story is live to control the timing of your message. Analyze the effectiveness of each influencer not by the size of their audience, but by their ability to inspire action.

# 3 Newsjack With Your Spokespeople By Identifying Trends

Create a list of your spokespeople and the areas that they are best suited to discuss. Set up searches and alerts for news about those topics and pitch your expert as a source to journalists and influencers writing about the topic. Measure your message pull-through and Power of Voice™ during that time as compared to the previous time period.

# 4 Crowdsource Your Content

It can be difficult to find enough time and energy to produce all the content you need. Ask your influencers, advocates, customers, and employees a question and provide a round-up of expert feedback that is easy to digest and simple to produce. Once you publish the content on your owned media, contributors will want to amplify the content they are mentioned in. Use data to identify the most effective topics and how your content impacted business results.



## 5 Incentivize Your Influencers And Advocates

Offer early access to new releases, entrance to events, product samples, and more. Your loyalty to them will often be returned. (Note: if giving away product or paying an influencer, their posts need to be identified as “sponsored” or marked with “#ad” to comply with FTC regulations.) Additionally, your influencers and advocates can frequently become your beta testers for how your product works, what messages resonate and what will work in the sales cycle.

## 6 Highlight Multiple Sources When Pitching A Story

Bloggers and journalists appreciate when you can do research for them. When pitching a story, line up one or two other non-competitive experts or organizations that can be quoted in the same article. These other sources will also serve as additional sources of amplification when your story goes live.

## 7 Create Cornerstones And Cobblestones

(From Tom Martin’s “The Invisible Sale”). Create three to five foundational pieces of content each year. Maybe this is a white paper, a video series, an ebook or an event. Extend the life of that content by creating smaller pieces of content based on the cornerstone content. Measure each cornerstone and cobblestone separately, but also as an overall campaign.



## 8 Nurture Leads With Content

Create a content strategy that works throughout the marketing and sales funnel. In true account based PR, identify prospects who visited your website from an earned media article, provide a call-to-action with content (like a webinar or e-book download), create stickiness with content subscriptions (like email newsletters or blog notifications) and provide “how-to” guides and product tips during conversion.

## 9 Use Online And Offline Resources In Every Stage Of Your Strategy

When creating a message, in addition to using data, gather information from your sales and support teams, your customers, and your prospects. When controlling your message on your owned media, consider live micro-events to support that message. To amplify your message offline, line up conferences and speaking engagements to build your audience and awareness. Determine the ROI of your offline efforts by directing offline leads to your content funnel on your owned media.

## 10 Use Compelling Internal Data Externally

Now that you are making data-driven decisions and extracting insights from your content, your earned and owned media and your influencers and advocates, share interesting facts and data to produce more content. Create an infographic on your brand that highlights how people use your product or service. Use data to pitch journalists a story idea by being a source of proprietary insights.







## Building A Growth PR Organization

Now that we've established the four pillars of data-driven PR, you may be looking at your schedule for the next week and wondering how you will find the time to begin implementing your PR plays. To truly own a data-driven PR organization, you must be a PR insights leader. Whether or not you have someone to help you assess your data, numbers and analytics, you need to be the person in charge of those insights—and how your team will use them to continue to optimize your efforts and improve business impact. Metrics and insights need to become a part of your weekly workflow.



# Best Practices For Setting Up A Data-Driven PR Organization:

- **Establish your team.** The group should include your PR insights leader, your PR report leader (internal or agency), and any other contributors to your PR success efforts.
- **Schedule the recurring meeting.** Depending on your amount of content, coverage, and campaigns hold weekly or biweekly meetings to:
  - **Focus 1: Review what worked and what didn't**  
For what did work, brainstorm if that was an anomaly or if it is repeatable or extensible
  - **Focus 2: Analyze your PR data and your competitive data**  
Highlight the trending authors, publications, and topics, as well as your key message resonance
  - **Focus 3: Identify new strategies**  
Examine adjacent topics to those that your company has been speaking to recently and see if any results look repeatable for your brand. It could be the theme of the trending topic, a specific article to which you want to pitch a follow-on story, or a specific journalist or publication that you should re-engage or start to build a relationship with.

Assign people to lead the charge on action items from the meeting.

By utilizing these best practices for building a data-driven PR organization, you will always keep data in mind throughout your workflow, and will constantly be testing to increase and optimize your owned and earned media results.





## Building An Integrated PR Measurement Plan

The work of PR teams shouldn't be in a bubble. For messaging and amplification efforts to be successful, they need to be aligned with overall marketing messages and objectives. This requires an integrated marketing strategy. At the heart of an integrated marketing campaign is a communications strategy. While multi-channel marketing campaigns typically measure the performance of each channel toward the end goals, integrated marketing requires that you measure how well the different channels or components are working together.



Although you are working on your own data-driven owned and earned media insights, it's paramount to work hand-in-hand with marketing leadership to determine what metrics and KPIs should be in your integrated marketing and communication dashboard.

Integrated marketing requires that you measure how well the different channels or components are working together. By combining your earned and owned media measurement with overall marketing mix models and methodology, you can begin to understand how all the components work together to drive business objectives.





# The Growth PR Playbook For Data-Driven PR

This playbook has outlined common challenges of PR professionals, and includes practical PR plays to aid your efforts, as well as outlines what you can do today to stand out above the noise and truly drive business impact. By implementing the four pillars of Growth PR, you can develop a workflow and an organization that is successful, measurable, and efficient.

## The Four Pillars Of Growth PR

1. Create the Right Message
2. Control the Message
3. Pitch and Amplify the Message
4. Analyze Business Impact

Data and insights are the supporting fundamentals of each of these four pillars. By utilizing the technologies and data that can be at your fingertips, you can take the guesswork out of PR planning and measurement and report to the C-Suite what they truly want to see: how owned and earned media efforts are actually moving the needle.





## Conclusion: About Onclusive

**Onclusive** is the data science company for communications. The inventors of **PR Attribution™** and **Power of Voice™**, our inclusive data and conclusive insights reveal which marketing communications strategies drive business outcomes—through to revenue. The Onclusive media monitoring platforms are built upon a proprietary global newscrawler which analyzes millions of earned, owned, and newswire content daily in over 100 languages, organizing each based on dozens of dimensions.

The world's leading brands and agencies including Airbnb, H&R Block, Lyft, Intercontinental Hotels Group, 23andMe, and Experian use Onclusive to improve communications. For more information, visit [onclusive.com](https://onclusive.com) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#). For a demo of our platforms, email us at [info@onclusive.com](mailto:info@onclusive.com).