



**HOW TO OPTIMIZE
MESSAGING & SOUNDBITES
TO DRIVE SUCCESS**



Your Message Matters. Measure Just How Much.

Clear and compelling messaging is essential to achieving impact with marketing, communications and branding. Strategic messaging enables you to create brand awareness, convey who you are as a business to your intended audience and develop the emotional connection that influences purchases of your products and services.

All organizations communicate their vision and product value, but not all communications efforts are effective. Successful brands put a lot of thought into their messaging: how they want to deliver it, through which channels and how they want to evolve it over time. Key messages are the essence of what you wish to communicate, serving as the foundation of your communications strategy and giving it focus and control.

While the right messages can shape what you want people to think and do, ultimately, communication is about what the receiver perceives it to be and what they do with it. That's why it's equally important to understand whether your messaging is resonating and who it is influencing.

3X

According to a PwC survey of more than 1,000 senior executives, highly data-driven organizations are 3X more likely to report significant improvements in decision-making. [\(ThinkWithGoogle\)](#)

Understanding which messages are gaining traction can empower you and your team to develop impactful communications strategies and campaigns. This understanding can also help you to integrate those messages into other business functions, such as marketing, product and human resources.

In this whitepaper, we will review the practical applications of the next generation of message optimization technology for communications professionals, News Engine Optimization (NEO™).

NEO™ Messaging gives organizations deep insights into message resonance with the media, customers and other stakeholders, which can then be used for data-driven decision-making across the business.

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Why Message Optimization Is A Must

Getting noticed is more challenging than ever

Millions of pieces of content are shared every day on various online platforms, including 7.5+ million daily blog posts and 500+ million daily tweets. ([Internetlivestats](#))

One of the biggest challenges faced by communicators and marketers worldwide is getting noticed, particularly if you are an emerging company, brand or product.

The customers of today are a far cry from the customers of fifteen, ten, or even five years ago. They don't wait for someone to show up at their door to make a sales pitch. Armed with Google searches, Amazon reviews, forums, online news sites, blogs, expert recommendations, and a variety of devices, they "seek and find"—in real time—based on variables you would never be able to guess without some level of data analysis.

Why message resonance matters

Online search has turned your prospects into informed investigators, meaning they make purchase decisions based on the plethora of information they can find online. Your prospective customers make up their minds about your brand long before they ever speak to a sales representative, send an email inquiry or click "checkout" on that shopping cart.

With over 90% market share, Google now processes more than 3.5 billion searches per day. ([Business Insider](#))

It's more important than ever to leverage every piece of data you have in order to cut through the noise and increase your "signal" in the overcrowded digital environment.

How do you know which messages are resonating with your audiences?

How can you be sure that the messages you are pushing out into the digital ether are the right messages? Are these messages cutting through the noise and resonating with influencers, media and your customers? What data do you use to identify what's working and what isn't?

Measuring how often your messaging is being used internally and externally, and optimizing your messaging based on this data is an integral part of strategic decision-making.

LIZ WALTON

VP of Marketing, Yext

It is incredibly important for the communications team to have the same level of analytical support and sophistication as the rest of our organization. Leveraging Onclusive's platform has given us valuable, actionable insights to inform our communications decisions on a global scale.

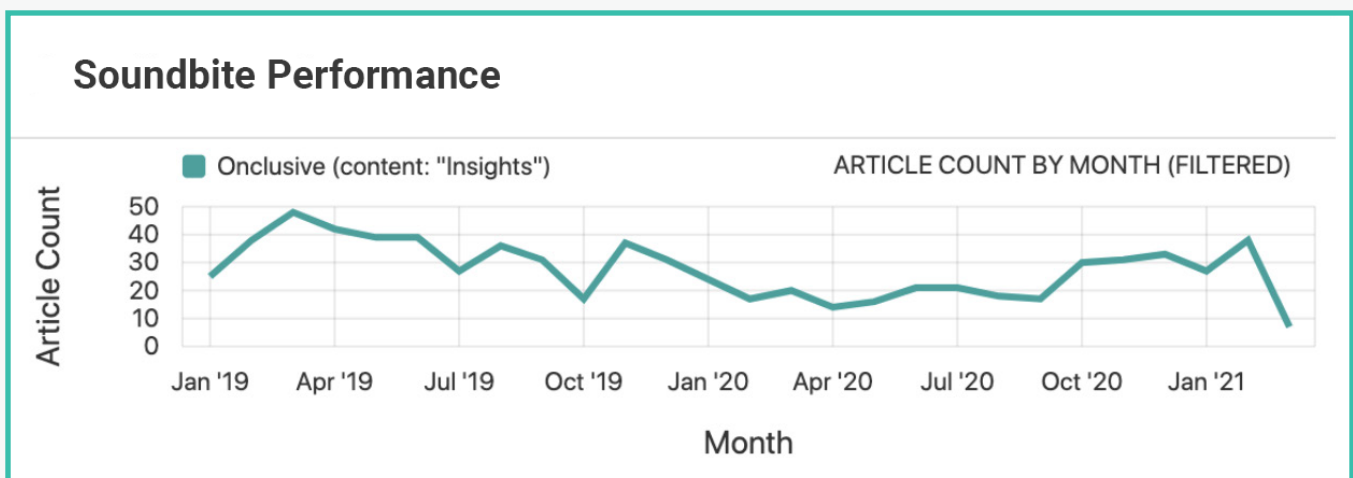
News Engine Optimization for messaging (think “SEO for PR”)

Messaging is made up of keywords, or “soundbites”. Soundbites are 1 to 10 word phrases about your product or brand which:

- You continuously use in messaging assets in order to reinforce their significance
- You want customers to associate with your product or brand so there is a concerted effort to integrate them into PR activities
- Example soundbites: “PR measurement,” “insights,” “media monitoring”

Keyword tracking and optimization, a practice that’s usually thought of for search engine optimization (SEO), is central to most companies’ ongoing data analysis efforts. It is widely used to inform marketing and communications strategies, large-scale public relations efforts, lead generation campaigns and other PR and marketing tactics.

News Engine Optimization (NEO) is like SEO for communications professionals. NEO provides powerful insights into how the media, influencers and ultimately customers are responding to and amplifying “sticky” messages: messages that can then be used to drive future marketing and public relations activities, owned media content creation and even advertising campaigns.



Background: SEO And Search Psychology

SEO: the first data-driven tool to optimize digital messaging

SEO stands for search engine optimization. Rand Fishkin, founder and former CEO of Moz, defined it as “the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of the traffic that you earn through the organic results in search engines.”

Simply put, SEO means the process of improving your site to increase its visibility for relevant searches. The better visibility you have in search results, the more likely you are to generate attention and attract customers to your business.

Search psychology: how people search

We’ve all used search engines to find information on everything from “best Thai restaurants” to “best time of year to visit San Francisco.” These tools have turned us all into more informed decision makers.

The search behavior of audience segments has important implications for those in communications, public relations and marketing because how people think about something related to a brand is often unrelated to how they search for it.

As a communicator, if you are unable to cross the psychological chasm between “what a customer should know about your brand” and “how a customer searches based on how they they think and what they already know,” you run the risk of losing them to a competitor or worse, to the internet vortex.

Here's a great example by Bill Tancer, the world's preeminent expert on online behavior and author of New York Times bestseller Click:

"As [former] General Manager of Global Research at Experian, I [spent] a vast majority of time working with large data sets to give companies – mostly Fortune 500 – insights into audience segments' online behavior so they can make better decisions about marketing, advertising, and the list goes on. What people do online – search for, buy, etc. – is probably the most important information a company can have for understanding their customer."

TIP:

Google's Keyword Planner is an extremely useful tool for planning which keywords you may want to incorporate into digital marketing and PR campaigns.

When your digital marketing and PR efforts match the "search thinking" of your customers, your ability to see a return on your efforts increases exponentially. But how do you apply this to messaging tracking and optimization? Read on.

NEO Messaging: The Next Generation Of Message Optimization Technology

What is NEO Messaging?

NEO Messaging is a PR technology that generates messaging data and insights by tracking the performance of your designated soundbites across all news sources worldwide. Based on this information, you can quickly see which messages are resonating with both the media (frequency) and your target audiences (amplification and PR Attribution™).

NEO Messaging Methodology

A feature of Onclusive's flagship media monitoring and PR analytics platform, NEO gives insight into which soundbites are embraced and amplified in press coverage and across social media.

Across the marketing funnel: NEO shows the business impact of each soundbite and message across the marketing funnel. With NEO, you understand not only which messages had the highest frequency, but also which ones were amplified the most across social media, drove the most website traffic and generated the most website actions and conversions.

NEO Messaging		Buckets: Corporate	Sort by: Most Articles	
	Articles	Amplification	Website Traffic	Website Actions
Insights	137	200	2.4k	1.9k
PR Measurement	14	73	558	683
PR Analytics	11	8	326	328
vanity metrics	5	4	282	289
big data	5	6	1.5k	617
PRTech	3	2	399	93
PR performance	1	6	87	83
PESO	1	6	86	83
PR ROI	0	0	0	0

Automated & unbiased: NEO offers automated, unbiased data for understanding which brand messages should be incorporated into your marketing and PR efforts. It works in the same way as search keyword tracking: you set the soundbites you want to track and NEO automatically generates the data you need to make decisions.

Real-time: NEO tracks soundbite performance in real time, allowing you to take advantage of search's "fresh and relevant" content rule and ride the wave of the current trends that apply to your brand.

KATIE WATSON

VP of Communications, 23andMe

By understanding the business impact of our earned, owned and newswire efforts, we can better shape our broader strategy and make data-driven decisions around the specific content, media strategies, publications and reporters we want to focus on moving forward.

A/B testing for communications and PR

NEO is based on the concept of A/B testing, which is how marketers evaluate the effectiveness of their digital messages. At its most basic, A/B testing is a way to compare two versions of something to figure out which performs better.

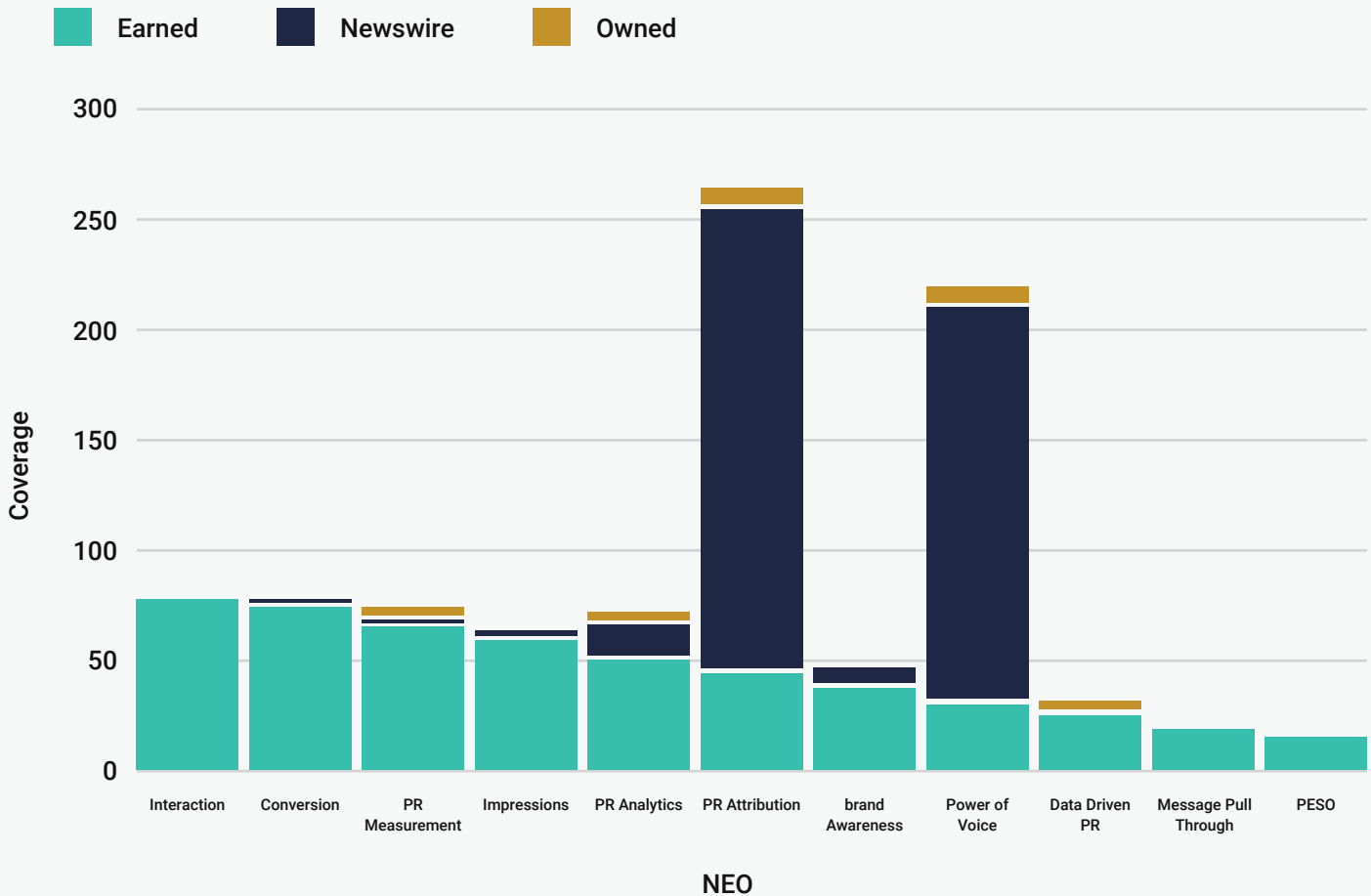
You start an A/B test by deciding what it is you want to test—for example, one headline for your advertisement against another—and how you want to evaluate its performance, such as by measuring the number of clicks on the ad that go to your website. To run the test, you show two sets of people two different versions of the ad and measure which ad drove more clicks to your website. Once you figure out which ad has performed better, you can use the winning ad in your next campaign.

Essentially, NEO allows you to A/B test which keywords, spokespersons and soundbites drive the most business outcomes for your brand so you can optimize all future PR and marketing efforts.

Organizations can leverage the power of NEO to gain insights into which messages should be incorporated into everything from investor and customer communications to media pitches. In the simplest form, NEO offers a deeper look into the behavioral aspects of your messages, supported by data.

As an example, here is a look at Onclusive's own corporate messaging performance broken down into earned media vs. newswire vs. owned media coverage and content:

Corporate Messaging



Key Takeaway

While the terms “interaction,” “conversion” and “PR measurement” have generated the highest earned media coverage for Onclusive, “PR Attribution” and “Power of Voice™” have been much more prominent over newswire. “PR Analytics” shows a split between earned and newswire media. All of these terms are worth continuous investment by Onclusive, as opposed to “message pull-through” and “PESO”, which have the least media coverage.

Understanding the relationship between marketing communications, search and NEO

In the simplest form, you can think of NEO in this context:

- Search engines (Google, Bing, etc.) are the infrastructure
- Search terms are the inputs into the infrastructure
- Search results are the outputs, and show how the infrastructure values the search terms in relationship to highly ranked news and blog sites
- NEO provides insights into what search terms (soundbites) have the most value for your brand, company, or product on highly ranked news and blog sites

With NEO, you can measure your messaging frequency in an article all the way through to conversions on your website and get insights for optimizing your messaging strategy.

Once you know which messages resonate with your audience, you can continue to refine, build and optimize your future PR efforts for ongoing performance improvements.

STACEY HEDMAN

Global Marketing Strategy at IFAW

One of the reasons we chose Onclusive, was because we saw [Onclusive] as more of a technology solution than just a measurement solution. Not just monitoring the media, but looking for the insights behind it... We're a year in and we're definitely seeing some great results.

NEO IN ACTION: Onclusive Example

Take a look at the important brand messages for Onclusive. This example provides us with some interesting data in terms of how the media and our customers think about PR measurement and related concepts:

NEO Messaging		Buckets: Corporate	Sort by: Most Articles	
	Articles	Amplification	Website Traffic	Website Actions
Insights	137	200	2.4k	1.9k
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PRTech	3	2	399	93
PR performance	1	6	87	83
PESO	1	6	86	83
PR ROI	0	0	0	0

Key Takeaway

- Soundbites “insights” and “PR Measurement” are clear winners across the board, in terms of the coverage / number of articles, social amplification, website traffic and website actions.
- While “PR Analytics” has garnered more article mentions, “big data” actually outperforms it in terms of website traffic and website actions. This indicates that “big data” drove more business impact with less frequency.
- Overall, soundbites like “PR Measurement” and “PR Analytics” perform much better than “PR performance” and “PR ROI”, which is something we would never be able to guess without this data available to us.

Using NEO Messaging For Communications & PR

Getting started with NEO Messaging

STEP 1: To master NEO, the first step is to get a clear picture of where you're starting. Create your categories, or buckets, of key messages and add the soundbites important to your brand.

STEP 2: The next step is to ensure you have a balanced mix of current messaging and aspirational messaging so you can gauge changes over time. Aspirational messaging includes soundbites that you want to see grow in usage and amplification.

For example, Onclusive's current messaging may include "PR Measurement," which is already being widely used in earned media coverage. Meanwhile, our aspirational messaging may include "Power of Voice," which is a proprietary term and needs more time to be embraced by the media, influencers and customers.

STEP 3: The last step is to commit to consistently using your aspirational messaging across your communications. The only way you will see shifts in message usage and amplification is when everyone understands and is committed to the narratives you're focused on spreading and cementing.

ELIZABETH BASSLER

Director of Media Communications, ConnectWise

Being able to know which metrics were the most impactful for my leadership team grew their understanding of the benefit of our work, and with increased exposure, the full company saw the value of PR and became more engaged. The use of Onclusive data has strengthened our collaboration.

It's about controlling the narrative

NEO Messaging gives you the ability to identify and leverage winning soundbites that resonate with your stakeholders and move the needle for your business.

Communications and PR have an important impact on your business strategy. What was once left to instinct for strategic decisions about this work now has data-backed outcomes. If you see that a soundbite is gaining momentum, you can make a note of it and start incorporating it into future communications to increase your brand awareness, boost interest and influence purchases of your products and services.

NEO Messaging can also help you understand where there are opportunities for shifts in your messaging based on the media, the market and your competitors.

There may be current perceptions associated with your brand that you'd like to shift, or new perceptions you want associated with your brand. You may want to track thought leadership topics to understand the public association of these topics with your brand. As message usage and amplification change, NEO will show which soundbites are resonating and which may not be taking root.

STACEY HEDMAN

Global Marketing Strategy at IFAW

NEO analysis helps us understand where IFAW can truly stand out. And where we might be able to tell another side of the story or what subjects might help us most. Or, join conversations that our audiences are having today.

NEO Messaging applications for communications & PR pros



Company, brand and spokespersons:

- Track soundbites for a company, brand or spokesperson to shape marketing, thought leadership and PR strategies for greater impact
- Create earned, owned, shared and paid media campaigns based on soundbite performance



Products:

- Track soundbites for a specific product to identify if you're over indexing on specific product mentions or one product benefit over another
- Inform earned, owned, shared and paid campaign strategies for improved performance and product storytelling optimization



Crisis situations:

- In pivotal moments, add soundbites that you are using in external communication
- Track crisis-specific soundbite performance over time to understand their ongoing impact on your brand reputation



Taking a company public:

- In tandem with an IPO announcement, measure the company's messaging and spokespersons
- Quantify the impact of communications and PR on your IPO performance



A/B testing for key messages:

- Track soundbites in a bucket against each other to optimize email marketing, social media and messaging materials by leveraging your top performing messages
- Collaborate with other teams, including marketing, product and human resources, helping them incorporate the winning messages into their strategies

NEO Messaging Case Studies



NEO Messaging helped 23andMe, a personal genomics and biotechnology leader, look at the messages and terms that were driving the most website traffic and actions during a campaign launch.

Takeaway:

Looking only at message pull-through, the communications team would have deemed 'research' and 'DNA testing' to be the top performing soundbites, while in fact the terms 'study' and 'genetic testing' generated more business impact with less pull-through.

In addition, 23andMe tested a new strategy to leverage industry experts for their product launches.

NEO Messaging		Buckets: Corporate	Sort by: Most Website Actions	Articles	Amplification	Website Traffic	Website Actions
research	371	12.5k	29.4k	50.9k			
genetic testing	151	15.7k	27.9k	49.4k			
study	223	10.2k	26.8k	49.1k			
DNA Testing	303	5.6k	3.3k	4.1k			
next-generation sequencing	2	0	52	56			
genetic study	3	1.4k	53	52			
genomic research	1	1.2k	51	52			
genetic research	1	1.2k	51	52			

Takeaway:

The team confirmed that the engagement of a prominent primary care physician in the launch broadcast media tour drove not only a high level of media coverage and social amplification, but also a significant amount of website activity on 23andMe.com, compared to other industry experts.

NEO Messaging		Buckets: Type 2 Predisposition (2)	Sort by: Most Website Actions	Articles	Amplification	Website Traffic	Website Actions
diabetes	1.1k	390.1k	51.1k	64.3k			
Industry Expert 1	1.6k	1.4M	20.2k	9.7k			
Industry Expert 2	5	411	2.7k	2.4k			

[Read the full case study](#)



Lucidworks, an enterprise search technology innovator, used NEO Messaging to help them create a global brand and increase category awareness through thought leadership and industry education efforts.

Takeaway:

The PR team quantified message pull-through and tested key messages for category building and thought leadership. They identified two soundbites to focus on: “digital transformation” and “diversity,” which generated the most impact in terms of website traffic and social amplification, respectively.

[Read the full case study](#)

	Articles	Amplification	Website Traffic	Website Actions
digital transformation	67	1.7k	546	9
productivity	60	1.3k	311	3
chatbots	36	1.3k	266	5
microservices	29	1.1k	163	3
diversity	7	24.1k	77	2
inclusion	6	23.9k	43	0
humanizing AI	1	31	8	3

KATIE FLOREZ

PR Manager and Content Strategist, Lucidworks

Onclusive saves me a ton of reporting and analysis time and enables me to really focus my efforts on the topics, publications, and writers that matter.

MONSTER

The team at Monster used NEO Messaging to craft their plans and demonstrate their success developing messages that get traction in the media and resonate with their customers.

Takeaway:

Monster increased the inclusion of key soundbites and spokespersons in their media coverage by up to 54%.

[Read the full case study](#)

CARL GERMANN

Senior Marketing Manager, Content & PR, Monster.com

Dashboard and the tools allow us to check our ideas about campaigns and storylines and whether they are going to resonate with the market.

Final Thoughts

Key takeaways:

- In our data-driven world, understanding which messages are gaining traction is critical for strategic decision-making across your business.
- NEO is the next generation of message optimization technology that delivers powerful insights into how the media, influencers and customers are responding to and amplifying your key messages.
- With NEO, you can measure your message pull-through from an article all the way through to conversions on your website.
- Once you know which messages resonate with your audience, you can continue to refine, build and optimize your future PR efforts for ongoing performance improvements.

With access to unique technologies like NEO Messaging from Onclusive, PR and marketing professionals can exponentially increase the impact of a brand's communications strategy.

NEO Messaging is a part of Onclusive's flagship media monitoring and PR analytics platform. [Request a demo](#) or [contact us](#) today to discuss how NEO can help your business cut through the noise, differentiate itself and accelerate future growth.

Onclusive

Onclusive empowers communications teams with media monitoring and PR analytics software and services. The inventors of **PR Attribution™** and **Power of Voice™**, Onclusive's product suite is built upon a proprietary global news crawler which analyzes millions of earned, owned and newswire content pieces daily in over 100 languages.

Leading global brands and agencies including Airbnb, 23andMe, H&R Block, Experian, Monster, Edmunds, Sophos, Omnicom Public Relations Group and MSLGROUP partner with Onclusive to improve their communications. For more information, visit onclusive.com, email info@onclusive.com and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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