

Onclusive

Demystifying PR Measurement



PR Measurement is a key ingredient in strategic communications

PR and communications have become an integral part of organizational success. This is evident from the growth the industry has experienced every year in every global region, as well as from the fact that brand reputation – a key business asset – is now more critical than ever.

However, there is one area of PR that has been a struggle, and it is measurement. While it is arguably one of the most important elements of a solid communications strategy in 2022, in many cases PR measurement continues to be unstructured, ad-hoc or an afterthought, and a lot of communicators still consider it too complicated. And not surprisingly so – typically, PR pros don't have data and measurement backgrounds or training.

What if PR measurement could be simple, easy and almost entirely automated? For over a decade, Onclusive has been on a mission to demystify this concept for the communications industry and offer user-friendly tools to make it accessible, straightforward, reliable and C-suite ready.

Francis Ingham & Richard Bagnall

Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) Director General / ICCO Chief Executive & International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) Chair / Global Strategy Consultant, Prime Research.

“Measurement is the final ingredient to help PR realize its potential.”

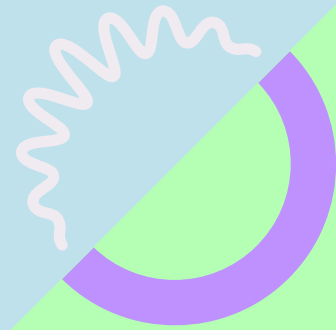
In this whitepaper, we'll explore what PR measurement is and isn't, discuss why any communications strategy must start with measurement in mind, review PR measurement frameworks and best practices, and suggest what to look for when selecting your data and technology partner to help you quantify and showcase your success.



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What Is PR Measurement?



Supporting PR decisions with data is no longer a luxury, but an expectation from senior executives worldwide. Measuring helps you – and them – define, track and prove the success of communications.

Given that in the past, PR was measured via a variety of vanity metrics, including article clippings, impressions and Advertising Value Equivalents or AVEs, no wonder this shift has been challenging. That's why The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) presented an industry-wide consensus on measurement and evaluation during the 2010 Barcelona summit, thus known as the Barcelona Principles, which have since been updated twice – the latest 2020 update being [Barcelona Principles 3.0](#):

1. Setting goals is an absolute prerequisite to communications planning, measurement, and evaluation.
2. Measurement and evaluation should identify outputs, outcomes, and potential impact.
3. Outcomes and impact should be identified for stakeholders, society, and the organization.
4. Communication measurement and evaluation should include both qualitative and quantitative analysis.
5. AVEs are not the value of communication.
6. Holistic communication measurement and evaluation includes all relevant online and offline channels.
7. Communication measurement and evaluation are rooted in integrity and transparency to drive learning and insights.

What is PR measurement, then? Our definition:

It is a set of standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that allows communicators to accurately and consistently evaluate the performance and demonstrate the business value of PR, and use insight from ongoing evaluation for strategy optimization and future planning.

The benefits of measurement standards across your organization are three-fold:

1. You can compare results across programs, geographies, business units and agency partners in order to understand your program performance in context.
2. Instead of guessing, you can use concrete and consistent data over time to improve your performance.
3. Your stakeholders can see the continuity in the data and results year over year, which builds their confidence in the impact of communications on your brand.

Mary Elizabeth Germaine

Managing Director, Global Research and Analytics, Ketchum

“The companies that are data-driven and understand they need to answer the ‘so what’ in the numbers will win in the marketplace. It’s critical to understand how to use data to target the right audience at the right time with the right message AND to showcase how that targeting created meaningful change for the business.”

Why PR Measurement Is a Must



Simply put, measurement is an essential business process for every function at an organization because it helps you define success, track how you're doing on your path toward achieving it, amplify what works, and prove your value and contribution to your brand. The more you can measure and prove your business impact, the more budget and resources you'll get.

Peter Drucker

Austrian-American Management Consultant, Educator,
and Author

"What gets measured, gets done."

Going beyond the big picture, here is the breakdown of the reasons why we think measurement must be a foundational process in PR and communications.



Win the game against competition

Measurement done right starts with identifying what success looks like, which in many cases means winning the game against your competition — for example, growing your brand's share of voice and [Power of Voice™](#). When you know exactly what the desired competitive KPIs look like, you increase your chances of success by using this information to shape your strategies, guide your storytelling and media relations tactics, and adjust your campaigns along the way.



Prove the value of PR

Your executive team is one of your key stakeholders, and it's no secret that they speak the language of tangible results and business metrics. More and more PR pros are being asked to become data-driven when developing and measuring communications initiatives. The good news is that the more you use data to demonstrate your impact on the business, the easier it is to prove the need for additional investment.

84.5%

of communicators reported having, or preparing, to defend strategic PR decisions to the C-suite with data.*



Grow your budget and resources

Proving the value of PR and growing your communications budget go hand-in-hand. If you want to expand your team or increase the scope of your key initiatives, the best way to secure those additional resources is to show the C-suite that what you're doing is working. You can also develop and present a [business case for a major campaign or an annual PR plan](#).

* Source: PRNews + Public Relay, The State of Data-Driven Communications in 2020



Build an impactful PR agency / client relationship

Ideally, a PR agency serves as an extension of your internal communications function. One of the best practices we outlined in [The Complete Guide to Building an Impactful Relationship with Your PR Agency](#) is aligning on key business, marketing and PR success metrics between your internal team and your agency. This helps clarify your expectations about the level of support you need from your PR agency, as well as what your account team needs from you to deliver on those expectations.



Become a strategic advisor the C-suite needs

To fully participate in your company's decision-making, you must adopt a measurement mindset and embed it into everything you do. Data and measurement help you be more strategic, proactive and in control of your success, which also benefits your entire organization. Armed with unique insights and recommendations that no one else can provide, you'll be able to contribute at a much higher level and help steer the overall direction of your brand.

Michael Dolmatch

Director of Communications, Yext

"Yext's press efforts span regions from North America to Asia, and it can be extremely difficult to measure our coverage metrics globally in a reliable way. It's critical for my team to have access to advanced metrics to inform our communications strategy, and Onclusive makes this much easier."



Optimize your campaigns

Measuring the effectiveness of your campaigns reveals what's working and what isn't, which can help you adjust your tactics in the moment and get better results. In addition, evaluating past campaign performance is essential for building future PR strategies and asking for the right budget and resources to be able to successfully implement them.



Power innovation and business agility

Without measurement, there is no experimentation or innovation. Even something as simple as A/B testing of new messaging requires careful measurement for you to know which one worked better so that you can scale from there. And as every organization's ability to keep up with the market dynamics is now more critical than ever, real-time tracking and measurement is needed to allow PR pros to pivot quickly under any conditions.



Support long-term vision

Strategic communication is a marathon, not a sprint, and ongoing measurement plays a key role in your long-term strategy. A robust measurement framework that tracks your KPIs over time can provide a big-picture view into the success of your long-term initiatives, such as increasing brand awareness or improving brand reputation year over year. Being able to track and demonstrate results on a continuous basis will also help secure consistent investment in PR.



PR Measurement Best Practices



PR measurement can be challenging due to the lack of time, confusion about what to measure, or the complexity of bringing it all together for company-wide alignment. As data science and PR analytics specialists on a mission to support communicators worldwide, we'd like to offer best practices and frameworks for setting goals and success metrics that you can use whether you're just starting out or ready to go to the next level.

Create a plan with the end in mind

Starting with the end in mind is key not just for PR and communications, but also for business in general. If you don't define from the get-go what success would look like, it's difficult if not impossible to set the right goals, develop the right strategy and measure how well you're doing on the way there.

This means that planning must be part of PR measurement, and measurement must be part of the plan. According to the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework guidelines, planning ahead begins by asking two "big picture" questions:

- What is the human problem you're trying to solve?
- What is the business impact you're trying to achieve, and how can communications realistically contribute towards it?

At the highest level, thinking about the core human problem you are trying to solve means reflecting on the rationale why your communication strategy is needed in the first place. Listen to your audiences and stakeholders — how do they define their top needs and challenges? What keeps them up at night? This type of research will help you frame a solution that's most likely to resonate with them and tell your story in a way that speaks directly to your most important readers.

Next, consider the desired business impact of your communications plan. How you define it really depends on your industry and how your organization measures its overall success. While traditional PR metrics like brand awareness and share of voice are essential to evaluating performance, connecting communications efforts to tangible business impact has become equally, if not more, critical.

Source: AMEC website
<https://amecorg.com/amecframework/>



As a best practice, we recommend following the above AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework, which outlines four forms of PR measurement:

-  **Outputs:** what you produce that is received by your target audiences, including the volume and quality of your media coverage, social posts, number of events and event attendance, and message pull-through.
-  **Out-takes:** how your audiences respond and react to your communications outputs, such as shifts in attention, awareness, understanding, learning, interest, engagement and consideration.
-  **Outcomes:** longer-term influence of your communications on your target audience as a result of the out-takes, including attitude change, satisfaction, trust, preference, intention and advocacy.
-  **Impact:** business impact of your communications with a direct contribution toward the organization's goals as a result of your outputs, out-takes and outcomes, such as improved reputation, increased sales, change in policy, or improved social change.

Tie communications objectives to business goals

We talk about this a lot, as we have seen this best practice work really well for Onclusive clients over the years. Communications teams that have clear objectives tying into business goals and that use consistent metrics to assess their progress against those objectives not only have stronger results, but are also able to contribute to corporate strategy at the highest level.

As you are considering your communications objectives, take the time to review your organization's overall business goals. Your executive team has likely set those around acquiring or retaining customers, winning market share, improving corporate or brand reputation, creating a new category, gaining meaningful brand engagement – or something else that is often connected to revenue targets. The communications function should support organizational success in some way that is clear to you and your C-suite.

Ask yourself, how can you align PR objectives for your brand with your company's business goals? Here are some examples:

PR Objective	>>>	Business Goal
Website traffic and desired actions generated by earned and owned media	>>>	Acquiring customers
Building relationships with media outlets that publish powerful educational stories resulting in new inquiries	>>>	Creating a new category in your industry
Achieving a certain volume of article reader interactions, such as social shares	>>>	Gaining meaningful brand engagement

Get the right data & measurement tools

In order to set the right objectives and develop a solid plan, communicators need access to the right data. PR planning must begin with knowing your audience, which is why data has become a critical strategic pillar for winning.

Thankfully, there is ample data available to us now, and technology that can help extract useful insights from the data has become far easier to access. There are multiple solutions out there for you to choose from including Onclusive, so you can leave measurement automation to a subject-matter expert while you continue to focus on what you do best – media relations, storytelling and communications strategy.

The right communication data and technology partner will support you in all these key areas:

-  **Understanding your audience and their journey** so that you have clarity around who to target now and in the future, what to say and when to say it.
-  **Knowing your customers' behaviors and preferences** to reach them on the right channels at the right time.
-  **Staying ahead of market shifts, opportunities and crises** with predictive analytics that enable you to identify a story to newswatch before it goes viral, or learn about a potential crisis before it happens.
-  **Automating your day-to-day and reporting tasks**, such as maintaining a fresh contact database, keeping track of your media outreach, and easily accessing and sharing your performance data with your stakeholders.
-  **Optimizing your overall plan and each campaign, and accurately demonstrating the value of PR** to your organization so that you can get more resources and impact your brand strategy.

We also recommend integrating your PR measurement tools with your organization's existing martech stack and marketing performance dashboard. Collaborate with your marketing team to understand which tools are already in place (for example, Google or Adobe Analytics, Marketo, Hubspot, etc) and request access to understand the goals that have already been set up there. By integrating with the tools that already exist, you can kickstart your PR measurement program and minimize friction by providing consistent reporting with other teams.

Establish your PR measurement framework

Now it's time to tie it all together and develop a PR measurement framework for your brand. What is a measurement framework? Rather than simply a collection of metrics, tools or initiatives, a measurement framework creates a systematic way to collect the right data, analyze the data to understand communications performance, extract insights for continuous improvement of PR strategies and tactics, and demonstrate the value of communications.

A PR measurement framework works only if everyone in your organization is on board with using it. This is especially important for large or global companies, which may have multiple communications, executive and agency teams. To roll out PR measurement at the global level, you must create alignment upfront — ensuring the buy-in from all regions, business units and agency partners across the board. An effective framework must be integrated and consolidated, with uniform KPIs and review cycles.



At Onclusive, we've developed a framework to reliably measure real business impact of earned, owned and newswire media content across the entire customer journey. Each step in this framework is aligned to specific metrics that help determine the quality, resonance, influence and bottom line impact of every article:

Content Quality

Am I producing the right content?

Engagement

Is my content being read?

Influence

Am I influencing readers?

Action

Is my content driving behaviors?



Content Quality: Going deeper than just measuring the volume of media coverage, you can now gauge the quality of your content using metrics such as Onclusive's Power of Voice™, which combines relevance, publication authority, repetition, social amplification and article sentiment into a single competitive metric.



Engagement: You've got press coverage – but do you know if anyone is consuming your content, and if so, how much and for how long are they reading it? These questions can be answered by Onclusive's Reader Engagement score, which incorporates the reader's time on page, average attention, scroll depth and unique visitors for each article.



Influence: How did your content shape the opinions of the reader, and how did it impact your brand sentiment and consideration? Onclusive's Brand Impact measurement can show you this with real-time survey results from your target audience.



Action: What business outcomes did your content drive, including website traffic, sign-ups, sales and revenue? Look no further than Onclusive's PR Attribution™ to understand how many times people, after having read a piece of content about your company, eventually visit your website and which specific actions they take.

We call these “metrics that matter” because they are tied to the KPIs that the C-suite cares about. They can help your executive team to understand the true impact of earned and owned media on organizational success, while arming you with data-driven insights that you can use to be a strategic advisor to them.

Romain Vezirian

Director, Global Brand PR Content & Multimedia, IHG Hotels & Resorts

“Working with Onclusive has been a big shift for us – previously we focused on quantity metrics like share of voice and volume of coverage, and now we use Power of Voice™ to look at the volume along with the quality of content. For example, how do you accurately measure the impact of a crisis on your brand? That's where Power of Voice™ comes in, because it includes positive and negative sentiment analysis along with content relevance, publication authority, and social media amplification rolled into a single data point.”

You can also use AMEC's Integrated Evaluation Framework and the concepts of outputs, out-takes, outcomes and impact to support you in setting your goals, developing your PR plan, and determining your success metrics. We've added examples of specific PR metrics to this framework:

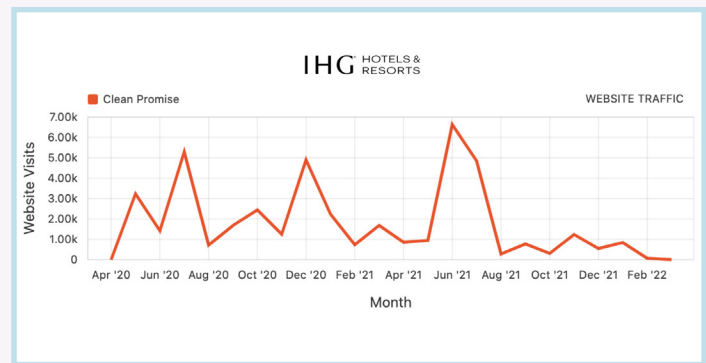
Outputs	Out-takes	Outcomes	Impact
Basic measures of the volume of your communications activity	Response and reactions of your target audiences to the communications activity	Longer-term effect of the communications activity on the target audience	Business impact of the communications activity
What media and influencer activity has been generated by your PR campaign?	What do you want people to <i>think</i> differently as a result of your PR campaign?	What do you want people to <i>feel</i> differently as a result of your PR campaign?	What do you want people to <i>do</i> differently as a result of your PR campaign?
Example metrics Number of articles Readership Share of voice Power of Voice™ Message pull-through	Example metrics Brand awareness Audience reach Social Amplification Reader Engagement	Example metrics Brand sentiment Brand consideration Brand Impact	Example metrics Website traffic Website actions Info / demo requests Sales / orders New talent hired

Need support setting communications objectives that are connected to the desired business impact, or developing an overarching PR measurement framework tailored to your brand? Onclusive's consultants and account strategists are ready to help you take your planning, goal-setting and measurement to the next level.

Customer Success Story **IHG** HOTELS & RESORTS

IHG® Hotels & Resorts is one of the world's leading hotel companies, with around 350,000 colleagues working across more than 100 countries to deliver True Hospitality for Good. IHG's diverse portfolio of differentiated brands is well known and loved by millions of consumers around the world.

As the world adjusted to the new travel norms and expectations during Covid-19, in Q2 2020 IHG launched the "Clean Promise" campaign to highlight its efforts toward an enhanced hotel guest experience around the world by redefining cleanliness and supporting guests' personal wellbeing throughout their stay through:



1. Using new science-led protocols and service measures
2. Partnering with industry leading experts Cleveland Clinic, Ecolab and Diversey
3. Launching a global IHG "Clean Promise" and Global Cleanliness Board

The Results

Based on the data and insights from Onclusive between April 2020 and the first quarter of 2022, IHG achieved these extraordinary results:

 **Outputs:** 9,980 Target Media Placements, including publications like USA Today, Global Traveler, CBNC & more, as well as 39% Share of Voice and 59% Power of Voice™

 **Outtakes:** 225,000 Social Media Engagements

 **Outcomes:** 98% Positive / Neutral Sentiment and 59% Positive Sentiment during the height of a global pandemic

 **Impact:** 42,900 Website Visits

Find Your PR Measurement Partner



The good news is that there is no need to figure out PR measurement on your own. Besides the support you can request from your marketing colleagues, there are many solutions and tools available on the market. In fact, there are so many that you'll want to first go through the process we outlined above to get really clear about your needs and requirements:



Clarify what success looks like



Set your goals



Define your KPIs



Establish your measurement framework



Determine your PR measurement partner needs, requirements and budget

Your needs, requirements and budget will depend on your industry, your company size, whether you want a measurement tool that is basic, intermediate or highly sophisticated, and the resources available to you.

What to look for in a PR measurement solution



How comprehensive and relevant is their media monitoring?

The more coverage can be captured through media monitoring, the more data you'll have at your fingertips for measurement and insights. Make sure that the partner you're selecting can track all the media channels and formats essential to your business, including digital, video, print, social, blogs, podcasts, and more. At the same time, with an ever-increasing volume of media released every day, it's essential to focus only on what's relevant – so ask about robust filters, human curation or both.



How accurate is their media database, and do they have a PR CRM?

You'll want to measure which journalists, influencers and bloggers are creating value for your brand, and a fresh and accurate media database is a must for that. Ask how often and in which ways the database is being updated – human curation is important here, too.

If you're going to gauge the effectiveness of your interactions with authors on an ongoing basis, you'll also need the PR equivalent of a customer relationship management (CRM) system that can keep track of your pitches, who they went to, how journalists engaged with your communications, and whether they picked up and published your stories.



Do they have a turnkey offering, and /or a customizable enterprise solution?

Depending on the size of your company / team and where you are on your PR measurement journey, make sure that your measurement solution fits your needs. If you want everything automated, easy to set up and use on your own, ask about their turnkey “done-for-you” offering. If you have special needs, such as custom metrics or dashboards, or have a large organization, chances are you'll need a comprehensive solution with significant customization and support. Ask about what can be customized, how quickly, and what level of service you can expect.



What are their international and global capabilities?

If you have an international or global business, you'll want to confirm that your PR measurement partner can serve the needs of multiple geographies and business units. Look for a robust data collection and analysis capability, options to customize regional dashboards, and staff available to support international demands. Your ideal partner may also be a company that has presence in locations that are important to your brand, and offers sophisticated AI or human linguists who can accurately determine messaging and sentiment in different languages.



How can they help you measure the business impact of communications?

To include the impact of PR on your bottom line in your reporting, ask if your measurement partner is able to connect communications activities to business outcomes such as website traffic, desired actions and revenue. Another good question to ask is how they actually do this, especially if there are no backlinks in your published earned media content to your website. Their methodology should help you understand how accurate the impact tracking is going to be.

Romain Vezirian

Director, Global Brand PR Content & Multimedia, IHG Hotels & Resorts

"Power of Voice™ and PR Attribution™ are both amazing metrics. While it can feel a bit scary to introduce a new KPI to your C-suite, you need to get out of your comfort zone to get a seat at the table. We educated our executive team on what makes these new metrics so impactful and now they want to see them every time! It was truly a lightbulb moment when we demonstrated how PR can drive website traffic – generating tangible business results. There is a lot of value in introducing these new metrics to your stakeholders."



What do they offer in terms of technical and strategic support?

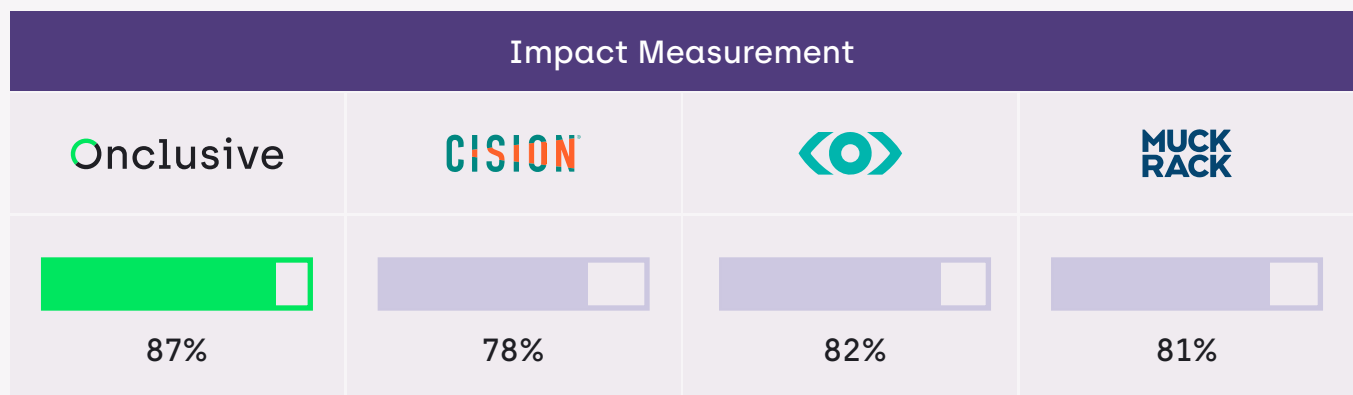
Even if you're looking for a standard solution that doesn't involve customization, you'll want to understand what you can expect if you have questions, technical issues or need help figuring out a feature. For larger teams and seasoned communicators, strategic support can become an important consideration. You may want to know if your measurement partner can help you set the right goals, apply the best measurement framework, interpret data, give recommendations to optimize your strategy and maximize your investment in their technology.



How Onclusive measures up

The Onclusive team are the quintessential PR measurement subject-matter experts. We've been developing our best-in-class and most advanced AI and data science for communications for over a decade, and now we're a global company that combines smart technology with human insights and expertise, serving over 9,000 clients worldwide.

We're also consistently recognized by our customers as #1 in many key categories according to the G2 Crowd Report for User Satisfaction Ratings, which uses data from hundreds of thousands of verified business user reviews. Read our [2021 Media Monitoring Comparison Report](#) to learn more.



Ready to try out Onclusive for yourself? [Request a demo today.](#)

Onclusive

Onclusive is a global partner for PR and Communications success. We bring together Kantar Reputation Intelligence, the largest media monitoring and measurement service in Europe, with the best-in-class media relations tools of PRgloo, and Onclusive's own powerful AI and data science. Our technology, insights and expertise make sense of the fractured, fast-moving media world, helping you manage, monitor and measure your communications activity. Elevate your performance and prove and improve your value with Onclusive on your side.

For more information, visit onclusive.com, email info@onclusive.com, call (415) 545-8247 and follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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