5 KEY PUBLIC RELATIONS METRICS

As a participant in this year’s AMEC Measurement Month activities, Universal Information Services has prepared a blog series on five key PR measures. There are potentially an infinite number of elements and aspects of a PR campaign you can measure, but the five metrics outlined in this whitepaper can be essential to any program. The importance of these measures is that they can yield a level of insight helpful to not only your public relations team, but also the executives and stakeholders holding you accountable for their public relations.

Each of the five PR metrics below represented one day during the third week of Measurement Month. For more information visit us at Universal Information Services or research the evolving work at AMEC, the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication.

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This week is focused on North America, as it relates to Measurement Month around the World. Universal Information Services is participating in an awareness and education campaign organized by AMEC, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication. These events are sponsored by membership companies and work to better educate public relations professionals on reliable methodologies for measuring PR and media. Each day this week Universal will spotlight a specific metric. Since there are dozens of meaningful metrics an organization can measure, mostly determined by their goals and anticipated outcomes, we will focus on only five key metrics. Five days, five metrics.

**Sentiment Analysis:**

Identifying and categorizing opinions expressed in a piece of text or story, especially in order to determine whether the writer's attitude towards a particular topic, product, etc., is positive, negative, or neutral.

Today we look at Sentiment analysis. By measuring the tone of a media mention, analysts can help indicate potential feelings towards a product, service, or organization. Although the specific definition of sentiment might vary depending on the organization doing your measurement, we train our professional analysts to view stories in the same manner. Cross-coder training is critical when judging sentiment so that there is no deviation in metric values due to personality differences in people. While there are many services offering automated sentiment analysis based on keywords or phrases, those solutions are generally only 60% accurate. When preparing a measurement report that needs a higher level of reliability, a trained analyst is necessary to determine the nuances between "it was an awfully good movie" and "it was an awful movie". Having access to the text, video, or audio of the actual media placement is critical so you or your analysts can determine the true context of the mention. Some "negative" news stories highlight great solutions and therefore would represent a positive story to that solution provider if there were presented in a positive light.
PR METRICS THAT MATTER

SOURCE QUALITY

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Each day this week Universal will spotlight a specific metric. Yesterday we covered Sentiment and Tone. Today we’re going to briefly discuss the how Source Quality and Reach impact your measurement results.

Reach refers to the total number of different people or households exposed, at least once, to a medium during a given period. Source quality is a reflection of a media outlet’s authority in a specific area of interest, plus the credibility of their information.

Reach can be an element of Source Quality, but may be insignificant depending on the target audience and demographic niche you’re focused. For example, if you are targeting a very narrow interest group with your key messages, and the media sources serving that interest group have a very low circulation or audience value relative to mainstream media, automated measurement may discount that Reach as being “low”. This would be a mistake. Niche media sources may have low circulation, audience, or follower numbers, but the total sum of the audience may be equally small. Therefore, the reach for that source would actually be high. Again, this illustrates the importance of checking your measurement methodology and having human analysts making proper inferences from the resulting outputs and measures.

We’re interested in hearing your thoughts, concerns or failures related to Source Quality and Reach. Tomorrow we will focus on why identifying Key Messages before measurement, and locating their placement within your media results is so important.
PR METRICS THAT MATTER

KEY MESSAGES

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Each day this week Universal has spotlighted a specific metric. Yesterday we covered Source Quality and Reach. Today we will drill down on why identifying Key Messages before measurement, and locating their placement within your media results, is so important.

Key Messages are the phrases you craft and specifically want to appear in your media exposure. Message penetration indicates the prevalence of these messages, a quantitative measure, across all possible messages.

Tracking Key Messages is particularly helpful when your campaign or organization has multiple messages and you want to see which ones are performing best. From this type of analysis, a professional analyst can determine how the media is responding to your efforts, how widespread your messages are travelling, and what second degree networks are amplifying your message.

Amplification of a message, either from traditional media into social media or vice versa, only expands the message penetration and reach of your effort. Establishing key messages is done during the planning stages of a campaign and prior to the start of measurement. Measuring key messages after the fact is possible, but should be established as part of your planning.

Tomorrow we’ll discuss Exposure Volume, another quantitative measure that some believe has limited impact of the efficacy of your measurement. You will see how key messages and message amplification impact exposure. Until then, let us know any thoughts or concerns you have related to Key Messages.
PR METRICS THAT MATTER

MEDIA EXPOSURE

Universal Information Services is participating in an awareness and education campaign organized by AMEC, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication. These events are sponsored by membership companies and work to better educate public relations professionals on reliable methodologies for measuring PR and media.

Each day this week Universal has defined one of five key metrics important to public relations measurement. Yesterday we covered Key Messages and Message Penetration. Today we will look at how the volume of Media Exposure can affect your measured results.

**Media Exposure quantifies the amount of attention that television, radio, online media, social media and newspapers give to a specific story. The volume of media exposure is simply the measurement of that attention and can be represented in terms of number of mentions, stories or share of voice when compared to other specific topics.**

In a fixed media market, where the placement opportunities remain static, tracking the volume of media exposure can be an indicator of the receptiveness the media has towards your stories or organization. When performing competitive measurements, tracking your volume of exposure relative to the competition, can generate an effective share of voice metric. Whether a strict volume of media placements as an indicator of message penetration, or as a share of voice comparison, understanding volume of media coverage can still have an important role in calculating the effectiveness on your public relations effort. Exposure Volume should not be a stand-alone metric as it yields little to know information about behavioral changes or modified market actions. But when used with other qualitative metrics in can be a very helpful indicator of effort. Our final metric will resolve how several of these measures can be formulated to determine true impact of your public relations efforts.

Tomorrow we will look at Universal Information Services’ Impact Score, a metric that combines qualitative and quantitative measures in order to yield a relative number for evaluating individual stories, time frames, and campaigns. In the meantime, share your experiences with calculating media exposure and any concerns you have with that measure.
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The Impact Score takes into account the number of qualitative driver conditions met AND the media source. Points are given in two areas: 1-qualitative points and 2-media source points.

The Impact Score statistic unveils the true impact of a story; a weighted factor our clients can use to understand the impact from each news story and compare that value relative to other stories. The value of this metric is to remove the false value imparted by quantitative measures only, and deliver a weighted value you can use to compare stories across time. It’s particularly useful when used as part of an ongoing PR measurement program. Capturing both the qualitative and quantitative elements of media exposure has never been easy, nor an exact science. However, through a sound media measurement framework, like the approach used at Universal, we can evaluate what your media exposure means in terms of impact, value, tone, focus, and a variety of other user-defined parameters.

Those who need to understand the ROI and impact of their outreach efforts can get truly actionable data when following a reliable methodology. As this post is the last in our five-part series on Metrics that Matter, we hope you’ve found these posts informational if not enlightening. We recognize that a few paragraphs can’t do justice to the broad topic of reliable media measurement. And although we’ve tried to be concise with our definitions, there is always more to the story. We encourage you to contact your professional media measurement service or reach out to us for additional information. We would be happy to expand on the topics briefly covered this week.

It would also be improper for us to not recognize the research and work AMEC has put forth in raising awareness for media measurement at a global level. We look forward to our continued collaboration with them and our partner company members. If you have additional questions we have more information on our public relations tools at Universal-info.com.