

PublicRelay

# How to Measure Public Relations Success with PR Attribution

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4 Keys to Proving Your Value and Improving Campaign Effectiveness

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# Understanding how your work impacts business goals is the key to PR measurement and analysis.

This impact is widely known as PR attribution and it's vital to communicators' role as a strategic partner to the business.

Executives want to see the impact of PR and communications on business goals, not just PR outputs such as potential impressions, article counts, or worst of all - largely discredited AVEs. These metrics don't benefit your team, nor your executives. They are purely backward-looking, so they don't provide insights that drive tactical or strategic decisions that help you do your job better. They also don't illustrate the value of your work to executives because they don't put communications activities in the context of the business.

To tie PR and communications activities to business goals, communicators must tie to business outcomes, rather than PR outputs, to demonstrate how your work connects to goals that span departments.

What does a quality measurement strategy look like that allows you to easily attribute your impact?

# Create a PR Attribution and Measurement Plan

## What are your business goals?

The first step toward PR attribution and establishing a measurement strategy is determining your company's high-level business goals. Maybe you already know them, or you might need to have a conversation with senior leadership about the company's priorities and how you can contribute. Once you know the challenges they're solving for, you can measure what matters to uncover insights that make an impact.

## How can communications map to those goals?

Even after you've had the conversation with your senior leadership, it's not always immediately obvious how you can attribute your business impact to certain goals. If your CEO says, "our only goal this year is to grow revenue by 30 percent," you might feel pressure to attribute a dollar amount. If you're an online retailer or similar direct to consumer business, revenue is often a business impact you can attribute. But revenue is not the ultimate value of PR and communications and there are many other ways to contribute to company growth without tying to a dollar amount.

Next-generation communicators are gate keepers of brand reputation, content creators, policy advocates, social responsibility leaders, company culture gurus, and much more. Ensure your executives understand the true value of PR by attributing all this expertise and effort to results they'll understand.

Think creatively about the goal of growth: will you be recruiting new sales and marketing employees? You'll want to be known as a great place to work. Trying to attract a millennial and Gen Z audience? They want to do business with socially conscious organizations.

With accurate and relevant data, you can correlate how your work impacts:

**Website Traffic**

**Reputation**

**Revenue**

**Donations**

**Membership**

**Hiring efforts**

**Employee engagement**

**Loyalty**

**Advocacy**

**Investor Relations**



## Set your communications goals and metrics based on the business goals to which you're going to contribute.

Communications goals, the strategies and tactics you're going to use to achieve them, and the metrics you'll use to measure success are the how behind your contribution to larger business objectives.

Let's continue with the example business goal of company growth. If your company wants to increase sales in the millennial and Gen Z market, your communications goal could be to increase message penetration to those audiences.

Make sure to establish SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) such as, "we're going to increase coverage containing positive brand quality messages to millennials by 10% in the next three months." And if you want to go above and beyond, establish ethical and revolutionary goals, or [SMART-ER goals](#). Are your efforts and results ethical and replicable and are the analytical insights from them revolutionizing your communications strategies? Processes inside or even outside your department? Your contribution to the business?

Use demographic and psychographic audience analysis to make progress on this goal. Segment your audience by data points like age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and social and consumer behavior. This analysis enables you to find a very granular audience such as, millennial consumers over a certain income who regularly make eco-friendly purchases. Pinpoint the outlets that best reach this audience and tailor your media relations strategy accordingly.

When you can show that 60% of coverage reached your target market, as opposed to reporting a large, but vague number of potential impressions, this is a business conversation the C-suite will want to have.

Demographic and psychographic analysis is just one kind of communications metric you can use to demonstrate the outcomes of your efforts. Other communications metrics you should consider are [reputational drivers](#), or the high-level reputational pillars your brand wants to be known for such as being a great place to work or an innovator in your industry, and other key messages.

## Correlate PR Data With Other Parts of the Business

After you've gathered your communications data and analyzed it for the concepts that are important to your business, overlay it with data from other parts of the company. Learn more about other departments' goals and initiatives to see where you align, build relationships, and understand what data is available to you. Sales and HR data overlaid with communications data could reveal patterns that correlate the PR outcomes with business outcomes like increased revenue and more effective hiring efforts.

In return, share your data with other departments. You might be surprised what insights communications data provides HR, Marketing, Sales, and even [your CEO and CFO](#).

Breaking down siloes, sharing data across business units, and attributing your business impact will transform the perception of PR and communications from a cost center to a strategic partner.





## Lastly, ensure attribution and measurement are replicable, transparent, and ethical.

Attributing how your Communications work is impacting the business requires a comprehensive measurement program. The truth is, there's no "magic bullet" PR metric to prove your value and that can be confidently defended in the board room.

When it comes to PR attribution of any kind, you need to know exactly how your results are calculated. You should also ensure all attributed earned media data is relevant to your business and make sure the data is toned specifically to your brand, products, and messages. A passing mention of your company in an irrelevant article likely did not cause a spike in website traffic and a negative story about your product quality certainly didn't drive sales.

Make sure your PR attribution is ethical, the standard for inclusion is transparent, and analysis can be repeated and confidently explained if ever called into question.

If you can walk into your board room with no reservations about the quality of your work or the quality of analysis, you can make an impact on your organization - ***and prove it.***

## The PublicRelay Difference

PublicRelay brings the best technology and the best people together to deliver the insights that help you uncover and measure the influencers most likely to move the needle. Here's how:

- **Fully analyzed results in near real-time**

Our team is responsible for making sure your media analysis is correct — no more valuable time wasted massaging “directionally correct” output. You can take our accurate analysis straight to the Board.

- **Insight into the impact of social sharing on your earned media**

Your Trending Score tells you how traditional and social media coverage interacts so you can be more proactive and strategic — leveraging each channel for maximum impact.

- **Context, not just counts**

Every article is categorized by what matters to you — from brand and reputation concepts, like thought leadership or workplace environment, to which authors are covering your peers but not you (and how to reach them).

- **An extension of your team**

We hire less than 1% of the media analysts that apply, so you get a dedicated, highly educated analyst located in the US or Ireland that collaborates directly with you and your team.



# Trusted Analytics for PR and Business

It's not just about what you've done but what to do next

**Find more information here:**

[www.publicrelay.com](http://www.publicrelay.com)