

## Measuring the Value of PR

By Rosanne E. Desmone

In today's business environment, PR practitioners feel the pressure to prove the value of their efforts in order to survive. Gone are the days when passing around clips would do it. Today it takes a PR program that is strategic, that gets your key messages out to your target audiences, and that meets the goals set out in your PR plan.

And, even if you do a bang-up job, you still have to prove that your PR efforts translate to your association's bottom line. If you can't do this, your PR program could be kaput. In fact, as any number of us can attest, an association in trouble usually starts trimming right at the PR and marketing level. (But that's another story.)

When thinking about this article, I did all my research and sat down to tackle the topic of PR value and measurement. But I realized that the topic was too complicated to deal with in one newsletter article. I decided, therefore, to try something different and share with you some of the research I found most useful. From there, I'll let you decide the best way to convince your boss and your board that they can't live without PR's contribution.

I do have a few words of my own about measuring PR's worth, however. Regardless of what method you use, the best way to be taken seriously is to do the following:

- Determine your methodology and write it down in detail.
- Share the written version with management, your board, and anyone else who will see the valuation document.
- Err on the conservative side to make sure your assertions will be credible.

That said, pick and choose from the helpful resources below to make your best case for what you do.

1. **"The Ad Value of PR"** by Australian PR authority Jim Macnamara. PR has long struggled to show its value, but what's the best way?  
[http://www.masscom.com.au/Downloads/AdValue\(A4\).pdf](http://www.masscom.com.au/Downloads/AdValue(A4).pdf)
2. **"What Does It Cost? The Value of PR Services"** by James L. Horton, founder of online-pr.com. Why there will never be a way to define absolute value for PR services.  
<http://www.online-pr.com/Holding/Whatdoesitcost-article.pdf>
3. **"The Future of PR: Measurement and Evaluation in the New Millennium"** from the February 2003 *Vocus PR Pro* newsletter. "In many organizations, PR is the last holdout when it comes to providing metrics and analytics on spending and programs. The economy dictates the need for PR department accountability, and it isn't as hard as you think to demonstrate how your programs impact the bottom line. Just as marketing can demonstrate the return on investment in initiatives and progress toward achieving company objectives, so must PR. Surprisingly, few organizations are making the shift."  
<http://www.vocus.com/prpro/2003/0203/index2.html>

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4. **“Public Relations Measurement: The Heat Is On to Deliver ROI”** from *GCI Intelligence Quarterly*.  
“It is not an overstatement to say that accountability is the key issue facing the public relations industry today. Measurement of public relations value has never been more important. For public relations departments, the ability to prove value and return on PR investment may be the difference between getting budget approval or not.”  
<http://www.gcigroup.com/docs/gcigs/Measurement.pdf>
5. **“Is Your PR Program Worth the Cost?”** by marketing and PR consultant Al Lautenslager. How to set specific goals for your PR campaign and calculate your precise ROI.  
<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/0,4621,306669,00.html>
6. **“How Do You Measure Public Relations?”** from a Dublin, Ireland-based blog called “PR Opinions,” hosted by Tom Murphy.  
The overwhelming conclusion on PR measurement from this March 2004 survey sample: “There continues to be little or no consensus around the best way to measure a PR campaign.”  
<http://www.natterjackpr.com/stories/2004/03/02/prOpinionsSurveyMarch2004HowToYouMeasurePr.html>
7. **“Guidelines and Standards for Measuring the Effectiveness of PR Programs and Activities”** by Walter K. Lindenmann, published by the Institute for Public Relations.  
“In the short term, PR measurement and evaluation involves assessing the success or failure of specific PR programs, strategies, activities, or tactics by measuring the *outputs*, *outtakes*, and/or *outcomes* of those programs against a predetermined set of objectives. In the long term, PR measurement and evaluation involves assessing the success or failure of much broader PR efforts that have as their aim seeking to improve and enhance the relationships that organizations maintain with key constituents.”  
[http://www.instituteforpr.org/measurement\\_and\\_evaluation.phtml?article\\_id=2003\\_guide\\_pr\\_effectiveness](http://www.instituteforpr.org/measurement_and_evaluation.phtml?article_id=2003_guide_pr_effectiveness)
8. **“Another Way to Measure PR Value”** by guest columnist Katie Paine on TalentZoo.com. May PR practitioners believe that ad-value equivalents (AVEs) and column inches are not valid measurements. Paine, publisher of *The Measurement Standard* and *The One-Minute Benchmarking Bulletin*, proposes a budget-based measurement method: the PRV.  
<http://www.talentzoo.com/content/guestcolumnist/article/197.aspx>
9. **KDPaine’s PR Measurement Blog.** More from Katie Paine, a self-described “serial entrepreneur specializing in measuring the effectiveness of marketing programs.”  
“If you’ve ever wondered how to measure public affairs, media relations, internal communications, or even blogs, you’re in the right spot. In this space I’ll be regularly ranting and raving about news, techniques, and development in the world of PR research and evaluation.”  
[http://kdpaine.blogs.com/kdpaines\\_pr\\_measurement\\_b/2005/04/index.html](http://kdpaine.blogs.com/kdpaines_pr_measurement_b/2005/04/index.html)

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**10. Dictionary of Public Relations Measurement and Research** from the Institute for Public Relations.

“Why a dictionary for public relations measurement and research? Because we don’t all measure the same things, measure the same ways, or use the same tools or terminology. To get all of us on the same page we need to know precisely what we mean when we use or say certain words in measuring our activities and our research.”

<http://www.instituteforpr.org/pdf/Dictionary.pdf>

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