

Demystifying measurement:
**Demonstrating the
value of your B2B
PR investment**

skout



Introduction

We're currently living in a society and an age where every penny counts. The cost-of-living crisis has impacted our home lives as the prices of food and energy continue to rise, and that's having a knock-on effect in the world of business too, as rents increase and companies struggle

to make ends meet owing to a similar hike in their utility bills. Every line on the balance sheet needs to be justified. Measurement of your public relations activity is therefore crucial as it demonstrates a tangible return on the investment that has been made into it.

To learn more, we spoke with three thought leaders who are all making waves in PR measurement by pushing the boundaries of traditional reporting in order to deliver real value to senior marketers.



Claire James
Client Services Director
Skout PR

With decades of experience working with B2B marketers on their measurement pain points, Skout's client services director, Claire James, is the brain behind our own measurement formulae.



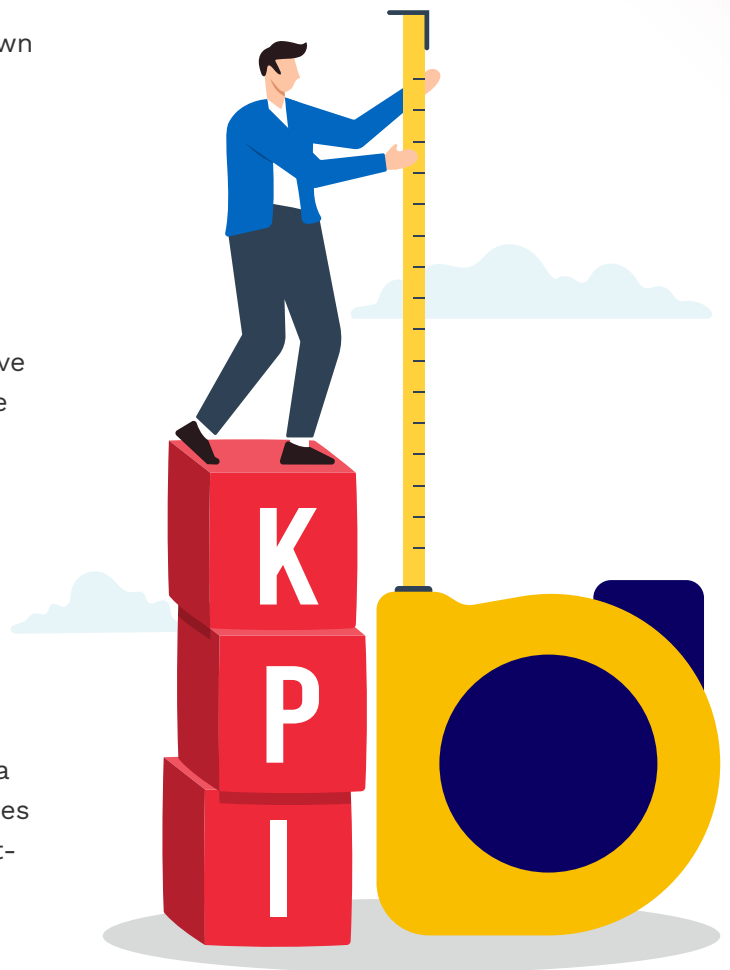
Richard Benson
Founder and Managing Director
Releasd

Richard used his agency background to develop an intuitive platform designed to address the reporting challenges faced by PR professionals.



Ricky Reemer
Managing Director
Unicorn Partners

Managing director of Unicorn Partners, Ricky Reemer, created a PR reporting service that combines traditional PR metrics with client-side data that can be mapped to relevant KPIs.



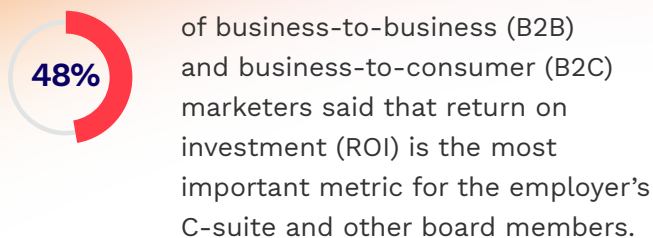
Measurement counts

When considering the wider impact of B2B PR, it's important to start from the perspective that all your competitors have a voice in the market and you don't. This is why demonstrating its value is important, otherwise you run the risk of going unnoticed by your key audiences.

Third party research shows that marketers do understand the importance of PR and its influence on increasing their business' market share, but they are finding it difficult to communicate its ROI to C-Suite.

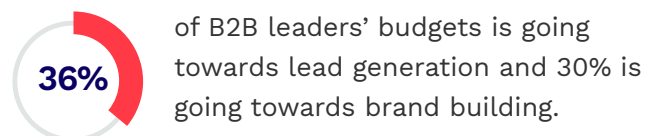
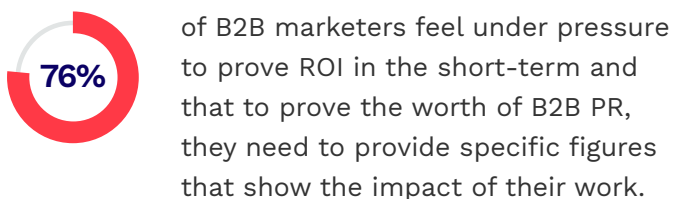
MW MarketingWeek

Marketing Week's 'Language of Effectiveness' survey from 2022 revealed that:



LinkedIn

According to LinkedIn's B2B Marketing Benchmark report from 2023:



Exposure Ninja's research highlighted that:



So, how can B2B marketers work together with PR professionals to better communicate PR's impact, what metrics should they be reporting on, and what tools should be considered both now and in the future, to support effective measurement? These are some of the topics we explored in more detail with our industry experts.



The evolution of PR measurement

In the analogue age, the impact of PR was notoriously difficult to measure. It seems unfathomable to those entering the profession for the first time in 2024 that a press release would be typed up on a typewriter, put in an envelope and posted to a publication, before scouring the next, physical edition to see if it had made the cut. If it did, out came the scissors and glue as the article was removed from the publication and pasted into a coverage book.

Today, online platforms can provide PR professionals with much more granular detail on where the fruits of their labour appear. They can outline the circulation of the publication and how many people visit the website – an unknown phenomenon pre-1995 – on which the story was published as well as its domain authority (DA). Not only that, but today's tools can tell you how many people have actually read the story and the sentiment that it conveys to readers.

“When we launched, the industry wasn't particularly tech-savvy and didn't know what software-as-a-service (SaaS) was. It was a big thing to ask agencies to trust us with their measurement,” says Richard Benson, founder and managing director of measurement platform, Releasd.

“Since then, the agency world has changed and now demands a more professional way of reporting. Demonstrating the value of the work you had done was seen as a lengthy and often thankless task, whereas we thought it should be viewed as an opportunity.

“PR agencies need to offer their clients a good report because this visibility is imperative to demonstrating value. B2B marketers need to show their board members that they are doing a good job, so it is in their interest to have a compelling summary of what results their money has generated. A succinct, visual report with relevant metrics will help senior leadership teams better understand PR,” he continues.

“We've come a long way with measurement but I still don't think it has the right amount of budget behind it,” says Claire James, client services director at Skout.

“Teams spend hours pulling together reports, but the measurement aspect of a £100,000 campaign might only be worth £2,000. It should be more like five times that to get a genuine view of what the campaign's impact was,” she adds. “A general rule of thumb is that your measurement budget should be at least a tenth of your total budget to be able to demonstrate the impact of your programme.”



It is important to note that measurement platforms allow for a much greater understanding of the impact a piece of coverage has, and its value to your business.

Just because a publication's website has a high DA does not mean it is the ideal outlet for your content; if its website has a million views per month but only 0.1% of those people read your content, then it is better to place your work on a specialised website with a lower DA and a lower views-per-month figure where 90% of the website's visitors will be decision-makers who influence buying decisions in your market.

This is where additional metrics come into play. Examples of these include:

- **Salience: the relevance of your coverage**
- **Share of Voice: in the whole discussion about this subject, how much of it is attributed to your company**
- **Sentiment: where the coverage of your brand within the story was positive, negative or neutral**

Measuring these areas with the right platforms can provide you with a better picture of how your coverage is performing. It can help benchmark your brand against competitors, though you should make sure you compare like-for-like coverage and not just brand mentions to provide you with a direct comparison. This will also start allowing you to assess coverage's impact.

“So you've got 1,500 pieces of coverage. But what's its impact? If nobody actually interacts with the content, visits the website or buys the product, it's pointless. The gap is between the content and the end result”

Claire James, Client Services Director, Skout

A tier-1 approach to measurement

When measuring a PR programme's impact, which are the best metrics to illustrate it and what do they mean?



Key audience

Who is reading this and what are their interests?



Domain Authority (DA)

An X/100 score based upon the strength of the website's link profile.



Tier-1

Whether or not the publication is highly-regarded in the sector.



Circulation

The number of people who read each edition of the publication.



Coverage views

The estimated number of people who read your story.



Backlink

Whether or not a link to your website was included in the coverage.



Key messages

Has the piece featured the specific ideas you want to communicate?



Solus or first mention

Does your brand name appear first or does the piece solely focus on your brand.



The missing pieces of the measurement puzzle

Impact is everything in measurement, as the dots are joined to create a full picture of how a piece of content performs. This is the golden ticket, where businesses want to see where their money is going.

Context as well as impact in measurement demonstrates the value of PR campaigns and allows them to be moulded and adapted to best meet the needs of the target audience. They are the metrics which make reports to the C-suite meaningful.

“The PR practitioner needs to know what success looks like to the client so they are able to effectively measure it. Is it traffic to the website? General enquiries to the business? If it’s brand awareness, you’ve got to establish a benchmark to determine if your activity is successful”

Claire James, Client Services Director, Skout

However, like any other metric, it is important to set benchmarks for context and impact and to demonstrate ‘what good looks like’ as far as PR is concerned. Benchmarking illustrates the value that can be drawn from PR activity and that requires meaning; it can’t always be about lead generation. For instance, a piece of PR activity may have resulted in an increase in traffic to the company website and thus satisfied a brand recognition metric. The same piece of coverage may also have increased followers on social media, satisfying a metric around social amplification.

Marketers and PR professionals will find it beneficial to work together on measurement, but this will require a close, trusting, mutual working pattern with access required to company data such as CRM systems, Google Analytics and marketing automation platforms.

If the PR professional can overlay their client’s data – such as website traffic – over the work they have done, a more complete picture can be created. It shows where coverage has had an impact that has driven people to engage with the client.

Global companies can spend vast amounts of time and resource crunching data and feeding back on content marketing campaigns and how they have impacted referrals and orders. At a more intimate level, personal anecdotes that can demonstrate how a single blog led directly to a request for proposal (RFP) are just as valuable when evaluating the success of a campaign.



The future of measurement in B2B PR

While there may be some fog in our crystal ball, we can see through enough of it to understand what the future of measurement could look like.

There is undeniably a growing focus on measurement and its position in being able to demonstrate ROI and attribution. Within the PR and marketing industry, we envisage 'Head of measurement' roles or similar will become popular, with them likely being taken up by data specialists or those with a similar passion for interpreting data.

AI is also likely to continue its inexorable influence in PR, especially when it comes to analysing sentiment, as machine learning develops to be able to further understand the nuances of content and the context of articles.

Contextual analysis reports are currently compiled by humans but it will not be long before AI can take their place, leaving PR professionals with more time to concentrate on delivering creative campaigns that resonate with the target audience.

AI will also be able to draw on historical data and, to a certain degree, predict the success of PR campaigns. Predictive analytics along the lines of 'If we create this content, we expect to see this result' will become the norm and inform the strategy of campaigns.

AI is no longer seen as a 'here today, gone tomorrow' fad. Its use has already revolutionised PR and will continue to do so as it gets smarter and develops.



The ultimate goal for PR measurement

A 'one-stop shop' with everything in one place is the ideal platform for PR measurement. It would measure outcomes and impacts and be supported by information drawn directly from reporting systems. This approach offers a continual feedback loop.

“The world is driven by data. Understanding how it works and being able to incorporate this into their offering gives an agency an edge. It provides transparency and will help them adapt strategies based on what the analysis of the data tells them.”

Richard Benson, Founder and Managing Director - Releasd



PR and marketing people must overcome the fear of measurement showing that a campaign has not delivered tangible results, as this knowledge is just as valuable as those campaigns that create website uplift and sales engagement. Knowing the type of content that does not resonate with your key target audience is crucial for all future campaign planning. Similarly, it is important to be able to show how a campaign has influenced key indicators such as website traffic, brand awareness, sales enquiries, social media engagement – even the ringing of the old-fashioned enquiry line. These are all measures of success and need to be monitored effectively to provide a complete picture.

Do you want to understand in absolute clarity what impact your PR activity is having? Chat to us about how we can support your measurement aspirations. [Click here to get in touch.](#)





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