

PRNews

Guidebook

PR Measurement

*Proving the Performance of
PR Strategies*

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Foreword

Measurement in PR Brings Right and Left Brain Together



Back in the mid-1980s when I was just starting my career, the fields of journalism and PR were presented to me as crafts to be constantly mastered and perfected. Both were activities that harnessed the right-brain ability to communicate in order to accomplish specific utilitarian objectives: write a news story, or pitch a client's point of view. While I was happy to interview subject matter experts who understood left-brain things like regression analysis and trend trajectories, I was thrilled to leave any serious number crunching to folks better suited by temperament and training.

Alas, as you will see in this brand-new volume of the **PR News Measurement Guidebook**, it is no longer good enough to just be good at turning a phrase in this profession. The digitization of communications has created a multidirectional flow of traffic that can now be captured and analyzed in "real-time," so that insights into the next steps can be gleaned while the impact of efforts already expended can be measured. In other words, the subjective art of communication has converged with the objective science of accountability. Good, clear writing and communication remain critical. But now, like nearly every other area of business, the pressure is mounting to assess and quantify the returns on the creative investment in our craft.

One can be forgiven for finding this turn of events intimidating.

After all, can you really measure the editorial quality of a blog post? Can you capture the passion tapped by a compelling call to action? As it turns out, you probably can measure both. However, the focus on accountability and measurement forces us as communicators to think more about outcomes that can be tracked and aligned with the business priorities and objectives of our organizations.

As Scott Gillum notes in his report on the impact that changing buying behaviors are having on sales and marketing, the new digital communications environment is colliding with an increasingly activist digitally-oriented consumer. Indeed, as Gillum points out, consumers today do not wait for the vendor community to make them aware of opportunities. Instead, they proactively dive into the digital environment in search of word-of-mouth endorsements that will help set the agenda for who they should trust and engage with. If brands do not participate in this discussion they risk being left out of the conversation (not to mention the transaction cycle).

This brings the concepts of audience monitoring and measurement together, as organizations figure out how to listen carefully to the market in ways they really have never done before. Sending out a survey questionnaire to determine the needs and wants of an audience cannot provide insight into the constantly changing consumer landscape.

In this guidebook our contributors provide the latest thinking on how PR can bring together the craft of communication with the discipline of measurement. We're grateful to the community of experts who shared their insight into this increasingly critical aspect of the public relations profession.

Here's to finding that successful blend of art and science.

Lane Cooper

Lane Cooper
Editor, PR News Measurement Guidebook

Table of Contents

Foreword 5

Index of Companies & Organizations 8

Chapter 1. Overview 11

Tips for PR Pros Ready to Start Wearing Green Eyeshades — *By David Patton*..... 12

PR Pros Start to Make Progress With the Barcelona Principles — *By PR News Editors* 14

Measurement Now Focusing on Impact, Not Just Activity — *By PR News Editors* 16

Measurement is Sexy, Really; But Getting Buy-in is Tough — *By Diane Schwartz* 17

Identifying Roadblocks Key to Defining Objectives, Success — *By Sandra Brodnicki* 18

Outcomes Versus Outputs: Avoiding Common Pitfalls — *By Robert F. Lauterborn*..... 22

Three Key Trends in Current Public Relations Measurement — *By PR News Editors* 24

Measurement is Good For PR Budgets and Personal Growth — *By PR News Editors* 25

Chapter 2. Tying PR to the Bottom Line 29

What You Observe in PR is What You End Up Improving — *By Paige Arnof-Fenn* 30

Sales and Marketing Evolves as Buyer Behavior Changes — *By Scott Gillum* 32

7 Tips for Working KPIs Into Your Measurement Strategy — *By PR News Editors*..... 35

Retooling Social Media Metrics To Capture, Harness Insights — *By Kent Lewis* 37

Leveraging Technology to Make What You Say Resonate Most — *By Ishviene Arora*..... 40

How PR Professionals Should Leverage ‘Big Data’ Trend — *By PR News Editors* 42

Chapter 3. Reputation Management 45

Media Monitoring: A Key Requirement of Measurement — *By William Comcowich*..... 46

Monitoring and Correcting Wikipedia, By The Rules — *By Marcia W. DiStaso* 53

5 Research-Driven Insights For Effective Media Relations — *By Matthew Ragas, Ph.D.*..... 56

Win the Reputation Game in Media Crisis Management — *By Karen Riley Sawyer and Christine Antles* 59

Cases in Point: The Revolving Value of PR Measurement — *By Rodric J. Hurdle-Bradford* 62

Chapter 4. Stakeholder Communications & Internal PR 67

Why Employee Engagement is a Critical Measure to Manage — *By David Hebert* 68

Leveraging Measurement To Secure Budgets and Projects — *By Brenda K. Foster* 73



Executing Effective Employee Community Management — <i>By Matt Paddock</i>	76
Engaging Internal Stakeholders: Keys to Becoming an Influencer — <i>By Franceen Shaughnessy</i>	79

Chapter 5. Measurement and Social Media 83

PR Strategies for Social Media Measurement — <i>By Stephanie Thara</i>	84
How to Prove the Value of Social Media Investment — <i>By Hannah Harrill</i>	88
Showing Business Value of Social Media Isn't Impossible — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	92
Good, Bad or Ugly: Addressing Social Media Comments — <i>By Charlie Hullihen</i>	94
Pinterest and ROI: Finding and Mining the Value of a Picture — <i>By Carolyn Mae Kim</i>	97
Strategies for Sharing Social Metrics with C-Level Executives — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	101
Beyond ROI: Creating a New Value Model for Social Media — <i>By Ric Dragon</i>	102
Metrics That Matter: Making Your Social Data Useful — <i>By Kevin Shively</i>	105
Maximizing Measurement with an 'Interested Party List' — <i>By Betsy Weaver, Ed.D. and Bill Lindsay</i>	109
Google Optimization: Strategies For Small, Medium Businesses — <i>By David A. Viniker</i>	112

Chapter 6. Proving PR's Worth 119

7 Steps to a Results-Driven PR Measurement Program — <i>By Deborah Brown and Nicole Moreo</i>	120
5 Principles to Ensure Buy-in by Measuring What Matters — <i>By Marla Bace</i>	123
Using Data to Make Better Public Relations Decisions — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	128
Social Media Case Study: Clorox's Bleachable Moments — <i>By David Kellis</i>	129
Create Effective Strategies For Competitive PR Analysis — <i>By Clinton Riley</i>	132
Maximizing Measurement's Value in the Nonprofit World — <i>By Rosemary Martinelli</i>	138
How Medicare Proved PR's Value in an Enrollment Period — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	141
Hydropower Industry Metrics Inspired Widespread Change — <i>By Jessica Olberding</i>	144
Strategies for Quantifying Investments in Facebook — <i>By Scott Hancock</i>	148

Chapter 7. Barcelona Principles and Dashboards..... 151

The Barcelona Principles: How is PR Measuring Up? — <i>By Tanya Madison Howard</i>	152
Putting Rigorous Measurement Processes to Work for PR — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	155
AMEC's Valid Metrics Framework: A Magic Bullet? — <i>By Angela Jeffrey</i>	157
Benchmarks and Barcelona Trump ROI as Critical KPI — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	160
Understanding and Embracing Predictive Analytics for PR — <i>By Mike McDougall</i>	161
Leveraging Dashboards to Boost Social Media Adoption — <i>By PR News Editors</i>	163
Dashboard Management: Why It Pays for Firms to Measure PR — <i>By Nancy Marshall</i>	166

Board of Contributors 170



1

Overview

Tips for PR Pros Ready to Start Wearing Green Eyeshades

By David Patton

Is social media turning PR pros into quasi accountants? The growth of social media has upended the communications industry, creating dozens of new channels at our disposal, as well as questions about its value to organizations. For decades, the value of landing a great story, or launching a product with an event has been understood and accepted, even though there are rarely hard numbers to back up that value. The same is true for non-digital advertising, where we may know the reach of an ad, but we can't directly track the action that it drives.

At a time when CEOs and CMOs question spending across all marketing channels and look for ways to prove the value related to business goals, social media offers the communications team a chance to become more numbers-based to satisfy that demand. That's because social media is extremely measurable.

For PR folks, there are steps to take to address these questions and create a "green eyeshade" mindset around social media's costs and benefits.

Here are some initial steps to take:

- **Look at the social data.** All social platforms generate awareness and engagement data such as likes, retweets and followers. Many organizations create monthly or quarterly reports with the data to show activity. Media companies—the most sophisticated users of social-media platforms—now look at data hourly because they have the resources to generate new content or shift focus on the fly.

Brands and organizations should at least be looking at social data daily to establish an understanding of the flow, and how audiences are engaging. Also, examine the numbers from your competitors and partners to see how your brand compares.

- **Look at your costs.** As with all marketing and communications, there are hard and soft costs associated with social media. First, understand how much time your organization is spending on all of its communications and what percentage is related to social media. This may be easy if you have one or two people spending concentrated periods of time listening to, creating content for, managing and posting to your social media properties.

In many cases, social media efforts are spread across a team or added on to existing work. You might spend two days drafting a press release and then five minutes crafting the tweet that will be used on Twitter.

For the hard costs, look at how much you are spending with listening platforms such as Visible Intelligence or with social media management tools like Hootsuite or Buffer. It may be that spending more on these tools and platforms will reduce the time the team spends managing social media platforms. That is a place where PR groups can demonstrate smart spending to business leaders.

Additionally, consider doing research via social media to understand your audience and brand positioning. Cleverly using these platforms can be dramatically less expensive than traditional audience- or brand-research efforts.



Social media offers the communications team a chance to become more numbers-based, because social is extremely measurable.

- **Get comparative business data.** We are now more often asking our clients to provide sales data or other business information, so that we can draw correlations between communications activities across digital and social media. It's an easy way to illustrate a focus on driving the outcomes that matter to business leaders of the organization.

As with all data (or statistics), it's possible to compare communications activities and business results and tell a story that connects the two. Also, PR teams should be asking for the data from advertising efforts to find correlations or disparities. Effective social media engagement often amplifies traditional advertising efforts.

Once you have done the work to gather and analyze the data around social media efforts, the next step is to start injecting opportunities to measure the impact

of those efforts. This can be as simple as adding a call to action at the end of a YouTube video that invites the audience to follow a blog or Twitter handle.

By inviting the audience to take another step with every social media engagement, you can effectively prove the value of those efforts to the CMO, CEO or business leaders who are focused on the bottom line.

As you get more sophisticated in organic social media efforts, it's a short jump into paid social media to drive wider engagement and grow the audience and the business. And getting more funding to dedicate to social media will be easier if you have already shown measureable results to the organization's top and bottom lines. **PRN**

David Patton is VP and editor in chief at Waggener Edstrom.



2

Tying PR to the Bottom Line



What You Observe in PR is What You End Up Improving

By Paige Arnof-Fenn

Here's some timeless advice: Measure what matters most, because you will get what you measure—that's for sure. Make certain you are rewarding the right customers and employees for the right behavior. Just because someone likes you on Facebook or follows you on Twitter does not mean he or she will ever be a good customer.

In fact, for companies that have analyzed the value of a “like” or follower, there does not seem to be much correlation between those metrics and a strong bottom line. It is easy to get distracted with a promotion or campaign to drive people to like and/or follow you. Those efforts can take up a lot of time and energy, without driving profitable growth. So stay focused on what really counts.

Analyze the source of your business to see whether new customers are finding you via referrals, SEO, PR, Yelp or some other gateways. You might realize that you have two or three very happy customers who were responsible for most of your new clients last year. If you are not posing the right questions to the right audience, you may not be getting the true answers.

If you are trying to validate your market, for example, make sure you ask real customers what they

think—not just the folks at the management meeting (unless they happen to be the target audience). Your mom or your best friend will not provide objective feedback because they will not want to hurt your feelings with negative comments. Your output will only be as good as your input.

This leads to another marketing truism: It is critical that you understand your customers. To be successful, you must know what they already have and use, what they think they need, how they are solving their problem now, what's working, what's not working, how they make their purchase decisions and who influences those decisions.

At Procter & Gamble, for example, everything starts with the consumer, and P&G is probably the most data-driven company in the world. It is not about what I think or what you want, it all comes down to your consumer and their motivations and desires. If you know what is in your target audiences' heads and hearts, you really do not have to spend a ton of money to reach them.

Look at Starbucks. It does not spend a lot on traditional advertising. The company does not need to run Super Bowl ads to get attention. It mostly uses ads on subways to reach its customers, since they know a location will be close by.

What if everyone in your organization thought of themselves as an ambassador for your brand? Give them the training and tools to tell a consistent story.



Send Out Your Brand Ambassadors

One of my professors used to say that marketing is everything and everything is marketing. So what if everyone in your organization thought of themselves as an ambassador for your brand? Whether they realize it or not, they are. Give them the training and tools to tell a consistent story, so your key benefits and messages are amplified in the market.

In marketing, we measure television advertising by reach, frequency and gross rating points. If you extrapolate from that the impact of all the feet you have on the street by way of brand ambassadors singing your praises and repeating those core messages at every turn, you will be successful too.

The smaller your budget, the more important it is to incorporate this advice into your company culture. Every touch point and communication is

an opportunity to reinforce your brand, so don't waste it.

So what are things you can do right now to increase your visibility and awareness? Start by getting to know your organization's customers and your competition intimately. Where are the gaps in the market? Find ways to leverage your fans to become ambassadors for your brand online.

Deliver on your promises and exceed expectations wherever possible, so that positive word of mouth is generated and sales follow. Don't worry about being liked or followed. When you get these things right, you will get off to a great start. **PRN**

Paige Arnof-Fenn is founder and CEO of Mavens & Moguls.



3

Reputation Management

Media Monitoring: A Key Requirement of Measurement

By William Comcowich

Valid measurement insight requires effective monitoring of news and social media. Without a solid monitoring strategy, it's impossible to ensure that the data for measurement is complete, accurate and timely.

Communications departments, including public relations, marketing and brand management, have long used media monitoring to gather and measure data to understand and improve their results. Now, additional departments, like customer service and social media, also use media monitoring to resolve customer issues, gather audience demographics, obtain customer feedback and uncover conversations to improve ROI.

Media Monitoring Strategy

A “one-size-fits-all” media monitoring strategy does not exist: Monitoring solutions are best developed on an organization-specific basis to determine which tool or service best fits each organization's needs and budget.

Media monitoring solutions range from free, do-it-yourself tools with few features to feature-rich services that can be quite pricey. Finding a media monitoring solution that provides the most valid and actionable measurement data for your organization is the first step in an effective media mea-

surement program for public relations, reputation and crisis management, marketing, brand management, competitive intelligence and social media customer service.

An effective media monitoring strategy:

1. Sets monitoring goals that reflect and tie into the organization's measurement and service goals.
2. Includes features that meet your organization's specific requirements.
3. Fits into your company's media monitoring budget.
4. Transforms monitoring results smoothly and accurately into measureable data.

The key questions in determining the goals of your media monitoring strategies are: Who will be viewing the media clips? How do they expect to use the information? What analytics do they need?

Determining a strategy involves defining the scope (where your organization should be watching) and defining the topics your organization should monitor.

- **Scope:** In terms of media coverage, what mea-

Learn which metrics are most important to your business, where data measurement should be improved, and how the results affect your organization.



dia do the organization's marketing and PR programs target? Are the programs confined to traditional print and online news sources, or do they include broadcast and social media?

Instead of monitoring all publications and social media sources, some organizations monitor only "important publications." The list of "important publications" varies for each organization—and may even be different for divisions or departments within an organization. Answering these questions provides an initial framework for what media to monitor.

The vast majority of organizations monitor all media within their location and industry sector for "all mentions." Many organizations filter that information by division, brand or country for targeted distribution of media clips to division, brand and country managers.

- **Topics:** After determining which media to monitor, you establish the topics to be monitored. Typically, the key words and phrases for monitoring include all corporate and brand names, along with the names of key executives and spokespersons. Other topics to monitor may include competitors' names and industry terms.

Selecting Media Monitoring Solutions: Features and Cost

One potential media monitoring solution includes free online monitoring tools, such as Google, for organizations with no or limited budgets for monitoring and measurement. Free, however, has its downside.

Compared to full-fledged monitoring solutions, free and cheap monitoring tools are quite limited in their features, rarely provide the media coverage or benefits sought by most organizations, require substantial staff time to conduct daily media searches and aggregate the data, and often result in disappointing outcomes.

An effective media monitoring and measurement program using free tools usually requires several hours each day to:

- Search online news and social media sites to find mentions of your company, products and competitors.

Finding a media monitoring solution with valid and actionable measurement data for your organization is the crucial first step.

- Delete duplicate articles from the same publications.
- Store the media clips in an easily searchable format for future reference.
- Aggregate the media mentions into a single file (usually a spreadsheet) for analysis and to share with employees, partners, and/or clients; convert the information into measureable data.
- Measure the data to determine the clips' prominence, reach, tone and other factors.

By requiring significant staff time for searching and aggregating, do-it-yourself media monitoring

The following is a list of visual measurement data types provided by subscription media monitoring services:

- Number of Clips by Day Grouped by Tone
- Number of Clips by Day Grouped by Subject
- Number of Clips Over Time
- Average Clip Size (by Number of Characters) Over Time
- Online Opportunities to See (OTS) Over Time
- Print Circulation Over Time
- Number of Clips by Media Type Over Time
- Percent of Clips by Media Type Over Time
- Number of Clips by Country over Time
- Number of Clips in Top States Over Time
- Median News Rank for all Clips Over Time
- Top 10 Media Sources — Number of Clips
- Top 10 Media Sources — Print Circulation

tools can turn out to be costly while producing inefficient results.

Nonetheless, free do-it-yourself tools may well be sufficient to meet the needs of smaller companies and nonprofit organizations with less demanding monitoring and measurement requirements. Using free tools certainly makes economic sense for companies that employ volunteers or unpaid interns to perform the monitoring and measurement functions.

In addition, free tools play an important role in the initial testing of media monitoring strategies. You can use free tools to determine the monitoring and measurement needs of your businesses and get an idea of the types of features you would like. There are no free monitoring tools for broadcast mentions, leaving a major gap in monitoring results.

In constructing and testing a new measurement strategy for your business, you will need to experiment with multiple tools. Google Alerts is the most popular free online news-monitoring tool, while Hootsuite, SocialMention and Boardreader are among the many free online tools to monitor social media. There are also specialized tools for monitoring Twitter, Facebook and other major social media platforms.

Start by exploring these different free tools. Learn which metrics are most important to your business, where data measurement should be improved, and how the results affect your organization. During this experiment, you'll determine just how much staff time and budget resources you invest in using free or low-cost media monitoring tools, and decide whether it's worthwhile to upgrade to a professional service.

You also can analyze features through free trials from subscription services such as Custom Scoop and CyberAlert (or online demonstrations by other subscription services) to assess the added-value features and to determine the value of both the time saving features and the added features in subscription services. Determining custom services you need is another crucial step in implementing an effective media-monitoring program.

Benefits of Professional Media Monitoring Services

Subscription monitoring and measurement services can integrate online news, social media and broadcast news daily, with technology that avoids clip duplications and irrelevant data. The services also accommodate clients with multiple user accounts, so that news clips and measurement data can be easily shared among departments.

Figure 1

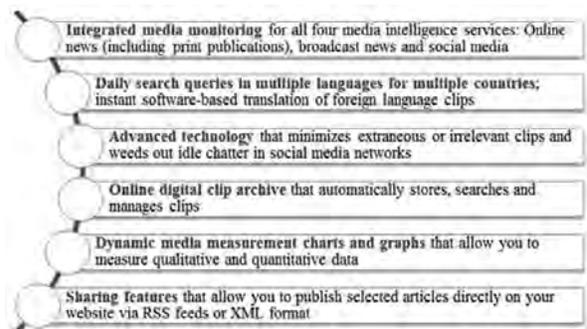


Figure 2

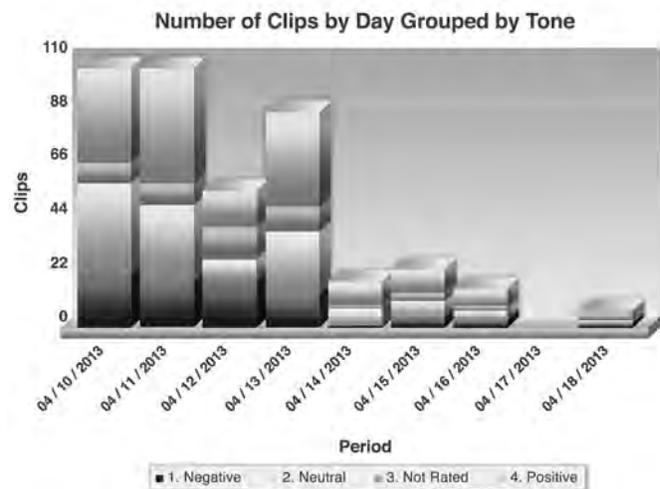


Figure 1 illustrates features that most professional monitoring services offer.

Professional services' advanced technology is especially important for a valid measurement program. Missing clips and skewed data can result in inaccurate measurement results.

Figure 3



With these features, subscribing to a professional media monitoring service delivers multiple benefits:

- Better media coverage with international data available in multiple languages.
- More precise results with fewer missing clips and fewer irrelevant clips.
- Multiple user access for cross-department use.
- Full-featured integrated online dashboard for sorting, sharing and managing news and social media clips. [See Figure 3.]
- Automated charts and graphs for PR measurement.
- Easily include colleagues and clients in your monitoring and measurement efforts with multiple-user access and easy export options.
- Reduced time, freeing staff for more productive work.
- Greater insight into results of media programs.

Monitoring and Measurement Integration

The final factor to explore in selecting a monitoring strategy is its measurement capabilities. Several free tools offer measurement with social media monitoring, but few measure online news and/or broadcast monitoring. Thus, most free and do-it-yourself tools lack the capability to integrate all your monitoring results in one monitoring and measurement dashboard.

The result is that employees may spend valuable time aggregating media results from different tools into measurement spreadsheets. This also can in-

Resource Guide: Free and Self-Serve Monitoring Tools

You may choose a media monitoring strategy that combines several free and self-serve tools. These services are satisfactory for organizations with narrow, focused goals that can afford to compile and normalize the data themselves. Below are some of the top free and self-serve tools:

Online news monitoring:

- **Google Alerts:** Sends updates based on user's key words of the latest online news and Web results. Alerts are only sent when the article appears in the top 10 Google News results for their particular search terms. (Free)
- **Mention:** Provides a portal to monitor both news and social media, with basic analytics information. (Free and subscription-based)

Social media monitoring:

- **SocialMention:** Website that pulls data from blog and social media services, internationally. Provides basic measurement data including sentiment. (Free)
- **Hootsuite:** App that monitors mentions from the top social media networks, provides analytics and allows dashboard access to multiple users. (Free and subscription-based)
- **Netvibes:** Compiles online news and Twitter mentions into a dashboard reader. Analytics and alerts available for additional prices. (Free and subscription-based)
- **Boardreader:** Searches message boards and forum discussions across the web in every language. (Free and subscription-based)
- **Facebook Insights:** Provides users with their Facebook page's metrics, trends, usage and demographics. (Free)
- **Twitter Search:** Allows users to filter updates, links, hashtags and followers as well as monitor negative mentions and brand and product names. (Free)
- **Pinterest Web Analytics:** Tracks Pinterest activity, providing metrics including reach, engagement and traffic. (Free)



volve normalizing data into a common set of metrics. When communications professionals need to evaluate a recent campaign or demonstrate PR efforts to executives, this is a time-consuming process.

For example, Hootsuite is one of the most popular social media monitoring tools, and it also offers engagement statistics, analytics and demographics data. Yet, it only offers these tools for social media. Therefore, if you want to monitor online news and broadcast news, you'll have to combine Hootsuite with other monitoring and measurement tools. You may decide, then, to use a combination of Google Alerts and Hootsuite to create a free news and social media monitoring strategy. But be ad-

vised: Costs can escalate in terms of time required to centralize all the data.

Most professional media monitoring services, on the other hand, incorporate automated measurement data and charts for both quantitative and qualitative assessment. [See Sidebar 4 for a typical list of charts available on news clips from a subscription service.]

The graphs in subscription services are professionally designed and provide the types of insights PR and marketing departments require for media assessment. The charting packages often include the ability for customers to design custom charts. Figures 2 illustrates the types of charts automati-

Selecting a Media Monitoring Service: Important Questions to Ask First

Three key areas determine the media monitoring service that yields the best measurement results. Answer these important questions before deciding on a media monitoring strategy:

1. Scope and Topic

- Are your media programs international, national or local? Do you want to capture placements in foreign languages?
- In which social media networks are your customers/constituents active?
- Is it important to see “all mentions” about the organization or only “important articles?”
- Do you want to monitor competitor media results in relation to your own organization's to determine share of voice or other metric?
- Is it important that corporate executives review articles about broader industry issues, even if your company or brand is not mentioned?

2. Cost

- Will staff require more than 20 hours per month in searching, rating and aggregating clips?
Formula: Staff hours per month required for monitoring X staff cost/hour = cost of DIY monitoring. Is cost of subscription service comparable or less? Do additional features of professional service make it a better value?

3. Features

- What are the monitoring and measurement needs of the various departments in your company? Will free and self-serve tools satisfy those needs?
- How much focus should you give to each of the media categories (online news, social media and broadcast)?
- Can you benefit from integrating data into a single, online portal?
- Can you benefit from features in subscription services not available in free tools, including clip storage & sharing and automated measurement charts?
- Which subscription service's features best fit your company's media monitoring and measurement needs?



Resource Guide: Integrated Media Monitoring Subscription Services

Your organization's needs may require in-depth monitoring and measuring that free tools cannot supply. For these needs, professional suppliers offer better features and are generally more cost-effective. Below are several types of integrated monitoring services that incorporate measurement tools. Costs and features of each service vary.

Most are suitable for not-for-profits, small and mid-sized businesses and also appropriate for many large companies.

- **CyberAlert:** "Best media monitoring and measurement value." Monitors online news, social media, TV and radio. Services offered in multiple packages, with services customized to specific client needs. Also offers worldwide news feed at flat monthly rate. (Month-to-month subscription).
- **CustomScoop:** "Your complete solution for media monitoring and measurement success." Monitors online news and social media. TV and radio monitoring available as add-ons. Services available in four packages. (Month-to-month subscription).

Most suitable for large businesses with sizable monitoring budgets:

- **Cision:** "All your media monitoring. All in one place." Monitors online and print news, social media, TV and radio. Services available in four packages with add-on features available. (Annual contract).
- **BurrellesLuce:** "Improving the way you capture, measure and connect with the media." Monitors online and print news, social media, TV and radio. Services available in customized packages. (Annual contract).
- **Meltwater:** "Superior global media monitoring and analytics with better-targeted media outreach." Monitors online news and social media. Services available by packages with add-on features available. (Annual contract).
- **Vocus on Demand:** "Integrates social, search, email and PR into one smart software solution." Monitors online and print news, social media, TV and radio. Services available in customized packages. (Annual contract).

Standalone Social Media Monitoring and Measurement Subscription Services

There are over 250 services that originated as social media monitoring and measurement services. Some now also monitor online news by licensing news feeds from suppliers such as Moreover and CyberAlert. Among the major subscription services:

- **Radian6:** Social media monitoring and measurement, available packaged with Salesforce Marketing Cloud's other social marketing products.
- **Netbase:** Customizable social media monitoring. Choose to track one or several social channels, or the entire social web.
- **SDL:** Tracks social media conversations, purchases, marketing responses and surveys with its customer analytics software.
- **Crimson Hexagon:** Social media monitoring and measurement software identifies key influencers and prominent authors, and offers advanced sentiment analysis.
- **Visible Technologies:** The platform Visible Intelligence offers fully integrated news and social media monitoring, with measurement tools and engagement abilities available.
- **Trackur:** Social media monitoring tools and sentiment analysis software offered on a monthly subscription in affordable packages.



cally generated by professional media monitoring/measurement services.

Summary

A powerful media monitoring strategy boasts an array of benefits: protecting online reputation, unveiling customer issues for resolution, increasing social media engagement, brand awareness and marketing intelligence. One of its most important and widely used purposes is to gather data to measure PR, marketing and social media programs. If your monitoring solution is weak or disjointed, then your analytics and measurement data will be weak and disjointed, as well.

The two classes of media monitoring services differ in cost, features and how they integrate with measurement, and each presents distinct benefits.

Do-it-yourself services, which include free and self-serve tools, are suitable for companies with a

narrow measurement focus and can spend time aggregating and organizing the data themselves. Professional monitoring suppliers, which use advanced technology to gather all the media results into a portal, are a better fit for organizations that need to examine the bigger picture and that expect more insight from their measurement program.

There is no “cookbook” for how much you should be paying for monitoring or which features are most effective. Determining the strategy that works for your business is straightforward: Identify the goals you want to achieve from measurement results, and assess which measurement tool will provide a solution to those goals. **PRN**

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