CONTENTS

8

10

12

MEASUREMENT

Measurement's Turning Tide: PR Puts More Value on Insightful, Comprehensive Analysis of Data

For years we composed a decidedly sad picture of PR measurement as **Measurement Month** arrived. For many PR pros, measurement was an albatross. It was something that people thought they'd avoided when they chose communications as a career path.

The tide appears to be turning, albeit slowly. Communicators seem more receptive to measurement in a digital world, where nearly everything is measurable. Digital communications is merely part of that world.

Digital operations should render nearly all of a PR pro's actions and results quantifiable, making it easier to prove the value of her work. That's only the first step.
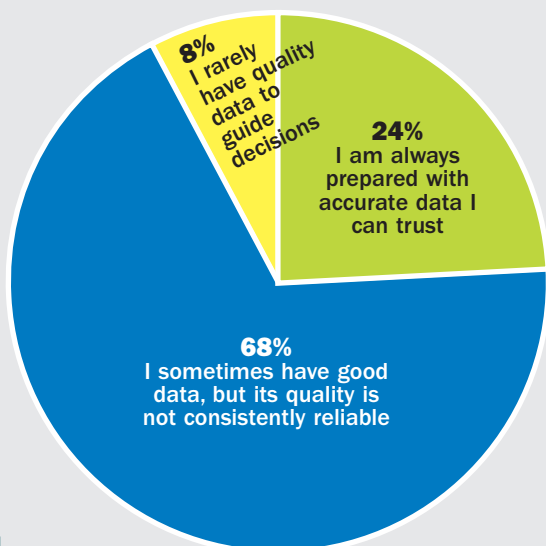
More important is deriving insight from data, which should be part of a PR pro's arsenal to tie communications to business

Eric Koefoot,
President/CEO,
PublicRelay

1

How prepared are you with data to make decisions?

2

8% I rarely have quality data to guide decisions

24% I am always prepared with accurate data I can trust

68% I sometimes have good data, but its quality is not consistently reliable

ALL

15.25% I rarely have quality data to guide decisions

25.4% I am always prepared with accurate data I can trust

59.32% I sometimes have good data, but its quality is not consistently reliable
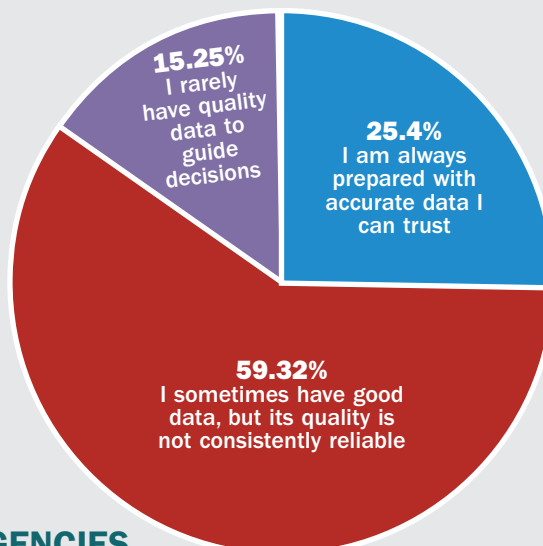
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Speed Takes Back Seat to Data Insight

goals.

Indeed, senior leaders increasingly are asking PR pros to justify decisions with data.

As **Eric Koefoot**, president/CEO of **PublicRelay**, a media monitoring and analytics firm, says, "We're seeing an upsurge in the marketplace for insight from data."
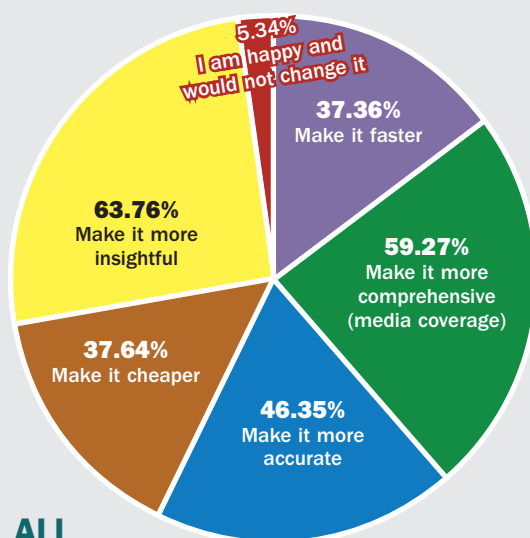
Kevin Winston, principal communications business partner at **Genentech/Roche**, agrees. "There's no question. The tide is changing" in favor of using data to garner insight. "Measurement used to be about numbers of clips and share of voice; communicators rarely used it to gather insights."

Matt Anchin,
CCO,
Consumer Reports

3   **How would you change your media measurement process to better meet your needs? (Select all that apply)**   **4**

ALL

- 5.34% I am happy and would not change it
- 37.36% Make it faster
- 59.27% Make it more comprehensive (media coverage)
- 46.35% Make it more accurate
- 37.64% Make it cheaper
- 63.76% Make it more insightful

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- 1.72% I am happy and would not change it
- 32.76% Make it faster
- 58.62% Make it more comprehensive (media coverage)
- 46.55% Make it more accurate
- 32.76% Make it cheaper
- 67.24% Make it more insightful
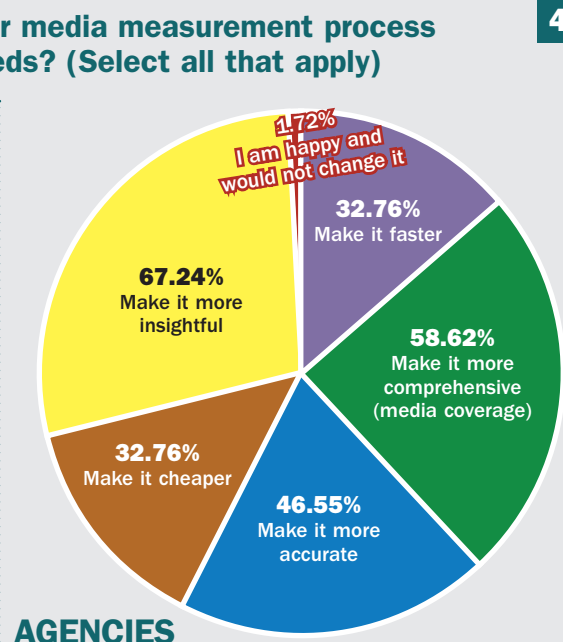
5   **(For directors and above only)Instead of media analysis, which of the following communications activities would you rather be doing? (Select all that apply)**

- None - I'm a data scientist — 4.45%
- Pitching or reaching out to influencers — 45.75%
- Media training executives — 21.86%
- Building strategic messaging plans — 75.71%
- Creating investor relations programs — 10.93%
- Improving crisis management plans — 30.36%
- Augmenting social media brand strategy — 52.63%
- Managing and pitching our spokespeople — 30.36%

ALL

*For subscribers only: You are entitled to 33% discounts on all PRN events and webinars. Contact: cbrault@accessintel.com

6 — Who is responsible for collecting and analyzing media data for your measurement program? (Select all that apply)

Our PR agency	19.66%
Our internal staff	72.19%
An outside media analytics firm	19.38%
Our marketing department	24.72%
I don't know	3.09%

ALL

7 — Is/Are your CEO and/or executives asking for more data-driven analysis around PR measurement?

Yes - I must defend decisions using data	44.54%
Not yet - but I am preparing now	38.38%
No - I have not changed our reporting	17.09%

ALL

8 — Is measurement/analytics enough of a priority for your agency to have an in-house analytics department?

- 6.9% No, but we're thinking about creating one
- 10.34% Don't know
- 20.69% Yes
- 10.34% No, but we're creating one
- 51.72% No

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Kevin Winston, Principal Communications Business Partner, *Genentech/Roche*

This optimism can be seen in conversations we had with other measurement analysts (see pp. 6-10) and in some of the findings in the second **PR News**-PublicRelay survey "The State of Data-Driven Communications." The charts in this edition of PR News are from that report.

For example, 65 percent of the nearly 400 participants in the survey tell us they use media measurement "to show how our efforts are contributing to broader business goals."

The survey does not paint a completely upbeat picture of communications measurement, though. "76 percent of the people don't have reliable data," Koefoot says, referring to chart 1. "That's a problem and it's scary. How can you manage without good data?"

Adds **Matt Anchin**, CCO at **Consumer Reports**, "This lack of confidence in the data is indicative of how far we have yet to go as a profession in terms of our ability to sort and leverage data in a truly scientific and applied way."

Winston agrees, but believes communicators' lack of reliable data is a larger issue that touches nearly all industries.

"This is not just a communications' problem," he says. "There's so much data out there, it can be overwhelming. And it's really, really difficult to know what data is relevant and should be measured and synthesized into useful insights."

This year's responses to the question in charts 1 and 2 were a slight improvement over the 2017 survey. Last

9 What are the main pain points at your company concerning measurement/analytics? (Select all that apply)

We collect data via automated tools and don't have enough training to garner insights from data — 34.83%

We've been too slow to embrace data and now it seems too daunting a task to change the company's culture — 19.66%

We're skeptical about the quality of data, so we skip measurement/analytics — 9.83%

Data and analytics are not top priorities, so we invest little or no time in them — 19.94%

Our outside analytics firm collects and analyzes data, so we're not very involved with it — 10.67%

We want to do more with measurement, but we don't know where to start — 27.53%

We want to do more with measurement, but we cannot find the money to do it well — 34.55%

We are monitoring but can't trust analysis because count and sentiment data are inaccurate — 23.31%

ALL

10 Are you spending more time or less time on media measurement and analysis this year compared to last year?

- 6.9% I don't know
- 12.07% Less time
- 29.31% The same
- 51.72% More time

ALL

year 74 percent of director-level communicators told us they "sometimes have good data" and 7 percent said they "rarely have quality data." 72 percent of VPs and higher said "sometimes" their data is reliable and three percent said "rarely."

There was a lot of reaction to charts 3 and 4, which show responses to how to improve measurement. "Make it cheaper" and "make it faster" trailed all the change proposals, including the leader, "make it more insightful" (64 percent), make it more "accurate" (46 percent) and make it more "comprehensive" (59 percent). In fact, more insightful outpaces faster and cheaper by nearly two-to-one. The results on speed and cost were similar to those in the 2017 survey.

The conclusion: Communicators seem to put a premium on insight, comprehensiveness and accurate data.

"Those answers are really anti- what you'd think you'd find in a highly competitive marketplace," Koefoot says. "You'd expect faster and cheaper to be the leaders."

Indeed, Anchin was "a little surprised" that there wasn't more of an emphasis on speed. "In the news cycles we live in…we no longer have days or hours, we're down to minutes."

Anchin says the "alignment" in the totals between all re-

spondents (chart 3) and agency respondents (chart 4) was "very telling" about the importance of measurement and data. "As a very long-time in-house professional," he adds, "it's something I will be able to press agencies on as I look for strategic partners in the marketplace."

"I'm glad so many communicators want greater insight… we're using a tool here that's become a great source of insight. I'm starting to look at other tools to augment our suite. I'm very happy that I'm in a position to make the case for metrics-driven activity."

Koefoot sees charts 3 and 4 linking to the responses to chart 7's question: "Is/Are your CEO and/or executives asking for more data-driven analysis around PR measurement?"

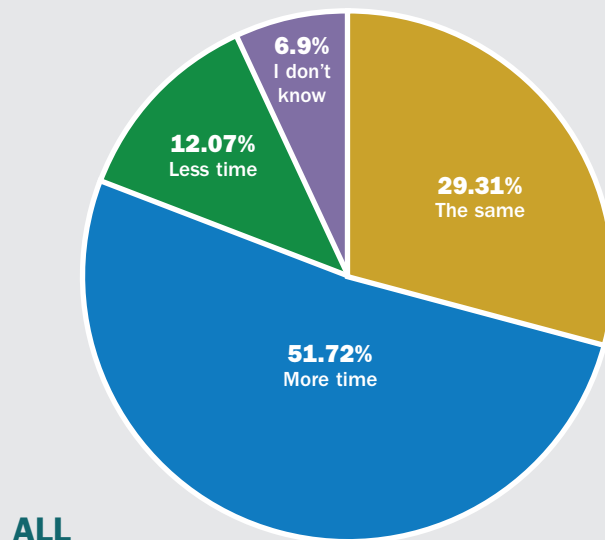Just about "everyone" (83 percent) is either being asked to defend decisions using data or preparing to do so, Koefoot says. "The results here are saying if your company isn't data-driven yet, it's coming fast, it's a freight train. That's not surprising. We're seeing that in the marketplace."

Anchin adds, "The existential threat where marketers were six to 10 years ago is where the leaders of our profession are at now. The decisions you make and the strategies you design, the results you deliver, if they're not data-driven, especially in a world where so much data is readily available, you're not going to be in a good spot."

Taking it a step further, the savvy communicator uses insights from data to anticipate what's ahead. "That's where I'd rather be," Anchin says.

The idea that the profession is data driven also links up with chart 10's responses, where communicators respond to "Are you spending more time or less time on media measurement and analysis this year compared to last year?"

By comparison, last year 44 percent of director-level communicators said they spent more time on media analysis, 30% said the same amount of time. For VPs and higher, the

11 **How do you use analysis from your media measurement program? (Select all that apply)**

Prove my department's worth - show what we've done	52.25%
Show how our efforts are contributing to broader business goals	64.89%
Understand our SOV against our competitors on our key brand messages	25.28%
Detail where we are meeting goals and where we need to improve/reallocate resources	42.98%
Provide insight that will assist us in crafting better pitches	37.08%
Share hard data to calm executives who are quick to label any negative mention a crisis	17.70%
Quantify our brand reputation over time	42.98%
Justify additional budget to do more/better in the future	38.48%
We do not have a formal measurement program	16.01%

ALL

responses were 64 percent more time and 22 percent the same amount of time.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the 2018 responses. As Koefoot says, it takes time to deliver the comprehensive insights CEOs are seeking (chart 7). "More and more companies are coming to us and saying, 'I'm working with data-driven analysis and quick and dirty no longer carries water. I've got to do a better job. I'm being asked by my CEO for more data-driven insight.'"

On the other hand, spending more time with data might indicate that data is so overwhelming and perhaps confusing to communicators, that they need to spend more time just to cope.

In addition, as you can see on chart 9, the largest pain point (35 percent) involves communicators lacking enough training to garner deep insights from tools. Maybe a lack of training is why PR pros are spending more time on data.

"That's a fair point," Anchin says. "We are still light years behind where communications technology should be," he adds. Maybe the takeaway here is that if communicators have to spend so much time with data "shouldn't technology be thrown at data to collect and analyze it far more efficiently and powerfully?" Perhaps "we should be calling on service providers to do better and do more."

Koefoot agrees with the last point. "On the training, that's on the providers, all of us. If we have a tool and we're not providing training, shame on us. We're not supporting the industry," he says looking at the top answer on chart 9.

Anchin adds, "Perhaps the balance between art and science in this profession is a little out of whack." It's great to have automated tools, but more than training in how to use the tools, you need an awareness of the value of the data, Anchin says, and "where you should push for more and better."

Winston says the tools response on chart 9 is "a bit surprising…it's not rocket science. You hire data people" who can use tools to gain valuable insights from data. Making another point, he adds, "Having a tool is the least of it. We all think [AI] can replace human beings, but you need humans to make sense" of what's being measured. "You have to have [staff or a vendor] trained to understand data so you can gain value from insights."

Speaking of chart 9, Anchin is dismayed with the 20 percent response to "data and analytics are not top priorities, so we invest little or no time on them." As a profession, he says, we should want that to be zero. ■

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Measurement 2018: Optimism, AI's Intrusion, Data Overflow and How to Get Better Insights

Editor's Note: Since it's **Measurement Month**, we asked a quartet of senior measurement analysts to assess the state of communications measurement, including what's being done well or badly, the ramifications of AI for measurement, how to push for better measurement and what a company's budget priorities should be for communications measurement.

In general the four were upbeat about communications measurement and its future, though they believe there's much work to be done. In short, there's plenty of very good measurement going on, particularly of the integrated ecosystem that is modern communications. Still, a lot of things need improvement, particularly downgrading vanity metrics, getting brands to measure what is really important to them and connecting what's being measured to business objectives.

Our roundtable is composed of veteran *PR News* columnist and **Paine Publications** chief **Katie Paine**; global managing director of the **International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communications** (AMEC) **Johna Burke**; **Mark Weiner**, chairman of the **Institute of PR**'s (IPR) Measurement Commission and chief insights officer at **Cision**; and consultant **Allyson Hugley**, who is a member of the IPR Measurement Commission and former president for measurement and analytics at **Weber Shandwick**. An edited version of their remarks follows.

PR News: Are you optimistic about the state of measurement as Measurement Month approaches?

Katie Paine: I just finished a summit with 17 of the smartest people in marketing, communications and measurement and they made me feel extremely optimistic because finally, finally, finally the world is being forced to change the way it measures. The old, bad, stupid metrics we've been using for years are no longer fine.

Katie Paine,
CEO,
Paine Publishing

The most interesting factoid of the summit, but one which everybody agreed with, was that the more sophisticated measurement programs, things like marketing mixed modeling…they're not being adopted in PR departments, they don't have the budgets to adopt them. Finance departments and people who run risk assessments are adopting them.

PRN: What does that mean for communicators?

Paine: If finance is paying attention to communications, that's a good thing. It means there's a perception of value in communications.

Accounting and senior leadership are saying, 'Hey, we *do* need to put a value on [communications] and we *can* put a value on it. What we're going to do is see how communications helps mitigate risk, how it provides lift to our sales force, the extent to which communications is helping us keep the people we want and attract new people and make us the employer of choice, the neighbor of choice and the vendor of choice.'

What's making me hopeful is that people are looking at communications as an integrated, effective function that has impact on the business. That the finance department thinks communications can be measured as part of a business impact makes a huge difference to our profession.

Johna Burke: I'm optimistic because measurement continues to grow. There's a growing audience of communicators who realize that measurement isn't an intimating factor, but can actually stimulate success and retention among their teams when they're more thoroughly engaged. That's very exciting.

Johna Burke,
Global MD,
AMEC

A lot of communicators are seeing management become more receptive because they're providing meaningful data as opposed to counts and amounts, and clicks and likes. When communicators are able to demonstrate through data their contributions to an organization's business objectives it gives them more credibility and an expansive role to influence greater change and overall better communications.

Sure, there's a faction of people who say measurement, or analytics or evaluation, call it what you will, is too quantitative.

But there are practitioners who are either hiring data scientists or who are dipping their toes into becoming more accountable in their communications work by showing the validity of how things truly effect the outcome of their organization through measurement.

PRN: Should communicators be concerned when they hear communications departments are hiring data scientists? Is that communications' future?

Burke: [Data] is definitely an element of communications. But I think communicators should be encouraged. Someone who really understands data will be able to extract insights from data that will really help communicators make a bigger impact on their organization. So, bottom line, we should all be encouraged by data, we should all be skeptical of data and we should all be empowered by data.

PRN: Allyson, are you optimistic about measurement?

Allyson Hugley: I'm highly optimistic. Organizations like AMEC and the IPR Measurement Commission have made significant strides in recent years to advance the discussion around media tracking and intelligence methodologies.

The 2018 AMEC global summit focused on insights, innovation and impact and included sessions on advanced analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence – all topics significantly influencing the future of media analysis and measurement.

The IPR Measurement Commission has called attention to timely issues such as the rise of disinformation, which has implications for how and what we measure. Another positive sign are the increased discussions around data integration.

Mark Weiner: The state of PR measurement today is one in which there's good news and not-so-good news. The good news is more and more people are measuring: With the proliferation of inexpensive (even free) technologies, more PR people have access to measurement than ever.

Standards also are rising and everyone now has a tool and data.

PRN: Is that good?

Weiner: Yes and no. Everyone has data, but there's too much data. Smart communicators recognize that tools are a good way to begin, but they cannot evolve through tools alone. Beyond technology, the human element is essential in the form of subject matter expertise, statistical acumen and critical thinking. The new standard for PR research and evaluation is actionable insights (see diagram).

Uncovering Actionable Insights: The Human Element

Man vs. Machine: This Venn diagram illustrates the importance of having qualified human analysts perusing data for deep insights. Source: Mark Weiner

PRN: What are some issues with measurement?

Hugley: Access to data and silos remain challenges on the agency and the client side. Advancing evaluation methods requires harnessing the power of data across disciplines, agency networks and the client-side enterprise. The vast majority of data within organizations is still largely un-utilized or underutilized.

Weiner: The diminished standard of what's good enough. Free and low-cost tools are better than nothing, but suffer for a lack of content relevancy and data accuracy, which leads to false conclusions and irrelevant findings.

There's also confusion in the marketplace about what automation can and cannot do, false claims about the presence of AI, a purposely-blurry distinction between proving PR's value and generating PR ROI.

On a more grassroots level, measurement still is a matter of unwillingness rather than inability. An agency president put it perfectly: "I don't measure because I'd rather forgo being a proven success in exchange for never being a proven failure." In general, there's too much fear in PR and it undermines our professionalism.

PRN: Same question, Katie. What are some of the lingering issues for measurement?

Paine: Vanity metrics and activity metrics without a point. For example, say you're an insurance company. Why are you measuring impressions overseas if you're not allowed to sell outside the United States? The bad stuff is people who count things that don't matter and who in pursuit of big numbers lose sight of their target audience.

Burke: There's also a problem with definitions and the amount of black box behavior within the industry. It makes it difficult for people to establish a good baseline. When people are talking about impressions and reach they aren't looking at some of the elements that are behind that data.

For example, is engagement rated differently on a certain blog? Are a lot of other bloggers responding to a peer's blog to sort of rig the algorithm of engagement? So I would always challenge people to understand how data is validated. And if you work with someone who can't tell you about their data sourcing, you could be leading down a path to multipliers and God only knows what else.

PRN: So the takeaway is to make sure you're using accurate data?

Burke: Yes, especially if you're going to be putting data in some of your management pieces, make sure it's good data that you're basing your summation, your theories, your context on.

The bigger takeaway is to always have that data validated, whether you're using comprehensive data or a statistically

accurate sampling of data. I'm not saying everyone needs to be a mathematician, but they *do* need to understand what those statistical samples can reveal or conceal.

They have to understand that so if they're asked any of those questions by their senior team they can express how this data can help.

PRN: What's being done well?

Paine: I think the effort to look at communications as an integrated whole is something being done well. This is forcing communications professionals to define business value in what they do; and for nonprofits and government agencies it's mission value. People are being asked to define their value in terms of the business as a whole.

That's the best thing that can possibly happen to measurement because that means things like AVEs, hits and impressions go down in value unless people can show their contribution to the bottom line.

So you have to have that conversation where someone asks what the business value is of 5 billion impressions when your target audience has only about 5,000 people in it.

It's good that those conversations are happening, and not just at the biggest companies. They're happening all over. People are stepping back and looking at the communications function and how it contributes to the bottom line.

PRN: What would you like to see the industry doing differently by this time next year?

Burke: The biggest opportunity is for communicators to speak the language of their organization. That would be a big culture change. It's up to the communicator to take data and insights and translate them into meaningful business outcomes for their organization.

It's one thing to take the counts and amounts that you're given and put them in a pie chart and deliver those to your executive team. It's another thing to give that contextual layover and tell people what the data means for the business. Really what you want to do is talk about how paid and earned work together, or if they don't, why not?

PRN: Katie, what about awards and the metrics used in so many of them?

Paine: That's a huge missed opportunity. In 1995, the IPR Measurement Commission wrote a manifesto and sent it to everyone who had an awards program. It said if you do not tie your results to business objectives your application will be thrown away. And if you use AVEs it will be tossed away.

Today many programs do throw out applications that use AVEs. The sad thing is people still use some sort of earned media value on awards applications without questioning it. The thing is if we award companies for presenting their successes with really terrible metrics we perpetuate the use of poor metrics.

> **In a year or two you'll have AI-based systems that will learn from existing stuff. They're here now but they're not operationalized and commercialized. If AI machines can replace reporters and sportswriters, why not measurement analysts? — Katie Paine**

PRN: How should companies spend measurement budgets?

Hugley: They should invest in forward-looking analytics, not measurement. Understanding performance patterns is critical, but it's valuable only if the analytic purpose is optimizing work going forward.

Measurement efforts that are too rooted in past work without an eye for enhancing the communications quality, efficiency and impact should be scaled down to free resources–human and financial–to support more prescriptive and predictive work.

Allyson Hugley,
Member,
IPR Measurement Commission

Paine: The first thing they need to do is spend their money on cookies, **Starbucks**, alcohol and caffeine, whatever it takes, so they can buy time with senior leadership. This is because they'll need to get clarity up front about what leadership's goals and objectives are for communications.

Next buy equal amounts of cookies and Starbucks for the folks who manage your **Google Analytics**, web analytics, CRM, finance and accounting. You'll need these people to talk to you and give you the information you require.

After that spend on surveying your target audience. It won't cost much. Find out from sales and marketing about your target audience and what's keeping it up at night. Then find out what's keeping your sales and marketing people up at night. What's keeping the CEO up at night?

Then start thinking about measurement as a way to solve those problems. If you done research up front to learn about what the problems are, your solutions are much more likely to work.

What happens too often is people get jazzed about a concept or an idea or an initiative, whatever you want to call it. And it becomes all about execution, about how many social media channels you can put it in. But if your audience, for example, isn't on a particular platform, why invest a lot of money to monitor that platform? Why spend huge amounts of money on things that don't matter? Invest a little bit of money upfront to find out what matters.

PRN: So the takeaway is first to test assumptions?

Paine: The most powerful words in a communicator's arsenal when they're asked to do something are: 'Are you sure you don't want to test those assumptions?' Assumption testing is absolutely the first thing I would tell people to do.

For example, say you have a company whose leaders say, 'Our product is best known for being top quality.' When you survey the target audience you might find that no, the audience believes you're fourth best in quality vs your competition. Or the assumption at a company is, 'The best way for us to sell product is at trade shows.' Test and you may discover that's not true.

So to do measurement, first test assumptions and now your company knows what it has to improve and therefore what it has to measure, instead of wasting money to measure things that don't matter.

PRN: What if you don't have much of a measurement budget?

Paine: You don't need a big budget to run Google Analytics, which will tell you 90% of what you need to know. OK, you might need a budget to get a Google Analytics expert to set up some conversions for you…but really, you don't need a huge budget to measure.

PRN: Allyson, if you had the budget and the ability, what two aspects of PR measurement would you like to see improved by this time next year?

Hugley: I continue to champion the need for better intelligence about the audiences consuming news and earned media performance at the content (article), not publication, level. Although advancements have been made by companies like Cision and **Hitwise**, there is more work that can and should be done to help communications professionals drill down into content level, article level, and earned media performance.

In an increasingly cluttered and complex news cycle, better intelligence is needed about the stories that are actually breaking through and with which segments of the public.

Reputation and risk-mitigation tools would be another area of focus. In the current, highly charged political environment, where more brands and corporate leaders are being pushed to own and pick sides on issues, communications leaders need better – more refined and more efficient – real-time tools to inform decisions around the issues where it makes sense for companies to act, the best courses of action, and the cost-benefit analyses around those decisions.

Weiner: I'd like to see attribution analysis become the standard complement to traditional media analysis to unlock our ability to connect media relations performance with business outcomes and to inform media targeting based on who clicks on what, when and with what result.

PRN: What can a brand communicator do to hold an agency's or vendor's feet to the fire on measurement?

Hugley: Brand communicators have to own the evaluation process – not necessarily aggregating the data – but defining the research parameters and key performance indicators and forcing agencies to adhere to a core set of consistent standards.

There is still too much customization and variance in the reporting. Good evaluation requires consistency in methods and units of measure. There is still too much inconsistency across systems and approaches to feel confident when evaluating work over time, across tools and across agency partners. Creation and adoption of standards is needed and brand communicators should exercise the leverage they have with data providers and agencies to drive that.

Weiner: We must all remember that we have a responsibility to generate a positive return on our (employers' and clients') investment in PR. Those who choose not to quantify their contribution should no longer hold the right to be engaged. To achieve this, corporate and brand communicators must require more from their agencies; agencies will do what their clients direct them to do. If measurement is required, then it's required. If not performing measurement is unacceptable, then it's unacceptable. It's a binary equation.

Mark Weiner,
Chairman,
IPR Measurement Commission

Paine: If you're not getting insights from reports, which often is the case when there are complaints, I'd sit down with the vendor or consultant and go through every single chart and page in a report and say, "So what?"

You need to gain insight from data and direction as to how to make a situation better. You can get a program to churn out charts and graphs, but you're paying somebody to interpret it and tell you what it means.

The other thing is a basic accuracy test. Is the vendor or agency measuring what's important to you and is the data accurate, valid and complete?

PRN: What are your thoughts about AI and measurement? Down the road will we need human analysts or can well-prepared machines interpret and extract insight from data with little or no human intervention? Can they do that now?

Hugley: Regarding AI, the space and specific application to communications are still relatively nascent and the application and outputs of the technology have not caught up with the promise. We are still a ways to go, I think, before the balance shifts toward machines.

Humans have a significant role to play in the development, testing and refinement of machine-learning algorithms. Humans also are critical to the interpretation of outcomes. They also are needed to effectively apply lessons, which can be surfaced more efficiently through the use of machine learning, to communications and business decision-making.

Burke: My counsel is that people understand how a partner or provider is using the term AI and really question what that includes. So as Mark said earlier, you need to distinguish between automation and AI.

Yes, there are AI systems that can write summaries, but is it something you want to put in front of your board? I don't think so.

If communicators totally surrender...and give up applying deep insights into what the data means for their organization and how it relates to the overall objectives, I think they will be marginalized and can be replaced by automation. Like anything else, if we leave everything up to an algorithm we are limiting the potential of what we're able to see.

Paine: There's absolutely no reason why a modern system, equipped with a well-trained AI machine would not be able to take well-coded content and look at it and find messages in it. That technology exists today. Companies are investing in this stuff. They are telling me Boolean is dead and AI will replace it in a year or two.

Then the question becomes who is the first to operationalize it and make it affordable enough for the 99 percent to glom onto it and use it?

PRN: So humans are history in measurement?

Paine: Well, no, but a well-trained machine can replace much of what humans currently do, with about 80 percent accuracy. But you need to generate a large-enough volume of data to make it worthwhile [to invest in a machine].

So, yes, in a year or two you'll have AI-based systems that will learn from existing stuff. They're here now but they're not operationalized and commercialized. If AI machines can replace reporters and sportswriters, why not measurement analysts?

PRN: So if a young person tells you she wants to be like you, a measurement analyst, what do you say?

Paine: Go get an MBA. Understand business. Understand how companies make profits, why they lose money. Yes, you need the PR and communications background, but you have to understand how companies work. Too many people in communications don't. I know when I graduated, I didn't. ∎

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Five Communicators on How They Connect What They Measure With Business Objectives

Editor's Note: We are using this month's roundtable question to celebrate **Measurement Month!** With so much data floating around it's easy to lose sight of whether what you're measuring relates to your brand's business objectives, or in the case of a nonprofit, with its mission.

So we asked senior communicators: How do you connect what you measure with your brand's or organization's business objectives or mission? Their edited responses are below.

Andrea Staub
SVP, Corporate Communications
Perdue Farms

Andrea Staub
SVP, Corporate
Communications,
Perdue Farms

It's interesting that you ask that. I'll give you an example. We had a big initiative on animal care. We've got lots of programs to make sure that people understand that we care very much about the animals that are in our care. So if we're launching a campaign around our animal-care initiative we always tie it back to our overall business objectives.

Linking this to sales, however, is a tricky question, because it never really measures on an apples-to-apples basis. So, for example, we've been on national television for the animal-care initiative, but you can't necessarily automatically track that back directly to sales. We can say we were on "Dr. Oz" and our sales increased, but we can't say that our sales rose *because* of that appearance on TV. We never really see that jump [in sales] immediately. So it's a little bit tricky to track the sales progression.

One thing we notice, though, is we track our trust scores. Trust is very important to us and we do a quarterly measurement of our scores.

Tina Starkey
National Director, Social Media
American Cancer Society

Tina Starkey
National Director,
Social Media,
*American Cancer
Society*

It's very important to circulate goals internally to make sure we're all on the same page, whether we're trying to drive engagement with our content or drive revenue in the door. We do this with a one-pager that states everything upfront so that we understand what the KPIs are against those goals from the beginning.

For example, we're measuring the relevance of our content. So as we publish social media content we want to keep

a few key metrics in mind; this might include engagement with the content, estimated ad recall in the **Facebook** tool and how many times it's being shared. Very simple things but making sure we're always delivering those back to what the objective was in the beginning.

Emily Shirden
Partner
Strategic Communications Leader
Finn Partners

Emily Shirden
Partner, Strategic Communications Leader,
Finn Partners

When we counsel a brand or organization about connecting measurement with business objectives, we urge getting buy-in from the C-Suite at the outset about what the business objective is. In other words, building a program against KPIs that everyone agrees ladder up to an objective, such as changing positions, behavior or awareness of something. It could be attracting new clients or members, or a change in behavior. And then establishing what KPIs can be measured; and being strategic and creative around communications tactics that help meet those objectives.

We are seeing less interest in vanity metrics from clients. They are becoming smarter about what's important to their organization. They want help getting there and determining what's measurable.

We know some budgets are declining, but where they're steady or growing is in digital because we've been successful building programs that are measurable and can be regularly scaled by performance.
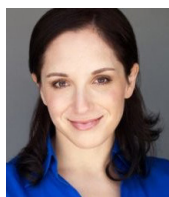
Suzanne Barston
Director, Content Development
AbbVie

Suzanne Bartson
Director, Content Development,
AbbVie

This is a really interesting question for us because we're in the process of reviewing how we measure. We're making sure all those metrics are really what we want to be seeing and what's actually relevant to our business.

The biggest thing for us is sentiment. One of our major remits is protecting and enhancing the reputation of not only our company, but also our industry at large. That's a tall order. So we look at sentiment as much as we can, but with the understanding that there's a lot that can be misunderstood and is subjective. We look at the comments on our Facebook feed and we need to understand where these people are coming from; are their comments relevant to our business or are they just trolls?

When explaining this to company leaders we try to look at sentiment as a long game. We try to make them understand that every piece of content we put out is like our own long-term reach and frequency plan. So we look at every piece on each channel and the audience it was directed to. If we… share with them the strategy behind what we're doing and pick and choose comments that show the negative and the positive, that usually gives them more of a holistic picture of

> **" We are seeing less interest in vanity metrics. Brands want help with things that are important to them and determining what's measurable.**
> **-- Emily Shirden, Partner, Finn Partners "**

how the content is being received.

Linking it back to tangible business outcomes, that's a harder thing to do because we're not directly related to sales. We believe we are the company stewards for the brand and the narrative. If that's getting out there and we're seeing it reflected with media wins and positive sentiment in that more qualitative way, then we think we've done our job.

Jenna Hilzenrath
VP, Communications
Birchbox

Jenna Hilzenrath
VP, Communications,
Birchbox

There's no one-size-fits-all in terms of how you report [to executives] what you measure and tie to business objectives. It depends on the priorities of your company and the KPIs. But the more you can connect the dots and show how your work helped support overall company goals, the better.

While I don't encourage sugarcoating results, if you want to show what worked and what didn't, I think there's room to be creative in connecting results with objectives. So, for example, instead of just saying results are down vs last month, you can say they are up vs last year.

I also think there's a chance to translate KPIs into a narrative, manage up and educate the C-Suite on what PR can and cannot achieve. I think it's great to get the C-Suite to think about qualitative results as opposed to only quantitative.

While you might not be able to show how a PR campaign impacted the bottom line, you can show qualitative results, such as message pull-through. You can show that a key message is coming through in, say, 90 percent of your press coverage this month. You can show we are changing the conversation about the company and getting that new brand narrative out there. ■

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Note to Subscribers: Send us a question you'd like us to ask communicators in an upcoming Roundtable by contacting our editor (sarenstein@accessintel.com). If we pick your submission, you will be acknowledged when it runs in a future edition of PR News.

A Law Firm's Recruiting Videos Show Lawyers Are People Too

The video begins. We see a woman dressed in black sitting in a white leather chair in an all-black room. She's brushing lint off her dress and seems unaware that we're watching her. Soft music plays in the background. The screen fades to black, and then the words "Conversations That Matter" appear in a thin, white font. In the next frame the woman is back on screen. "I love really, really well," she says with sincerity, but not overly emotionally. "I know how to love someone, whether it's loving my neighbor or the supermarket cashier, I give love a lot." It's a tantalizingly human experience. And it's a recruiting video… for a law firm.

Lights, Camera…Law Firm? Partner Tanaz Salehi is at ease in front of the camera during her video, where she talks about love not law.

THE ISSUE

With a few exceptions, law firms aren't known for their flamboyance. "The legal space is extremely slow to adapt on the business-of-law side," says **Thomas Choberka**, chief marketing & business development officer at **Kelley Kronenberg**, a law firm with offices in Florida and Chicago.

"In the past, law firms didn't need to adapt. It's a unique business because of that." Prior to the recession of 2008, lawyers didn't do a lot of what could be called cutting-edge marketing or branding. Not long after, though, law firms began paying attention to things they hadn't previously. "The competitiveness in the market was something they hadn't seen in 100 years," he says. "This changed their appetite for being innovative a little bit, but not a lot," he says with a chuckle.
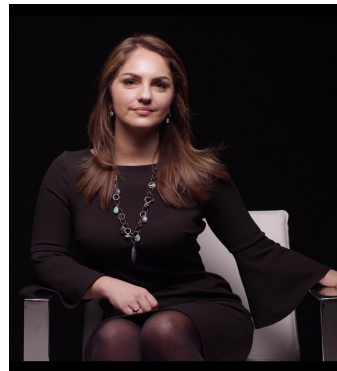
So while the legal services industry isn't quite as innovative as some others, the root issue for communicators and marketers is similar to that in other professions: Breaking through the clutter to get your message heard.

The field is large. There are 1.34 million lawyers in the U.S. and about 14 percent work in firms with more than 100 lawyers, according to the **American Bar Foundation**. Kelley Kronenberg is in that wheelhouse, with some 130 lawyers in nine offices, doing corporate law, representing businesses in various kinds of litigation. For the purposes of this case study, though, the most compelling statistic for Kelley Kronenberg is the number of attorneys in the country: 48,000.

While it might not seem Choberka's job title requires him to attract higher-quality attorneys, Kelley Kronenberg looks at recruiting a bit differently. "Ultimately my job is firm growth… and after awhile we began to look at that as a brand issue… and a sales process…we have to sell them on what value we can add to them," he says.

He's been successful. In six years at the firm, the number of attorneys has doubled.

The target audience is lawyers "already in a group or [working solo and having] a book of business." Attracting higher quality attorneys, though, is more complicated at the firm since "we want to find people who are not just motivated by money," he says. More than that, he's trying to attract at-torneys "who may not be looking to leave where they are."

Once money gets discussed during a recruiting conversation, he says, another often-mentioned topic is culture. "Culture's a big word and it gets thrown around a lot," he says. Choberka decided to focus on communicating the firm's culture as a differentiator.

HURDLES

Choberka did his homework. To research culture, he visited the top 200 law firms' career sites. "I watched their videos and they all seemed the same." Everyone was in a suit and buttoned up. "It was very boring. Even as a marketing guy, I had trouble getting to the end of them and it was my *job* to watch them."

When the videos discussed culture, "again, they were all the same. They all listed what they do for diversity, for the community, etc. Maybe there was a message from the CEO."

Choberka realized the biggest obstacle "was going to be getting people to pay attention for a few seconds, nevermind to a 5-minute video. "I knew if I didn't push the envelope in terms of being different, the videos weren't going to be worth watching."

He also knew this was risky. The firm was exposing itself and its brand. Is there another law firm whose career videos feature lawyers in jeans and dark shirts? Content would be far from the norm, too. That Choberka was able to get a green light for the project was based on his track record of success, he says.

TACTICS

The birth of "Conversations That Matter," the 19-part video series that resulted from Choberka's calculated risk-taking, began with another film, "The Path: A Story of Leadership."

In that 2-minute, 20-second video, one of the firm's owners, **Heath Eskalyo**, is shown training for a triathlon that will result in pledges of $40,000 to a charity. The video segues

To better understand the experience of being interviewed, Thomas Choberka sits in the hot seat.

between shots of Eskalyo training and footage of him working at the firm. There's no dialogue during the video, just the sounds of Eskalyo training and ethereal background music.

It's cinematic and inspirational. It looks expensive, like a **Nike** commercial. Choberka tells us it's not inexpensive. At the end, though, it becomes a recruiting video; there is a brief note that the firm is seeking leaders. Kelley Kronenberg's web address follows.

Choberka's goal was to use that video to attract the attention of potential partners, the top 3 percent of lawyers. Attorneys, not just prospective partners, watching the video also would be induced to visit the firm's site. Once there, Choberka's task was getting them, the other 97 percent of lawyers, to watch one or more of the 19 videos in the Conversations That Matter series.

The 19 lawyers in Conversations "are diverse enough so that if you were thinking of coming to work here, you should be able to relate to somebody on that page. That was my hope."

Choberka pre-interviewed each lawyer prior to the shooting day. He asked them questions designed to elicit passionate responses.

On the day of the shoot, however, the lawyers had no idea what questions would be asked. Filming was done in an all-black room with about $600,000 worth of equipment. "[The lawyers] felt completely alone…they couldn't see the camera…there was no direction or coaching." Each lawyer was filmed for 45 minutes, though most of the finished videos are just one minute in length.

"I didn't know what they were going to say…in the end, it didn't matter." The goal was authenticity. "What I didn't want was a polished answer. That's the safe route…I wanted them to come off as people, not as disingenuous lawyers blowing smoke. I wanted them to communicate a feeling." Several cried during the filming.

OUTCOME

The series already has garnered notoriety. The video series won first place at the "Your Honor Awards" of the **Legal Marketing Association** Southeast Region (LMASE). OK, so we know the videos are award winners. Are they also effective?

As we said above, attorneys seeking a lateral move are the target audience of the videos. The firm is marketing the videos on social media and with paid and organic campaigns.

Choberka and his team are measuring results using **Google** Analytics. While the campaign is only about 50 percent completed, traffic to the firm's careers page has gone up 500 percent since the videos launched.

"We are working with our recruiting director to figure out how to quantify the number of people who are coming in to talk with us based on the videos," he says. "Almost everyone who comes in for an interview tells us they've watched the videos." But are the videos why attorneys are interviewing at Kelley Kronenberg? "This is something we're trying to determine now," he says.

LESSONS LEARNED

Changes in Real Time: Using data from measurement, Choberka is tweaking operations on the fly. "If you're running a digital campaign and not paying attention to it every second and making changes, you're doing it wrong," he says.

For example, a recent video included closed captioning for people who watch without sound.

Tracking viewing times, he's discovered some viewers stay for just 30 seconds. "It's hard not to take it personally, because we think they're good videos and they're only one minute. That's just how people consume video today." A future project is considering videos of 15 seconds, Choberka says.

Don't Worry, be Happy: "Every project we do, I put my job on the line…I take so much risk that if it goes wrong I could lose my job…I remember thinking if these videos come out badly or cheesy, I could get fired."

Choberka believes a lot of marketers get to this moment. Many go backward and say it's not worth it. "My takeaway is I shouldn't have been so stressed out about it at the beginning…we worked hard, we trusted our instincts, it worked out well…if you're doing something that different, you have to really believe in it."

Begin at the End: Regarding production costs, Choberka says, "We fought to the death on this…but if you're putting the brand out there and laying your neck on the line…you have to pick the best (vendors) or nothing…people cut corners and then wonder why the product is bad at the end… we are so glad we partnered with the right production team."

But how did he afford top-notch videographers? "We couldn't," he says. "We identified what we wanted to communicate and worked backward from there…you have to almost start at a place you don't belong in, creatively…'I can't afford this guy but I want to have him…let's see if we can convince him to work cheaper…let's see if we can move budget from another project to this one.' If you approach it from 'This is too big for me,' you'll never be able to do it. Start with a huge idea and then figure out later how to get it done." ■

Editor's Note: The videos can be found at: http://www.kelleykronenberg.com/careers/

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Healthcare Communicators Tout Success of Integrated Campaigns and Measurement

Editor's Note: Just prior to *PR News' Healthcare Social Media Summit* late last month in Baltimore, PR News and partner **Crisp**, a company specializing in social media risk, held a Communications Leadership Roundtable, convening 12 senior communications professionals for a 90-minute exchange about trends, developments and best practices.

Among the major themes to emerge from the discussion was the emphasis on integration. Communicators not only stressed the importance of integrated campaigns, which has been a trend for quite some time, they also noted the importance of integrating measurement. "You can't measure in silos," one said, noting that a communications effort may have performed well in several areas and failed in others.

Again on measurement, several supported a holistic approach where the results of paid, earned and owned media are merged into a single measurement score, represented by a number.

INTEGRATION AND PR EDUCATION

Other moments where the theme of integration arose included a point where several communicators were discussing the importance of getting brands to expand their communications horizons. It is important, one said, to avoid focusing on doing "just one thing," such as communicating on a single social channel, since "it could be gone some day." Another executive agreed, "Get your blinders off…companies need to achieve goals, not do one thing."

Along the same lines several communicators urged industry representatives to encourage educators to make integration a priority with PR students; "schools should merge specialties," a communicator said.

Another added, "I was at a college fair and was shocked to find so many 21-year-olds saying, 'I want to do paid social…or I want to be a community manager' and that's it. Students need to realize the [communicator's] job includes doing many things…none of us does one thing anymore."

While federal regulations protecting patient privacy often are cited for cooling enthusiasm in healthcare toward using social media, the roundtable participants didn't seem overly concerned with the issue. On the other hand, several recommended that communicators forge strong bonds with members of your company's compliance and legal departments.

The following is a summary of some of the questions posed and comments made during the discussion. The participants, who are listed in the graphic, were told in advance that they would not be quoted for attribution.

Where is your organization in terms of breaking down silos and integration? Who owns social in your world?
"We're totally integrated…it's a marketing and communications umbrella," one executive said. "We use lots of tools and don't exclude anything. The question for us is about getting the proper mix [of tools and channels] for a particular campaign." Said another communicator, "This is why we want our people cross-training…we want them to be able to look at campaigns holistically."

"We ask what behavior are we trying to encourage" from consumers. The answer determines the elements included in a campaign.

Similarly an executive commented on how to approach crafting a PR plan. "These questions come out of my mouth at least three times a day when I'm talking with staff: Who are you trying to engage? Who are you trying to talk to? Hopefully this keeps people grounded." As a general rule, this executive said, "marketers are looking for big audiences, we in communications are looking for a few names."

Another executive said, "The struggle for us is how to measure…the days of starting a campaign and leaving it for six months before you measure are over…you have to look at some things daily since there are changes every day… sometimes your social works but traditional media doesn't."

MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Speaking of measurement, what tools do you favor?
"For the bottom line we use **Google** Analytics, but also **Hootsuite** Enterprise and **Simply Measured**, which **Sprout Social** acquired."

"We had a tool developed for us. We told a measurement firm what matters most to us and they put it into an analytics form. It gives us a number…five and above is good, below five is not…we use the tool only for social, but eventually we'll use it for everything."

Another executive concurred with that line of reasoning. "If you want to take an holistic approach, you need to measure everything…you can't look at things in silos."

There was a consensus, though, about what one participant called "drowning in data" and how "easily it can happen." This executive's company also had a score developed for it, which took six months. But the executive admitted, "The score doesn't help us too much. We use it externally, though."

What about applying what's measured to business objectives?
"That's still a work in progress," this last executive admitted.

LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE

When healthcare communicators gather, regulation is an oft-mentioned subject. What are your views?
The consensus was that solid groundwork should precede a social media effort. "Reach out to compliance and legal to build a relationship and an understanding…schedule face-to-face meetings…bringing food usually works."

Another insight was that part of the problem for healthcare companies making the foray into social are the **Food and Drug Administration**'s (FDA) "loose guardrails…they're not black and white…it's more of a feel thing," one communicator said.

There's also the issue of communicating on social with people during their worst moments as they suffer from a sickness. "We want people to feel loved" when they visit our site, one executive said, "but it's tricky…we can't say, 'We're glad you're not feeling well.'"

Several executives noted the reluctance of companies to engage in a conversation on social. It's for this reason that communicators need to clearly explain to management what social media entails.

Another executive said, "A company I worked with didn't want to hear stakeholders' comments [on social]…when they saw criticism they wanted it to be removed." The group agreed that if at all possible stakeholder comments should not be removed from a site because they provide valuable insights.

SOCIAL TOOLS

What's the most effective social tool for you?

Responses to this question ran the gamut, from **LinkedIn** and **Twitter** to **Reddit**, **Snapchat** and **Facebook**, which emerged as a prime place to do social monitoring since so many people use it. **Doximity**, the healthcare social networking site, also was mentioned.

"A lot of doctors are on Twitter, so it's a big platform for us," one executive said. Said another, "You can't escape Facebook…and **Instagram** is useful because it's part of Facebook." Added another communicator, "Anything with a consumer theme works on Instagram…for example, 'A Day in the Life of' series about someone with psoriasis."

Another executive noted, "Our corporate leaders post their thought leadership articles on LinkedIn…I'd like to get on Reddit, it's massive and under the radar…there are lots of important discussions going on there."

FACEBOOK SUPPORT

There was plenty of support for Facebook. One communicator called it "the **Google** of healthcare…it's not sexy and it costs more to reach people, but everyone's there…and we want to connect with people, it's friends-and-family-heavy and since our brand is personal it's been a huge revenue driver for us."

Speaking of Facebook, an executive noted, "An under-used aspect of Facebook is Groups…your brand can gain a lot of traction if it can be authentic as a host of Group."

What challenges do you face getting your teams to be more digital?

"The words you use internally matter…we don't use the words digital or traditional, just media…be intentional, tell people over and over what you want to do," said one participant.

Another agreed. "Focus less on swim lanes such as marketing, sales and PR and more on integration." This executive added that such a mindset encourages staff to become familiar with many tools and methods.

"Turnover is good [since it allows you to find more well-rounded employees]…any good communicator I've seen [has the ability to do] digital and social…it's not rocket science…and it's not a generational thing…I've seen young people who aren't good at digital and social." The executive added, "You want a level playing field so you need to offer a lot of training in all fields…it's also important to form teams, so they can cross-train each other."

Your budget is 20% higher for social. How do you spend the money?

The answers were wide ranging, though the connective tissue was the desire to know more about target audience members and how to engage them. Spending more on paid influencers and paid posts were popular responses.

Said one executive, "I'd spend more on doing good, quality research about who's in our community, what's working for them, who's engaging with our content and then building personas… it's always a challenge to get [companies] to invest in research."

Another executive said, "I'd spend half on paid and half on training for an employee advocacy program." Getting companies to spend on video and other visual material is a challenge, several participants noted, so they'd advocate more spending there.

"60 percent," another executive said, "would go to contextual content marketing and 40 percent to making our web site more user friendly…you only get one chance to get people to visit your site…if it's not good, they won't stay."

"I'd spend the additional budget on paid," said an executive echoing one of the dominant responses, but also 10 percent on technology and A.I. "I want to find tools that tell you what topics are resonating rather than guessing about what the topics are." ∎

The Participants

Bianca Anderson, Senior Manager, Social Media & Communications, DaVita

Kate Callan, SVP, Social Strategy, Evoke

Emma Monks, Head of Trust & Safety, Crisp

Kieran Fagan, VP, Communications, AETNA

Kit Fullenlove, PR Manager, Baptist Health

Shana Harris, COO, Warschawski

Kaitlyn McCoach, Senior Associate, Weber Shandwick

Robert Oquendo, EVP, Digital & Creative, Spectrum

Diane Schwartz, SVP, Group Publisher, PR News

Emily Shirden, Partner, Strategic Communications Leader, Finn Partners

Tina Starkey, National Director, Social Media, American Cancer Society

Linda Wharton-Boyd, Director of External Affairs, D.C. Health Exchange

Betty Woods, Account Manager, Crisp

Takeaways from PRN-PublicRelay Survey, State of Measurement and New to the Resource Center

In each edition of *PR News* we highlight takeaways from select articles as well as important additions to the **PR News Resources Center**, available to paid subscribers at: http://www.prnewsonline.com/subscriber-resources/

You can also access the Center by clicking "Resource Center" at the top, middle of the prnewsonline.com home page.

SELECT TAKEAWAYS

▶ **PublicRelay Survey** (pp 1-6): Communications measurement seems to have turned the corner, with more brands seeking meaningful measurement that is comprehensive, accurate and yields deep insight and trends.

▶ More than 80% of the nearly 400 PR pros who participated in the second PRNews/PublicRelay survey this year said their CEO or senior executives are asking for more data-driven analysis around PR measurement.

▶ Not everything's rosy; 76% reported "sometimes" or "rarely" having access to quality data.

▶ **State of Measurement** (pp 6-10): Looking at communications as an integrated whole is forcing communications professionals to use measurement to define business value in what they do.

▶ Within a few year it's likely that AI-based machines will be able to replicate much of what measurement analysts do, though that point is not here yet.

▶ Invest in forward-looking analytics, not measurement.

NEW TO THE RESOURCE CENTER

As we look to the **PR News Crisis Management Summit** in Miami, Feb. 27-28, we highlight crisis-related resources that were recently added to the PR News Resources Center.

One of the larger crises gripping the country during October and early this month surrounds the tragic death of **University of Maryland** football player **Jordan McNair** in June. In the Crisis Management section of the Resources Center we have the Oct. 29 report from an independent investigator assessing the school's football culture.

The report found the culture "dysfunctional," yet the state's board of regents recommended reinstating head football coach **DJ Durkin** and retaining athletic director **Damon Evans**. School president **Wallace Loh** defied the board and fired Durkin Nov. 1. The board's chief, **James Brady**, stepped down the next day.

We also have the transcript of Brady's press conference where he defended reinstating Durkin.

In our For The Record section we have an Oct. 30 memo from **Google** chief **Sundar Pichai** responding to a **NY Times** story about sexual harassment allegations at the company. Pichai apologizes for past cases at Google but fails to provide specifics about policy going forward or mention a 2014 $90 million payout to former Google exec **Andy Rubin**, which spurred a walkout of 20,000 employees Nov. 1.

Remember, one benefit of being a paid subscriber to PR News is that you are entitled to a 33% discount on all PR News events. Please contact cbrault@accessintel.com for more information. ■

CRISIS MANAGEMENT SUMMIT

The conference for forward-thinking communications leaders.

Hosted by the leading brand for communicators, PR News, the Crisis Management Summit will be held on February 27-28, 2019 in Miami, FL. This is your graduate course in managing your organization's brand and reputation in a time of crisis and a unique opportunity to connect with like-minded peers. And we're doing it all at the beautiful Eden Roc in Miami because we know that with all this crisis talk, you will need to chill out!

> "Leadership is a way of thinking, a way of acting, and most importantly, a way of communicating"
> — *Simon Sinek*, Author of Start with Why

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