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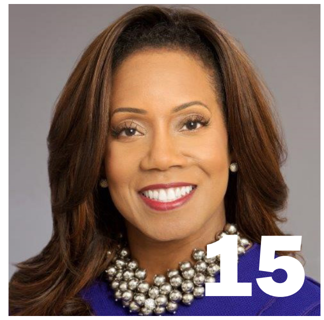

MEASUREMENT

Quality Data at a Premium as C-Suite Demand Continues to Grow for Insights from Measurement

During the past few years it's become a tradition for PRNEWS to join **PublicRelay**, a media monitoring and analytics firm, in celebrating Measurement Month. The celebration begins with a survey about the state of measurement.

In introducing last year's survey results, we postulated that communications' measurement woes were behind it. It seemed that a growing tide of communicators solidly supported the idea that it's important to use data as part of their job (PRN, Nov. 2018).

Eric Koefoot
President/CEO
PublicRelay

"We definitely feel a wind at our back" in favor of collecting, measuring and analyzing data, is how PublicRelay's president/CEO **Eric Koefoot** put it during a 2018 interview.

This makes sense in a digital environment, where nearly everything a communicator does is measureable. In addition, more and more C-suites are demanding data en route to making decisions in all facets of business, not just in communications.

The push for measurement in communications also may be tied to the realization that data has become "a competitive weapon," Koefoot says. "It's not the only thing" executives use to make decisions, "especially in communications," but it's an important point of reference, he adds.

These factors have combined to make business a data-rich endeavor. As **Matt Anchin**, CCO at **Consumer Reports**, told us last year, "The existential threat where marketers were" about a decade ago "is where the leaders of our profession are… now. The decisions you make and the strategies you design,

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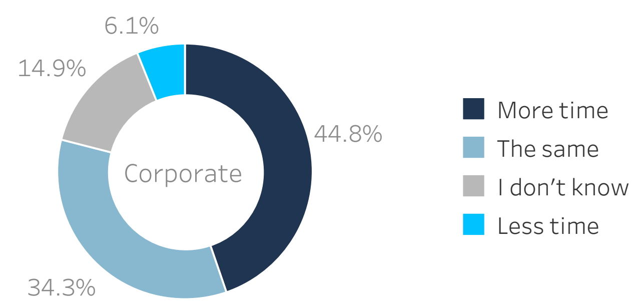
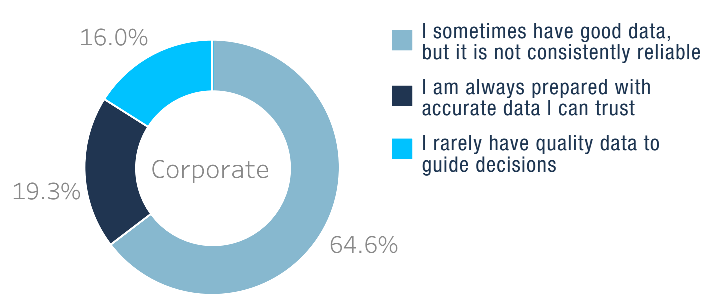
1. ARE YOU SPENDING MORE OR LESS TIME ON MEDIA MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS THIS YEAR VS. LAST YEAR?



2. HOW PREPARED ARE YOU TO MAKE DECISIONS WITH DATA?



Source: PRNEWS/PublicRelay survey, Oct. 2019, (350 responses)

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Time Spent with Data Remains Solid

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."

More than merely measuring to prove ROI, the 2018 survey showed a rise in the number of communicators seeking insights from data.

As **Kevin Winston**, principal communications business partner at **Genentech/Roche**, told us in 2018, "There's no question. The tide is changing" in favor of using data to garner insights. "Measurement used to be about numbers of clips and share of voice; communicators rarely used it to gather insights."

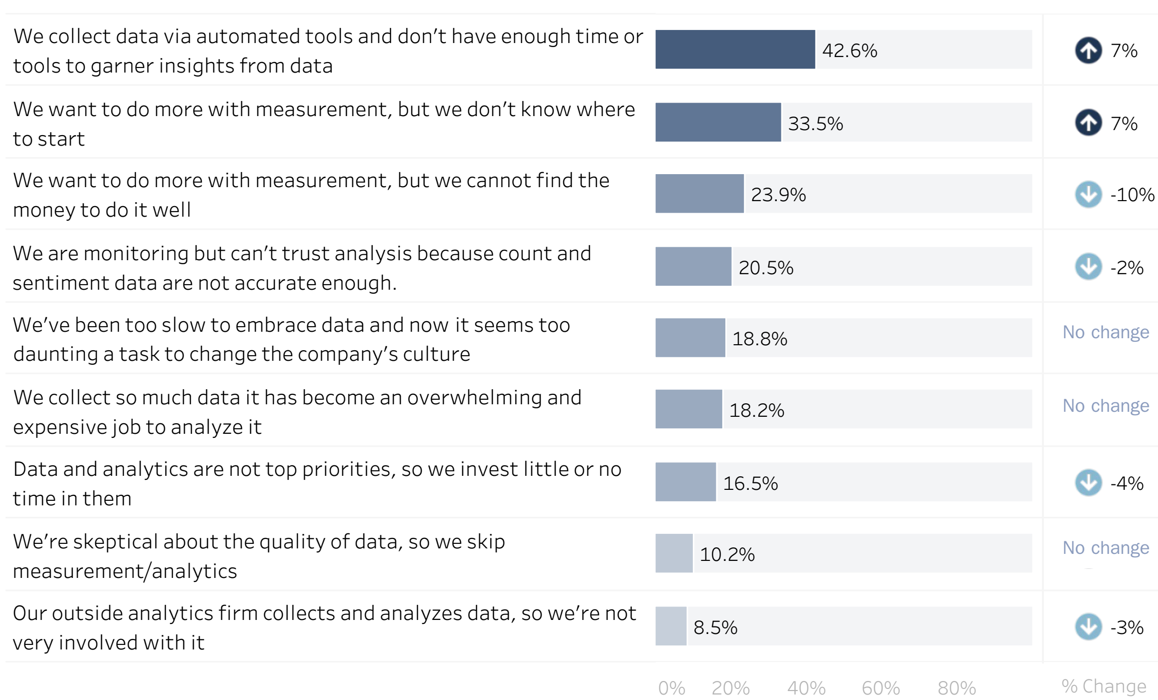
While much of the 2018 survey matched closely with the 2019 edition, the new report indicates communicators have a slightly more sophisticated relationship with data, measurement and analytics.

For example, the question of measuring or not seems moot. We asked, "Is measurement enough of a priority for you to have an in-house analytics department?" 37percent said no, which was down 15 percent from the 2018 result. 30 percent answered yes, which was up 9 percent from the previous year (see chart 6).

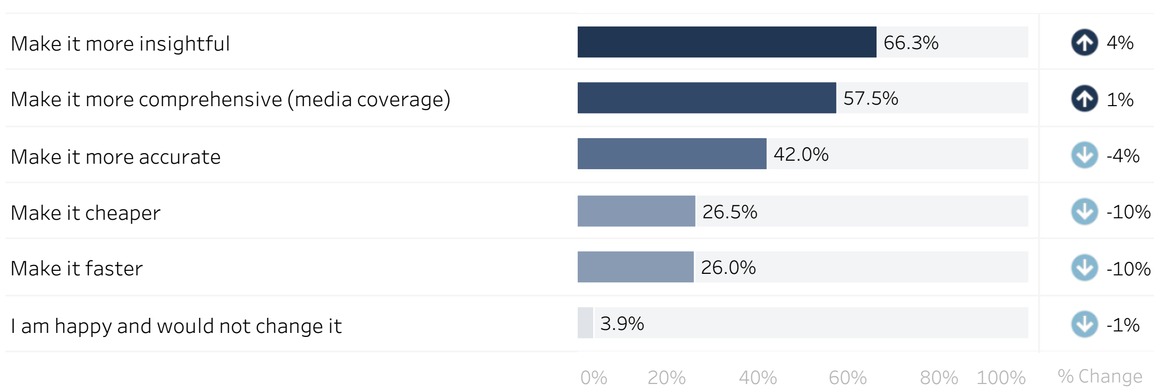
Not all is sanguine. We asked, "What is/are the most common issue(s) clients have with data/analytics?" Slightly more than half (56 percent) said clients "leave measurement and insight to us, so they have little involvement with it." That rose 12 percent from '18 (see chart 7).

21 percent say their companies lack a "formal measurement program," up 5 percent from

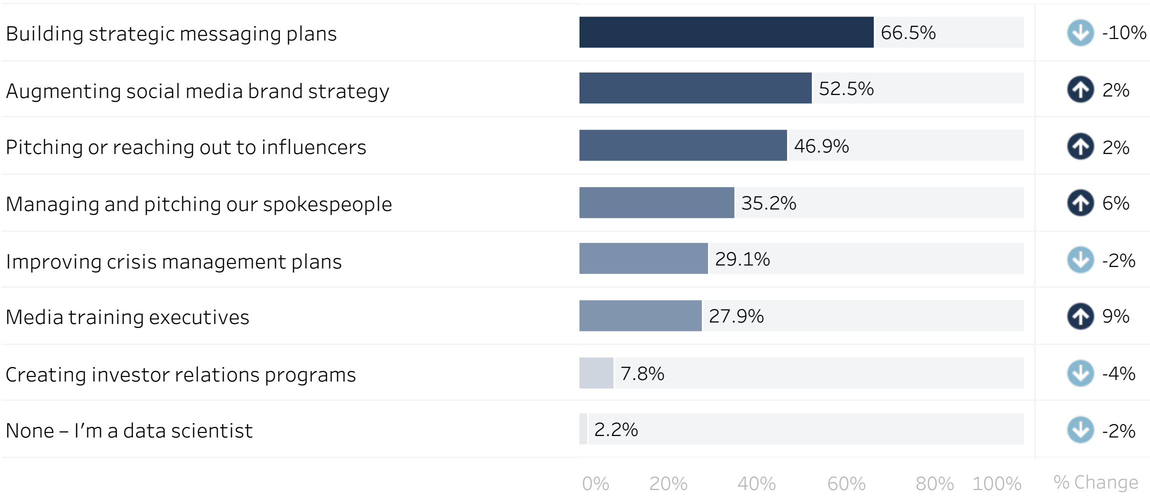
3. WHAT ARE THE MAIN PAIN POINTS AT YOUR COMPANY CONCERNING MEASUREMENT/ANALYTICS?



4. HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR MEDIA MEASUREMENT PROCESS TO BETTER MEET YOUR NEEDS?



5. HOW DO YOU USE ANALYSIS FROM YOUR MEDIA MEASUREMENT PROGRAM?



2018, as the last column in chart 5 shows.

Still, concern for many resides at a higher level, with issues such as data quality, for example. In the 2019 survey, 16 percent said they "rarely have good data" to make decisions. In 2018 that was just 7 percent.

[A related issue, though not covered in the surveys, is that PR "is tired of working with garbage data," Koefoot says.]

Another sign of measurement maturity is the increased interest in gaining insights from data, as opposed to merely collecting and measuring, the survey shows. A related surprise was that cost and speed are losing ground to gathering insights from data.

The 2019 survey was fielded in October. There were nearly 350 responses.

In chart 1 we see positive responses to "Are you spending more or less time on media measurement and analysis this year vs. last year?" This year's 45 percent (more time) and 34 percent (the same amount of time) is comparable to 2018's responses.

In chart 2, as noted above, there's been an increase of 9 percent from 2018 in those saying, "I rarely have quality data to guide decisions." Also rising is the response for "sometimes" having good data (65 percent). Obviously when "sometimes" and "never" rise, that's troubling. Yet Koefoot says this result tracks "with what we've been hearing in the marketplace about the softness with hard numbers."

For him, the finding about poor-quality data mainly is "an awareness issue." He doesn't believe the quality of data has risen or fallen in the past year. There are vendors that supply quality data and some that offer second- and third-rate data, he says. Instead it's that communicators, who rarely looked at data before with a critical eye, now are saying, 'Whoa! What I have really isn't that good…it's not good enough to do my job.'

One of the interesting takeaways from chart 3 is that the top three answers relate to wanting to do more with measurement. The largest response, "We… don't have enough time or tools to garner insights from data" (43 percent) is encouraging and disappointing. This group wants to garner

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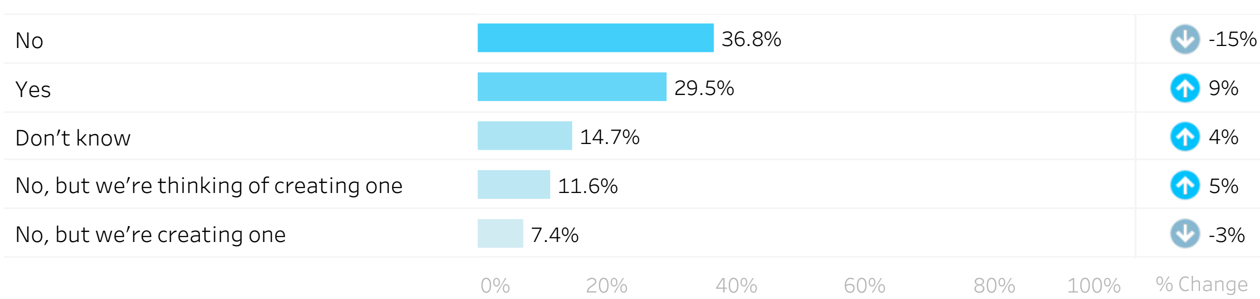
6. IS MEASUREMENT ENOUGH OF A PRIORITY FOR YOU TO HAVE AN IN-HOUSE ANALYTICS DEPARTMENT?



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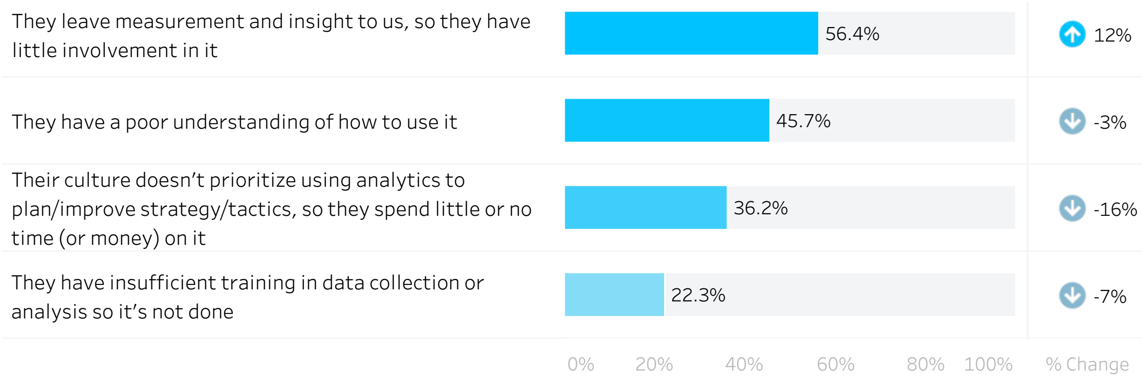
7. WHAT IS/ARE THE MOST COMMON ISSUE(S) YOUR CLIENTS HAVE WITH DATA/ANALYTICS?



insights, which is good, but is unable to do so.

Not too long ago communicators (and everyone else in business) were fixated on cheaper and faster. Another example of PR's evolving approach to measurement is seen in the top response in the next chart (chart 4). Some two-thirds of respondents said they would change their data efforts to make them "more insightful" (66 percent, up 4 percent from 2018). "Make it cheaper" and "Make it faster" are two of the laggards; both are down 10 percent since the 2018 survey.

Koefoot believes the "insightful" response is key. "That's not like I'm counting impressions or [using] AVE…it's not raw counts…and insightful doesn't necessarily mean dollar sales attribution either…Insightful is what's working. Who matters? Why do they matter? How do I make my limited budget go farther? How do I work smarter…what strategically is working and why? Where is my competition strong? Where is it vulnerable? Where am I strong or vulnerable?"

Chart 5's findings are unsurprising. To be sure, that 21 percent lack "a formal measurement program," up 5 percent from 2018, is disappointing. The top three responses "are variations on proving and measuring PR's worth…it's really measuring outcomes," Koefoot says. "Communications has always had to prove its worth in non-standard ways."

Editor's Note: PRNEWS and PublicRelay will be sending you the full survey later this year. ■

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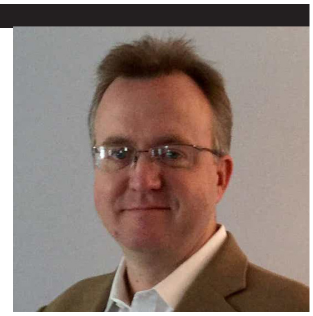
PRIVACY

BY STEPHEN PAYNE, VP, PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PRIVACY, FELD ENTERTAINMENT

What Communications Professionals Need to Know About Data Privacy



What exactly is privacy? Is it **Facebook**'s record fine from the **Federal Trade Commission**? Or is it **Apple**'s claims that the iPhone is the best mobile device in terms of user privacy? For consumers, privacy may mean having control of personal data, information about their families, income, medical conditions, etc. In short, privacy means a lot of things.

It was going to be an easy assignment, or so I thought, when my company asked me, a veteran communicator, to dig into privacy to help with compliance. It's privacy. Everyone wants it and knows what it means, right?

LEAVE ME ALONE

A basic definition of privacy is the right to be left alone. It's also the right to decide what and when a company can share details about your life or family.

Only one problem with that definition – the use of the word "right." There is no fundamental right to privacy in the U.S. Constitution. There have been court cases applying privacy to certain circumstances. Overall, though, the concept of privacy in the U.S. continues to evolve. In Europe and in California, it's a different story.

At this point, my guess is you're thinking, 'I'm in communications. Why does all this concern me?' Communicators need to be aware of and care about privacy for a lot of reasons.

For example, do you have employees in California, Paris or Brussels? Congratulations, the **California Consumer Privacy Act** (CCPA) or the **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) covers those employees.

Does your firm provide health insurance in the U.S.? If so, be aware what the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or **HIPPA**, says you can communicate and the words you can and cannot use.

Similarly, do you have clients in the financial sector? Then **Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act** (GLBA), like HIPPA, can influence your communications. Does your company have a privacy policy on its webpage? Are you living up to the promises the privacy policy makes to your site's visitors? Are all these questions and acronyms giving you a headache?

In short, privacy laws are everywhere. PR pros can benefit from at least a basic understanding of how they work.

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The Roadblocks to Effective PR Measurement and Strategies to Overcome Them

[**Editor's Note:** This is the first in a series of articles about measurement issues from PRNEWS and partner **Intrado Digital Media**.]

Many PRNEWS readers already have or will be celebrating Measurement Month in November. While it's a good thing that PR pros set aside time each year to celebrate measurement, a more sober reflection also may be in order. In a world bursting with digital data and ample free tools, there remain a number of roadblocks to effective measurement.

The lowest hanging fruit is the sizeable segment of communicators who consciously choose to avoid measuring, **Mark Weiner**, chair of the **Institute for PR Measurement Commission** and chief insight officer at **Cision**, wrote in these pages recently (PRN, September 2019).

Avoiding measurement and data, he noted, hampers the profession, particularly as business leaders increasingly favor making decisions based on data.

As **Sunita Menon**, a director at **IBM** and chief of staff to CCO **Ray Day**, says, "You may not be in the business of data, but data is in your business."

For Weiner, this deliberate avoidance of measurement is a matter of "unwillingness rather than inability."

NUMERACY FEARS

Johna Burke
Global Managing Director
AMEC

Johna Burke, global managing director of **AMEC**, the international communications measurement organization, agrees generally with Weiner, but has a slightly different take. She's heard the oft-repeated idea that communicators fear working with data and numbers. Burke believes, though, the unwillingness to measure is more the result of a lack of confidence—not ability—to use data "to provide meaningful insights."

This causes those communicators without clear objectives "to revert to charts and graphs that they think look good," she says.

There's also the fear of measurement revealing what's not known without it. Weiner quotes an agency president who told him candidly: 'I don't measure because I'd rather forgo being a proven success in exchange for never being a proven failure.'

This type of ignorance-is-bliss thinking speaks in part to another hurdle that impedes measurement: fear of the unknown. For Burke, that fear "is not based in reality," though she admits it exists. Most senior executives don't expect every campaign to be a homerun, she says. What they want, however, "is qualitative insight on what failed, why, and a plan to mitigate that loss in the future."

Deirdre Breakenridge
CEO
Pure Performance Communications

Another point about Weiner's agency president relates to accountability, or the lack of it. Measuring, argues **Deirdre Breakenridge**, CEO, **Pure Performance Communications**, "is the only way to show accountability." And if accountability is an important part of an organization's culture, it should filter down to all departments, including PR. Such cultures, she believes, have embraced communications measurement.

INEFFECTIVE MEASURING

On the other hand, Breakenridge says she's "not come across a PR pro who has admitted, 'I'm not measuring.'" Instead, she's met many PR practitioners who are measuring, but are doing so ineffectively. "Mostly they're collecting outputs." Counting only outputs fails to generate useful insights or a comprehensive picture of PR's value to an organization.

Adds Burke, "If the communications team is still delivering reporting based on 'counts and amounts' and not insights, the organization is not likely to increase the budget for communications."

The remedy, of course, is that communicators need to implement more meaningful measurement programs.

One way to do this is to align what is measured with the company's business goals and objectives. This is why com-

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municators are urged to have business goals in mind before beginning a measurement effort. Some communicators advocate coming up with a business question you want answered and then measuring.

Says Burke, "Communication leaders who focus their effort on goals and objectives of outcomes…and providing insights to the C-suite…are not begging for budget, but are being given greater access to data and leadership. This is because they are demonstrating how they are influencing change, growth and overall organizational success."

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

That's good advice, but some communicators lack knowledge of business objectives. That's an internal communications issue, Breakenridge believes. Culture, she says, needs to include the value of having everyone [in the company] understand "how the business makes money." With that knowledge, communicators should be better able to measure what matters as opposed to what's easy.

It's not always that direct, however. In certain organizations, communicators find themselves in a bind since senior executives fail to agree on what's most important.

Sometimes it's a silo issue as "each area [of the business] has its own ideas about goals," Breakenridge says. This can impede measurement since communicators are uncertain about business objectives and what they should be doing to further them.

One solution is to bring in analysts from the outside, Breakenridge says, to look at the enterprise as a whole and help get departmental goals aligned.

CLARITY OR NOT?

Burke sees the issue somewhat differently. "I don't think corporate leaders are unclear about business goals," she says. "The barrier to success is a lack of clearly stated and measurable goals…and how communications can demonstrate value…and support those goals."

EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES

Another measurement roadblock stems from too much data. The amount of data generated in the digital age "can be overwhelming," Breakenridge admits. Still, "though everyone seems to talk about big data…what you really want is to do is find the data that's most useful for your organization…the smart data."

Burke also acknowledges data proliferation, but says, "Only a small portion of the market has access to the fire hose of data available throughout their organization." As a result, most communicators are not inundated. In fact, she feels "it's the opposite…communicators do not have access to enough data to understand all of the ways" they can help various parts of the enterprise.

Breakenridge is optimistic that as tools improve, finding smart data and weeding out unnecessary data will become easier. She has her favorite pay tools, but also praises free programs, particularly Google Analytics. In addition, she points out that those using tools must be on their game. "A tool is only as good as the person using it…and the search you set up."

Sylvie Harton
SVP, Global Head, Strategy
Intrado Digital Media

And the tools must deliver, too. **Sylvie Harton**, SVP and global head of strategy at **Intrado Digital Media**, says some tools are ineffective.

"Unlike in marketing, where we see rapid advances in technology," she believes some tools PR pros use to measure "have not kept pace…being stuck in an outdated way of working" makes it hard to measure.

PR pros who use "multiple tools and multiple logins" find it difficult to get "the full picture of how campaigns are performing…as they try to interpret different sets of data." A solution is an all-in-one platform that allows one "to measure all your communication efforts right from one dashboard." Several tools integrate data in a single dashboard, including one from Intrado Digital Media.

OTHER ISSUES

For Burke and Breakenridge, a lot of measurement impediments are related to culture and education. Many communicators have not been trained to understand the value of measurement and/or they're not working in an environment where measurement is deemed important.

"A lot of communicators say they don't have the time or resources to measure. You have to make the time…make it a priority," Breakenridge says. The biggest hindrance to measurement is "attitude," of the company and the communications team, Burke adds.

CULTURE CHANGE

The question, then, is how to change a non-measuring culture? It's similar to most PR campaigns. Raise awareness of measurement successes, link measuring to success and add a bit of fun.

Ideas include presenting case studies of how communications teams have thrived when they've used measurement to derive insights. Using personal stories can also help. Provide examples of successful CCOs and CMOs who insist aligning business goals with measurement. Create a measurement-based **Slack** channel for your team.

Burke suggests a practical approach. Start with a clearly stated measurable objective, she says. Then test and refine your communication efforts. Report on and celebrate the successes, but don't ignore the failures. Make sure you create a plan to overcome the failures.

Rinse, lather, repeat. Use these learnings, Burke says, as a guide to future programs until communications is an asset everywhere. "When you let the data guide you, it could reveal other interesting correlations that prove invaluable to your organization." ■

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62% of Organizations Have PR Crisis Plans, Just 49% are Updated; Cyber Crime Lacks Attention

It's a common coping mechanism. Avoid planning for or discussing something that you don't want to face and it will go away, as if it never existed. While we know that's not prudent strategy, it might explain some answers in a recent crisis survey from PRNEWS and **CS&A International**, a specialist risk, crisis and business continuity management consultancy.

There's a computer hacked every 39 seconds, a **University of Maryland** report says. The average cost of a data breach next year will be $150 million, according to **Juniper Research**. While the majority of cyber crime is concentrated in three sectors (health, retail and government), nearly every business is susceptible to attack. Still, relatively few respondents (39 percent) identified cyber as a potentional crisis area (see chart 1).

Caroline Sapriel
Managing Partner
CS&A International

This surprised **Caroline Sapriel**, CS&A International's managing partner. "We noted immediately that cyber attacks ranked fourth," she says. Yet "when contemplating realistic crisis scenarios...a cyber attack is always on the table." In her experience, "Clients typically steer clear of ethics and compliance or mismanagement scenarios."

Yet slightly more than half (55 percent) of the 200 communicators who responded listed "ethics and compliance" as likely crisis starters. Compliance and ethics "should be strongly embedded at all levels... in a company," said an executive who requested anonymity.

The survey was fielded in October. Respondents overwhelmingly were senior and middle managers (87 percent); 43 percent of respondents said they'd been involved in a crisis.

'WE HAVE A PLAN, BUT...'

The next two charts (2 and 3) are meant to be looked at together. Chart 2 shows a majority of respondents (62 percent) told us they have a crisis plan. That figure is roughly in line with other crisis surveys. Of course, it means almost 40 percent lack a crisis management plan.

In addition, chart 3 shows that just 49 percent have an updated plan. Says Sapriel, "It is striking to see how many companies believe that they are prepared to handle a crisis because they have a plan in place, which may or may not be up-to-date."

Christine White, a recently retired global director of crisis management and international risk management at a large multinational food & beverage company, is "concerned that only 26 percent responded that the [crisis] plan is well known to crisis management team (CMT) members." A total of 33 percent said "most of the members of the CMT are familiar with it." Yet 31 percent said they "weren't sure" and 10 percent said "no."

Having an updated plan is a good preliminary step. Chart 4 looks at necessary additional measures. As you can see,

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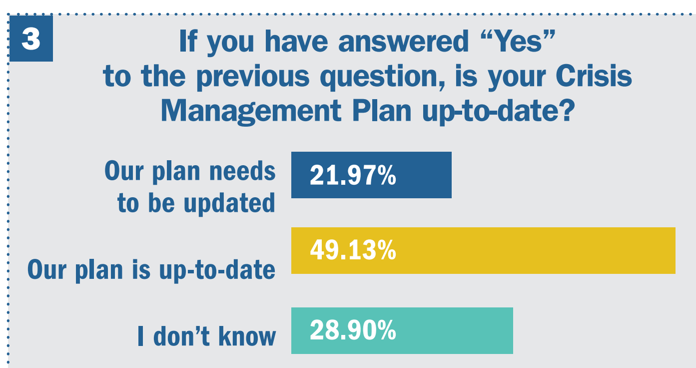

SOURCE: PRNEWS/CS&A Survey, Oct. 2019 (200 responses)

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nearly 40 percent of respondents told us, "We've never conducted a crisis exercise." 21 percent said they "weren't sure" how often their company runs a crisis exercise.

"Organizations do not realize the ROI of having periodic exercises/round table discussions to review their crisis management plans using real or hypothetical scenarios," White says. "The value this provides...is not clearly understood."

Sapriel adds, "If you look at how many companies are actually organizing crisis training, we can only conclude that far too little is done in that respect."

Dirk Lenaerts
Senior Partner
CS&A International

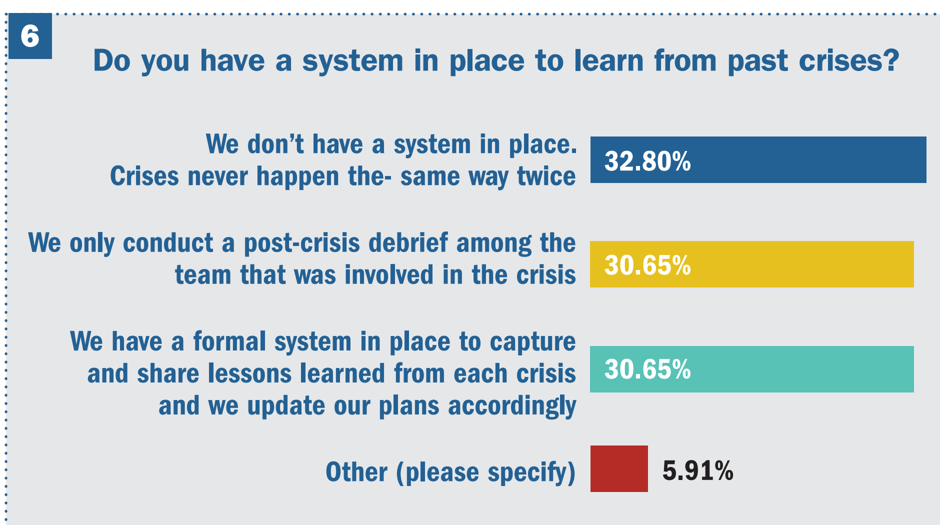
One executive linked a lack of consistent practice of crisis plans with the results of chart 5. "Many companies struggle with reacting quickly and getting organized when crises strike. This is yet another reason why practicing is so important," says **Dirk Lenaerts**, senior partner at CS&A International. Indeed, respondents chose "reacting quickly" as "the most difficult aspect of crisis response."

Lenaerts adds, "The process may be clearly noted in a crisis plan, but if people don't know it and don't practice it, they will tackle each crisis by improvisation," which seldom leads to strong outcomes.

LESSONS LEARNED

Chart 6 harkens to the idea mentioned at this article's start. If you don't think about something unpleasant, it never really happened.

Says Lenaerts, "Once a crisis is over, people want to forget about it and move on as quickly as possible. As a result, a large number of companies have nothing in place to learn from...or to share within their organization." A best practice is to capture learnings of crises and ensure that all employees with a crisis function are properly introduced to this documentation, he adds. ■



Editor's Note: PRNEWS will send you the full report later this year.

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Measurement 2019: Guarded Optimism, Denial of Data, the Need for Insights and College Courses

Editor's Note: Last year (PRN, Nov. 2018) during **Measurement Month**, we asked senior measurement analysts to assess the state of communications measurement and what's being done well or badly.

In 2018 the general mood was upbeat. It's the same in 2019. There's plenty of very good PR measurement, yet some things need improvement, including downgrading vanity metrics, tying measurement to business goals and a general lack of PR measurement in college programs.

Katie Paine
Founder
Paine Publishing

Our 2019 roundtable is composed of PR News columnist and **Paine Publications** chief **Katie Paine**; global MD of the **International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communications** (AMEC) **Johna Burke**; **Mark Weiner**, chair of the **Institute of PR**'s (IPR) **Measurement Commission** and chief insights officer at **Cision**; and **Alexander Laskin**, professor/director of the M.S. program in PR at **Quinnipiac University**. An edited version of their remarks follows.

PRNEWS: Katie, last November you were optimistic about measurement. "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," you said. Are you still upbeat?

Katie Paine: Maybe I'm just impatient, but I'm no longer quite as optimistic.

PRN: Why not?

Paine: Because of the outmoded intellectual fog that lingers around measurement. Marketers who learned everything they *think* they know about measurement in the 1980s and 1990s and haven't updated their skill set perpetuate this.

That mindset seems content with completely meaningless, but large, numbers, like impressions or social actions.

Worse, they deny access to data that is needed to tie communications programs to outcomes. So many PR pros have as their goals "increase awareness, consideration or preference." That requires regular surveys of stakeholders. Whether due to budgets or fear of data, they don't happen.

Agencies often say they want to up their measurement game. Yet they are continually denied access to web analytics or other data that they need to measure accurately.

PRNEWS: Mark, last year you were mixed when we asked about the state of measurement. You said more people are measuring, but there's too much data and people are confused about what to measure. How about today?

Mark Weiner
Chair, IPR
Measurement
Commission
Chief Insights
Officer
Cision

Mark Weiner: I am a born optimist and I never let past failure interfere with future success…I'm happy that more communicators apply data to prove PR value and improve PR performance. Still, the profession has a long way to go. And I am pessimistic about those who choose to avoid PR measurement altogether. The dinosaurs would still be here today if only they could predict the weather. Like the dinosaurs, those who choose not to participate in PR's measurement revolution will eventually disappear.

PRNEWS: Same question, Johna. In 2018 you said, "I'm optimistic because measurement continues to grow. There's a larger audience of communicators who realize that measurement isn't an intimidating factor, but can actually stimulate success." Do you feel that way today?

Johna Burke: Yes. I see more success every day on a global scale. Teams that are driving results through outcomes vs. outputs continue to prove the case for PR and good measurement and evaluation. When evaluation is meaningful, organizations come to rely on the data to make informed decisions.

PRNEWS: Mark, when we asked in 2018 what issues measurement faces, you mentioned the diminished standard of what's good enough; confusion about what automation can and can't do; and that measurement remains a matter of unwillingness rather than inability. Is that still the case?

Weiner: While more PR pros may be measuring now with the introduction of low-cost/no-cost automated platforms, the standard in most companies continues to evolve beyond what tools alone can accomplish.

As PR is progressing in its adoption of data-informed decision-making, so too is every other area of the enterprise. The result is that executives seek more than data. They know enough to be cynical of data without context. Today's data-informed organizations seek insights, not just data, charts and graphs that technology alone produces.

To achieve the outcome executives prefer, we need technology. But technology alone functions as a complement to sector expertise and statistical acumen. The combination of these three elements is the foundation for insights and the basis for success.

PRNEWS: Same question, Katie. What are some of the issues with measurement? Last year you said vanity metrics and activity metrics without a point. Is that still the case?

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Paine: Lack of access to the right data – data that is accurate, relevant and meaningful certainly is one major issue.The other huge issue is the lack of business acumen among PR pros. Far too many entry and mid-level PR people have little or no training in business and thus have a hard time defining measures of their success that relate to business goals. And one more pet peeve – the lack of consistency, relevance and accuracy in media monitoring and social media "impression" counts. Everyone seems to think that bigger is better – but it's just less accurate.

PRNEWS: Johna, last year you noted PR measurement had a problem with definitions and the amount of black box behavior. How do you feel about those issues in 2019?

Burke: Those problems continue to exist, but the biggest challenge is a lack of planning and seeing measurement as a 'What did we do?' vs. 'How are we supporting our organization's overall objectives?' PR teams using the 'To do what we are doing better' analysis and/or 'How can we pivot from ineffective work or course-correct based on the data?' are earning respect, budget and influence with their C-suite.

Johna Burke
Global MD
AMEC

PRN: We asked you in 2018 about what's being done well in measurement. You said, "The effort to look at communications as an integrated whole...[which is] forcing communicators to define business value in what they do." Is there something new that is impressing you?

Paine: Yes. The trend away from PR-only or social media-only dashboards and the interest in integrated communications, PESO dashboards. **Google**'s Data Studio is making integrating data much easier. People are starting to use these dashboards to discover connections between activities and desired outcomes.

I'm also happy about the renewed interest and emphasis on human-curated or human-analyzed data among measurement vendors. Automation and machine coding are no longer differentiators. I'm seeing more vendors and organizations emphasizing the importance of human curation. **FullIntel**, **Agility PR** and even the **Prime Research** parts of Cision are a few that are pushing the human analysis benefit. The reality is that in the near future AI will drive most of the data collection, but humans still are needed to understand what the data means.

PRN: Last year, Johna, we asked you what you'd like to see improve by this time next year. You said the "biggest opportunity is for communicators to speak the language of their organization...it's one thing to take counts and amounts and put them in a pie chart...it's another thing to give that contextual layover and tell people what the data means for the business." What about now?

Burke: My 2018 answer stands, but now I have a better understanding of a primary barrier to success. Many teams still lack effective planning and clearly stated measurable objectives. [**Ed. Note:** This month AMEC is launching a PR Planning Guide to assist you set clear, measurable objectives.]

PRNEWS: Mark, last year you spoke about the importance of attribution analysis. Has it fulfilled your expectations?

Weiner: In short, yes. In 2019, the profession has recognized attribution analysis's ability to properly identify, quantify and attribute PR's contribution to more meaningful business outcomes, such as awareness, engagement...and sales.

PRNEWS: Is there enough emphasis on PR measurement in college and grad PR programs?

Alexander Laskin
Professor
Quinnipiac University

Alexander Laskin: Certainly not. It's rare to find a master's program with a course on measurement and evaluation as an elective, let alone a required course. In fact, even **PRSA**'s standards for Certification in Education for Public Relations do not specify a required course or content area focused on measurement and evaluation. At best, some master's programs have a research methods course.

PRNEWS: What would you recommend?

Laskin: There should be a required course covering PR measurement and evaluation.

PRN: A young PR pro lacks knowledge of measurement. How can that be overcome?

Laskin: As a professor, I recommend required readings [laughter]. Seriously, there are many good books, articles, and case studies available. Start with leading trade publications and then proceed to more advanced content from the **Chartered Institute of Public Relations**, Institute for Public Relations, International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, and, of course, PRSA. There are seminars and webinars available from a lot of sources. A few colleges offer courses, online or on campus.

PRN: What's the most difficult area of PR measurement for students to grasp?

Laskin: The general idea of measurement's importance. Until you have an executive or client stand up in a meeting and ask, 'What exactly did you do for me?' you do not realize how important evaluation is and how it should be the keystone of any campaign planning, not an afterthought. ■

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BY MARK WEINER, CHAIR, IPR MEASUREMENT COMMISSION/CHIEF INSIGHTS OFFICER, CISION

10 Questions You Need to Answer as the 2020 Budgeting Season Beckons

Along with Measurement Month, it's the time of year when PR evaluation and funding questions arise for 2020. Executives who invest in PR are becoming more discriminating, so we must clearly make our case using the language of the boardroom, not just the language of PR.

Further complicating matters, beyond past accomplishments, we need to communicate what could be gained through the use of additional resources. Despite new technology that enable almost everyone to produce data, charts and reports, proving the value of PR endures as one of the profession's most vexing challenges.

One difficulty with proving business value is that values are subjective. What's more, values change not only from organization to organization, but from person to person within the same organization. As such, the first step in communicating PR value in is to uncover the often secret value system extant among the executives involved in planning, funding and evaluating your program. After that, address points they consider top priorities.

> **"Measurement should not be viewed as a scorecard but rather as a tutor."**

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

As you prepare for 2020, try a systematic approach to discover the ways your internal clients define PR success and the extent to which you're achieving it now.

Structured one-on-one conversations with internal stakeholders will reveal preferences and expectations by which you will be later evaluated. Having an objective third party conduct such conversations is preferable.

Questions may include those which probe: best PR measures (from clipping volume to revenue generation); how you're performing on these measures vs. competitors; top media; top journalists; key competitors; contribution to overall business objectives and so on.

The keys to success: gather, aggregate and analyze individual responses to find common ground; share the aggregate findings with the individual executives involved; and negotiate your way to a more reasonable and meaningful consolidated central position.

For example, if 20 executives are involved in budgeting and performance, it's much better to focus on four "core" measures all agree on than to try to satisfy 20 individual preferences. Attain authorization on the final measures and begin with the confidence that comes with knowing the most direct path.

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK

What follows are ten questions you can reasonably expect to answer when determining your delivery of PR value. Your executives or clients may not have asked these yet, but if you know the questions and how to answer them (or better yet, ask them of yourself), you are more likely to enjoy the benefits of long-lasting positive relationships with stakeholders.

1. Did we meet or exceed measurable objectives? Every PR investment decision-maker deserves to know whether the program met or beat its goal(s). Assuming that reasonable and measurable objectives were set at the outset, this is among the easiest performance measures to deliver.

2. Did we outperform our competitors? This measure requires no particular knowledge of PR to attribute value. In a media-driven program, for example, you might consider a way to compare "share-of-voice" to "market-share:" if your share-of-voice is the greater of the two, you've probably generated more than your fair share.

3. Did we deliver our key messages? To what extent did unintended messaging interfere? It's more common to track the delivery of intended messages…but "unintended messages" (negative or off-topic themes) can neutralize or even overwhelm what's intended. Track both to show full context.

4. Did we reach our target audiences? PR has evolved to be highly targeted. Increasing awareness among lower value audiences is a poor use of resources. It's best to focus on the target audience and the media it reads, watches and listens to. Results should reflect the extent to which the total audience was comprised of the target.

5. How has the competitive landscape changed? Competitive activity can impact your results, for better or worse. As you interpret the results of your program, consider the following: What PR and marketing initiatives were undertaken during the span of your campaign? Did they influence your PR performance?

6. What was the effect on awareness? Understanding? Behavior? It is reasonable to expect PR to do more than drive media coverage. Influencing the perceptions and attitudes of your target audience sets the stage for more meaningful business outcomes, such as increases in sales or stock price.

7. Are we generating a positive return on our PR investment? Is our PR driving revenue? Leading to greater efficiency and lower cost? Avoiding costs altogether? Connecting PR to sales is a compelling value equation. In the past, this was difficult and expensive but now, given new technol-

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ogy developments for PR attribution, it's accessible to most PR programs (PRN, October, 2019).

8. Did PR meet or exceed relative efficiency when compared to other marketing disciplines? Improved efficiency over past performance is an important gauge of continual improvement, comparing your PR's efficiency with that of other marketing agents can provide helpful context. It's not unusual for PR to deliver the best ROI within the marketing mix, but if you want to benchmark internally, it's important to have the buy-in of others with whom you'll be referencing (as well as the measures by which you'll be compared).

9. What worked, what didn't and how do we improve? Measurement should not be viewed as a scorecard but rather as a tutor. Opportunities for learning and continual refinement abound. And it's hard to imagine a CEO who wouldn't respect the desire of staff to learn from mistakes and improve programs that under-performed.

10. What do we do next? Beyond telling you what happened and how you performed, your measurement activities should tell you something about why, what to do about it and in what sequence.

THREE CRITERIA

Ideally, the criteria that shape your PR value model will meet three targets. They should be reasonable, meaningful and measurable within the broader context of budget, type of campaign, duration of the campaign and more.

So while generating a high volume of coverage is reasonable and measurable, most executives agree that it is not particularly meaningful. And while generating sales is extremely meaningful, doing so can be expensive and, therefore, not as "reasonable" as other measures.

Typically, three or four measures will emerge as those upon which executives can agree. The most common "winners" include delivering key messages in target media, raising awareness, and meeting or exceeding objectives. To optimize value and reduce risk, be certain to maintain consistent and open communication with your key executives to share findings and seek agreement.

OK, so you think it's too late to alter your 2019 plans for 2020. Fine. The best time to uncover your value equation probably was a few years ago. The next best time? Now. ■

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Let's start with the United States. The U.S. lacks an omnibus federal privacy law. True, many sectors have privacy regulations, but they vary widely. Students have privacy over their education records. Patients have a level of privacy over their medical records via HIPPA.

We all have privacy when it comes to potential discrimination based on our genes. The **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) enforces privacy laws as they relate to policies and promises business make to consumers. The agency does so under Section 5 authority, which regulates unfair and deceptive practices in commerce. (And yes, I know that is a generalization of the FTC. I have a limited word count.)

That patchwork of privacy regulations makes compliance difficult, and lawyers rich. Yet privacy in the U.S. is evolving, whether we like it or not. One way it's evolving is via the **California Consumer Privacy Act** (CCPA), which starts Jan.1.

Unlike many states, in California (CA) the right to privacy is actually part of the state constitution. The CCPA builds on that with a slew of consumer rights and business obligations. It started as a ballot measure and morphed into a hastily passed and, some would argue, unclearly written law.

CCPA AND PR PROS

What does CCPA mean for communications professionals? If you collect or share data on CA residents you might have obligations under the CCPA. CA consumers have the right under the law to ask you what data you have about them, where you got it, what you plan to do with it, not to sell or share it with anyone else. In the most extreme case, you must delete data when asked. This has implications if you have employees in CA. Today, they can't ask you to delete data, but you must tell them what data you collect and why.

For example, if your company has data on CA consumers and you use that to determine the best methods for developing communications strategies you may have to disclose what you are doing with that data. Similarly, you might have to prove you are handling the data correctly. In addition, you might be asked to demonstrate that what you're doing with the data does not have discriminatory consequences for CA consumers. Under CCPA, consumers also have the right to request that all their data be deleted.

THE CALIFORNIA CASE

And if you or your firm has a website that collects data on CA consumers, you need a CCPA-compliant privacy policy on your website. You also must offer a way for CA residents to contact you about their data, including a website and a mandatory toll-free number. By the way, the law's definition of personal data is wide and almost all encompassing.

The good news, at least for now, is that there is no private right of action for violations of the privacy requirements of CCPA. In other words, consumers who feel you violated their privacy, or did not respond to a request exercising their rights in a timely manner, cannot sue you.

CCPA has teeth, though. The CA attorney general has the power to levy fines up to $7,500 per violation of the law. So,

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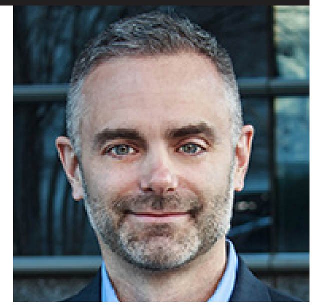
BY BRENDAN STREICH, SVP, FLEISHMANHILLARD

Using Data to Improve Performance in Higher Education or Any Sector



I've spent most of my communications career working in agencies. I trace my love for higher education to my first official account – the **College of Computing at Georgia Tech**, a top-10 computer science program. There, I was exposed to technology innovations on a regular basis – robotics, cyber security, big data. Coming from a more "numbers-not-words" family, data and analytics piqued my curiosity. While computational algorithms were light years beyond my level of comprehension, I relished seeing and hearing first-hand how big data was going to shape the world around us.

Fast forward 10+ years, and we see how data has reshaped the way we live, work. And, for the purposes of my chosen career field, how we communicate. Data has given us the ability to put science behind what was once considered an art. It makes communications more customized and targeted, predictive and quantified.

Similarly, we as communicators also can use measurement to test assumptions that other parts of the enterprise make. In that way, we can help improve the operations of the businesses we work in.

DATA AND PR: STILL A STRUGGLE

And, yet, as communicators, there is still a struggle with how to apply data to our work. Why have data and PR always had such a tricky relationship?

Consider higher education. Often at the directive (OK, pressure) of presidents, provosts and board members who have focused heavily on academic prestige, top PR practitioners at universities traditionally have spent more hours figuring out how to get a story in **The NY Times** than making sure the right audiences on the right channels are receiving the messages the university is sending.

I'm certain some readers are nodding in empathy with this example. Academia is far from alone in having leaders who think media relations begins and ends with placements in The NY Times, **Wall St Journal** or other major outlets.

Conversations about channel optimization and holistic campaigns are sometimes considered too marketing – and, let's be honest, "marketing" is misunderstood and vastly underestimated in a university setting. Often confused with branding or confined to business and law schools or online degree programs, historically marketing has taken a second seat to communications. The evidence is a paucity of true CMOs in higher education.

COURSE CORRECTION

But now, some universities are shifting course – and data is helping to drive that change. Job boards are filling up with postings for senior-level strategic marketers, content strategists and digital communications leads who understand how to harness the power of data and insights.

And communications departments are connecting more closely with their admissions and advancement counterparts, integrating PR and social with fundraising campaigns and recruitment efforts to more clearly demonstrate ROI against true financial objectives.

In light of this evolution, what are ways that communications teams can start to effectively use data to improve performance?

- **Track and Audit Constantly.** Regularly audit peer and competitor channels to understand whitespace, not just at a macro, brand level, but even on a channel-by-channel and story-by-story basis. Track competitor engagement levels and their reach as regularly as you do your own metrics. Understand what topics they are leaning into, so you can determine the best way to differentiate your storytelling and stand out. Also, take immediate advantage of new social ad transparency policies to see what other institutions or organizations are promoting. This can help shed light on not just what others are promoting, but alert you to sponsored posts that are talking about you – accurately or not.

- **Use data to ensure that stories – and the way they are told – are resonating and standing out.** Each story – whether on new research, improved educational offerings or even just cool campus features – has a unique audience that seeks out and digests information differently. Take cues from our marketing counterparts and create a profile or persona of each key audience for the university, including stats on news consumption habits and social engagement. When pitching stories or creating campaigns, use these personas as the foundation for your strategy and the best way to find that sweet spot of where to place a story to watch it take off. And then keep track of that post's performance over time, feeding intelligence into future editorial conversations and decisions to constantly improve performance.

- **Integrate paid social as a key part of your 2020 communications budget.** Whether to foster greater alumni engagement or chase more research dollars, targeting and amplifying content, especially earned media articles, is imperative for tracking performance and measuring success. But communications teams, unlike their marketing counterparts, often fail to put adequate (or even any) paid media dollars in their annual budgets. In today's cluttered and highly confusing content environment, using old-school metrics like impressions misrepresents – and actually undervalues – communications' influence. The data generated when paid is put behind a post or article can help teams prove that content is reaching

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intended audiences like corporate or government funding agencies, and more closely quantify success aligned with business metrics like admissions yield, research funding and philanthropic donations.

PAID MEDIA AND ATTITUDES

I recognize that some faculty and academic leaders still may look down on paid media, thinking that a sponsored tag on social is akin to "pay-for-play" and lessens the prestige of that hard-earned article on groundbreaking research. Not so!

Instead, counter any uninformed arguments by noting that 55 percent of U.S. adults get their news via social media, and organic posts have a very limited reach. So, without an extra boost, chances are that the coveted New York Times article months in the works will never reach its full, intended audience – and frankly not be worth the time, effort and investment.

Yet another way data can be a higher education communicator's best friend. ■

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should you stick your head in the sand and ignore CCPA, it can bite you. Hard.

If you have not started planning to comply with CCPA, or even figured out if it applies to you, time is short. Should you treat all data as if it comes from CA just to be safe? Do you treat all consumers as if they are CA residents? These are questions businesses across the U.S. are asking. So far, there are few clear-cut answers.

Now that you're terrified to do business in California, let's move to the really complicated discussion: the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

GDPR AND ITS COMPLICATIONS

GDPR came into effect last May and has been a near-constant focus for privacy pros and companies operating in Europe. The GDPR requires companies that collect and process data to comply with strict requirements as it relates to consumer data.

It applies to companies that collect consumer data in the EU. In addition, the definition of data is broad. It also applies to companies that offer goods and services to the EU, even though they may not be based there. Under this requirement, if your company or one you represent sells products in the EU or offers, for example, professional services that include collection of personal data, you must comply with GDPR.

Under GDPR, companies must be transparent with how they handle data. In some cases, relying on consent from the subject is not enough. Companies also have to limit how data is used and not use it for more than the purpose it was collected without additional consent. Companies also can only retain data for limited time periods and must keep data confidential and secure.

FORGET ME, FORGET ME NOT

Communicators should be familiar with GDPR's "right to be forgotten." This means that consumers have the right to have their personal information erased. For example, if your company has data on someone and that person wants it deleted, you must do so. In addition, you must inform everyone you shared that data with that they too have to erase it. Recent court decisions have limited this right to the EU, however.

Here is an example of a GDPR issue that's become common. Let's assume you offer communications services in the EU and your webpage collects data using cookies. You must get explicit consent before you place cookies on a user's computer. The words, "By using this website you agree to our cookie policy," you see on a lot of U.S.-based sites is not GDPR-compliant. These "cookie walls," where just by using the website you get cookies, are no longer legal under GDPR.

YOU'RE FINE

Earlier, we reviewed the penalties that the California attorney general can levy under CCPA. The potential fines under GDPR make those look affordable. Each EU member has what's called a Supervisory Authority, the government agency charged with enforcing the GDPR. The law gives them the ability to charge a wide range of fines. With the most severe violations, fines can add up to four percent of global revenue. Let me repeat. The fines can be four percent of every cent your company makes worldwide, not just in the EU.

SINGAPORE AND BRAZIL JOIN THE FUN

And it's not just the U.S. and EU that can complicate your business with privacy matters. Singapore has been looking closely at privacy and the movement of data. China recently issued a draft regulation that would restrict greatly the ability of companies to move consumer data out of the PRC. Brazil approved legislation setting up a GDPR-like structure. The list goes gets longer each day.

Please note, a brief article like this giving a broad overview of privacy regulations is not a substitute for an in-depth analysis of how these laws might impact you or your business. When in doubt, consult a privacy professional before you undertake a project that could have profound privacy, and financial implications. A good place to start is the **International Association of Privacy Professionals** (IAPP). This group has a wealth of information on U.S., EU and other nations' privacy regulations.

And remember, and with due credit to the IAPP, there is no privacy without security. But data security and the dreaded "we've had a breach" are for another column. ■

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Incoming Page Board Chair Emphasizes New Skills for CCOs as They Manage Expanding Role

It was little surprise that **Charlene Wheeless**, VP, global corporate affairs, **Bechtel Corporation**, was named last month to chair the **Page** board of trustees, succeeding **Aedhmar Hynes**. A Page member since 2012, Wheeless chaired the annual conference in Boston earlier this year. She's also a highly regarded speaker at events that the group for CCOs and senior communicators sponsors. She starts in January.

Prior to her tenure at Bechtel, Wheeless was VP of communications for **Raytheon**'s intelligence and information systems business unit. Before that, she spent time at **American Management Systems** and **DynCorp**.

We asked Wheeless about challenges senior communicators are having and how Page can help them. We also inquired about what she's gained from her years at Page and themes she plans to emphasize during her tenure as chair.

PRNEWS: What do you want the theme of your tenure as Page chair to be?

Charlene Wheeless
Incoming Board Chair
Page

Charlene Wheeless: Relevance. Businesses are redefining and remaking themselves in response to disruption. New Page research shows the CCO is stepping up on corporate brand and culture and how their enterprises create societal value.

I see a powerful new opportunity for CCOs to be relevant, central leaders in transformation. That's why I'm so excited about the chance to lead Page at this moment.

CCOs can – and really, we must – also step up in new ways. Page also is working to build up its professional learning programs. I see Page's role as helping CCOs be stronger leaders who bring additional value to their enterprises – commercially and for society.

PRNEWS: You've been a Page member for seven years. What have been the benefits from your time at Page that have convinced you to remain involved with the organization?

Wheeless: The professional relationships and personal friendships are extremely important and have made participating in Page invaluable. It's personally satisfying to be a part of an organization that's making our profession better.

But as a CCO, it's also a place to get exposed to the latest thinking, explore common challenges, learn from each other, and stay ahead of the curve. It also allows me to connect with CCOs at the companies Bechtel considers clients or partners. That additional connection is extremely valuable.

I have grown personally and professionally during my time at Page. In addition to all that we do in our programs, we also are working to evolve the profession, to challenge conventional thinking, and put diversity, inclusion, and belonging at the forefront of the minds of our members.

It's an awesome honor and responsibility.

PRNEWS: What challenges facing senior communicators do you plan to address during your tenure?

Wheeless: A big one is that these new roles for the CCO demand new knowledge and skills, both for themselves and their teams. Acquiring new talent is great, but we also need to retrain our people to work in new ways.

As an example, CommTech isn't just about new platforms and tools. We need our teams to think differently about how data helps us understand people as individuals and engage them in personalized ways. To design content journeys that account for human behavior and optimize them by continually refining content. We're entering a new era for our profession, and Page can help us lean into that.

In addition, the characteristics of the most successful CCOs and their teams are changing. Today's environment calls for multidisciplinary teams and CCOs who can work effectively across the C-suite and the entire organization. ■

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LEADERSHIP

Incoming PRSA Chair Pushes Non-Stop Learning, Urges PR to Use Truth to Combat Disinformation

Recently elected as **PRSA** national chair for 2021, **Michelle Olson** runs the Scottsdale, AZ, office of **Fingerpaint**, the NY-based PR firm. A veteran PRSA member, she's been director of the group's western district since 2017. A 30-year PR veteran, Olson, a corporate communications specialist, is known for her work in healthcare, land use, hospitality and sustainability. We asked her what skills PR pros seek from organizations such as PRSA. In addition, we discussed measurement in PR and goals for her tenure. Her edited responses are below.

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PRNEWS: What are PRSA members telling you they need to do their jobs better? How will you, as PRSA's top elected official, move the organization to respond?

MICHELLE OLSON: PRSA includes young and experienced PR pros, people like me, with more than 30 years under our belts, yet still growing. Senior professionals say they're looking for more learning, networking, and ways to give back to the profession they love. Expanding PRSA's certification program might be a good place to start.

Similarly, offering more master classes at district and national levels. Chapters have this dialed in already.

Michelle Olson
Incoming Chair
PRSA

I've also heard that people are looking for more flexible and affordable learning opportunities – on demand, and shared experiences with other chapters. By building a repository of professional development being offered in any of our chapters, districts and sections, and then making it easily accessible, we can easily serve that need. Technological advancements at PRSA will make sharing professional development programming across the world much more efficient and timely.

PRNEWS: What are 2 goals you have for your tenure?

Olson: I want to help PRSA maintain its relevance while our profession rapidly evolves into what it will become. I don't think we're through 'the change' yet. As a result, it's vitally important that PRSA be at the forefront of what's coming and inform and educate our members as quickly as possible. Convergence is here, and it's a fast-moving train.

My second goal may seem altruistic, but it's for PRSA to continue to be an arbiter of truth. **Microsoft**'s corporate VP, corporate communications, **Frank X. Shaw** said it really well: "The future of the PR profession is to purposely, relentlessly shine light on the truth." In this age of disinformation, PR pros are more important than ever. If we do nothing except hold up the candle of ethics in business and in our organizations, we will have done our jobs.

PRNEWS: What were some of the most interesting learnings for you from the recent PRSA convention in San Diego?

Olson: There aren't enough words to express how important **Richard Dreyfus**'s crusade for civics education is, and his passion for healing America...is admirable and contagious. But more important is what we, as PR pros, can do. Dreyfus says civics is "learning how to share political space with those with whom you disagree." If so, then PR pros have an obligation to teach this skill to our organizations and clients.

The keynote with the most relevance to my work was Frank X. Shaw's "state of the profession" speech. His exploration of what PR pros and the media can do in the disinformation age was immediately relevant. I hope people heard him. Media can start by "knowing the difference between reporting and repeating." PR pros can start by being relentlessly authentic in all things, as truth becomes the biggest shield we have against disinformation.

PRNEWS: What's PRSA doing to encourage measurement?

Olson: PR pros long have been working with data...to shape public opinion and develop campaigns that resonate with targeted audiences. The type of data we are using has been changing, particularly with social media. PRSA...continually offers classes on new techniques and why it's important that our work be data-driven. ■

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