

2017  
GUIDE TO  
MEDIA  
MEASUREMENT  
FOR PR &  
MARKETING



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## Listen Up: Social Media Monitoring & Measurement Methods that Produce Actionable Insights for Marketing & PR



More organizations are monitoring social media for mentions about the organization, its brands, competitors and industry issues, but many remain unsure how to achieve the full benefits of social media listening.

According to a new research from [eMarketer](#), 49% of marketing executives use social media monitoring to better understand customers, prospects and markets. The survey revealed that executives' favorite data sources were corporate website analytics named by 74%, followed by sales data and CRM-based customer records (68%), customer satisfaction surveys (57%), and corporate managed social media feeds (53%).

### Social Media Data for Decisions

According to a report by Altimeter Group, almost half of social media professionals worldwide use social insights to reach decisions about products, employees and customers. Almost two-thirds of marketers now aggregate social media data for marketing purposes, says a study by [Demand Metric](#). A survey by Reseachscape on behalf of Skyword reported that a little more than half of U.S. marketers use social media monitoring technology.

Although social media monitoring is common, research indicates that many marketers are unsure how to put social media data and analytics into effective use and obtain actionable information.

A survey by Business Performance Innovation (BPI) Network last year showed that only 29% of business and technology managers thought social media data offered a competitive advantage. A Marketing Executives Network Group study found that 39.2% of marketing executives believe most data obtained through social media monitoring is not actionable.

A proactive approach is required in order to gain actionable data through social media listening. Brands must understand how to identify appropriate conversations, and analyze and interpret the vast amount of data social media monitoring gathers. Experts offer the following guidance for identifying actionable insights.

### Putting Data to Good Use

Select meaningful metrics. Marketers may feel swamped by the enormous amount of information from a service like [Glean.info](#) that covers multiple social media networks and offers dozens of potential metrics. The solution is to decide what social media content to monitor and what data to analyze. Brands can narrow their focus if they analyze a small number of meaningful metrics such as referrals and conversion rates as opposed to vanity metrics such as number of followers or likes that are tempting to report but offer little real marketing insight.

**View a single dashboard.** View metrics through a single dashboard that includes news, social media and website analytics rather than trying to track metrics through



different sources. An integrated dashboard of results saves time, provides real-time access, displays a comprehensive view of performance, and makes it easier to analyze and interpret data. Most importantly, it provides an integrated view and data for all media.

**Evaluate your tools.** Companies lack the proper tools needed to manage and measure social media activities, concludes [TrustRadius](#) research. Marketers use multiple sources of data and multiple technology products. They may trust their data, but they may not be able to properly interpret the results.

**Invest in your staff.** Hire or tap in-house technology-savvy personnel who have in-depth knowledge of statistics and are comfortable analyzing data.

**Study your competitors.** [Competitive Intelligence](#) is one of the main benefits of social media listening. "It might sound deceptively simple, but knowing where your rivals' shoppers live on social media sites can lead to richer competitor analysis and a deeper understanding of consumers' purchasing intentions," writes business and technology writer Barbara Thau for an [IBM blog](#).

Observing brand advocates, consumers who are loyal to a brand and likely to recommend it to others, can provide valuable information, Thau notes. Noticing how brand advocates interact with the competition can offer valuable information about how the competitor attracts consumers.

**Consider human analysis.** Social media monitoring and measurement services can measure the [sentiment](#) of brand mentions on a positive to negative scale. Services that include trained human analysts, in addition to automated software analysis, can provide more accurate judgments and uncover actionable insights that hide within the data.

**Bottom Line:** Social media listening is becoming increasingly prevalent among marketers. However, sifting through the vast amount of data to find actionable insights and reaping the full benefits of social media monitoring remains a struggle for many brands. An effective media monitoring and measurement program needs a staff that is knowledgeable and experienced in the nuances of statistics and measurement in order to arrive at real marketing insights. A measurement service that integrates all media and data into one dashboard and offers human analysts is also necessary to support the PR and marketing measurement staff.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## 12 Must-Have Features in a Robust Media Measurement Dashboard

Monitoring and measuring news and social media has transitioned from a nice-to-have to a must-have in public relations, marketing, product management, competitive intelligence, customer service and other corporate functions. Besides gauging the effectiveness of PR efforts and marketing, media monitoring and measurement helps organizations conduct market research, improve customer service, manage corporate reputation, collect competitive intelligence and assess corporate strategy, among other benefits.



Most all companies and not-for-profits outsource monitoring and measurement and receive daily email alerts on new media mentions from their selected service. However, selecting the best media and monitoring vendor can be challenging. Media monitoring and social media monitoring services abound. Many perform adequate monitoring only for social media; others only for traditional media. Many offer little or no analytics services.

The media monitoring coverage and services of measurement dashboards are key features to examine. Without comprehensive, accurate coverage and a well-designed dashboard, analyzing the huge amount of media data can be overwhelming, especially for a well-covered public corporation or well-known not-for-profit organization. When evaluating a media monitoring and measurement service, you'll want to be sure they offer these features:

**Comprehensive monitoring.** A quality dashboard displays data from owned media and a full range of news and social media. That includes print, television and radio broadcasts, blogs, message boards and forums and online news, in addition to social media networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

**Integrated analytics.** The best dashboards integrate analytics from all media and social networks, including the client's Google Analytics. An integrated analytics approach provides a 360-degree view of how earned media, marketing or social media campaigns impact key business objectives.

**Customizable.** If a dashboard can be customized to the client's needs, different divisions, departments, brand managers, or country managers can create different search and measurement profiles. They can generate charts and graphs for their particular needs. PR teams monitoring a crisis or a campaign can create specific views, filters, and dashboards. The service can create new custom metrics for clients.

**Intuitive.** An intuitive design makes it easy for users to master the dashboard and learn how to use it. Users can easily choose metrics they want to track, the charts and graphs to display those metrics, and other dashboard features.

**Accuracy.** Good keyword filters will eliminate irrelevant clips and ensure the most accu-



rate search results possible. Advanced search capabilities include Boolean search commands, such as “And,” “Or,” and “Not,” and the ability to specify capitalization proximity, plurals and possessives and word repetition.

**Sentiment analysis.** The best dashboards provide sentiment analysis: They grade brand mentions on a positive-to-negative scale and assess the prominence, dominance, and other qualitative factors of brand mentions. They also identify predetermined corporate messages. Be sure to test its accuracy, as automated sentiment analyses are often inaccurate. The most advanced services combine automated sentiment analysis with human analysts.

**Automated alerts.** A first-class dashboard can send customized alerts to match the client’s specifications. It can send different email alerts to individuals in different departments or with different responsibilities in the organization daily or several times a day.

**Language translation.** A high-quality media monitoring service can translate foreign languages into your native language – or the native languages of other users around the world. Automated translation isn’t perfect by any means, but it usually does provide a real understanding of the content of the article or social media post.

**Cost effective.** Price is naturally always a major concern when selecting a media monitoring service. Be sure to seek a comprehensive, integrated and intuitive dashboard for a cost effective price. In addition, seek a media monitoring tool that offers monthly contracts to avoid being tied into a long-term contract with a service that turns out to be inadequate.

**Human analysts.** Although most organizations find automated monitoring and measurement sufficient, some desire the additional advantages of human analysts. Well-trained, experienced analysts can assess clips with greater depth and accuracy than any of today’s software. They provide clients more meaningful insights on the impact of their PR and marketing programs.

**A free trial.** A short free trial will reveal the dashboard’s abilities and the accuracy of its data better than a canned online demo. If the vendor doesn’t provide a free trial, insist on a 30-day cancellation clause.

**Bottom Line:** Finding a media monitoring and measurement tool that meets your organization’s needs can be challenging. These recommended features can help PR and marketing teams weed out the weaker players and find the most appropriate and cost-effective media monitoring and measurement service. By focusing on the vendor’s dashboard, organizations can hone in on the full range of its monitoring and measurement capabilities.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](http://Glean.info)



## 8 Obstacles to PR Measurement – and How to Overcome Them



PR measurement obstacles & solutions PR's continuing struggle with measurement confounds many PR measurement experts.

Although most PR managers appreciate the benefits of measurement, PR agencies and corporate departments cling to inferior metrics that emphasize viewership — such as total reach or impressions — rather than business outcomes.

Most agency and client-side executives surveyed for the [Global Communications](#)

[Report](#) believe total reach is the most common form of measurement (68%), followed by impressions (65%) and content analysis (64%). Fewer stressed brand perception (47%) or return on investment (41%). Almost a third (30%) say they use advertising value equivalency (AVE), which PR measurement experts almost universally denounce as an inappropriate PR metric.

In addition, an [AMEC survey](#) revealed that 56% of communications professionals are unhappy with the current availability of information, 35% are unacquainted with the valid metrics framework, and 63% are dissatisfied with the ability to demonstrate the impact of communications on business outcomes.

### PR Measurement Obstacles

Tina McCorkindale, president and CEO of the Institute for Public Relations, sees three reasons [why PR measurement efforts frequently fall short](#).

**Over-reliance on media.** Focusing solely on media measurement provides an incomplete picture. For a more complete view, PR can also employ other methods such as surveys, experiments, and predictive modeling made possible by the increased access to big data.

**Success metrics.** All too often, PR seeks to win acclaim by reporting unrealistic results that lack credibility. Such was the case when the [Washington Redskins](#) counted impressions to claim that more than 7.84 billion people read about their training camp within a three-week period. That's more than the entire population of the world. PR can gain greater respect and credibility by using realistic metrics that produce credible data and that are tied to business outcomes.

**Confusing insights and data.** PR often uses the buzz term “insights” interchangeably with “data” and “metrics.” Data are not insights. “Insights are an extra step in the process where the data is interpreted and application to the business is made that may have not been made otherwise,” McCorkindale asserts.

**A shortage of qualitative information.** Qualitative research from focus groups or surveys can answer some of the “why” questions that quantitative methods cannot. However, relying on smaller samples as the gospel with qualitative research can create problems with generalizations, she cautions.

**Misguided intentions.** PR should not employ measurement to prove its value compared to other corporate departments. Instead, measurement should be used to improve PR. “Research and insights should save time and money, and help support our decisions by



also narrowing options and pinpointing issues,” she writes.

## More PR Measurement Obstacles

Other commentators cite other PR measurement hurdles.

**Fear of numbers.** PR pros typically dislike or even fear numbers and data. That math phobia may be why they chose PR as a career in the first place. Unfortunately, that avoidance of measurement means numbers-orientated C-suite executives often view suspiciously a PR department or agency that lacks data to demonstrate success. Online courses in statistics and data analytics, now deemed [must-have PR skills](#), can boost PR professionals’ confidence in handling data – and help their careers.

**Finding top talent.** Attracting and retaining top talent is the greatest challenge facing PR executives surveyed by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations for the Global Communications Report. Almost two-thirds (62%) value analytics skills. Only the basic skills of writing, strategic planning and verbal communications are viewed as more important. PR may be able to attract desirable talent by recruiting from outside its ranks, something it has not traditionally done.

**Lack of integrated tools.** Most media monitoring tools do not integrate traditional media monitoring and social media monitoring, or do a poor job of integration. Traditional media monitoring vendors typically don’t understand social media listening, and most social media listening companies did not care about or were bad at traditional media monitoring. However, [new platforms](#) can now perform both functions well and integrate different data streams from traditional media, social media as well as internal communications into a single dashboard.

**Bottom Line:** PR agencies and corporate departments face many challenges in implementing PR measurement programs that produce accurate, meaningful results. However, it’s possible for PR to overcome those challenges in order to improve PR strategies and demonstrate PR’s value in advancing the organization’s mission.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## The Fallacy of Awareness as a PR Measurement



Many business executives and public relations professionals cite “increase awareness” as a top PR objective. But awareness has become a controversial metric in PR measurement circles. Some say awareness, or brand recall, is a major factor leading to purchases. Consumers are much more likely to purchase a product if only they can remember it. Others call awareness a vanity metric that does little to measure key business objectives.

### The Big Lie

If people say their only goal is to increase awareness, they are lying, asserts [Julie Wright](#) of Wright Communications. No one wants their PR campaign to simply raise awareness. They want their campaign to motivate consumers or other stakeholders to take a specific, measurable behavior: buy a product, visit a destination, attend an event, submit their email, visit the website, download the white paper or make a donation.

“Hold yourself to a higher standard and help your client or boss understand that you do more than just ‘create buzz,’” Wright urges. She recommends these steps to develop a more meaningful PR measurement.

- Set an objective that states the behavior you want your stakeholders to take and a timeframe for reaching the objective.
- Work backwards and think about your informational objective. Develop the message or knowledge your stakeholders need to receive and the motivation or the emotional connection they need to take the desired action.
- Research your stakeholders to determine their level of awareness and knowledge and what motivates them.

### A Red Herring

Doing PR to increase awareness is a red herring, says Katie Paine, CEO of Paine Publishing. Awareness might be an acceptable goal for a start-up, but established brands need to address perception and consideration of the brands, Paine said in an [interview](#) with marketing and PR agency Arketi Group.

Nonprofits often want to increase awareness of their organization. The problem is not increasing awareness, but a false understanding of what the organization does. The solution is to educate people about the nonprofit’s mission and why it matters.

“The red herring factor is when people say, ‘I want to increase awareness.’ It’s not really about awareness or impression—it’s getting people to understand what you do and why it’s important,” Paine says.

### A Waste of Money

Sean Ellis, founder and CEO of GrowthHackers.com, calls building awareness a waste of start-up resources. “Building a strong customer acquisition engine is the best chance you have of creating long-term awareness,” [Ellis writes](#). “At a certain scale, awareness/brand building makes sense. But for the first year or two it’s a total waste of money.”

Still, many PR teams continue to pursue awareness. There’s enough historical data to



suggest an indirect link between brand awareness and sales, argues Douglas Cook at Skyscanner Growth in a [Medium article](#). Yet the company's research reveals a curious disconnect between awareness and web traffic for its own projects.

"To date I've never seen brand awareness on a list of vanity metrics alongside the likes of UVMs or page likes, but perhaps it should be?" Cook surmises.

In the pre-Internet days, PR turned to surveys to gauge brand awareness. They now can also use social media measurement. Social media analytics provide data much faster and affordably than traditional surveys. It also avoids survey bias, the tendency of people to provide incorrect answers.

**Bottom Line:** Although PR pros often brag about increasing awareness of their brands, some PR measurement experts call awareness a spurious objective. More valid objectives relate to specific actions of stakeholders and the organization's primary goal. Simply trying to "create buzz" degrades PR's role.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## How to Avoid the Most Prevalent Social Media Measurement Errors that Afflict Most Everyone



Gauging the value of social media marketing remains a continuing challenge for many organizations.

Accurate measurement is essential to decide how much to invest in social media and to determine which campaigns perform best. However, both companies and nonprofit organizations find that selecting the right metrics, measuring the value of social media, and connecting social

media campaigns to key business objectives can be challenging.

Digital marketing experts say that these are the most common social media measurement pitfalls.

**Bad search strings.** The internet bursts with acronyms, identical words and abbreviations that have different meanings. Astra Zeneca's stock symbol AZN is also short for "Asian," AbbVie's ABV is short for "Already Been Vaped," and Bristol Meyers Squibb's BMS is short for "By Myself," notes [measurement guru Katie Paine](#), CEO of Paine Publishing. Identical abbreviations may exist for your company. SAS refers to SAS Software, but it also refers to Sexual Assault Support, Society for Applied Spectroscopy, and Students Against Sweatshops. Such abbreviations fill your search results with undesirable, irrelevant results.

[Boolean search terms](#) provide a solution. Place the word "not" before the undesired term to exclude it from results that your monitoring. Write "and" between search terms to require the search results to include both words in any order. Write "or" to find any of the desired search terms. The Lincoln Motor Company can monitor for Lincoln AND (auto OR car OR dealer OR etc.) AND NOT (president OR penny OR emancipation OR St. OR Ave. OR school, OR etc.). Most every acronym including stock symbols require a Boolean search query to assure accurate results.

Paine recommends regular tests of search strings, at least once a month.

**Bots.** [Fake accounts proliferate](#) on social media. Because of computer-generated accounts on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, up to 40% of what you measure could be spam or at least not representative of what influences your target audience. Take a few minutes each week to review the measurement reports and ensure that accounts are relevant and genuine. Focus on social media accounts that are most influential within your market and ignore the rest.

Fake accounts typically have a high ratio of people they follow to people following them, points out [MediaKix](#). While authentic accounts on Instagram, where the problem is especially insidious, usually have a 1:1 follower-to-following ratio, fake accounts follow an average of 41 Instagrammers for each one that follows them. In addition, fake accounts typically lack profile photos and have posted fewer than 10 photos or videos to their account.

**Misunderstanding mentions.** Not all brand mentions are positive. At least some are negative. It's crucial to employ a social media listening service with [sentiment analysis](#) to determine if mentions are positive, negative or neutral and grade mentions for overall sentiment.



The best sentiment analysis systems combine automated software analysis with human analysis. That's because even the best automated sentiment analysis programs commit errors due to their inability to interpret slang, sarcasm and context. Social media can be especially challenging for automated sentiment analysis software. Slang can evolve quickly on social media, and syntax on social media is different from conventional conversational style or standard journalism style.

**Being impressed by impressions.** The typical impressions data report potential impressions, not actual impressions. Measurement platforms calculate impressions differently. Some use multipliers or count second and third-line followers. The best solution is to ignore impressions and consider engagement or more worthwhile metrics. Number of click-throughs combined with time on content provides a better view of reach and impact. If you have to show impressions, then always use the smallest number.

**Emphasizing vanity metrics.** Many marketers generally turn to vanity metrics, such as likes and followers to measure success. Vanity metrics make you feel like you are accomplishing something, but they provide little insight into what helps increase revenue or improve a business. Social media teams sometimes turn to vanity metrics to inflate their egos – and their clients' egos — and to present a deceptive image of a successful business. While easy to report, those metrics can be difficult to link to business objectives.

**Bottom Line:** Many social media marketers commit a range of mistakes when attempting to measure social media results. Some mistakes are more common than others. Avoiding these common social media measurement mistakes helps improve social media marketing efforts.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](http://Glean.info)



## 9 Distressing PR Measurement Failings



Measurement offers the public relations industry one of its top growth opportunities. PR agency executives surveyed by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations ranked measurement third out of 18 potential growth drivers. Two-thirds of agency executives and over half (54%) of in-house PR executives say measurement is very or extremely important as a growth driver, states

the center's [Global Communications Report](#) done with the Holmes Report.

Yet PR measurement remains surprisingly unsophisticated. Many PR teams still focus on obsolete and discredited metrics such as advertising value equivalencies (AVEs), impressions and number of social media followers rather than on business outcomes. Fewer than half employ social media listening strategies, such as real-time monitoring on conversations or changes in opinion or actions.

"Measurement remains the holy grail in the PR industry," stated Fred Cook, the center's director, in its report. "Everyone agrees that it's a huge growth opportunity but few seem to have figured out an integrated approach to determining the real return on investment for communications."

With that in mind, we've gathered the most common PR measurement mistakes from measurement experts.

**Comparisons to the wrong competitors.** Defining competitors helps formulate successful strategies, but brands frequently compare themselves to the wrong competitors. "The most common mistake I see is a brand comparing themselves with the biggest brand in their industry, even though their brand is much smaller and serves a completely different group of clients," says [Kim Do at Lewis](#), a PR agency. Compare your organization to competitors in the same geographical locations, in the same vertical markets or those seeking the same media audience.

**Incorrect use of PR measurement tools.** PR measurement tools can deliver data in wildly different ways. It's essential to understand the data each tool provides, their strengths and weaknesses, and to apply tools consistently to provide "apples to apples" comparisons. "Don't create two comparable social metrics reports from two different tools," Do advises. "Chances are the data behind each will be very different."

**Unclean, unreliable, or duplicated data.** Accurate media measurement for PR and marketing depends on accurate, reliable and unduplicated data that comes with each media clip. With most PR professionals getting data from multiple sources, there's a high probability of duplicate clips and duplicated data. When our [Glean.info](#) service was switching between indexing systems, we ran the systems in parallel for a while. Within a day, we discovered that we had eliminated duplicate clips as planned, but that we were double-counting the viewership data. Fortunately, we found and corrected the problem quickly. Check how you data are aggregated from multiple sources. Every duplicate media mention in your archive will throw off your analytics.

**Selecting the wrong goals.** Picking goals that do not connect to business objectives is a common PR measurement error. "The problem with most PR programs is nobody says



to senior leadership, “Our business goal is to increase revenue, reduce cost, and grow market by X. How does what we do every day in PR contribute to that?” Katie Paine, CEO of Paine Publishing, [told Arketi Group](#). Measurement experts recommend first learning management’s top goals, and then selecting PR metrics that report progress toward those corporate goals that involve leads, revenue and profitability.

**An obsession with awareness.** All too often, PR says its goal is to increase awareness. Paine calls that a red herring. A better goal is to educate your audience about what your brand does and why it matters to them.

**Over-reliance on media.** Focusing solely on media measurement provides an incomplete picture. For a more complete view, PR can also employ other methods such as surveys, experiments, and predictive modeling made possible by the increased access to big data, says Tina McCorkindale, president and CEO of the [Institute for Public Relations](#).

**The “success theater” trap.** PR teams sometimes track unhelpful metrics in order to boast to clients or corporate leaders, McCorkindale says. While they report unrealistically huge numbers, they do little to reveal the real value of PR. Case in point: The [Washington Redskins](#) counted impressions to claim that more than 7.84 billion people, read about their training camp within a three-week period. That’s more than the entire population of the world.

**Emphasizing data over insights.** Many analysts like to report reams of numbers. The key to real success in PR measurement is to sift through the vast amount of data to find actionable insights. Employ analysts capable of uncovering those insights, either in-house or through a third-party service.

Not integrating data. Many PR measurement tools often do not integrate data from traditional media, social media monitoring and earned media and owned media, or do a poor job if they do. Not integrating data into a single portal produces a difficult to understand array of numbers. PR can miss meaningful connections between data sources. The first-class [media monitoring dashboard](#) integrates analytics from all media and social networks, including the client’s Google Analytics. An integrated analytics approach provides a 360-degree view of how earned media, marketing or social media campaigns impact key business objectives.

**Bottom Line:** When done correctly, PR measurement can help improve PR campaigns and prove PR’s value to clients and C-suite executives. PR measurement often falls short, however. Avoiding these common mistakes can help put in place an outstanding PR measurement program.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## Why Google Analytics Can't Measure PR



Almost all organizations examine Google Analytics to judge results of their public relations, marketing and advertising efforts.

At some point in their careers, PR pros may hear clients or corporate managers complain that Google Analytics reports

indicate lackluster PR campaigns. Website traffic is not meeting expectations. Perhaps page views fell or bounce rates increased. Google Analytics is certainly valuable for measuring website performance. Actually, it's widely recognized as the gold standard for website analytics.

Here's the thing, though: Google Analytics offers limited worth as a measurement tool for PR.

That's because the principal goal of PR is not usually to increase website traffic — the core metric from Google Analytics. Although PR efforts may increase the company's website traffic, that's rarely the primary or most meaningful PR objective. Website traffic may increase if PR places an article in a major publication, but PR's main goal build brand awareness and attract the right kind of traffic.

In order to properly measure PR, the metrics must align with the specific goals of PR or specific PR campaigns. Website traffic should not be the primary metric to measure the business value of PR.

### What Google Analytics Won't Tell You

Often, increasing brand awareness is a key PR goal. The right article placed in the right publication will improve brand awareness among key audience members and prompt them to take desired actions. Google Analytics will not measure that.

Important investors or influencers may read the article, prompting a major business development or investment. Google Analytics will not report that.

"Google Analytics can tell you exactly how effective an ad spend is, but it can't measure the emotional appeal and trust generated by a glowing review from a trusted writer," writes Ayelet Noff, founder and CEO of PR firm Blonde2 in [Forbes](#). "Nor can it measure the value that one big business development opportunity could bring you as a result of seeing your brand featured on a prestigious publication."

### How to Really Measure PR

For a better gauge of PR effectiveness, organizations must analyze the entire Web, including social media, not just their own website. While Google Analytics adequately reports general metrics such as websites visitors, more sophisticated measurements specific to PR purposes require a media monitoring and analytics service. Metrics that a media monitoring service can report, and Google Analytics can't, include:

**Share of voice.** Share of voice is the percentage of media coverage and conversations about your company, compared against those of your competitors. "By analyzing your



share of voice you can gain the necessary insights to help make more informed ROI evaluations and strategic planning decisions,” states an [ebook](#) from PR and digital marketing firm [onechocolate](#). “The operative word in this metric is share,” stresses Katie Paine, PR measurement expert and CEO of Paine Publishing, in her post on [data to include in a PR measurement dashboard](#).

**Sentiment.** Sentiment rating systems typically score articles or posts as “positive,” “neutral,” or “negative.” Without [sentiment analysis](#) of media mentions, it’s impossible to evaluate the true import of a media placement or social media post. Although automated sentiment analysis can provide affordable review large amounts of mentions, trained human analysts offer superior accuracy. Measure all conversations about your brand, products, or organization and rate them either desirable or undesirable — in other words, if the reader is more or less likely to support your business.

**Net quality score.** Determine what messages are most likely to persuade people to buy your product and assign each a weighting, Paine says. Make sure the total for the perfect story adds up to 10. Then do the same to negative elements, making sure they add up to -10. Evaluate all stories in the media most likely to influence key stakeholders based on those scores.

Percentage of conversations with one or more key messages. The PR campaign’s message might be an initiative, campaign, new product or an actual message. But regardless of how you define “message” track the percentage of items that contain a key message.

**Reach.** Of course, do measure the reach and viewership of media placements based on print circulation, broadcast ratings and online readership. Measure the impact of social media posts by tracking views and engagement including comments, likes and shares.

**Revenue.** When the PR goal is to create leads and sales, follow leads generated from media placements through the sales process to actual revenue produced. Use unique website landing pages to identify leads produced by PR placements.

Different PR goals require differing metrics. Some media analytics services such as [Glean.info](#), previously CyberAlert LLC, are able to create custom metrics to meet specific PR goals of individual client companies. Such customized metrics enable deeper insights into PR success.

**Bottom Line:** Despite its prevalence, Google Analytics offers limited uses for measuring public relations. To gauge the full impact of PR and to demonstrate its value to upper management, it’s essential to analyze how PR performs across the entire media landscape, including social media. Accomplishing that requires a comprehensive media monitoring and measurement service that can customize its metrics, analytics and insights to each client’s specific needs.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## AVEs Live on as a PR Measurement Metric



Advertising value equivalencies, or AVEs, persist in public relations even though PR measurement gurus dismiss the metric as outdated and unhelpful.

A recent survey by [PRWeek and the PRCA](#) found that more than 35% of UK PR agencies and just over 23% of in-house teams still use AVEs, which measure the value of earned media by comparing it to advertising of similar size and placement. Agencies

often use AVEs because their clients, not in-house executives, expect them.

“We all know that we shouldn’t use AVEs, but let’s be honest, clients want it – especially the smaller ones that want to know exactly how much value they are getting back in terms of their investment,” one PR agency pro responded in the survey.

AVE use appears to be declining. No agency expects to use AVEs more this year than it did it 2016, while almost 60% said AVEs would be used less.

The survey results confirm previous research and anecdotal reports on AVE use on both sides of the Atlantic.

### AVEs Rejected as a Legitimate PR Metric

PR standards reject AVEs as a legitimate PR metric. The overwhelming majority of PR measurement experts dismiss advertising value equivalencies (AVEs) as inaccurate and misleading. Earned media mentions are simply not equivalent to advertising. Some may be worth more than advertising. Example: When an independent and well-regarded expert touts a company or brand. Other media placements such as mere mentions are worth much less because they don’t contain key corporate or brand messages and they have little prominence or dominance of a product advertisement.

Many [alternatives to AVEs are available](#). And first-rate media monitoring and measurement services offer superior alternative metrics. Some measurement vendors can also create customized metrics for clients.

But AVEs won’t die because they are easy for PR to report and easy for clients to understand. They have a financial return figure associated with them.

AVEs persist because they have a cost and value associated with them, [says Ben Levine](#), vice president, global research & analytics, at Ketchum. AVEs compare costs to advertising. Cost and value are not the same. Cost is the investment you made to do something. Value is what an organization obtains as a result of an investment.

“So, if you’re a PR practitioner, what is more important to you? The cost of the communications program you create, or the value it delivers for your clients?” Levine asks.

PR can benefit from tools like the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework, a meaningful and easy to use evaluation planning tool. When you use a planning tool such as this, you see clearly how to think about and approach measurement for your clients and your agency.



## More Education on Measurement is Needed

Education about the shortcomings of AVEs and why measurement starts with proper planning is essential to keep the industry moving in the right direction, Levine argues. “And this education initiative falls on all stakeholders in the industry,” he says.

Glean.info, formerly CyberAlert, is among the media monitoring and measurement services that do not presently include AVEs in their reports to clients. “As a signer of the [Barcelona Principles](#) and recognizing the lack of equivalency between earned media and paid advertising, we believe clients should heed the guidance of the PR measurement experts that’s based on solid principles by relying on alternative metrics and discarding AVEs. It’s the best way forward for PR measurement,” said William J. Comcowich, founder and acting CEO.

Others argue that PR should not totally abandon AVEs if clients insist on using them. Mark Weiner, Chief Executive Officer of PRIME, a research-based consulting firm, asserts in an article in LinkedIn’s Pulse that “If the person to whom you report, who administers your budget and who evaluates PR performance insists on ad values, you’d be foolish not to provide them,” But, in also declaring his support for alternative metrics, he adds “it’s the responsibility of every public relations person to do what we can to elevate our profession. Better to augment AVEs with measures your manager, your peers and you yourself consider to be more meaningful to ease the transition forward.”

David Geddes, principal of Geddes Analytics LLC, says PR measurement experts cannot persuade AVE adherents to drop the metric.

Although PR must strive to educate clients about PR measurement best practices, arguments against AVEs fall on deaf ears, Geddes writes in [the Measurement Standard](#). Continual arguments harden their entrenched positions. Only market forces can eventually drive AVEs out of existence. In meantime, PR measurement experts should move on.

“We have better things to do than argue with closed minds,” Geddes says.

**Bottom Line:** AVEs refuse to die, much to the exasperation of PR measurement experts, mostly because clients insist on them. Educating clients can help spread the adoption of more meaningful PR metrics. However, some clients will likely cling to the use of AVEs as PR measurement gurus continue to denounce the advertising-based metric.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## Advantageous Alternatives to Advertising Value Equivalencies (AVEs) for Media Measurement



**AVE alternatives**The overwhelming majority of PR measurement experts dismiss advertising value equivalencies (AVEs) as inaccurate and misleading. The AVE measurement reports what earned media coverage would cost if it were advertising.

Measurement experts agree that [AVEs cannot measure PR's effectiveness](#). Yet use of AVEs persists. The metric refuses to die because it's easy to report and understand. Unlike more meaningful metrics, AVEs don't require PR pros to determine exactly what they are measuring. When a CEO demands a quick and single, simple answer, AVEs fill the bill – but unfortunately don't provide valid results or real insight into the impact of a media campaign.

PR measurement expert Katie Paine, CEO of Paine Publishing, explains how to find alternatives in a recent in-depth [article in The Measurement Advisor](#). Here's a synopsis.

**Define acceptable proxies.** Find an acceptable proxy that your team and your senior leadership agree adequately measures the desired action. For instance, visits to the “Thank You for Your Donation” page, can serve as a proxy for a nonprofit.

**Gamify your research.** If your goal is to educate the public on an issue or to communicate a specific message, you need to determine if the messages have been received and believed in order to gauge the campaign's success. That's difficult without an expensive and time-consuming survey. An alternative is to quiz website visitors or attendees at an event. Offer people a prize for answering correctly. You can also create a “passport system” that allows access only after people answer certain questions and get their passports “stamped” to signify that they know one of your messages.

**Compare cost effectiveness.** If obtaining exposure for your key messages is PR's goal, you can compare effectiveness of launch tactics, by taking the budget for each event and then dividing it by the number of messages communicated for that event. This metric is cost per message communicated. You can use it to compare programs or events or to track the effectiveness of a program over time.

**Engagement.** Engagement can indicate how well people respond to your outreach efforts. Be clear on your definition of engagement and set expectations correctly. The [Conclave on Social Media Measurement Standards](#) defines engagement as the percent of followers on Twitter or likes on Facebook who have taken some action you define as engagement.



Many alternatives to AVEs are available. It's essential to remember that the best metrics vary among organizations and campaigns. "Just as no two organizations are the same, no two objectives can be the same, and no measurement frameworks for a campaign will be the same," blogs [Stephen Waddington](#), a partner and chief engagement officer at Ketchum.

Measurement experts urge PR pros to first determine their goals and objectives and identify [metrics that measure](#) how effectively they are reaching those goals. The closer you can tie the value you deliver to deliver to the organization's objectives, the more highly you'll be valued.

Some of the established media monitoring and measurement services including [Glean.info](#) offer advantageous alternative metrics to AVEs and will customize metrics or develop new ones to meet the specific needs of their clients.

**Bottom Line:** AVEs remain in use because they are easy to report and understand. However, that doesn't make them accurate or useful. Finding and tracking more meaningful metrics may be challenging, but it's well worth the effort. Better-designed and more valid metrics can help PR more effectively measure reaction to and impact of media campaigns and demonstrate PR's value to the overall organization.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## Can Social Media Listening Replace Traditional Market Research Methods?



Social media listening has surpassed more traditional marketing research techniques to become the favored marketing research method among brands in the Asia-Pacific region, reveals new research from global research firm TNS.

Marketers in the region, which covers Australia, China,

India, Indonesia Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand, prefer social media monitoring for both planning and to measure campaign performance, according to the Marketing Monitor study from [TNS](#). Other market research methods include brand tracking, market share data, opinions of senior management and focus groups.

Marketers in other regions likely see a similar trend. Roughly half of American marketing executives use social media monitoring to analyze their customers, prospects and markets, according to [research from eMarketer](#) released early this year.

### An Intrinsic Part of Our Lives

"It's no secret that social has become an intrinsic part of our daily lives," said Zoe Lawrence, digital director, Asia-Pacific for TNS, according to [Marketing Mag](#). "The mass adoption of social provides marketers with an array of sources when it comes to developing strategies and evaluating the effectiveness of their marketing activity."

Out of the 2,700 marketers surveyed, 43% use social media for brand communications, 49% use social media advertising to drive ecommerce, 40% use it to provide customer service and 28% use social media 'buy' buttons.

"With marketers using social for a range of marketing objectives, it is important that they are offering a consistent, coherent experience to the customer. Brands need to strive to break down the siloes in their organizations to ensure that they are realizing the potential positive impact that an aligned, well-executed social strategy can deliver," says Lawrence.

### Superior Aspects of Social Media Analytics

Researchers and marketers have been predicting that that social media listening could largely supplant traditional market research techniques such as focus groups. Social media analytics has distinct advantages over traditional marketing research.

Perhaps most importantly, it is fast and inexpensive. Social media analytics can produce data in hours or days, as opposed to months for conventional research methods. In addition, consumer research through social media can be more accurate than conventional market research because consumers are less disposed to social desirability bias and mistaken recall. People tend to be honest on social media, since they post their opinions without being prompted by survey questions. Services such as [Glean.info](#) aggregate the social media posts and use a combination of automated software and human analysts to perform analysis and produce reports.



## Replace or Enhance?

Some marketing experts argue that social media research should augment rather than replace traditional research, at least for now. Many consumers do not use social media or rarely or never post or engage others. Some people may make up or hide their profile information, and only a small percentage of people have Internet access in some countries. Frequent social media posters have different demographics than average consumers. Because of those factors, social media listening may produce skewed findings.

“Social media is still quite new, and the media themselves and the analytic tools for exploiting them are still evolving,” write Kevin Gray, founder of Cannon Gray consultancy, and Koen Pauwels, a professor of marketing at Ozyegin University, Istanbul, in post for [Green Book](#), a blog on market research.

Still, they concede that social media has provided a wealth of new data and has substantially impacted marketing research. “The marketing world has changed dramatically in the past decade and there is no turning back the clock even if one wished to,” they say.

The stated reasons to continue using traditional market research methodologies seem to suggest that social media listening can now serve as the primary market research methodology for customer feedback, supplemented by the older methods.

**Bottom Line:** Marketers in some countries prefer social media monitoring over other more traditional marketing methods, new research shows. Social media listening is also prevalent among marketers in the U.S. That’s not surprising considering the cost and speed advantages of social media listening.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## As Fake News Creators Begin Targeting Brands, Media Monitoring Rises in Importance



With the 2016 election over, purveyors of fake news will turn their attention from candidates to corporations. Companies and large not-for-profit organizations now need to more closely monitor news and social media. Early detection of bogus news and aggressive measures to refute the story can minimize viral spread and prevent serious damage to corporate reputation.

Pepsi may have been the first victim.

Supporters of president-elect Donald Trump advocated a boycott of Pepsi after a fictitious article that PepsiCo (PEP) CEO Indra Nooyi told Trump fans to “take their business elsewhere.” Fake news sites published the fake quote and urged a boycott. They also incorrectly claimed the comment caused PepsiCo’s stock to drop 5 percent.

Nooyi did criticize Trump’s comments about women and said her employees were worried about his election, but the CEO also congratulated him on his victory.

Fake news reports filled social media, most notably Facebook, during the presidential campaign. A [BuzzFeed News analysis](#) found that top fake election news stories generated more total engagement on Facebook than top election stories from 19 major news outlets combined. The stories produced 8.7 million shares, reactions, and comments, compared to 7.3 million for mainstream news.

### Same Tricks — Different Targets

The same websites that produced and spread phony news during the campaign will probably continue their work now that they’ve learned how to gain lucrative advertising revenue. However, as the campaign fervor subsides, they’ll turn their attention to businesses.

In addition, people with motives other than profit will probably apply the same tricks now that they’ve seen what can be done. And the list of possible motives is extensive: competitors, activists with anti-corporate causes, short-selling stock traders, and former customers with grudges.

Google and Facebook recently [vowed to ban fake news sites](#) from using their advertising networks. After initially denying the problem, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said his company is exploring additional ways to counter fake news, such as improving detection, warnings and third-party-verifications.

“We believe in giving people a voice, which means erring on the side of letting people share what they want whenever possible,” Zuckerberg stated in a blog post. “We need to be careful not to discourage sharing of opinions or to mistakenly restrict accurate content. We do not want to be arbiters of truth ourselves, but instead rely on our community and trusted third parties.”

### No Stopping the Fake News Epidemic

Those appropriate, although belated moves, won’t stop fake news purveyors. A man [the Washington Post](#) called an “impresario of a Facebook fake-news empire” said that wouldn’t stop him.



"I know ways of getting hooked up under different names and sites," Paul Horner, who's made a living from making up news for years, told the Washington Post. "So probably if they cracked down, I would try different things. I have at least 10 sites right now. If they crack down on a couple, I'll just use others. They could shut down advertising on all my sites, and I think I'd be okay. Plus, Facebook and AdSense make a lot of money from [advertising on fake news sites] for them to just get rid of it. They'd lose a lot of money."

## Solutions for Brands

Commentators including [Jeff Jarvis](#) suggest various possible solutions to the epidemic, such as government regulation and search engine warnings on fake news websites. For now, organizations can only closely monitor social and traditional media and swiftly respond to fabrications. Real-time news and social media monitoring can immediately send alerts when a client's organization, brand or products are mentioned online.

"From a monitoring perspective, companies would be well served to identify fake news as early as possible," writes Shel Holtz in his Holtz Communication + Technology blog. "That means tweaking existing monitoring services to watch for fake news."

PR can also:

Closely monitor websites known to produce false information.

Immediately issue press statements and social media posts to deny deceptions.

Seek a takedown of the original story, although legal action may have little impact.

Work with brand ambassadors to counter misinformation.

**Bottom Line:** With the election over, creators of fake news have begun targeting brands. False information can inflict substantial damage on an organization's reputation because posts can spread swiftly on social media. The trend is unlikely to slow despite efforts to counter it. However, businesses can protect themselves by monitoring social media and preparing to react quickly.

Author: Mike Kling, [Glean.info](#)



## Are Vanity Metrics Really So Bad?



Vanity metrics are frequently criticized in public relations and marketing circles. You would think that they are accursed numbers that lead to horrible death.

Vanity metrics stroke the ego but reveal little or no meaningful information and accomplish nothing, the critics say. Facebook's likes are a prime example, but social media shares, pageviews, registered users and anything else that fails to provide actionable data are among the critics' targets.

Vanity metrics make you feel like you are accomplishing something, but they provide little insight that helps increase revenue or improve a business. Marketing folks use them to inflate their egos – and their clients' egos — and to present a deceptive image of a successful business. That's what critics say. However, some PR and digital marketers defend vanity metrics.

### Easy to Obtain and Understand

Vanity metrics are easy to understand and obtain, while actionable metrics are difficult to collect and interpret, argues [Rand Fishkin](#), founder and former CEO of Moz. Although he can access more business-oriented metrics, he says he mainly examines clicks, traffic and social media shares. Those vanity metrics tend to correlate with email subscriptions and free trials. They help him understand what types of posts interests his audience.

"They bias me to action vs. analysis," Fishkin writes. "It's worked for a number of other bloggers and social media addicts I know, including plenty who you'd definitely assume 'know better' than to use vanity metrics."

If vanity metrics help you become a better content producer and social media marketer, don't be deterred by their simplicity, he advises. The caveat: Make sure you can obtain actionable metrics like conversions and revenue and at least occasionally compare those metrics to vanity metrics.

### Good Leading Indicators

Vanity metrics can serve as good leading indicators, argues [Mike Cohn](#), founder of Mountain Goat Software. They can indicate if you are achieving progress. Lagging indicators, in contrast, indicate if you have achieved your goal.

"Just keep in mind that they don't measure what you really care about. They merely indicate whether you're on the right path," he cautions.

The real danger of vanity metrics is that they can be gamed. Companies can buy social media followers and website traffic that will never translate into revenue.

Vanity can buy you time. PR and content marketing success requires time, but clients and corporate executives can be impatient. Favorable vanity metrics can keep them content until you achieve business-oriented objectives, says [Doug Kessler](#), co-founder and creative director of Velocity Partners



## An Early Warning Signal

Vanity metrics can also serve as an early warning signal. If social shares and followers are not translating into achieving your business goals, you can reexamine your strategy.

They can also scare competitors. “A million YouTube views is sure to get the wind up your arch enemies’ backsides,” Kessler says. They will tell their bosses that “it’s just a vanity metric” but their bosses don’t understand measurement, so they’ll pressure the marketers to do stupid things — like chase vanity metrics at the expense of market share.

The problem is that stupid or dishonest people use them to hide facts. If you’re neither stupid nor dishonest, you need not fear vanity metrics. “You only have to keep an eye out for con artists and morons waving ‘likes’ in your face,” Kessler says.

**Bottom Line:** Although PR and marketing charlatans have given vanity metrics a bad name, the much-maligned metrics do have their uses. Although they can be misused and misunderstood, they can provide guidance that helps PR and marketing understand if they are making progress toward their goals. The danger is focusing on vanity metrics at the expense of actionable metrics.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](http://Glean.info)



## How Nonprofits Can Reap Powerful Benefits from Media Monitoring & Measurement



Like for-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations can gain substantial benefits by monitoring the wealth of data available from both traditional and social media sources.

Locating positive media coverage can demonstrate the impact of marketing and public relations work. Identifying negative media articles and social media posts allows nonprofits to swiftly respond and resolve issues.

“Nonprofits that keep their ears perked by employing listening devices are well-poised to strategically respond to what others are saying about your organization,” explains [Cecilia Bianco](#) for Prichard Communications. “Online ‘listening’ can refer to a number of tactics—social media monitoring, target audience analysis or key message penetration—but we find that monitoring media coverage is one of the most effective tools for listening to what others are saying.”

### The Value of Media Measurement

Media measurement does more than report mentions of a nonprofit’s name. Media measurement can:

Reveal how many people discuss your key issues, measure sentiment surrounding those conversations, and track trends in mentions and sentiment.

Show how well audiences understand your issues and gauge their level of awareness.

Track what media outlets and bloggers say about the organization, its leadership and cause to help nonprofits improve and protect their online reputations.

Determine what type of content works best and the best channels for communications.

Reveal what inspires people to donate or volunteer.

### How Nonprofits Benefit from Media Monitoring and Measurement

Nonprofits gain the full value of media monitoring and measurement by following a proven process.

**Monitor broad issues.** Many nonprofits track only mentions of their organizations. Monitoring broad issues related to your cause can reveal deeper insights. Using [Boolean search techniques](#) can locate specific results and eliminate irrelevant results – it’s not as difficult as the name implies.

**Establish objectives.** Set clear objectives against which to measure results. These may include the number of donors, donor retention, fundraising amounts, the number of volunteers and volunteer retention.

**Connect goals to actions.** Establish a connection between the nonprofit’s mission and its marketing and PR activities before starting a measurement program. “Far too few nonprofit communicators take the time to make the connection between their



efforts and the mission before they embark on a measurement program. When you do, the results are powerful," writes PR measurement expert Katie Paine, CEO of Paine Publishing, in her blog the [Measurement Advisor](#).

**Consider your stakeholders.** Nonprofits have many stakeholders, including donors, volunteers, sponsors, employees, and the people they serve. Design the monitoring and measurement program to seek insights that meet the different interests those diverse groups of stakeholders.

**Metrics.** Select at least three specific metrics for analyzing various categories of communications including email, marketing, public relations and social media, [Paine advises](#). Select metrics that are quantifiable, with a number such as an amount of money or percentage that can be compared to another number such as past performance or competitors. It's also critical to include a date when the goal will be achieved.

**Control costs.** Paid monitoring services offer distinct advantages over free services. However, nonprofits face unique pressure to keep expenses down. Nonprofits can control costs by working with a monitoring service that offers month-to-month agreements rather than one that binds them into long-term contracts. In addition, selecting vendors that can customize their services to the nonprofit's needs can help the organization avoid paying for unneeded services.

**Bottom Line:** Media monitoring alerts nonprofits when they are mentioned in traditional media and social media. However, media measurement provides more powerful benefits. By analyzing media data, nonprofits can find the best strategies for encouraging people to donate and volunteer.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## 8 Metrics to Better Measure Video for PR & Marketing



The use of video for PR and marketing, especially video in digital distribution channels, has grown rapidly in recent years. To be precise, 82 percent of B2C marketers and 79 percent of B2B marketers now include video in their content marketing programs, according to the [Content Marketing Institute](#).

Yet far fewer are pleased with marketing outcomes video produces. Only 59 percent of B2C marketers and 62 percent of B2B marketers rate videos as an effective content marketing tactic.

A website-centric view accounts for the shortfall in satisfaction, argues Greg Jarboe, president and co-founder of the content marketing agency SEO-PR. They typically obtain their metrics from Google Analytics or a few other similar web analytics services rather than YouTube Analytics. Those web analytics indicate that social media videos — even videos on YouTube, the grand-daddy of video sites — generate only small number of visitors and conversions.

That's because Google Analytics only tracks people who've clicked on a link in a video's description or an associated website card, Jarboe explains in a [Tubular Insights blog post](#). It doesn't track people who visit your YouTube channel then visit your website 30 to 90 days later.

"So, go ahead, try explaining that to your executives or clients," he says. "And, then try to justify why they should give you a bigger share of the marketing budget to release video content frequently on a recurring schedule and maintain activity on their YouTube channel despite the fact that it will be hard to track the direct impact of these efforts on website traffic, leads, or sales. This is the elephant in the room."

### Moving Beyond Video Views

An over-reliance on view counts accounts for much of the uncertainty and inaccuracy about the effectiveness of video marketing. Views are probably the most popular video metric. However, counting views presents substantial disadvantages. The metric lacks a quantifiable value as well as a standard definition. View count doesn't tell you about your audience demographics, and doesn't indicate if viewers like your videos. Many view counts also don't account for the length of viewing time.

These are some metrics video experts recommend to improve video marketing measurement.

**Watch time** is how long viewers watch the video. Studies show a consistent relationship between how long a PR, marketing or education video ad is viewed and increases in brand awareness and consideration, Jarboe says in the [linkdex](#) blog.

**Viewers.** If viewers provide email addresses, you can track what videos they watch, says Kristen Craft of Wistia in her article for [Harvard Business Review](#). You can segment those viewers and invite them to view other content that matches their interests.



Knowing what they watch provides information that sales can use to target pitches.

**Average engagement** measures the proportion of the video that viewers watch on average. Ideally, of course, viewers watch the entire video. Analytics can show sections of videos that viewers are rewatching, indicating the type of material viewers prefer. Points at which viewers often stop viewing can indicate weak points in the video that can be improved.

**Play rate** is the percentage of people who click on the video divided by the total number of the visitors to the web page where the video resides. A low play rate means you might need to re-evaluate the video's title, description, thumbnail graphic, or the video's position on the page. Play rates exceeding 50 percent are considered successful.

**Action completions.** By watching the number of visitors who complete calls to action, you can see what videos are succeeding. By A/B testing action completions for various website page locations or for promotional copy, you can test what page locations or copy work best. Caution: you can only A/B test one variable at a time.

**Consumer attitudes.** Website surveys can provide valuable information about consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Google Consumer Surveys allow website managers to ask visitors four default questions for free and more for additional costs, Jarboe notes.

**Subscribers.** More subscribers to a YouTube channel naturally lead to more viewers and more total minutes watched, says [Dan Nedelko](#), founder of HoneySpot Marketing, in a blog post for Vidyard. When a viewer subscribes to your channel, they receive automatic updates when you upload videos, and subscribers tend to watch videos longer.

**Comments and social shares.** Comments and social shares mean you're creating the right content. The sharer's credibility spreads to you, and extensive commenting can lead to an ad hoc community centered on your site.

**Bottom Line:** Although video can be a powerful marketing and public relation strategy, many marketers are unsatisfied or unsure of its effectiveness. Video views, the prevailing metric, are a vanity metric that doesn't indicate if your videos are effectively promoting your company. Instead, marketers suggest tracking more telling metrics to improve video marketing strategies.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## How to Select the Best Type of Chart to Visualize Your Data



Data visualization has become increasingly important for communicating in the digital age.

Charts and graphs can communicate data more clearly and effectively than text or rows and columns on spreadsheets. Visuals help audiences understand numbers faster and better. Well-designed charts and graphs enable viewers to grasp insights that were not obvious and

incorporate those insights into their decision-making.

PR communications that include data visualizations stand out and rise above text-only content to gain the attention of journalists, business decision-makers and consumers who are inundated with information. A well-designed graphic can prompt an editor to publish your press release rather than a competitor's. Some say data visualization has become a must-have skill for public relations. Some PR agencies now tout their skills in visualizing data to potential clients.

The first hurdle to overcome is selecting the right type of chart or graph. Certain types of data best fit certain types of visuals.

### Four Basic Types of Graphs and Charts

Jānis Gulbis at business intelligence firm eazyBI cites [four basic types of graphs and charts](#) that present data:

- Comparison,
- Composition,
- Distribution,
- Relationship.

Unless you are a statistician or a data analyst, you most likely use the comparison and composition charts, Gulbis notes.

To determine the chart that best suited for your data, answer these questions:

How many variables do you want to show in a single chart? One, two, three, many?

How many items (data points) will you display for each variable? Only a few or many?

Will you display values over a period of time, or among items or groups?

“Bar charts are good for comparisons, while line charts work better for trends,” he explains. “Scatter plot charts are good for relationships and distributions, but pie charts should be used only for simple compositions — never for comparisons or distributions.”

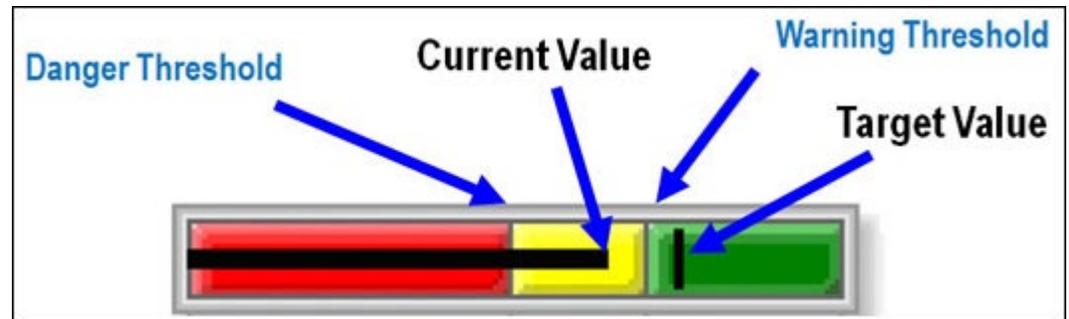
Tables are for comparison, composition, or relationship analysis when there are only few variables and data points. The column chart, probably the most common type of chart, is best used to compare different values when specific values are important.



## The Purpose of the Data is Key

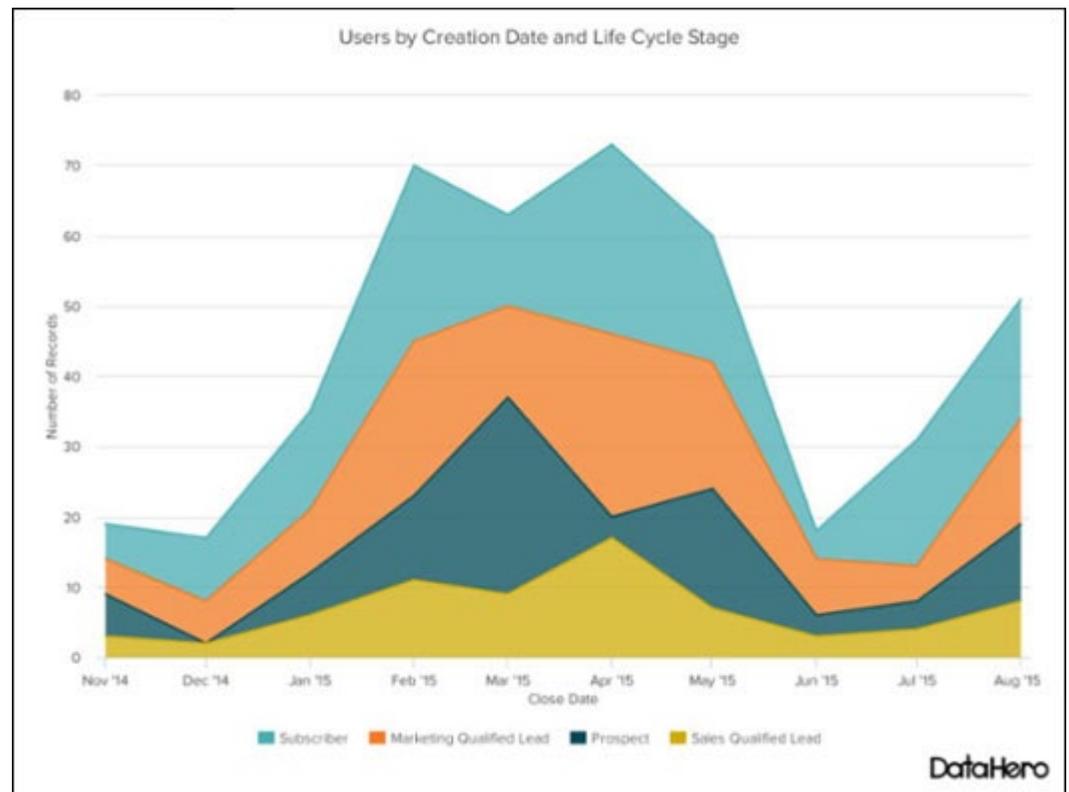
Jami Oetting at Hubspot explains how to select the [right chart or graph for your data visualization](#) and offers an in-depth analysis of pros and cons of different types of visuals.

**Comparisons.** To compare values and to show the low and high values in data sets consider column, bar, circular area, line, scatter plot and bullet charts.



A bullet chart. Image source: Wikimedia Commons

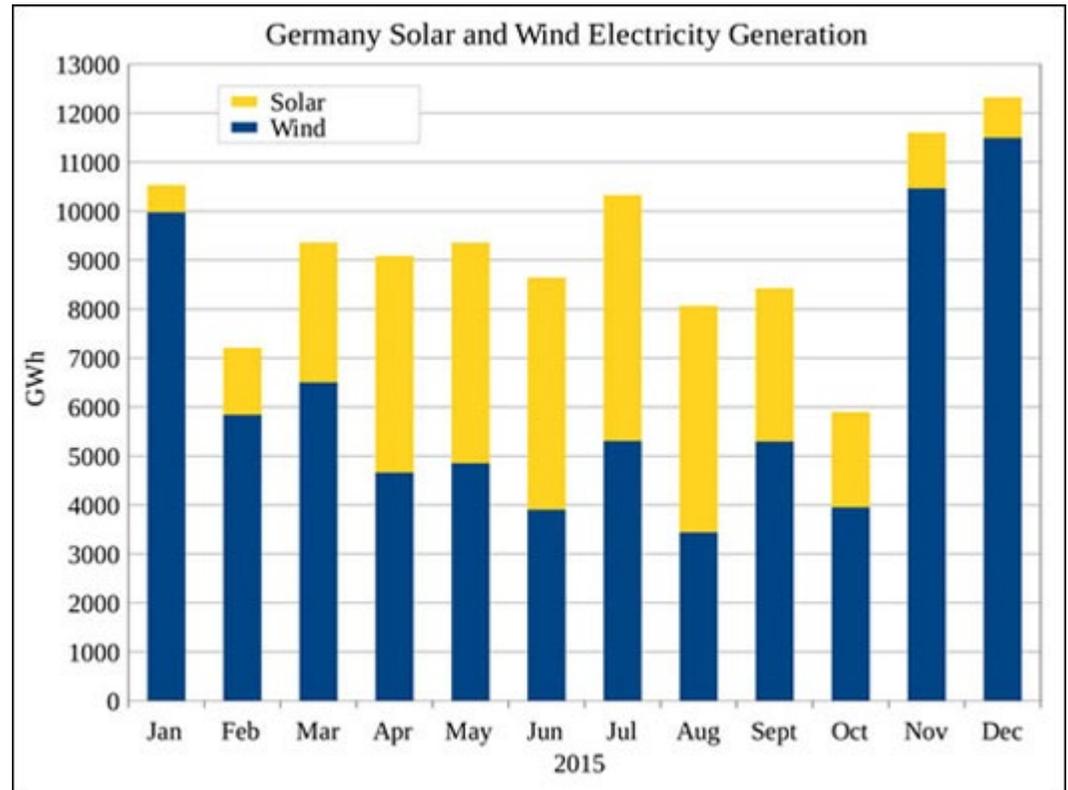
**Composition.** To show the composition of something, use pie charts, stacked bar, stacked column or area waterfall charts.



An area chart. Image source: Hubspot

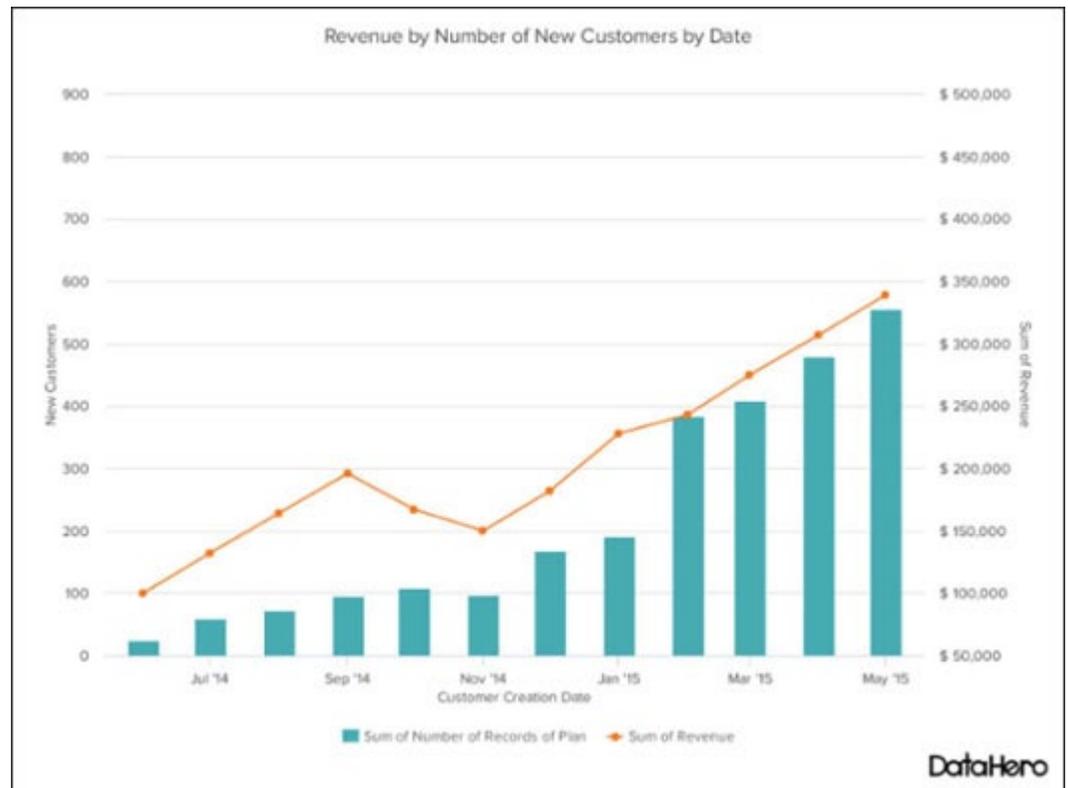


**Distribution.** Distribution charts help you to understand outliers, the normal tendency, and the range of information in your values. Use scatter plot, line column or bar charts to portray distribution.



A bar chart. Image source: Wikimedia Commons

**Trends.** If you wish to study how something performed over a specific time period, consider a line, dual-axis line or column chart.



A dual axis chart. Image source: Hubspot



**Relationships.** Relationship charts are good for demonstrating how one variable influences, or doesn't influence, one or more other variables. These include the scatter plot, bubble or line charts.



A scatter plot: Image source: Hubspot

**Bottom Line:** Charts and graphs, also known as data visualizations, provide communications professionals an important advantage in depicting data to make it easier for audiences to understand. Selecting the type of visual that's best-suited for your data and your purpose is essential if you hope to educate and persuade colleagues, customers and corporate leaders. Following key principles in selecting chart format assures the greatest impact.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](http://Glean.info)



## How to Measure ROI of Trade Shows



Trade shows offer valuable marketing and public relations benefits, including sales leads, media coverage and brand exposure.

Trade shows are also expensive. Booth space, attendee registration, booth design and setup, giveaways, promotions, employees to man the booth and staff travel expenses all add to costs. If companies don't measure ROI, they cannot be sure trade show investments pay off.

Despite widespread uncertainties about the costs versus benefits, vendors typically pack trade show space.

Almost half (44 percent) of business owners and marketing managers don't measure ROI of their trade shows, according to [a survey](#) by Display Wizard. Many exhibitors (39 percent) called trade shows a profitable marketing tactic and cited their benefits: the ability to reach many customers in a short space of time and give consumers the opportunity to see the people behind the company.

"It's crucial for businesses to have a good understanding of the return on their marketing spend in order to sensibly assign budgets for the following year," says Display Wizard Co-owner Diarmuid Beary. Inability to measure ROI of trade shows could allow inappropriate or unnecessary spending, which directly impacts the performance of the entire business.

### The Four Steps

In an article for [MarketingProfs](#), Peter Symonds, Display Wizard trade show marketing expert, outlines four steps to measure trade show ROI. Here's an overview:

**Set a simple goal.** Select a quantifiable, actionable goal and an appropriate metric to measure it. Keep things simple. Set one goal for your first show. "If your goal isn't measurable with a concrete "yes" or "no," it's too vague or complicated," he says.

**Track and update leads.** Most trade shows provide systems to record visitors by badge number. With a customer relationship management (CRM) tool, track your leads to see which ones produce sales. Create a custom tag within the CRM system to identify and measure leads from trade shows.

**Calculate your lifetime customer value.** Lifetime customer value (LCV) tells you the total amount of profit a new customer produces over the long term. After tagging tradeshow leads in CRM software, you can group leads from one event, then divide the total profit by the amount of leads.

**Continue measuring and optimizing.** Many businesses make the mistake of measuring their trade show ROI once, then assuming that it will not change. Because every trade show is different, it's essential to track and monitor each event.

If companies don't measure ROI, they cannot be sure trade show investments pay off. Obtaining clean data is essential for measuring ROI, yet often challenging, according to a new [ebook from Shift Communications](#). For instance, trade show registration lists often don't jive well with automated marketing systems.



“There must be reliable data in the marketing systems, and marketers must make accurate use of that data, to truly determine trade show ROI,” it states. “How did the brand reach people? When people provide information at the booth, are they giving up-to-date information? What information does the conference provide through its badges?”

Shift Communications suggests that marketers considering attending trade shows ask these questions:

- Are our customers there? Are our competitors there?
- Should we speak there? Should we become a sponsor?
- How large is the event’s media attendance? How many briefings can we secure?
- Should we pull a stunt to stand out?
- What is our budget? The answer to this question is necessary to measure ROI.
- Is the marketing team dedicated to engaging with the audience?

## Measuring Public Relations Activities

Major trade shows often attract a large contingent of consumer and trade press. Most major shows also have their own daily publications and/or TV broadcasts available to attendees. Trade shows therefore offer significant opportunities for public relations activities to obtain earned media placements that create greater awareness of the organization’s products and services. Measuring results of PR activities connected to the trade show, therefore, should factor into assessment of trade show ROI. A [media monitoring and measurement service](#) can provide, segregate and analyze data from trade show publicity.

**Bottom Line:** Although trade shows may offer substantial marketing opportunities, they’re extremely expensive. That means quantifying and measuring the concrete results of trade shows is imperative to sensible budgeting of future marketing and PR expenses and, ultimately, to business success.

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## How to Measure the Value of Press Releases in 2016



Despite the much-publicized demise of print media, press releases remain one of the most important weapons in the PR arsenal. PR can share news releases on social media, distribute them to bloggers and other influencers interested in the company's niche, and post them on company blogs and websites, which win top billing on Google News.

PR pros believe brand awareness and sales increase after they issue press releases. The hard part is proving that value to senior management. Media monitoring and measurement services help PR overcome that challenge.

"Thanks to better monitoring and tracking services, tracking the true ROI of a news release has never been easier," writes Serena Ehrlich, Business Wire director of social and evolving media.

### Examine Your Metrics

Measurement reports reveal important insights into the effectiveness of your press releases, Ehrlich explains in her Business Wire article [How to Measure the ROI or Impact of a News Release in 2016](#).

**Coverage.** Coverage, the first and oldest PR metric, refers to the amount of coverage your news and content generated. Coverage includes the number and reach of placements in print, online and broadcast, location within the placement, length of article, multimedia assets used, and corporate or brand messages delivered.

**Visibility.** How broadly was the news shared, who shared it and which audiences impacted the marketing funnel the most? Was it editorial coverage? How many influencer shares of that coverage occurred? Did employee sharing increase word-of-mouth marketing? Did the multimedia assets you included increase impact?

**Geo-Impact.** In what geographic regions did the news resonate? Organizations can act on this data with paid advertising or a concentrated sales effort, striking while the conversational iron is hot, Ehrlich advises.

**Social shares.** Examine the number of influencers who talk about your news and the number of overall news shares. Also consider the message adoption and associated hashtags usage.

**Inbound traffic.** Simply add a URL Builder or extension to a URL within your press release that drives traffic back to your website. After viewers click the link, you can track their actions within your website. Because some media outlets will not include hyperlinks to your website, remember that this will only be a snapshot of incoming traffic. Also consider increases in inbound website traffic during the news cycle.

**Owned channel registrations.** Include links to join your other owned channels, including following social channels or registering for a newsletter. This enables interested parties to take the first step in creating a relationship with your organization.

**Engagement.** Other PR measurement experts such as Katie Paine also include



[engagement rate](#) to measure impact in social media. Engagement rate consists of the number of likes, comments, and shares that an article generated as a percentage of the total number of views. Some experts emphasize the sentiment of the comments. To obtain valid measurement of sentiment, a piece will have to generate significant numbers of comments.

## Craft a First-Class Press Release

The first step in measuring the press release's results is to consider your goals and its expected outcome. Are you alerting media to new products, or showcasing thought leadership with white papers and infographics?

Ehrlich and other experts offer these recommendations to create news releases that drive results.

- Your audience. When writing the release, concentrate on how the news will impact your target audience. The release should be unique, new and informative or helpful for your audience. As the saying goes, "new" is the biggest part of "news."
- Avoid mass messages. Gear the release to a particular publication or small number of reporters. Emailing the same release to a huge number publications acquired through a data base rarely works.
- Consider the headline. Including the organization's name and being succinct are essential for headlines. You can also play around with the words to create a catchy headline. Including a powerful verb in the headline works best.
- SEO. Include keywords in the headline, subheads, anchor link text, and within the body of the text. [Search engine optimization](#) (SEO) is important to gain placement in search results, although Google's algorithm punishes content mills that churn out releases filled with spammy, "unnatural" links.
- Write well. The best press releases are succinct, straightforward and free of clichés and industry buzzwords. Placing the hook in the headline and first sentence is the best way to win attention – especially from journalists or editors who decide whether or not to publish the story.
- Be visual. Research shows that most people including journalists tend to learn better through visuals and are more likely to interact with images, videos and audio. Editors are more likely to run stories that include interesting multimedia elements.

**Bottom Line:** Writing and distributing news releases remains one of the most important functions of PR, though distribution methods have changed. Demonstrating the value of news releases can improve PR's standing in the organization. Fortunately, media monitoring and measurement services make that easier than ever.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## Media Monitoring & Measurement: Essential Tools in PR Crises



Image source: Mashable

Two types of plans are essential in preparing for a PR crisis: a crisis management plan and an ongoing communications measurement plan.

“You need to know what’s happening out there, and your dashboard software is the most important piece of any crisis environment,” says Josh Machiz, director of integrated marketing at Nasdaq in its white paper [How to Build a World-Class Crisis Communications Playbook](#).

“Certain words, connected to your organization, could spell a crisis.”

A monitoring system can identify media outlets with negative mentions, enable you to respond to unfavorable publicity, and measure your effectiveness in decreasing and countering negative publicity. A good measurement system provides critical data to help you in your decision-making.

PR measurement expert [Katie Paine](#), CEO of Paine Publishing, explains reasons measurement is invaluable for handling PR crises.

1. You will know if your brand is being compromised—maybe even before the local media contacts you. A monitoring system that searches both social and traditional media for mentions of your brand will alert you to any unusual mentions.
2. You can learn if negative mentions are worrisome. Are several negative tweets a normal blip or a sign of an imminent disaster? A measurement system can compare volumes, reach and sentiment of mentions to provide real insight.
3. Long-term measurement can reveal the most effective tactics in the past. Insights from that data can help guide decisions during the heat of the crisis, helping you will remain calm during the crisis and avoid spontaneous, ill-advised decisions based on little or no information.
4. You will know how your message is resonating in the media. With an ongoing measurement system in place you can quickly see if your actions are portrayed as you intended in the media and if the resulting coverage reflects the positioning you desire. “With measurement you can be the best-informed person in the room,” Paine says. “You’ll confidently enter the war room, armed with facts and figures about what worked in the past, what is working now, and what should be changed going forward.”
5. The organization will be able to maintain its perspective. An analysis can reveal if the tone of media coverage is within normal ranges or compare coverage to industry averages. Perhaps media coverage is not as negative as it seems.
6. You’ll know if your strategy is succeeding and if you can relax. Typically, crisis coverage and negative mentions peak on the first day then gradually decrease. If mentions continue to increase after the first day, PR has a problem.
7. You’ll be better able to argue for a budget increase. Monitoring and measurement will quantify PR’s impact and costs.

In addition to the decision-makers, effectively responding in a PR crisis requires at least



two people: one to monitor the conversation and another to write social media posts that are distillations of the official statement, Machiz says. Do this in coordination with your crisis communications team, he advises. As you feed your team information about the problem from Twitter and other sources, they will draft statements for the Web. On social media, you can either issue multiple tweets or post an abbreviated statement and a link to your website.

**Bottom Line:** Ongoing media monitoring and measurement provides one of the most important tools for determining how best to respond during a PR crisis. Media monitoring and measurement can help organizations during a crisis in ways executives don't realize. The most effective media monitoring is an ongoing service that provides a data archive to help guide decision-making during the crisis.

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## How Social Media Monitoring Aids PR Crisis Management



Social media has drastically increased the speed that public relations crisis can develop and spread. News can quickly spread and “go viral” through multiple social media channels. Slow or inappropriate responses during a fast-moving crisis can cause severe reputational damage on a brand. Loss of reputation almost inevitably leads to financial losses.

On-going monitoring social media for mentions of your company and its brands

has become a vital component of PR and reputation management. With a social media monitoring service, organizations can monitor multiple social media channels simultaneously and analyze large volumes of data quickly through a single interface. Comprehensive social media monitoring can provide real insights into consumer sentiment. It can also identify a developing PR crisis before it explodes. And it can keep close watch over a crisis in progress.

### Social Media Monitoring in Telecommunications

[Deutsche Telekom](#), one of the world’s largest telecommunications companies, provides an example of how a major organization has successfully employed social media for crisis management. Responding to crisis quickly is especially critical in the telecommunications sector. Companies in that sector need to identify and track both known service disruptions and unknown problems not yet reported to the company.

The company created a “situation room” where employees track brand mentions, analyze data and measure mentions for sentiment, according to an article in [RTInsights](#). The situation room also recommends actionable insights to departments throughout the organization. That prevents information from becoming “siloes,” a common issue in large organizations. Deciding how to apply the information is more important than collecting the data itself.

Its customized reports present insights that non-technical professionals can understand. “Since the reports for different departments serve different purposes, it’s extremely important for us to be able to individualize them,” said Robert Schwerdtner, a former crisis manager for Deutsche Telekom.

### More Tips on Social Media for Crisis Management

Here’s some more advice from reputation management experts for using social media listening for PR crisis management.

**Monitor your brand constantly.** Continually monitor your corporate and brand names for news and social media comments. Monitor competitors and keywords describing your industry niche to better understand market sentiment.

**Select your keywords.** In addition to searching for your company and brand names, search for common slang terms and common misspellings, and names of top executives.

**Consider Boolean search techniques.** [Boolean search terms](#) can deliver more accurate media monitoring results and eliminate extraneous results by adding words



such as AND, OR, NOT and punctuation like parenthesis and quotes.

**Consider automated analysis.** [Automated sentiment analysis](#) can grade the overall sentiment of large numbers of social media comments.

**Answer negative comments quickly.** Initiating friendly conversations, as opposed to confronting critics, and solving customer problems helps stop negative comments from spreading.

**Vet information.** When gathering information, be careful to verify information before acting on it, recommends Jason Jubinville at [Echosec](#). Posts are often sensationalistic and embellished. Photos can be easily doctored. One red flag is that altered images typically take longer to appear online. Following the journalism standard of requiring two credible sources can prevent you from falling for a hoax.

**Engage with posters.** However, be careful what you say when a disaster erupts. In the earliest stages, simply asking for information is the safest strategy. Record the contact information of people posting frequently about the issue. You might need to communicate with them later.

**Sentiment changes over time.** By tracking how the number of negative, positive and neutral mentions are changing over time (and the specific content of the mentions), PR can see how their strategy succeeded over time, notes Caroline Roy, CEO of [Mesure Média](#).

**Identify influencers.** Besides reporting what influencers are saying about brands and grading the sentiment of their comments, social media listening can identify and rank influencers to help PR prioritize its responses.

**Bottom Line:** In today's world, social media listening is essential to responding to PR crisis. In addition, social media monitoring and measurement can help prevent crisis and gauge the effectiveness of the company's crisis management strategy.

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## Untapped Benefits of Media Monitoring for Competitive Intelligence



It should be obvious that knowledge about competitors is critical business information. Yet almost half the companies that collect competitive intelligence are not using the data to make strategic decisions, according to a recent survey.

The [Academy of Competitive Intelligence survey](#) revealed that only 55% of competitive intelligence managers and analysts said that their input made a difference on major management decisions. In addition, they said executive leadership frequently turned to them merely to confirm beliefs they already reached.

Companies spend about \$20 billion on market research annually and about another \$2 billion on analyzing specific competitors, says Benjamin Gilad, the academy's president. Competitive intelligence clearly improves decisions.

### Companies Benefitting from Competitive Intelligence

Pharmaceutical companies are some of the largest users of CI. Some have saved or made millions of dollars by speeding up the development of drugs in response to competitors, divesting drugs made unprofitable by competitors, and walking away from deals, writes Deren Baker, CEO of Jumpshop, which offer marketing analytics. Baker explains how to use CI in an [iMedia Connection article](#).

**Product releases.** Learn what they offer and how it has evolved over time to spot market trends and opportunities. This tactic is especially advantageous in fast-evolving industries like the tech sector. For instance, less than a year after Apple introduced a mobile payment solution, Samsung rolled out its own version.

**Promotions.** Understand your competitors' promotions strategies. Are they cutting prices or offering bundled deals or limited-time offers? Pay special attention to promotions in advance of special events, such as back-to-school deals, and modify your pricing and SEO strategy in response.

**Corporate activities.** Be aware of where competitors allocate money and resources, where they open new offices and what top executives they hire.

**Sales data.** Sales data is difficult to obtain but extremely valuable. If you can obtain it, scrutinize their sales funnels, website conversions, and product-specific conversion rates.

To gather CI, companies attend trade conferences, examine public records and read



trade journals, Baker says. They can also subscribe to the competitor's newsletters, follow them on social media, and read their corporate blogs.

## Sharing Media Monitoring & Measurement Insights

[Comprehensive and integrated media monitoring](#) is another beneficial tool for gathering data about competitors. News monitoring can capture all competitor announcements about the company and its products. Social media listening can reveal what consumers are saying about competitors and their products, and what they like and dislike about them, including possible customer service issues. Such information can reveal a competitor's Achilles' heel. If social media listening uncovers a negative mention of a competitor's product, your sales team can reach out to the individual to establish contact and open a relationship.

Social media listening can also provide a goldmine of information on competitors' social media marketing practices. By analyzing people who are mentioning competitors, you can learn about their audience's profiles. That can help you better define your own target audience.

Measuring social media engagement can provide exceptional market insights. Companies can track trends in engagement levels, follower numbers, product messaging and other metrics. Some monitoring services can complete a sentiment analysis which rates brand mentions on a positive to negative scale. By comparing changes in sentiment of their brand to competitors' over time, brands can learn if their marketing strategies are succeeding.

It's vital for CI to share information with other departments. Even when companies monitor for competitors, the market intelligence it produces often remains in the CI or PR departments and is not shared with marketing, product management, sales or other departments that could benefit from the information. As a result, many businesses fail to capitalize on the valuable competitive insights provided by media monitoring.

**Bottom Line:** Competitive intelligence is one of the most valuable kinds of data for businesses. News and social media monitoring provide effective and efficient ways to gather information about competitors' marketing strategies and business plans.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## Checklist: Selecting a Media Monitoring and Measurement Vendor



More companies and non-profit organizations are using social media monitoring and measurement dashboards to improve customer service, conduct market research and identify successful marketing strategies. PR departments have long used news clipping services and media measurement services to manage corporate reputation, handle PR crisis, and assess the impact and value of public relations activities.

Finding a media listening and measurement service that meets the organization's needs can be an arduous and problematic task. New start-ups continually emerge, companies are regularly acquired, go out of business, or revamp their offerings. Many organizations have experienced the unhappy situation of selecting a media listening solution that doesn't meet their needs, and having to begin the search all over again in less than a year.

Katie Paine, measurement expert and CEO of Paine Publishing, offers valuable tips that can help avoid that unfortunate scenario in her new [Guide to Measurement Vendors](#). The guide offers insights into the strengths of various vendors in both news and social media monitoring and measurement.

Here are some key criteria recommended by Paine and other measurement experts to use in selecting a media monitoring and measurement service:

**Media coverage.** Many services do not cover all media – print, broadcast, online, social – in one integrated dashboard. Make sure that the service monitors the key media types you need and the outlets you need within each media type. Most organizations, for instance, have specific local news sources or trade publications they want to monitor. Many companies have specific blogs or social media accounts to monitor. Make sure the service already monitors your required sources or can readily add them to its monitoring list.

**Timely alerts.** For daily alerts of brand mentions in media coverage, timing is often as critical as content. Make sure the vendor can deliver media alerts when you need them.

**Clip accuracy.** Seek a vendor with good keyword filters. These days, the real problem isn't finding all the news articles and social media posts containing your key words; it's finding the right ones. That's especially true if you're monitoring some generic words. If the monitoring service can't filter out spam, porn, geographical references and other irrelevant mentions, then look elsewhere. A short free trial using your own keywords will tell you much more about media coverage and clip accuracy than a canned online demo. (If you can't get a free trial, insist on a 30-day cancellation clause.)

**Sentiment analysis.** When considering media monitoring services that offer qualitative assessment of articles, broadcasts and social media posts, seek one that uses a combination of automated software and human analysis. Relying solely on automated sentiment analysis software to assess tone/sentiment, messages, prominence, dominance, and other qualitative factors can produce results that are quite misleading. Demand a minimum 88% accuracy in a Scott's Pi intercoder reliability



test. (Paine says she can help run a test.)

**Social media metrics.** If you seek a company that can provide comprehensive social media monitoring and comprehensive social media metrics, seek a vendor that can take the application program interface, or API, from a variety of sources and automatically extract all the data that social media networks compile. Make sure the vendor tracks the networks you seek to monitor and measure.

**Graphic depictions.** It's hard to believe, but some measurement services use the wrong type of chart format to display results for trends or comparisons. Make sure the charts offered and the chart formats meet your needs – or offer flexibility to develop additional charts.

**Customization.** Most all companies and non-profit organizations have some sort of special need in monitoring or measurement. It can be coverage of certain media sources, or custom metrics, or certain types of measurement or graphic depictions. Find a vendor that is able to customize its standard package to your specific wants and needs. Many vendors cannot or will not.

**Industry standards.** Before you begin your search, find what vendors have pledged their support to PR industry standards. The list is available at the [Institute for Public Relations](#) website. Vendors who do not follow industry standards are likely to push you to use AVEs and other dubious metrics, Paine warns.

## Determine Your Requirements First

Paine and other experts recommend you first determine your requirements, objectives and budget before contacting vendors. After determining your needs, interview vendors to find if they can meet them.

“This is much preferred to watching the 60-90 minute dog and pony show that vendors show to every prospective client. Make sure each requirement on your list is addressed—and demonstrated—to your satisfaction,” stresses [Dr. Liz Gross](#), a social media and market research strategist for a federal student loan servicer.

After selecting a vendor, seek a trial period. Avoid signing a multi-year contract to keep your options open, Gross urges. The company you choose could overhaul its solution, be acquired, or go out of business before the contract ends.

Some organizations, notably larger companies and government agencies, require formal competitive bidding and a formal [request for proposal](#) (RFP) process. Although RFPs offer a methodical way to gather competitive bids, they often leave out information that vendors need to create a thorough proposal that's specific to the organization's needs. It's essential to include specific requirements in the RFP in order for vendors to produce quality proposals with accurate cost estimates.

**Bottom Line:** These recommendations from industry experts can you help find a media monitoring and measurement service that meets your organization's PR and marketing needs. Be sure your team first agrees on its needs, goals and budget before vetting media monitoring and measurement vendors.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## Is Automated Sentiment Analysis Right for Your Media Measurement? Questions to Consider



Automated sentiment analysis is becoming more popular for media measurement as the computer-based software programs improve and organizations seek to analyze enormous amounts of mentions quickly and affordably.

By automatically grading news articles and social media posts as positive, negative or neutral, the sentiment analysis software can

help public relations and marketing departments determine how well their campaigns are working by analyzing trends in consumer sentiment. Political campaigns can use sentiment analysis to study the public's reaction to candidates' positions; investors and stock analysts can analyze perceptions about the stock market or a particular stock.

Automated systems are less expensive than paying human analysts. However, they are not always the best choice. Although the software has improved, it remains far less accurate than human analysts. Automated programs cannot place comments in context and often fail to grasp nuances of human language. They have difficulty interpreting slang and sarcasm.

Pointing out an example of automated analysis can misfire, Huffington Post business blogger [Dan Mirvish](#) noted that when Anne Hathaway was in the news with favorable publicity, Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway's shares went up. He found six dates going back to 2008 when that happened. Automated trading programs apparently confused the actress with Buffett's company.

### Questions to Consider

Katie Paine, CEO of Paine Publishing and a noted expert on media measurement, recommends [questions to ask](#) to help decide if sentiment analysis is right for your organization.

- Do you receive more than 2,500 qualified mentions a month in social media? Qualified mentions do not include spam, content-farm generated copy or mentions of similar-sounding brand name. If your brand has relatively few mentions, a computer program might be more expensive than a trained analyst.
- Do people express any sentiment when discussing your brand? Conversations about some products, such as B2B products, are typically very factual. It may not be possible for a computer to glean any sentiment from the conversations.
- Do you have direct interaction with customers? If you have no direct customer interaction, then determining if sentiment has any real impact on your business will be difficult. You can link sentiment to customer behavior only if you are an online retailer or are in a field where people make reservations, or register online.
- What level of accuracy is acceptable to your executive leadership? Most automated tools have an accuracy rate of about 60% to 70%. If that is not acceptable to your leadership, you can use human coders to conduct a random sample check to ensure a higher degree of accuracy.



- What level of detail do you need from your sentiment analysis system? You will probably need a human analyst if you need to track complex messaging, quotes, issues, positioning, or other esoteric details.
- Do you run numerous campaigns, which will require different search terms and different message tracking and different definitions of positive or neutral? Computers take weeks to reprogram, test and fix. If you need fast turnaround on changes to your system, then use a human.

## The Hybrid Approach

Some monitoring services, including [Glean.info](#), combine automated sentiment analysis with evaluation by human analysts. By using human analysts, companies can establish finely-tuned criteria for what constitutes a positive or negative mention. Although not always perfect, human analysts are trained to recognize language nuances and idiosyncrasies that trip up automated programs. They can also be quickly trained on specific rating criteria for each client.

Humans are also less literal than machines and can better tease out meaning. Large companies with thousands of media mentions can the control costs of human analysis by reviewing a sampling of posts. Many companies, for instance, use human analysis only for media mentions that appear in top tier media sources.

PR measurement and data analysis experts agree that integrating automated tools and human analysts is the best approach for most organizations.

Experts at the Sentiment Analysis Symposium favored using a combination of software and humans.

“Machines do analytics, humans do analysis,” remarked Anjali Lai, an analyst at Forrester Research, according to [Adweek](#).

**Bottom Line:** Automated sentiment programs provide both benefits and pitfalls. In many cases, human analysts provide superior results. It’s essential to carefully weigh the pros and cons before establishing a media monitoring and measurement plan. For many companies, a hybrid approach that integrates humans and machines is the most effective and cost-efficient option.

Author: William J. Comcowich, [Glean.info](#)



## The Importance of TV News Monitoring – and How to Do It



Despite the gains of online news, television remains the most popular source for news.

Although 16% of Americans now say watching television is their favorite way to spend an evening, down from 48% in 1966, according to [Gallup](#), television remains a major news source. When asked where they get the news, 53% of the global respondents named television as one of their go-to sources, according to a [Neilson survey](#) of more than 30,000 online consumers in 60 countries last year.

More Americans named television news as the most helpful source to learn about the 2016 presidential election, according to a [Pew Research Center survey](#). Out the 3,760 adults polled, 24% said cable news was most helpful. Social media and local TV tied at second with 14% each. With both network and local TV news now available on cell phones and tablets though mobile apps, television viewing has become a mobile activity with near-instant accessibility.

### An Essential Strategy

Clearly, companies, government agencies and major nonprofit organizations cannot ignore TV when developing PR pitching and placement strategies – and when doing media monitoring and measurement.

Yet many organizations don't monitor television news or don't strategically monitor the news to drive actionable business outcomes. It's now considered essential for major companies, government agencies and not-for-profits to include broadcast monitoring in an integrated media monitoring program to monitor the organization's brand names and products, competitors and industry issues. Local organizations will usually be notified when they appear on TV news and can usually avoid the cost of an on-going broadcast monitoring subscription.

### TV Monitoring Services

In the United States, broadcast monitoring services search the closed-caption text, originally intended for the hearing impaired, from all network news broadcasts, cable news programs and talk shows, and local TV news broadcasts for each client's keywords. The services deliver the closed-caption text and/or a preview video of any news segments containing the keywords. The services also save the clips in an online archive, often with in-depth media measurement features.

In other countries, media monitoring services use speech to text software to create a transcript of news programs, and then search the transcript for clients' keywords. Speech-to-text software is also used to monitor radio news. In general, speech to text software is less accurate than closed caption. Neither is perfect. Closed caption captioning, for instance, isn't included for some live remotes by on-the-scene reporters. Speech-to-text software (and closed caption too) often misspells corporate and brand names. Most TV news monitoring services require clients to subscribe to a service that includes preview video of each found media mention.



A few services such as [CyberAlert TV](#) offer clients the option of receiving only the closed-caption text at lower cost. In most cases, the text excerpt of the broadcast is all that's needed for monitoring and measurement purposes. For most clients, the closed-caption monitoring is part of a fully integrated media monitoring and measurement service that also includes print, online news, and social media.

## Copyright Issues

Clients should be aware of the potential legal ramifications of downloading and sharing video files from their media monitoring service.

Due to a recent legal decision, clients cannot download video clips without permission of the broadcast company that owns the copyright. Fox News recently won [a court case](#) against TVEyes, a company that creates a text-searchable database of broadcast content television and radio stations. A federal judge in New York ruled that TVEyes could continue to stream Fox News clips to subscribers, but could no longer allow people to download clips to their own computers.

The order also directed the monitoring service to block people from sharing clips on social media services and to prohibit subscribers from emailing clips to more than five recipients at other organizations. In addition, the court injunction ordered TVEyes to block clips from playing on social media networks.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will review the case this year. What ever your feelings about Fox and copyright and fair use issues, the case is one to watch in 2016, says [Law360](#).

## Strategies for Broadcast Monitoring

These are some important techniques for monitoring television news.

**Check the text first.** For a more cost-effective solution, employ a media monitoring service that permits clients to subscribe to only the closed-caption text of broadcast news or one that will do customized keyword searches after broadcast. In most cases, clients can then opt to see a preview video of only the most important clips that the monitoring service has identified.

**Focus on specific keywords.** Selecting specific keywords terms is critical to locate relevant videos. Concentrating on specific high-priority searches, such as a brand initiative, is more effective and affordable that attempting to monitor every brand mention. It's important to include spelling variations, and common misspellings of the company, brand, and high-level executives. It's often beneficial to use [Boolean search queries](#) for companies, brands or executives with common names such as "Adele" AND (song OR singer OR Top 50 OR album).

**Integrate with social media.** TV networks and local stations now promote their programs and engage with their audience on social media where viewers share and discuss TV news stories. Because of that noteworthy trend, it's essential to use a media monitoring service that integrates TV and social media data. If all media mentions are under a single umbrella, online reputation management and media measurement is much more comprehensive, accurate and convenient.

**Monitor both networks and websites.** While many news organizations put some of their newscasts on their websites or on YouTube, not all stories from the live broadcast are posted and stories are often not posted in their entirety.



**Bottom Line:** Despite the rise of online news, it remains vital for large organizations to monitor television news. Even today, television remains the most popular source for news. That means it's essential to integrate TV news monitoring into a comprehensive media monitoring program.

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## PR & Marketing Analytics: Resolutions for 2017



PR marketing analytics 2017 resolutions Analytics are an essential element of effective marketing and public relations. Analytics provide organizations data and insights needed to improve tactics, plan strategies, measure performance, and link data to key business outcomes like sales and revenue.

Unfortunately, many PR and marketing departments don't obtain the full benefits of analytics that can improve PR and marketing outcomes. Only 15 percent of marketers say they can quantify the value of their social media campaigns, according to a [CMO survey](#).

As the year quickly winds to a close, the time for preparing New Year resolutions approaches. Along with the common resolution to exercise more, a resolution to properly implement PR and marketing analytics can lead to a happier and more profitable 2017. As you get ready to clink champagne glasses, contemplate adopting these data analytics resolutions to energize PR and marketing next year.

**Review your goals and KPIs.** Gather your stakeholders and ask if the metrics you're using and the reports you're delivering are what they prefer? Do they help your stakeholders make the key decisions you need to make? Candid feedback is essential to identify missing KPIs and ones to be ejected, says Nick Iyengar, associate director of Digital Intelligence at Cardinal Path, in a [Marketing Land article](#). Re-examination of metrics may prompt a need to update your dashboards, adjust your reporting templates and complete other changes.

**Replace manual reporting with automated dashboards.** Pulling data from your disparate sources, compiling and organizing numbers in Excel, and building charts and PowerPoint decks is extremely time-consuming. Automated and fully integrated dashboards allow you to dispense with such labor-intensive chores. Communications dashboards, such as the new one from [Glean.info](#), can be customized to particular organizations, departments, brands, countries and even particular PR or marketing managers. State-of-the-art dashboards can integrate data from a plethora of sources to provide a single, over-arching viewpoint.

Time-saving benefits of advanced dashboards enable you to engage in deeper analysis that ponders why trends occur. "If done well, your always-on dashboards will free up a lot of time for analysis and also generate demand for that deeper analysis from your stakeholders. That's a virtuous circle!" Iyengar says.

**Build trust in data.** Organizations can increase trust in data by increasing transparency about the use and impact of their data, connecting them to real-world goals and opening the data "black box." Improve data accuracy by scrubbing data and discounting or questioning substantial, unexplained swings in trends. "We need to take [data & analytics] out of the 'black box' to encourage greater understanding about its use and purpose to help organizations trust the new insights it can bring," states Brad Fisher, US data and analytics leader and a partner with KPMG in the U.S. in the KPMG report [Building Trust in Analytics](#).



**Think like an anthropologist.** Concentrating less on data and more on context will help obtain the full benefit from social media analytics. In other words, business managers must “think more like an anthropologist,” argue a trio of experts in the Harvard Business Journal. Rather than seeking data that confirm predetermined views, pursue unexpected insights that change perspectives, as anthropologists do. Trained human analysts, either hired in-house or through outside vendors, can understand the context and interpret the meaning of social media monitoring reports far better than automated algorithms.

**Train your staff.** PR pros typically disdain or even fear numbers and data. That avoidance of measurement may hobble PR’s ability to demonstrate success and cause C-suite executives to view PR suspiciously. Reserve time to learn how to better use media monitoring and measurement tools. Online courses in statistics and data analytics, now deemed [must-have PR skills](#), can boost PR professionals’ confidence in handling data – and help their careers.

**Include analytics in your budget.** Analytics has become so important that it deserves a separate line item in the annual PR and marketing budgets. The actual budgeted amount depends on your methods of implementing an analytics program – and the cost of your outsourced measurement services. Many experts recommend that ideally 10 to 15 percent of the total budgets for marketing and PR should be reserved for data collection and analytics.

**Bottom Line:** Data analytics promises a goldmine of insights, but many PR and marketing teams have not yet found that treasure-trove. Following these New Year resolutions will help you and your organization obtain the full benefits of data analytics.

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## After One Year – The Complexities of Measuring Facebook Reactions (Better Known as Emoticons)



Image source: We Are Social via Flickr

Facebook Reactions, introduced a year ago, have started to improve brands' ability to engage with followers, understand their audiences and improve content strategies.

The emoticons have been used a total [300 billion times](#). While that sounds huge, Facebook reportedly generates about 4 million Likes per minute. Use of the emoticons will likely continue to grow as Facebook users become more comfortable with them. The U.S. ranks eighth on a list of the countries that use reactions the most. It's preceded by Mexico, Chile, Suriname, Greece, Paraguay, Costa Rica, and Belize.

### Greater Reach on News Feeds

Facebook Reactions include a bevy of emoticons for relaying emotional emotions, including love, laughter, happiness, surprise, sadness and anger. Despite requests, there is no dislike button, although Facebook is reportedly testing a [thumbs-down symbol](#) in its Messenger app.

The emoticons may help marketers improve their reach on news feeds. Facebook recently tweaked its news feed algorithm to assign more weight to the icons than the simple thumbs-up like. The company believes reactions indicate a stronger signal, or a greater emotional response than likes.

A Like is the default interaction and is a vague indicator of interest. Since reactions require a long press or hovering action, they indicate stronger emotions, as [TNW points out](#). Importantly, all reactions are still weighed equally to one another, including temporary reactions created special for holidays and special occasions like Mother's Day.

### Measurement Capabilities – and Complications

The symbols can help marketing and PR better understand audience responses to posts, better understand customers' feelings, and improve content. A significant number of angry reactions could warn brands of an impending PR crisis and signal the need to act quickly before it spirals out of control.

The symbols have improved measurement capabilities, but they have also made life more complicated for brands. In the old days of 2015, marketers only had to add up likes and shares. But now, reactions can signal either positive or negative sentiment, depending on the post. The variety of emotional possibilities require greater nuance to avoid misinterpretation.

"With reactions, there are not only more choices to measure, but there's also a new concept that marketers will need to embrace: intent," says Chris Kerns, vice president of research & insights at Spredfast, a social software platform. Kerns provides an example of the danger in an article for [Marketing Land](#).



## A Tale of Two Posts

A post from the Seattle Mariners congratulates superstar second baseman Robinson Cano on the birth of his daughter. As expected it garnered positive responses – 13,000 likes and 1,300 loves but also a handful of laugh reactions.

A post from Tesla that warned of the world's rising CO2 levels, citing data from Climate Central, prompted a large number of sad and angry reactions but also a few laugh emoticons. Kerns classified the laugh emoticons as support for the Mariners post, but as opposition for the Tesla post. Laugh reactions should be interpreted as people mocking its cause.

To measure reactions properly, Kerns recommends setting an emotional target for the audience's intended response. Depending on the post, marketers may seek laughter, sadness, love or even anger.

"While Facebook Reactions add an extra layer of complexity to reporting, the data and insights you'll get out of an emotion measurement plan will steer your team to create better content than ever before," Kerns concludes. "And for data-driven marketers, that's nothing to laugh at."

**Bottom Line:** A year after their introduction, Facebook Reactions are enabling marketers to improve engagement and measurement. As the emoticons become more popular over time, they will add depth to brands' measurement capabilities. The symbols also make measurement more complicated. Classifying reactions as support or opposition can be tricky.

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## Does Engagement Still Matter as a Social Media Metric?



PR and digital marketers frequently consider engagement a key social media metric. Yet some believe online engagement is faltering. Fewer brands engage with followers, asserts Arik C. Hanson, principal of ACH Communications, in his [marketing and communications blog](#).

Very few companies, typically larger brands, dedicate the staff for extensive engagement. [Wendy's](#)

[tweets](#) are an exception. Even JP Morgan, a huge financial services company, gains few responses on Twitter, as a glance at its feed shows, Hanson points out. It treats Twitter as a broadcast channel. Accenture, a large B2B brand with over 300,000 followers, elicits little response on Twitter.

Hanson blames trolls, the 2016 Election, and general declining interest in online conversations. Online publications are [closing comments sections on articles](#). In a most recent example, Vice shut down its comments section, blaming an overabundance of trolls. Publications say they're moving conversations to social media, but those conversations are now also increasingly dominated by hyper-political debates, personal attacks and hate speech.

### Winning Engagement is Challenging for Brands

Sparking engagement is more difficult for brands. Comments and shares have dropped. At their best, comments provide meaningful input, spur conversation, and provide feedback. Shares, the best form of engagement, help spread the brand's marketing and PR message. Likes, the lowest form of engagement, barely qualify as significant engagement. If comments and shares disappear, brands will be left with very little else, Hanson warns.

Hanson relies on personal observations and lacks hard data. Others have complained of an increase in derogatory comments, especially during the presidential campaign. People may be sharing posts, but share only with people they agree with in their own networks.

Marketers have differing views about the importance of engagement as a social media metric. Some argue engagement indicates the quality of content and the effectiveness of the brand's marketing more realistically than number of followers.

### Even Likes Count

Even the number of likes matter because consumers believe the popularity of a product correlates to its quality, says Lesya Liu, social media strategist at The Social Media Current. "We as entrepreneurs also look at the like counts as a metric for reputation of the company and as a metric for effectiveness of social media marketing efforts," Liu writes in [Entrepreneur](#).

However, engagement is not the ultimate business goal, only a tactic to produce leads, clients and sales. Like any other business activity, engagement entails costs and



resources that must be balanced against results. The key to success is determining how engagement helps you reach your business goals.

Engagement must be linked to business objectives. Engagement is only a tool, one that's not extremely valuable on its own unless it's tied to a measurable goal. Those goals can be customer acquisition, product development, customer service or brand awareness.

**Bottom Line:** Engagement may be falling out of favor as a social media metric. Trolls and declining interest in online conversations may be putting a damper on engagement. Some brands may place a low priority on engagement, and instead use social networks as a broadcast channel. Many marketers tout the benefits of engagement, saying it can accurately measure marketing success. The key is to link engagement with bottom-of-the funnel metrics.

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