



Public relations (PR) is a powerful marketing tool for boosting your company's brand recognition and profile, without spending advertising dollars. One of the most common questions I am asked when launching a PR campaign is how to measure the success of the campaign and return on investment.

### MEASURING PR SUCCESS

Of all marketing tools, PR is typically the hardest to measure. This is because there is no standard method that is agreed upon throughout the industry and because PR is fundamentally about increasing awareness and reputation. There are several factors to consider when evaluating the success of a PR campaign:

1. What are the campaign goals?
2. What results are you trying to achieve?
3. What would the cost be to achieve the same publicity through other marketing tools?

### ESTABLISHING CAMPAIGN GOALS

To best measure the effectiveness of a PR campaign, establish goals before starting the campaign. Are you using PR to promote an event, announce a new product, provide information on a recently completed project or simply increase your visibility in front of your target audience?

If there is a specific promotion (an event, sale or product announcement), you can track the effectiveness of the PR directly based on how many responses you get. If the goal of the campaign is to increase visibility (through a project case study or business profile), tracking website traffic, and new business inquiries are good ways to analyze success.

### ACHIEVING THE RIGHT RESULTS

There is such a thing as bad publicity. PR is powerful and can therefore cause just as much harm as it can good. Creating a simple, clear message in the media is key. When creating the campaign message, evaluate whether it relates to your business goals and whether it is relatable for your target audience. For example, if you are announcing a new product, provide a clear

description of the product, the benefits of use and differentiation from competing products.

### COMPARING PR RETURNS TO OTHER MARKETING RETURNS

The most common way for PR professionals to measure return on investment is to compare the placement with the ad rate of a comparably sized ad in the same publication. If McGraw-Hill's ENR runs a full-page profile on a company, it would be equivalent to over \$2,000 in advertising (the cost of a full-page ad that runs one time in ENR). If the same profile runs in multiple publications, the return on investment can easily reach 200%-300%.

While PR is not statistically as easy to measure as advertising or search engine optimization, the return on investment is often much higher. If you would like to learn more on how to launch and leverage a successful PR campaign, please feel free to contact me at [sberman@bermangrp.com](mailto:sberman@bermangrp.com).

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