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Over the past decade, the public relations (PR) industry has evolved at an extremely rapid pace and with that growth the industry must adopt comprehensive and strategic methods for measurement and evaluation (Ketchum 2016). However, in the past PR has been labelled as the weaker sector when compared with marketing and advertising, partly due to the lack of congruency in measurement and evaluation (Michaelson and Stacks 2014). Academic professional Watson (2012) argues, "The measurement and evaluation of PR effectiveness has long been a major professional and research issue." The CEO of Ketchum, David Rockland, supports this by admitting that the value of PR is frequently measured and evaluated through advertising, by using the Advertising Value Equivalence (AVE) model (Ketchum 2016).

The AVE model consists of multiplying the advertising rate card by three to calculate the PR value. PR practitioners use the AVE model to measure and evaluate campaigns; however, Rockland believes that the PR industry should move away from AVE's and turn towards more, "sophisticated and strategic measurement" (Ketchum 2016). Traditionally, the AVE model has governed the PR industry, however in 2010 "PR practitioners from thirty-three countries gathered in Barcelona and agreed on seven principles of measurement, including the abolishment of AVE's" (Ketchum 2016). However, it is widely known that PR professionals are still using AVE's throughout the industry. This is supported by research from Macnamara (2015) in which a global study of measurement and evaluation in the PR industry took place in 2009. The results found that, "rudimentary counting of media clippings, subjective internal reviews and AVE's were the three most used methods" (Wright et al. 2009; cited in Macnamara 2015, p.374). It is imperative that the industry acknowledges this out-dated concept as Rockland argues that the use of AVE's, "effectively dumb down measurement and give an inaccurate value for PR that could be just as easily guessed" (Ketchum 2016).

PR's Insatiable Appetite for AVE's

Although AVE's have been outlined as a flawed method, PR practitioners argue that their continued usage spurs from clients requesting them (Macnamara 2006).

PR professionals support the use of AVE's through the following three criteria. The belief that PR creates greater word of mouth coverage than advertising, known as pass-along circulation, and for this reason a multiplication of three is justified (Weiner and Bartholomew 2006). Secondly, the credibility of PR value and thirdly, the notion that all hits are created equally (Weiner and Bartholomew 2006); meaning regardless of the day or time, circulation figures or online unique visitors will remain the same.

Arguments against the use of AVE's suggest that coverage can be negative or neutral, contain coverage of competitors and be poorly positioned or presented in non-target or low priority media (Macnamara 2006). AVE's could even be viewed as dishonest and unethical as frequently different figures are used for multiplication. It has been reported that AVE's have been multiplied anywhere between 2.5 and 9 times (Weiner and Bartholomew 2006). Therefore, if a client were to use more than one PR agency there is a high possibility that they would receive two very different measurements and evaluations, "causing confusion and undermining the credibility and confidence in PR" (Weiner and Bartholomew 2006, p.5). The CIPR (2016) believe that AVE's do not represent the value of PR and in order for measurement and evaluation to be valid it must be transparent, understandable and replicable. Furthermore, Lindenmann et al. (2003) suggest that the following can and should be measured: message distribution and reception, understanding, favourability and acceptance, issues management and prediction, stakeholder attitudes, and success or failure of the strategy. All of which are unobserved when using AVE's as the model fails to capture the outcome of a PR campaign.

In my opinion, from both an academic and industry background in PR, I believe that the reason why PR practitioners continue to use AVE's is because they view the high quantitative results as a safety net. Clients are accustomed in receiving measurement and evaluation reports with high figures of engagement. Consequently, PR practitioners are reluctant to adopt the new strategies through fear that clients will misinterpret the evaluation and assume that the agency is delivering an inadequate service. My insight is supported through PR Week (2014), which believe a barrier for why PR practitioners find it difficult to discard AVE's is because the industry is known for quantifying outcomes, and AVE's provide high figures for quantitative results. However, PR results are mostly qualitative and should therefore be measured and evaluated through other means, rather than a quantified AVE model (AMEC 2016).

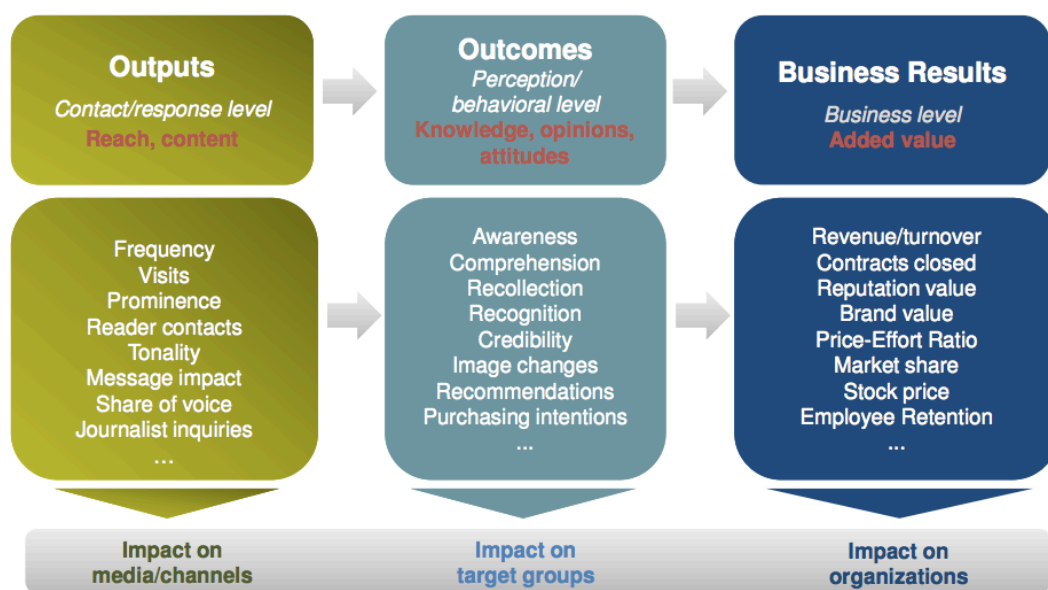
OUTPUTS, OUTTAKES AND OUTCOMES

The PRSA (2016) highlight the importance of PR measurement and evaluation, not only for practitioner's professional competencies, but for validation of results, linking to business outcomes and achieving organisational goals. The CIPR (2016) propose that PR activity should be measured and evaluated by using the outputs, outtakes and outcomes framework. PR practitioners should measure all media output, both online and offline, and then evaluate the outcomes against the business objectives and goals for the organisation (CIPR 2016). Lindenmann et al. (2003) support this by assigning outputs, outtakes and outcomes as levels one, two and three of a PR campaign.

Outputs form level one which consist of the presentation of the campaign, outtakes form level two which measure the reception of messages to deduce retention, comprehension and awareness (Lindenmann et al. 2003). Lastly, outcomes form level three which is the action phase, measuring opinions, attitudes and behavioural changes, using pre and post campaign research (Lindenmann et al. 2003). Similarly, PRCA (2016) support this by suggesting that, outputs are the activities that have been undertaken in the PR campaign, outtakes are the result of those activities and outcomes are the resulting change in behaviour of the target audience.

The techniques used to measure outputs include: press clippings, target audience reach, opportunities to see, share of voice, cost per thousand, hits and visits (PR Week 2014). The methods used to measure outtakes consist of: unique visitors, views, likes, followers, click-through, downloads, comments, tone and sentiment (PR Week 2014). Finally, the process used to evaluate outcomes comprise of: engagement, influence, impact, awareness, attitudes, trust, loyalty, reputation, relationship and return on investment (PR Week 2014). However, there is a lack of consistency with the application of this framework as both the PRSA and the CIPR propose that the linear process comprises of outputs, outtakes and outcomes. While, AMEC (2016) recommends that the model should be applied through outputs, outcomes and business results.

Figure 1: AMEC PR Measurement Framework (2016)



From personal experience in witnessing first hand how frequently the PR industry quantify results, I believe that PR practitioners find it difficult to measure and evaluate level three because outcomes form qualitative results. The CIPR (2011) advise that qualitative evaluation methods include: messages, tonality, sentiment and favourability, however without dedicated measurement software this is extremely difficult to measure and evaluate. I believe that the PR industry has provided inadequate guidance on how to measure qualitative outcomes and without this, the movement away from AVE's is unlikely.

THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES


The Barcelona Principles are a set of seven guidelines established to effectively measure and evaluate PR campaigns. The original Barcelona Principles were introduced in Barcelona in 2010, however these were later revised and consequently AMEC announced The Barcelona Principles 2.0 in London in 2015. AMEC (2016) believe that the original Barcelona Principles focused on what not to do, however the updated 2015 principles provide guidance on what to do.

Figure 2: Barcelona Principles Statements (AMEC 2016)

ORIGINAL	2.0
1. Importance of Goal Setting and Measurement	1. Goal Setting and Measurement are Fundamental to Communication and Public Relations
2. Measuring the Effect on Outcomes is Preferred to Measuring Outputs	2. Measuring Communication Outcomes is Recommended Versus Only Measuring Outputs
3. The Effect on Business Results Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible	3. The Effect on Organizational Performance Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible
4. Media Measurement Requires Quantity and Quality	4. Measurement and Evaluation Require Both Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
5. AVEs are not the Value of Public Relations	5. AVEs are not the Value of Communication
6. Social Media Can and Should be Measured	6. Social Media Can and Should be Measured Consistently with Other Media Channels
7. Transparency and Replicability are Paramount to Sound Measurement	7. Measurement and Evaluation Should be Transparent, Consistent and Valid

PR professionals acknowledged that the PR industry is now part of an integrated service and therefore The Barcelona Principles had to accommodate a wider array of communication types (Rockland 2015). Additionally, the subsequent principles emphasise the importance of qualitative measurement and evaluation (Rockland 2015). Manning and Rockland (2011) state, “The future is about smart measurement, proper budgets, the language of business and consistency across an organisation in how we approach traditional and social media.” AMEC (2015, p.5) declare that the launch of The Barcelona Principles 2015 are highly important because, “They set an overarching framework, provide alignment and a basis for measurement and evaluation programmes.” After the launch of The Barcelona Principles, AMEC (2011) introduced the Valid Metrics Framework to put the principles into action. Detailed frameworks were devised for: brand and product marketing, reputation building, issues advocacy and support, employee engagement, investor relations, crisis and issues management, public education, not-for-profit and social engagement (AMEC 2011).

Figure 3: AMEC PR Measurement Framework (2011)

 Brand/ Product Marketing	Awareness	Knowledge	Consideration	Preference	Action
Public Relations Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content creation Traditional media engagement Social media engagement Influencer engagement Stakeholder engagement Events/speeches 				
Intermediary Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audience reach [traditional & social media] Impressions/Target audience impressions Number of articles Video views Frequency Prominence Share of voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key message alignment Accuracy of facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key message alignment Frequency of (positive) mentions Expressed opinions of consideration Social network Followers Retweets/Shares/ Linkbacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsement by journalists or influencers Rankings on industry lists Expressed opinions of preference Social network Fans Likes 	
Target Audience Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaided awareness Aided awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of company/product attributes and features Brand association and differentiation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance of brand (to consumer/ customer) Visitors to website Click-thru to site Time spent on site Downloads from site Calls Event/meeting attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude uplift Stated intention to buy Brand preference/ Loyalty/Trust Endorsement Requests for quote Links to site Trial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales Market share Cost savings Leads generated Customer loyalty

I believe that the Valid Metrics Framework has failed to encourage PR practitioners to adopt the new methods of change because the framework does not deliver a convenient service or fast outcome. In my opinion, it is necessary for industry leaders, such as CIPR and AMEC, to stop creating theories and frameworks and put the research into action by developing software for measurement and evaluation.

INDUSTRY EXAMPLES THAT HAVE ADOPTED THE NEW APPROACH

Watson and Noble (2014) highlight the strategic use of measurement by Philips in March 2009, as an industry example of PR evaluation in practice. A key element of the PR campaign was to unify global measurement. Andre Manning, *VP and Global Head of Corporate Communications* at Philips claimed, “We needed our communication measurement...to focus on outcomes and effects, rather than quantifying mere output” (Watson and Noble 2014, p.103). The chosen method, called the Net Promoter Score (NPS), asked consumers, “How likely is it that you would recommend Philips to a friend or colleague?” Answers were then scored out of ten with those scoring 9-10 being categorised as promoters, 7-8 as passives and 0-6 as detractors (Watson and Noble 2014, p.104). Additionally, a key performance indicator (KPI) was implemented to monitor global media coverage, including five competitors, against key corporate issues that Philips prioritises (Watson and Noble 2014, p.104). The coverage was then ranked according to reach, presence, alignment of messages, prominence of publication and position, quotes and tone (Watson and Noble 2014). The result of the strategic

measurement and evaluation led to Manning stating, "This consistent measurement led approach has raised the perception of PR within the organisation" (Watson and Noble 2014, p.104).

Further industry examples include leading PR firms adopting their own measurement and evaluation software, such as the DeltaSet by Golin, or the Relationship Index by Edelman or the Influencer Identification and Tracking by FleishmanHillard Fishburn. All of these agencies claim that their software adheres to The Barcelona Principles, but how do we know that this software is not just a replica of the AVE's and the use of different figures for multiplication? This movement could be a step in the right direction, however I am concerned with the following three issues. Firstly, only the top PR agencies will have the funding and resources to design and implement software enabled to measure and evaluate PR activity. Secondly, if each PR agency creates a unique measurement and evaluation method the industry is back to square one with the lack of standardisation. Thirdly, PR firms claim to have designed the new software around The Barcelona Principles, but without strict regulations in place it is unclear how honest and ethical these new approaches are.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDUSTRY

This article has outlined a lack of standardisation throughout measurement and evaluation, causing negative results on the professionalisation of the PR industry. Consequently, I propose two industry recommendations with the hope that PR professionals' demand for AVE's will decline. The PR industry should adopt a new approach for measurement and evaluation because AVE's do not equate to any real value, to improve long-term strategies with measurement that allows for formative and summative evaluation (Lindenmann et al. 2003), a competitive advantage if clients start demanding to see new methods and provide PR agencies with presentation of data through third-party credibility (PR Week 2016). Finally, the PR industry is evolving and by aligning standards with honesty, integrity and openness it can only excel the rapid growth and acceptance of the industry.

#1 Industry Leaders Must Maintain a Consistent Dialogue to Encourage Change

Industry leaders, such as the CIPR, should design software to measure and evaluate PR activity. The CIPR has been chosen because they are unbiased compared to competitive PR firms who constantly challenge each other for client wins. This movement is similar to the coverage tracking software Precise, in which PR practitioners demand convenience and a fast outcome. I believe that this software is a step further than AMEC's Valid Metrics Framework or The Barcelona Principles because it puts theory into practice. This recommendation aims to unify measurement and evaluation practices throughout the industry, rather than taking a sporadic approach.

#2 Educate the PR Industry on Qualitative Outcomes

This article has identified an issue with measuring qualitative outcomes, PR practitioners understand how to quantify results however the onus lies with how to qualitatively measure and evaluate a PR campaign. In order to achieve widespread adoption for new

measurement and evaluation methods, industry leaders such as AMEC need to focus their efforts on more precise, reliable and valuable measurable outcomes. The Barcelona Principles and the outputs, outtakes and outcomes framework are a step in the right direction, however they are too descriptive and the emphasis should be placed on how to measure and evaluate outcomes, not what to measure and evaluate.

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