MUCK RACK

The essential guide to

Media Measurement

Introduction to media measurement

Each year, Muck Rack **surveys** thousands of PR pros about their biggest challenges. And each year, the answer is the same: measuring, reporting and proving the value of PR is consistently the top-ranked challenge that PR pros face.

There are a few good reasons for this: thanks to the diverse nature of today's media channels, PR campaigns span across traditional print and broadcast media as well as digital platforms, social media and influencers. Measuring the effectiveness of PR requires a multifaceted approach since each medium has its own unique metrics.

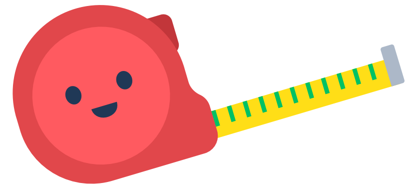
Landing on the right metrics for your organization is another challenge: without standardized measurement practices, PR pros may struggle to demonstrate the tangible value of their efforts to clients and stakeholders. The absence of clear benchmarks makes it challenging to set realistic goals and assess the relative success of different campaigns. As a result, it can become impossible to tie PR metrics to business goals, which is an essential part of the PR role.

This guide will help you understand essential PR KPIs, how to measure them and how to report on them to show the value of PR.

We've also developed a comprehensive course with an industry recognized certification, **The Fundamentals of Media Measurement**. The course, led by instructors Gini Dietrich, founder and author of **Spin Sucks**, Johna Burke, Global Managing Director of **AMEC** and Christopher Penn, cofounder and Chief Data Scientist at **TrustInsights.ai**, is the perfect companion piece to this ebook.

TAKE THE COURSE AND GET CERTIFIED

Getting started with media measurement



PR KPIs and how to measure them

Key performance indicators (KPIs) help support a team's and company's goals by introducing quantifiable measures of performance over time for a specific PR objective. KPIs are also a great way for your team to better understand what is and isn't working, allowing you to refine future media campaigns and better optimize your allocation of resources, especially when multiple team members are working on PR efforts.

Finally, KPIs are a great opportunity to prove your team's value to executives and stakeholders through measurable, tangible goals. Explaining you increased your brand's awareness by a certain percentage is much more impactful than saying you executed two brand awareness campaigns, for example.

These metrics vary by industry and campaign, but common PR KPIs include:

Media mentions
A media mention refers to any mention of a brand's name, campaign or message through any media channel. This is one of the most fundamental measurable earned media metrics.

Sentiment analysis
Sentiment analysis refers to the tone in which your brand is mentioned. This can be positive, negative or neutral. This helps PR pros determine the success of a campaign.

Reach
Reach refers to the number of people who see your media coverage per month. This can be paid or organic. It's worth calling out that reach is often considered a limited data point because it only calculates quantity, not quality.

Share of voice

Share of voice (SOV) helps PR pros compare brands against their competitors. It helps determine how much your brand dominates the industry conversation. It's an important metric that not all PR pros use—we'll dig in deeper and explain why later in this ebook.

Social media engagement

Social media engagement refers to likes, comments, shares, retweets, clicks or mentions through social channels.

Metrics associated with social engagement include:

- Likes
- Comments
- Shares
- Retweets
- Clicks
- Mentions

Website traffic

It can be important to track the number of visitors who clicked to your company's site as a result of your PR coverage and link placement. This can help you measure the overall reach of your media campaigns.

Examples of ways to measure website traffic include:

- Unique visitors
- Unique pageviews
- Bounce rate (i.e. the percentage of visitors who leave after only viewing one page)
- Number of referrals from target media publications (e.g. 134 clicks from the New York Times)

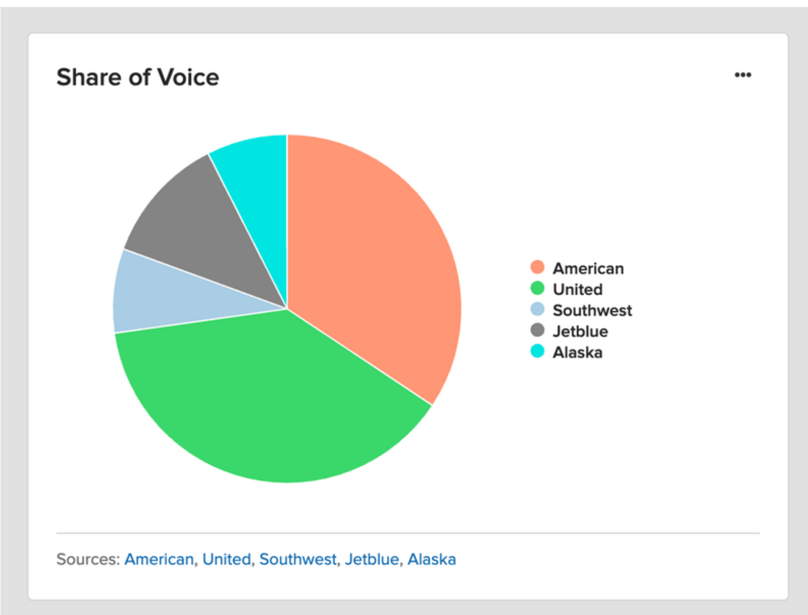
There are a number of tools available to monitor website traffic. The big one is Google Analytics, which is free. A key to measuring website traffic from your earned media is to include **custom UTM parameters** that link back to your website, when someone is covering your brand. There are also sites that can track backlinks, including Muck Rack. That means you can easily see where your website, products or press hits are linked in articles.

Share of voice: what it is and why you need to measure it

Measuring share of voice is a smart way for PR pros to compare coverage of their brand to competitors—but according to our **State of Measurement survey**, only 37% of PR pros measure it.

Share of voice—often abbreviated as SOV—is a measure of the number of earned media mentions your brand or client received in a period of time compared to competitors. SOV can help you understand how much you dominate the conversation in your industry, find areas of opportunity (think: industry trends, writers to pitch) and prove the ROI of your team's PR efforts.

Here's an example of what this might look like for popular U.S. airlines:



You can see American and United airlines dominate the conversation.

How to calculate share of voice

To calculate share of voice, use this formula:

Brand metric ÷ total market metric × 100 = SOV

Keep reading to learn what tools will help you calculate share of voice —no math required.

What kind of data is collected for share of voice?

You might be wondering what brand metric you should use to calculate share of voice. You can calculate share of voice by organic keywords, impressions, reach, media mentions, hashtags and more.

Really, it depends on your goals. For example, PR pros typically focus on media mentions. That helps them understand how many times their brand is mentioned across news outlets and blogs versus their competitors.

Advertisers, on the other hand, might measure the share of voice for paid ads whereas SEO managers will analyze their brand's share of voice in organic search, and social media managers will focus on metrics like mentions, reach or impressions.

How PR professionals use share of voice

Let's focus on PR pros and why share of voice is a useful metric to calculate.

The benefits of tracking share of voice include:

- Keeping up with your competitors. Are they getting positive or negative coverage? Have they launched a new campaign? Did they take a unique angle that seems to be resonating with their audience? Answers to these questions can help evolve your strategy.

- Gaining audience insights. Understand what's resonating with your target audience and find opportunities for your brand.

- Finding active journalists and new outlets. When you track share of voice, you can see which journalists are covering your competitors—and where. Chances are, they might be interested in covering you, too!

- Proving your worth. Share of voice is a powerful metric when it comes to demonstrating your team's value to internal and external stakeholders. Show clients—or your execs—where they stand amongst their competitors.

Share of voice: quantification vs qualification

It's worth noting that share of voice is traditionally a quantitative metric. But like any quantitative metric, it has limitations PR pros must keep in mind.

For example, a brand's share of voice could be inaccurately high due to bots duplicating news articles on spam sites or fake Twitter accounts sharing links to an article.

There are also instances where a brand's share of voice could skyrocket in a 24-hour period due to negative press.

And remember this, too: Different media mentions accomplish different goals. Dozens of mentions in a niche trade publication might be weighted differently than, say, one mention in the New York Times.

That's why it's important to keep an eye on qualitative data, including case studies, interviews and comments.

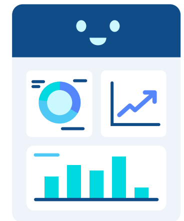
Tools for measuring share of voice

There are a number of ways to measure share of voice. If you're focused on social media efforts, you'll want to tap into a social listening tool, like Sprout, Hootsuite and more. These can help you track important social metrics like engagement (think: likes, comments, shares and clicks) and awareness (reach and impressions).

On the search side of the brand, SEO managers will likely focus on measuring share of search, which is share of voice for organic search. Popular tools like Google Analytics and Ahrefs can track your rankings for specific keywords.

Now, here in the PR world, you'll want to use a media monitoring tool. **Media monitoring** refers to the practice of listening, watching, and tracking media coverage and conversation about your brand, industry, competition, related topics and more. Muck Rack is an example of a media monitoring tool that provides share of voice data.

Everything you need to know about PR reporting



Sending PR reports—like reports on media mentions, sentiment, reach and more—on a regular cadence is an effective way to show off your team's value and measure business impact internally—solving for one of the **top PR challenges**. This is especially important when annual funding discussions take place. These reports can also provide key insights to other departments, like marketing or sales.

Within your team, PR reports are useful in analyzing your work and determining what's working and what isn't and making tweaks and changes to future initiatives based on those findings. It also helps keep your PR team on track to achieving larger goals.

Externally, PR reports are an essential way to present results to clients and, above all, build trusting, longer-lasting relationships with them. They're also a great way to gauge how your brand resonates with your target audience.

Types of PR reports

When creating a PR report, the first question you'll want to ask is: Who's my audience? For example, is the report for internal leadership or will it be sent externally to a client and their team? This information will help you determine the type of PR report you need to build.

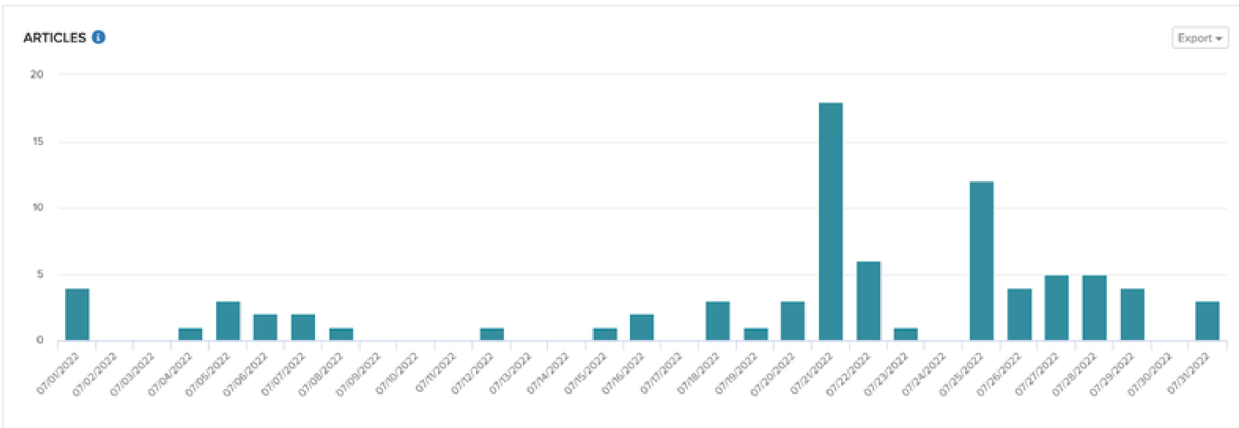
Other questions you'll want to ask include:

- Why is it necessary?
- What should the PR report reveal?
- What's the intended takeaway?

As you answer these questions, consider the most common types of PR reports below.

Monthly
Monthly PR reports are one of the most common types of reports. These are great internal tools to share with your team, managers or clients.

The purpose of monthly reports is to ensure your campaigns and PR initiatives are on track. Identify trends to determine what's working and what may need improving.



Quarterly
Quarterly reports are often sent to management—whether that's internal leadership or higher-ups at your client's company. Think: senior directors, VP of communications, CMOs and CEOs.

These reports should paint a high-level picture of the team's progress over the past 90 days. It's a great opportunity to show off your success as well as justify your team's budget. Quarterly PR reports should:

- Demonstrate the value of spending
- Summarize progress
- Show next steps

Annual
Annual reports are perhaps the most important type of PR reports. For these, your target audience will be a CEO and other C-level managers, the board of directors, investors, and other important stakeholders. This report will help them determine your budget for the following year.

The purpose of an annual report is to show off your team's value. Highlight the year's biggest wins and outcomes with data. This is also an opportunity to identify resources that may need to be worked into your future budget, like new hires or additional tools.

Campaign
Depending on the size of the campaign, the audience for these reports will be the same as your monthly or quarterly reports. Think: Team members and key stakeholders.

These reports should highlight the specific goal or set of key performance indicators (KPIs) established before the start of the campaign, like launching a new product, entering a new market or promoting an upcoming event.

Crisis
Crisis reports are often built out for management or even higher-level stakeholders like the board. The goal of this report is to explain what specific steps your PR team took to reduce the spread of negative sentiment and maintain the brand's perception during a period of turmoil.

How to create actionable PR reports

With PR reports, it's not enough to throw together some metrics and call it a day. The key is to create reports with actionable takeaways and next steps. Here are some best practices to keep in mind.

1. Set specific goals
Always set specific, measureable and timebound goals that you can report on. It's also important to align with relevant teams (like marketing) and stakeholders on these goals to make sure you're all on the same page.

2. Measure what matters
Remember: KPIs will vary by industry and campaign goals, so focus on the most relevant goals that directly reflect your campaign's progress and your organization's mission.

When determining what KPIs to include in a report, think back to the specific goals behind the campaign. What numbers will best show off progress or achievements? Consider the type of campaign—like brand awareness, social, integrated marketing and communications—then drill down to better understand what KPIs will best reflect these goals.

3. Provide context for the available data
With PR reports, it's not enough to dump a bunch of data into a document. You must include context around the data—the "why." Here are a few strategies to better tell this story:

- Conduct interviews across departments to understand how your campaign impacted them.
- Choose the right benchmarks.
- Focus on providing actionable insights.

4. Incorporate visual elements into PR reports

Add more impact and value to your PR report by including visual elements, like charts, graphs and other infographics. This is a great way to show your progress.

No need to dig into a spreadsheet for this capability. **A dedicated PR reporting software solution solution** can automatically generate compelling graphics for you. Just be sure to keep your audience in mind and not include too many visuals. This could become overwhelming.

5. Leverage tools that deliver actionable insights

Finally, when creating a PR report, lean on tools that'll help you deliver actionable insights. For instance, Muck Rack's powerful software lets you build customizable dashboards in seconds. They're interactive, sharable and updated in real-time. This allows you to analyze, benchmark and compare coverage.

There are other benefits to using PR software to collect and analyze this data, including:

- A more streamlined workflow. Everything is in one place with Muck Rack, so you need less tools, which makes for a better workflow and easier training process.

- Better data organization. No need to figure out the best way to present the data. Muck Rack does this for you.

- Automate your reports. Muck Rack can automatically aggregate press hits in real time. That means no more searching the web. Instead, for each piece of content, Muck Rack tells you where it's been shared, what journalists have shared it, social sentiment and media outline information.

Tips for creating PR reports for executives

Reporting for executives requires PR pros to not only communicate results effectively, but also tie those results to business metrics. This is essential for proving the value of PR and justifying future PR budget. Here are a few pointers for creating PR reports for executives.

1. Include meaningful metrics

Clearly outline the goals and objectives of your PR campaign to provide more context, especially if it's a new campaign that may require additional resources in the future. Start with the big picture: Is this a brand awareness campaign? Social campaign? Integrated marketing and communications campaign? Then drill down to better understand the target KPIs they're looking to hit.

2. Make sure the frequency and medium match expectations

How you report on a single breaking news alert is going to look different from your regular weekly, monthly or quarterly coverage summary reports, which also look vastly different from your year-end summary.

Many reports will be shared with your team via less formal methods, such as email or messaging apps like Slack. Also keep in mind your marketing and communications departments may benefit from these reports, too.

Work with the leadership team to determine when a more formal presentation is necessary and how frequently. This may require you to pull together several different reports per month, each containing different information that is meant for different stakeholders.

3. Include visual elements in your reports

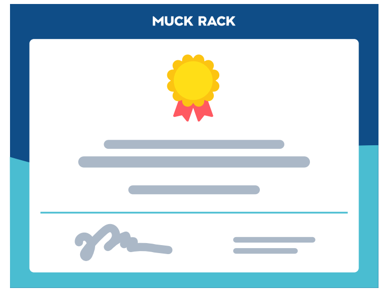
Just because you're pulling a bunch of data for these reports, that doesn't mean you have to dump it in a spreadsheet—get visual! Using easy-to-follow graphs, charts and other infographics to showcase your progress is a great way to show your impact and success in a way that's not totally overwhelming.

4. Don't forget to report qualitative data

When you're building out these reports, it's easy to dive deep into the numbers and never look back, but qualitative data can be equally impactful in these reports. Spend some time analyzing conversations and audience sentiment (aka social listening) to find the "why" behind a campaign's performance. This allows you to better understand your campaign and also replicate the success—or troubleshoot—in the future.

Next steps

Get certified in the Fundamentals of Media Measurement



Muck Rack's Fundamentals of Media Measurement course is a deep dive into everything you need to know about media measurement.

Instructors Gini Dietrich, founder and author of Spin Sucks, Johna Burke, Global Managing Director of AMEC and Christopher Penn, cofounder and Chief Data Scientist at TrustInsights.ai will guide you through essential measurement frameworks.

What's in it for you?

- **Master goal-setting:** Learn to set clear PR objectives and measure the metrics most relevant to you.
- **Level-up your career:** Get an industry-recognized certificate to showcase your expertise. Whether you're a seasoned PR pro or a newcomer, brand, agency or Fortune 500 company, this course is for you.
- **Take the course at your pace:** This on-demand course takes about 2 hours of your time with lessons designed to keep you hooked.

The course is made up of six on-demand video modules, totalling around 2 hours, with a quiz at the end of each lesson and a final exam.

GET CERTIFIED

About Muck Rack

Muck Rack's Public Relations Management (PRM) platform enables thousands of organizations including Google, International Rescue Committee, Pfizer, Golin, Zapier and Duolingo to build trust, tell their stories and prove the value of earned media through its media database and monitoring and reporting features. Journalists use Muck Rack's free tools to showcase their portfolios, analyze news about any topic and measure the impact of their stories.

Learn more at **muckrack.com**.