

Public Relations Adds Value to Marketing Efforts

Peter Mayer Public Relations
www.peteramayer.com

What is the value of good PR?

Measuring the effectiveness of public relations (PR) is often confusing. When PR professionals convince journalists to consider a client's story worthy of attention, and a client's product is subsequently featured in an editorial story, the price of such an "endorsement" – due to the objective nature of editorial copy and placement – is valuable indeed. In fact, editorial exposure is considered even more valuable than paid media – *it's news because it wasn't bought, but earned.*



The value of paid ad space is no mystery. More difficult to determine is the value of an earned media placement.

Everyone agrees this kind of exposure is highly valuable. And everybody wants it. But how do you quantify the value of ink, electrons or radio waves? There's the rub. There is no standard way to measure PR value, but Peter Mayer Public Relations has a proven methodology that monetizes editorial placement in dollars and cents so clients can measure results.

What is the Peter Mayer Public Relations process?

To understand what makes PR exposure valuable, it helps to understand how PR works. The Peter Mayer Public Relations process for earning media exposure begins with collaboration. We sit down with clients to discover and determine clear objectives and target audiences. It is not uncommon to have different objectives for different target audiences. That's why the PR team tailors strategies and tactics to specific goals. *Good PR is not achieved with a one-size-fits-all approach.*

For example, we wouldn't pitch an NPR business correspondent the same way we would an editor of *InStyle* magazine. We tailor our media outreach based on the different media channels' format and audience to ensure we give them relevant, accurate and compelling information in ways each media professional finds useful.

Gaining a journalist's trust is critical to success. Our ability to garner positive stories for our clients is rooted in our reputation as a trusted source of information and our expectations for journalists to present the information we provide them in an objective format. We consider our relationships with media as professional partnerships. Journalists look to us for accurate information and we provide it, looking to them for accurate and compelling stories. While it's nice to be friends with our media contacts, it's more important for us to be credible sources of information for them at all times. *Trust is what keeps them coming back to us. And we take that responsibility very seriously.*

Your story may not be a story. Occasionally, a client provides information that we evaluate as having little or no news value based on our experience with the media, the topic or the potential risks involved. If the information is of little interest to the media, we either recommend no action or we gather more information to reposition the story in a more creative way to make the story newsworthy. The resulting tactic could manifest itself in several ways: a news release, a special event, a blog entry, a Tweet, a YouTube video or a meeting request with targeted media contacts.

Regardless of the client's goals or tactics used to achieve them, *our job as PR practitioners is not finished until we measure and report results.*

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How does Peter Mayer measure PR value?

There are several ways to measure PR's value. Our approach is to first determine how the client defines success, and we adapt our strategy and tactics to generate the success the client seeks. Success could take the form of sales, impressions, websites visited, perceptions changed.

Most often, we measure success by providing an Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE), which yields a return on investment (ROI) figure for our PR efforts.

AVE is a traditional PR formula that considers the advertising rate charged for placing the same size or length advertisement in the same medium and then multiplies the space (for editorial) or time (for broadcast) by a number between 2.5 and 5.0. The multiplier accounts for the implied credibility of the earned PR message, having passed through the filter of editorial scrutiny.

This method is not perfect. It does not take into account the "sentiment," or the degree of influence of the message. It cannot fully measure the damage done by a negative article or the positive feelings imparted by a glowing review. And it cannot measure the value in keeping a potentially damaging story out of the headlines. In the end, PR is not paid advertising, so you can't accurately compare the two.

However, in a tough economic climate, when marketing directors are forced to show ROI on everything they do, the AVE measurement is the generally accepted solution and is considered a credible yardstick by most all industry members.

How do you measure the value of social media PR exposure?



As social media sites gain popularity, the value of social media placement grows.

Social media – the online world of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and a dizzying array of other sites – is growing exponentially. Measuring the value of commentary in this space is a work in progress, like the medium itself.

As with traditional media, measuring value in social media depends on how the client defines success. Is it number of page views? Positive comments? Content downloads? RSS feed subscriptions? Sign-ups? Online efforts can return a torrent of analytics. But, again, hard data doesn't measure sentiment – the intangible results such as improved reputation, customer retention or the strengthening of Business-to-Business relationships.

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As companies trim marketing budgets, the cost advantages of engaging social media platforms to generate messaging, instead of investing in the creation of paid media ad campaigns, are becoming increasingly valuable.

Since most social media platforms do not offer advertising opportunities to use for comparison, there is, at the moment, no standard accepted way to measure the PR value of social media. But make no mistake – social media is valuable.

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Research conducted among IT decision makers by IDG Connect suggests that social content is a significant decision-making factor within the IT investment process. The most noteworthy finding from the study showed that *when a vendor is presented in a positive light in a social media landscape, the likelihood of sales increases*. Conversely, negative social media exposure makes sales more difficult.

The social media experiment is not yet accurately quantifiable because its success seems to be based on the quality of interaction between people. The intersection of business and personal lives within social platforms gives marketers a chance to speak to prospects in both casual and business-appropriate way. And the value of the intangible, positive human interaction experience is immeasurably powerful.

What does good PR look like?

While there is no consensus on the best way to measure good PR, almost everyone recognizes it when they see it. Here are a few examples of work we've done recently so you can think about what we could do for you...and how we would measure the success of our efforts.



THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM WWII Museum

TV

Objective: To earn media exposure on the expansion of The National WWII Museum in New Orleans.

Strategy: Secure top media market television news segment with The National WWII Museum Chairman and CEO Nick Mueller.

Tactics: Pitch WNBC-TV in New York on a WWII Museum expansion interview to coincide with Memorial Day.

Results: Secured a four-minute interview with Mueller on WNBC-TV's *New York Nightly News*, reaching five million households and 12 million viewers; its PR value totaled \$65,000. [Watch the interview.](#)

Social Media

Objective: To inform younger, digital audiences about The National WWII Museum.

Strategy: Attract online WWII enthusiasts with a Twitter handle (WWII today) that tweets about WWII and its relevance today.

Tactics: Attract Twitter followers with a mix of links, photos and videos relating to WWII with blended news and information about The National WWII Museum.

Results: Since its inception in March, WWII today now has more than 7,100 followers and has garnered endorsements from research institutions such as the Smithsonian and Pritzker Military Library. Tweets now regularly get 25,000 views and 125,000 impressions. [\(tweetreach.com\).](#)



Louisiana Department of Culture,
Recreation & Tourism

Objective: To earn media exposure on the locals' version of New Orleans Mardi Gras.

Strategy: Host bloggers to provide daily updates on how New Orleanians celebrate Mardi Gras.

Tactics: Invite a blogger, videographer and photographer to visit New Orleans during Mardi Gras to post daily updates on their experiences. Introduce bloggers to some of the places and traditions that locals enjoy during Mardi Gras.

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Results: A daily Mardi Gras blog on *National Geographic Traveler's* Intelligent Travel, which showcases cultural, authentic and sustainable travel destinations. At last count, the posts generated 62,259 visits and 96,360 page views. [Visit the blog.](#)

W

NEW ORLEANS **W Hotels**

Objective: To position W French Quarter as the “hip” location to hang out after Dirty Linen Night events.

Strategy: Host “green-friendly” Dirty Linen Night after-party with art by local “green” artist Chris Kaiser, music by Project 30-90, and vodka donated by VeeV.

Tactics: Distribute press release via local media. Promote event via social media channels (Facebook invite and Twitter) and organizations such as 504ward, Curious Tribe and Live Green Orleans to attract their followers/members.

Results: A [nola.com post](#) about the event received 2,717 page views. The W Cabana Giveaway promoted through 504ward reached 1,500 contacts. A combination banner ad and email through NolaFunGuide.com reached more than 15,000 people. The event was named [Live Green Orleans' No. 1 recommendation](#). An estimated 150-175 people attended the event, which was described as the best attended of the various Dirty Linen Night events.

BLANCHARD

AMERICA'S RARE COIN & PRECIOUS METALS FIRM®

Blanchard

Objective: To generate awareness of Blanchard and Company as economic experts on the gold market.

Strategy: Leverage the recurring wire service gold market news stories to feature Blanchard and Company as opinion makers and thought leaders on investing in gold.

Tactics: Craft timely economic analysis on the gold market and pitch it to the Associated Press (AP), along with making a company analyst available for a follow-up interview.

Results: The Associated Press interviewed Blanchard and Company analysts and used them as the only experts featured in the wire service's daily report on the gold market, positioning the company as the “go to” experts and a “precious metals investment firm.” The article appeared in print and online in outlets including ABC News, Yahoo! News, Google News, Forbes.com, *Houston Chronicle*, *Charleston Daily Mail*, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, *Miami Herald*, *Washington Post*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Buffalo News*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Huffington Post* and *Seattle Times*. [Read the article.](#)

How can Peter Mayer Public Relations help?

It is easy to become overwhelmed when considering all the different communications platforms from which to choose. Choosing platforms that provide the best ROI can be even more daunting. We can deliver your key messages to your target audience and measure the effort's success against your intended results. For example, something as simple as your business position statement can become a compelling story if it is properly couched and distributed to a variety of media channels.

To discuss building a public relations outreach effort, contact **Butler Burdine**, Director of Business Development, at burdineb@peteramayer.com or call 504.210.1270 today.