

How to get the most out of Media Measurement

By Melissa Davis, Head of Media and PR at the Law Society. This online article featured in CorpComms on 5th November 2009. <http://bit.ly/6r3AEF>

Melissa Davis is running a national PR campaign to promote the brand of solicitor to the public and offers advice on how to get the most out of media measurement tools.

(1) Set KPIs

Video killed the radio star and now new media, along with falling advertising revenue, has killed the print. In order to keep up, you need to know the ratio of your media reach. I set my KPIs into our measurement tool to allow me to compare performance for different time periods and to assess whether or not the Society is improving its performance from the benchmark analysis. Two years ago getting increased print media coverage was the main KPI for the Law Society press office. Since then, using data from my media measurement tool, I benchmarked new media at 15 per cent. By this June, I had edited that to 30 per cent. This allows me to redefine the KPIs for the team so that we evolve to keep up with the latest trends in social media and online coverage.

(2) Prove your worth to the chief executive

Presenting an impressive set of figures to the chief executive and board demonstrating that PR Advertising Value has increased by £13 million to £40 million is certainly going to take the heat off. To us PR experts, PR ad value is a crude figure. To the CEO - it's about being able to prove your team's worth with actual figures - which is worth its weight in gold.

(3) Evaluate campaigns

After every campaign I do a separate media evaluation. It allows me to see what has worked and which campaigns should be repeated and how they might be changed next time. If you can cover your advertising department's costs then you have more leverage to repeat and justify the time spent on that issue. Some issues will take a lot of PR time but show small results - useful when prioritising the workload of a busy department.

(4) Select the messages you want out there

If the message you want out in the media isn't being picked up then you need to ask yourself why. If the column inches are high but the message is lost then using your measurement tool should help to learn lessons. Who is picking up your message? Who isn't? Which journalists do you need to spend more time with explaining and drilling down your organisation's external key messages?

(5) Define your weaknesses

It's important to know where you get good coverage, but it's more important to know where you do not. Are you getting impressive results in print but being shunned by the broadcast media? Do your spokespersons need training? And does this information allow you to ask for more budget to close that gap?

(6) Increase the team?

If you can prove that with every new team member you can increase your PR reach by 100 per cent, then you might find the business case signed off before you've even crossed the last t. If you have defined an area of weakness, assigned a PR officer to that issue and can show in next month's evaluation that they have brought in results then you're on your way to a bigger team.

(7) Keeping negative coverage under control

An industry standard tool will not only evaluate what sort of positive coverage you're getting but the amount and type of negative coverage. Brand wealth depends on avoiding negative coverage - with a measurement tool you can measure your corporate reputation in the media. If a certain media source is permanently criticising you and putting out false information, it's probably time for lunch with the editor. The worst thing you can do is ignore it. Factual coverage is great - positive coverage is better. Choose between a 'nib' saying *The Law Society has run a campaign*, or *the Law Society has ran a successful campaign*, says legal commentator Joshua Rozenberg - the latter is the one every PR should be aiming for.

(8) Assess who is commenting on your brand

Are your stakeholders discussing your brand on blogs and social networking sites and writing comments you're not happy about? Do you have bloggers who constantly review and tweet about your products? A measurement tool allows you to find out who these people are and decide which ones you want to engage with. It should be about changing the hearts and minds of some and positively encouraging others to be brand leaders for you.

(9) Check your media mix

If you're a national organisation and getting most of your coverage in the nationals, are you missing out on a large section of your target media - the regional papers? These days the regional press are more familiar with breaking news, which is then picked up by the nationals and broadcast media. Recently I sold a story to the *Evening Sentinel* in Staffordshire, which was then picked up by the *Daily Telegraph* and BBC. If your media mix isn't right then you're likely to be missing out on communication with some of your important stakeholders. We currently have a legal aid issue which affects Bristol and Manchester - I expect next quarter's evaluation to reveal bigger coverage in those areas.

(10) Motivate the team and the business

Leading the team I know that when we show a marked improvement I feel good and the team is especially motivated. I like to shout from the rooftops how well we have done and use the media measurement results in all internal communications. Good results in relation to measurement of our KPIs proves to the business that we are working well on their behalf. Equally, when the figures are not as good as I expect or hope for, I know which areas we need to improve upon. The use of the results extends beyond motivating the press office. I always tell other departments that their work has secured x per cent of coverage per quarter. It motivates them to engage with the PR department too.