



MACIAS PR

How to Measure an Effective PR Campaign: The ROI of Public Relations

6 Methods to Measure the ROI of Public Relations

Author: Mark Macias

*No portion of this report may be reproduced in any form without the prior written consent from Mark Macias.
The contents of these pages are protected by the copyright laws of the United States and other foreign jurisdictions.
Copyright © 2013 All rights reserved.*

What is the ROI on PR?

Did you know the most popular Superbowl commercial from 2011 spent less than a penny to reach each consumer? But that low ROI (Return on Investment) didn't come solely from advertising. A good portion of it came from the PR and social media push behind the commercial, helping it become one of the lowest ad buys per viewer in Super Bowl history, according to Nielson statistics.

That Volkswagen Mini Vader ad reached about 111 million people from the Super Bowl alone, but when you add the 58.5 million people who watched it on YouTube, the total viewership jumps to 170 million viewers and keeps growing. Now that is the power of social media and a successful publicity campaign.

Those are remarkable ROI numbers that make even a Google AdSense buy look expensive.

Many business owners, especially online commerce companies, devote a large portion of their budgets to online advertising because when executed effectively, it will translate into new sales. But what those business owners frequently forget is when that ad budget is over, so goes the media campaign.

It doesn't work like that with public relations. Your story placed on the websites of the Los Angeles Times, New York Post or other influential websites will continue to educate consumers on your product long after that PR campaign ends.

In addition, there are other methods to measure a successful PR campaign as well. They include:

Measure ROI with Media Placements: With many media campaigns, it is possible to measure the reach of your message. In addition to the number of media placements secured by your PR firm, you should also look closely at the internal distribution numbers and demographics. Many news organizations publish these numbers on their advertising pages, giving you insight into how many or what type of consumer you are reaching. This assessment can give you a measurable look at the number of consumers your PR campaign is reaching.

Measure ROI with Search Engine Ranking: If you type in "[PR Help](#)" in Google, you will see a link to this www.PRHelp.co at the top of the first page. That high profile search engine ranking didn't happen by accident. It was a choreographed PR strategy that took a little less than 3-months to achieve.

Every business owner wants to be on the first page of Google, especially if they are selling a product or service. There are many ways to push your website up in rank – key word optimization, Internet marketing, promoting your website through back links – but one of the most cost-effective ways to increase your search ranking is via

public relations. For those not familiar, this is called Search Engine Optimization or SEO for short.

So how does PR help your search engine ranking?

Nearly every PR story helps with your website ranking because the search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing) identify these websites as quality links. In other words, Google believes if the [New York Times](#) links to your website, it must have value. More often than not, that analysis is true.

In December 2012, my PR agency, [MaciasPR](#), got a client high profile media placements with CBSNews, Entrepreneur, VentureBeat, CNN and other influential industry blogs. All of these news outlets put a link to the company on their website. These so-called “backlinks” or “inbound” links helped promote our client not just to business readers, but it also quietly helped their ranking with Google. And as we continue to get this new client more media placements, Google, Yahoo and other search engine websites will recognize these backlinks by placing a larger emphasis on their website.

Here’s another way PR can help your website get a higher ranking with the search engines. Smaller blogs frequently run stories or snippets from the larger media outlets. If you are able to get a large story in a major newspaper, there is a good chance that you can get other, smaller websites to also do a story promoting your business, which can help your SEO. In the case with that client on CBSNews.com, we used that prominent media placement to land media placements with smaller industry blogs.

So if you want new clients or customers to find your website via search engines, consider looking to public relations as an alternative. If your sales depend on traffic, you should consider devoting a portion of your online marketing budget to PR. Unlike online ads, which expire with your budget, with PR your stories and promotions keep working long after the publicity campaign is over.

Measure ROI with Analytics: In October 2013, Google changed its analytics data, making it harder to determine key words that are sending traffic to your website. Before that change, business owners could track traffic and popular key words that sent new traffic to their website. It is still possible to gather this information using Google Webmaster, but the data is still not as detailed under the new secure search.

The good news is you can still measure the ROI from PR using Google Analytics. If your publicist can get a hyperlink placed with the news organization, Analytics will tell you which websites are sending you new traffic. Unfortunately, a successful PR strategy gets your company into the conversation, so analytics can’t measure this aspect of PR. However, if more people are finding your website using specific keywords for your company, you can safely assume the PR campaign is driving your company into the conversation, which in turn is driving more searches to your website.

Credibility among Customers: Public Relations is especially effective and measurable when it comes to increasing your credibility among the service sector industry. Consumers want to know that your service has been vetted and is reliable. If you're on the local newscast as an expert or on CNBC as a financial expert, your customer will assume you are of a higher caliber. This increased credibility will improve your profile with potential customers and can lead to more sales.

An example of this occurred in 2012 when MaciasPR helped a mortgage broker in Arizona get on the local news. The mortgage broker posted the video story from Channel 3 on his website, effectively reinforcing his credibility with potential customers. He later told me he had at least 4 mortgage clients say they went with him because he was an expert on the local news. Credibility matters, especially when it comes to an industry that is driven by personality and style. If the media considers calls someone an expert, consumers will also buy into the narrative.

It's very important to make sure you include media placements on your website. I recently spoke with a medical doctor who said she had hired a PR firm, but I didn't see any of those media stories on her website. If your company is the news, make sure you are promoting that story, especially if the story positions you as an expert in your profession.

But before you get credibility with consumers, you must first establish credibility with the journalists or your PR campaign will never gain traction. Whenever a person pitches a story idea to the media, the journalist is going to subconsciously measure the value of the person's integrity and experience. If the reporter or producer is going to invest time and energy pursuing a story, he wants to make sure the idea has credence from the start so he's not wasting his time on false leads.

So how do you determine whether you are credible enough to speak about the topic you are pitching? Here are a few questions to ask yourself when trying to establish your credibility for any PR campaign.

- Q) What makes you qualified to speak on this topic?
- Q) How many years of experience have you spent in the industry?
- Q) What part of your daily routine is spent reinforcing your expertise?
- Q) What do you know as an insider that others would want to know?

You may possess a limited amount of expertise, but that shouldn't stop you from continually trying to establish more credibility for your PR campaign. Websites, op-ed articles, trade magazines can all lend credence to a person in search of credibility. So can [writing a book](#), [blog](#) or [article for your community newspaper](#). Remember, the media needs experts for nearly every story because it lends credibility to their reporting. Even the salacious stories require insider knowledge.

Social Media Influence: A successful PR campaign that uses video can become another way to measure the ROI of PR. My company, MaciasPR, produced videos for a small New York City restaurant, showcasing the restaurant's happy hour, ambiance and dinner menus. One video alone got more than 3,000 views from users on Youtube. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTwnkOp7f5Q>) Another video showcasing the restaurant's live entertainment got more than 2,400 page views (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDgeckV0zhY>). These were potential customers who went out of their way to look at this restaurant. It might be difficult to measure the exact ROI from these video views but it does prove how PR is introducing your business to new customers. Research also shows video on your website can increase sales up to two-fold, not to mention the added SEO value it brings with search engines.

Measure ROI with Sales: It's very difficult for a PR firm to assess the ROI from sales if the client doesn't share that information with the agency, however every business owner should be able to assess over time where their clients are coming from. One way to better track PR ROI is to create a special website link for the media campaign. If customers are typing in this direct link with any search engines, you know your PR campaign is gaining traction.

It's important to remember that the primary purpose of PR is to introduce your product or business to consumers. A successful campaign will get your product into the conversation, which shouldn't be confused for marketing. Measuring the ROI from a marketing or ad buy is fairly straight-forward, but PR has multiple prongs and variables that can make it more difficult to assess the direct impact of the bottom line, but by combining these six different methods, you will have a better view of how your PR campaign is having a direct impact on the bottom line.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The founder of MACIAS PR, Mark M. Macias, has worked inside the newsrooms of NBC, CBS, KTVK, the Arizona Republic and King World Productions. As the Executive Producer with WNBC in New York, Macias approved and vetted story ideas from publicists, reporters, producers and viewers. He was also Executive Producer for a national business show that was syndicated by NBC. This background in programming and editorial gives us an edge when finding the strong narrative needed for coverage.

MaciasPR SERVICES INCLUDE

Public Relations, Crisis Communications, Media Training, Messaging, Social Media Strategy, Original Content for Blogs/Newsletters and Website Design, Press Releases and Distribution, Introductions to Journalists, Event Publicity, and Video Production.

If you are interested in scheduling a call with Mark Macias to discuss a media strategy for your company, you can reach him at: Mark@MaciasPR.com.

No portion of this report may be reproduced in any form without the prior written consent from Mark Macias.

The contents of these pages are protected by the copyright laws of the United States and other foreign jurisdictions.

Copyright © 2013 All rights reserved.