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In today’s world public relation plays a significant role in our daily lives. They are an integral part of an organization and are very significant in informing, educating, assuring, and creating interest in an organization. The department affects every organization big or small. They foster communication between organizations and are point of contact for anyone wants to know about the organization. Since we are in a digital age where social media plays a significant role in influencing decisions in the absence of a formal PR group an organization can land in trouble. The reason being difficulty in controlling people’s views and opinions about any organization.
Public relations professionals possess the ability to understand the qualitative impact of their activities but often aren’t able to express them in the format significant to executives. The current quantitative measurement approach such as advertising values and measuring positive impact have become ineffective in proving the contribution of public relations to the organization. It is suggested that public relations practitioners should attach their activities to their company’s KPI and then show the value of campaigns, how they influenced the campaigns and ultimately the company’s goals.
For any organization to develop and implement a measurement plan for PR department, the professionals within the department must understand what exactly return on investment (ROI) means. One of the definitions of return on investment (ROI) is the amount of revenue earned via the activities of the public relations teams and their initiatives less the program expenditures. Though it is not the best way to evaluate return on investment of PR executives (Multimedia, 2014). There are many tools that help to derive the ROI of public relations. Such tools demonstrate the value of public relations professionals. The output from media coverage can have a similar level of impact as the sales data. This data can be used in the same way as the sales data used for advertising. Some tools which can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the PR deliverables is:
- Website traffic
- Searches for the brand,
- Call volume,
- Brand-awareness analysis via survey’s(pre- and post-PR),
- Mind share tracking
Evaluation measures are essential elements in the creating successful communication programs. The KPIs also keep the professionals aware and alert. It is a myth and unfortunate to know that a good PR strategy delivers results only to the company’s bottom line. In reality if the evaluation criteria is in place one can measure the ROI of PR, and understand that the value is much more. If analyzed properly the executives can get clear connections between public relations and the indicators that drive growth in their organizations (Cmo. com, 2014).

## Some key indicators that can be put in place to evaluate the PR performance is the following:

- Conversion of leads into Prospects
- Involvement in shortening the sales cycles
- Key Contacts
- Relationships with Media
- Positive visibility in social media
- Positive quotes from analyst or 3rd party
- Impact made on strategic-decision making of the company
Gone are the days when, ROI (Return on Investment) and evaluation were loose concepts and disciplines like PR (public relations) were exempted and were not subjected to ROI expectations. With changing times there is an increased accountability in the PR departments. They are manifested in systems like Key Performance Indictors (KPIs), benchmarking and ROIs. Evaluation s increasingly becoming mandatory requirement for sustaining of all departments without exceptions. (Macnamara, 2014)

## References

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