

# TAKING THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY

TOM McCUIN



amec  
prca



ICCO

INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNICATIONS  
CONSULTANCY  
ORGANISATION



PRSA  
Public  
Relations  
Society of  
America

IPR  
Institute  
for Public  
Relations  
FOUNDED 1956

# THE MEASUREMENT PARADOX

"...not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

Cameron, W. (1957). "The Elements of Statistical Confusion Or: What Does the Mean Mean?"

# WHAT ARE THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES?

- Adopted in 2010 to provide PR practitioners with a guide to developing measurement programs
- Seven Principles:
  1. Importance of Goal Setting and Measurement
  2. Measuring the Effect on Outcomes is Preferred to Measuring Outputs
  3. The Effect on Business Results Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible
  4. Media Measurement Requires Quantity and Quality
  5. AVEs are not the Value of Public Relations
  6. Social Media Can and Should be Measured
  7. Transparency and Replicability are Paramount to Sound Measurement
- Their weakness was that they were more about what not to do

# WHERE TO FIND THEM

- <http://www.instituteforpr.org/barcelona-principles-2-0-updated-2015/>

# MEET BARCELONA 2.0

- 2015 revision based on recognition of weaknesses of the original document
- Expanded the principles to address integrated communications and not strictly PR
- Focused more on what do do
- Acknowledgement that qualitative measures have importance
- Still lacking in the how to measure

## BARCELONA PRINCIPLES 2.0



# MEET BARCELONA 2.0

1. Goal Setting and Measurement are Fundamental to Communication and Public Relations
2. Measuring Communication Outcomes is Recommended Versus Only Measuring Outputs
3. The Effect on Organizational Performance Can and Should Be Measured Where Possible
4. Measurement and Evaluation Require Both Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
5. AVEs are not the Value of Communication
6. Social Media Can and Should be Measured Consistently with Other Media Channels
7. Measurement and Evaluation Should be Transparent, Consistent and Valid

# 1. GOAL SETTING AND MEASUREMENT ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

## What AMEC Says To Do:

- Conduct measurement and evaluation against defined goals and SMART
- Make goals quantitative or qualitative, but still identify who, what, how much, by when
- Be holistic: traditional and social media; changes in awareness among key stakeholders, comprehension, attitude, and behavior; and impact on organizational results. Campaigns or ongoing are both relevant.
- Be integrated and aligned across paid, earned, shared and owned channels where possible

# 1. GOAL SETTING AND MEASUREMENT ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

## What This Means:

- Properly defining goals and objectives is the most important step
- Goals and objectives should be nested with your organization's overall strategic plan
- SMART = Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound
- Set goals and objectives that cover all your efforts across all media
- Progress toward *Goals* is measured by compiling the progress made toward measurable *Objectives*.



# S.M.A.R.T.

- **Specific:** does the objective describe what we hope to achieve?
- **Measurable:** is it constructed in such a way that we can measure it using either qualitative or quantitative methods?
- **Attainable:** is the objective a reasonable expectation?
- **Relevant:** does the objective apply to the overall goal?
- **Time-bound:** is there a deadline for achieving the objective?

# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- **GOAL:** a statement rooted in an organization's mission or vision, acknowledging an issue and sketching out how the organization hopes to see it settled.
- **OBJECTIVE:** statement emerging from an organization's goal, presented in clear and measurable terms, pointing toward particular levels of awareness, acceptance, or action.

Smith, Ronald D. (2013). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*. Routledge: New York

# EXAMPLE OF A GOAL AND SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

## GOAL:

“Improve the organization’s reputation in the industry.”

## OBJECTIVES:

- Increase positive mentions in industry-specific publications by 25 percent by May 2017
- Double attributions to the organization’s subject matter experts by May 2017
- Decrease incorrect citations of company’s history by 50 percent by May 2017

# HELP AVOIDING PITFALLS

- When people perceive that a goal is unattainable and will negatively affect their performance review, they will filibuster
- Stress the importance of deciding what to measure first
  - Will we count goats or sheep?
- Then decide what would constitute progress
  - An increase in the number of sheep? Better health across the flock? Fewer losses to wolves? All of these?
- Then choose a target number for that measure
  - Hard number or percentage change over a baseline

## 2. MEASURING COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES IS RECOMMENDED VERSUS ONLY MEASURING OUTPUTS

### What AMEC Says To Do:

- Tailor practices for measuring the effect on outcomes to the objectives of the communication program
- Consider both quantitative and qualitative methods
- Apply standard best practices in target audience research

# WHAT IS AN “OUTPUT?”

“...the short term or intermediate results of a particular public relations program or activity. Output analysis measures how well the organization presents itself to others and the amount of exposure or attention that the organization receives.”

Wimmer, R. and Dominick, J. (2014). *Mass Media Research, An Introduction* (Tenth Edition).  
Wadsworth : Boston

## 2. MEASURING COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES IS RECOMMENDED VERSUS ONLY MEASURING OUTPUTS

### What This Means:

- We don't talk just to hear ourselves; tracking your outputs is a start, but measuring what audiences do with those outputs is what's important
- It's okay to use "qualitative methods." Not everything can be expressed as a number.
  - More detail in Principle 4
- What is "best practice" in audience research? That depends on your budget and other limitations.

# 3. THE EFFECT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE CAN AND SHOULD BE MEASURED WHERE POSSIBLE

## What AMEC Says To Do:

- To measure results from communication for an organization, models that determine the effects of the quantity and quality of communication outputs on organizational metrics, while accounting for other variables, are a preferred choice
- Use models that determine the effects of the quantity and quality of communication outputs on organizational metrics (e.g., Demand for models to evaluate the impact on target audiences, survey research)
- Develop communication measures that can provide reliable input into integrated marketing and communication models, including through advanced econometrics and advanced survey analysis



# 3. THE EFFECT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE CAN AND SHOULD BE MEASURED WHERE POSSIBLE

## What This Means:

- A good strategic communications plan is “nested” with the organization’s strategic plan
  - Communications goals and objectives should support specific business objectives – they are “why” we communicate
- Determine how your communications efforts influenced customer behavior, not just how many people saw the message; i.e.:
  - Increased web traffic leading to increased conversions tied to communications efforts
  - Comments submitted to federal agency on proposed regulation
  - Congressional contacts arising from your message

# 4. MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION REQUIRE BOTH QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

## What AMEC Says To Do:

- Consider qualitative methods to better explain the quantitative (or to replace, in some cases)
- Media measurement, whether in traditional or online channels, should account for:
  - Impressions among the stakeholder or target audience
  - Quality of the media coverage including, but not limited to:
    - Tone
    - Credibility and Relevance Message Delivery
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> party or company spokesperson
    - Prominence as Relevant to the Medium
- Remember that we are measuring results and progress, not necessarily success
  - Quality measures can be negative, positive, or neutral

# 4. MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION REQUIRE BOTH QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

## What This Means:

- It's not the number of stories that counts (completely), it's the quality
- Not all news stories are equal.
  - Do you think this man believes that front-page exposure in the *New York Times* helped his communication efforts?



# QUALITATIVE MEASUREMENT DOES NOT MEAT INTUITIVE MEASUREMENT

"Public relations practitioners should not substitute intuition or approximations for objective measurement – guesswork has no place in evaluation research (or any research)."

Wimmer, R. and Dominick, J. (2014). *Mass Media Research, An Introduction* (Tenth Edition).  
Wadsworth : Boston

# QUALITATIVE MEASUREMENT DOES NOT MEAT INTUITIVE MEASUREMENT

- You can and must define what constitutes a positive, neutral, or negative story ahead of time.
  - Does the story present your organization or issue positively and accurately?
  - Are your messages included in the story and/or are your SMEs quoted fairly and accurately?

# CREDIBILITY AND RELEVANCE MESSAGE DELIVERY

- It's important to consider not just the readership, but the credibility of the outlet.
  - Would you rather have a positive story in a major metropolitan newspaper or a low-readership blog?
  - It depends on the audience!

# 5. AVES ARE NOT THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION

## What AMEC Says NOT To Do:

- Do not use Advertising Value Equivalents (AVEs)
- Do not use multipliers for “pass-along values” for earned versus paid media (unless proven to exist)

## What AMEC Says To Do:

- If you must make a comparison between the cost of space or time from earned versus paid media, use:
  - Negotiated advertising rates relevant to the client
  - Quality of the coverage (see Principle 4), including negative results; and
  - Physical space or time of the coverage related to the portion of the coverage that is relevant

# 5. AVES ARE NOT THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION

## What This Means:

- Do we REALLY need to discuss this any further?
- AVEs are a discredited metric.
- If your boss insists on using them, educate him/her.
- If you are forced to use this or a similar metric, account story quality and the amount of space containing your messages



# 6. SOCIAL MEDIA CAN AND SHOULD BE MEASURED CONSISTENTLY WITH OTHER MEDIA CHANNELS

## What AMEC Says To Do:

- Define clear goals and outcomes for social media
- Include measurement methods such as:
  - Media content analysis
  - Web and search analytics
  - Sales and CRM data
  - Survey data
- Evaluate the quality and quantity of social media (just like with conventional media)
- Focus measurement on engagement, “conversation” and “communities,” not just “coverage” or vanity metrics such as “likes”

# 6. SOCIAL MEDIA CAN AND SHOULD BE MEASURED CONSISTENTLY WITH OTHER MEDIA CHANNELS

## What This Means:

- Think “likes” equals popularity or reach?
  - How many Twitter followers or people who like your Facebook page are working for your competition?
- Focus on the conversation (and if you’re not having a conversation, you’re doing it wrong)
  - Are customers engaging with you positively?
  - Do you address negative comments with a solution in mind?
  - Are customers becoming advocates? (not just sharing, but actively promoting your content)

# 7. MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT, CONSISTENT AND VALID

## What AMEC Says To Do:

- Ensure integrity, honesty, openness and ethical practices
- Use valid methods
  - Quantitative = Reliable and replicable
  - Qualitative = Trustworthy
- Consider other relevant standards, like:
  - For Media Measurement:
    - Source of the content along with criteria used for collection
    - Analysis methodology
  - For Primary Research:
    - Methodology
    - Verbatim questions
    - Statistical methodology
- Recognize any potential biasing effects
  - In the research itself, or
  - Broader societal context

# 7. MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION SHOULD BE TRANSPARENT, CONSISTENT AND VALID

## What This Means:

- Don't make how you're measuring a secret, at least from your boss
- Measure the same way each time; don't change criteria mid-program
- Validity: "the degree to which an instrument actually measures what it sets out to measure." (Wimmer & Dominick)
- Reliability: "when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions." (Wimmer & Dominick)

# **DISCUSSION**