

Why Metrics Are the Key to Getting a Seat at the Revenue Table

The lines between PR, marketing, and demand generation are increasingly blending together. As a result, PR practitioners who were traditionally tasked with raising awareness and visibility now also increasingly need to drive revenue.

The good news is that these shifts are creating an opportunity for you to elevate your clients' perceptions of PR from a purely tactical function into a strategic one. In order for your clients to evolve their thinking, however, and ultimately offer you a seat at the revenue table, you have to be able to show them the real impact that PR can have.

While PR has historically been a tactic for delivering reputation and mindshare through earned media, today it has also become a way to reach consumers directly. In fact, it has morphed into an essential tool for driving the traffic, leads, and conversions necessary to fill your clients' pipeline and ultimately generate revenue.

The implication of this is that companies can no longer afford to let PR be an afterthought that's only considered once the big decisions have already been made. Instead, it needs to be included at the beginning of every strategic conversation about campaigns, projects, and initiatives to ensure that there's enough time to support them appropriately and maximize their impact on revenue.

Admittedly, this logic is easy enough for most PR practitioners to understand, but getting clients on board with the idea often takes some concrete evidence.



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Metrics make the case

The best way to earn a place at any revenue table is by communicating the strategic value of PR to your clients. When doing so, remember that numbers often speak louder than words. As a result, in addition to the clip books that PR practitioners have long used to showcase earned media, you will also need to start tracking and reporting a variety of metrics that demonstrate how your efforts have reached consumers directly and helped contribute to revenue. These include:

SOCIAL ACTIVITY

Social media isn't just a way to amplify your messages to as many people as possible; it's also an effective approach for driving referrals back to specific websites. Keep track of these referrals, as well as how your clients' social networks grow and improve in quality (as measured by increasing engagement numbers) thanks to your work. These efforts will continue to pay dividends for your clients long after their current campaign is done.



WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Your PR activities, and the social activity that they result in, will drive traffic to your clients' websites. By tracking how many page views and unique visitors your PR drives by using techniques like trackable links (see [here](#) for an example of how to build them in Google Analytics), as well as how engaged people were when they got to the website (as measured by time on page and bounce rate), you can illustrate the volume of high-quality leads that you are bringing to your clients. In the process, you will also be able to determine which channels are most effective at doing so.



CONVERSION RATES

Most importantly of all, track the rates at which prospects and customers convert as a result of your PR efforts. A conversion is simply a desired action that a person takes as a result of your PR, such as filling out a form, making an online purchase, or downloading an app. All of these conversions are important steps that buyers need to take as they make their way down the path to purchase.



The more that you are able to quantify the impact of what you are doing by tracking metrics like these, the better. Fortunately, there are a variety of tools that PR practitioners can use to demonstrate the impact that they are having, such as:

- Marketing automation tools
- Social media monitoring tools
- Customer relationship management tools
- Web analytics tools

It's important to note that these are all client-side tools that you will either need access to yourself or at least be able to derive reporting from with your clients' help. Requesting access to these tools is essential so that you can measure the success of your PR efforts beyond relying solely on your wire service's placement reporting.

Importantly, compiling the data from these tools can't be a one-off activity. Instead, it needs to become a part of your regular rhythm so that you are able to distribute reports to your clients on a monthly or even a bi-weekly basis. Doing so will have far more value—and allow you to demonstrate your real impact on revenue—much more effectively than relying on traditional clip-books and placement reporting alone.

You know how important it is for PR to have a seat at the revenue table to ensure strategic alignment across everything your clients do. To get that seat, you need to either help drive revenue or at a minimum be able to demonstrate the value of what you are doing by reporting on the right metrics. That's something that other areas of marketing have been doing for some time. Fail to keep up and you will be missing an opportunity to demonstrate your true value to your clients.

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