

## Seeing is believing: The future of measurement

8 November 2016 by Deb Camden — 1 Comment



Corporate communication is undergoing a massive transformation—stepping out from behind office walls to be part of the conversation with employees.

Digital platforms are providing powerful new ways of involving employees in social listening and, in turn, engaging them as advocates.

Take the example of global credit card corporation MasterCard, which has transformed their social media efforts by moving out from behind closed doors and into an employee drop-in area officially known as the “Conversation Suite.” In this space, staff are welcome to be part of the company’s social listening efforts—following what’s trending and seeing and learning in real time how they are responding.

At the company’s Purchase, New York, headquarters, product managers gaze at a 13-meter display that broadcasts feeds, visualizations, and performance metrics for more than 60 markets. When they want to dive deeper into the data, they go to “Insights Alley,” a room filled with casual lounges and large-scale touch screens. To follow trending stories, there’s the “Real-Time Marketing Lab,” where eight more displays highlight unfolding stories.

MasterCard began the experiment four years ago to create a “single source of truth” for its multimillion-dollar advertising budget. Another benefit is that they no longer need a statistician to help analyze data; they watch and observe as the trends unfold in real time. [Read more about their journey.](#)

It’s not only happening in the U.S. One of our innovative government clients at **The Communication Dividend** in Australia is proudly displaying their social media efforts for the past year for all staff, to see performance against their targets. Continuing their push for innovation, they are now considering “taking down the walls” and going live with their real-time dashboard on a large LED screen for all staff to share.

### Show me the metrics!

While “seeing is believing,” finding “metrics that matter” continues to be a challenge for communication professionals searching for insights to shape action. A quick Google search will uncover dozens of must-have metrics, but beyond the basics, there are some innovative measures being used by strategic communicators across the world.

### Capacity ratio

This innovative input metric highlights the capacity of a communication function to deliver, based on the number of full-time communication staffers.

This clever input metric was created by an innovative council in Canada. In their case, the ratio was calculated in two ways: a comparison of communication employees to residents (1:10,450) as well as a comparison to council employees (1:110).

The council takes it one step further by comparing their ratio against 18 benchmark cities—a powerful and objective way to be transparent about resourcing levels.

## Issues management effectiveness

Issues management is a key responsibility for most corporate communication functions, yet building a metric can be challenging. One answer is to have a disciplined issues management process that you can use to track at what stage issues are resolved. For example, was the issue resolved because it was anticipated? Was it assigned to someone with authority to resolve? Did it have a timely response? Was it closed to the complainant's satisfaction?

Whatever your process for managing issues, the outcomes of effective issues management includes time savings, resource savings, stakeholder satisfaction and ultimately, an enhanced reputation for your organization.

## Sponsorship health

Evaluating the performance of sponsorship can be challenging. The temptation is to focus on outputs that are easy to measure, such as media coverage and social media buzz rather than the outcomes a sponsorship actually produced with the target audience.

No single metric will answer this question but a bundle of metrics will can help to understand sponsorship health:

- **Awareness:** Are respondents able to recall your overall sponsorship? (This can only be understood through primary research.)
- **Perceptions:** Of those who are aware of the sponsorship, how do they perceive it? Does it encourage them to take action?
- **Engagement:** Beyond awareness, engagement looks at the specific actions taken as a result of exposure to your sponsorship: visiting a dedicated URL, downloading a document, making a donation.

## Communication value chain

With the ever-evolving use of social media and other digital channels, measurement and evaluation has become a confusing world of inputs, out-takes, outputs and outcomes. The communication value chain offers a simple measurement approach based on three types of metrics and segments communication effort based on its increasing value to organizations.

- **Transactional** metrics include all of the activities produced and that can be counted (inputs and outputs).
- **Transitional** metrics track if there has been any change in target audiences in the short term.
- **Transformational** metrics capture the longer-term impacts of communication efforts, as well as their contribution to business results.

Viewing metrics in terms of their increasing value from transaction through transition to transformation helps focus practitioners on the end game of our efforts – the dividend to our organizations from communication that is both strategic and business-centric.

For examples of metrics in the Communication Value Chain, view the Monday Metrics at **The Communication Dividend**.



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