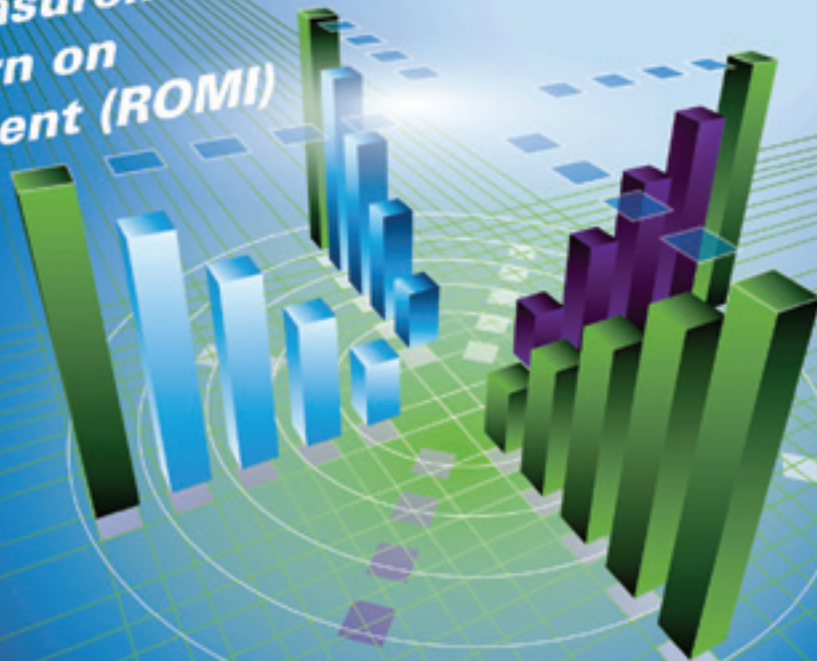


# Press Release Measurement: Creating the Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI)



In this time of transition in public relations, there is a great deal of buzz around how communicators can determine what is being said about brands and who is saying it. However, there is no real consensus on who has influence, what should be valued and how to determine if something “worked.” In this Business Wire white paper, Executive Vice President of Media Services and Product Strategy Laura Sturaitis attempts to demystify this process by providing an approach that utilizes the press release as a way to illustrate how to unify all your PR efforts and maximize the return on marketing investment — or ROMI — of your communications program.

## Press Release Measurement: Creating the Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI)

There is certainly a great deal of buzz around measurement and metrics for public relations today. Numerous technologies, along with tools, charts and spreadsheets, are positioned to help professional communicators determine what is being said about their company and who is saying it.

We are in a time of transition and upheaval in PR because there is not only a great deal of buzz but also no consensus on *who* has influence; *what* should be valued; *when* a campaign has started and ended; *where* PR focus should be targeted; and *how* PR messaging should be measured, tracked and reported to determine if it worked.

In order to demystify this process, this paper will seek to provide an approach to help determine how you can utilize the press release — from the writing itself through the distribution and measurement of the results — to illustrate how you can integrate the various components of the PR function to unify your efforts and maximize the return on marketing investment (ROMI) of your communications program.

ROMI expands on the concept of measuring the cost of a campaign versus the return on investment — the financial return (sales) resulting directly from that campaign. Using positive ROMI as a goal of a PR campaign takes into consideration the significant investment of time as well as money that the new media landscape requires of professional communicators. It is very common for PR teams to feel stretched in so many directions due to the proliferation of media channels, new influencers and social networks available to deliver and track messages.

Using the press release as the medium to illustrate the ways in which messaging can be composed, delivered and tracked over time can help a company or an agency focus on the channels and audiences valued by the organization so that the budgeted time and money can be targeted where they will provide the best return. Setting goals, preparing content, selecting the right distribution and gathering the relevant measurement metrics are important. Doing so will help uncover and engage with key audiences most desired by the organization.

### Start with the End in Mind



**Content + Context = Impact**  
(Message) (Channels) (ROMI)



### GloMoSoMe!

GloMoSoMe means **Global-Mobile-Social-Measurable** and it's the most complete platform of patented technologies coupled with human expertise perfectly designed to serve the 21st-century PR professional.

## Start with the End in Mind

The best way to ensure a successful result and meaningful measurement of your press release is to craft a newsy press release and format it in a way that allows all audiences to quickly find the valuable information supporting the message. This is accomplished through the use of multimedia, linking, keywords and the ability to engage with your company or brand directly from the press release. The press release should be written and formatted much like an online portal website, with key information presented up front and easily reviewed by the online reader.



## Content = Message and Format

The press release should be considered “the first mover” document breaking the news. When crafting the release, make certain it is formatted at the outset to generate, track and engage your audience. The release should carry the proper branding, such as a logo, along with a short, sharp headline and a subhead containing the keyword(s) that will help the story reach your target audience online. You will want to “tell” your story in the press release, making it as compelling as possible through the use of photos, videos and background materials such as charts, graphs and PDF files.

Make your news easy to find, share and connect with no matter what your reader’s preferred channel: email, RSS, Facebook or Twitter posts or a call back from a salesperson. The news release is a key source to help you build your network of media, influencers and customers.

Including media contacts on your press release is essential, but for best results, also include links to the company’s Facebook page, Twitter feeds, blog or RSS subscription feeds as well. Adding these features turns your press release into more than today’s news; it helps build a long-term audience of followers for the company and products. Readers can easily opt in, subscribe to, connect with or follow your news in the future.

A great resource for maximizing your press release is Business Wire’s white paper “[Six Tips for Getting the Most Out of Your Press Release](#).”



## Context = Distribution and Availability

Seize the opportunity to either provide these materials with your release, or, at the least, link to landing pages on your own website where these materials can be easily accessed.

If you are going to link to landing pages on your own website and wish to demonstrate the ROMI of the press release, it is imperative that you activate the web analytics on those landing pages to receive the referral traffic from the comprehensive wire distribution of your press release. Consider the call to action you might include in your press release so that you can track the conversion of that web traffic from the release itself to the activity, giving your press release the credit as the source of that activity.

Perhaps that call to action is to download more information, request that you be contacted by someone at the company or simply subscribe to receive future press releases and other information from the company. All of these actions may be traced to the press release if the metrics are put in place to receive the handshake/referral from the traffic generated from the press release to your website.

### Earned:

- Media Coverage
- Links and Rich Content
- Search Ranking

### Owned:

- Landing Pages
- Online Newsroom
- Blog

### Paid:

- Marketing Mix
- AdWords PPC
- Events

### Social:

- Social Networks
- Experts and Employees
- Audience Engagement

## Traditional + Social Media

Once the press release is written for maximum online effectiveness and has crossed the wire, you will want to amplify your distribution through all available methods by immediately posting to the company's online newsroom and company intranet. Second only to the specific landing pages linked in your release is the importance of posting the same release to your company's online newsroom. This is your company's 24/7/365 PR department presence. There is the expectation that all key facts about your company and its products should be available and searchable on your company's website and especially organized in your online newsroom. For more information on the best way to set up your online newsroom, please see Business Wire's white paper "[Considerations for Building a Better Online Newsroom.](#)"



It is important that the press release is sent to those who have opted to receive notification of your breaking news, either by email or RSS subscriptions. You may also want to modify the key messages in the release to post to your blog, Facebook page and Twitter feed. Simply tweeting or posting the same press release in its entirety may not be considered a best practice. However, no one would dispute that audiences turn to these social networks regularly for their news. For that reason alone, it is best to modify your message for those networks and link to the release so everyone receives the news in his or her preferred format. It is important to recognize that employees are a very important audience to help get the message out. Be sure they are the first and not the last to know about the breaking news in your company.

Another important consideration in formatting and delivering the press release is the increasing probability that your news release will be seen and read on a mobile or hand-held device. As you craft your news release, have you considered how it will look on a small screen? Are the links in your release pointing to a mobile-enabled website? Many news releases are not presently following these important guidelines; however, as the consumption of news becomes more portable, those who utilize a quick-scan, mobile-friendly format will engage and retain readers at a higher rate. On many mobile-enabled sites, all phone numbers referenced in the news release are hot-linked and can be dialed and saved to the mobile phone in one touch. The incorporation of QR codes within press releases is also rapidly growing in popularity. Used as a Smart News Release asset, QR codes are replacing links or being offered as an additional source to help mobile users access specific landing pages with ease.



“Six Tips for Getting the Most Out of Your Press Release” (A Business Wire White Paper)

### **Impact = Measurement by Benchmarks**

You have now created a compelling news release, well-formatted to be easily found and shared, and have used all the distribution power of the wire combined with your own channels. Using benchmarks set by your communications team, you can begin to evaluate the effectiveness of your release in the full context of the PR and marketing campaign.



**Measurement:**

Press Release  
Quality vs. Quantity  
Activity on Release

**Metrics:**

Traffic Stats  
Referral Site Authority  
Conversion for ROI \$\$

**Monitoring:**

Mentions/Retweets  
Context/Sentiment  
Competitive Ranking

**Social Media:**

# of Followers/Friends  
Audience Engagement  
Referrals

**Traditional + Social Media**

In setting benchmarks to determine the success of your news release, you will have to concede that the “old” way of measuring the success of a news release, namely media placements, is no longer the whole story. Because of the explosion of the number of media, and because of the very definition of who is considered media in today’s world, it is important to determine three or four benchmarks for the performance of each news release. Flexibility is key. By adjusting those goals by campaign or audience type and being open to unexpected opportunities, you’ll find many benefits in the wire’s simultaneous, comprehensive reach. Your message can be delivered to an expanding, global audience of media, influencers, followers, friends, competitors, employees and others.

Media pickup and key stories pitched to print and broadcast media are still very important and desirable. Much of the lift described by those who have seen their news go viral comes from a potent combination of widespread online sharing of the story combined with the crossover of the story once it is picked up and reported on by “traditional media.”

This means you cannot simply cater to one channel or method in doing your PR outreach and building on your media and influencer relationships. One needs to conduct media relations according to best practices, while also utilizing the direct access to audiences available to professional communicators because of new media tools and technologies — for better or worse. We have to think in terms of “plus/and” instead of “either/or.”

This brings us back to the concept of ROMI, the return on both your time as well as your budget dollars. It can be very time-consuming for you and for your staff to craft and manage the messages, handle the various audiences and influencers and stay on top of the sheer volume of the buzz surrounding your company news and reputation. The only thing worse than too much buzz is no buzz at all.

It is important to have a good sense of how your messages and news are being consumed and shared. Equally, it is critical to understand where your audience is searching and sharing online. Both serve as key benchmarks to begin your measurement tracking and reporting to help target your efforts and build your audience of influencers and fans. Success must be valued in the quality of engagements. It goes beyond the number of “hits,” focusing more on “quality versus quantity.”



Measurement is a team assignment, spanning 360 degrees of shared resources among a company's marketing and web departments. Working together, teams can share their expertise through building and programming keyword-optimized landing pages with content from press releases and specific keywords purchased from AdWords. Combining these skills can help build authority for the company's website for those keywords — online and in brochures, signage and other online and offline marketing efforts.

Likewise, the digital marketing team and webmaster offer valuable metrics reports on the performance of their efforts through the specific web analytics reporting they are receiving. It is vital that the PR team use these analytics reports as well as the traditional news clipping, [press release NewsTrak reports](#) and social media metrics to determine overall how the news and messaging are penetrating and how these various marketing and PR messages are driving traffic back to the key landing pages of your company's website. It is only with this unified approach and targeted benchmarks that your entire marketing team will truly know where to target the staff's time, resources and budget for best results. Your team will also understand how to alter and enhance the current list keywords, landing pages, messaging and marketing materials to quickly adjust to capitalize on trends, competitive pressures, market opportunities and influencer feedback. This will help maximize your company's brand awareness and top-of-mind authority of the audiences that really matter.

## Conclusion

PR campaign measurement is changing. The former laundry list of daily, weekly, and monthly media clips; ad equivalency projections; news clipping reports; web analytics reports; press release measurement reports; monthly sales results; key story placements; search engine referral reports; social media counts of new fans, friends, connections, posts and tweets and PPC click-through reports were once the only gauges to indicate success or failure.

Without a mapped-out destination, anywhere you end up can be considered "right" by simply auditing the tools and technologies at your disposal, determining the current state of affairs and then working with other members of the web and marketing team to establish the benchmarks for unearthing and engaging with the key influencers for your company. The success of every PR and marketing effort can be measured by these benchmarks to forge a strong bond with your key audiences, influencers, media, employees and customers. Monitoring and tracking against these benchmarks will also help to communicate the real value of PR efforts in terms of both staff time and marketing budget. This can be accomplished by allowing the PR department to provide real ROMI — return on marketing investment — and to quickly be able to respond to opportunities, trends and competitive threats to the company using the press release as a key tool in conjunction with the proven distribution channels that bring about the most effective delivery of your company's news and information to your most influential audiences.



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