

# 3 Things To Know About PR Attribution



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The PR profession is moving away from impressions, reach, and AVE metrics because they cannot be used to answer how PR is affecting business outcomes. They are also single data points that don't illustrate **the value** of your work. At a recent PR conference, one of the speakers asked, "Have you ever wondered why there isn't a 'PR Equivalency' metric?" Excellent point.

Attributing how your Communications work is impacting the business, requires a comprehensive measurement program. Not a "magic bullet" metric that cannot be defended. Your PR measurement program should enable you to correlate your earned media analysis data with other data points from the business – website traffic, revenue, reputation, donations, membership, hiring efforts, etc.

PR Attribution technologies may provide media tracking options beyond link tracking – tracking visitors from earned media articles back to your website. There are three important questions to ask any vendor, especially if you are trying to attribute revenue:

## **1. Are my attributed articles relevant?**

Repeated studies show that even in news stories with rich keyword matches, less than 25% are actually relevant to the brand.

- For example, a burglary at the jeweler next to the Starbucks does NOT mean that the visit to the Starbucks web site had anything to do with that news story
- For example, the redevelopment of a local office building that is next door to the local office of McKinsey & Company is not a relevant McKinsey news story.

## **2. Will the articles be toned for my brand, product, or message?**

If you do not take into consideration the tone on these additional data points, you may end up attributing sales or website hits to articles that are negative and clearly *not* driving sales.

## **3. Can I understand exactly how my results are calculated?**

If anyone challenges your results or wants to dive deeper into your numbers, can you defend the “credit” you’re taking? Be wary of the “black box” calculations masquerading as PR Attribution.

Your [PR Attribution](#) efforts should yield reliable and defensible analysis that can hold up to scrutiny in the C-

Suite and the Board Room.

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**About the Author:** Having worked on both the agency and industry sides of marketing and communications, Leslie brings extensive corporate communications, branding and demand generation practice and understanding to the team at PublicRelay. Formerly the VP of Digital Marketing for Optymyze, Leslie holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration in Marketing from Youngstown State University.