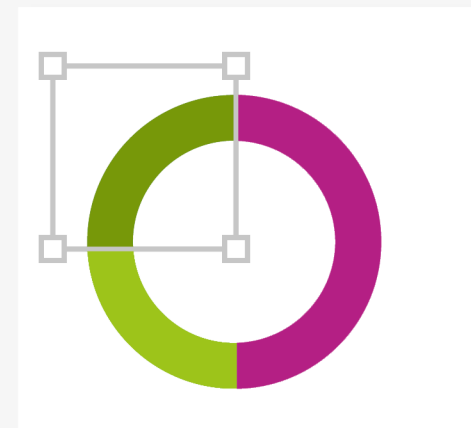
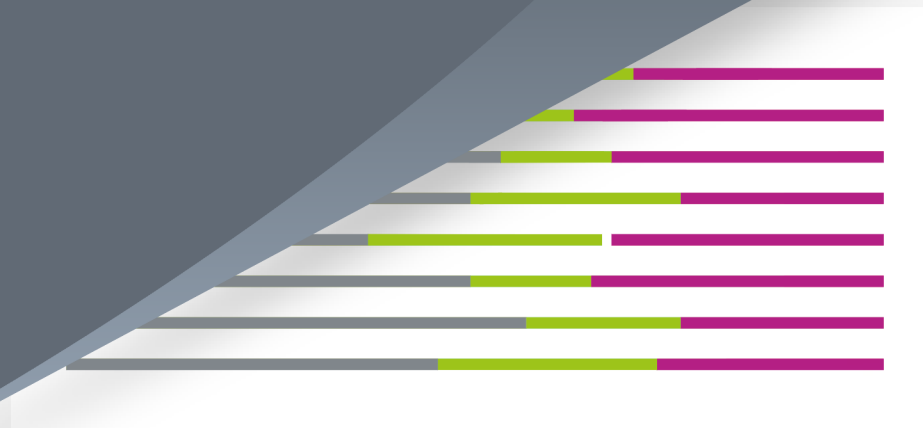


# How to Quantify Your PR Impact

Why a Data-Centric Approach to  
Public Relations Is No Longer Optional



# Introduction

The way that public relations professionals measure campaigns and calculate return on investment (ROI) has changed significantly in the last 15 years. The ongoing digital disruption that started as social media has become a far-reaching force reshaping media, advertising, platforms, and metrics.

This evolution in PR measurement has accelerated in the last decade—away from vanity metrics like impressions and advertising value equivalency (AVE)—toward lead-generation and customer engagement. This shift is happening because, even though vanity metrics look good on paper, they have a limited probable impact on business performance and revenue.

As significant as this change is, the PR industry has been slow to adopt the meaningful metrics that drive revenue and move business forward.

PR's marketing counterparts are taking the lead in adopting measurement tools, technology, best practices, and KPIs that appeal to the C-suite, which go further in justifying a team's value and budget.

It's become clear that the PR industry has reached a tipping point. When it comes to innovation, tech and new metrics are showing the way forward.

In this e-book, we'll highlight the milestones of this transformation, the tools you need to make the most of this evolution, and what trends and disruptions lie ahead.



# Table of Contents

1	<b>EVOLVING KPIs:</b> Advancing from outputs to outcomes and impact	4
2	<b>DATA-DRIVEN PUBLIC RELATIONS:</b> Adopting a metrics-first mindset	7
3	<b>INTEGRATING MEASUREMENT ACROSS YOUR WORKFLOW:</b> Driving better results with continuous measurement	10
4	<b>EARNING C-SUITE RESPECT:</b> Making meaningful contributions to the bottom line	14
5	<b>THE PUBLIC RELATIONS MEASUREMENT CRYSTAL BALL:</b> 2021 and beyond	16

# 1

## Evolving KPIs:

Advancing from  
Outputs to Outcomes  
and Impact

With increasing frequency, **PR measurement is moving from outputs to outcomes and impact.** Output metrics track activity (total number of social posts, media reach, press releases issued, etc.) but fail to address the effect or impact of PR campaigns.

Measuring outcomes and impact is more strategic because it looks at the effects and results of your communication on your audience.

For example, what probable actions were taken (e.g., an increase in subscriptions, leads, or sales) or how opinions were changed (e.g., an increase in positive brand sentiment) as a result of PR activity.

**The Barcelona Principles**—the industry-wide consensus in measurement and evaluation—have recently been updated to reflect the ever-changing practice of PR globally. The 2020 version builds on 2015’s recognition of the impact of social media and digital measurement on the communications landscape.

The Barcelona Principles 3.0 acknowledge that goal setting is a fundamental requirement for communications planning, measurement, and evaluation.

The Principles, “...now reflect a broader standard of measurement, focused heavily on measuring what matters to drive continuous improvement within an organization rather than solely proving the value of communication”. Outcomes and impact, not just outputs.



## Output Metrics:

Reach, advertising value equivalency (AVE), hits, impressions.

### WHY THEY'RE NOT ENOUGH?

The industry is leaning toward a more nuanced and multi-faceted approach to understand the impact of communications—not just the amount and volume of activity. Output metrics are often vague, don't prove the value of the work, and lack precision. AVE has been singled out for **not measuring effectiveness**, as there's no qualitative element to this metric.

## Outcome Metrics:

Trust levels, website traffic, higher rankings for specified keywords, registration, leads.

## Impact Metrics:

Customer retention, increase in sales, reputational change, competitive positioning.

### WHY THEY'RE SO IMPORTANT?

All these metrics provide the segmented, specific data required for a tailored approach to measuring performance against overarching business objectives. Outcome metrics don't stop at quantifying. They help PR professionals understand how messages are being received and interpreted. Impact metrics go one step further to demonstrate results—business goals and organizational objectives.

## The Truth about Vanity Metrics

Vanity metrics like potential reach, likes, retweets, and page views provide “feel-good” numbers that are easy to report and represent in graphics and dashboards. However, **these numbers fail to prove any demonstrable sales lift or brand growth.** While they're important numbers to track as part of your overall efforts, they're not performance indicators.



## The Go-To Measurement Tools



### Social listening and social media monitoring platforms

Both are effective in **measuring contextualized data** (audience engagement, brand awareness, and reputation, for example). Over time, social media monitoring can reveal changes in public behavior that can be traced back to the effectiveness of a PR campaign.



### Google Analytics and SEMrush

These valuable tools are useful to better understand **what's driving traffic and how that traffic is engaging with your clients and their content**. They also provide geographic reports and time comparisons, details that can provide specific insight into the effectiveness of your campaign. Keep in mind this data relates to website traffic, which is at some distance from brand awareness.



### SEO tools

There's a plethora of search engine optimization tools that can help you measure your campaign. To get a handle on SEO effectiveness, you must **match your goal with the appropriate** metric. For example, a search visibility index can provide valuable intel when comparing your client with a competitor. PR campaigns can boost their SEO by creating media that links to the brand's website. The more links a website earns, the most trusted by search engines and searchers it becomes, especially when dealing with relevant topics.



Moving from outputs to outcomes shifts the role PR plays. We need to move from transactional order takers to strategists and business consultants. Measurement is the only way this happens. It's important to realize that it's only when we get to this place that we're able to align more closely with the CMO and thus unlock bigger budgets to execute the integrated campaigns we're all capable of doing.

**Greg Mondshein,**  
Co-Founder and Managing Partner,  
SourceCode Communications



# 2

## Tracking the Effectiveness of Your PR Strategy Using Data

# Data-Driven PR:

Adopting a Metrics-First Mindset

The shift from outputs to outcomes and impact to measure PR means that **data has become paramount in determining a campaign's success or failure.**

Traditionally, PR was about driving reputation while marketing was about driving sales. Both objectives remain undeniably important in any organization, but in recent years, the lines between PR and marketing have started to blur. It's not always clear-cut when determining who's responsible for driving key business objectives like brand awareness, customer advocacy, and sales revenue.

When it comes to embracing hard numbers and quantifiable business metrics, PR has typically fallen short of their marketing counterparts.

In a 2020 survey created by Notified and PRWeek, 98% of PR professionals from around the globe said they recognize the importance of mastering and applying marketing competencies. They also identified five **key success metrics that marketing teams commonly use to demonstrate business impact**, and stack-ranked them in order of those they want to measure more effectively.

- 1 **Brand awareness**
- 2 **Customer engagement and retention**
- 3 **Lead generation**
- 4 **Customer acquisition**
- 5 **Lifetime value of a customer**

While it's clear there's a lot that PR can measure, what's most important is to **measure the activities and outputs that are most significant to a brand or campaign**. By embracing their inner marketer, PR pros might consider measuring performance metrics that traditionally fall to marketing, such as:



### **Website traffic:**

The increase of visitors to a website or landing page through a specific campaign activity (social promotion, press releases, influencer programs, etc.).



### **Lead generation:**

The number of sales-ready leads resulting from PR campaign efforts (media outreach, influencer programs, earned media, etc.).



### **Brand awareness:**

The measurable increase in brand mentions across social and earned media following specific PR activities. Remember to look beyond simple retweets and likes—you're looking for actual brand mentions.



### **Earned media:**

All the content about your brand created by somebody else and published somewhere other than your owned channels. Data can help you identify the right publication and the right time to drive action and awareness.



### **Share of voice:**

The share of exposure your brand gets compared to your competitors. When done well, share of voice is invaluable to the C-suite.



Far too frequently, PR data is examined and reported too broadly, and that's why vanity metrics like impressions are still widely used. We report the data that will make everyone feel good in the moment, but ultimately doesn't show how our work directly impacts the brand and business. The industry must overcome its fear that the data won't tell the story that the C-suite wants to hear. PR professionals must make better use of technology to understand and analyze marketing and PR data. We must be better at asking questions and digging deeper into the data that we have access to. Why didn't reporters open that pitch? Why isn't our content resonating with target audiences? Data empowers us with that information, allowing us to be much more effective and results driven.

**Katie Creaser,**  
Senior Vice President,  
Technology PR, ICR





## 5 Ways to Measure Press Release Performance

Press releases are often criticized for being irrelevant and “old school” in the world of social media and real-time brand communications.

However, **savvy practitioners know that press releases still provide value.** They continue to be used as part of a strategic media mix, remaining an effective way to reach targeted audiences, including global media and niche verticals.

To combat the notion of fake news, press releases provide media, customers, and investors with verified, straight-from-the-source content on behalf of brands.

But, can you really measure the effectiveness of a press release? Here’s how to do it:

- 1 Media inquiries:**  
How many requests for interviews or additional information did your release generate?
- 2 Earned media:**  
How much coverage resulted from your release?
- 3 Social media activity:**  
What conversations (mentions, sentiment) across social did your release spark?
- 4 Event registrations/content downloads:**  
How many people registered for your event or downloaded a gated asset? Using tracking links in your releases makes this response easier to track.
- 5 Lead generation:**  
How many sales-ready prospects signed up for a product demo or event? Again, take advantage of tracking links to see who responded to specific call-to-actions in your press release.



As a discipline, PR is in a state of constant evolution. But the fundamental principles remain constant: The need to influence, to shape opinions, attitudes and behaviors, and to do so by forging, nurturing and leveraging personal relationships.

**Jon Meakin,**  
President, North America,  
Clarity PR



# 3

## Integrating Measurement across Your Workflow:

Driving Better Results with Continuous Measurement

One of the mistakes PR teams make is to put measurement at the end of their program, using it as a one-time recap. For many, it's the final step to summarize success once a campaign is complete.

This is short-sighted. **There are opportunities to improve at every stage of a PR program**—from message development to media analysis—with data and insights gathered from the appropriate metrics.

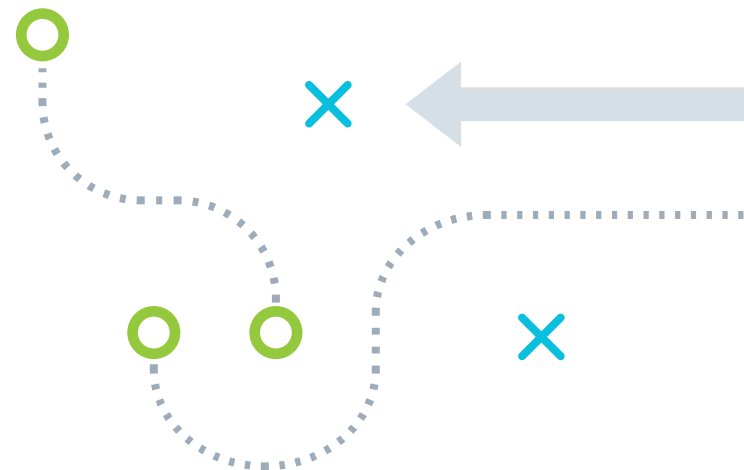
Measurement should be an always-on, ever-present activity that informs everything you do. Being strategic with the right times and right activities to measure can help you course correct and pivot your campaign along the way.

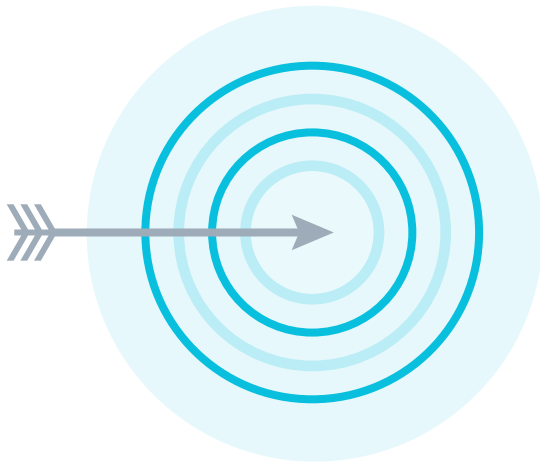
The need for an integrated PR workflow in which strategy, tactics, and measurement come together in a coordinated effort is increasingly important.

PR teams are being challenged to achieve more with fewer resources (both financial and human) while proving value to clients and management.

Where should you begin?

It's important to look at a strategic framework to uncover where measurement can (and should) play an important role.





## Goal Setting:

The essential prerequisite for any PR program. This is where you align with other key stakeholders on the desired outcome of the campaign: “What are we trying to achieve, how are we going to achieve it, and how will we know if we’re successful?” Measurement is critical here, and you need benchmark data before you begin. Without understanding your starting point, how can you appreciate where you end up? If your goal is increased brand awareness, share-of-voice versus a competitor, media coverage, or sales leads, measuring and setting benchmarks before you launch your campaign is a must.

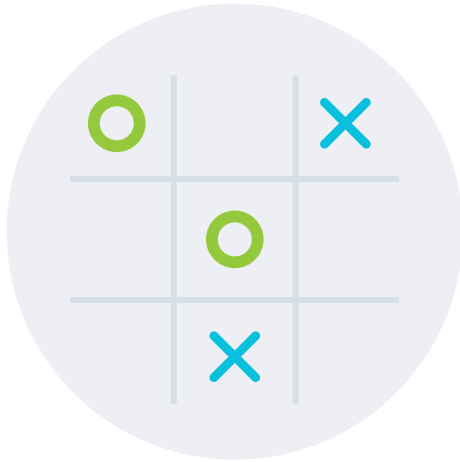


## Messaging:

The foundation of an integrated PR workflow is a **strong, clear message tailored to your target audience**. At every touchpoint and with every tactic, audiences need to experience consistency across your messaging and content, from tweets to executive presentations to media pitches. Listening and measurement tools can be of great help to understand what customers are saying about your brand—good and bad—and the messaging and positioning your competitors are using.

## Pro Tip:

Effective communication starts with listening. When it comes to fueling your PR programs with relevant benchmarking data, a social listening platform can be an effective tool. Key metrics like sentiment, share of voice, demographics, and key influencers can be compiled and benchmarked before you begin.



## Tactics:

Once objectives and messaging are aligned, the next step is to develop an actionable plan. Whether through media outreach, press releases, social media postings, or digital content, the goal is to drive awareness and put your brand in front of your audience. When it comes to measuring progress, remember that tactics are outputs: They're essential to track but are not performance indicators.



## Reporting and Measurement:

While it's true that measurement is important at every stage of a campaign, there will come a time for final analysis and campaign wrap-up. This report typically represents the culmination of weeks or months of effort and significant financial investment. Because it's presented to executives, partners, and other stakeholders, there is considerable pressure to show the most relevant and impactful results.

## Pro Tip:

PR teams, don't forget to partner with marketing colleagues on tactical execution. Email marketing, campaign landing pages, webinars...there are many opportunities for cross-team collaboration and, when there's a shared objective of lead generation or brand exposure, it makes good sense to work together.

## Key Takeaways

Compare your results to the benchmarks set at the beginning of your program and be prepared to adjust, whether to target your audience more effectively, hone your messaging, or reconsider the media outlets you approach.

Looking back at your goals and KPIs, did you achieve what you expected? Remember to focus on outcomes and impact. For example:



### Did you improve brand reputation?

Prove it by showcasing social and earned media that demonstrates marked improvement in positive sentiment and coverage.



### Did you increase sales?

Demonstrate it by tying your PR activity to generated revenue reported in your CRM.

The integration of specific goals, cohesive messaging, smart tactics, and continuous measurement make success a more likely outcome.



The evolution of data analysis is allowing communication pros to more efficiently leverage qualitative and quantitative analysis for cross-channel impact. Technology and analysis enable pros to more effectively evaluate and leverage their Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned (PESO) channels determining outcomes from efforts versus relying heavily on outputs as metrics. Tools crafted for each channel allow faster access to data so the PR professional can focus on applying or adjusting the strategy to be data-led and data-driven with confidence to assure KPIs remain aligned with the organizational goal.

**Johna Burke,**  
CEO & Global MD, AMEC Association  
for the Measurement and Evaluation  
of Communications

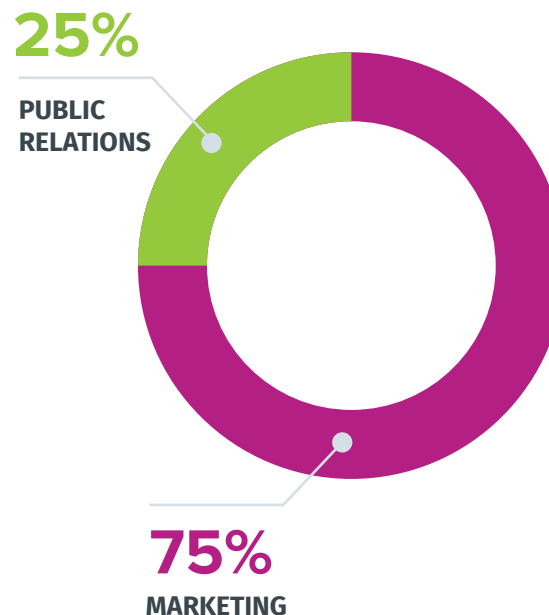


# 4

## Earning C-Suite Respect

Making Meaningful Contributions to the Bottom Line

The same 2020 survey of PR practitioners by Notified and PRWeek asked: Who is more effective at demonstrating value to the C-suite? 75% of the respondents said marketing, while only 25% said PR.



While marketing and sales can prove directly attributable business value, PR has a harder time doing so. This makes it difficult for PR teams to have the same level of input as their counterparts when executive management sets strategic business goals.

How can PR teams demonstrate the impact of PR on the bottom line and elevate their standing with the C-suite?  
**By focusing on outcomes and impact.**

Earlier, we mentioned PR's ability to contribute to brand awareness, lead generation, and audience engagement—all legitimate ways to impress and demonstrate value to the C-suite.

## Here Are a Few More Examples:



### Brand advocacy

Most companies spend a considerable amount of time and money on marketing programs that promote brand awareness. Many also have a roster of internal subject matter experts (SMEs) who speak about the brand and its products. This type of communication can go a long way to educate and attract potential customers and employees. **Even more effective is a recommendation from a trusted third-party source;** positive reviews and kudos from a customer, reputable industry publication, or other brand advocate. PR often plays a significant role in identifying and developing brand advocates, uncovering them, and measuring their impact through social listening and organizational survey tools like net promoter score (NPS).



### Reputation

Protecting and enhancing the reputation of an organization or brand is one of the cornerstones of PR. The ability to manage crises, promote notable achievements, and ensure spokespeople are prepared to convey key messaging can contribute to maintaining—and sometimes rebuilding—a good reputation. **Reputation is not always easy to measure but analyzing sentiment and share of voice is a good place to start,** as are focus groups and pulse surveys.



### Staff retention

By elevating a brand's profile, maintaining its strong reputation, and fostering advocacy, **PR can significantly contribute to building and sustaining employee engagement.** Given the time and financial investments that come from onboarding new staff and the lost knowledge of exiting employees, the impact of retention can be significant. Employee surveys and staff retention rate can be effective ways to measure PR's contribution.



The PR pro has transformed from a 'yes person' who relays decisions from the executive team to a critical counselor involved in the strategic business development strategy. PR has earned a seat at the executive table because its role extends far beyond promoting a product or service—it gives other stakeholders a reason to believe. PR describes what sets a company apart from the competition by defining not only what the business does, but what it stands for and why that purpose matters. Good PR shapes perceptions, increases awareness and understanding, protects reputation, and enhances value.

**Darrin Shewchuck,**  
Vice President, Public Affairs and  
Communications, HARMAN  
(a Samsung Company)



# 5

## The PR Measurement Crystal Ball:

2021 and Beyond

There's certainly no shortage of measurable elements when it comes to PR campaigns.

From media mentions to brand advocacy and sales, **PR pros are being challenged to measure almost everything they do** and consider the effects of their activity on their organization or brand.

Here are just a few of the trends—and disruptors—we believe will make an impact in 2021 and beyond.

### New Measurement Trends



A strong social responsibility practice can boost a company's reputation, increase customer and employee loyalty, and minimize the possibility of boycotts or cancelations. **Environmental, social, and governance (ESG)** criteria are a set of standards for a company's operations that socially conscious investors use to screen potential investments. It can be everything from actively managing carbon footprints to ensuring labor laws are upheld. As these programs become more important, companies will look to PR not only to help manage the communications, but to measure them as well. Customer and investor sentiment, key message penetration, and even stock price. It's all measurable.



## New Measurement Trends

A light gray crystal ball with a pink base, containing the text 'More sophisticated PR analytics'.

### More sophisticated PR analytics

As vanity metrics continue to fade away and data-driven, outcomes-based PR becomes the norm, **the need for tools and technology to measure brand sentiment, customer engagement, and message resonance becomes greater.** Platforms that support multiple PR activities (social listening, media research, distribution, monitoring, and reporting in the same platform) and dashboards that incorporate data inputs from PR, marketing, advertising, and sales will not only increase the efficacy of PR communications, but allow practitioners to develop more strategic, results-based programs.

A light gray crystal ball with a pink base, containing the text 'Reputation management and crisis communications'.

### Reputation management and crisis communications

Tolerance for cultural insensitivity, bias, and unethical behavior has hit an all-time low. Brands (and their employees) are under constant scrutiny and it seems we hear about an organization facing a PR crisis almost daily. **Monitoring—reactive and proactive—will continue to play a pivotal role in PR communications and measurement.** Tracking keywords and conversations in real time and monitoring public sentiment across traditional, digital, and social media will remain a critical activity, not only as an early alert system to help prevent or minimize reputational damage, but to repair it should the need arise.

## PR Disruptors



### Brand advocacy

As mentioned above, **brand advocates (e.g. happy customers) can play a significant role in driving awareness and sales** through third-party recommendations. As many brands start to turn away from unauthentic influencer marketing, expect a closer bond between PR and brand advocacy.



### Artificial intelligence (AI)

We're just starting to see **AI's potential impact on PR**: Automatic generation (writing) of press releases, media monitoring, and sentiment analysis of media coverage. Much of the AI-generated content still lacks the required finesse, but the potential for faster, simpler, and more intelligent content is exciting.



### Multi-skilled PR professionals

The blurred lines between PR, marketing, and advertising become even more muddled as the three disciplines work more closely together. **PR professionals are now expected to cultivate brand ambassadors, manage reputation, develop social media programs, and drive sales.** Many PR agencies already offer services (creative, SEO, media buying) beyond what is considered traditional.



Influencers will continue to help with overall awareness but brand advocates are playing an increasingly important role in shaping perceptions and driving behavioral change. People want to hear from real, authentic people like themselves. This is why ratings and reviews have become so critical: positive or negative reviews are a deciding factor in which products we buy.

**Steve Bauer,**  
Senior Vice President & Partner,  
FleishmanHillard





## Shift towards niche media

Waning trust in some mainstream media and an increasingly crowded media space will **continue to make niche outlets like specialty verticals, podcasts, and blogs more attractive.**



## Human curation and insights

Automating data analysis makes it possible to ingest and interpret unfathomable amounts of data very quickly. But the automation approach often falls short when it comes to contextualizing data, measuring sentiment and tonality, and applying insights. **Human curation and insight analysis are a necessary overlay to automation,** and the best approach to measurement will continue to be a hybrid approach.



## Voice-based search

Comscore predicts that by the end of 2020, 50% of searches will be voice searches. The growing presence of Siri, Alexa, and Google Home in households means **PR practitioners should produce more content that can be discovered by voice activation.**



## Live streaming and virtual events

The global pandemic wreaked havoc on in-person events in 2020 and a return to normal is nowhere in sight. Conferences, media days, and product launches are now virtual, and **PR pros need to continue to hone their virtual networking, event management, and presentation skills.**

## | About Notified

Notified is the world's only communications cloud for events, public relations, and investor relations to drive meaningful insights and outcomes.

**Notified Event Cloud** lets you create unforgettable experiences to build brand and community engagement. It's the world's most comprehensive end-to-end event technology and related services to power the creation and management of events.

**Notified PR Cloud** helps you optimize brand value, increase earned media, and drive meaningful business impact. Reach global audiences, monitor brand sentiment, send GlobeNewswire press releases, and measure success.

**Notified IR Cloud** lets you manage stakeholder communications and regulatory requirements to maximize shareholder value. Tell your investment story with high-impact, multichannel solutions – earnings announcements, press releases, webcasting, virtual events, and IR websites.

Visit [Notified.com](https://www.notified.com) to learn more.

