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DICTIONARY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS MEASUREMENT AND RESEARCH

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FOREWORD

“Words... are innocent, neutral, precise, standing for this, describing that, meaning the other...so if you look after them you can build bridges across incomprehension and chaos.

“I don’t think writers are sacred, but words are. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones in the right order they can nudge the world a little....”

From the play, THE REAL THING by Tom Stoppard

Why a dictionary for public relations measurement and research?

Because we don’t all measure the same things, measure the same ways, or use the same tools or terminology. To get all of us on the same page we need to know precisely what we mean when we use or say certain words in measuring our activities and our research.

Some may complain that the words we have chosen to define are too simplistic. Remember Webster once defended his word choice by explaining that it’s the little words we think we know the meaning of - but don’t - which cause most of the problems in understanding and communications.

We thank Dr. Don Stacks and others who have given so generously of their time to assemble this special choice of words and politely debate each definition. We have listed their names for you and they will tell you they gratefully acknowledge that this is a work in progress. Public relations continuously evolves so there are no “final words.”

Jack Felton
President & CEO
Institute for Public Relations

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DICTIONARY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
MEASUREMENT AND RESEARCH

A

Alpha Level (α) – the amount of error or chance allowed in sampling or inferential testing

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) – an inferential statistical test of significance for continuous measurement dependent variables against a number of groups as independent variables

Articles – an output, typically printed but also found on the Internet

Attitude – a predisposition to act or behave toward some object; a motivating factor in public relations; composed of three dimensions: affective (emotional evaluation), cognitive (knowledge evaluation), and connotative (behavioral evaluation)

Attitude Research – the measuring and interpreting a full range of views, sentiments, feelings, opinions, and beliefs that segments of the public may hold toward a client or product

Attitude Scale – a measure that targets respondent attitudes or beliefs toward some object; typically interval-level data and requires that an arbitrary or absolute midpoint (“neutral” or “neither agree nor disagree”) be provided to the respondent; also known as Likert or Semantic Differential measures

Audience – a specified group from within a defined public targeted for influence

Baseline – an initial measurement against which all subsequent measures are compared

Behavioral Objective – (1) an objective that specifies the expected public relations campaign or program outcome in terms of specific behaviors; (2) a measure that is actionable in that it is the behavior requested of a target audience

Belief – a long-held evaluation of some object, usually determined on a basis its occurrence; clusters of beliefs yield attitudes

Benchmarking (Benchmark Study) – (1) a measurement technique that involves having an organization learn something about its own practices, the practices of selected others, and then compares these practices

Bivariate Analysis – a statistical examination of the relationship between two variables

BRAD – (1) British Rate and Data measure (2) provides circulation and advertising costs data

C

Campaign (Program) – the planning, execution, and evaluation of a public relations plan of action aimed at solving a problem

Case Study Methodology – an informal research methodology that gathers data on a specific individual or company or product with the analysis focused on understanding its unique qualities; is not generalizable to other cases or populations

Categorical Data – measurement data that are defined by their association with groups and are expressed in terms of frequencies, percentages, and proportions (see: nominal and ordinal data)

Category – in content analysis the part of the system where the content (units of analysis) are placed; also referred to as “subjects” or “buckets”

Causal Relationship – a relationship between variables in which a change in one variable forces, produces, or brings about a change in another variable

Census – collection of data from *every* person or object in a population

Central Tendency – a statistic that describes the typical or average case in the distribution of a variable; see: mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation, standardized score, variance, z-score

Characters – a manifest unit of analysis used in content analysis consisting of individuals or roles (e.g., occupations, roles, race)

Chi-Square (X^2) – An inferential statistical test of significance for categorical data (nominal or ordinal)

Circulation – number of copies of a publication as distributed (as opposed to read)

Closed-Ended Question – a question that requires participants to answer selected and predetermined responses (e.g., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)

Clustered Sample – a type of probability sample that involves first breaking the population into heterogeneous subsets (or clusters), and then selecting the potential sample at random from the individual clusters

Coefficient Alpha (α) – a statistical test for a measurement’s reliability for interval and ratio data; also known as Cronbach’s coefficient alpha

Cohort Survey – a type of longitudinal survey in which some specific group is studied over time according to some criteria that stays the same (e.g., age = 21) while the samples may differ

Column Inches – total length of an article if it were all one-column measured in inches (or centimeters); determines the total “share of ink” that a company or brand has achieved

Communication – the process that deals with the transmission and reception of intentional messages that are a part of a natural language system (e.g., words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs)

Communication(s) Audit – a systematic review and analysis of how effectively an organization communicates with all of its major internal and external audiences by identifying these audiences, by

identifying the communication programs and their communication products utilized for each audience, by determining the effectiveness of these programs and their products, and by identifying gaps in the overall existing communication program; uses accepted research techniques and methodologies (see the following methodologies: formal, informal, case study, content analysis, survey, in-depth interview, focus group, experiment, secondary, historical, participant-observation)

Communication Product (Product) – the end result of the communication product process resulting in the production and dissemination of a brochure, media release, video news release, web site, speech, and so forth

Communication(s) Research – any systematic study of the relationships and patterns that are developed when people seek to share information with each other

Community Case Study – an informal methodology whereby the researcher takes an in-depth look at one or several communities – subsections of communities – in which an organization has an interest by impartial, trained researchers using a mix of informal research methodologies (i.e., participant-observation, role-playing, secondary analysis, content analysis, interviewing, focus groups)

Confidence Interval – in survey methodology based on a random sampling technique, the range of values or measurement within which a population parameter is estimated to fall (e.g., for a large population we might expect answers to a question

to be within $\pm 3\%$ of the true population answer; if 55% responded positively, the confidence interval would be from 52% to 58%); sometimes called **measurement error**

Confidence Level – in survey methodology based on a random sampling technique, the amount of confidence we can place on our confidence interval (typically set at 95%, or 95 out of 100 cases truly representing the population under study, with *no more than* 5 cases out of 100 misrepresenting that population); sometimes called **sampling error**

Construct Validity – a statistically tested form of measurement validity that seeks to establish the dimensionality of a measure

Content Analysis – (1) an informal research methodology (and measurement tool) that systematically tracks messages (written, spoken, broadcast) and translates them into quantifiable form via a systematic approach to defining message categories via specified units of analysis; (2) the action of breaking down message content into predetermined components (categories) to form a judgment capable of being measured

Content Validity – a form of measurement validity that is based on other researchers or experts evaluations of the measurement items contained in a measure

Contingency Question – a survey question that is to be asked only to some respondents, determined by their responses to some other

questions; sometimes called a “funnel question.”

Contingency Table – a statistical table for displaying the relationship between variables in terms of frequencies and percentages; sometimes called a “cross tabulation table” or “cross tab”

Continuous Data – data that measured on a continuum, usually as interval data

Convenience Sample – a non-probability sample where the respondents or objects are chosen because of availability (e.g., “man on the street”); a type of non-probability sample in which who ever happens to be available at a given point in time is included in the sample; sometimes called a “haphazard” or “accidental” sample

Correlation (r) – a statistical test that examines the relationships between variables (may be either categorical or continuous)

Correlation Coefficient – a measure of association that describes the direction and strength of a linear relationship between two variables; usually measured at the interval or ratio data level (e.g., Pearson Product Moment Coefficient, r), but can be measured at the nominal or ordinal level (e.g., Spearman-Rho)

Cost Per Thousand (CPM) – cost of advertising for each 1,000 homes reacted by the media

Covariation – a criterion for causation whereby the dependent variable takes on different values depending on the independent variable

Criterion Variable – the variable the research wants to predict to

Criterion-Related Validity – a form of validity that compares one measure

against others known to have specified relationships with what is being measured; the highest form of measurement validity

Crossbreak Analysis – a categorical analysis that compares the frequency of responses in individual cells

Cross-Sectional Survey – a survey based on observations representing a single point in time; see: snapshot survey

Cumulative Scale (Guttman Scale/ Scalogram) – a measurement scale that assumes that when you agree with a scale item you will also agree with items that are less extreme

Cyber Image Analysis – (1) the measurement of Internet content via chat rooms or discussion groups in cyberspace regarding a client or product or topic; (2) the measurement a client's image everywhere on the Internet

D

Data – the observations or measurements taken when evaluating a public relations campaign or program (see: nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio)

Deduction – a philosophical logic in which specific expectations or hypotheses are developed or derived on the basis of general principles

Delphi Technique – a research methodology (usually survey or interview) where the researcher tries to forecast the future based on successive waves of interviews or surveys with a panel of experts in a given field as a means of building a “consensus” of expert opinion and thought relating to particular topics or issues

Demographic Analysis – analysis of a population in terms of special social, political, economic, and geographic

subgroups (e.g., age, sex, income-level, race, educational-level, place of residence, occupation)

Demographic Data – data that differentiates between groups of people or things (e.g., sex, race, income)

Dependent Variable – the variable that is measured or collected

Depth Interview – an extensive, probing, open-ended, largely unstructured interview, usually conducted in person or by telephone, in which respondents are encouraged to talk freely and in great detail about given subjects; also known as an “in-depth interview”

Descriptive Research – a form of research that gathers information in such a way as to paint a picture of what people think or do

Descriptive Statistics – the reduction and simplification of the numbers representing research, to ease interpreting the results

Descriptive Survey – a type of survey that collects in quantitative form basic opinions or facts about a specified population or sample; also known as a “public opinion poll”

Double-Barreled Question – a question that attempts to measure two things at the same time; a source of measurement error

E

Editorial – (1) the content of a publication written by a journalist, as distinct from advertising content which is determined by an advertiser; (2) an article expressing the editorial policy of a publication of a matter of interest (also known as a “leader” or “leading article”); (3) space in a publication bought by an advertiser that includes

journalistic copy intended to make the reader think it originates from an independent source (also known as an “advertorial”)

Environmental Scanning – a research technique for tracking new developments in any area or field by carrying out a systematic review of what appears in professional, trade, or government publications

Equal Appearing Interval Scale – a measurement scale with predefined values associated with each statement; also known as a Thurstone Scale

Equivalent Advertising Value (AVE) – equivalent cost of buying space devoted to editorial content.

Ethnographic Research – an informal research methodology that relies on the tools and techniques of cultural anthropologists and sociologists to obtain a better understanding of how

individuals and groups function in their natural settings (see also: participant-observation)

Evaluation Research – a form of research that determines the relative effectiveness of a public relations campaign or program by measuring program outcomes (changes in the levels of awareness, understanding, attitudes, opinions, and/or behaviors of a targeted audience or public) against a predetermined set of objectives that initially established the level or degree of change desired

Events – (1) a community affairs or sponsorship output

Experimental Methodology – a formal research methodology that imposes *strict* artificial limits or boundaries on the research in order to establish some causal relationship between variables of interest; is not generalizable to a larger population

Explanatory Research – a form of research that seeks to explain why people say, think, feel, and act the way they do; concerned primarily with the development of public relations theory about relationships and processes; are typically deductive

Exploratory Research – a form of research that seeks to establish basic attitudes, opinions, and behavior patterns or facts about a specific population or sample; are typically inductive and involve extensive probing of the population or sample or data

F

Face Validity – a form of measurement validity that is based on the researcher's knowledge of the concept being measured; the lowest form of measurement validity

Facilitator – an individual who leads a focus group; also known as a moderator

Factor Analysis – a statistical tool that allows researchers to test the dimensionality of their measures; used to assess a measure’s construct validity

Field Study Methodology – a formal research methodology that imposes less restrictions or limits or boundaries on the research in order to test some causal relationships found in experimental research and generalize them to a larger population

Filter Question – a question which is used to move a respondent from one question to another; a question that is used to remove a respondent from a survey or interview; also known as a “funnel question”

Focus Group Methodology – an informal research methodology that

uses a group approach to gain an in-depth understanding of a client, object, or product; is not generalizable to other focus groups or populations

Formal Methodology – (1) a set of research methodologies that allows the researcher to generalize to a larger audience but often fails to gain in-depth understanding of the client, object, or product; (2) a set of methodologies that follow scientific or social scientific method; (3) a set of methodologies that are deductive in nature

Frequency – a descriptive statistic that represents the number of objects being counted (e.g., number of advertisements, number of people who attend an event, number of media release pickups)

F-Test – an inferential test of significance associated with Analysis of Variance (AOV)

Funnel Question – a question used in a questionnaire or schedule that moves an interviewer or respondent from one part of a survey to another (e.g., “Are you a registered voter?” If the respondent says yes, certain questions are asked; if not, then other questions are asked)

G

Goal (Objective) – the explicit statement of intentions that supports a communication strategy and includes an intended audience/receiver, a proposed measurable outcome (or desired level of change in that audience), and a specific timeframe for that change to occur

Gross Rating Points (GRP) – measures of weight or readership or audience equivalent to audience exposure among one percent of the population (see also: Targeted Gross Rating Points [TGRP])

Guttman Scale (Cumulative Scale/Scalogram) – a measurement scale that assumes (1) unidimensionality and (2) that people, when faced with a choice will also choose items less intense than the one chosen

H

Historical Methodology – an informal research methodology that examines the causes and effects of past events

Hypothesis – an expectation about the nature of things derived from theory; a prediction of how an independent variable changes a dependent variable; formally stated as a predication (e.g., males will purchase more of X than females), but tested via the null hypothesis (males and females will not differ in their purchases of X)

Hypothesis Testing – determining whether the expectations that a hypothesis represents are, indeed, found in the real world

I

Image Research – a research program or campaign that systematically studies people’s perceptions toward an organization, individual, product, or service; sometimes referred to as a “reputation study”

Impressions – the number of people who might have had the opportunity to be exposed to a story that has appeared in the media; also known as “opportunity to see;” usually refers to the total audited circulation of a publication or the audience reach of a broadcast vehicle

Incidence – the frequency with which a condition or event occurs in a given time and population or sample

Independent t-test – an inferential statistical test of significance that

compares two levels of an independent variable against a continuous measured dependent variable

Independent Variable – the variable against which the dependent variable is tested

In-Depth Interview Methodology – an informal research methodology in which an individual interviews another in a one-on-one situation; see “depth interview”

Induction – a philosophical logic in which general principles are developed from specific observations

Inferential Research – statistical analyses that test if the results observed for a sample are indicative of the population; the presentation of information that allows us to make judgments whether the research

results observed in a sample generalize to the population from which the sample was drawn

Inferential Statistics – statistical tests that allow a researcher to say within a certain degree of confidence whether variables or groups truly differ in their response to a public relations message (see: Analysis of Variance, Chi-Square, Bivariate Correlation, Correlation, Regression, t-test)

Informal Methodology – a research methodology that does not allow the researcher to generalize to a larger audience but gains in-depth understanding of the client, object, or product

Informational Objective – an objective that establishes what information a target audience should know or the degree of change in knowledge levels after the conclusion of a

public relations campaign or program.

Inputs – the research information and data from both internal and external sources applied in the conception, approval, and design phases of the input stage of the communication production process

Inquiry Research – a formal or informal research methodology that employs systematically content analysis, survey methodology, and/or interviewing techniques to study the range and types of unsolicited inquiries that an organization may receive from customers, prospective customers, or other target audience groups

Instrumental Error – in measurement, error that occurs because the measuring instrument was poorly written

Interval Data – measurement data that are defined on a continuum and assumed to have equal spacing between data points (see interval and ratio data); examples include temperature scale, standardized intelligence test scores

Interview Schedule – a guideline for asking questions in person or over the telephone

Issues Research – a formal or informal research methodology that systematically studies public policy questions of the day, with the chief focus on those public policy matters whose definition and contending positions are still evolving

Items – a manifest unit of analysis used in content analysis consisting an entire message itself (e.g., an advertisement, story, press release)

J

Judgmental Sample – a type of non-probability sample in which

individuals are deliberately selected for inclusion in the sample by the researcher because they have special knowledge, position, characteristics or represent other relevant dimensions of the population that are deemed important to study; also known as a “purposive sample”

K

Key Performance (Performance Result) – the desired end effect or impact of a program of campaign performance

Known Group t-test – an inferential statistical test of significance that compares the results for a sampled group on some continuous measurement dependent variable against a known value

KR-20 – a reliability statistic for nominal- or ordinal-level measurement; also known as Kuder-Richardson Formula 20

L

Latent Content – from content analysis, an analysis of the underlying idea, thesis, or theme of content; the deeper meanings that are intended or perceived in a message

Likert Scale – an interval-level measurement scale that requires people to respond to statements on a set of predetermined reactions, usually strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree; must possess an odd number of reaction words or phrases; also called “summated ratings method” because the scale requires at least two, if not three, statements per measurement dimension

Longitudinal Survey – a type of survey that consists of *different* individuals

or objects that is observed or measured over time (e.g., multiple snapshot samples)

M

Mail Survey – a survey technique whereby a questionnaire is sent to a respondent via the mail (or Internet) and the respondent self-administers the questionnaire and then sends it back

Mall Intercept Research – a special type of person-to-person surveying in which in-person interviewing is conducted by approaching prospective participants as they stroll through shopping centers or malls; a non-probability form of sampling

Manifest Content – (1) from content analysis, an analysis of the actual content of a message exactly as it

appears as opposed to latent content that must be inferred from messages

Market Research – any systematic study of buying or selling behavior

Mean – a descriptive statistic of central tendency that describes the “average” of a set of numbers on a continuum; also called “average;” (2) the process of applying a precise number or metric, which is both valid and reliable, to the evaluation of some performance

Measurement – (1) a way of giving an activity a precise dimension, generally by comparison to some standard; usually done in a quantifiable or numerical manner

Measurement Error – for surveys, see “confidence interval”

Measurement Reliability – the extent to which a measurement scale measures the same thing over time (see: coefficient alpha, test-retest reliability, split-half reliability)

Measurement Validity – the extent to which a measurement scale actually measures what it believed to measure (see: face validity, content validity, construct validity, criterion-related validity)

Media – includes newspapers, business and consumer magazines and other publications, radio and television, the Internet; company reports, news wires, government reports and brochures; Internet websites and discussion groups

Media Evaluations – the systematic appraisal of a company’s reputation, products or services, or those of its competitors, as measured by their presence in the media

Median – a descriptive statistic of central tendency indicating the midpoint in a series of data, the point above and below which 50 percent of the data values fall

Mention Prominence – an indication of how prominent a company, product, or issue was mentioned in the media, typically measured in percent of article and position within the output (e.g., headline, above the fold, first three minutes)

Mentions – counts of incidents of a company or product or person appears in the media, one mention constitutes a media placement

Message Content – (1) the verbal, visual, and audio elements of a message; (2) the material from which content analyses are conducted; (3) a trend analysis factor that measures what, if any, of planned messages are actually contained in the media (see also: message content analysis)

Message Content Analysis – analysis of media coverage of messages regarding a client or product or topic on key issues

Message Strength – trend analysis factor that measures how strongly message about a client or product or topic was communicated

Mode – a descriptive statistic of central tendency indicating the most frequently occurring, the most typical, value in a data series

Moderator – an individual who leads a focus group; also known as a facilitator

Motivational Objective – an objective that establishes the desired level of change in a target audience's specific attitudes or beliefs after a public relations campaign

Multivariate Analysis – an inferential or descriptive statistic that examines the relationship among three or more variables

N

Network Analysis – a formal or informal research method that

examines how individuals or units or actors relate to each other in some systematic way

Neutral Point – in attitude measurement scales a point midway between extremes; in Likert-like scales usually defined as “neutral” or “neither agree nor disagree”

Nominal Data – measurement data that are simple categories in which items are different in name only and do not possess any ordering; data that are mutually exhaustive and exclusive; the simplest or lowest of all data; categorical data; example: male or female, where neither is seen as better or larger than the other

Nonparametric Statistics – inferential and descriptive statistics based on categorical data

Non-Probability Sample – a sample drawn from a population whereby respondents or objects do not have

an equal chance of being selected for observation or measurement

Nonverbal Communication – that aspect of the communication that deals with the transmission and reception of messages that are **not** a part of a natural language system (e.g., visual, spoken [as opposed to verbal], environmental)

Normal Curve – measurement data reflecting the hypothetical distribution of data points or cases based on interval- or ratio-level data that are “normally distributed” and error free; all continuous or parametric data sets have their own normally distributed data that fall under its specific normal curve

Null Hypothesis – the hypothesis of no difference that is formally tested in a research campaign or program; its rejection is the test of the theory

O

Objective – (1) a measurable outcome in three forms: informational (cognitive), motivational (attitudinal/belief), behavioral (actionable); (2) an explicit statement of intentions that supports a communication strategy, and, to be measurable, includes an intended audience/public, a proposed change in a communication effect, a precise indication of the amount or level of change and a specific timeframe for the change to occur

Omnibus Survey – an “all purpose” national consumer poll usually conducted on a regular schedule (once a week or every other week) by major market research firms; also called “piggyback” or “shared-cost” surveys.

Opinion – a verbalized or written evaluation of some object

Opportunities to See (OTS) – the number of times a particular audience has the potential to view a message, subject or issue; also known as impressions

Ordinal Data – measurement data that are categories in which items are different in name and possess an ordering of some sort; data that are mutually exhaustive and exclusive and ordered; categorical data; example: income as categories of under \$25K, \$26K–\$50K, \$51K–\$75K, \$76K–\$100K, over \$100K

Outcomes – (1) quantifiable changes in awareness, knowledge, attitude, opinion, and behavior levels that occur as a result of a public relations program or campaign; (2) an effect, consequence, or impact of a set or program of communication activities or products, and may be either short-term (immediate) or long term

Outgrowth – the culminate effect of all communication programs and products on the positioning of an organization in the minds of its stakeholders or publics

Output – (1) what is generated as a result of a PR program or campaign that impacts on a target audience or public to act or behave in some way this is deemed important to the researcher (also known as a “judgmental sample”); (2) the final stage of a communication product production process resulting in the production and dissemination of a communication product (brochure, media release, web site, speech, etc.); (3) the number of communication products or services resulting from a communication production process, the number distributed and/or the number reaching a targeted audience

Outtake – (1) measurement of what audiences have understood and/or heeded or responded to a communication product’s call to seek further information from PR messages prior to measuring an outcome; (2) audience reaction to the receipt of a communication product, including favorability of the product, recall and retention of the message embedded in the product, and whether the audience heeded or responded to a call for information or action within the message

P

Paired t-test – an inferential statistical test of significance that compares data that are collected twice on the same sample

Panel Survey – (1) a type of survey that consists of the *same* individuals or objects that is observed or measured over time; (2) a type of survey in which a group of individuals are

deliberately recruited by a research firm because of their special demographic characteristics for the express purpose of being interviewed more than once over a period of time for various clients on a broad array of different topics or subjects

Parameter – in sampling, a characteristic of a population that is of interest

Parametric Statistics – inferential and descriptive statistics based on continuous data

Participant-Observation – an informal research methodology where the researcher takes an active role in the life of an organization or community, observes and records interactions, and then analyzes those interactions

Percent of Change – a measure of increase or decrease of media coverage

Percentage – a descriptive statistic based on categorical data; defined as the frequency count for a particular category divided by the total frequency count; example: 10 males out of 100 people = 10%

Percentage Point – the number that a percentage is increased or decreased

Performance – the act of carrying-out, doing, executing, or putting into effect; a deed, task, action, or activity is a unit of a program of performance

Performance Indicator – a sign or parameter that, if tracked over time, provides information about the on-going results of a particular program of performance or campaign

Performance Measure – is a number that shows the exact extent to which a result was achieved

<p>Performance Result (Key Performance) – the desired end effect or impact of a program of campaign performance</p> <p>Performance Target – a time-bounded and measurable commitment toward achieving a desired result</p> <p>Periodicity – a bias found in sampling due to the way in which the items or respondents are chosen; example: newspapers may differ by being daily, weekly, weekday only, and so forth</p> <p>Poll – (1) a form of survey research that focuses more on immediate behavior than attitudes; (2) a very short survey-like method whose questionnaire asks only very short and closed-ended questions</p> <p>Position Papers – print output</p> <p>Positioning – trend analysis factor that measures how a client or product or topic was positioned in the media (e.g., leader, follower)</p>	<p>Probability Sample – a sample drawn at random from a population such that all possible respondents or objects have an equal chance of being selected for observation or measurement</p> <p>Probe Question – a question used in a questionnaire or schedule that requires the participant to explain an earlier response, often in the form of “why do you think this?”</p> <p>Product (Communication Product) – the end result of the communication product process resulting in the production and dissemination of a brochure, media release, video news release, web site, speech, and so forth</p> <p>Program (Campaign) – the planning, execution, and evaluation of a public relations plan of action aimed at solving a problem</p>
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Prominence of Mention – trend analysis factor that measures how prominently a client or product or topic was mentioned and where that mention occurred (e.g., headline, top of the fold, what part of a broadcast)

Proportion – a descriptive statistic based on categorical data; defined as the percentage as made part of one (1); example: 10 males out of 100 people are 10 hundredths of the of the sample

Psychographic Research – research focusing on a population or sample’s non-demographic traits and characteristics, such as personality type, life-style, social roles, values, attitudes, and beliefs

Public – (1) a group of people who have consequences on an organization or affected by the consequences of organizational decisions; (2) a group of people from which the public

relations campaign or program selects specific targeted audiences in an attempt to influence it regarding a company, product, issue, or individual

Public Opinion Poll – a type of survey that collects basic opinions or facts about a specified population or sample; also known as a descriptive survey

Purposive Sample – a non-probability sample in which individuals are deliberately selected for inclusion based on their special knowledge, position, characteristics, or relevant dimensions of the population

Push Poll – a survey technique in which an interviewer begins by acting as if the telephone call is a general survey but then asks the respondent a question implying questionable behaviors or outcomes of a person or product

Q

Q-Sort – a measurement instrument that focuses on respondent beliefs by asking them to sort through piles of opinion statement and sort them into piles on an 11-point continuum usually bounded by “most-like-me” to “most-unlike-me”

Qualitative Research – usually refers to studies that are somewhat to totally subjective, but nevertheless in-depth, using a probing, open-ended, response format or reflects an ethnomethodological orientation

Quantitative Research – usually refers to studies that are highly objective and projectable, using closed-ended, forced-choice questionnaires; research that relies heavily on statistics and numerical measures

Question – a statement or phrase used in a questionnaire or schedule that elicits either an open- or closed-ended response from a research

participant; see also: funnel and probe questions

Questionnaire – a measurement instrument that contains exact questions and measures an interviewer or survey researcher uses to survey through the mail, Internet, in person, or via the telephone; may be closed-ended and open-ended, but typically employs more closed-ended questions.

Quota Sample – a type of non-probability sample that draws its sample based on a percentage or quota from the population and stops sampling when that quota is met; a non-probability sample that *attempts* to have the same general distribution of population characteristics as in the sample

R

Range – a descriptive central tendency statistics that expresses the difference between the highest and

lowest scores in the data set; example: responses to a question on a 1 to 5 Likert-like scale where all reaction categories were used would yield a range of 4 (5 minus 1)

Ratio Data – measurement data that are defined on a continuum and possess an absolute zero point; examples: number of children, a bank account, absolute lack of heat (0° Kelvin = -459.67° or -273.15° C)

Reach – refers to the scope or range of distribution and thus coverage that a given communication product has in a targeted audience group; broadcasting, the net unduplicated (also called “duplicated”) radio or TV audience for programs or commercials as measured for a specific time period

Readership – Number of people who actually read each issue of a publication, on average

Regression (REGR) – an inferential statistical test of significance that predicts dependent variable (measured) outcomes for independent variables that may be either categorical (e.g., bivariate) or continuous (interval) in nature

Reliability – general: the extent to which results would be consistent, or replicable, if the research were conducted a number of times; see also “measurement reliability”

Research – the systematic effort before (formative research) or during and/or after (summative or evaluative research) a communication activity aimed at discovering and collecting the facts or opinions pertaining to an identified issue, need, or question; may be formal or informal

Response Rate – from survey methodology, the number of respondents who actually completed an interview

S

Sample – a group of people or objects chosen from a larger population (see: probability sample, non-probability sample; convenience sample; panel survey; longitudinal survey; snapshot survey)

Sampling Error – for surveys, see “confidence level”

Scale – a measurement instrument consisting of attitude or belief items that reflect an underlying structure toward some attitude or belief object

Scalogram (Guttman Scale/Cumulative Scale) – a measurement scale that assumes (a) unidimensionality and (b) that people, when faced with a choice will also choose items less intense than the one chosen

Scattergram – a descriptive statistics based on continuous data that graphically demonstrated how data are distributed between two

variables; also known as a scatter diagram or scatterplot

Schedule – (1) the timeline on which a public relations program or campaign is conducted; (2) a list of questions, usually open-ended, used in focus group and in-depth interviews to gather data

Screener Question – one of several questions usually asked at the beginning of an interview or survey to determine if the potential respondent is eligible to participate in the study; see also “funnel question”

Secondary Methodology – an informal research methodology that examines extant data in order to draw conclusions; a systematic re-analysis of a vast array of existing data; often used in benchmarking and benchmark studies

Semantic Differential – an attitude measure that asks respondents to evaluate an attitude object based on bipolar adjectives or phrases separated by a continuum represented as consisting of an odd number of intervals; developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum

Semantic Space – the idea that people can evaluate an attitude object along some spatial continuum

Share of Ink (SOI) – measurement of the total press/magazine coverage found in articles or mentions devoted to a particular industry or topic as analyzed to determine what percent of outputs or opportunities to see (OTS) is devoted to a client or product

Share of Voice (SOV) – measurement of total coverage devoted to radio/television coverage to a particular industry or topic as analyzed to determine what percent

of outputs or opportunities to see (OTS) is devoted to a client or product; also known as “share of coverage”

Simple Random Sample – a type of probability sample in which numbers are assigned to each member of a population, a random set of numbers is generated, and then only those members having the random numbers are included in the sample

Situation Analysis – an impartial, often third-party assessment of the public relations and/or public affairs problems, or opportunities, that an organization may be facing at a given point in time

Skip Interval – the distance between people selected from a population based on systematic sampling; usually defined as the total population divided by the number of people to be sampled (e.g., for a sample of 100 people to be drawn

from a population of 10,000 people, the skip interval would be $100/10,000 = 100$ individuals skipped between selected participants)

Snapshot Survey – a type of survey that consists of individuals or objects that is observed or measured once; see also: “cross-sample survey”

Snowball Sample – a type of non-probability sample in which individuals who are interviewed are asked to suggest other individuals for further interviewing

Sources Mentioned – trend analysis factor that measures who was quoted in media coverage; also known as “quoteds”

Speaking Engagements – print or broadcast or Internet communication product output

Split-Half Reliability – a test for a measure’s reliability where a sample is randomly split and one segment

receives a part of the measure and the second segment receives the rest

Standard Deviation (σ) – a descriptive statistic of central tendency which indexes the variability of a distribution; the range from the mean within which approximately 34% of the cases fall, provided the values are distributed in a normal curve

Standardized Score (Z-Score) – a descriptive statistic based on continuous data that expresses individual scores based on their standard deviations from the group mean; range of scores is usually – 3.00 to +3.00

Statistical Significance – refers to the degree to which relationships observed in a sample can be attributed to sampling error or measurement error alone; expressed in terms of confidence that the relationships are due to error X% of the time (e.g., 5%) expressed in

terms of the confidence that we have that the results are due to what was measured X% of the time (e.g., 95% confident)

Stratified Sample – a type of probability sample that involves first breaking the total population into homogenous subsets (or strata), and then selecting the potential sample at random from the individual strata; example: stratify on race would require breaking the population into racial strata and then randomly sampling within each strata

Survey Methodology – a formal research methodology that seeks to gather data and analyze a population's or sample's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions (see longitudinal, panel, cohort, snapshot survey); data are gathered in-person or telephone (face-to-face), or self-administered via the mail, email, or fax

Symbols/Words – a manifest unit of analysis used in content analysis consisting of specific words (e.g., pronouns, client name, logotypes) that are counted

Systematic Sample – a type of probability sample in which units in a population are selected from an available list at a fixed interval after a random start

T

Target Audience – a very specific audience differentiated from “audience” by some measurable characteristic or attribute (e.g., sports fishermen)

Targeted Gross Rating Points (TGRP)

– Gross Rating Points (GRP) targeted to a particular group or target audience

<p>Test-Retest Reliability – a test for a measure’s reliability by testing the same sample with the same measure over time</p> <p>Themes – a latent unit of analysis used in content analysis that measures an underlying theme or thesis (e.g., sexuality, violence, credibility)</p> <p>Throughputs – the development, creative, and production activities (writing, editing, creative design, printing, fabrication, etc.) as part of the throughput stage of a communication product production process</p> <p>Time/Space Measures – a manifest unit of analysis used in content analysis consisting of physically measurable units (e.g., column inches, size of photographs, broadcast time for a story)</p> <p>Tone – trend and content analysis factor that measures how a target audience feels about the client or product or</p>	<p>topic; typically defined as positive, neutral/balanced, or negative</p> <p>Trend Analysis – tracking of performance over the course of a PR campaign or program; survey method whereby a topic or subject is examined over a period of time through repeated surveys of independently selected samples (snapshot or cross-sectional survey)</p> <p>t-test – an inferential statistical test of significance for continuous measurement dependent variables against a bivariate independent variable; used when total number of observations are less than 100 (see: paired t-test; independent t-test; known group t-test)</p> <p>Type of Article – (1) categories of a publication such as “product review,” “by-lined article,” “editorial,” “advertorial,” “feature story;” (2) trend analysis factor that measures the nature of client or</p>
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product or topic coverage (e.g., column inches, broadcast time)

U

Unit of Analysis – the specification of what is to be counted in content analysis methodology; consist of symbols/words, time/space measures, characters, themes, and items; may be *manifest* (observable) or *latent* (attitudinal)

Univariate Analysis – the examination of only one variable at a time

V

Validity – general: the extent to which a research project actually measures what it is intended, or purports to measure; see also “measurement validity”

Value – an underlying cultural expectation, usually directs an individual’s beliefs

Variance (σ^2) – a descriptive statistic of central tendency that measures the

extent to which individual scores in a data set differ from each other; the sum of the squared standard deviations from the mean (σ)

W

Word/Symbol – from content analysis, a unit of analysis

Z

Z-Score (Standardized Score) – a descriptive statistic of central tendency that takes data from different types of scales and standardizes them as areas under the normal curve for comparison purposes

» About the Commission on Public Relations Research & Evaluation

The Commission on Public Relations Measurement & Evaluation is an initiative of the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), the only independent foundation in the public relations field. Located on the campus of the University of Florida, IPR sponsors research, competitions, awards, lectures & publications - all dedicated to improving the professional practice of public relations around the world.

» Commission Mission

- To be the leading *provider of information* about & advocate for PR and related communication research & evaluation.
- To be *the first group PR professionals turn to* when they require definitive answers on PR & related communication research & measurement methods & standards.
- To *generate consensus on research & measurement standards*, creating authoritative papers on critical issues in the PR research field.
- To ensure the *broadest possible dissemination* of its findings.
- To actively *promulgate the need for & value of research & evaluation* in public relations.

Commission Objectives

- To be the leading *arbiter of accepted standards* for research & measurement that relate specifically to public relations, as well as for related communication disciplines that may apply or be linked to public relations programs and activities.
- To be the *instigators of original research* to develop these standards.
- To be *proponents of the use of research* in planning & evaluating public relations & related communications activities. The Commission views itself as a credible provider of PR & related communications research & evaluation information, because it includes *representatives of the four pillars of the PR profession*:
 - the client sector
 - counseling firms
 - research firms
 - Academicians

The papers & other supporting materials provided by the Commission, and its own research, seek to adhere to the *highest standards of research methodology* and apply them in a very practical sense to real-life public relations planning, program development & measurement experience. The Commission recognizes that broader use of research & measurement in public relations can not only *increase the effectiveness of public relations* but also raise its profile as a management discipline. The Commission will track its success through number of requests for research and measurement white papers

generated by the Commission, sponsorship of original primary research projects, Commissioner participation in various public relations forums (including award adjudication, speeches, panel participation, and writing relevant columns) around the world, and website usage and evaluation among the public relations community.

About the Institute for Public Relations (IPR)

IPR is the only independent foundation in the field of public relations dedicated to research and education. Established by a group of senior public relations practitioners in 1956 as the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education, IPR has distinguished itself by pioneering involvement in the field of public relations. Through publications, lectures, awards, symposia, professional development forums and other programs, IPR has been at the leading edge of efforts to promote academic and professional excellence and to build the professional body of knowledge.

Through the years, IPR has made impressive contributions to the sum and substance of modern public relations. Our non-proprietary research has led to breakthroughs in improving the teaching and the understanding of public relations.

IPR has supported more than 250 separate research projects covering everything from what PR students should study to an analysis of how new technologies are affecting the profession.

Besides covering basic operational costs, IPR's Annual Fund helps support:

- Basic and applied research to build the professional body of knowledge.
- The Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation, which seeks to be the foremost provider of information about and advocate for public relations and related communication research and evaluation. The Commission's mission is to establish accepted standards for research and measurement that relate specifically to public relations, as well as for related communications disciplines that apply to public relations programs and activities.
- Distinguished awards and competitions that serve as incentives for students and scholars to build the body of knowledge in the field.
- International symposia on issues of critical import to practitioners and educators.
- The IPR Research and Education Newsletter, which lists PR research projects underway, the latest PR studies, survey results, publications, and a calendar of upcoming meetings of interest to PR executives, researchers and educators.

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Measurement Tree

There's a tree top, a tree of life, a tree house, a shoe tree, even a tree frog but the newest tree phenomena is a Measurement Tree - a systematic new way to evaluate the effectiveness of public relations programs.

Communication and PR: Made to Measure

By Fraser Likely

PR/Communication Performance Measurement Consultant

PR/C managers need to better manage their measurement activities. A generic performance measurement management framework is presented - a framework that captures various levels and categories of evaluation. The framework may be used by PR/C managers as they think through the design of their own customized measurement framework or scorecard.

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Public Relations Research for Planning and Evaluation

Resource Booklet Prepared **By Walter K. Lindenmann, Ph.D.**

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Research Doesn't Have to Put You in the Poorhouse

By Dr. Walter K. Lindenmann, former head of research at Ketchum in New York.

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The study outlines how to save money by using such inexpensive techniques as quick-tab polls, piggy-back questions, secondary analysis, internet projects and intercept interviews.

A non-profit builds a Dashboard that belongs in every boardroom

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Toward an Understanding of How News Coverage and Advertising Coverage and Advertising Impact Consumer Perceptions, Attitudes and Behaviour

By Bruce Jeffries-Fox

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A comparison study of the impact of news coverage and advertising on perceptions, attitudes and behavior. Examines the differences in effectiveness of media coverage and advertising over a specific period of time at AT&T. The study identifies situations in which the two forms of communications complement each other and when they undermine each other. It identifies ways the two can be managed to gain the greatest efficiency and impact.

**Selling PR Research Internally:
Changing the Mindset about Communications**

By Lisa Richter and Walter G. Barlow

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Based upon years of experience in the field, the study helps management leaders have a clearer understanding of the role and value research offers the communication process.

Fun Things to do with Measurement

By Katharine D. Paine, president, Delahaye Medialink

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**Measuring Public Relations Effectiveness For
The Dole Food Company and the Society for Nutrition Education**

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Setting Measureable Public Relations Objectives

By Forrest W. Anderson and Linda Hadley

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Uses case studies to describe how to tie precise objectives to measures of program success. Also offers a series of key questions to help practitioners create more realistic and better-targeted goals linked to organizational objectives.

Guidelines and Standards for Measuring and Evaluating PR Effectiveness

By Dr. Walter K. Lindenmann

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Summarizes the ideas, thoughts and suggestions of an Institute for Public Relations special task force seeking to set industry-accepted minimum criteria for evaluating PR outputs and outcomes.

Other resources:

Primer of Public Relations Research

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"Primer of Public Relations Research." Published by The Guilford Press, New York, "Primer" provides easy to understand explanations of the complexities, methodologies and terminology of PR research. Dr. Don Stacks, University of Miami, shows that public relations research can be far easier and more affordable than most people think. Order directly from the publisher or Amazon.com.

Psychology and Public Relations Today:

Annotated Bibliography of Recent and Significant Psychological Research of Import To Public Relations Practitioners

By Nicholas DiFonzo and Elizabeth Toth

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Underwritten by a generous grant from General Motors, this bibliography consists of recent psychological research, reviews, and theoretical works that bear upon the work of the public relations practitioner.

The Magic Communication Machine - Examining the Internet's Impact on Public Relations, Journalism and The Public

By Donald K. Wright, Ph.D.

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This comprehensive study, sponsored by The WORLDCOM Public Relations Group, examines the Internet's impact on public relations, journalism and the public. It shows that journalists feel the quality of their work has improved, with reporting made easier as a result of the Internet and e-mail, and that e-mail has become the preferred medium for communication between public relations people and journalists. The study also warns of the growing concerns of abuse of information and data clutter.

Playing by the Rules:

Relationships with Online Users

By María E. Len-Ríos, Ph.D. student

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RATES (Rules-Appropriate Testing Evaluation Scale) and Implications for E-Commerce and Portal Web sites.

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Corporate Communications Policy Concerning The Internet:
A Survey of the Nation's Senior-Level Corporate Public Relations Officers.