

WHY IT'S TIME FOR CMOs TO EMBRACE PR AND COMMS

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SUMMARY

By rights, PR and comms should play a far greater role in your company's media strategy. Consumers trust earned media more than any other kind of marketing. It has the potential to generate the greatest returns. And yet most companies are still under investing in it.

The reason for this is simple. Company execs want to be confident their investments are generating returns. But for years, comms professionals have struggled to measure the business impact of their campaigns with the same accuracy as their colleagues in paid and owned media. That is, until now.

This white paper reveals how new technology is revolutionising the comms industry. It looks at the scale of this opportunity for your business. And it outlines why it's time for CMOs to finally embrace PR and comms.

INTRODUCTION

What you're about to read might sound like bad news.

But for businesses that arm themselves with the right tools, it actually represents a huge opportunity just waiting to be realised.

You see, consumer trust is falling across the board. Global research firm Nielsen reports that consumers now trust print, TV and radio ads less than they did five years agoⁱ. At the same time, Edelman's 2017 Trust Barometer shows that trust in public institutions plummeted last yearⁱⁱ.

In fact, it's earned media that people see as the most trusted ingredient in the marketing mix. Recommendations from friends and family top Nielsen's consumer trust index, with 83% of respondents saying they trust themⁱⁱⁱ.

Yet, despite yielding the best results, earned media's power has failed to translate into increased marketing investment.

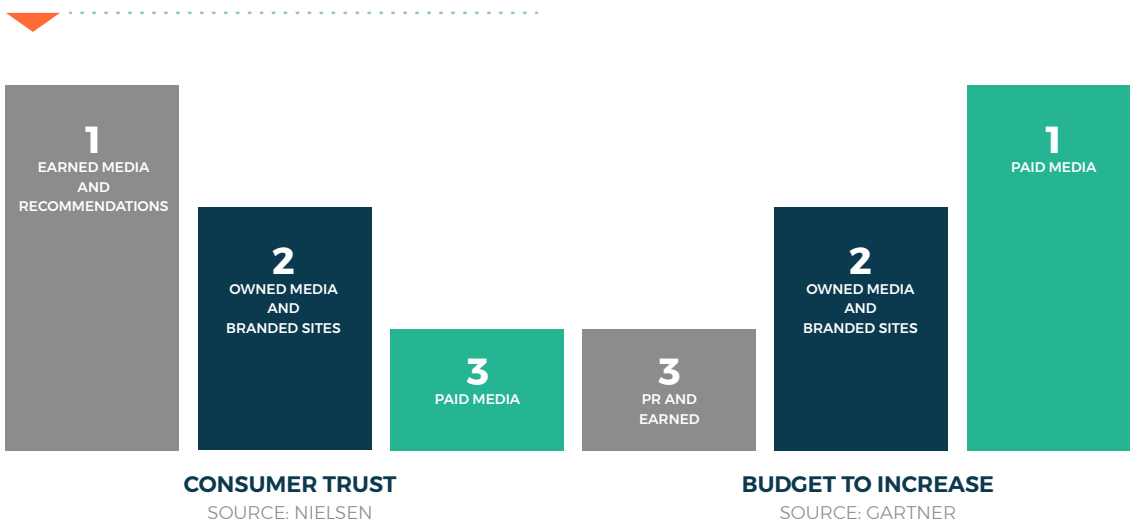
Even though consumer trust in advertising is plummeting, it's actually paid media budgets that have seen exponential growth in recent years.

Ask any CMO and they'll tell you why. They feel confident investing in paid media because it's easy to measure, easy to manage and easy to see when it's generating ROI.

Ensuring company execs feel the same way about earned media is the key to unlocking its true potential – and helping communications claim its rightful place in the marketing mix. But historically, communicators have lacked the tools to do this.

THE EARNED MEDIA PARADOX

Earned media is the most trusted part of the marketing mix, yet it receives the smallest piece of the marketing budget



This is now changing.

New technology is helping huge brands around the world maximise the impact of their campaigns and measure the true contribution that earned media makes to their businesses.

Thanks to the latest PR and comms tools:

- **The Museum of London substantially boosted its 2017 visitor numbers with a targeted campaign that increased its social media engagement 60% year-on-year.**
- **The Stroke Association doubled the number of signatures its #NewEra petition was generating last year. As a result, it collected 55,000 names and led to two meetings with the government's health minister.**

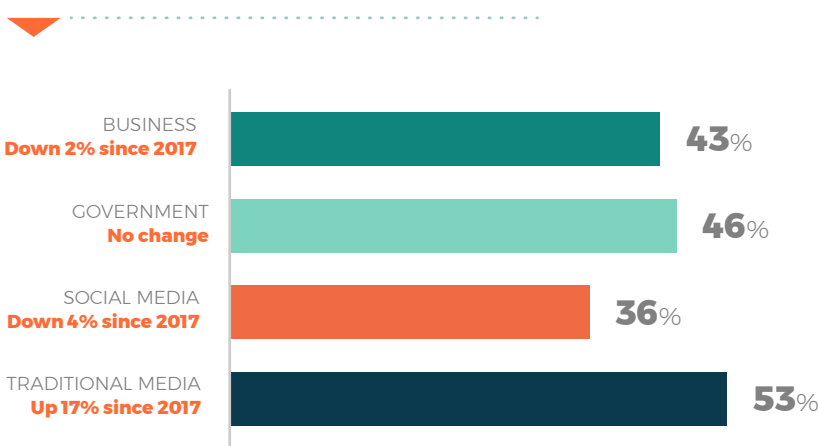
- **And Slimming World increased its brand's reach 25% in just six weeks with its 2017 *Dream Weight* campaign – generating more than 11,000 web sessions in the process.**

That's just a small taste of what's now possible with the latest cutting edge media monitoring, media outreach and analytics technology.

With these tools at your disposal, your comms team will finally have everything it needs to compete on a level playing field with their marketing and advertising colleagues – and win.

Today, we'll outline the true scale of this opportunity for your business – and reveal why it's finally time for CMOs to embrace PR and comms.

UK CONSUMER TRUST LEVELS ^{iv}



SOURCE: EDELMAN'S 2018 TRUST BAROMETER

THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN EARNED MEDIA

Consumer attitudes have changed radically in recent years.

People aren't just becoming more sceptical of traditional push marketing tactics. They're increasingly taking active steps to avoid them altogether.

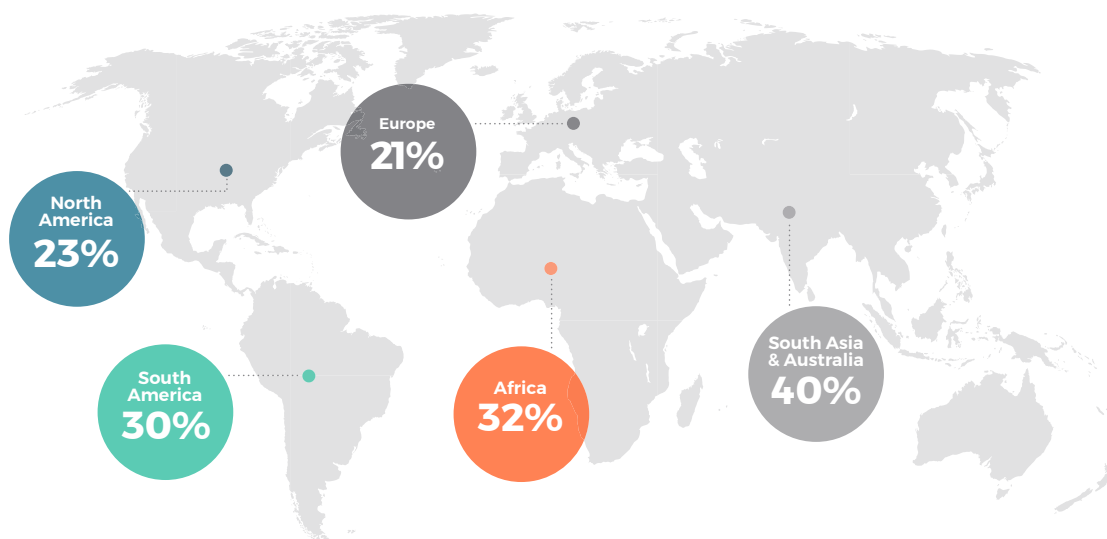
Ad blocker penetration has surged 20% since 2016 to 615 million users worldwide^v. Meanwhile, new research from YouGov suggests that three quarters of Brits don't want marketing professionals targeting them on social media^{vi}.

"There are various degrees of suspicion and rejection towards the premise of targeted advertising," notes *Marketing Week* columnist Mark Ritson. "The only reason we have not heard more from this large, dominant slice of the British population is that they had no idea what was going on."

At the same time, consumers are changing the way they interact with the media. It's becoming increasingly clear that earned media plays a vital role in driving lead generation and building consumer trust.

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNET USERS WHO USE AN AD-BLOCKER ON THEIR MOBILE AT LEAST MONTHLY

Q: On average how frequently do you see an ad-blocker on the following?



SOURCE: GLOBALWEBINDEX Q3 2017

CONSUMERS ARE TURNING AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL MARKETING CHANNELS

Thanks to comparison sites, online reviews, news articles and more, consumers today are far better informed than they were even 10 years ago.

Historically, if you were buying a car you would have had to rely on the messages in TV ads, printed in brochures or delivered by forecourt salesmen. But now, you can find everything you need freely online.

As a result, paid and owned media channels have less control over a brand's message. So communicators need to find new ways to reach their audiences, using mediums consumers know and trust.

It's more important than ever for brands to be part of the conversation early. Those that don't leverage the press, social media and influencers risk seeing their brand value erode over time.

Company decision makers are also hungry for earned media content, according to research from publisher and thought leadership agency Raconteur^{vii}.

Its survey of 500 European C-suites found that half of executives are likely to read content from a recognised expert – while 47% look for content that's recommended by an influential figure in their industry.

"Your ability to cut through comes down to credibility," says Raconteur CEO Freddie Ossberg. "Partnerships, respected influencers and exclusive research offer great ways to demonstrate your expertise.

"When done right, these types of partnership result in credible content which creates a halo effect for your entire brand."

EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE AND PULL MARKETING GENERATE TRUST

Research from leading advisory firm Outsell confirms that senior marketers and CMOs prefer "pull marketing" methods. These methods let people opt in when they are ready to engage with a product or service.

A survey of over 1,500 industry professionals showed that B2B and B2C marketers now believe pull tactics like earned media and public relations are more effective than print, TV and native advertising^{viii}.

The same study showed that consumers find "push marketing" tactics like email intrusive. People want to seek out

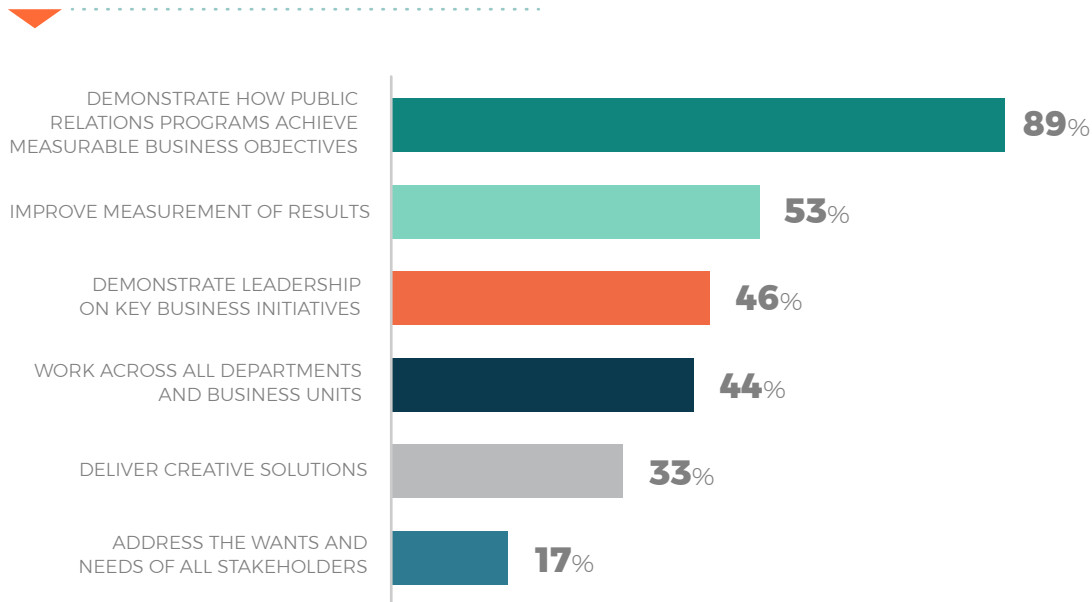
information when they're interested in products or services. They don't want to hear about them if they're not.

The most trusted methods also tend to be the most effective. Users prefer experiences they can opt into – such as hearing expert speakers, reading news articles and viewing testimonials.

All this ties into the idea that modern consumers are actively seeking out information from trusted sources to inform their buying decisions.

HOW PUBLIC RELATIONS CAN DEMONSTRATE VALUE

Q: How can public relations demonstrate its value most effectively within an organisation?



SOURCE: ANA RESEARCH

MARKETING EXECS ARE EMBRACING EARNED MEDIA

As consumer attitudes towards the media change, communicators are seeing their share of the marketing budget increase.

Three quarters of companies plan to increase their PR spend in the coming years, according to the latest research from the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) and the USC Centre for Public Relations^{ix}.

“Public relations as a discipline is clearly evolving and becoming more important to marketers,” says ANA group executive VP Bill Duggan. “Digital has put PR front and centre, as it allows immediate outbound communication and inbound feedback.”

This reflects the changes in consumer behaviour highlighted above. Customers are

seeking information from trusted sources like news articles, experts and influencers. While marketers are keen to create the content their customers want to consume.

That means your comms team is now in a unique position to influence consumer behaviour. But technology must play a key role in your campaigns if they are to realise their full potential.

Media targeting tools can help you identify the best ways to reach your audience and speak to them through mediums they know and trust.

Then, analytics software will let you measure the performance of your campaigns against definable business objectives.

“

Marketing technology is evolving to help get value from the world of earned in ways never done before.

Chris Lynch
CMO, Cision

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Cision CMO Chris Lynch

A BETTER WAY TO MEASURE **THE VALUE OF EARNED MEDIA**

Earned media is perfectly positioned to solve the critical problems senior marketers face.

It generates qualified prospects, identifies potential customers and engages them at the right place and time.

By rights, communications should play a far more prominent role in the marketing mix. The reason it doesn't can be summed up in just three words: lack of measurement.

At Cision, we recognise that you need to

know where earned media works best in order to achieve the best results. Marketing execs want to know their investments are achieving tangible business goals. But old metrics like reach or Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) simply aren't up to the job.

Today, technology is helping communicators measure the performance of their earned media campaigns with a far greater degree of accuracy.

WHY COMMUNICATORS NEED A NEW WAY TO MEASURE EARNED MEDIA

You'd be hard-pressed to find a marketing director who considers AVE a meaningful metric. So, perhaps it's not surprising that some major PR organisations are calling for it to be abandoned altogether.

AVE ascribes the same value to both positive and negative media coverage. It doesn't account for when coverage reaches the wrong audience for your brand. And it does a bad job of measuring the impact of coverage received through social media.

"AVE is a lazy way of persuading marketers schooled in old ad ways that PR counts," says Robert Phillips, Edelman's former CEO. "The

model of the future must be able to analyse the depth, resonance, importance and influence of the conversation."

Other common measures like Opportunities to See (OTS) and reach also fall short of this standard. But new innovations are helping communicators assess the impact their campaigns are having on tangible metrics like conversions, lead generation and ROI.

Armed with these insights, not only will you be able to demonstrate the success of your campaigns to senior company stakeholders. You'll also have the tools to optimise them for maximum impact.

BETTER TOOLS MEAN BETTER MEASUREMENT... AND BETTER RESULTS

We know that marketing execs understand the value of earned media. But it still remains a largely unrealised opportunity for businesses that lack the tools to effectively measure their campaigns.

Press releases, speaking opportunities, case studies, testimonials and social media can all drive lead generation and build customer trust. But different strategies are suitable for different businesses. So communicators need a way to see what works best.

To take full advantage of this opportunity, you need the tools to overcome this challenge. You need something you can use to accurately measure the value of the coverage your campaigns generate.

Ad agencies don't boast about the number of billboards or TV ad slots they get their clients' content featured on. So, your comms team shouldn't hold up the volume of coverage it secures as a measure of its success.



Getting into a top tier outlet is great. But what does that mean for the business? **That's a question that is getting asked more and more.**

CHRIS LYNCH
CMO, CISION



Right now, we'll show you how the latest technology can help you answer that question using recognised business metrics.



HOW PR **MEASUREMENT SAVES LIVES**

In 2017, the government made an announcement that could have been tragic for stroke survivors throughout the UK.

It had decided not to replace the National Stroke Strategy for England when it came to an end that year.

The Stroke Association argued that stroke is a unique condition requiring its own plan to drive improvements. As the UK's fourth biggest killer and leading cause of disability, it said existing strategies did not adequately address the key issues to driving continual improvement in stroke care.

The charity knew something had to be done – and with potentially thousands of lives on the line, failure was not an option.

If it couldn't sway public opinion to put

pressure on the government, the standard of stroke care could decline and people could lose their lives. So the Stroke Association commissioned Cision to help monitor and track its campaign progress.

"We were determined to develop a campaign that highlighted the seriousness of this devastating health condition to mobilise public support," says Anil Ranchod, the Stroke Association's deputy director PR and comms. "We needed a powerful way to inform the public and the right tools to ensure we were on track."

He adds: "Our campaign, A New Era for Stroke, needed to engage the public and garner widespread media attention to spur the government to re-evaluate its decision."

PR WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO SWAY PUBLIC OPINION

The Stroke Association puts PR and comms at the heart of its media strategy, and this campaign was no different.

To force the government to act, it decided to drive people to an online petition calling for change. If it could gather enough signatures, it knew NHS England and the Department of Health would then be forced to listen.

“The strategy for the campaign involved establishing a research and measurement program to reach targeted audiences and analyse campaign progress,” Ranchod explains. “Developing audience profiles for personalised outreach with a call to action

was important to identify target audiences.”

To achieve this, Cision surveyed 10,000 UK residents to measure the public’s awareness of the issue. Then, our team identified and tracked key influencers and outlets for the charity’s target audiences.

As the campaign progressed, we mapped The Stroke Association’s mainstream and social media coverage against its web traffic, calls to the helpline and petition signatures.

Ranchod says: “Updated measurement was factored throughout the entire campaign, starting with the audience identification survey, which pinpointed specific audiences and their media consumption habits.”

THE INSIGHT THAT AVERTED DISASTER

By the end of stroke awareness month (*Make May Purple for stroke*), the petition had gathered more than 5,000 signatures. But there was a problem.

Cision’s reports showed that the charity’s PR and social output correlated with a huge spike in signatures. But that spike wasn’t big enough. If the charity was to achieve its goal of securing time with a government health minister, something had to be done.

We showed that although the campaign had reached 48% of UK adults, just 14% had been exposed to coverage featuring a link to the petition. Following this feedback, the Stroke Association changed its approach – greatly increasing the campaign’s impact.

“Having this information from the beginning was vital as it encouraged campaign efforts to revolve around

data-based decisions,” says Ranchod.

“Monitoring social media engagement (which started low) led to the charity upping the ante on our social media offering.”

He continues: “Utilising our video content earlier along with the comprehensive online dashboards available through Cision Intelligence provided much-needed ongoing analysis, ensuring progress could be tracked against KPIs.”



By the end of the campaign, Cision reported respondents’ awareness of our key messages grew by 35%, showcasing how PR efforts helped the organisation achieve its underlying objectives.

ANIL RANCHOD
DEPUTY DIRECTOR PR & COMMS
THE STROKE ASSOCIATION’S



Spurred on by the introduction of social media case studies, the #NewEra hashtag made 7 million impressions. The petition link was shared almost 4,000 times, achieving a

potential reach of 3.7 million people. As a result, the petition generated over 55,000 signatures and helped secure two meetings with a government health minister^x.

A NEW ERA FOR STROKE

The campaign helped secure two meetings with a government health minister



#NEWERA MADE MORE THAN **7 MILLION** IMPRESSIONS AND REACHED **3.7 MILLION** PEOPLE



RESPONDENT'S AWARENESS OF KEY MESSAGES GREW BY **35%**



GAINED OVER **55,000** PETITION SIGNATURES



RECEIVED AN OFFICIAL **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

THE FUTURE OF COMMS AT THE STROKE ASSOCIATION

Technology played a key role in the success of The Stroke Association's #NewEra campaign.

By incorporating measurement into the campaign from the start, it was able to define exactly what success looked like and show that its PR activities were a cost-effective way to achieve its goals.

"Measuring the success of a campaign is not just about coverage or reach and frequency," says Ranchod. "It's about demonstrating engagement and impact of the coverage, such as actions taken or increased awareness."

Going forwards, Ranchod says the charity will continue to use this approach to demonstrate the contributions PR and comms make to its strategic objectives.



It has and continues to be a journey, not a destination, **but thanks to technology we're now in a position to effectively track and measure the impacts and outcomes of our work.**

ANIL RANCHOD
DEPUTY DIRECTOR PR & COMMS
THE STROKE ASSOCIATION



He adds: "Working with Cision, we now have a better understanding of what metrics to measure – and it's about measuring your performance and being able to attribute outcomes across all areas of your work."



A MEDIA REVOLUTION TO **RIVAL THE PRINTING PRESS**

Today, demand for PR measurement services is booming.

According to industry analysts Burton-Taylor, analytics is the fastest growing segment within the media intelligence sector^{x1}.

What's more, the technology driving this measurement revolution is having a transformational effect on the media as a whole, as Nadin Vernon, strategy consultant at PRIME Research, highlights.

"Just as 500 years ago the technology of printing revolutionised the way people communicate," she says. "Technology today is revolutionising the way we communicate."

She was speaking at PR measurement in practice, an event celebrating the coming together of Cision and PRIME Research – combining the world's two most awarded media measurement firms into a single intelligence powerhouse.

MEASURING RESULTS IS THE KEY TO SECURING BUDGET

You've already seen that marketers grasp the value of earned media.

But to secure increased marketing investment, communications professionals need to demonstrate the business impact of their initiatives.

"85% of new ad spend is going to just two

sources, and we all know what they are," says Paul Hender, Cision's head of insight. "The reason it's going to Google and Facebook is because these are platforms that offer data."

"The lesson is that for earned media to earn more resource and more budget, it needs for get better at measurement," he adds.

Earned media isn't measured in column inches



HOW YOU MEASURE PR DEPENDS ON YOUR GOALS

Vanessa Wilson, UK Sport's director of comms, first enlisted Cision to tackle a media crisis. We provided the analytics to prove her crisis strategy was working.

"It was actually quite revelatory, because one of the first things was just putting some context around it," she says. "It's great for the morale of the team, in terms of saying that we're doing the right thing."

Jenny Caven, head of external affairs at Slimming World, adds that the company weaves PR measurement into the fabric of its annual January weight loss campaigns^{xii}.

She says: "We were able to show the value of all our comms and PR activity in driving traffic to our website, as well as accounting for more than 50% of all the members who joined the local groups in January in 2017."

WHY THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS CARES ABOUT MORE THAN JUST POSITIVE COVERAGE

As the Office for National Statistics discovered, the specific objectives of your organisation can have a huge impact on the way you go about measuring your public relations programmes.

PRIME Research helped the office develop accessible KPIs for understanding the quality, relevance and authority of its PR and earned media coverage.

“As a business, we used to rely on sentiment an awful lot,” says Martin Nicholls, head of strategic communication at the ONS. “We’d target ourselves to keep under 2% negative. Does that mean the other 98% was

positive? No. It actually means about 90% of it was neutral.”



Going forwards, I’m trying to remove the extreme volatile positive and negative approach and **focus more on the neutral.**

MARTIN NICHOLLS
Head of strategic communication, ONS



“Our business model isn’t about generating positive coverage. It’s about informing debate and producing the statistics that help Britain make better decisions.”

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS HELPING MEASURE PR ROI

The challenge many communicators run into when trying to measure the success of their campaigns is that there’s no ‘one size fits all’ metric to turn to. How you measure a PR campaign depends on its goals.

“What you’re trying to do in terms of understanding your goals really does dictate how you should go about measuring your work,” Hender explains. “PR can do lots of different things.”

Creating a bespoke measurement framework when planning your PR campaigns is a great way to identify the best metrics for what you’re trying to achieve. You can then combine this framework with the latest tools and techniques to measure the business impact of your earned media initiatives.

“What we do for the Museum of London is track their media coverage against their visitor numbers,” Hender adds. “We can see directly when there’s a campaign about a particular exhibition and track those visitor numbers, and you can see the direct correlation between the two.^{xiii}”

All this shows that, with the right tools, communicators can now show the business impact of their campaigns.

It’s already helping organisations as diverse as The Stroke Association, Slimming World, UK Sport and the ONS prove the value of their earned media initiatives – and it can do the same for you.

THIS “CLOUD COMMS” BREAKTHROUGH WILL **CHANGE PR FOREVER**

What you’re about to see will change the way your business does PR and Comms forever. But what will really surprise you is just how simple it is.

You see, most comms teams depend on a wide range of disparate tools to handle the various tasks they perform each day. They’ll have a database of media contacts, a press release distribution platform, an array of analysis tools and more besides.

These tools generally aren’t designed to work together. And managing campaigns effectively across all of them can be a real headache.

That’s why we created the Cision Communications Cloud®.

It combines the very latest earned media technology into a single cloud-based platform – making it easy to design, implement and manage world-class communications initiatives.

But that’s not what’s so revolutionary about this first-of-its-kind comms platform. Because it also gives you the tools to directly measure the business contributions and returns your campaigns deliver – so you can make the case for greater investment in PR and comms.

Power your story with data-driven communications



GO BEYOND MONITORING TO MEASURE THE TRUE VALUE OF YOUR EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE

Monitoring your earned media coverage is essential for understanding its reach and seeing what people are saying about your brand. But it's not sufficient on its own.

So, the Cision Communications Cloud starts by automatically tracking your coverage across print, digital and social channels:

- It makes it easy to engage with your audience online and listen to media channels to uncover trending topics.
- It lets you analyse earned media sentiment, so you can clearly see how perceptions of your brand are changing over time.

- You can even conduct valuable competitor analysis by comparing this information against your rivals' earned media coverage.

But that's just a taste of what's possible with this groundbreaking earned media technology – because the best communicators go beyond media monitoring to measure the true value of their comms programmes.

To compete in today's media environment, what you really need is to measure the business impact of your media initiatives.

TRACK CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR WITH UNRIVALLED ACCURACY AND TRANSFORM YOUR EARNED MEDIA PROGRAMS

To optimise your campaigns, you need to know which ones are generating the best results. Quality insights are the key to increasing your earned media success, influencing your target audience and building business for your brand.

So, the Cision Communications Cloud does more than show you which outlets are driving traffic to your website. It reveals the exact demand generation results and revenue your activities deliver.

These are the same insights that have fuelled rapid expansion in the paid and

owned media industries in recent years. Now, with the Cision Communications Cloud, they could soon be doing the same for your business.

With it, you'll be able to see how effectively your campaigns are generating media coverage, increasing your share of voice and driving sales.

What's more, you'll have the tools to attribute sales to specific pieces of coverage.

Finally, you can bring your comms up to date and create a detailed picture of the value of earned media for company stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

PR and comms should be a central pillar of your media strategy.

Earned media is a proven way to connect with highly targeted audiences through channels they know and trust. But historically, CMOs have preferred investing in channels that were easier to track and measure.

Now, that's all changing - with new technology like the Cision Communications Cloud is making it possible for communicators to prove the business impact of their work.

"This recognition that businesses have under-invested in earned media and over-invested in paid is happening right now," says Cision CEO Kevin Akeroyd. "There has never been a better time to be a

communications professional - whether you're on the agency side or the brand side."

With Cision's help, Slimming World was able to show that earned media generated half its new signups during January 2017.

We helped the Museum of London prove its earned media coverage is driving visitor numbers - and we were instrumental in the success of the Stroke Association's *A New Era for stroke* campaign.

The simple fact is earned media has the potential to generate greater returns than any other kind of marketing.

Now, thanks to cutting edge technology, communicators across the globe finally have the tools they need to make the case for greater investment in PR and comms.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT THE **CISION COMMUNICATIONS CLOUD** CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

REQUEST A DEMO NOW



SOURCES

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WRITER:

Solomon Radley, Content marketing manager, Cision

DESIGNER:

Aysha Khalid, Graphic designer EMIA, Cision