Implementing and evaluating the campaign

A successful launch is important – some would say essential. It has been known for campaigns with a lacklustre launch, attracting little interest from the target audiences, to gain attention and success gradually. However, your life, and that of your colleagues, will be made much easier if the initial activities surrounding the launch contribute to make it the most successful event possible, gaining as much interest from your target audiences as you can.

This is partly because of the way the media works and the importance of the ‘first’ story of your campaign. The issue is likely to have been discussed in various ways before and so is not totally new. However, it must be presented as not only ‘new’, but as ‘news’.
Implementing planned actions

Involvement in a campaign calls on a wide range of skills such as analytical, administrative, communication, organisational and creative – as well as good personal and social skills. If you are fortunate you will be part of a team with the widest possible range of talent and experience; this will mean that not only do you make a valuable contribution, but also you learn from others.

You will be better at some tasks than others. This is true for everyone. What matters most is a willingness to learn and improve on a day-to-day basis. One of the similarities between a career in journalism and one in PR is that the most successful practitioners regard each day as contributing to their education.

You need to ensure that your contribution demonstrates your abilities – for example:
- how you deal with people on a personal basis
- your telephone manner
- making sure that your written materials are always well edited and appropriate for each audience
- whether you can always behave politely, positively and with a smile – however you are feeling.

These attributes will carry you a long way. And never underestimate the importance of being punctual and reliable.

Implementing actions

When contributing to a campaign, the work can often be intense and stressful. The following are characteristics that will help you.

Accuracy

Good, accurate and concise notes of meetings are vital. You may be taking a note or minute to write up afterwards, or simply making one for your own benefit. Meetings where every member goes away with a different understanding of what has been decided are worse than useless. If you have any doubt about what has been decided, you need to have the confidence to speak up and ask for any clarification of what has been agreed.

Reliability

Successful campaigns depend on team members delivering as expected and on time. Avoid thinking up excuses for why you cannot deliver the work on time, or delivering it done in a sloppy or clearly rushed manner. It is your job to check the spelling, punctuation and grammar of your own work, not someone else’s. Merely relying on spellcheck to pick up mistakes is not enough.

Cooperation with others

Excellent communication skills, supporting team objectives and supporting team members will help you make a valued contribution to the team. It helps if you are welcomed into a team because you can make a worthwhile contribution, listen to and encourage others, and empathise with and show consideration to colleagues and others. This takes a great deal of self-discipline at times.
Unit 9: Delivering and evaluating public relations campaigns

9.2: Implementing and evaluating the campaign

**Flexibility**
Not everything goes to plan, and sometimes unexpected circumstances mean that plans need to be changed. To support the campaign, it is important the campaign team is flexible – it needs to be able to adjust plans at short notice, and be willing to put in the hours required to achieve the necessary impact.

**Appropriate attitude and personal presentation**
Successful campaigns require all members of the campaign team to deal with and convince a wide range of audiences. It does not matter if you initially feel a little nervous of meeting, for instance, the chief executive of a leading company, a well-known journalist or someone sleeping rough on the streets. Smile and remember that there is probably not that much that divides you. One appeal of PR is the diversity of the people you are likely to meet – and the surprising things you learn about them.

**Clearly defined role**
Successful campaigns depend on a clear understanding of the roles of each team member and the reporting structure. You need to know who is ultimately responsible for each part of the campaign.

**Effective resource and time allocation**
Monitoring the use of resources and keeping timesheets or similar ways of accessing the time taken to carry out certain functions, spending and expenses are essential parts of a PR campaign.

To work in PR, you do need a facility for recording and organising budgets. But monitoring how, when and where money is spent is a crucial task in any campaign.

Spending can be split into three categories: personnel, operating costs and capital spending. Personnel means staff salaries and other employment costs. Operating costs is most likely to refer to expenses for operating equipment, print and production of publications. Capital spending refers to ‘immovables’, such as furniture, computer equipment and telephones.

2 **Monitor plans against objectives**

*Key term*

**Momentum** is an essential factor in your campaign. Journalists – and most other stakeholders – are a mix of individuals and herd animals. One of the first acts of journalists (and others) when presented with an idea is to check what has already been reported. This will influence their attitude and how they follow up the issue.

A common mistake is to try to reach too wide an audience straight away. You need an outreach strategy, or some sort of strategy which quite carefully defines your target audiences. Then you will never lose sight of the importance of engaging with them and measuring the impact. In addition to stand-alone initiatives, consider whether you need to keep specific audiences updated with the progress of the campaign. If, for instance, you have a dedicated list of donors, investors or journalists, keep them informed about your progress. Similarly, exploit your website, Facebook, Twitter and other new media sources to keep target audiences aware of the campaign’s objectives and what is being done to achieve them.
Monitoring reactions

It is essential to keep a finger on the pulse of your target audiences during the course of your campaign. By regularly monitoring the impact of the campaign, you can assess whether you are successfully working towards achieving the campaign’s objectives or your own cascaded objectives. This will also help identify any remedial work that might be required. 

Judgement – that is, an ability to gauge the impact of your initiatives – is equally as important as momentum. This is not something that can easily be taught; it tends to come with experience. There are many ways of measuring and evaluating results. They will help you to develop the confidence and competence to estimate the impact of your initiatives as you go along, preferably through taking advantage of opportunities for personal contacts with target audiences. Working in PR offers the opportunity to deal with diverse audiences on a personal basis. Take advantage of any opportunity for engaging with those you are seeking to communicate with and convince face to face, instead of via remote or electronic means.

There are several key aspects of plans that you need to monitor against your objectives.

- **Campaign objectives**: how is the campaign progressing against its overall objectives? Having SMART objectives should mean that you can measure progress towards the target and assess whether you are on track.
- **Cascaded objectives**: how are you progressing towards your own cascaded objectives? Are your deliverables running to schedule?
- **Resource and time allocation**: do you have the resources needed to deliver the campaign objectives and your own cascaded objectives? If your campaign is for a client, are you within the budgeted number of hours allocated to the project?

**Acting on your findings**

There is usually a time during a campaign when you want or need to remind the target audiences of your objectives and messages. A campaign is likely to have a rhythm, although it is often an uneven one. If you have a successful launch, this can lead to a short spurt when it looks like the campaign is heading quite quickly for success. This is may be followed by a lull, when you seem to be working as hard as ever, but with far fewer obvious results. Do not be alarmed! Use this as a time to assess how far you have achieved the objectives and what you need to do next.

But most campaigns initiate one or even two relaunches at some stage to inject new vigour into them. You are reminding your target audiences of the key points of your campaign, but probably introducing something new – in other words, ‘news’ – such as the most up-to-date facts and figures, new people or personalities.

Part of this new, more intensive period of activity could involve the feedback or reaction you have received from the campaign so far. This could involve:

- support from key influencers or stakeholders
- testimonials or quotes from key stakeholders, with their permission
- reaction from a survey or analysis
- increase in membership or donations
- success from a conference or exhibition initiative
- hits on the website or reaction via other new media systems.
You will, in any case, have been evaluating the results of the campaign as you go along (evaluation will be discussed later in the unit). The concept of detailed planning together with the flexibility to change when change is demanded is a hard one to communicate. But a campaign is unlikely to be continuous and smooth, without any unexpected changes in course.

**Media monitoring**

After a launch event, tasks will include monitoring coverage in the media, chasing up journalists to encourage more coverage and remind them of the key messages, and thanking all those who took part.

**Following up with journalists**

You have helped distribute press packs and similar materials, held a launch event and helped arrange a range of interviews. Then you are inevitably faced with the key questions for all those in PR: ‘Are they going to report it?’ and ‘What are they going to report?’ It may well fall to you to try to answer these questions.

When contacting specific journalists on target media, you should feel confident that they are likely to be interested in reporting your campaign. Too many PR practitioners use the scattergun approach of sending releases to an entire media database, whether or not the material is of any interest to most of them, and without personalising the message. Those holding senior positions will always try to make personal contact, face to face or on the telephone, with known journalists, rather than rely on electronic means of communication. This ‘contact and convince’ strategy can be a challenge, and most if not all PR professionals have suffered the sort of response more commonly experienced by those in call centres. But, overall, it is the most successful way of communicating to the journalist your campaign’s key messages and convincing them that this is a story worth reporting.

Frequently you will have to check with journalists that they have received the correct information and ask whether they are likely to report it. This can be an awkward task, but there are a few ways of making it easier.

1. Make sure that the information has been sent to the appropriate journalist. There are quite regular changes in the staff on many of the media or changes in their responsibilities. So check that the journalist on your list is still in the same position.

2. Take care in sending information in the right format. Many journalists do not open attachments on emails in case they contain a virus. They tend to be more prepared to access links, so long as they are precise and work with one click.

3. Contact the right journalist at the right time. Do not be surprised if a journalist is abrupt or rude if you ring them just before their deadline, or if they ignore you just after this.

A telephone call to the right journalist at an appropriate time, reminding them of a key message about their campaign and asking, for instance, if they need any more information, is a good way of keeping communications open. You want to aim for a symbiotic relationship – that is, one that helps both them and you. Sometimes they may want to know what media interest you have generated, which generally...
means that they want to know if their competition is writing stories. The general rule is: never lie, never be too specific. If you know that there has been a good response from a target audience, such as customers or clients, or a lot of electronic traffic, perhaps via Twitter, you could mention that. Anything that demonstrates that you are touching a public pulse will encourage them to report your campaign.

Keep a good note of such contacts. Not only are they useful to you for future reference, they may be extremely helpful to your colleagues.

**Monitoring progress against campaign objectives**

Media coverage is important. However, it is even more important to monitor the media reaction to your campaign. Do the stories reported support your campaign’s objectives?

If key elements of your message are missed, or if the story published contradicts your campaign's message, you need to consider what action can be taken. Is there a problem with the presentation of the message, which can be amended for better results in the future?

### 3 Teamworking

A campaign is a team effort, and, as you have seen, individual members of the team will be responsible for specific deliverables that contribute towards the team achieving its overall objectives. The effective working of the team remains important as the campaign is implemented.

**Communication skills**

There should be regular points at which the campaign team compares progress against objectives and the overall plan. These are key points at which issues or concerns should be communicated, and may result in actions, escalations or prioritisations of particular tasks.

However, to work effectively as a team, you will need to communicate on a more regular basis with colleagues whose work is affected by your deliverables.

In the first instance, this should be either face to face or over the telephone so that you are able to agree as a group the best course of action to minimise the impact of any changes. This can then be followed up via email to confirm details and to ensure there is a clear written record of decisions made.

**Support for team objectives**

A campaign team must be united by their team objectives and all working towards the same goal. As the campaign unfolds, plans may need to change as a result of the campaign monitoring.

This may mean that parts of the campaign plan need to be refined, or the priority of certain deliverables changed.

It is important that the team understands the reasons behind decisions and how they contribute to the team objectives as change can sometimes affect team morale.
Support for team members

Workloads through the campaign may vary depending on the stages at which various deliverables are required, and how changing priorities and the evolution of the campaign affect individuals within the team.

Individual team members may need support at different stages of a project. For example, a dependent task may need to be prioritised in order to help a colleague meet the required date for their deliverables. Similarly, a team member may need support from other team members in order to complete a high-priority task on time.

4 Challenges in dealing with specific tactics

While many of a campaign’s activities and tactics involve PR practices common for most of those working in PR, some of them present particular challenges. These include:

1. putting together a press pack
2. helping to organise a launch event
3. organising a press conference
4. helping to organise a press trip
5. helping with interviews.

Putting together a press pack

You may be accustomed to contributing to the development of press packs, especially press releases and briefing notes. However, producing and updating one for a campaign can present specific challenges.

The press pack is likely to need to be accurate and relevant for a certain timescale. Quotations, facts, figures and case studies should still be true and continue to read well for at least a couple of months. Conversely, it is not a good idea to mention support from someone who is unlikely to want to maintain this within a month or so. Remember that the front sheet, which is usually a press release, can be updated as the campaign develops. However, other information should have a slightly longer shelf life.

Helping to organise a launch event

You should understand the importance of the launch event being a success – this is often the first public part of a campaign. But detailed planning at this stage is likely to save you a lot of work and stress later on. Before discussing the possibilities with colleagues, it is worth doing some revision. This will refresh your memory on what you want to achieve, whom you want to influence and who are your target media. Ask yourself the following questions.

• What do I want to say?
• Who am I talking to?
• Will the media be interested?
The general rule is to do something visual – something that will provide you and the media with good photographs which help tell your ‘story’, and which will also guarantee a couple of interviews in target media with those speaking on behalf of your campaign.

There may be a temptation to think ‘celebrity’ to attract attention. It can be very useful when someone with a high and positive profile agrees to back the launch of a campaign, because they personally feel committed to your objectives. However, there are a range of questions you need to consider:

- How well known are they – and with which target audiences?
- Are they associated with other campaigns?
- How are journalists likely to react to their involvement in your campaign?
- What is their link to your campaign?
- Will they take guidance?
- How much will their involvement cost?
- Is there any likelihood that they will attract media attention that could damage your campaign?

Your launch event needs one or two people who lead the campaign, backed up by a couple of others. The campaign leader(s) provide a clear focus for the target audiences, including the media. They will have been involved in the planning and be comfortable with dealing with any questions about the organisation and the campaign issue. Others who may also take part could be:

- one or two people who have had personal experience of the campaign issue
- someone who has specialist knowledge of the analysis, survey or statistics.

It is advisable for those working in PR, marketing and event management to take a supportive role. In the UK, journalists tend to be suspicious if PR or communications advisers take a prominent public role. On the other hand, the US media are much more relaxed about the part played by such advisers.

In organising a launch event, there are likely to be regular meetings to plan every detail. An agenda for such a meeting may look like the one shown in Figure 9.2.1 (with the initials of those taking part in brackets):

1. Update from last meeting (AB & BC)
2. Update on latest research (AB)
3. Update, with presentation, on venue and facilities (BC)
4. Consider draft list of invitees, both media and non-media (CD)
5. Consider first draft of press pack (AB)
6. Presentation of plans for photo opportunity (DE)
7. Update on launch of website and social media initiatives following the event (EF)
8. Confirm action points and date of next meeting

Figure 9.2.1: Example of a meeting agenda
Between these meetings you should expect to take part in a great number of discussions in smaller groups or on a one-to-one basis as the details are gradually sorted out.

A key feature of the launch event itself is the itinerary, again giving a clear understanding of who is doing what. See Figure 9.2.2 for an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 a.m.</td>
<td>BC, DE and FG arrive at venue to set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
<td>Catering team arrive to set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30 a.m.</td>
<td>CD, FG, Chair and Deputy Chair arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>Key supporters, JK and KL arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15 a.m.</td>
<td>Doors open, journalists arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BC and DE man welcome desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refreshments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45 a.m.</td>
<td>Start of launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 a.m.</td>
<td>Close of formal event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-to-one interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refreshments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.45 a.m.</td>
<td>In office, distribute news release to the rest of media list (LM and MN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In office, campaign website goes live (EF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>Wind up event at venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>AB, BC and DE chase up journalists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organising a press conference**

The launch event may involve a formal press conference, with either a small invited group or a wider range of media outlets invited. Nowadays, press conferences have become more common in the UK when there is a problem, such as police appealing for help after a serious crime, or when a person or organisation is facing some sort of crisis. The exception is those associated with sports events, which give the media the opportunity to ask questions as a group. But for many PR practitioners, one-to-one interviews or briefings of small groups are usually preferable. This is because there is always some uncertainty about how a press conference with a large group of media will turn out.

The other fear that many PR practitioners experience is when senior executives demand a press conference to which it will be extremely difficult to encourage many – or any – to turn up. There is also the dilemma of whether to start your conference on time with only two journalists or wait a bit because at least two others have promised they will come along.

Taking part in the planning and implementation of a press conference is an excellent – if stressful – experience, as you will need to use a wide range of your PR skills.
9.2: Implementing and evaluating the campaign

Checklist
There are also various ways of taking some of the stress out of the event.

- Choose the venue with care, taking account of convenience for invited media, appropriateness of the room, lighting, acoustics, electric points and parking facilities.
- Prepare the room layout carefully – for instance, how the table and chairs are set out, or what is on the table, such as name labels, bottles of water and glasses. Aim to make the room as uncluttered as possible.
- What sort of table are you using? For instance, are the legs of those on the panel visible to the media? It is amazing what odd things people do with their legs when they are nervous, so it is advisable to make sure legs cannot be seen.
- Carefully check the background and anything else that may be in view of the television cameras. For instance, take care that a sign, poster or banner is not sited behind any panel member in case, onscreen, it looks as if it is coming out of someone’s head or reads oddly.
- Check the placing and effectiveness of microphones. Sudden whining sounds annoy and distract the audience.
- Check for any distractions, such as squeaky chairs, noisy air-conditioning or loud traffic noise.
- A registration table needs to be sited at the entrance to log in/sign in journalists, hand out press packs and deal with any specific requirements or interview requests.

An itinerary similar to that for a launch event will be needed so that everyone knows precisely where they have to be and when. Those taking part will need detailed guidance if they are not accustomed to answering unexpected or hostile questions from journalists.

Remember throughout the importance of working as a team of equals – combining different skills and expertise into one highly professional and competent group. That is what inspires confidence and trust. The most common mistakes include:
- forgetting that microphones and cameras may be on before and after the press conference and can pick up negative comments and images
- looking uneasy in each other’s company
- certain panel members looking bored or distracted while other members are speaking
- interrupting each other
- believing that it will impress if you speak for longer or faster than the previous speaker
- hurrying away from the table – this gives the impression that you are relieved that your ‘ordeal’ is over.

Activity
Watch online (for example, on YouTube or similar) three press conferences from sectors you are working in. Note down what you think worked well and what did not.

The next day, try to remember at least two key messages or positive images from each of the three conferences.
Helping to organise a press trip

Few activities cause as much stress for a PR practitioner as organising a press trip for a group of journalists.

The best chance of achieving success lies in detailed planning at every stage. Your tasks are likely to include the following.

- Liaise with the proposed facility to discuss the best time, hosts and numbers.
- Draw up an invitations list, prioritising into first, second and third tiers your preferred media outlets and journalists.
- Research logistics, such as travel and hospitality arrangements, activities during the visit and any issues of confidentiality.
- Agree suitable hosts, preferably those who have knowledge and enthusiasm, and who are unlikely to struggle when meeting journalists.
- Agree priority list for invitations and send out the priority list.
- Book travel and catering arrangements.
- Prepare a press pack.
- Draft an internal Q&A paper so everyone knows how to deal with likely questions, especially negative ones, backed up by relevant facts and figures.
- Brief hosts and anyone else likely to be approached.
- Draft speeches for hosts.
- Check on the status of invites and specific requirements, such as travel and dietary.
- Do a thorough recce (investigation) of the facility, checking for any possible problems.
- Carry out a rehearsal with the hosts.
- Confirm the final attendance list.
- Facilitate the visit.
- Follow up with the hosts.
- Follow up with the journalists, trying to confirm details of likely coverage.

There are various skills involved in running a successful press trip; not least is that of choosing journalists and media outlets, and the initial planning process. It is not advisable to pick a couple of journalists who are in direct competition, especially if they are known to dislike each other. Since some journalists you may like to include may not be available or willing to take part, it is usual to compile around three lists in order of priority. Try not to be over-ambitious; select between three and six journalists, preferably known to you or your colleagues, who are likely to get along and – most importantly – who will write up the trip accurately, quickly and (generally) positively. Be prepared for them to mention any negative points; they work in journalism, not advertising.

Helping with interviews

During a PR campaign, you may find that there are opportunities to gain press coverage through offering journalists interviews with key spokespeople.

As a PR practitioner, your role will be to:

- organise the logistics
- act as a liaison between the campaign and the journalist
• prepare and rehearse the spokesperson
• follow up with the journalist after the interview to answer any follow-up questions and provide any further information to secure coverage.

Checklist
To give the interview a good chance of success, there are some guidelines.

✓ Do your research on the journalist’s (and their media outlet’s) likely attitude, and what they have reported on the issue.
✓ Research the likely style of interview, depending on the type of media and whether it is pre-recorded or live.
✓ Check running stories, as journalists like to mention something currently in the news.
✓ Make sure the spokesperson is comfortable with the key messages and has studied the agreed Q&A.
✓ Do a rehearsal, with you or a colleague anticipating the most likely and difficult questions to be asked. This can be extremely useful.
✓ Encourage the spokesperson to deliver at least two clear, true and memorable messages; back them up with a few simple facts and figures; and talk about real people.

If you are accompanying the spokesperson, it helps to decide your role beforehand – and expect it to be supportive, there to help with any additional information the journalist might need. You should never become the story! If the interview is with a print journalist, you are perfectly entitled to tape the interview itself, especially if you do not have good shorthand.

Michael Browne is a PR officer for a major chain of fashion stores. He is part of a 22-strong team of communications professionals based at the headquarters in Basingstoke. His main role has been to:
• promote coverage of the stores and their promotions in the regional and trade media
• develop generic media materials for distribution to colleagues in other offices
• help keep the website updated.

In addition, he has a specific role in monitoring media coverage, including blogs and Twitter, of the company and that of its main rivals.

Recently Michael has been asked to provide further ideas for promoting the company’s campaigns via new and social media. He has been researching ways of doing this, based mainly on the use of the customer database in the areas where they have their main stores. He has also raised the idea of involving staff in these stores in community work, such as repainting a housing estate’s communal meeting room, to emphasise the local credentials of the stores and their commitment to local residents. He has not, so far, been involved in community work himself. However, he is investigating suitable volunteering opportunities so that he can gain valuable experience and knowledge to help him recommend appropriate initiatives for the company’s campaigns.
Portfolio activity 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

As part of the assessment for this unit you need to implement planned actions to support the delivery of PR campaigns. For this part of your assessment, you will need to collect evidence from different PR campaigns which shows that you are able to:

1. carry out your planned activities (e.g. press packs, meeting minutes)
2. demonstrate effective team-working skills to contribute to the campaigns.
   Is there anyone within the campaign teams who would be able to give a statement for your assessor about your contribution?
3. monitor progress against objectives, and adapt plans as necessary.

5 Evaluating the campaign

The importance of evaluation

Evaluation needs to be a key part of every PR campaign and every PR tactic. It is the spine of every successful PR strategy.

Myths surrounding this area include evaluation being something we tag on to the end of the campaign to justify expenditure or evaluation being an expensive process that proves little. Evaluating PR is not simply about monitoring what coverage your campaign achieved. It is as much about monitoring what attitude shift there was among the target audience – ascertaining what their overall impression was and how that contributed to the organisation’s objectives.

Evaluation points

Evaluation should form a critical part of any campaign – both during the campaign and after the campaign. Evaluating a campaign while it is still running allows you to make informed decisions that will help capitalise on aspects that are working well and address areas that need improvement.

For the Higher Apprenticeship, you will need to evaluate both your own contribution to public relations campaigns as well as the overall implementation of public relations campaigns.

Media analysis

Media coverage helps to spread a message and can influence a far greater range of people very effectively. However, some coverage is far more effective at influencing your key audience than others.

When evaluating the media coverage generated, you need to consider the following.

- **Tone**: what is the tone of the media coverage? Is it supporting your campaign, or critical?
- **Key message**: has the key message from your campaign been reported and carried through into the coverage? If not, why not?
• **Audience reach:** is the audience of the media coverage likely to be the target audience for your campaign? How valuable is each piece of media coverage in terms of accurately targeting the key recipients of your message?

**Advertising value equivalent (AVE)**

Historically the most common way of evaluating a PR campaign has been to measure the media coverage generated by column inches (often given at the top of the press cutting by the clippings agency). The size of space commanded by the editorial is then applied according to the rate card of the publication for the equivalent advertising space (hence the name advertising value equivalent (AVE)) to establish the cost of purchasing that space in the publication.

The standard practice within the PR industry is then to multiply the figure by three (for third-party endorsement); this creates a financial figure that can be used to assign a financial value to the PR coverage.

The system has received criticism and has, over the years, been corrupted by some agencies/companies multiplying column inch prices by up to six.

Other disadvantages include the fact that the method takes no account of the messages (favourable or not) within the editorial, prominence and weightings, or that many media (such as the BBC and controlled circulation publications) do not carry advertising and therefore have no rate card.

**Opportunity to see (OTS)**

Opportunity to see (OTS) is the number of occasions on which an audience could see a given message. Publications are given an OTS number – for example, The Sun has an OTS of 5 while Metro has an OTS of 60. Reader’s Digest, Hello! and OK! are in the hundreds (due to being placed in hairdressers’ waiting areas for months, for example).

Derivatives of OTS include:

- **GRP (gross rating points)** – this measures the weight of readership or television audience. One GRP equates to an audience exposure among 1 per cent of the population
- **TVR (television ratings points)** – one TVR equates to reaching 1 per cent of the population with one 30-second advertisement.

### Evaluating your own contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Evaluating your own contribution</strong></th>
<th><strong>Evaluating the overall implementation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How has your contribution affected the media coverage of the campaign?</td>
<td>How much media coverage has the whole campaign received?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the AVE and OTS values for your contribution?</td>
<td>What are the AVE and OTS values of the media coverage? Does this justify the efforts of the campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the coverage carry your message? Was it positive?</td>
<td>Was the coverage positive? Did it meet the objectives of the campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What could be done to improve the amount of coverage you received?</td>
<td>What could have been done to improve (in volume and tone) the media coverage that the campaign received?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there anything you could have done to secure more positive coverage?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9.2.1: Evaluating own contributions and campaign implementation using media analysis

**Rate card** – a document listing prices for the different advertisement options available from a media outlet.

**Advertising value equivalent (AVE)** – the equivalent cost of the media coverage achieved, based on the publication’s rate card. This may be multiplied by a given figure to represent the added value of an endorsement versus pure advertising.

**Opportunity to see (OTS)** – the number of readers per unit of a publication. For example, Metro is distributed freely, but most issues are left on public transport for other travellers to read.
Market research

Well-planned market research can be useful for assessing the impact of a PR campaign, as well as forming an integral part of the initial planning and preparation for the campaign.

Using focus groups and surveys during and after the campaign can help to monitor both the growing awareness of your message and how your target audience is responding to this message. When this market research is conducted and analysed mid-campaign, it can provide very useful feedback that will help you to identify aspects that can be improved, messages that need to be strengthened, etc.

Online analysis

The internet is a significant part of most PR campaigns, and there are many different tools that can be used to monitor and analyse the success of a campaign. These include the following.

- Google Analytics can help track key measures such as the volume of unique visitors to your campaign website, sources of traffic (e.g. are people coming to your website through another website, social media, links on a newspaper website, a blog, etc.?). This can tell you some basic information about your audience, such as their location and the time spent on your site.
- Twitter and Twitter clients provide some useful analytics for PR professionals. Trending topics clearly indicate what people are talking about online (and can be filtered by location if you want to see international, national and local trends). Similarly, it is easy for PR practitioners to see how many times a message has been retweeted, and to set up regular searches for mentions of the names of their campaign or client.
- Facebook likes can be a useful measure of the popularity of particular messages or of a campaign in general.

Table 9.2.2: Evaluating own contributions and campaign implementation using market research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluating your own contribution</th>
<th>Evaluating the overall implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What opportunities are there for you to conduct market research to assess the impact of your own contribution?</td>
<td>• At which stages would market research be most valuable for monitoring the reception and success of a campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For example, if you organised an event, could you use a follow-up questionnaire sent to delegates to monitor the response to the event?</td>
<td>• For each instance, would qualitative or quantitative data be more useful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could you use Twitter hashtags to monitor the key messages that delegates take from the event?</td>
<td>• What types of market research would be most appropriate for your marketing campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you use tools such as Google Analytics to assess the success of follow-up action from your deliverable?</td>
<td>• How can you accurately interpret the results of the market research and act effectively on its results?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating the overall campaign aims and objectives

At the outset of the campaign, overall campaign aims and objectives should have been identified and cascaded objectives set for individuals within the campaign team. While it is important to assess whether the overall campaign aims and objectives have been effectively achieved, you must also assess how you have contributed to the campaign.
This means taking ownership of the activities that you completed during the campaign and making an honest appraisal of how they affected the overall result.

**Cascaded objectives**

Your own objectives within the campaign should have been SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). This is the point at which you assess whether you have achieved these objectives.

For example, ask yourself the following questions.

- Did you achieve the specific aim? Did you successfully complete your specific deliverables?
- What data is available to demonstrate that you achieved the quantifiable (measurable) element of the objective?
- Was your work within budget? Depending on the project and the agency you work for, this may mean time spent on the task as well as money spent.
- Did you meet the deadlines set for the objective? Did you meet the deadlines for the interim stages and key tasks that were needed to keep the objective on track?

**Feedback**

Both internal feedback (from colleagues, peers and managers) and external feedback (from clients and suppliers) are useful in identifying particular strengths in your performance as well as areas for improvement. You should always be open to feedback on your performance, as this helps to support your continuous development.

6 Evaluating campaign implementation

**The value of your campaign**

Assessing the value of a public relations campaign can be complicated. A campaign may not necessarily result directly in an increase in revenue for a business, and not all campaigns are commercially focused. A campaign's value can be judged by a number of different measures.

- Revenue, if a campaign can be directly linked to a commercial product or service. For example, a campaign around a product launch (e.g. the iPhone® 5) may be able to measure its value through sales.
- Advertising equivalents, such as AVE or OTS, may be used where a PR campaign is conducted in the place of traditional paid-for advertising. For example, where sponsorship of an event (e.g. the Virgin London Marathon) has resulted in coverage on television, online and in print.
- Impact measures are used for awareness raising campaigns, generally focused around public health. For example, the NHS Smokefree Stoptober campaign may measure its impact through the results recorded through the campaign's app (which tracks any reductions in smoking over the period of the campaign). This can be extrapolated into a number of measures, such as money saved by the NHS on long-term medical care.
Selecting metrics

Broadly speaking, evaluation of a campaign fits into two distinct categories – quantitative and qualitative.

- Quantitative evaluation gives a good ‘top line’ overall view of the success or failure of a PR campaign and is useful in modifying tactics during the life of the campaign. However, it is not revealing in determining perceptions, beliefs or attitudes, at least to any great depth.
- Qualitative evaluation, while more expensive than quantitative in both time and money, does allow us to explore, monitor and evaluate the shift in perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that the PR campaign may be trying to influence.

The type of evaluation depends on the objectives of the campaign. For example, a campaign designed to increase sales for a business is likely to rely more heavily on quantitative evaluation, whereas a campaign designed to influence opinion is likely to rely more heavily on qualitative evaluation.

Analysing campaign and your own personal performance

You are likely to use different metrics to analyse the success of a campaign from those you would use to analyse the success of your contribution to the campaign.

The most meaningful analytics for your campaign and yourself are likely to vary depending on the nature of the project. However, Table 9.2.3 identifies some common metrics that can be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.2.3: Metrics for analysing campaign and personal performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metrics for analysing campaign performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sales volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New leads generated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Equivalent value of media coverage (AVE or OTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opinions from surveys, focus groups, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tone of press coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Endorsements from opinion leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance within overall budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analysing whether the campaign and your own contribution met their planned objectives, you need to consider the following.

- **Outputs:** were your outputs (the activities completed as part of the campaign) completed on time, to budget, and to appropriate quality standards? These can be measured through performance against schedule and performance against time and resources allocated to the output. Quality standards may be measured through feedback from a client or the target group for the campaign.

- **Out-takes:** the out-takes are the impact of your outputs. For example, this could be the number of people using a promotional code after a product launch. Out-takes are not always easy to measure (e.g. if your campaign is based around raising awareness), so it is important to plan how you will analyse the results at the same time as you are planning the output.
Outcomes: the outcomes of the campaign are the changes in the behaviour of your target customers. In many instances, these may be linked to the out-takes. For example, if an out-take is increased awareness of a company, an outcome might be increased sales.

Accuracy, time and budget

These three elements should be considered in any assessment of a campaign’s success, or an individual’s contribution. Each can have a profound effect on the success – or otherwise – of a campaign.

- Accuracy is a key element of an effective campaign, but difficult to measure. It comes in a number of forms.
  - Spelling and grammar in promotional collateral. Any errors can negatively influence the audience’s attitude towards the campaign. Errors may also affect the relationship between a PR company and a client.
  - Facts, figures and dates are all key details that form important parts of PR campaigns. Incorrect information may lead to a confused message about a launch date or delegates turning up to an event on the wrong date. In a worst-case scenario, inaccurate facts may cause a campaign to fall foul of regulators such as the Advertising Standards Authority.
  - Timeliness is vital for many campaigns, which are orchestrated over a number of months or longer. Key campaign events are often timed to coincide with political events, launch dates, public holidays, etc. in order to maximise their impact. Whether a campaign is delivered to time can be relatively straightforward to assess through the dates on which outputs were completed – you should also assess whether milestones in the schedule were met.

- A campaign budget dictates the amount of financial resources available for a campaign, and the amount of in-house time that can be spent on a campaign.
  - The financial budget for a whole campaign, or a specific output, can be measured through projected spend and actual spend. It may also be appropriate to consider value for money spent.
  - The time budget relates to the amount of in-house people time spent on the campaign. Within a commercial agency, this is likely to have been budgeted carefully and in-house time will be critical to commercial success. A PR department within an organisation may also budget time in order to control their overheads.

Evaluation points

A PR campaign needs ongoing evaluation to provide a steer towards how the campaign should evolve.

Throughout implementation

Regular review points can help to make a campaign more effective. For example, if a campaign includes a number of regional events, an evaluation of the first event should inform the structure and format of subsequent events.

The most effective public relations campaigns adapt to feedback and evolve to take advantage of changes in the external environment.
On completion: lessons learned

Once a campaign has been completed, it is important for the campaign team to meet while the campaign is still fresh in their minds, for a lessons learned session. This should be an opportunity for the whole team to honestly identify things that went well and things that did not go well during the campaign.

Once the good points and negative points of the campaign have been identified, these can be grouped into themes to try to identify any common issues.

The final stage is to suggest changes that could be made to help improve the running of the campaign. These recommendations should be stored safely after the meeting and made available to other people in your agency who might run a similar campaign.

When a comparable campaign is next being developed, it is useful to review previous lessons learned, as this can help to avoid any issues that have been experienced in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluating your own contribution</th>
<th>Evaluating the overall implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Did you achieve your own SMART objectives, on time, to budget and to the appropriate quality standards?</td>
<td>• What is the estimated value of the impact of the campaign (based on AVE, OTS and other related metrics)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which of your colleagues can provide you with feedback on your performance?</td>
<td>• Did the campaign achieve its SMART objectives? What metrics can be used to measure this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have you received any feedback from clients and suppliers relating to your performance?</td>
<td>• Was the campaign delivered accurately on schedule, to budget and to appropriate quality standards?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your strengths?</td>
<td>• What is the feedback from the client and/or stakeholders for the campaign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your areas for improvement?</td>
<td>• What could be improved if the team were to run this campaign again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What actions can you take to improve in these areas?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Portfolio activity

To complete the assessment for this unit, you need to demonstrate how you evaluate your own contribution to PR campaigns and the campaigns as a whole. To prepare for this part of your assessment, you need to do the following.

1. Evaluate your own contribution to the delivery of the overall objectives of campaigns. How valuable was your contribution? How did your objectives support the overall agreed objectives of the campaigns?

2. Based on your evaluation, identify your own development needs. Think about what training or resources you need in order to better support future PR campaigns. How can you go about acquiring these new skills?

3. Evaluate the usefulness of the activities against the PR campaign plans. Which were the most useful activities, in terms of generating the biggest results and helping to achieve the overall plan?

4. Evaluate the implementation of the PR campaigns. What went well? What did not go so well? Support your answers with evidence.

5. Based on your evaluation, make suggestions to improve the implementation of future PR campaigns.
Further reading

About the authors of Topic guides 9.1 and 9.2
Sheila Gunn MBE was a journalist for over 20 years, including 12 years on the political staff of The Times, before becoming political press spokesperson for the then Prime Minister, John Major. After the 1997 general election, she was appointed head of European PR at Healey & Baker (now Cushman & Wakefield). She later moved to the strategic communications consultancy Fleishman-Hillard as associate director. She has also served as a councillor in Camden and stood as a parliamentary candidate in the 2005 general election.

She is now an adjunct professor at Syracuse University, teaching public relations at the London faculty. She is also a visiting lecturer at City University’s journalism department and works with presidential and parliamentary candidates in developing countries. In 2010 she produced a textbook So You Want to be a Political Journalist.

Steve Dunne is a PR practitioner with 30 years experience of in-house and consultancy roles. He is the UK’s top PR trainer, particularly in the digital PR field, and is in demand as a speaker at conferences around the world.

Steve is a former head of corporate communications for British Telecom, HSBC and South African Airways. On the consultancy side Steve was managing director of travel and lifestyle agency Affinity Consulting and a former director of Countrywide Porter Novelli. He was managing director of Brighter Group, a travel and leisure communications consultancy and is, today, its executive chairman. He is the CEO of Digital Drums, the UK’s fastest growing online communications strategy consultancy.

Steve advises a range of international brands, companies and government agencies on their digital and PR strategies and on their responses to crisis and issues management in the commercial and digital arena.