

AVE: small acronym, big controversy

 By [Angelo Coppola](#)

22 Oct 2010

Blaming clients for the continued usage of AVE in South Africa when measuring the effectiveness of a public relations campaign is an excuse used by PR people, says Lesley Schroeder-McLean, MD of PR Africa, who maintains that media reach would be a far more useful measure of media coverage, until a more acceptable measure on a communications campaign's effectiveness can be found.

Schroeder-McLean, speaking at the 2010 PRISA national conference on Wednesday, 20 October 2010, suggests that the measurement of media coverage received is pointless, specifically for those PR people who are called upon to keep their clients out of the media. The problem stems from the fact that the public relations industry has traditionally measured outputs, when it should be measuring out-takes and outcomes.

Playing a smaller and smaller role

She went on to say that the mainstream media are playing a smaller and smaller role in PR campaigns because businesses have a much clearer understanding of their target markets and how to reach them. The explosion of social media channels has also focused attention on measurement and the pointless attempt to place an AVE of social media interactions.

Schroeder-McLean's view is that social media is forcing people to follow particular conversations, rather than trying to place a value on all social media interactions. Added to which, business executives are less interested in how much value in media exposure is achieved, and more interested in how the communications campaign maps back to the business objectives.

The issue, according to Schroeder-McLean, really is that PR measurement involves measuring the intangible. Once you "operationalise" that intangible, you can measure it and show the contribution towards achieving the business objectives.

Correlate with other metrics

Ideally, one should correlate the earned media coverage with other metrics, such as an increase in sales or behavioural change, the result of a call to action. The coverage received is an aside to the behavioural change.

The biggest challenge is to display the integrated metrics and the comparative change, and how these maps to the business objectives.

Ultimately, however, it is the PR person's responsibility to ensure that the criteria for the success of a communications

campaign are established and communicated to the business executives upfront, and that they don't depend on media exposure alone.

And, yes, it will require a little more work, but Schroeder-McLean maintains that there are resources within the corporate structures that can assist. Finance and IT departments have the systems to monitor and detect changes in behaviour from their clients, which might result in increases sales, reduced customer complaints and the like.

ABOUT ANGELO COPPOLA

Angelo Coppola runs his own PR shop (Channel Managed PR), when not looking for something worthwhile to champion. He specialises in tactical content, media liaison & strategic and tactical PR. He's an ex-financial journalist. Email him at angelo@channelmpr.co.za, follow him on Twitter at [@angelo2711](https://twitter.com/angelo2711) and read his musings at www.posterous.com/angelo2711.

- 702/Outsurance points people matzah pudding - 31 Oct 2011
- B2B magazines need to up their game - 17 Oct 2011
- Whitewashing the news? - 30 Aug 2011
- Mainstream media platforms are communities, too... - 30 Jun 2011
- What does Google Authorship mean for SA PR industry, clients? - 28 Jun 2011

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>