

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public Relations Measurements Guidebook for Destination Organizations

The main goals of public relations are to create, maintain and protect an organization's reputation, enhance its impact and present a favorable image. So how should destination organizations measure such lofty goals?

Destination International's Public Relations and Communications Committee joined efforts with AMEC, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, to develop a more practical and impactful way to measure public relations success. The handbook, the *Public Relations Measurements Guidebook for Destination Organizations*, provides updated guidelines for measuring communication efforts.

These five points summarize the guide's major takeaways:

- 1. AVE is Arbitrary:** Move away from measuring public relations efforts by AVE (advertising value equivalency), which is simply not a valid metric. There is no singular formula or database for AVE numbers, meaning everyone is measuring them differently anyway, so comparisons are futile.
- 2. AVE is Inaccurate:** Advertising value equivalents confuse "cost" with "value." AVEs are mistakenly used as a metric to show the value of public relations. This thinking assumes that the more something "costs," the more "valuable" it is. In reality, cost and value often bear no relation to each other.
- 3. The Barcelona Principles Are A Framework:** The seven Barcelona Principles (* the name for the process created by experts in communication from which to evaluate public relations efforts) underscore the need for destination organizations to tailor KPIs to specific goals that extend to evaluating an entire public relations program rather than just media relations efforts.
- 4. Qualitative Measurements Are Vital:** Evaluating end goals such as positively managing the destination's brand reputation and being a community thought leader requires qualitative measurement. Consider brand health and consumer perception studies and community leadership evaluations to gauge the success of a destination's communications efforts.
- 5. Public Relations Metrics Should Be Integrated:** Destination organizations need to ensure that public relations efforts are evaluated in tandem with other marketing efforts, rather than in a silo. PR metrics should matter up to other marketing metrics in order to tell a destination's entire success story.

Clearly defined communication objectives are every communicator's most effective tool for proving their value, but illustrating that value is just as vital as identifying it. Destination organizations at the national, state and city-level are already updating their KPIs and evaluation methods by implementing the takeaways in this guide, indicating that shifts are underway in how destination organizations measure success.

Moving forward, Destinations International and the PR and Communications Committee is promoting its *Public Relations Measurements Guidebook for Destination Organizations* at conferences so that communications professionals begin to adopt it. We are working with Simpleview CMS to integrate categories into its platforms and also collaborating with clipping services to enhance the evolution of public relations measurement.

To download a copy of the handbook: <https://tinyurl.com/mv88awc5>

