



coach

communications

Communications that count:

A guide to measurement and success



Introduction

Today's B2B communications environment is often clouded by the myth that communications efforts are impossible to measure, and therefore, offer little value.

This guide is here to bust that myth by showing how you can measure the effectiveness of communication tactics, especially those often perceived as intangible

By analysing and aligning these communications efforts to your business goals, you can unlock their full potential and prove their indispensable value to your organization's success.



What do we mean by B2B communications?

B2B communications involve the exchange of information and messages between businesses (as opposed to B2C communications, when you are messaging an individual consumer).

Unlike traditional marketing that aims at customer acquisition and sales, B2B communications deal with more complex interactions involving multiple stakeholders, longer decision-making processes, and a strong focus on building trust and credibility.

In this guide, we focus on key communication disciplines rather than marketing functions; The types of functions usually managed by a head of communications:

- **Internal Communications:** Engaging employees and aligning them with the company's goals.
- **Public Relations:** Earning media coverage to shape public perception and relationships.
- **Organic Social Media:** Using social platforms to foster community and share content, supporting brand awareness.
- **Analyst Relations:** Engaging with industry analysts to influence their reports and recommendations.
- **Investor Relations:** Communicating with shareholders and potential investors to build trust and transparency.

While other areas like content creation, brand management, paid social media, and events are familiar to communications departments, they are beyond this report's scope.

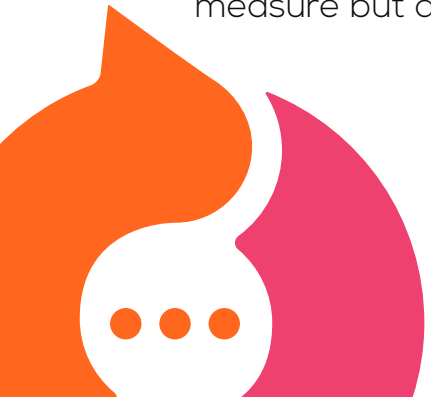
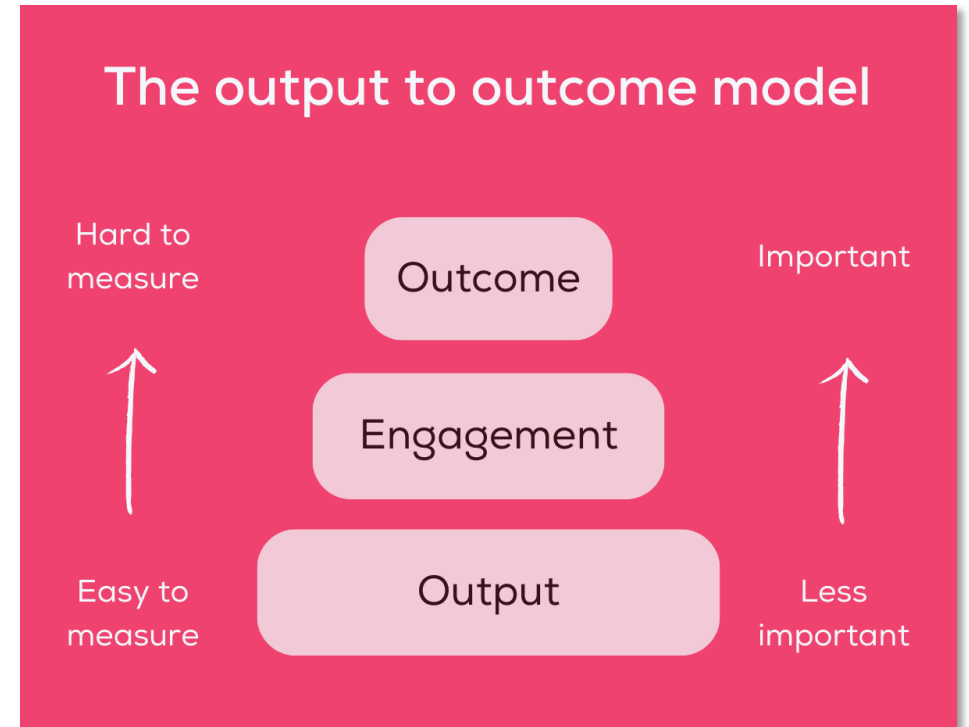
Output, engagement and outcome

Understanding what to measure is crucial to assess the effectiveness of your B2B communications strategies.

Output: Outputs are the easiest to measure, focusing on what you do rather than the impact it creates. This includes activities like sending press releases or conducting analyst briefings.

Engagement: Engagement tracks how your outputs connect with the audience. Metrics like open rates, social media likes, and event attendees provide insights into audience interaction.

Outcome: Outcomes reflect the real-world impact of your communications efforts, such as website visits or sales attributed to your communications outputs. These are the hardest to measure but are also the most valuable indicators of success.



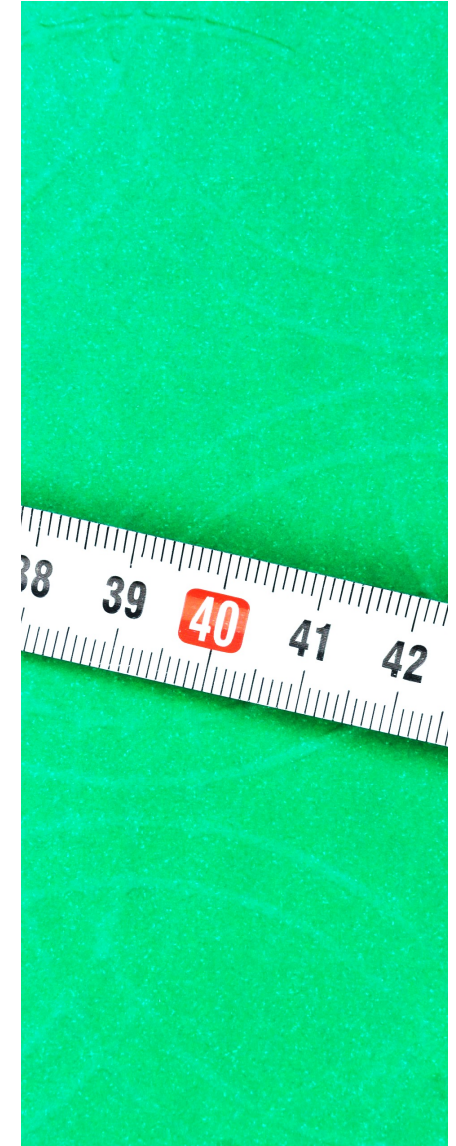
Business Priorities

Communications efforts only deliver value when they are aligned with your business objectives. For instance, if your company is launching a new product, focusing on media coverage for outdated offerings won't drive business results. Your communications should support current strategic initiatives to achieve desired outcomes.

To demonstrate the true impact of communications, it's crucial to measure those metrics that directly relate to your business goals. This means identifying which activities contribute to these objectives and focusing on measurable outcomes that matter. By doing so, you can clearly show how communications drive business success.

By combining communications KPIs with relevant data - such as sales figures, customer feedback, and employee satisfaction - you can assess their impact on business performance.

Aligning communications with strategic goals and measuring their effectiveness ensures that your efforts contribute to growth and success. This approach also creates a framework for continuous improvement, helping your business adapt to changing market conditions and consistently achieve objectives.



Internal Communications



Internal Communications

Internal communications is vital for creating a cohesive and informed workplace, serving as the backbone for effective employee engagement and organisational culture. It involves strategically exchanging information and ideas within an organization, ensuring employees align with company goals and values.

The scope of an internal communications program varies based on a company's size, complexity, and culture. Smaller businesses might use informal methods, while larger organizations require structured strategies to reach diverse employee groups.

Various channels and tools are available for internal communications, each with unique measurements. By choosing the right channels and measuring their effectiveness, companies can ensure internal communications reach employees and foster transparency, collaboration, and shared purpose.



Measuring Internal Communications

Types of activities	Typical outputs	Typical engagements	Typical outcomes
• Employee newsletters • Employee meetings • Intranet updates • Employee surveys • Internal social media	• Number of communications sent • Amount of content prepared • Key messages delivered	• Open rates / response rates • Employee feedback • Meeting attendance • Percentage of engaged users of channels	• Understanding of company updates • Alignment with leadership vision • Employee trust and engagement • Workplace culture • Follow up on calls to action with clear results



Employee engagement: Measuring the impact of Internal Communications

Employee engagement is linked to better business outcomes, such as increased productivity and innovation. The MacLeod Report (2009) identified four key drivers of engagement: strategic narrative, engaging managers, employee voice, and organizational integrity. These drivers offer a framework for measuring internal communications' impact.

- **Strategic Narrative:** By crafting a compelling story about your company's mission and objectives you can drive employee understanding and alignment. It's relatively easy to measure if employees understand the strategic vision of a company via surveys, interviews and manager feedback
- **Engaging Managers:** Having an engaged manager is a huge driver of employee engagement. Managers should communicate effectively and provide feedback to their teams. Manager effectiveness can be measured through employee feedback scores, employee retention and development and participation in communication training.
- **Employee Voice:** Companies should provide channels for employees to share ideas and concerns and respond openly and transparently to them. It's important to track participation in any feedback platforms and analyse employee suggestions.
- **Organisational Integrity:** Drive engagement by ensuring there is consistency between company values and actions – in other words, a company acts in the way it says it will and treats employees fairly. Again, this can be assessed through surveys and assessment of internal communication outputs for alignment with values.

The most simple and effective way to measure all the above is with a relatively simple and regular employee survey. Questions can be crafted to cover these drivers and provide compelling data so that organisations can track performance, and ultimately align internal communications to business success.

Public Relations



Public Relations

Public relations (PR) helps build positive relationships between organisations and their audiences. PR shapes perceptions, improves reputation, and supports business goals by engaging key stakeholders like the media, customers, and the public

The scale of a PR programme depends on its perceived importance and the resources allocated. Companies that value PR invest in in-house resources and external agencies to maximize reach and impact. An in-house PR professional usually manages strategy, while an external agency handles broader campaigns and media relationships.

A successful PR program builds strong media relations, crafts compelling content, and manages events and crises. The impact of PR can be measured using quantitative and qualitative metrics, like media impressions, website traffic, and brand sentiment.

Aligning PR activities with organizational goals ensures meaningful and measurable impact. Companies can enhance visibility, credibility, and reputation by tracking media coverage, analysing sentiment and evaluating the influence of PR on perception and behaviour.



Measuring Public Relations

Types of activities	Typical outputs	Typical engagements	Typical outcomes
• Press releases • Media interviews • Editorial placements • Press conferences • Award submissions	• Number of press releases sent • Number of journalists contacted • Percentage of tier-one journalists reached • Number of awards submitted	• Open rates / response rates • Coverage • Sentiment of coverage • Key quotes used • Awards won • Coverage in top-tier publications • Backlinks included in coverage	• Brand awareness • Website traffic • Inbound enquiries • Share of voice vs competition • Improved web domain authority



Unlocking the power of digital PR: A measurable approach for B2B success

Digital PR is a relatively modern approach, creating dynamic, real-time interactions with audiences through data-driven insights. Traditional PR, on the other hand, focuses more on relationship-building and storytelling for long-term reputation management. A key advantage of digital PR is its measurability, which tracks the impact of PR efforts with precision.

Central to digital PR are data-led stories that attract journalists and online publications. By sharing data headlines with journalists and hosting full data sets on their website (via blogs or data hubs), brands encourage journalists to link to their site, known as backlinks. Backlinks are essential in digital PR, driving traffic and boosting authority and search engine optimization (SEO).

Digital PR offers a range of unique and measurable benefits beyond those of traditional PR. Backlinks, for instance, play a pivotal role in enhancing a brand's online presence by:

- **Increased website traffic:** Backlinks drive visitors to the brand's website, allowing for attribution of traffic to specific PR efforts and demonstrating tangible results.
- **Improved authority:** When reputable publications link to a brand's site, they pass on their authority, boosting the brand's domain authority and enhancing overall web performance.
- **Enhanced SEO:** High-quality backlinks improve search engine rankings, leading to increased organic traffic and greater visibility on search engine results pages (SERP).

Digital PR offers improved measurability through metrics like backlink quality, referral traffic, search engine rankings, and online mentions. Tools like Google Analytics, Moz, and Ahrefs track these metrics and assess campaign success.

In conclusion, digital PR provides a powerful, measurable way for B2B brands to build their online presence, engage with audiences, and achieve communication goals. By leveraging digital PR's benefits, businesses can enhance visibility and credibility in the digital landscape.

Analyst Relations



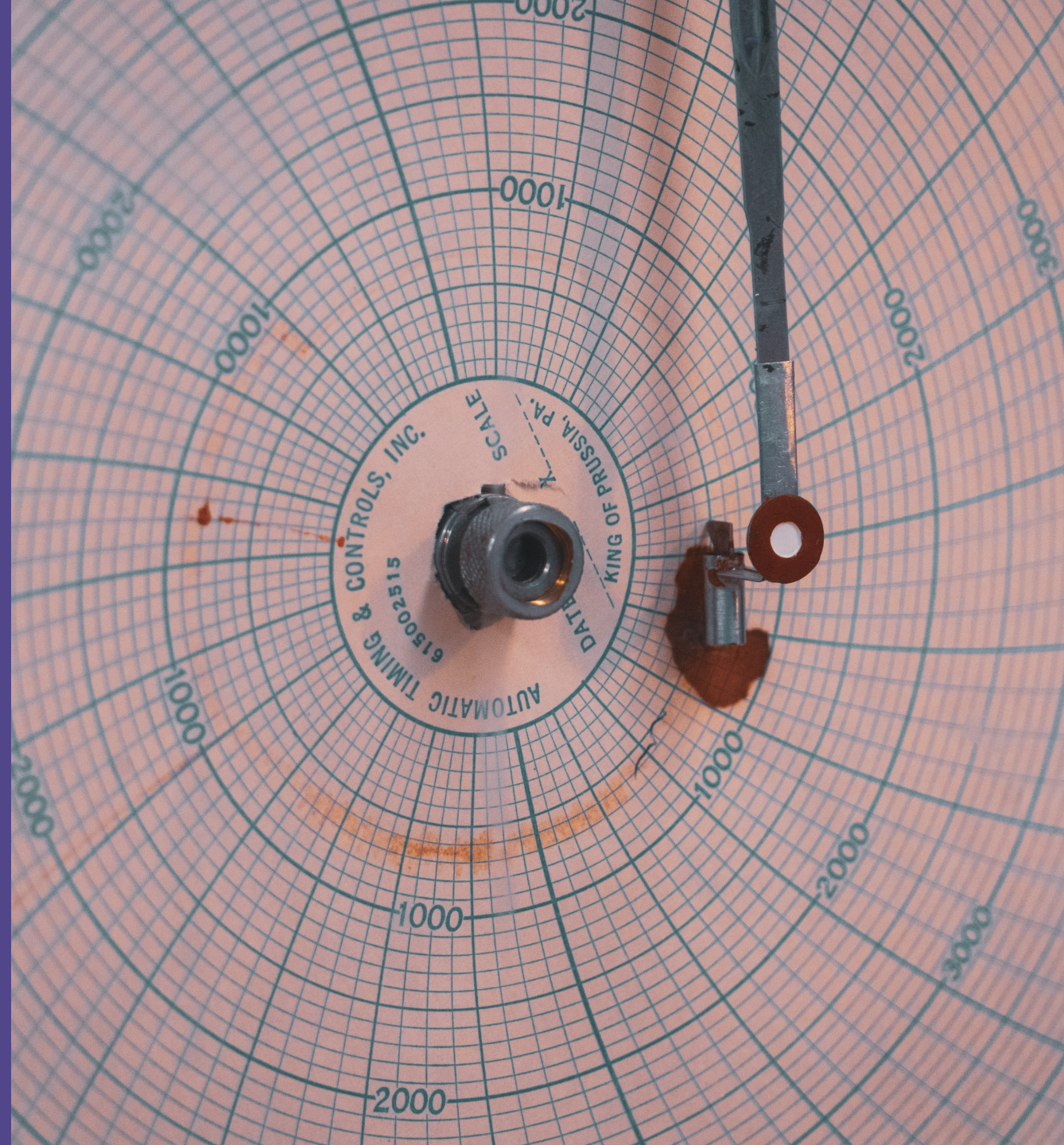
Analyst Relations

Analyst relations (AR) is vital activity enabling B2B tech companies to build relationships with industry analysts who influence market perceptions and purchasing decisions. These analysts shape opinions about technologies and vendors, guiding enterprise buyers and investors.

AR is about building mutually beneficial connections with influential analysts. As the name suggests, it's extremely relationship-based. It involves meaningful interactions where companies share their vision and insights while listening to analysts' perspectives. This engagement helps understand market dynamics and align strategies with industry trends.

For B2B companies, AR enhances brand credibility and visibility. Analysts act as trusted advisors, and their reports can sway buyers' decisions. A strong AR strategy will help improve positioning in analyst research and reports, like Gartner's 'Magic Quadrant' or Forrester's 'Wave', which will significantly boost a brand's perception in the market and help drive sales.

Measuring AR's value is crucial for continuous improvement and investment justification. Demonstrating AR's impact involves tracking interactions, feedback, and analyst report mentions.



Measuring Analyst Relations

Types of activities	Typical outputs	Typical engagements	Typical outcomes
• Analyst briefings and enquiries • Participation in analyst research • Analyst events • Sending regular updates to analysts • Conducting analyst surveys for feedback	• Number of briefings/enquiries conducted • Participation in analyst research - RFIs completed • Number of analysts invited to events • Newsletters / updates sent	• Feedback from analysts • Mentions in reports and market guides • Analyst attendance at events • Email open rates • Survey responses	• Actionable insights from analysts • Brand awareness and credibility • Analyst referrals and recommendations



Analyst Relations: Enquiries for influence

In analyst relations (AR), enquiry calls are a key tool for engaging with industry analysts. These calls allow one-on-one discussions, providing a unique opportunity to showcase your expertise, align with market trends, and influence analysts' perceptions of your business.

Understanding enquiries

An enquiry call is a scheduled session to discuss industry trends, share product insights, and gather feedback from analysts. Unlike formal presentations, these calls are interactive, fostering deeper relationships over time. Frequent engagement strengthens these relationships, positioning your brand as an industry thought leader.

Building relationships through enquiries

Regular enquiry calls keep analysts informed about your company's developments. This consistent interaction helps analysts understand your value proposition and can lead to more favourable mentions in their reports. Ultimately improved relationships and understanding may lead to analysts recommending you to prospects.

Measuring the impact of enquiries

To assess enquiry call effectiveness, track the number and topics of enquiries to see which gain the most interest. Adjust your messaging based on feedback, monitor analyst reports for mentions, and evaluate how these interactions contribute to lead generation and sales.

Utilising tools for AR measurement

By capturing the above analyst information into a CRM system and using analytics platforms to track web traffic from analyst mentions, you can measure the impact of these interactions effectively. By focusing on these measurable aspects, AR professionals can demonstrate the tangible impact of enquiries, ensuring that these engagements are contributing to business success and driving ROI.

In summary, enquiries are often underused, but they are a crucial aspect of analyst relations. By strategically engaging in these interactions and measuring their outcomes, companies can leverage AR as a powerful tool for achieving business objectives.

Organic Social Media



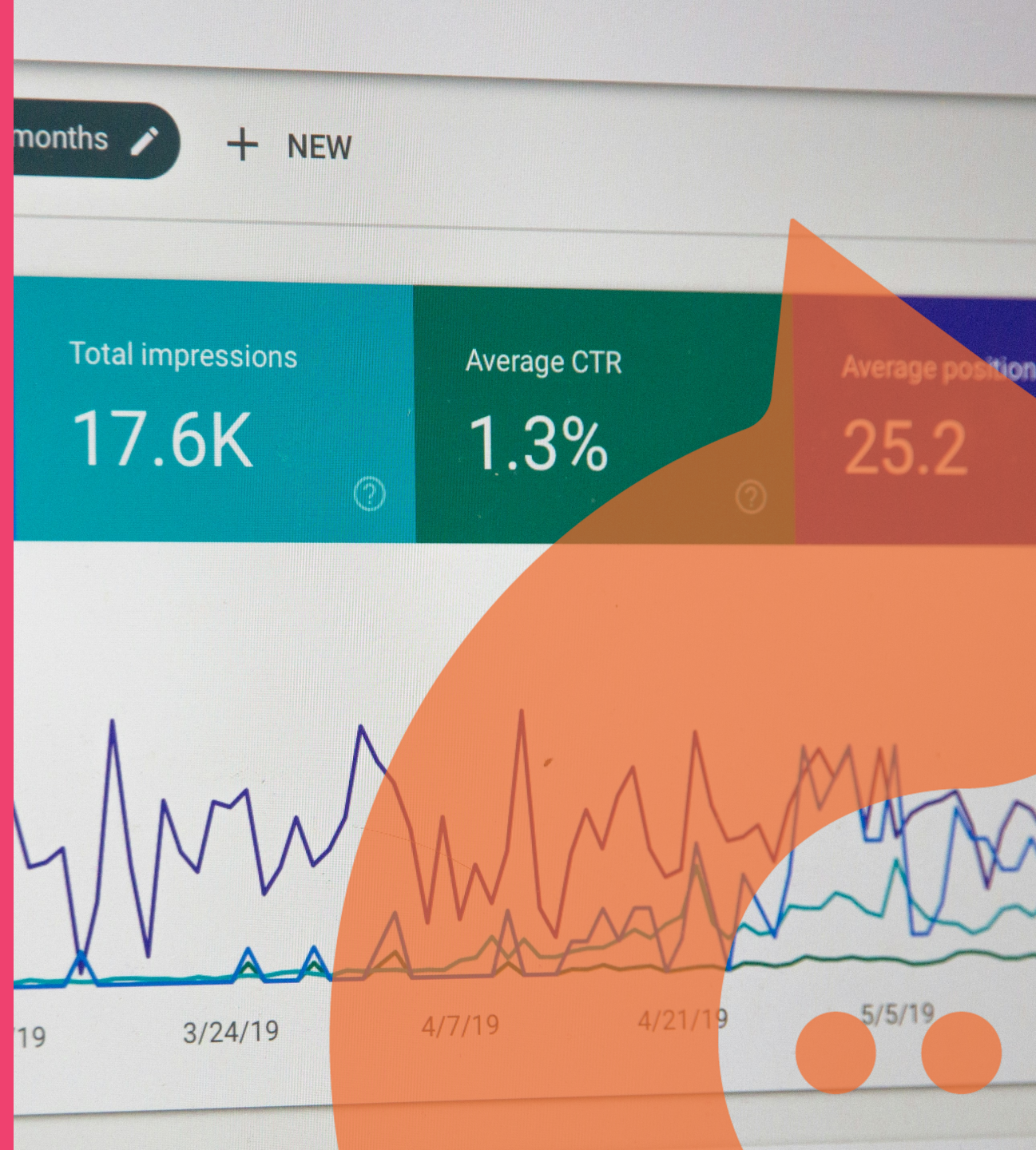
Organic Social Media

In B2B, organic social media is crucial for communication strategies, offering a platform to engage audiences, build relationships, and boost brand visibility. Importantly, organic social relies on unpaid methods to grow presence and foster engagement.

LinkedIn stands out as the dominant platform for B2B social media. According to the report *'Boost B2B Sales: Which communication tactics drive real results?'* by Coach Communications, LinkedIn is considered a vital tool in B2B buying decisions, with 90% of buyers citing it as an important factor.

Organic social media is highly measurable. Platforms like LinkedIn offer analytics tools to track output, engagement and outcome metrics. Metrics like engagement rates, click-through rates, and audience demographics can provide valuable data to assess the impact of social media efforts.

Real-time measurement ensures social media remains a crucial communication channel for B2B brands.



Measuring Organic Social Media

Types of activities	Typical outputs	Typical engagements	Typical outcomes
• Sharing Industry news and insights • Hosting live Q&As • Social media competitions • Using polls to garner opinions • Sharing video content	• Number of posts published • Amount of information shared • Number of channels used	• Post impressions • Likes / comments / shares • Follower growth • Video watch time	• Brand awareness • Website traffic • Completed call to actions • Customer engagement



Listening to the market: Harnessing social sentiment for B2B success

Social listening and sentiment analysis are essential tools for B2B brands to understand and manage their social media presence. By offering real-time insights into brand perception across platforms, these techniques help businesses quickly respond to changes, capitalize on positive trends, and address negative feedback.

Social listening involves monitoring social media channels for mentions of a brand, competitors, products, and industry topics. By tracking the volume and frequency of mentions, companies assess their brand awareness and visibility. Sentiment analysis further gauges public opinion by analysing the ratio of positive to negative mentions, providing a sentiment score that reflects the general mood towards a brand.

Identifying key trends and emerging topics is crucial for effective social listening. By tracking brand-related themes, companies can uncover content opportunities and engage their audience with relevant messaging. This proactive approach helps align communication strategies with audience interests, fostering stronger connections.

To implement social listening and sentiment analysis, brands can use a number of tools available for these purposes. These platforms automate tracking and provide actionable insights. Setting up keyword alerts helps companies stay informed and engage more effectively.

The impact of social listening and sentiment analysis can be significant. Understanding public sentiment and trends allows businesses to tailor content and communication strategies to better meet audience expectations and enhance brand reputation. This approach ensures brands remain agile and responsive in the fast-changing social media landscape.

By focusing on social listening and sentiment analysis, B2B brands can optimize their social media efforts, make informed decisions, and continuously support broader business objectives.

Investor Relations



Investor Relations

Investor relations (IR) is a strategic function that bridges communication between a company, its shareholders, and the financial community. IR builds credibility and trust among investors, ensuring accurate valuation and understanding of financial performance.

IR attracts and retains investment by demonstrating financial health, vision, and growth potential. Effective IR influences investor perceptions, affecting market valuation and capital access.

Measuring IR's effectiveness is challenging, as its impact is often qualitative and long-term. Investor perceptions are shaped by market conditions and trends, complicating direct impact assessment. A comprehensive measurement framework using quantitative and qualitative data offers insights into IR effectiveness.

Despite these challenges, measuring IR is essential for refining communication and ensuring alignment with objectives. Demonstrating IR's benefits strengthens its strategic role and drives success in financial markets.



Measuring Investor Relations

Types of activities	Typical outputs	Typical engagements	Typical outcomes
• Quarterly earnings calls • Annual General Meetings (AGMs) • Annual reports • Investor newsletters • Regulatory filings and announcements	• Number of events held • Number of investors engaged with • Amount of information shared	• Attendance rates at events • Percentage of shareholders voting • Open and click-through rates of communications • Investor enquiries	• Improved investor understanding • Strengthened relationships • Mitigated legal risks • Share price and valuation ratios relative to your peer group and sector



Maximising ROI: Board reporting metrics for Investor Relations



Demonstrating the return on investment (ROI) of an investor relations (IR) program to the board is essential for gaining support and ensuring alignment with company goals. Showing the ROI of your IR efforts justifies the resources you’re using, helps with decision-making, and promotes accountability.

If you’re just starting out with an IR program, focus on a few key steps to demonstrate ROI. First, track basic financial metrics to show the direct financial impact of your efforts. Then, gather non-financial metrics to help illustrate how the market views your company and how your communications are influencing that perception.

By creating a scorecard to track these and sharing it with the board, you can clearly show how your IR activities are helping to increase market value and grow the shareholder base. Use data to back up your claims, even if it’s just initial trends. Regularly updating this scorecard will build credibility and show that your program is driving real results.

By taking these steps, you’ll provide a clear, tangible view of IR’s effectiveness, making it easier to gain the support you need to keep the program moving forward.

Financial metrics	Non-financial metrics
Share price performance: Tracks changes in stock price over time	Investor sentiment: Measures investor confidence and perceptions
P/E Ratio: Compares current share price to earnings	Analyst coverage: Number and tone of analyst reports
Dividend yield: Annual dividend as a percentage of stock price	Media mentions: Frequency and sentiment of press coverage
Market capitalization: Total value of all outstanding shares	Investor engagement: Level of investor participation and interaction
EPS (Earnings per share): Profit generated per share of stock	Governance ratings: Assesses quality of corporate governance practices
Total shareholder return: Includes share price appreciation and dividends.	Employee satisfaction: Measures workforce happiness and retention.

Share of Search: The ultimate metric for communicators?



Share of Search

In today's data-driven landscape, communicators must always prove the value of their efforts. While this guide has explored measuring specific communication functions, there's one metric that stands out as essential for every communicator to understand – share of search.

Share of search refers to the proportion of search engine queries that a particular brand captures relative to its competitors. In essence, it measures the share of interest or awareness that a brand holds in the minds of consumers, based on how often they search for that brand compared to others.

This metric can provide an overarching view of how a company's communication efforts influence its relative market share. Like many brand value metrics, share of search isn't solely attributable to communications; it's influenced by a variety of factors largely driven across all marketing activities.

However, when this metric is analysed alongside other upward-trending communications metrics, it becomes a compelling argument that communications efforts are contributing to increased share of search – and as the following pages will illustrate... market share.



Attributing Share of Search to Market Share

Share of search has a strong correlation with market share, This makes it a powerful metric for predicting future market performance.

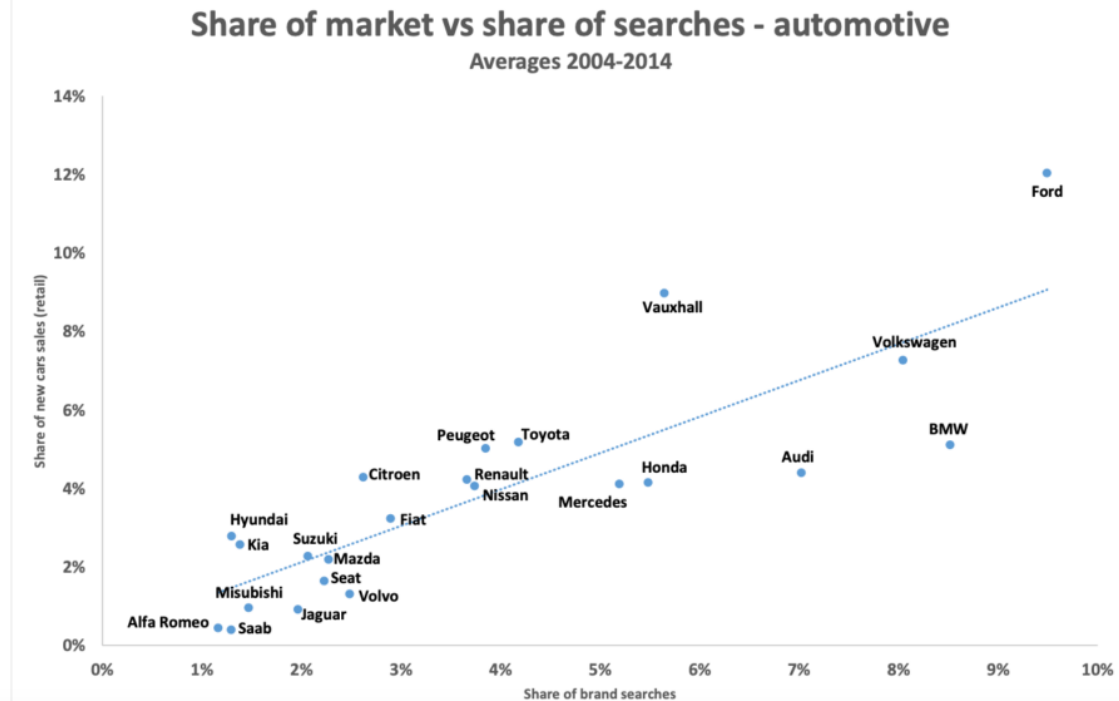
For example, when Hyundai boosted its share of search during the 2008 financial crisis, it led to significant market share gains as more consumers searched for the brand and ultimately purchased vehicles. Similarly, LG Electronics saw an increase in its global market share in the television segment as it grew its share of search in the consumer electronics market.

This correlation between share of search and market share was highlighted by Les Binet, a leading expert in marketing effectiveness in his ['EffWorks Global 2020: Share of search as a predictive measure presentation'](#). Binet's studies demonstrated that tracking share of search is a reliable indicator of market share growth, particularly in competitive industries where consumer interest directly influences sales.

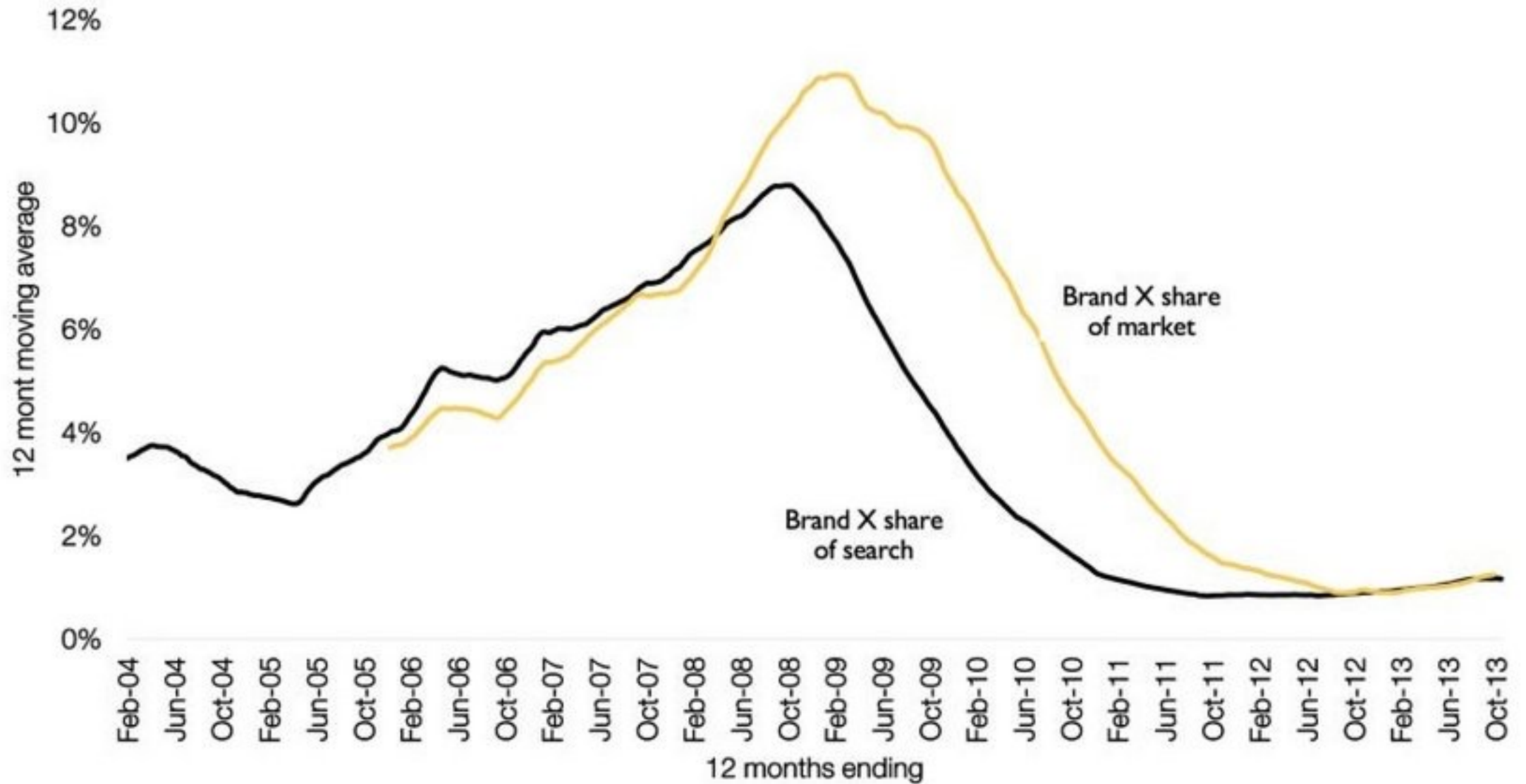
Importantly, Share of Search is considered a leading indicator, because it often predicts future changes in market share. This predictive power makes share of search a valuable tool for businesses to identify trends early, allowing them to adjust strategies proactively and maintain competitive advantage



share of searches correlates with market share in all three categories



Share of Search: a promising predictive metric



Measuring Share of Search

Measuring share of search is relatively straightforward and can be a powerful way to quantify brand strength in the market.

To calculate share of search, brands need to track the volume of searches for their brand keywords compared to the total search volume for all relevant brands in their category. This percentage gives an indication of how much consumer attention your brand is capturing compared to competitors.

Brands can use several tools including Google's native analytics tools, SEO platforms or brand monitoring tools to measure their respective share of search. Different tools will likely provide different results, so it's important to pick one and use it consistently.

To measure market share, businesses often use a combination of sales data, industry reports, and market research surveys.

Once you know your share of search you can begin to analyse trends over time. But remember that share of search alone does not directly equate to market share – it's an indicator that should be used in conjunction with other data.



Conclusion and key takeaways



Conclusion

Effective communication is vital in B2B, and measuring success is crucial to demonstrating its true value.

For measurements to be meaningful, they must align with business objectives rather than just serve as vanity metrics that don't drive real impact.

It's essential to recognise and report on all aspects of communications –outputs, engagement, and outcomes. However, communicators should place more importance on outcomes, as they provide the clearest insight into how communications efforts are influencing business performance.

Measurement isn't merely about tracking performance; it's a strategic tool for understanding, refining, and enhancing your communications strategy. By regularly assessing these metrics, communicators can adjust their programs to better meet objectives and drive more substantial results.



Key takeaways

Measurability matters: Showing the impact of your communications is key to proving their value. A solid measurement framework gives you the insights you need to make data-driven decisions.

Strategic alignment is key: Aligning communications with business priorities ensures that your efforts drive the results that matter most.

Measure outputs, engagement, and outcomes: While it's important to track all three, focusing on outcomes will resonate most with leadership. Outputs and engagement show activity, but outcomes prove the real business impact.

Continuous improvement is essential: Measurement is not a one-time activity. Regularly reviewing what you're doing and the impact it's having helps you stay competitive and succeed in the long run. Build a scorecard and look for upward trends.

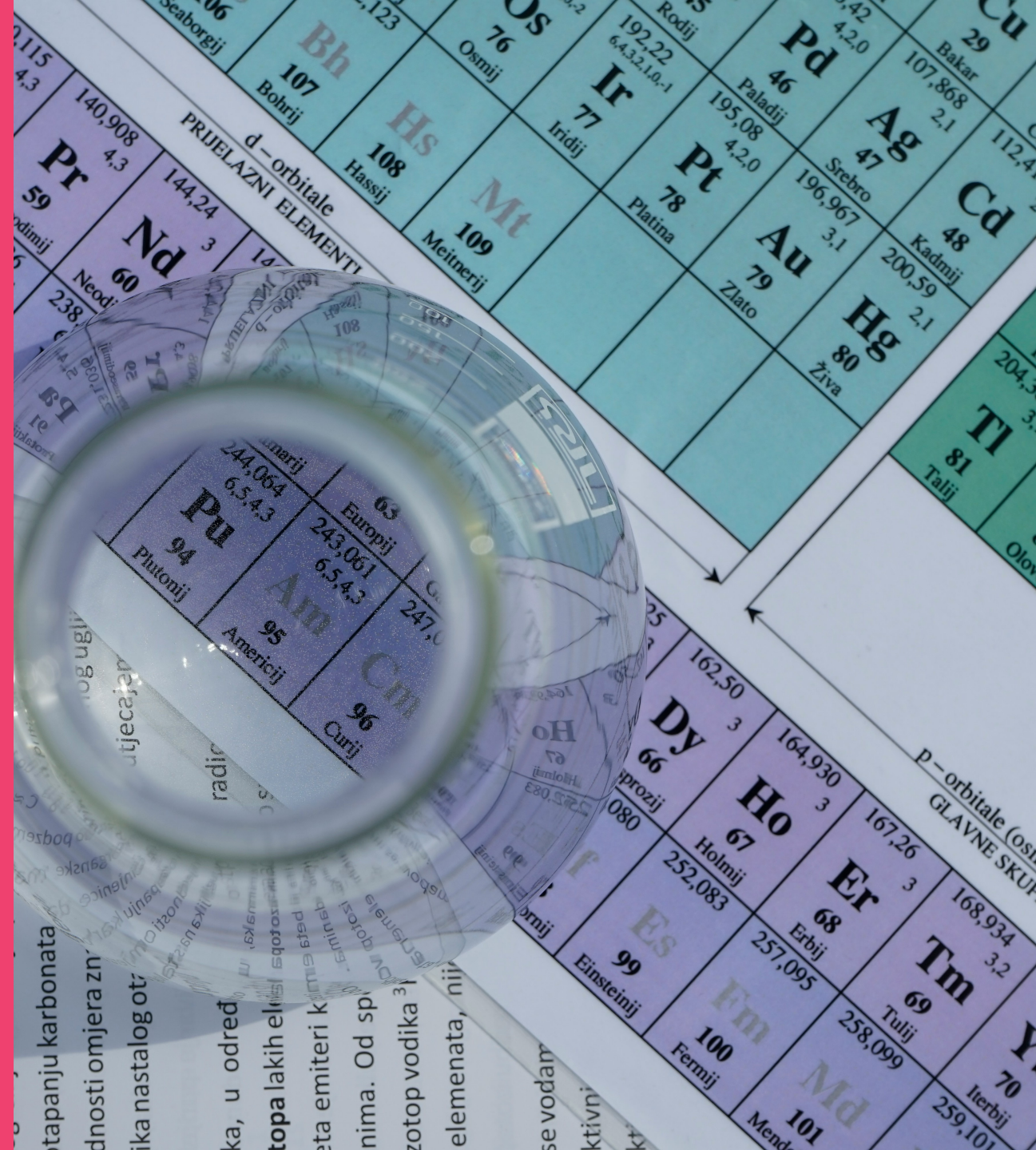
Share of Search predicts market share growth: Tracking Share of Search gives you early insights into potential market share gains. By understanding this, you can make smarter decisions and strengthen your position in the market.

Coach Communications can help

At Coach Communications, we understand the challenges of implementing and measuring a successful communications strategy. We help you develop strategies aligned with business objectives, delivering measurable results. Whether implementing new strategies or enhancing existing ones, we offer tools and expertise to support you.

Our services include strategic planning, measurement frameworks, and ongoing support to ensure communications efforts drive value. Our data-driven approach identifies improvement opportunities and optimizes strategies to achieve goals.

Contact Coach Communications today to transform your communications strategy and achieve measurable success.





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