

Measuring success at the Cutting Edge

Bradley O'Mahoney's decision to be the first of the region's PR consultancies to invest in a computer-based media analysis software package has measured up to expectations.

Not only is the software helping to measure the impact and value of media coverage achieved for clients, it is revealing whether or not key selling messages are reaching the right ears.

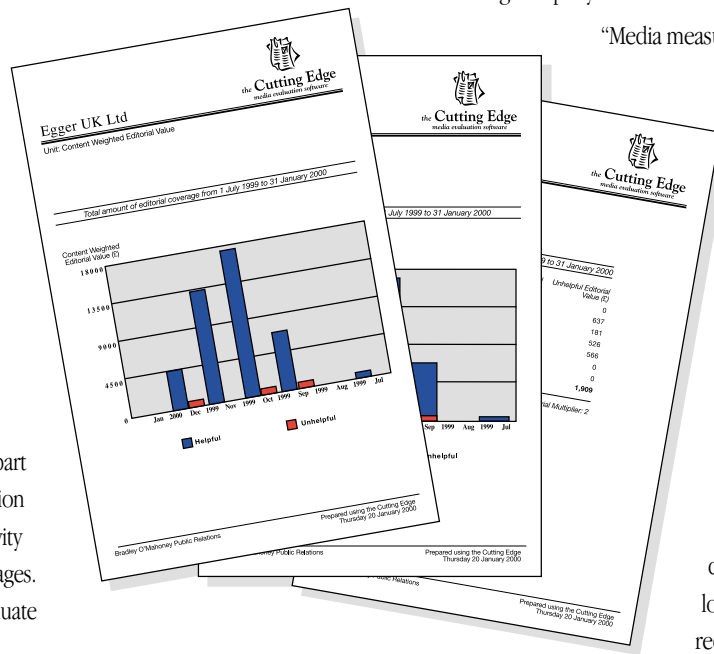
Important criteria not lost on Bradley O'Mahoney's clients, many of whom have received media evaluation using the Cutting Edge software.

Ian Hamilton, sales manager at Omega Plastics, part of the Express Group, explained: "Media evaluation has enabled us to see if Bradley O'Mahoney activity is achieving the campaign's objectives and messages. This feedback enables us to assess progress, evaluate results and, if necessary, realign strategy."

Andrew Hartley, corporate sales and marketing manager for engineering outsourcing company Beck & Pollitzer, is also impressed.

"Media measurement reveals the true value of the editorial coverage being achieved. It helps to justify the investment and demonstrate the effectiveness of PR campaigns, helping to underpin arguments for additional resources."

PR measurement in today's tough economic climate is important. PR impacts on your bottom line and evaluation is not a black art. Measurement need not be dazzling, complex or expensive, as long as everyone knows the score and recognises where the goal posts are.



A professional practice



Engineering company Beck & Pollitzer uses PR to raise awareness

Newcastle-based Bradley O'Mahoney Public Relations is one of the region's leading public relations firms, specialising in business-to-business, corporate and marketing communications support for regional, national and international organisations.

The firm employs a number of senior consultants - with backgrounds in journalism, PR and marketing - who have considerable experience of designing communications programmes and projects for a diverse range of clients spanning the corporate, consumer, service, manufacturing and industrial sectors.

These include English Partnerships, the Express Group, Imass, ITG GmbH, Newcastle City Council, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Beck & Pollitzer Engineering, surveying practice Sanderson Townend & Gilbert, Ove Arup and New Century Inns.

From strategic thinking to tactical implementation, Bradley O'Mahoney offers a comprehensive range of communications services which include media relations, sponsorship planning, corporate identity, seminars, multi media, advertising, newsletters and publications, online services, print and production.

New millennium structure shapes up

New millennium; new structure. Bradley O'Mahoney is set to start the new century with a strengthened management structure that maintains its commitment to raising standards of client service.

Staff training and personal development has always been high on the agenda at Bradley O'Mahoney PR and the commitment to a new management development programme is a further step in securing future growth and success.



Senior executives are undertaking a series of group and one-to-one sessions with Team Valley-based people development company Learning Dynamix under the theme 'Business Excellence Through Learning' to develop a new management structure that will take the business forward over the next few years.

"People are our strongest asset," said partner Tony Bradley. "It's important to develop a tier of highly skilled and experienced senior people who will become responsible for the day-to-day management of the business and client portfolios."

PR in Action

❖ ...Color us beautiful

Bradley O'Mahoney PR was called in by leading US corporate image consultants Color Me Beautiful (CMB) to raise its profile across the North of England.

Two evening events were organised at the David Lloyd Centre, in Leeds, and the stately Matfen Hall Hotel, in the Tyne Valley, where more than 300 invited guests were treated to some tricks of the make-over trade by CMB founder and chairman Mary Spillane.

Both events were linked with competitions in the local press to achieve added publicity and provide eye-catching platforms to communicate marketing messages.

❖ ...Going for Growth!

Newcastle City Council brought in Bradley O'Mahoney to involve the city's residents and business community in the biggest public consultation exercise ever seen in the region.

The Going for Growth initiative is designed to create a master planning framework for the city and reverse years of dereliction and decline. However, the project ran into controversy after so-called plans to demolish thousands of council homes were leaked to the press.

BOM PR partner Tony Bradley was seconded onto the City Council's officer team to manage the communications issues and provide strategic advice.



As a result, a community video featuring BBC Holiday show presenter Michael McNally was produced to highlight the problems facing the city and explain the council's plans to reverse the decline.

This was supported by a media relations programme (which spread the news as far afield as ABC Radio in Australia), a letter to households and businesses from council leader Tony Flynn encouraging people to write in with their own ideas for regeneration, articles in the council newspaper Citylife and a 'Green Paper' consultation document and questionnaire sent to every home in Newcastle.

Managing bad news

**By Richard Simpson,
Senior Consultant, Bradley O'Mahoney PR**

Bradley O'Mahoney has successfully advised and supported NSK-RHP Bearings Ltd in announcing the proposed closure of the company's factory in Ferrybridge, West Yorkshire, which employs 430 people.

As part of a global company with several manufacturing sites in the UK and Europe, NSK-RHP Bearings needed to retain customer confidence in its commitment to the products made at Ferrybridge and to maintain morale amongst the workforce throughout the phased, year-long closure period.

The proposal had to be kept secret while plans were put in place.

Bradley O'Mahoney worked closely with the company to ensure that the announcement to the media was timed to coincide with the internal communication with the workforce. There was great concern that the workforce

did not hear the announcement on the news before they heard it from their management.

We also had to take into account the company's other UK plants and their local media, as well as the trade media.

The announcement went extremely smoothly. The key messages agreed with the company were all successfully communicated to the workforce, the media and customers.

Announcing bad news - five golden rules

1. Adopt an open management style. If your workforce are consistently informed about business issues they are less likely to react in a hostile way to bad news.
2. Don't run and hide from bad news and think that if you don't tell the media, they won't find out - you will be found out sooner or later and be caught on the defensive. Your reputation could suffer irreparable harm. You need to decide what

your key messages are and ensure they are communicated to the media.

3. Prepare, prepare, prepare. Decide who is going to plan the announcement, but keep the number of those in the know to a minimum. Think about who you need to tell, when and how you are going to tell them. Minutes can be vital, so ensure everything is time tabled. Someone from the company will have to act as spokesman. Make sure they undergo a rehearsal with an experienced media trainer, preferably on camera with a video playback.
4. Make sure you have facilities set aside for the media should they want to come to you and do an interview.
5. Have a contingency plan in case the information is leaked.

NSK-RHP

Hilary boosts service offering

Consultant Hilary Burn has joined Bradley O'Mahoney PR and, with her expertise in local government, brings an added dimension to the services the firm offers clients. Joining from Gateshead Borough Council, where she was a press officer, 24-year-old media studies graduate Hilary offers a wealth of public sector experience. She will be looking to utilise this expertise and knowledge on the increasing amounts of public sector communications work now being undertaken by the consultancy.

Hilary has also worked with a range of commercial clients and has experience in developing the use of new media, such as the internet, as an added value PR tool.

"We're committed to bringing in quality staff, who can provide additional skills and expertise," said partner Daniel O'Mahoney. "Hilary has valuable skills and will be a great addition to the business."



Hilary Burn strengthens team

Why didn't I think of that?



Professor Don Schultz

US marketing expert Professor Don Schultz offers Perceptions his views on how communications budgets and measurement could be managed.

- Start with the machines. All businesses will have information about customers based on sales and invoices. Deploy your technology to make some sense out of all the data and turn it into useful, cogent information.
- If you plan to measure the financial returns of communications activity, consider your financial investments. This involves rolling up traditional disciplines such as advertising, sales promotion, PR, direct marketing into summary or total brand communication investments.

- Using customer-based financial income flows enables us to measure the Return On Customer Investment or ROCI. This is what customers financially return to a business based on the investments made in them through such initiatives as marketing communications or brand promotional activity.
- Customer profiling facilitates informed decision-making with regard to investing or allocating finite budgets. For instance, knowledge about current customer values is an excellent start. Think also about moving beyond costs surrounding media or trade shows and the like as the basic determinants in brand and communications investment.
- Finally, ponder the value of using incremental income for developing investment strategy. Companies will have existing customer income flows and marketing communications spend must

increase the flow to be worthwhile. In short, incremental returns need to be measured in addition to top line sales, product sold and market share.

The foregoing will release your potential to start thinking about more important issues surrounding the strategic use of organisational resources, separation of short and long term brand investments and returns, building brand equity and shareholder value. In other words, issues important to the corporate whole, not just the individual.

Don Schultz is known as the father of integrated marketing. He is an author, Professor of Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University in Illinois and a senior partner in marketing consultancy Targetbase Marketing International.

E-marketing to the world

Cyber-stores which never shut; information available around the clock, seven days a week - the internet is revolutionising the way we do business. So, to ensure you get the best from your e-commerce investment and stay on-line, we offer five tips for success...

1. Think customer first...and get the basics right. Simple, straightforward and easy to follow instructions are imperative; while a quick-to-download web-site will avoid frustrations and reinforce the excellence and quality of your corporate brand values.
2. Boost brand power by providing the right information, images and services on-line. Make customers want to visit your web-site by engaging their emotions - in the process you will develop a set of shared values and unique offerings that will make your company and its products genuine crowd pullers.
3. If you are launching a new product on the internet think and act in cyber-time - don't be complacent. You will probably have no more than a two or three month window of opportunity in which you can create an impact with a new web-site before the competition catches up.

To stay ahead in the cyber-space race, focus on building market share and delivering added value rather than looking for a quick return on investment. Also, ensure your site is well managed and regularly up-dated.

4. Build relationships with on-line customers. Creating personalised sites, which are rich in content and constantly evolving to match customer profiles, can and will help to win you business and grow market share.
5. And don't forget to ensure that online marketing activities integrate with offline campaigns to ensure message and public image consistency. For example, above the line special offers can be backed up with online promotions, while customers responding to print-based advertising campaigns should be given the chance to click-on for online registration and web-site follow-up information.

The above is based on an article by Louise Proddow, Marketing Director, Sun Microsystems