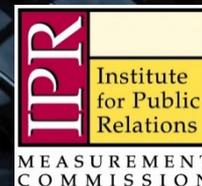


# IPR Measurement Commission Judging Guidelines

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# background

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Each year, hundreds of public relations professionals compete for the recognition and rewards that come with winning industry awards.

Standards for public relations excellence support and promote the need for both creativity and science. While different awards programs place more or less emphasis on the importance of research, the most prominent professional associations agree on the need for research to assess the operating landscape, to set objectives and to evaluate performance.

As professionals seeking to reward “the best of the best,” we must aim higher and reward entrants whose PR programs reflect the highest standards of research and evaluation. The purpose of this document is to share commonly accepted research criteria advocated by the Institute for Public Relations Measurement Commission for assessing award-worthy entries.



# premise of this presentation

Planning, objectives-setting and evaluation require research to manage and validate the positive and material impact of public relations. While professionals would agree conceptually with PR's ability to elevate the enterprise, most category winners provide only simple media volume measures (placements, impressions, likes, etc.) rather than more meaningful outcome measures.

This document enumerates best practices that should be considered in all evaluations.

These standards reflect the principles and awards criteria of most national and international public relations organizations including the Institute for Public Relations, the Public Relations Society of America, the Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, as well as the scholarly literature.



# four criteria

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1

## **FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH**

Research conducted before the campaign to understand the issues, develop goals and inform creative strategy

2

## **OBJECTIVES-SETTING**

Quantifiable pre-set target metrics detailing the results each campaign seeks to achieve

3

## **EVALUATION/OBJECTIVES ALIGNMENT**

Specific achievements linked directly to the desired objectives

4

## **DOCUMENTATION**

All necessary research and credentials to certify that the research met professional standards

# foundational research

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## QUALITATIVE METHODS



**ACCEPTABLE:** Focus groups or in-depth interviews which involve talking to real people who are key communications targets; listening to how people talk about the product or issue to uncover positioning hints and hot buttons. This can include observational research - watching how people shop for, use or behave around a product. Qualitative research also can inform the design of quantitative research.



**UNACCEPTABLE:** Sitting around a conference table brainstorming or speaking with people in the office who match the target demographic.

## QUANTITATIVE METHODS



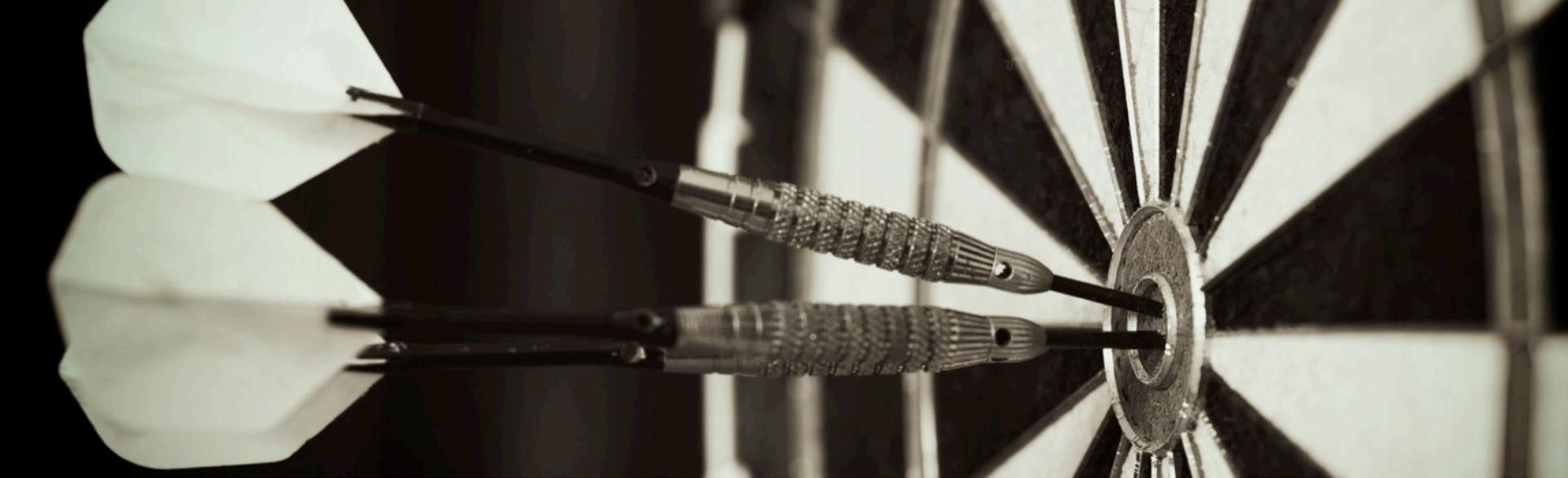
**ACCEPTABLE:** Using accepted attitudinal research standards, usually in the form of a survey instrument, to gather responses from a representative sample of audience members to draw projectable conclusions and recommendations. This can also serve as a benchmark against which program outcomes can be measured – e.g., changes in familiarity, attitudes or likelihood to buy.



**ACCEPTABLE:** Using accepted standards, to analyze the content of traditional and social media to determine what is being said about the client, product or issue under study to draw conclusions and recommendations. This can also serve as a benchmark against which program outcomes can be measured – e.g., changes in content or tone in media reporting or conversations.



**ACCEPTABLE:** Using published information, available industry data or proprietary client data to evaluate the current situation. These data can also serve as a benchmark against which program outcomes can be measured – e.g., changes in sales, website visits or number of customers.



## objectives setting

**An Objective is reasonable, meaningful and measurable**

Who is the target audience we are trying to influence?

What are we seeking to change?

By how much should results change?

By when should results be achieved?



**ACCEPTABLE:** *Raise awareness of brand safety attributes by 7% among prospective car buyers in the third quarter*

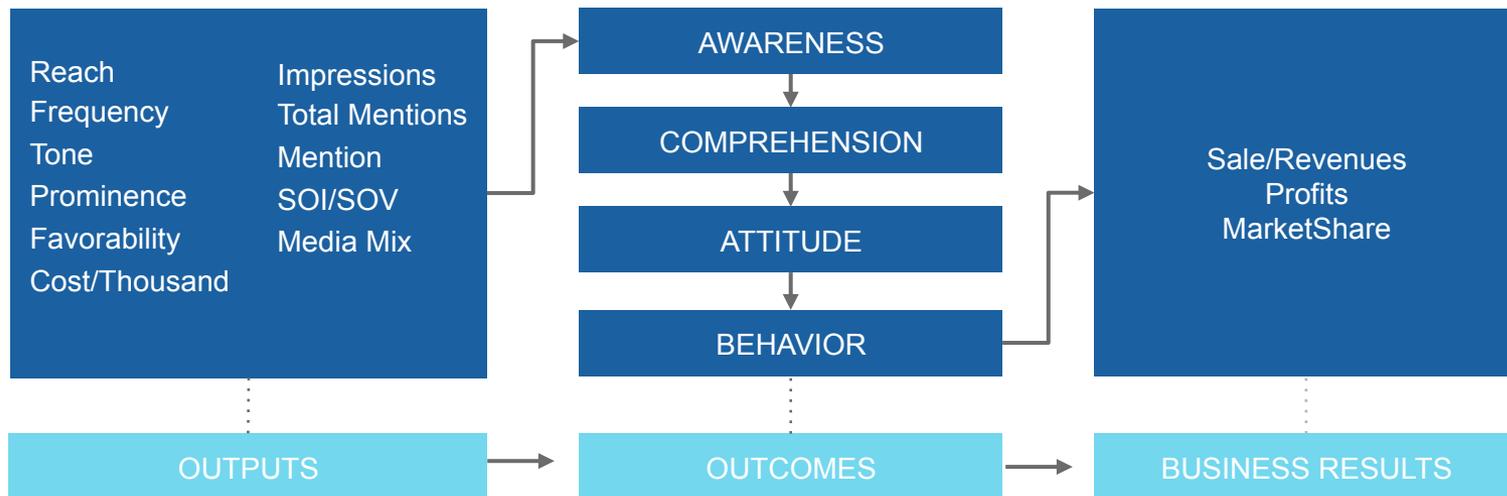


**UNACCEPTABLE:** *Break through the media clutter by generating significant buzz*

# evaluation/objectives alignment

## Three Measures for Setting Objectives and Evaluating Results:

- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Business Results





# documentation

## OUTPUTS

- Relevant media examples and copies of representative (but not all) clips (Note: copyright laws may prohibit photocopying clips)
- Media analysis
  - Quantitative: volume and reach
  - Qualitative: tone, intended/unintended messaging, spokespeople
  - Relative: performance versus objectives, competitors and best practice

## OUTCOMES

- Focus group results including verbatim examples
- Survey results showing data

## BUSINESS RESULTS

- Sales, revenues, profits, resource retention, cost avoidance, etc.
- Only where the campaign's connection to the result can be verified and isolated

# checklist for judges

Winning entries require more than a compelling story, great creative, clip copies and simple tabulations

<b>CRITERIA: DOES THE SUBMISSION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Landscape assessment using Foundational Research?		
Specific, measurable objectives related to outputs, outcomes and business results?		
Specific, measurable objectives related to awareness, understanding, attitudes or behavior?		
Specific, measurable objectives related to business results?		
Does the entry identify a target audience?		
Does the entry specify a desired and measureable change and amount of change?		
Does the entry specify a timeframe by which change will be achieved?		
Are the results measureable?		
Do the outputs, outcomes and business results relate directly to the objectives?		
Can results be reasonably attributed to the PR campaign specifically or were other factors involved (advertising, promotions, etc.)? Are the other factors represented?		
Documentation of foundational research, outputs, outcomes and business results?		

# the mechanics of judging

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## STEP 1: TRIAGE

- Review each entry according to the checklist
- Sort into three piles:
  - Clearly not in the game
  - Low potentials
  - High potentials





# the mechanics of judging

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## STEP 2: CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

- The ranking order should become clearer
- Begin eliminating the weaker entries
- Narrow the field down to three or four finalists
- Delve more deeply into support materials and documentation
- Align on which one is the Best of the Best
- Provide documentation (4-5 bullet points) on why the winner is the best
- Offer constructive feedback to all entrants on what they might have done better in order to win

# the mechanics of judging

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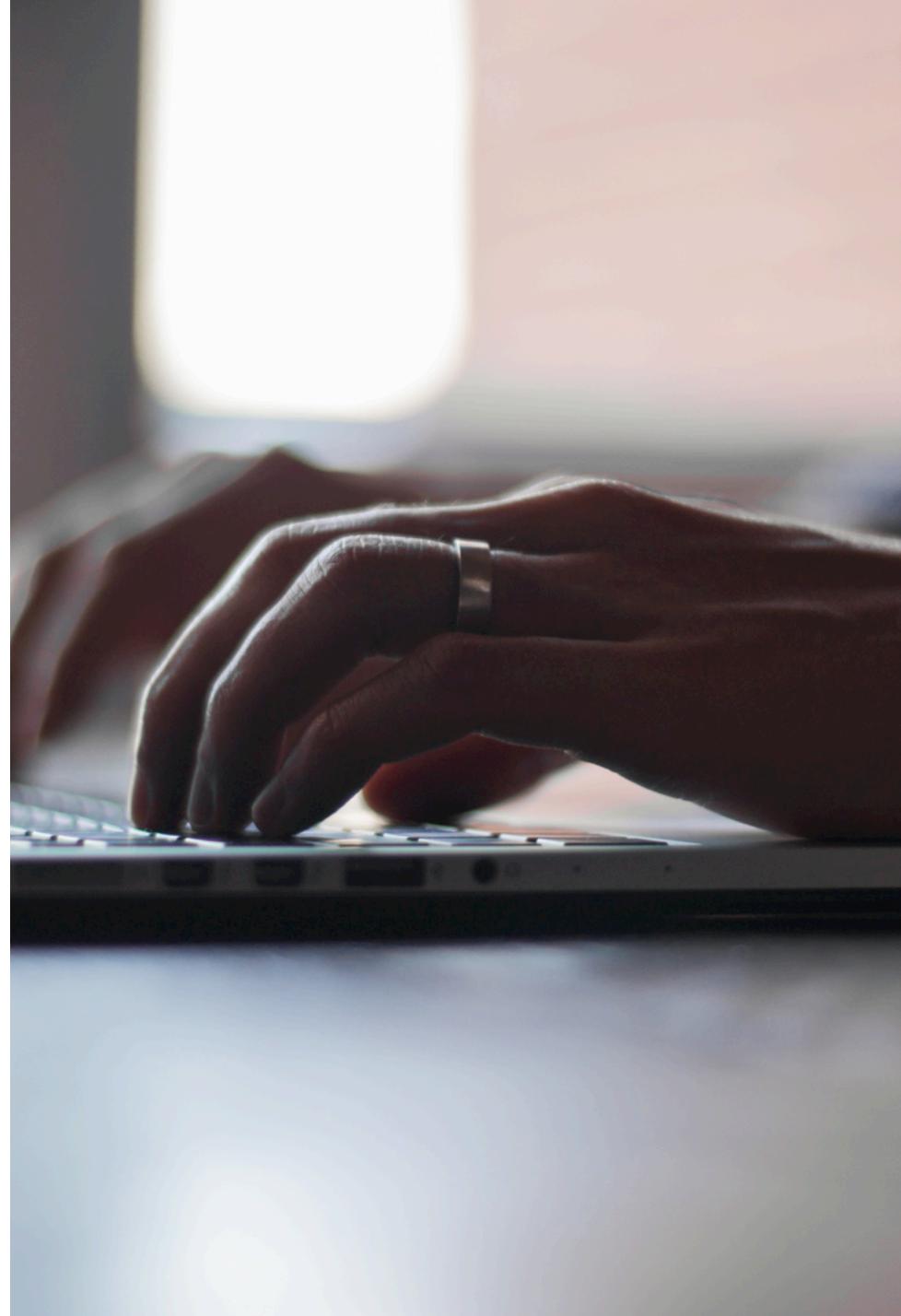
Some programs are judged on-line while others are judged from binders. In either case, a form is provided for scoring and feedback which needs to be completed for each entry.

## HARD COPY JUDGING

- Relatively easy to sort into piles
- Take notes for yourself about the winner. Details fade quickly and you'll need them later to support the winner and guide the finalists

## ONLINE JUDGING

- Can be hard to keep track of triage groups.
- May need to keep a scorecard for yourself.
- Take notes for yourself about the winner. After you judge, it can be difficult to access the site again.





# final notes

This is a great occasion for learning.  
You will see some fabulous campaigns.

It will (and should) take time  
Big budgets are not a requirement.  
Simply setting and then surpassing  
measurable objectives may  
be enough to qualify (if not win)

Judging is fun and provides great  
networking opportunities; many judges  
continue year after year after year

# about the institute for public relations

The **Institute for Public Relations** (IPR) is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to research in, on and for public relations. The IPR investigates *the science beneath the art of public relations*, focusing on research that matters to the practice, providing timely insights and applied intelligence that professionals can put to immediate use. The IPR does this through three kinds of research:

Research in public relations, to guide and evaluate communications programs (in other words, planning research and measurement)

Research on public relations, to understand what we do and how we do it (benchmarking and best practices)

Research for public relations – the social science underpinnings of our work

**The IPR Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation** was created in 1997 to develop and enhance measurement and evaluation in public relations. Commission membership consists of more than two dozen research thought leaders with representation from corporations and non-profits, public relations firms, research providers and university faculties. Commission members have produced books and dozens of articles about public relations measurement and evaluation. Commission members are regular speakers at seminars and conferences, advocating for research and evaluation that demonstrates the effectiveness of public relations.

To learn more about the Institute and the Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation along with its blog, its free whitepaper archive and research insights, visit [www.instituteforpr.org](http://www.instituteforpr.org). Subscribe to its research letter at <http://www.instituteforpr.org/conversations/>

# about the authors

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John is EVP at Koski Research, a leading research firm specializing in customer engagement and public release research. He was with Yankelovich for 30 years and headed up all custom research for the firm. His personal specialties are corporate reputation measurement, research for public release and B2B research. He was Vice Chairman at Roper Starch Worldwide (now GfK) and EVP of Stakeholder Management at TNS North America. John is a Past Chair of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO), Founding Member (now Emeritus) of the IPR Measurement Commission, Past President of the Market Research Council and for 20 years served on the Board of Advisors of the Master in Marketing Research program at the University of Georgia.

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## **MARK WEINER**

CEO, PRIME RESEARCH

Mark is the Chief Executive Officer at PRIME Research. He has served as a judge for many public relations awards programs including PRSA's Silver Anvil, AMEC, Platinum PR Awards, PR Week and more. Mark devotes his career to helping his research clients to demonstrate and generate PR's unique and measurable impact. PRIME Research works with many Global Fortune 1000 clients and the world's top brands. He is a Trustee of the Institute for Public Relations and former chairman of its Measurement Commission and a member of the IABC, AMEC and PRSA for whom he co-authored its Business Case for Public Relations. Mark has won a dozen professional communication awards. He is the author of *Unleashing the Power of Public Relations* and is inducted in the PR News Hall of Fame.

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