

***MADHULIKA GUPTA'S VIEWS ON MEASURING PR OUTCOMES***  
***- WHAT IMPACT IS THE COMMUNICATION HAVING? -***

At Citigroup we have not developed any formal tools of measurement for PR that are used uniformly across 100 countries. We rely a great deal on judgement and confidence that the management has in this function across regions. Ultimately it is the quality of assessment, thinking and the people that makes a huge difference to the PR function.

But that in no way means that one does not see the need to measure PR. The communication process is incomplete without proper monitoring and analysis of news. In order to create the maximum impact, critical messages must be disseminated in the right context, at the crucial time and through the most appropriate media vehicle to reach the targeted audience.

This is possible only when news reportage is objectively analysed to understand trends, preferences, developments and outlook – whether it is of all stakeholders or just one.

*The communication process is incomplete without proper monitoring and analysis of news...*

Corporations spend valuable resources analysing the strategy of their competitors, whereas a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of news reportage on relevant industry, can provide valuable understanding of each competitor's business moves.

The environment plays a very crucial role, irrespective of the nature of business or region of operations. The environment is noisy for all. All have the same access to the toolset of means and methods of communications delivery. There is the same promise and prospect of success across competition and there is increasing sophistication in the means & methods of communications delivery.

The challenges of measurement are multifold. Firstly, the emergence of micro audiences, as against the entire mass of target audience to communicate with through the diverse media options available. Secondly, the messages are very complex and often multi-dimensional. Next, the desired outcomes/impact are also changing and shifting targets, providing less time to assess and analyse with the added pressures of responding quickly to the environment. Finally, the reality that messages are not simply reproduced as-is-where-is, hence the challenge of accounting for distortions and interpretations.

Therefore, for Citigroup, the goal is not measurement...the goal is visibility, salience and reputation no matter what one is talking about, whether it is a product, a person, or a strategy.

Strategy is the bedrock of all PR activities and therefore it is very important to focus on the design of the campaign. This also helps make credible assumptions on results.

Measurement is about meeting objectives, and unless one has set objectives, one is not planning and is probably adrift strategically in the first place.

Desired goals have to be based on objectives. Some examples are given below:

<i>The key to successful measurement is to have clear goals that can be measured...</i>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Goals</b>
	Enhance Brand Equity	Reinforce brand characteristics and increase perception of value
	Mitigation of Crisis	Reduce negative impact of crisis on perception of the brand
	Enhance Brand Reputation	Increase alignment between brand values and audience perceptions
	Social Responsibility	Enhance relationships with stakeholders beyond transactional business

Measurement has both short term and long term implications. It provides answers to the short term effectiveness of tactics deployed in terms of:

- How was the message disseminated
- How many people did it reach
- How many requests for information were received
- How many total media impressions were generated
- Did intermediate audiences (media) act on our own material
- Were key messages featured in media coverage
- Did the messages reach the right audiences

A key element of measurement is the analysis it provides on the long term effects of strategy such as:

- Did we stimulate endorsements or recommendations
- Did our audience take any action as a result of efforts
- Did our audience change attitudes or opinions
- Did our audience modify behaviour
- Does our audience intend to modify their behaviour

There are many different approaches to measurement. At Citigroup we have arrived at some that we believe work best for us. One is to evaluate it on the parameters of cost. For instance, efficiency of the PR programme can be measured based on the achievement of desired messaging and media reach within a desired budget.

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{PR Inputs}}{\text{Costs}}$$

Another way to evaluate is based on desired outcomes. In Citigroup's experience this is easier to do as one can decide the message to be given, the media to be used and the intended recipient or target audience to reach out to. This can be illustrated by our experience in handling the merger exercise between the Traveller's Group and

Citicorp in 1998. A merger of such magnitude meant that a whole host of changes needed to be incorporated without losing the inherent brand salencies of the two groups. The rebranding exercise began in April 2003 and the company brainstormed to decide the best strategy to undertake this exercise. It weighed and deliberated on the kind of impact it wanted to achieve and decided against the usual route of advertising communications. It concentrated on internal communications and did not spend any money on advertising, and achieved total success slowly but steadily. Today, the logo of the new entity Citigroup, is widely recognised and its employees are proud of the brand.

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{PR Outcomes}}{\text{Costs}}$$

One of the major approaches to measurement that I believe in is ultimately ROI. However, what and how much value does one attribute is debatable - should it be business outcomes vs. costs or business outcomes divided by number of activities? Should costs be attributed in terms of commercial value or cost of time involved, opportunity costs, cost attached to lofty ideals being pursued...the debate is open as to what value can PR bring to the table for a business outcome.

*The reputation value of a business increasingly lurks not in physical & financial assets that are on the balance sheet, but in intangibles...*

For e.g, Citigroup has a CSR programme called the Micro Entrepreneur Award, which has been endorsed by eminent personalities like the Indian Finance Minister, Deepak Parekh, Narayana Murthy and Shabana Azmi. The value and credibility that the endorsement of these personalities lends to the programme and therefore to the corporation is invaluable and cannot be quite quantified. Therefore while we may have control over the message, medium and audience, it is not possible to measure whether the audience has understood the message and retained it to impact in desired action, these will be based on assumptions.

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Business Outcomes}}{\text{Costs}}$$

Reputation is a sum of intangibles; there is no specific value to it and no specific element of the programme can be attributed to it. But the process of measurement is necessary as it is important to achieve objectives and assess impact.

$$\text{Reputation} = \frac{\text{Intangibles}}{\text{Costs}}$$

At Citigroup, we analyse news reportage as a discipline. Both quality and quantity are measured.

*The actual measurement requires a range of tools and/or disciplines. Some*

**Quantitative Analysis**

- Quantitative parameters of circulation; size of article; number of mentions; page number; position on page; box or picture;

*are simple and others more sophisticated...*

authorised spokesperson quoted; etc. are used to analyse the news reportage

- This analysis compares the visibility or appearances that a company had vis-à-vis its competitors. The analysis does not take into account the nature of visibility.
- At the end of a quantitative analysis, one can say that, Company X has been in news almost every day across all media. Whether this appearance has been on account of positive news reportage or negative can't be deduced.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

All news reports are evaluated from a qualitative aspect.

- The tone of each news report is carefully studied and each news report is classified as Positive, Neutral or Negative.
- Weightage is given to each report based on its size, content and tone
- Media is categorised according to its importance and relevance to the target audience
- Models developed on principles of applied statistics
- Analysis customised to each industry, company, modelled on its business and communication objectives

In fact, we believe that impact is measurement itself. As an evolved and mature business unit, one should dare to make and revise assumptions. One must cultivate alertness to subtle changes. We believe that as a policy one should measure so that one can confirm assumptions, make plans tactical and justify why you do things differently.

Citigroup uses the services of CARMA and also commissions external and employee perception audits.

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

*Can you give us the methodology used for the internal communications advocacy for the Citigroup logo change campaign?*

Madhulika replied that there were a number of elements that were used. They began with internally familiarising the employees of what the new corporation is all about, keeping in mind that Citibank as a brand in India was very strong and had a deep association with the employees.

When the merger happened, Travellers Group was a very strong brand in North America, but an unknown brand in India. One had to bring out the positives of the merger and highlight the synergies of the two brands and constantly communicate what's taking place. The tools used were CEO memo's, newsletters, etc. highlighting the aspirational deals struck because of the merger. Even the process of the graphic brand change was subtly done to gain wider acceptance. An important element of the success was that there was freedom to modify and tailor the communication to market sensitivities.

*How much resources and senior management*

Madhulika said there is no rule to this. It is a function of trying to understand what one wants out of the evaluation. Measurement for its sake is not right; it should be the judgement of informed decisions.

*time is spent on  
evaluation?*

Even when we outsource, we give specifics of what we need.

*(Excerpted from the presentation made by Madhulika Gupta, Director Corporate Affairs, Citigroup, at PR Pundit's workshop, held in Mumbai on November 30, 2005)*