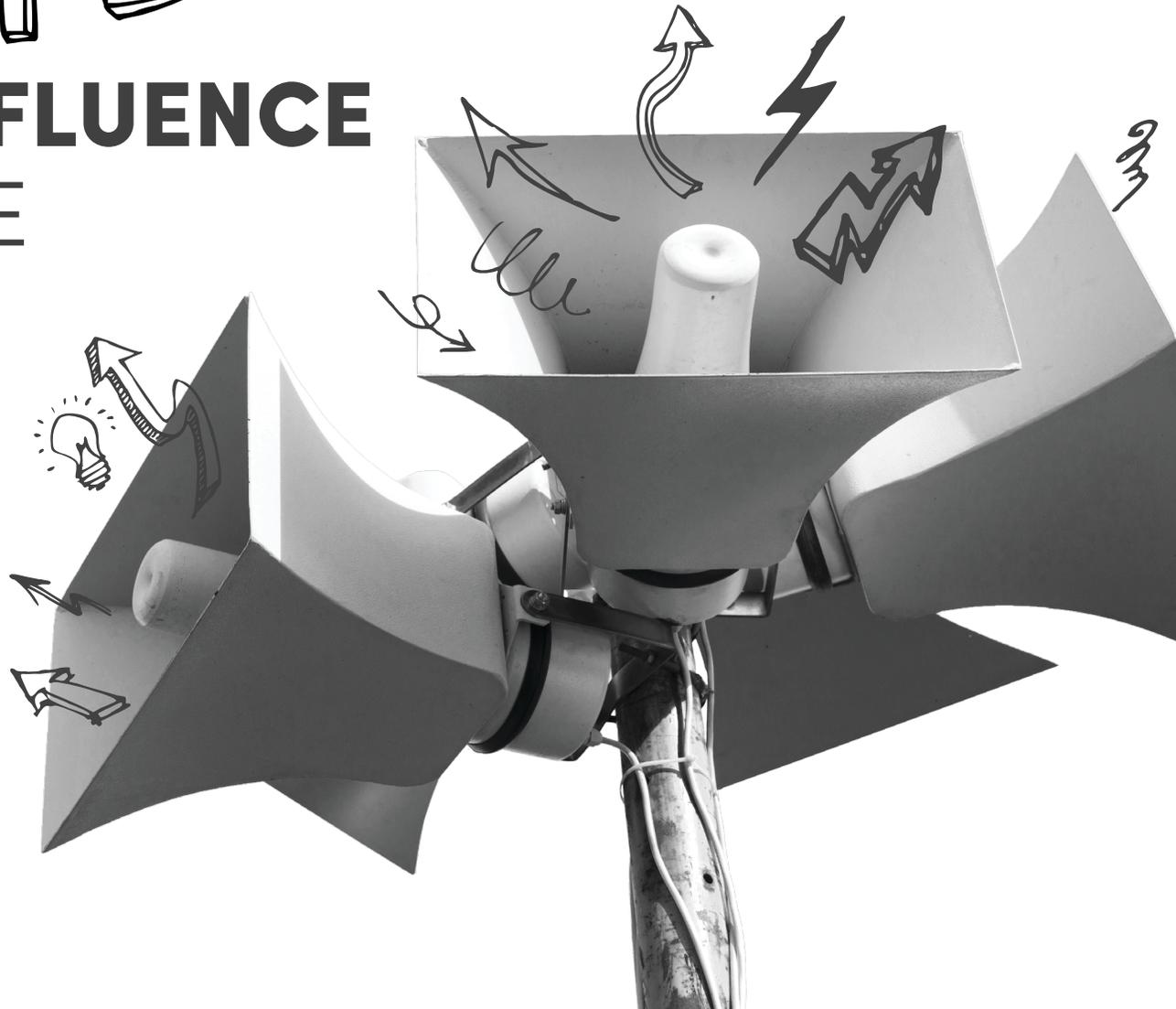




the starr conspiracy

3 WAYS

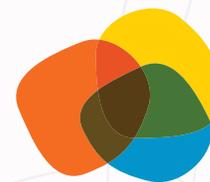
TO **BETTER INFLUENCE**
YOUR PIPELINE





As a strategic marketing and advertising agency, we often get asked if we also do public relations work. The answer is yes. And we're damn good at it. What we've learned is that most companies in our space (human capital management software and solutions) think of public relations as an afterthought — and that line of thinking is an epic fail if you care about brand awareness and efficient messaging.

In this white paper, we'll outline the top three reasons you need an integrated approach — that includes PR — to achieve great brand awareness.



1

YOUR CONTENT IS
NOT REACHING YOUR
IDEAL PROSPECT.

ONE



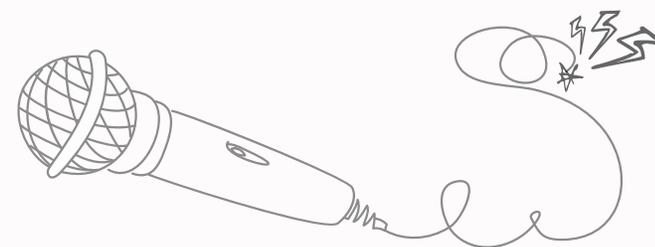
1. YOUR CONTENT IS NOT REACHING YOUR IDEAL PROSPECT.

Buyers read all kinds of content. Gartner and others have published data showing that up to 80 percent of the buyer's journey is complete before they ever raise their hand with sales. That means they're consuming content on all channels, including content being pushed by your competitors. Those channels include earned media channels — press, blogs, social media, interest group discussions, and what analysts have to say about brands, categories, and industry trends.

Prospects are not just consuming thought leadership pieces, infographics, and e-books. Although there are countless models and labels for defining the buyer's journey, let's just agree that most prospects go through the process of

discovery and evaluation before they actively engage a vendor (e.g., fill out a lead-generation form, call someone in sales, or ask for a demo).

Brands that fail to integrate an earned media strategy with paid and owned media strategies are missing key opportunities to influence the buyer's journey. An earned media audit and a strategic earned media plan can align with marketing and advertising to create an integrated communications plan that amplifies a brand's message on all channels. Figure 1 shows how we rethink public relations work and how it complements the marketing and advertising promotions we create and launch on our clients' behalf.



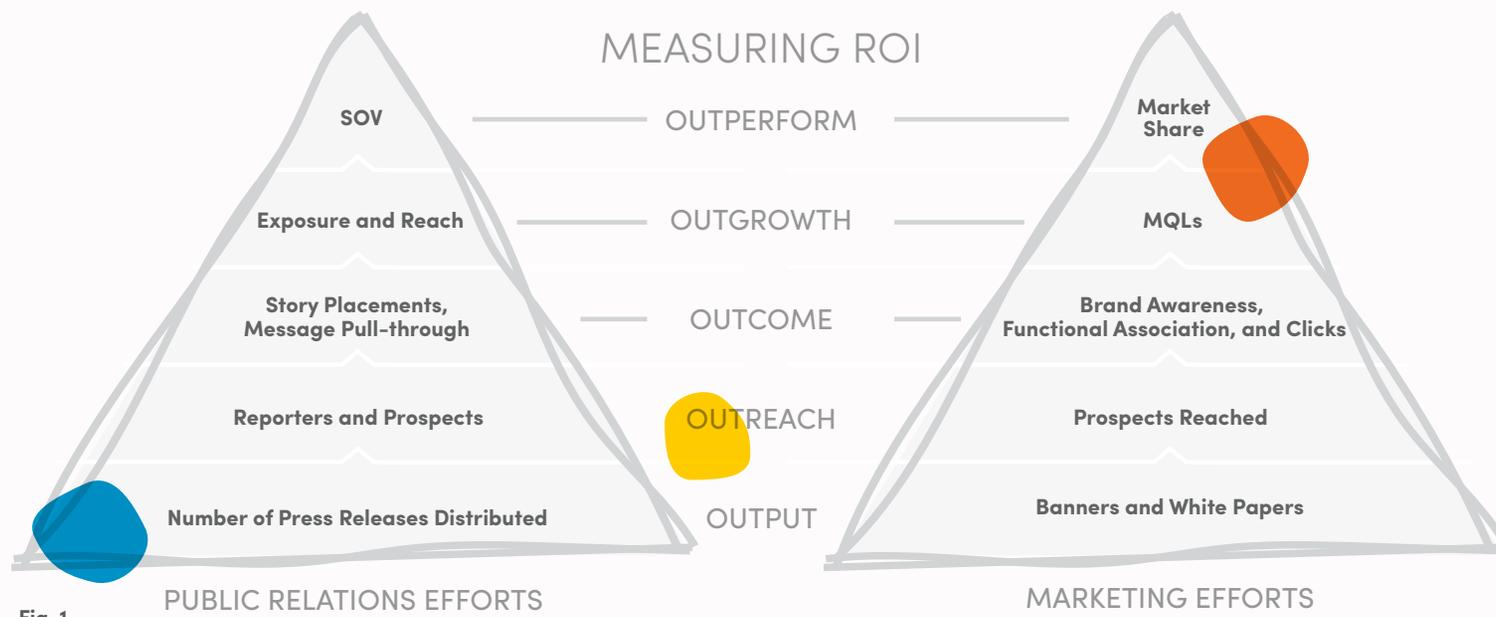


Fig. 1

 *Our approach to public relations is unique because we view earned media as communications that reach our clients' radical buyers on channels not already covered by a brand's paid and owned media efforts.*

We view everything we do as amplification and reaching our clients' radical buyer (ideal prospect) at every turn — creating more efficient, effective messaging that increases brand awareness and demand generation.

2

YOU'RE NOT
MEASURING PR.

TWO



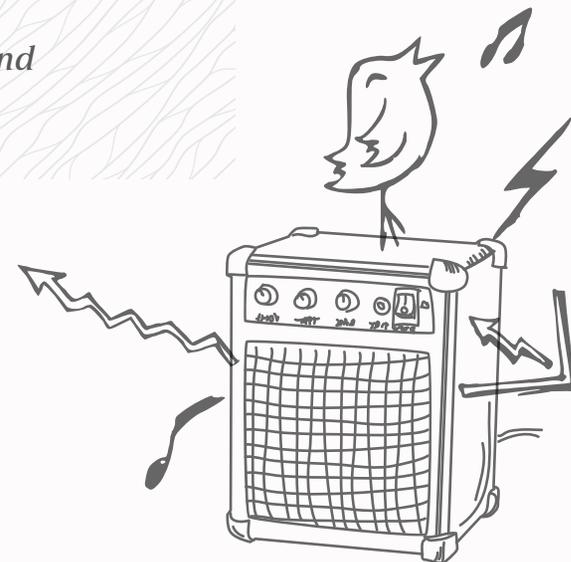
2. YOU'RE NOT MEASURING PR.

We all know there are quantifiable metrics associated with marketing. Most people don't even know where to begin with PR measurement, let alone how to align earned media measurements with analytics that clients care about when it comes to marketing and sales.

We're not surprised when clients tell us PR can't be measured. The 2016 **Holmes Report** article "Why Is PR Measurement So Important?" sums up why this sentiment still exists and provides some guidelines and methodologies to measure PR. We leverage the underlying framework — the Barcelona Principles — in our approach to measurement.



Because The Starr Conspiracy is an integrated agency, our measurement framework is informed first and foremost with amplification and how we can help create a more efficient and effective message for our clients.





Unlike the vast majority of our PR counterparts, we let the numbers lead us. Drawing from the Barcelona Principles, we move past the historical weight given to AVEs (ad value equivalencies, or how much the earned media would be worth if you had to pay for it) and simply measure outputs to understand how PR will affect business results.

So, we measure that way.

Figure 2 shows how PR activities can be categorized and tie back to the business. Having worked with more HCM technology and services companies than anyone else, our team is able to initiate the conversation around measuring what brands in the HCM space care about as a B2B enterprise.

We apply the information we receive during our initial discussion with clients (known as a strategic project brief) to help us establish KPIs and craft a PR plan that maps directly to our clients' KPIs.



Fig. 2

3

YOU'RE NOT TAKING AN
INTEGRATED APPROACH
FROM STRATEGY
TO PROMOTION.

THREE



3. YOU'RE NOT TAKING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FROM STRATEGY TO PROMOTION.

A framework alone does not lead to success. There are three additional factors we believe are nonnegotiable and make integration possible and measurement plausible in PR.



PR practitioners need to be active participants in business planning.



The decision to measure must be upfront — prior to developing a PR plan or strategy.



Everyone involved needs to understand the value that PR work brings to an efficient, effective message and how it's going to impact business and marketing goals.

Public relations work at The Starr Conspiracy starts as part of our entire team's engagement with a client during a business planning session and strategic project brief — a collaborative discussion where all of our resources get the full business and marketing context for the work we're planning and why it matters to bottom-line goals and objectives. These insights are as important to a PR professional as game footage of an opponent is to a professional basketball player. We hear what our clients believe are their strengths and weaknesses in the market. We're able to understand and advise on potential threats and opportunities. Participating in this exercise in tandem with senior-level decisions-makers not only sets us up for success, but helps us shape what we will measure and how it ties back to our clients' KPIs.

Yes, metrics-first thinking.



TAKEAWAYS

The best earned media comes from an integrated strategy in which the press your brand is getting amplifies the work you're doing (or plan to do) on owned and paid channels.

Two warnings on the subject of earned media:



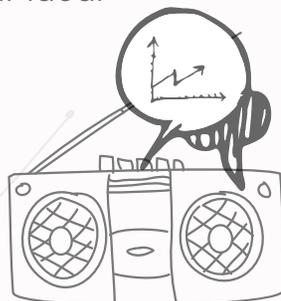
You'll probably waste a bunch of time and energy here if you delegate your PR to some inexperienced staffer or a marketing person who already has too much on their plate.



If you go with an outside agency that lacks industry expertise and doesn't take an integrated approach with your marketing, you're probably wasting your money.

We view PR and earned media differently in an integrated marketing agency. In our world, PR and marketing aren't competing factions (which is the typical view in most companies). Our strategic thinking is not siloed. We think about how we can best reach your ideal prospects at every turn.

Our PR execution is designed to influence your pipeline. And we influence your pipeline by managing the relationships between you and these audiences — whether directly or indirectly. **It's strategic. It's planned. And it maps to your KPIs.**



Want to learn more about how PR can amplify your marketing? Contact us.





About The Starr Conspiracy

The Starr Conspiracy embraces the humanity in business to build brands that have emotional resonance. More than a global business-to-business marketing agency, we're a movement. We're changing the way technology companies view themselves, their customers, and the world. Unlike conventional agencies, we fuse advertising, technology, and advisory services in completely new ways — ways that defy categorization and challenge the old-school agency structure.

thestarrconspiracy.com

