“Congratulations PRIA! The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) congratulates PRIA on the important new measurement guidance it has developed for its members. We were pleased to see too, that the new resource is consistent with AMEC’s current models and standards.

“We know from our own member research that measurement has never been taken more seriously than at the present time by the international PR community. The new PRIA initiative therefore, is in step with the latest trends in public relations practice.

“AMEC values the sense of partnership we enjoy with PRIA. You will always find us receptive to areas in which we can collaborate together.”

Barry Leggetter, FCIPR, FPRCA. Member of the Arthur W Page Society.
SETTING NEW BENCHMARKS FOR MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION IN AUSTRALIA

The Public Relations Institute of Australia is proud to publish the 2017 PRIA Measurement and Evaluation Framework to help public relations and communication professionals deliver and demonstrate tangible value.

This strategic communication framework incorporates an updated PRIA Measurement and Evaluation Model and the new PRIA Evaluation Implementation Matrix, providing practitioners with direction and resources to achieve best practice in these crucial areas of our day-to-day work.

My sincere thanks go to our eminent colleague Jim Macnamara FPRIA, Professor of Public Communication at the University of Technology Sydney, for developing this professional resource for the PRIA. As a globally recognised expert in measurement and evaluation, Professor Macnamara has ensured this cutting-edge model also aligns with the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication’s Integrated Evaluation Framework.

Our expanded model takes an ‘eco-system approach’ to contextualising communication within the organisation and the community it seeks to influence. It emphasises reporting on the impacts of a program or campaign – an extension from measuring outcomes. It underscores the importance of ongoing tracking against measurable objectives and the use of comprehensive data sources.

As a consequence, it also highlights the need to make the business case for investment in research, measurement and evaluation of communication, and to embed this into our budgets.

Ultimately, we should be able to speak confidently of the value of our work in clear and measurable terms to all stakeholders – to clearly demonstrate that the dial is being moved due to public relations initiatives.

On behalf of the PRIA Board, State & Territory Councils, and special interest committees, I’m proud to place this important resource into the hands of all public relations and communication professionals in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Muir
Public Relations Institute of Australia National President
The Organisation (corporate, government, NGO, or non-profit)

**CONTEXT**
External (i.e., economic, political, social, cultural, competitive) and internal

**INPUTS**
- Formative research
- Budgeting
- Strategic planning
- Resource allocation (e.g., staff, agencies)

**ACTIVITIES**
- Writing (e.g., press releases, brochures)
- Media relations
- Web site development
- Social media site development (e.g., blogs, Facebook pages)
- Publication development
- Event management
- Sponsorships
- Advertising campaign development

**OUTPUTS**
- Publicity
- Advertising placement
- Web content posted
- Brochures
- Newsletters
- Videos
- Events staged
- Social media posts
- Email marketing
- Community engagement projects
- Web sites
- Page views
- Video views
- Social media discussion
- Comments posted
- Inquiries, registrations, subscriptions, etc.

**OUTCOMES**
- Attention
- Awareness
- Understanding
- Learning (if necessary)
- Interest
- Engagement
- Consideration
- Attitude change
- Satisfaction
- Trust
- Preference
- Intention
- Advocacy

**IMPACT**
- Target public action
- Behaviour in line with objectives
- Organisation ROI
- Social/political change
- Organisation change

**STAGES IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**
1. Brief description: What is needed to plan and prepare communication
2. Planning & preparation
3. Formative research
4. Media relations
5. Web site development
6. Social media site development
7. Publication development
8. Event management
9. Sponsorships
10. Advertising campaign development

**KEY STEPS**
- Production & distribution
- Exposure & reception
- Web visits
- Page views
- Video views
- Social media discussion
- Comments posted
- Inquiries, registrations, subscriptions, etc.

**EXAMPLES**
- Formative research
- Budgeting
- Strategic planning
- Resource allocation (e.g., staff, agencies)

**METRICS & MILESTONES that can apply**
- SMART objectives
- Targets/KPIs
- Baselines/benchmark
- Number of media releases issued
- Reach (e.g., awarded circulation, ratings)
- Impressions
- Share of voice
- Newsroom attendance
- Unique visitors
- Views
- Cost per click (CPC)
- Cost per view (CPF)
- Cost per impression

**METHODS that can be used**
- Literature review
- Environmental scanning
- Database statistics
- Case study analysis
- SWOT analysis
- Market and/or social research (e.g., surveys, focus groups)
- Pre-testing
- Cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) (e.g., to compare methods and channels)

**STAKETERS, PUBLICS, SOCIETY**

**INPUTS**
- Smart communication objectives

**ACTIVITIES**
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- Event management
- Sponsorships
- Advertising campaign development

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**OUTCOMES**
- Short-term (outtakes) > Long-term
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Social media analysis
- Social media analysis (qualitative)
- Social media analysis (quantitative)
- Social media analysis (qualitative)

**METHODS**
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- Cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) (e.g., to compare methods and channels)
Guidelines for Implementing the PRIA Evaluation Framework

The Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA) Evaluation Framework for strategic communication, incorporating the PRIA Evaluation Model and the PRIA Evaluation Implementation Matrix, should be interpreted and applied noting the following guidelines.

1. **All communication program or campaign planning should start with SMART communication objectives** – i.e., objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. SMART objectives are characterised by the following:
   - **Specific** – communication objectives should contain numbers such as target volumes or percentages and dates (e.g., ‘to increase target public awareness of sugar as a key cause of obesity to 80% or more by 30 June’ or ‘to gain 10,000 registrations by 1 December’);
   - **Measurable** – three key features that make communication objectives measurable are (a) they should be specific as noted above; (b) baseline data should be available for post-program comparison (see Note 3); and (c) evaluation should be planned as part of strategic communication planning to ensure that necessary data collection is incorporated and budget is set aside;
   - **Achievable** – formative research such as review of relevant literature and case studies (see Note 9) can identify whether the proposed communication objectives are realistic (e.g., have similar programs elsewhere achieved the intended results);
   - **Relevant** – communication objectives must align with and support overarching organisation objectives. In addition, communication objectives should take account of the needs and interests of stakeholders and publics (see Note 2);
   - **Time-bound** – the deadline for achievement of objectives should be stated.

2. **Communication objectives should directly support one or more organisational objectives.** In addition, social responsibility (CR/CSR) requires that communication objectives also be developed with consideration of the needs and interests of stakeholders, publics, and society in general. Communication objectives that serve the needs of an organisation, but intentionally or knowingly disadvantage some stakeholders, publics, or sectors of society (e.g., social welfare or the environment) are not socially responsible. This holistic approach to setting communication objectives is illustrated by the bidirectional arrows in the PRIA Evaluation Model. Also, the setting of communication objectives is shaped by formative research that provides insights into target publics’ attitudes, concerns, interests, etc. – hence the setting of SMART objectives overlaps with the ‘inputs’ stage of communication (see Note 4 in relation to stages).

3. **Baseline data** is important for evaluation of outcomes and impact (e.g., through pre- and post-program comparative analysis). For example, in the first sample objective above, evaluation of increased target public awareness will require data on pre-campaign levels of awareness. Collection of baseline data should be part of formative evaluation (i.e., ex-ante) conducted during the ‘inputs’ stage (see Note 4).

4. The identification of strategic communication in stages as inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact is based on program logic models that are widely-used in program planning and evaluation within public administration, education, and international development. For example:
- The PRIA Evaluation Framework closely aligns with the five-stage Kellogg Foundation program logic model\(^{ii}\).
- The University of Wisconsin Extension Program (UWEX) program logic model\(^{iii}\) separates outcomes into short-term, medium-term, and long-term, with long-term outcomes equating to impact. (See Note 6.)
- Similar program logic models have been developed and are used by the largest volunteer non-profit organisation in the United States, United Way\(^{iv}\).

5. These types of models can be used for planning and evaluation by government, corporations, non-government organisations (NGOs), and non-profit organisations and they can be applied to all types of strategic communication including paid media advertising, media publicity, events, publications, Web sites, stakeholder engagement, and internal organisational communication, as well as integrated campaigns — although different methods are used for evaluating different types of objectives at various stages. (See Note 14 and the accompanying Evaluation Implementation Matrix.)

6. Some program logic models for communication use slightly different terms for the key stages. For example, some include ‘outtakes’, ‘outgrowths’ or ‘outflows’ as additional or alternative terms for stages. The International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) uses six-stages in the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework (inputs, activities, outputs, outtakes, outcomes, and impact)\(^{v}\). ‘Outtakes’ is a term used in some public relations literature to refer to short-term interim outcomes in the process of communication such as audience attention and awareness of messages. PRIA supports and endorses the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework and recommends the AMEC interactive online application for reporting evaluation. However, what some refer to as ‘outtakes’ are incorporated within ‘short-term outcomes’ in the PRIA Evaluation Framework for simplicity and because an international study of evaluation models has found that the most common descriptions of program stages are inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact\(^{vi}\). (It should be noted that the interactive online AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework does not require users to enter data in all sections/modules. Users may decide to describe short-term outcomes as ‘outtakes’ or include these under ‘outcomes’.) See the PRIA Evaluation Implementation Matrix that explains the alignment between ‘outtakes’ and ‘short term outcomes’.

7. The stages of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact, while often shown as separate elements for ease of illustration, are not discrete stages in a simple linear process. In reality, the stages overlap and accordingly are illustrated that way in the PRIA Evaluation Model. For example, ‘activities’ continue during the stages of ‘outcomes’ and ‘impact’ to maintain effects. Also feedback and learning gained at each stage should be used to refine strategy and adjust tactics if necessary (see Note 8.)

8. ‘Feedback loops’ are vital elements of the model. For example, if audiences are not responding to an output such as an information Web site, it may be necessary to adjust strategy or even return to redesign some activities and outputs, or even return to collect additional inputs (e.g., more target public insights) and sometimes even revise communication objectives (e.g., if there is a change in context). (See arrows denoting feedback loops above all stages in the PRIA Evaluation Model.) In some cases, it may even be necessary to review and revise communication objectives based on feedback or changes in context (see Note 14).

9. The use of program logic models to identify the stages of strategic communication with feedback loops between stages highlights that evaluation should be conducted progressively.
throughout programs – not only at the end. Best practice recommends three types of evaluation:

- **Formative**, also referred to as ex-ante, conducted before programs begin (literature review, identifying baselines, gaining audience insights including channel preferences, and pre-testing are examples of formative evaluation);
- **Process** evaluation conducted during programs to track outputs and short-term outcomes;
- **Summative**, also referred to as ex-post, conducted after programs to evaluate outcomes and impact.\(^\text{vii}\)

10. The program logic model-based PRIA Evaluation Framework for strategic communication also draws on communication and media theories such as the steps of information processing identified by W. J. McGuire and the *communication-persuasion matrix*\(^\text{viii}\). The AIDA model (attention, interest, desire, action) and similar models used in advertising is a derivative of McGuire’s steps, although the full list of steps in information processing is much more extensive including *exposure, attention, understanding, liking, retention, consideration*, acquiring *skills or knowledge, attitude change, intention, action/behaviour*, and *advocacy*\(^\text{ix}\). All of these steps in communication are reflected in the PRIA Evaluation Framework.

11. The PRIA Evaluation Framework also aligns with models in public relations and corporate communication that overview the process of planning and program management including the *RACE model* of PR planning, which stands for *research, action, communication, evaluation*; the *ROPE model* which stands for *research, objectives, program/plan, evaluation*; the expanded *RAISE model*\(^\text{xii}\), which advocates *research, adaptation, implementation, strategy, evaluation*; and the *ROSIE model*\(^\text{xi}\), which slightly rearranges the stages as *research, objectives, strategies, implementation, evaluation*.

12. **Stakeholders, publics, and society** are not only identified as ‘targets’ for information and/or persuasion in the PRIA Evaluation Framework for strategic communication. The framework illustrates that:

- Stakeholders, publics, and society should be considered in setting communication objectives as recommended in Note 2 and during the ‘inputs’ stage of programs (e.g., understanding their needs, interests, preferred channels, etc.);
- Stakeholders, publics, and society will be ‘targets’ and receivers of information during the ‘activities’ and ‘outputs’ stages of programs, which are focussed on production, distribution, and exposure. During these stages, evaluation will necessarily quantify what is distributed to stakeholders, publics, and society (e.g., advertising, media publicity, Web site information, etc.) – hence there is a one-way arrow to stakeholders, publics, and society under ‘outputs’;
- However, communication ‘activities’ also should include dialogue, listening, collaboration, and relationship building. Evaluation of such activities should include identifying the needs, concerns, and experiences of stakeholders, publics, and relevant sectors of society in relation to the program and its messages. In particular, when evaluating ‘outcomes’, attention should focus on identifying the response of stakeholders, publics, and relevant sectors of society. Hence, a reversed one-way arrow under ‘outcomes’ indicates the importance of inviting and processing feedback and response from stakeholders, publics, and society;
- Whereas most evaluation frameworks and models highlight evaluation of impact only in terms of achievement of the objectives of the organisation, impact should be evaluated in terms of impact on stakeholders, publics, and society including any unintended impacts (positive or negative), not only intended impacts that serve the objectives and interests of
13. Whereas most evaluation frameworks and models also fail to include context as a major determining variable, the PRIA Evaluation Framework for strategic communication highlights that all stages of communication from setting objectives and planning to impact occur within a dynamic external context (e.g., economic, social, cultural, political, and competitive factors), as well as internal context. Context, represented as a textured ‘backdrop’ of communication programs in the PRIA Evaluation Framework should be considered in:

- Setting objectives (e.g., are the objectives appropriate, relevant, and achievable in the circumstances); and
- Conducting evaluation – i.e., program evaluation should include evaluation of context. If the context changes, programs may need to be adjusted and sometimes objectives may need to be revised. For instance, if a major political event such as an election occurs, media and public focus will be diverted. Similarly, an economic recession can change government and public priorities. Evaluation of context should involve presentation of empirical data (i.e., evidence) to show the impact of context, not merely subjective claims.

14. While the process of planning and evaluating strategic communication and the key concepts and principles involved are overviewed in the model, users should refer to the accompanying EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX for further detail of key steps, metrics and milestones, and methods of evaluation. Under each of the stages in the model (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes (short-term to long-term), and impact), the matrix provides:

a. A brief definition of what the stage involves;
b. The key steps in each stage (such as planning, production, distribution, reception, awareness, engagement, interest, attitude change, etc.);
c. Examples of things that typically occur at each stage (e.g., placing advertising and writing and issuing media releases are ‘outputs’, while Web page views, downloads, and inquiries are ‘short-term outcomes’ or ‘outtakes’);
d. Metrics and milestones that can be collected or identified to provide empirical evidence of successful completion of each stage. In some cases, metrics (numbers) can be collected, such as media reach statistics, impressions, online views, etc. The term ‘milestones’ is used because in some cases numbers do not tell the story – e.g., strategic relationships might be demonstrated by signing of a partnership agreement or stakeholders agreeing to work collaboratively on a committee); and
e. Methods for generating evaluation data, including both formal and informal methods and qualitative as well as quantitative research.

15. The Evaluation Implementation Matrix is a customised ‘matrix’ to help practitioners implement evaluation for all types of programs and for all levels of budget and time as follows:

- The horizontal axis – The progressive stages of strategic communication from ‘inputs’ to ‘impact’ are arranged in columns across the matrix from left to right. The aim of evaluation should be to progress as far to the right of the matrix as possible – ideally to evaluating impact;
- The vertical axis – The metrics, milestones and methods are arranged from simple/basic/low cost at the top of the respective sections in the matrix to sophisticated/advanced methods at the bottom of each section. The aim of evaluation should be to go as deep as possible at each stage to generate the most reliable empirical evidence.
16. The Evaluation Implementation Matrix includes more than 45 examples of strategic communication inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts; 45 examples of metrics and milestones that can demonstrate progress and results at each stage; and 35 examples of research methods (informal and formal; quantitative and qualitative) that can be used for evaluation of strategic communication. (Some methods can be used for evaluating more than one type of activity.) Evaluation of most programs will use only a few of the metrics/milestones and methods listed. The purpose of this matrix is to:

a. Arrange various metrics/milestones and methods to show what is appropriate to each stage in the process of communication (the columns); and

b. Show a ‘menu’ of options available in metrics/milestones and methods relevant to each stage from basic to advanced (the levels), with corresponding cost, time, and rigour implications.

17. Reporting formats for evaluation of strategic communication vary. Some organisations have templates for reports or ‘dashboards’. For organisations that do not have a specified format, the AMEC interactive online tool for recording and reporting evaluation is recommended. See Figure 1, which shows a screen shot of the summary page of a campaign evaluation reported in the AMEC interactive online tool.

Figure 1. Summary of evaluation of a campaign reported in the AMEC interactive online tool.
Notes

i The term ‘program’ is used after this point to include communication campaigns, projects, and programs including paid, earned, shared, and owned media, events, and other public communication activities.


