



Precise Thoughts Nov05: What does the data say?

Welcome to Precise Thoughts from the team at Precise.

As a team, our core purpose is to help clients measure, interpret and enhance their PR efforts. As you are aware, we apply formal market research-type methodologies, which in turn help to support the credibility and influence of your role. As a result of our diverse client base, we get to see an incredible range of media coverage and distil a range of universal insights.

With that in mind, this newsletter series aims to share practical ideas that inform and inspire. The focus of this first edition is on PR Evaluation in the context of broader Australian market outlook.

I look forward to all feedback so please let me know any and all thoughts!

Yours,
Michael Ziviani
CEO

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The data speaks ...but what does it say?

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Research into where PR Evaluation is at in Australia

Universal PR Insights: Part I

There are some interesting general guidelines that have emerged from a universal perspective of outtakes, which we'd like to share with you.

- **The picture that tells** – Why is it that having a graphic in coverage almost always sees the textual favour improve? Graphics instantly communicate both a theme and a feeling - I could argue their impact can be more than the text itself. So, capturing their 'favour' is key to our evaluation approach. This inspires us in two ways:
 - Consider adjusting the weight of graphics in your impact scorer; and
 - Build a 'Success Portfolio' of reference graphics – the best of!

Visualising your products/service/situation well and making the graphics available will always be a challenge – as much operationally as creatively. Maybe it's as simple as a staff competition to snap the best shot or making images available to journalists via a restricted website.

- **The Mechanics of CSR** – The historical debate around the value of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) seems to have largely resolved to the affirmative. Ongoing, positive CSR activities that are appropriately communicated seem to 'featherbed' reputation when bad news hits. Of course, common sense still applies. Your CSR work needs to be:





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- o Relevant and genuine to your stakeholders; and
- o Executed well, ensuring appropriate creation of PR opportunities.

See also 'Contemporary Australia' below for more research to support CSR.

- **One-2, One-2** – A spokesperson quoted in your coverage can be highly beneficial. On average, its inclusion can see a tone uplift of 20% plus; depending on the coverage. When they are well-briefed and effective communicators they can not only deliver the intended message accurately but they can also clarify and help neutralise negative sentiment to 'save' the article.

What a great photo op too! Sincere and positive people help build trust and credibility – they bring a company to life. Important factors to also consider include attire, proper light, clarity, backdrop and clear branding. To assist with identifying needs for spokesperson training, Precise provides full history.

Contemporary Australia

This very interesting consumer research was released this year by Grey Worldwide 'Eye on Australia'. I have summarised key themes to help give an external context for your PR planning:

Competitive & materialistic culture - Australia is an increasingly competitive culture and this is starting earlier with kids being driven by their parents into extra activities. Behind this competitive theme is the trend to materialism

characterised by the have's and the have-nots. Interestingly, technology is amplifying the stress thanks to a social imperative to keep up with the latest!

Work stress – We are working harder and longer in order to afford the above, but we are doing it with less job security and therefore more stress. 72% say there are too many pressures in the workplace yet many are unwilling to work less in case they lose their competitive edge.

A solo generation – Australians no longer feel they are supported by Government and large companies. Some 74% feel the government is unlikely to look after them in retirement. Corporations fare poorly with perception issues around lack of ethics and heartlessness (the need for CSR). 79% of us think it is quite possible to be made redundant in your 40's. Given this, we feel left alone to focus on our own resources.

The research suggests Australians are seeking the following key elements:

- **More trust** – Trust topped the list when characterising a great brand with **92% saying great brands come from companies with values and ethics**. An amazing 64% say they don't trust most big companies.
- **More inventiveness** – 94% of Australians want to see the country become more inventive topping the scale of what they would like to see in the future. This feeling flows on to advertising and branding with 85% believing a great brand is innovative.





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- **More personality** – 68% feel that a great brand is fun and 64% think that it is witty.
- **More zen** - 80% would pay more for a product that brings a feeling of well-being.

So, what are the possible implications of all this to how we communicate:

Australians seek brands that create a feeling of trust and reduce the stress in our lives. Brands should be honest, transparent and believable in order to appeal to people who feel they are 'doing it alone'.

The communications approach should also seek to involve and interest but stay close to the ideals of escapism and freedom. Brands should have personality and be inventive yet still be reliable. Those that also soothe daily stresses can offer further emotional value.

PR Evaluation in Australia

Recent media has carried a few stories on PR evaluation with a compelling mix of both high and low-brow thinking. To put this in local context, some Australian research on PR Evaluation was released in 2004 by Charles Sturt University academics. The research revealed some interesting facts about attitudes of Australian PR professional to evaluation:

- There was strong agreement that 'evaluation is essential for credibility with clients and employers' (rated 4.2 on a 5 point scale)

- There is pressure from clients/employers to more clearly demonstrate results of PR communications (rated 3.8 out of 5)
- Raw output measures dominate evaluation practice with 89% of respondents measuring volume of PR coverage and 86% measuring favourability.

The study continues to point out that **most evaluation is focused on outputs of the communications process and now needs to extend into outcomes.**

Outcomes are defined as effects on the target audience often represented by shifts in key communications measures. The next newsletter will expand on this theme with practical measurement guidance.

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About Precise

Established in 2001, Precise specializes in premium quality communications analysis services for Blue Chip clients. We apply best-practice techniques to profile opportunities and quantify results in concrete business outcomes.

