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Defining Success: The PR Measurement Maze

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Tack!

Tack till vår handledare Camilla Nothhaft för din ovärderliga rådgivning och stöttning under den gångna våren.

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Abstract

"Defining Success: The PR Measurement Maze"

This study addresses how a lack of shared understanding of how PR contributes to organisational success creates a challenge in demonstrating the value of PR activities. The challenge lies in legitimising PR work, as its value is often viewed as difficult to measure and evaluate. To explore this issue, the study adopts a social constructionist approach and conducts qualitative interviews with PR practitioners. Specifically, it focuses on PR consultants in Swedish PR agencies who work with external clients. Through thematic analysis of the interview data, the study aims to understand how current measurement and evaluation practices impact the ability of PR consultants to legitimise and effectively carry out their work. The findings highlight the importance of gaining a better understanding of the value of PR. The analysis reveals that the PR profession struggles to demonstrate its value due to prevailing management logic. Sustainable legitimacy can be achieved by integrating a communication logic and fostering collaborative relationships with clients. Furthermore, the study emphasises the significance of balancing quantitative and qualitative values in the measurement and evaluation practice of PR for successful outcomes.

Keywords: Public Relations, Measurement, Evaluation, Communication Logic,
Agency-Client Relationship, Legitimacy

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Sammanfattning

“Att Definera Framgång: Labyrinten av PR-Mätningar”

Denna studie undersöker hur bristande gemensam förståelse för hur PR bidrar till organisationers framgång skapar en utmaning att demonstrera värdet av PR aktiviteter. Utmaningen ligger i att legitmitera PR-arbetet, då värdet av PR ofta kan upplevas vara svårt att mäta och utvärdera. För att undersöka detta använder studien en socialkonstruktivitstisk ansats, där kvalitativa intervjuer med PR-konsulter genomförs. Mer specifikt fokuserar studien på PR-konsulter på svenska PR-byråer, som arbetar med externa kunder. Genom en tematisk analys av det empiriska materialet syftar studien till att förstå hur nuvarande metoder för mätning och utvärdering påverkar PR-konsulters förmåga att legitmiera och effektivt utföra sitt arbete. Resultatet framhäver vikten att få en bättre förståelse för värdet av PR. Studien påvvisar att PR-konsulterna kämpar med att demonstrera sitt värde på grund av rådande managementlogik. Hållbar legitmitet kan uppnås genom att integrera en kommunikationslogik i branschen, och främja samarbetsrelationen med kunderna. Dessutom betonar studien vikten av att balansera kvalitativa och kvantitativa värden i mätning och utvärdering av PR för framgångsrika resultat.

Nyckelord: Public Relations, Mätning, Utvärdering, Kommunikationslogik,
Byrå-Kundrelation, Legitmitet

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1.Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Ironically, the PR industry itself has often struggled with bad PR. Despite the growing need for effective communication in today's business environment, public relations is still seen as a vague and undefined function, due to a lack of understanding of its scope and value (Fairchild, 2002). Recent global events, such as the pandemic, war, and recession, have made it even more challenging to convince managers to allocate larger budgets for PR and communication activities (Mynewsdesk, 2023). In this context, measuring the effectiveness of PR efforts has become crucial for both PR professionals and stakeholders, as demonstrated in the "State of Nordic PR & Communications" report by Mynewsdesk (2023). This study surveyed 450 Nordic PR and communications professionals and found that measurement was among the most influential factors affecting their work in 2023. The report revealed that 59% of respondents identified the need to demonstrate the impact of PR and communication as a growing concern, while 51% reported that their organisations are cutting PR and communication budgets. Therefore, PR professionals must show tangible evidence of their efforts to justify their budgets and demonstrate the value of their work. The lack of a shared understanding of how communication contributes to organisational success described by Volk et al. (2017), adds to the challenge of demonstrating the added value of PR efforts. While measuring and evaluating performance has become essential to demonstrate value, strategic communication researcher Heide argues that the metrics tracked may not align with the values that communication professionals strive to achieve (Gordan, 2023).

1.2 Contextual background

1.2.1 PR agencies

PR agencies form a substantial part of the PR industry today (Verčič et al., 2018). The PR industry in Sweden was born in the 1950s with the emergence of the first consultants and PR agencies. Over time, this industry has developed significantly, with the importance and need for communication expertise for companies growing in the 1980s and leading to an increasing number of PR agencies being established, particularly in the late 1990s (Larsson, 2005a). The primary focus of a PR agency is to strategically enhance the brand and communication of its clients over the long term (Verčič et al., 2018).

A PR agency and its client enter into a contractual relationship where the agency provides expertise for either short-term or long-term projects. Before entering an agreement, the agency prepares a pitch for the client, outlining its capabilities and suggestions to meet the client's objectives. Once both parties agree to work together, the agency sets up a contract based on cost estimations. The agency's most valuable offering is its counsel to advise the client on the proper course of action (Hinrichsen, 2005). To ensure a successful client-agency relationship, the agency must prioritise building a strong relationship with the client by providing excellent client service and considering the client's best interests while simultaneously working towards its own goals (Hinrichsen, 2005). Demonstrating efficiency is also the agency's responsibility, as a lack thereof can lead to contract termination due to the client's dissatisfaction. While some clients may have unrealistic expectations, poor quality of work is often cited as the reason for contract termination (Verčič et al., 2018). Agencies that can demonstrate how their work generates tangible business results will find it easier to justify their fees to clients. In today's competitive marketplace, clients who invest in publicity campaigns want to be assured that their investment will yield a positive impact on the company's financial performance, profitability, and overall business objectives (DeVries, 2018).

1.2.2 Measurement and Evaluation

Measuring the effectiveness of communication efforts in the PR field can present challenges. It is difficult to directly, from a short-term perspective, describe how a PR effort pays off in relation to the investment made in it. As a result, the PR field has developed a need to be able to measure its efforts as a means of legitimising its practices within organisations (Broom & Dozier, 1983). However, there is currently no standardised way to measure PR success in Sweden, and agencies rely on various metrics such as reach, potential reach, media value, views, coverage, articles, and click-through rates (Mellstrand, 2016). The emergence of social media and new technologies has led to a significant increase in measurement tools. While it may now be easier to track metrics like reach, exposure, and engagement through likes and shares, these metrics often fall short of capturing the broader behavioural changes and outcomes that align with communication goals (Macnamara, 2023). According to Buhman et al. (2018), the PR industry still tends to prioritise output metrics such as traditional and social media monitoring. However, as described by Heide, to truly demonstrate the impact of communication efforts and build trust, it is essential to shift towards measuring value creation rather than simply tracking metrics like reach and exposure (Gordan, 2023).

1.3 Problem Formulation

PR practitioners continue to strive to prove their worth, which has led the profession to align itself with a management logic dominating many organisations. The emphasis on measurable results has become a key aspect of the work, yet the perception that PR's intangible nature makes it challenging to measure and evaluate remains. The ongoing discussion on measurement has yet to reach a consensus on the best approach, which may have led many PR consultants to rely on imperfect tools and methods, failing to accurately reflect the actual value of their work to clients (Macnamara, 2023). Modern research on strategic communication draws attention to the need for communication professionals to abandon logics not tailored to their field and instead adopt a communication logic (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). Studying the perspectives of PR consultants is crucial for understanding how they view the current measurement and evaluation logic and its influence on their work performance and ability to legitimise their work. This research can offer valuable insights on how to enhance the demonstration of PR's value, as well as identify areas of improvement in current practices and suggest solutions to overcome them.

1.4 Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the impact of the current measurement and evaluation logic on PR consultants' ability to legitimise their work and perform their job effectively. We will explore how PR consultants perceive the current measurement and evaluation logic and whether they view it as a valuable tool or a constraint. Our study will solely focus on the experiences of PR consultants working in PR agencies in Sweden with external clients. We have chosen to focus on PR consultants because they operate in a vulnerable position where demonstrating their value is a constant requirement. Although the principle of effective communication applies to all communication professionals, consultants face a particularly extreme situation. This study is especially important due to the current trend of increasing demand for measurement and evaluation, coupled with decreasing communication budgets. By addressing this objective, we intend to gain insights into the challenges faced by PR consultants in navigating the tension between the need for measurement and evaluation and the delivery of effective communication strategies. For PR, effective communication strategies are those that have an impact on shaping attitudes and perspectives. To achieve this aim, we have established the following research questions;

- *How do the PR consultants perceive the current measurement and evaluation methods in demonstrating the value generated by PR activities?*
- *How does the current measurement and evaluation logic impact their work? Do they view it as an opportunity or constraint?*

1.5 Relevance to the Research Area

Public relations is an integral part of strategic communication, which is defined by Heide (2013) as the purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfil its mission, achieve its goals, and enhance its reputation. In today's world, the question of effectiveness holds significant importance for organisations. Leaders, both corporate and organisational, now require communication efforts to be reported in a systematic manner. As stakeholders increasingly prioritise measurement and evaluation, the PR industry needs to reassess how it presents the impact of its efforts. Moreover, practitioners must be able to justify their fees and establish legitimacy to sustain their operations. Recent research in strategic communication underscores the need for communication professionals to adapt to their own professional standards. Within this context, studying the dynamics among PR consultants becomes central.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the past, the value creation of PR was mainly measured by the volume of coverage, such as column inches (Watson, 2012). However, in the 1960s, the conceptualisation of non-financial value through communication led to a shift towards a managerial perspective (Likely & Watson, 2013). This meant that key performance indicators (KPIs) became more important in measuring value creation. Today, PR evaluation is a crucial component of nearly all communication practices, helping to demonstrate effectiveness and value and inform future strategies (Macnamara, 2023). Professional PR organisations and industry associations have been making increasing efforts to transition PR from an intuitive art form to greater reliance on scientific methodologies that are valid and reliable (Jakus, 2018). According to the report "State of Nordic PR & Communications" (2023), measurement is one of the most influential areas affecting the work of communication and PR professionals heading into 2023. Despite its importance, measuring and evaluating PR may not be an easy task.

2.2 Value Creation

The PR field faces challenges in demonstrating the value of its services, both in terms of organisational and financial value, hindering the legitimacy and growth of the profession (Fairchild, 2002). One major issue is persuading top managers to allocate larger budgets for communication activities due to a lack of shared understanding of how communication contributes to organisational success (Volk et al., 2017). Clients investing in PR services want to ensure a good return on investment (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011), but it can be difficult to perform cost assessments when there is no consensus on how PR creates value (Volk et al., 2017). Michaelson and Stacks (2011) highlight that PR professionals say that the primary reason for measuring PR is to demonstrate the value of PR programs, which can be done by measuring the return on investment. While measuring the return on investment is now a common practice among many PR professionals (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011), there remains scepticism regarding its feasibility and effectiveness. This scepticism arises from various factors and challenges associated with accurately measuring PR outcomes. For instance, one challenge is the difficulty of directly and short-term quantifying the payoff of a PR effort to the investment made (Broom & Dozier, 1983). Moreover, solely focusing on these numbers runs the risk of overlooking the broader value that PR can bring to an organisation. The non-financially measurable value of PR could be of more value to an organisation. Thus, it is crucial to measure the full range of benefits that PR can provide (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011).

To overcome these challenges, it is important to improve the understanding of the value of PR, both among top managers and clients. PR professionals must also expand their measurement frameworks to include non-financial measures, such as reputation management and stakeholder engagement. By doing so, the value of PR and its contribution to organisational success could be better demonstrated. Which, in turn, would lead to increased investment and growth in the profession (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011)

2.3 Evaluation and Measurement

To gain respect and understanding from management in an environment where PR budgets are often cut, PR professionals must demonstrate the value of their work through measurement and evaluation (Hon, 1997). Evaluation can facilitate decision-making for organisations and help answer questions about how to best allocate resources (Paine, 2011). PR evaluation involves appraising or comparing a PR program or effort with predetermined organisational goals. While PR measurement involves quantifiable data, evaluation involves more interpretation and judgment calls (Jakus, 2018).

Despite the widespread availability of analysis and reporting tools, as well as the evolution of the internet and social media, the methods used to measure PR have remained stagnant over the past fifty years (Macnamara, 2023). Nothhaft and Stensson (2019) discuss the consequences of neglecting measurement and evaluation in the PR industry, specifically how it has resulted in overpromising, creating reluctance among industry actors to engage in these practices due to concerns about being judged against unrealistic standards. Strategic communications researcher Heide argues that the wrong things often are being measured in communication work (Gordan, 2023). Measuring what has been produced says nothing about its strategic effects. Likely and Watson (2013) present an analysis that suggests that we are moving from a traditional evaluation, which primarily focuses on the internal cohesion of the PR discipline and professional topics in research, to more outcome-focused research. This means focusing on how communication efforts lead to beneficial effects on stakeholder attitudes toward PR. Macnamara (2023) also describes the issues with a media-centric approach, where the focus is on outputs rather than outcomes. This perspective emphasises that the value of strategic communication lies in its results and effects, not in outputs. To address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of evaluation practices, PR professionals should focus on improving the legitimacy of PR through ethical practice and stakeholder engagement (Merkelsen, 2011). Additionally, effective measurement and evaluation can be beneficial when it comes to avoiding suspicion of underperformance (Nothhaft & Stensson, 2019).

2.3.1 Outputs, Outtakes, Outcomes, and Impact

To effectively measure and evaluate PR campaigns, it is essential to distinguish between the various levels of results, including outputs, outtakes, and outcomes (Lindemann, 2003). Macnamara (2023) also suggests impact as another level. Outputs can be described as the immediate and tangible results of a PR campaign, such as volume, reach, impressions and sentiments (Lindemann, 2003). For example the number of media placements obtained. Outtakes refer to the short-term effects of a PR activity such as the engagement that occurs. Outcomes, on the other hand, are the long-term effects such as increased awareness and behaviour change. The outcomes are typically aligned with the organisation's business objectives, such as boosting sales, making them the paramount level of evaluation as they showcase the PR campaign's efficacy in achieving the organisation's goals (Lindemann, 2003). Ultimately, impact encompasses the broader effects that arise from the reception, reaction, and response. It encompasses the societal, industrial, economic, and policy-level changes that occur as a result of the PR campaign (Macnamara, 2023).

2.3.2 Standardisation of Evaluation and Measurement

The evaluation and measurement of PR suffers from a lack of standardisation, as pointed out by Jakus (2018). Although attempts have been made to establish standards, such as the 2010, 2015, and 2020 Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles (AMEC, 2020), and the 2016 Integrated Evaluation Framework proposed by the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, practitioners have not widely implemented these initiatives (Buhmann et al., 2019). The report "State of Nordic PR and Communication" (Mynewsdesk, 2023) highlights that many organisations measure and collect data without a clear plan or implementation strategy in place, resulting in a lot of confusion within the field. Less than 40% of PR and communication professionals report having a documented plan or strategy for measuring results, and nearly half do not take action based on the data they collect. Additionally, less than 30% of professionals share their results with the entire company, indicating a significant lack of transparency. Jakus (2018) emphasises that measurement and evaluation programs must be part of communication strategies, following a model, matrix, or guideline, to be effective.

Despite efforts to establish standards, scepticism persists around the measurement of PR, according to "State of Nordic PR and Communication" (Mynewsdesk, 2023). Over half of the PR professionals participating in the survey think that there are too many KPIs to know which ones are the most important to measure, making it impossible to keep up with the constant flow of new KPIs and metrics. They also feel they do not have enough time to measure PR activities. A significant portion of respondents, close to half, express scepticism regarding the ability of today's KPIs to accurately measure the true impact of communication efforts. Furthermore, an equal number of respondents admit to being unsure about what exactly they should be measuring. These findings highlight a clear lack of clarity and guidance within the field.

2.3.3 Guidelines for Evaluation and Measurement

To measure the effectiveness of PR, it is crucial to first determine the specific elements that should be evaluated (Lindemann, 2003). Industry research suggests that the most common technique for PR measurement is media analysis (Jakus, 2018). It involves monitoring and analysing media sources such as newspapers, to assess the effectiveness and success of the efforts. While media analysis is the most commonly used technique for PR measurement, there is a growing recognition, as highlighted by researchers such as Macnamara (2023), that measuring the impact of PR should extend beyond mere outputs. In addition, the measurement practices borrowed from advertising have played a pivotal role in shaping the current landscape of PR measurement methods. Notably, the utilisation of Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE). AVE is calculated based on the cost of placing an advertisement in a specific medium. However, it is important to note that AVE may not provide an accurate reflection of the value offered by different media channels (Jakus, 2018). An alternative to AVE is the concept of PR value. PR value is a measurement approach that assesses the value of PR activities by considering their reach and the potential cost of purchasing equivalent reach in the media. This methodology provides a more comprehensive and realistic assessment of the impact of PR efforts. According to All Ears (2023), the industry-standard PR factor for this calculation is 2.4, although it is important to note that this factor may vary depending on specific contexts.

Another approach to evaluating and measuring PR that has had great influence is the balanced scorecard method introduced by Kaplan and Norton (1992). This approach enables a comprehensive assessment of organisational performance, using KPIs to align communication objectives with business goals. It emphasises the importance of integrating communication activities with other organisational functions, such as marketing, HR, and operations, to achieve common objectives.

Despite these approaches, standardisation of PR measurement remains an issue. The Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles (AMEC, 2020) and the Integrated Evaluation Framework proposed by the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication are notable attempts at standardisation, but they are not widely implemented (Buhmann et al., 2019). Moreover, there is still confusion about measurement strategies, with many organisations collecting data without a clear plan or implementation strategy. Additionally, PR professionals are sceptical about the effectiveness of current KPIs and struggle to keep up with the constantly changing metrics (Mynewsdesk, 2023).

2.4 Management Logic & Communication Logic

As PR practitioners strive to prove the value of their work and gain legitimacy, they face challenges due to the lack of standardised measurements and consensus within the industry (Jakus, 2018). One explanation for these challenges could be the tendency of the communication industry to lean towards a management logic approach. Simonsson and Heide (2021) have studied the way communication professionals are more adherent towards a management logic, in the absence of a professional framework. The management logic approach treats organisations as standardised operations that can be quantitatively measured, perceiving communication as a linear transmission process. According to the authors, this perspective primarily emphasises the outputs of communication activities and fails to capture the comprehensive value of communication work, potentially impeding the professionalisation journey of communication professionals. Volk et al. (2017), have also confirmed that focusing on quantitative measurement may not be the best way to display the value of communication.

Simonsson and Heide (2021) propose a shift towards a professional communicative logic perspective that focuses on qualitative measurements of communication, to overcome this issue. The communication logic perspective prioritises qualitative measurements when evaluating communication efforts. This perspective stems from the recognition that communication plays a fundamental role in the sensemaking process, contributing to the creation and ongoing development of organisations. One aspect highlighted in their research is the potential for professionalising the communication profession by attaining a seat at the dominant coalition within an organisation (Simonsson & Heide, 2021).

While Simonsson and Heide (2021) primarily focused on communication professionals within organisations, this study aims to explore how current measurement and evaluation methods affect the ability of PR consultants to legitimise their work and effectively perform their job. However, as previous research in this field has shown, PR consultants face similar challenges to communication professionals within organisations. PR, like other forms of communication, cannot be fully captured quantitatively. Therefore, the application of the communication logic theory in this study is relevant.

3.Theoretical framework

3.1 Public Relations Defined

The PR profession has demonstrated its usefulness across various industries, despite its relatively young age. PR includes a wide range of practices (Larsson, 2005b), and due to its extensive scope, practitioners exhibit diverse competencies and abilities. This has led to a lack of a universally accepted definition of the practice (Tench & Yeomans, 2017). To address this issue, we have chosen to adopt the broader definition of the PRSA, the Public Relations Society of America, which defines PR as a strategic communication process that establishes mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their audiences (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2017).

3.1.1 Thinking PR

In order to grasp PR as an industry and practice, it is important to discuss what thinking PR actually entails. The focal point of PR involves the development and upkeep of relationships between an individual or organisation and various stakeholders, including the public, media, and other interested parties (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2017). Through communication, the quality of relationships can be created and managed (Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). PR can be a valuable asset for organisations as it enables them to generate earned value (Likely & Watson, 2013). Rather than simply buying advertising space in a newspaper, a PR agency can secure earned media coverage for the organisation, resulting in a mention or feature in the publication. This earned media coverage can be more effective than paid advertising as it can provide greater credibility and authenticity to the organisation's message. Building and maintaining relationships through PR requires a great deal of patience and effort, particularly when it comes to cultivating relationships with media and industry influencers (Tench & Yeomans, 2017). PR professionals must work tirelessly to ensure that the individual or organisation they represent is seen in a positive light and is recognised for their work in a manner that aligns with their goals and values. This demands earning the trust and loyalty of the target audience, which can only be achieved through consistent effort, responsiveness to feedback, and a long-term approach (Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). Furthermore, maintaining positive relationships is also crucial as a preventative measure during times of crisis or other negative situations. By having established a foundation of trust and goodwill with key stakeholders, PR professionals can work to mitigate potential damage and restore trust in their clients or organisation in the aftermath of a crisis (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2017).

Managing a brand is crucial for organisations and individuals alike. Effective PR "thinking" involves using influence to achieve clients' objectives by predicting, analysing, and interpreting public perceptions of their brand, and developing plans to shift those perceptions. To change public perception and behaviour, PR professionals must leverage communication channels and activities such as social media, events, press releases, and other marketing strategies (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2017). The goal is to influence public opinion, which is shaped by the experiences of different individuals (Larsson, 2005b), and behaviour. Attitudinal variables such as credibility, relationships, reputation, trust, and confidence play a crucial role in shaping perceptions and influencing behaviour (Michaelson & Stacks, 2017). By leveraging various communication channels and activities, PR professionals can create synergies that enable them to reach a broader audience, increase the effectiveness of their communication activities, and ultimately achieve their desired results (Morris & Goldsworthy, 2017).

In recent years, the PR industry has undergone significant changes due to the rise of new technology and increased flow of information, resulting in the widespread use of digital media. Target groups and receivers have become more active and involved in the message being conveyed by the sender. The abundance of information also poses a challenge for organisations to effectively reach their stakeholders. The emergence of PR practitioners has become more crucial in this context as organisations require experts to improve stakeholder relationships (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009). To meet these challenges, PR practitioners need to be proactive and critically evaluate their own roles in ensuring effective communication to create a meaningful impact.

3.2 Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy is widely used by researchers, but few have actually defined it. According to Suchman (1995), legitimacy is a socially constructed perception or assumption that an organisation's actions are desirable, appropriate, and aligned with shared norms, values, beliefs, and definitions within a particular system or context. An organisation's legitimacy is determined by whether its actions are perceived by relevant stakeholders as suitable and consistent with these shared norms and values. Legitimacy is critical for sustainability, as stakeholders are more likely to provide resources to organisations that appear meaningful, predictable, and trustworthy. Legitimate organisations tend to become self-replicating because their legitimacy reflects their integration into a system of institutionalised perceptions and actions.

Legitimacy not only affects how individuals behave towards organisations but also how they perceive and interpret them. The presence of cultural coherence suggests the presence of a common narrative or justification that clarifies what the organisation does and why it matters. However, in the communication profession, legitimacy issues are prevalent, both externally with the public and internally with communication professionals lacking recognition from their clients or management. This lack of recognition contributes to the negative reputation associated with PR, leading to a lack of trust and revealing underlying legitimacy problems (Merkelsen, 2011).

3.3 Management Logic

Management logic refers to the set of assumptions, values, and practices that guide how organisations manage their resources, make decisions, and pursue their goals. It posits that organisations should be managed in a rational and systematic way to maximise efficiency and productivity (Klikauer, 2013). By assuming that all organisations share more similarities than differences, it is believed that applying these generic business and management principles to organisational processes, including communication, can enhance the performance of all organisations. Communication can be seen as one of several management tools, and a way to convey meanings from one sender to a recipient. There is a direct link between the management logic and a linear transmission approach to communication that places greater value on information products such as media output and visibility. Communication work is viewed as a reactive, tactical task-based service delivery (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). Kvarnström and Pallas (2019) suggest that the adoption of this logic is often driven by the pursuit of legitimacy, rather than efficiency. Communication practitioners, due to the lack of a well-established professional logic, are particularly vulnerable to the influence of the managerial mindset, and may even be more receptive to it. Making communication professionals deliver what is expected of them by others rather than following their own framework. This can affect how communication is planned, executed, and measured (Simonsson & Heide, 2021).

When a client engages a PR agency, they expect the agency to provide expertise and proposed strategies to achieve their goals (Hinrichsen, 2005). However, we see the potential that these expectations are also shaped by the logic of managerialism, which emphasises the importance of demonstrating the impact of communication and measuring goal fulfilment. This pressure has become a central part of the client-agency relationship, as clients seek to ensure that their investment in PR campaigns and activities has a positive impact on the company's financial performance, profitability, and overall business objectives (DeVries, 2018).

PR agencies must therefore demonstrate the value of their activities to their clients, showing how they create business impact and justifying their fees. While setting goals is important for providing direction and demonstrating the value of communication, the emphasis on alignment and goals can sometimes be more about legitimising the profession than creating real value for the organisation. Goals are often designed using business terms and a management logic, which may not leave room for communication to have a strategic impact (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). In many organisations, there is a strong emphasis on accountability, with every individual expected to show how they contribute to the development and outcomes of the business. However, this can be challenging for communication professionals, as the impact of their work is primarily indirect, making it difficult to quantify (Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). This results in a preference for easily measurable outcomes, which may limit practitioners to communication efforts that can be quantified by tools like KPIs and other quantitative measures such as reach and engagement rates. This approach predominantly values communication in economic terms, as measured by metrics such as the number of visits, recipients, revenue, and profit. In some cases, the goal-setting process may overlook the unique strengths and capabilities of the communication function. This can lead to a lack of recognition for the value that communication work can bring to the organisation, beyond simply achieving predetermined goals (Simonsson & Heide, 2021).

It is our understanding that the logic of managerialism has played a significant role in shaping the expectations of clients when engaging with PR agencies. As a result, clients often enter into contractual relationships with preset expectations that can limit the potential for communication to have a strategic impact.

3.4 Communication Logic

According to Simonsson and Heide (2021), communication professionals must develop a communicative logic in order to be effective in their work. This involves establishing clear goals and objectives for communication activities, as well as a set of values and principles that guide decision-making and action. Thinking in terms of a communication logic requires a shift in perspective from communication as a one-way process of conveying information to communication as a relational and interactive process that is essential to the success of an organisation. This would entail a shift from the traditional quantitative approach to measuring and evaluating communication practices to a more qualitative and holistic view of communication. This shift recognises that communication is not just about numbers and metrics, but also involves the emotional and experiential aspects of communication (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). Relationships, emotions, and experiences of communication are difficult to quantify, often because these are long-term outcomes that may require more resources to measure, and are seldom quantifiable as a whole.

By embracing this perspective, PR professionals should prioritise the building and nurturing of relationships with stakeholders. This means engaging in genuine two-way dialogue, rather than solely focusing on achieving specific outcomes. By fostering a more collaborative and transparent approach to communication, PR professionals can establish trust and credibility with stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the organisation. It is important to strike a balance between setting goals that are relevant to the business and leaving enough space for communication to add strategic value. This can be achieved by involving communication professionals in the goal-setting process and ensuring that their expertise is taken into account (Simonsson & Heide, 2021).

4.Method

4.1 Scientific approach

Our study uses a qualitative approach to gather rich and detailed data through interviews, which allows us to explore the perspectives of PR consultants in-depth and gain insights into their experiences and opinions. Qualitative research methods are particularly useful for exploring complex, nuanced, and subjective phenomena, such as attitudes and experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

Our study is based on a social constructionist ontology and epistemology, which emphasises that reality and knowledge are not objective but are constructed through the interactions of people and the language they use to describe and interpret their experiences (Galanes & Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Specifically, we examine how selected PR consultants perceive the role of measurement in their work and in demonstrating the value of their efforts. By adopting a social constructionist perspective, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of how the value of PR is constructed and perceived by selected consultants, and how their perceptions are shaped by the broader social and cultural context in which they operate. Also, we aim to examine how the measurement and evaluation logic impacts the industry from a larger perspective.

A social constructionist perspective is also a way to address the limitations of traditional approaches to PR measurement and evaluation, which heavily focus on quantitative metrics such as media coverage and website traffic and fail to consider the broader social and cultural contexts in which PR efforts are received and interpreted. By using a social constructionist approach, we investigate how various factors affect how the value of PR is created and perceived, including cultural norms, power dynamics, and historical context.

4.2 Qualitative interviews

Given that the study is centred around the perspectives of PR consultants and is based on a social constructionist approach, the interview method is well-suited for data collection. Qualitative research interviews are effective for researchers to gain access to the unique perspectives and experiences of interviewees and thus develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, which means that we did not rely on a predetermined set of closed questions asked in a particular order, as explained by Kvale and Brinkmann (2014). Instead, we used a guide that included a list of specific topics to cover, while giving respondents the freedom to shape their answers in their own unique way. Throughout the interview, we guided the conversation based on their input and sometimes added new questions based on their responses. Although we generally followed the original order of questions, we remained flexible in tailoring the interview to suit the respondents' needs. This approach enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, generating additional insights and interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Ultimately, this flexible and adaptable method proved to be particularly effective in producing meaningful results.

Anonymity is maintained in the study to the advantage of the respondents, allowing them to share their experiences openly.

4.2.1 Sampling method

To identify potential respondents from a variety of PR agencies, we utilised the membership lists of PRECIS and SVENSK PR. PRECIS is Sweden's largest industry association for PR and communication, and in 2005, a portion of it was split to establish SVENSK PR. This new association catered to smaller PR agencies, which were not meeting PRECIS' requirement for a minimum annual turnover. By using the membership registers of both associations, we were able to locate potential respondents from a diverse range of agencies. To ensure their involvement with measurement and evaluation, we conducted a thorough review of the agencies' websites listed in the membership register. In cases where agencies did not explicitly state their approach to measurement and evaluation on their website, we conducted a targeted search using their agency name alongside relevant keywords such as "measurement" and "evaluation". Once we had identified potential agencies, we conducted a thorough review of their websites and LinkedIn pages to identify consultants with the necessary experience and expertise. After identifying suitable candidates, we reached out to them via email to provide a clear explanation of our study's focus and requirements. Our selection criteria were based on their connection to the topic. While they share some common traits that held theoretical significance, they also had distinguishing factors, such as agency affiliation, allowing us to obtain a more nuanced perspective. Furthermore, we sought to capture variation in the data by selecting practitioners of different genders and ages (Trots, 2010).

Adopting a strategic selection approach is both cost- and time-efficient. Opting for a smaller number of interviews is preferable as the focus is on quality rather than quantity. With too many interviews, it becomes challenging to gain a clear overview and understand differences and similarities in detail (Esaiasson et al., 2012). To ensure that we covered all aspects and achieved theoretical saturation, we included 10 PR consultants as our analysis unit and had additional respondents on standby if needed. However, we determined that theoretical saturation had been reached and did not require more respondents.

4.2.2 Data collection

The 10 interviews were conducted on the following occasions 21/4, 24/4, 27/4, 4/5 and 5/5 2023. As implied, some interviews were conducted on the same day. All interviews were conducted digitally due to geographic limitations. The interviews varied somewhat in length but were held for approximately 30 minutes. Each interview began with an introduction to the study's research field, the purpose of the interview, and the fact that the respondents would remain anonymous in the study. Respondents were also informed of their right to terminate the interview or withdraw their participation afterwards. As mentioned above, no predetermined questionnaire was followed. Furthermore, all interviews were held and transcribed in Swedish.

4.3 Method of analysis

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014), transcription serves as an initial step in the analytical process, as it inevitably helps you to become closely familiar with your data. Following the interviews, we transcribed the complete conversation using our audio recording. This allowed us to ensure a thorough transcription that captured any important nuances or details. Our reconstructed total transcription provided us with a comprehensive overview of the collected data and made it easier to navigate through the material. The process of transcribing the material not only allowed us to revisit it but also aided in our interpretation and analysis of its significance throughout the entire analytical process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). The transcripts also served as a basis for us to identify patterns in the material, which we then created categories of. These categories facilitated contextualisation and helped us shape the structure of the analysis, as the sorting process allowed us to gain an understanding of the material's components.

The thematic approach to analysis, often associated with methodologies that prioritise experience and expertise, was employed in our study. Silverman (2022) discusses thematic analysis as a valuable method for analysing qualitative data. By applying thematic analysis, we aimed to identify patterns, themes, and categories within the data. This approach allowed us to gain a holistic understanding of the dataset by identifying key recurring themes and patterns that cut across individual responses. Consequently, our analysis was able to capture the essential aspects of the data and provide valuable insights.

4.4 Reflection

During the course of our study, we were committed to upholding ethical and methodological standards to ensure the quality and credibility of our research. Our adherence to ethical principles was essential in presenting our findings in a responsible and meaningful way (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). We were aware of the interpretive nature of our study, and we maintained a consistent focus on the concept of validity throughout the research process. Validity refers to the extent to which our interpretations, findings, and conclusions accurately represent the phenomenon or data being studied (Silverman, 2022). We ensured that our findings were credible, trustworthy, and applicable to our research purpose by carefully selecting our sample, designing our questions, and analysing our data thematically.

As we conducted our interviews, we remained mindful of the potential for subjective interpretations that may deviate from our research objectives. To mitigate this risk, we carefully crafted our interview questions and analysed our data thematically to identify any patterns and themes. We also recognised the significance of intersubjectivity in the research process, where the interviewer and interviewee contribute to the construction of what is said and analysed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Furthermore, we gave significant consideration to ethical concerns such as anonymity, consent, and confidentiality for our participants. We ensured that our participants were fully informed of their rights, and we sought their explicit consent before conducting the interviews. We also handled the collected data with the utmost confidentiality and kept the participants' identities anonymous. This approach protected the participants' privacy while contributing to the objectivity and reliability of our findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

While thematic analysis is valuable for enhancing the credibility of the study through its transparent documentation of each analysis step, it is essential to acknowledge our role as researchers in setting the themes based on the empirical material. This recognition highlights the potential introduction of subjectivity into the analysis process (Silverman, 2022). We recognise that our own perspectives, experiences, and preconceptions may have influenced the identification and interpretation of themes. By acknowledging this potential bias, we sought to mitigate its impact on the analysis.

In conclusion, our qualitative study generated valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of PR consultants in Sweden working in PR agencies with external clients. Although it is important to acknowledge that our research may not be universally applicable to all consultants, agencies, and agency-client relationships, the underlying logics and mechanisms we have uncovered regarding how communication professionals approach their work are broadly applicable to the field as a whole. As such, our findings can provide valuable insights into how communication professionals currently need to think and offer opportunities for rethinking approaches that could benefit the broader profession. By recognising these patterns and potential areas for improvement, we hope to contribute to the continued growth and development of the communication field as a whole.

5.Analysis

5.1 The Studied Agencies

Our study includes PR consultants from different agencies in Sweden, each offering unique services and varying in size. While the consultants have different roles, they all possess a minimum of five years of experience in the field, with the exception of one consultant who is currently in their fifth year of practice. While the consultants varied in experience and years worked in the industry, all of the consultants interviewed described working with PR as a tool for pursuing a client's objectives. For example, an organisation could wish to pursue a better public image, and PR can be an effective tool for accomplishing that.

5.1.1 Results

When asked about the value of PR, the consultants all agreed that PR holds great value from a societal, organisational and personal perspective. The consultants also described PR as working with, so-called, soft values. Oftentimes, the goals are described as long-term, such as changes in public attitude, even though the project itself and the evaluation of it run for a short term. Although the value creation of PR was described to happen in the long term, and often being described as soft values, the methods of measurements were most often displayed in quantitative values. Furthermore, the findings from the interviews conducted showed how the consultants all used different methods of measurement. The results varied from not measuring at all, describing the knowledge of when a PR activity is successful as a "gut feeling", while some measured in strictly quantitative measurements, such as reach and PR value.

While the methods of measurement and evaluation differed between the consultants, they agreed that the methods used today do not display the value of PR in a fair way. Many described the short-term view on PR as constraining, as the value of a PR service is oftentimes not seen until years after the activity is started. The consultants also agreed that the quantitative measurements commonly employed are limiting as they fail to encompass the complete value of PR. Additionally, the consultants voiced a strong desire for the establishment of an industry standard for measuring PR. Such a standard would not only enhance the legitimacy of the PR industry but also enable the setting of clear expectations and standards with clients, as well as facilitate meaningful comparisons of results across the industry. Presently, there appears to be significant variation among consultants regarding measurement approaches. For instance, when consultants discussed the utilisation of PR value, there was inconsistency in the multiplication factor used for the calculation. Some consultants multiplied it by 2.5, while others opted for 3 or even 4.

5.2 Constraints

All the PR consultants describe that how they measure and evaluate their work is largely dependent on the client. When clients engage with a PR agency, they typically have specific objectives in mind they want to achieve through the relationship. In addition to these objectives, many clients also have clear expectations about how their results will be measured and evaluated. As service-requesting clients may not have a PR or communication background, their understanding of what makes a PR effort successful differs from that of a professional. Simonsson and Heide (2021) argue that due to the absence of a well-established professional framework in the field of communication, practitioners are often vulnerable to prioritising meeting the expectations of others rather than adhering to their own approach. This can be particularly problematic when the client's perception of a successful PR activity or campaign differs from that of the practitioners, as it can potentially lead to unwanted influence on the planning, execution, and evaluation of the project.

During consultations with clients to establish their goals, the consultants have observed a range of different approaches. Some clients have vague or minimal requirements, with little interest in measurement and evaluation. Others have very specific targets that they want to measure and evaluate after a campaign's execution. This significant variability in client needs can have a direct impact on the recommendations provided by the consultants.

> If we didn't have to worry about achieving goals and meeting these KPIs, I think we would focus much more on softer things. It would be something that is more closely related to the brand, that plays and works with the brand and thus would be more genuine communication, but it would yield poorer short-term results. (Consultant 3)

Consultant 3 highlights a common challenge faced by consultants, in which clients apply pressure to meet specific measurement metrics, thereby influencing the consultants' focus point in their work. This, in turn, restricts the consultants' ability to provide comprehensive recommendations. Consultant 3 acknowledges that in the absence of rigid metrics, they could propose alternative strategies to certain clients that would greatly benefit the brand in the long term, particularly from a PR perspective. The primary objective of PR work, as defined by Morris and Goldsworthy (2017), should be the cultivation of stronger and more meaningful relationships with stakeholders. The consultant underscores the prevailing preference to prioritise generating extensive press coverage and how that becomes restricting. Consultant 3 suggests that adopting a communication approach that truly embodies the brand's values, rather than relying solely on traditional press coverage-focused efforts that typically begin with a press release, would lead to more genuine outcomes and foster long-term relationships with stakeholders. Nevertheless, they also acknowledge the potential downside of prioritising these softer, brand-centric approaches, as they may yield poorer short-term results in terms of metrics and immediate impact. This highlights the tension between immediate goals and long-term brand building.

5.2.1 Lack of Understanding

> It is not just the number of press clippings that matters, but rather the quality of the coverage. One good press clipping can be more valuable than four mediocre ones. Therefore, it primarily depends on the client's maturity in PR. (Consultant 8)

Several consultants point out that the lack of understanding among clients about the true nature of PR is one of the root causes of the overemphasis on quantitative values when looking to measure and evaluate PR efforts. Consultant 8 explains that the specific measurement and evaluation requests from clients vary based on their level of familiarity and comprehension in the field of PR. It has been observed by the consultants that numerous clients, including communication and marketing managers, lack the essential background and knowledge required to fully grasp PR. As a result, this knowledge gap often leads them to question the expertise of PR practitioners. Consequently, clients prioritise the quantity of coverage over the quality of coverage, as they do not fully comprehend what constitutes effective PR work. Unfortunately, this often results in overlooking the emotional and experiential aspects of communication, which may be the most crucial elements of PR. As explained by Simonsson and Heide (2021), these elements are challenging to quantify, and the consultants recognise that clients may not fully appreciate their significance for that reason. As a result, consultants may focus too heavily on achieving measurable results, such as media mentions, at the expense of fostering meaningful relationships and creating impactful experiences for stakeholders.

5.2.2 Client Expectations

It is apparent that clients' perception of communication work is strongly shaped by a management-driven mindset, emphasising the need to demonstrate a direct impact on business outcomes. Within this context, communication is viewed as a management tool for businesses to convey meaningful messages to their intended recipients (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). In an effort to validate the allocation of resources to communication activities, clients seek tangible results that contribute to specific business objectives, including revenue generation. As a result, clients tend to prioritise communication strategies and tactics that can be easily measured and directly tied to financial or operational outcomes. During discussions with the consultants, it became evident that many clients exhibit a preference for activities that yield high press coverage and reach. This inclination aligns with the management logic's desire for visible and quantifiable outcomes. The perception is that extensive media coverage will generate increased brand visibility and potentially drive customer engagement or sales. However, it is important to note that while high press coverage can provide immediate visibility, it may not always align with the broader strategic goals of effective communication. Building long-term relationships, enhancing reputation, and engaging with stakeholders are crucial aspects that should not be overlooked in favour of seeking media attention.

> Internationally, it may be more common to pay based on results, such as payment per published article or similar metrics. (Consultant 8)

Consultant 8 describes how consultants internationally get paid based on the results achieved. While hourly payment remains the standard in Sweden, it is possible that this approach could still have an impact on the industry. This is especially true for Swedish agencies working with international clients, as they may be subject to different payment standards and expectations. Consequently, these standards could potentially influence the demands and expectations of the contractual relationship between the agency and the client. It becomes evident that in the absence of a well-defined professional logic, the adoption of management logic becomes a convenient approach to adapt to the business climate and secure a stronger position. As highlighted by Kvarnström and Pallas (2019), the adoption of management logic is frequently driven by the pursuit of legitimacy within the professional sphere. Our study found that consultants overwhelmingly rely on "outputs" as the primary measurement tool, despite the fact that this approach has been criticised in scholarly literature for its inadequacy in measuring the impact of publicity (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). Although consultants recognise its limitations, they continue to use this method due to a lack of alternative measurement tools and client expectations. What is concerning is that by focusing solely on meeting specific metrics and objectives, consultants fail to fully demonstrate the overall impact of their work.

During the interviews, another aspect that emerged was the lack of knowledge that international clients have about the Swedish media landscape when seeking to work with Swedish agencies. Several of the agencies we interviewed have extensive experience working with international clients who require assistance with their PR efforts specifically in the Swedish market. It was raised that compared to other countries, Sweden has a limited number of media outlets available to work with, and it is projected that the number will decrease even further in the coming years. Hence, relying solely on counting clips or the number of publications may not provide an accurate representation of success in the Swedish context. It was also noted that the fast-paced media landscape, filled with an overflow of information, makes it challenging to rely solely on reach metrics. While it may be easy to access data on page visitors, constantly updating pages with new articles and content can make it difficult to determine how many visitors actually saw a specific article where the client was mentioned. As the media landscape continues to evolve, this challenge becomes even greater. Making quantifiable measurements become even more arbitrary when it comes to measuring the impact of PR. As noted by Solis and Breakenridge (2009), this situation creates two challenges. First, organisations struggle to effectively connect with their stakeholders. Second, it places higher expectations on PR practitioners. To address these challenges, practitioners must take a proactive approach and carefully evaluate their own roles in ensuring effective communication that makes a meaningful impact.

5.2.3 Lack of Understanding & Lack of Resources

> We should not forget that those on the client side need to show their bosses why they want a higher budget for the communication team next year. So, they also need to be able to show something. And then numbers and quantitative values become very easy, but they can also very easily be taken out of context. (Consultant 6)

A major consequence of this poor understanding of PR is that it becomes harder to justify the PR expense. Many of the practitioners mentioned that internally, a common problem for PR clients is that they struggle to justify the PR expense in a sufficiently concrete way for people in management who are very accustomed to steering with clear numbers and such. As Consultant 6 explains, the most straightforward method of presenting information to management is by utilising numerical data. However, it is important to recognise that numbers can be easily misinterpreted or taken out of context. In the management logic, we see dominating most organisations today, the impact of communication and PR work does not translate well to the common business language. This is because the impact of communication and PR work is primarily indirect, so it becomes difficult to quantify (Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). As a consequence in many organisations, communication managers, particularly those without a representative in the management group who can influence budgeting, face cost limitations. Since communication is not valued as an important function. Many communication practitioners in organisations are left to often focus more on operational tasks than on strategic planning, as they also struggle to demonstrate the value of their work (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). This, in turn, can lead to there being allocated insufficient budgets to work with a PR agency. The lack of resources not only makes it difficult to engage in long-term evaluation but also reduces the capacity to measure the real impact of PR activities.

> What we would like to do is to start from zero, beginning with an examination of the current state of the brand and people's attitudes towards it. We would also consider specific attitudes and how we can influence them. Only after this initial analysis, would we conduct measurements to determine whether we have achieved our goals. This information is valuable not only for evaluating the campaign's success but also for other purposes. Regrettably, many companies are unwilling to invest the necessary resources for this type of work. (Consultant 1)

Consultant 1 reveals their aspirations for their PR practice, expressing a desire to implement certain strategies or approaches that are currently hindered by limitations in budget and knowledge. Often, neither the agency nor the client wants to pay for a survey to determine where consumers stand in their perception of the brand and then follow up afterwards to see what progress has been made. Conducting such surveys can be very expensive, making it costly to evaluate the actual results. As a result, the significance of softer values can often be overlooked, causing the true impact of PR to be missed. As previously mentioned, PR work typically involves long-term efforts that focus on key attitude variables, such as credibility, relationships, reputation, and trust (Michaelson & Stacks, 2017). This creates a challenging situation for PR professionals who struggle to demonstrate the full value of their work, resulting in a cycle where they are unable to secure a larger budget and this in turn only makes it harder for them to showcase their worth since demonstrating qualitative softer values today is costly. Unfortunately, the focus on easily measurable outputs and outcomes often restricts PR practitioners to communication efforts that can be quantified by tools like KPIs, reach, and engagement rates, as described by Simonsson and Heide (2021). While these methods are more cost-effective and aligned with the business logic of organisations, Simonsson and Heide (2021) recognise that they can overlook the unique strengths and capabilities of the communication function. This narrow approach can lead to a lack of recognition of the true value of PR and limit its ability to make a meaningful impact, which in turn leads to smaller budgets to work with.

5.3 Opportunities

While measurement methods are often seen as restrictive, it is worth noting that all consultants were able to articulate positive aspects of implementing measurement in their practice. In fact, many consultants regarded it as an essential component of their work. Measuring PR can serve as a valuable tool for substantiating the immense worth it brings to an organisation. The multifaceted value of PR holds the potential to impact an organisation's overall success. Unlike advertising, which primarily focuses on paid promotion, the value of PR manifests in earned outcomes, such as shifts in public attitudes towards an organisation or changes in public opinion on political matters. This distinction is why Likely and Watson (2013) emphasise the high effectiveness of PR.

> PR can be extremely valuable. It can change a law that impacts the existence of your company. It can make you reach new heights and build the company, increasing sales enormously. It can change a brand's position from something negative in a crisis situation to becoming positive. So PR holds tremendous value. (Consultant 9)

As Consultant 9 describes, PR holds tremendous value. However, this value is often realised in the long term and is not easily quantifiable. As described by Falkheimer and Heide (2022), the impact of communication work is primarily indirect. Nonetheless, there are other dimensions of PR efforts that can be measured and evaluated more easily, which also prove to serve a purpose. The interviews conducted in this study shed light on the importance of being able to measure PR practices even when the full value is not captured. The ability to demonstrate the value of their work proves to be an important asset for agencies, both from a client perspective and an internal one. As previously mentioned, the interviews indicated a tendency to work with quantitative measurements over qualitative ones. This preference may be attributed partly to a deliberate choice by the agencies and partly to an industry standard, where agencies aim to provide customers with tangible results easily aligned with their business plans. Our study highlights that PR consultants align themselves with a management logic to meet customer expectations, thus they do not fully capture the comprehensive value of PR efforts. However, it is worth noting that when consultants prioritise meeting customer expectations by presenting the desired metrics, clients tend to be satisfied, as this aligns with their perception of successful PR. It is also worth noting that significant advancements have been made in the development of software programs in recent years, enabling cost- and time-efficient measurement of many of the desired values. Several consultants specifically mentioned utilising Retriever for media monitoring. Achieving an efficient presentation of the desired values is advantageous for both consultants and the client-agency relationship.

5.3.1 The Value of Evaluation and Measurement

When customers engage in the services of a PR agency, they have various motivations behind their decision. As described by Larsson (2005b), PR encompasses a wide range of objectives, including altering public perceptions of the brand, launching new products, or influencing public opinion on political matters. In all cases, clients hold certain expectations that the agency will effectively achieve the intended goals and objectives of the PR activities. The interviews reveal that PR evaluation and measurement often revolve around providing customers with tangible evidence of value for their investment and a solid return on their financial commitments. Customers frequently anticipate measurable results for the financial resources they allocate to PR services. Our study demonstrates that showcasing the value of PR aids in setting realistic expectations with clients and reinforces the agency's accountability for the results they deliver.

> There is a reason and a purpose as to why one wants to communicate a certain thing or why one wants to commit to a certain plan. So there is always a business perspective in that it is connected to their organisational goals. (...) How is the customer getting value for their money? They have budgets to consider and want to know that they prioritise the correct things. (Consultant 9)

Consultant 9 clarifies that when clients engage in a PR service, it is natural for the work conducted to align with the client's organisation's business goals. Hence, financial aspects tend to take centre stage and receive significant attention. As described by Simonsson and Heide (2021), it is common for organisations in today's business landscape to measure and evaluate their goals through a management logic, emphasising accountability in business terms. This management logic also influences how PR agencies measure communication results, often placing greater emphasis on demonstrating the value of PR through quantitative measurements. The pressure to showcase the value of PR and its impact on the client's performance is a significant aspect of managerial logic. As organisations apply a managerial approach to their measurement practices, PR agencies present their value in quantitative terms to facilitate easier interpretation for clients.

> It all depends on what the client wants, how they want us to measure and how much time they want us to spend on doing it. We would like to spend quite some time on it, but there are different interests there. (Consultant 1)

While evaluating PR activities thoroughly may require years, many organisations desire to showcase some value of their PR efforts at earlier stages. As mentioned by Consultant 1, some consultants prefer to allocate more time for evaluation, but client interests may not align with this timeline. PR agencies are constantly tasked with justifying their fees to clients and demonstrating the value of their services. By quantitatively demonstrating the value of PR, agencies can validate their budgets and help clients comprehend the impact their investment is making on their business. Since quantitative measurements are often more easily understood by clients and can capture value in a shorter-term perspective, especially when examining outputs. The managerial logic prioritises measurable results, and by adhering to this logic and presenting quantitative measurements as evidence of their work, PR agencies can align themselves with customers' expectations, providing straightforward and tangible measurements of specific activities that deliver value for their investment, although with a short-term focus. This aligns with the description provided by Simonsson and Heide (2021) regarding why communication professionals find it easier to align themselves with this logic.

> We measure to be able to prove to the client that the money spent is worth it. The client wants to know that they are getting a good return on investment. (...) We also want to raise the PR industry and prove to ourselves that our services are as valuable as the services of an accountant. (Consultant 8)

As put by Consultant 8, providing quantitative results in PR offers agencies an opportunity to offer customers simple and specific values. The opportunity with this, as described, is to raise trust in the PR industry. Metrics that are easier to measure, such as KPIs are more available for clients to comprehend, as they are more aligned with the same management logic that can be found in many of the client's organisations. This alignment with familiar management concepts and practices fosters a greater sense of confidence and transparency in the PR industry. Moreover, these metrics are often more cost-effective, in part due to their focus on short-term perspectives and the increasing availability of software programs that automate monitoring processes, reducing the time and effort required to generate valuable insights for clients. Consequently, showcasing these measurable results becomes significantly advantageous for PR consultants compared to providing no evidence of their efforts.

5.3.2 Internal Benefits of Measurements and Evaluation

> It is also about evaluating and seeing that the communication inputs we do work, and also learning from the communication we've done to be able to optimise it. That is something we do constantly. (Consultant 5)

As Consultant 5 highlights, measuring and evaluating PR practices can bring significant internal benefits to the agency too. Many of the interviewed consultants described how they also measure PR activities for their own benefit, ensuring the correct packaging and enabling future reviews. When PR agencies track and measure their results using quantitative metrics, they can assess their own performance and identify areas for improvement. This enables agencies to refine their strategies, tactics, and campaign optimisation for even better results. As it helps agencies understand the effectiveness of various campaigns and tactics, enabling them to allocate resources more effectively. This aids agencies in making informed decisions about where to focus their efforts and invest their resources. Thus agencies can continually enhance their services and deliver improved results to their clients.

5.4 Working Around It

Although constrained by the managerial logic and a lack of understanding of PR, many of the consultants are actively working to find ways to navigate these obstacles and leverage opportunities to their advantage. The consultants are convinced of the important value that PR can bring, and it is their mission to perform their jobs in a way that reflects this commitment. During the interviews, multiple consultants discussed how they addressed the challenge of utilising their professional expertise and showcasing the true value of PR. The study identified a pattern where consultants aim to initiate a dialogue with clients about goal-setting and how to measure and evaluate performance.

> It must be a part of every project that everyone must start with. Have a dialogue about measurement, otherwise, you will fail. What is success in this project? (Consultant 6)

> I think that one still tries to push the client towards measuring in a good way and actually measuring the attitudes of the target audience. But when one does not succeed with that, which one will not always do, try to still be very clear about what is being measured and try to have a discussion with the client about it from the beginning. (Consultant 1)

The identified pattern is consistent with the communication logic, which highlights the significance of establishing trust and engaging in two-way dialogues to foster effective communication practices. Notably, involving communication professionals in the goal-setting process and taking their expertise into account can facilitate this process (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). Both Consultant 6 and Consultant 1 recognise the importance of engaging in dialogue as the initial step when planning a project with a client. While several consultants emphasise the crucial role of engaging in a dialogue with clients about goal-setting and measurement strategies, they also acknowledge the difficulty in achieving this. Despite being an ideal starting point for every project, many clients are not always receptive to these discussions due to various reasons such as lack of understanding or budget and time constraints. As Consultant 1 mentions, the reality is that it can be challenging to get the client to sit down and engage in this type of dialogue. Therefore, the consultants interviewed stressed the need for clear communication and transparency regarding measurement strategies, even when initiating a dialogue is not feasible. During the interviews, Consultant 5 highlighted an example of achieving transparency in a campaign evaluation report. This involved the agency clearly explaining the methodology employed to calculate reach and PR value. By setting clear expectations and defining what is being measured, consultants can still strive to achieve effective communication practices even in challenging circumstances.

> We also work creatively and proactively to get support for implementing our own ideas and projects that we propose, and in order to do that, we must put the bread and butter on the table, and the bread and butter is largely that we can show good results in smaller PR efforts. (Consultant 5)

Another recurring pattern identified in the study was the importance of building trust. Similar to how PR involves building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, PR agencies need to prioritise building strong relationships with their clients. As mentioned by Consultant 5, building trust can pave the way for gaining support for implementing their own strategies. However, before reaching this point, the PR agency needs to demonstrate its capabilities and prove its worth to the client. This is often achieved by showcasing quantifiable metrics that align with the client's business goals often aligned with showcasing some kind of return on investment, as stated by the consultant when referring to "the bread and butter." Once this step is accomplished, and trust is earned, the client may be more willing to listen to the PR professionals' expertise and insights. In line with the communication logic, the fostering of a collaborative approach that takes into account the expertise of communication professionals is crucial for using communication as a tool that contributes to the long-term success of an organisation. To foster such an approach, building relationships based on trust is essential (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). By building trust, communication professionals can work collaboratively with other stakeholders in the organisation to achieve shared goals. This collaborative approach is key to ensuring that communication is not seen as a separate entity but as an integral part of the organisation's overall strategy. By working together, communication professionals and other stakeholders can ensure that communication efforts are aligned with the organisation's goals and contribute to its success. The identified pattern suggests that professionals may need to initially focus on demonstrating quantifiable measurements, before shifting their focus towards more qualitative values and presenting strategies that align with the communicative logic approach. This approach can help in proving the effectiveness of PR through measurable outcomes, thereby gaining the trust and support of clients and stakeholders. In essence, building trust and demonstrating the business value of PR can enable professionals to take a more strategic and collaborative approach to their communication practices.

5.5 Legitimacy

The consultants confirmed that there are widespread legitimacy issues in the PR industry, which has been previously discussed in research, such as Merkelsen's (2011) work on legitimacy issues in the communication and PR profession. Our study further revealed that these legitimacy issues not only affect agencies' practices and individual consultants' abilities to perform their jobs but there are also internal legitimacy issues within agencies themselves. It is worth noting that the communication or marketing department within the client's organisation also faces legitimacy issues, as communication practices do in general. These issues can impact the relationship between the client and the agency, and affect expectations. For example, clients expect PR consultants to demonstrate a quick return on investment and be accountable for their actions, just as they are expected to be accountable within their own organisations. As pointed out by Suchman (1995), legitimacy is crucial for the sustainability of an organisation as stakeholders are less likely to provide resources to organisations that do not appear meaningful to them. This creates additional pressure on PR consultants, making it more challenging for them to focus on building and maintaining softer values when the primary focus is on delivering quick results.

5.5.1 The Practicioners’ Legitimacy

From the interviews, it became evident that all respondents possess an awareness of the difficulties and resistance that exist in the PR profession. As mentioned before, the PR industry is tarnished with a bad reputation, leading clients and the public alike to question its relevance and effectiveness. This has shed light on significant legitimacy issues within the industry (Merkelsen, 2011). All the consultants reported experiencing a level of scrutiny regarding the value they bring to an organisation, while also witnessing that many clients have little knowledge about what PR actually is. The factors mentioned above are indicative of legitimacy issues within the PR profession. Legitimacy for a profession is shaped by a socially constructed perception, which is determined by whether the actions of an organisation are viewed by relevant stakeholders as consistent with shared norms and values (Suchman, 1995). The shared norms and values within the context of PR practice are heavily influenced by a management logic that prioritises a linear transmission approach to communication, which places greater value on information products such as media output and visibility. According to Kvarnström and Pallas (2019), the adoption of this logic is often driven by the pursuit of legitimacy, rather than efficiency.

While adopting PR practices that align with the general business and management practices prevalent in most organisations today may increase the profession's legitimacy in the short term, it is important to note that this approach will not lead to long-term legitimacy. While such practices align more closely with norms of how business is conducted and use a language and value system that is familiar in economic terms, they sacrifice the unique aspects of PR work that distinguish it from other business functions. Furthermore, the pursuit of short-term legitimacy will undermine the long-term goals and sustainability of the profession. Our interviews have revealed that PR consultants, lacking a well-established professional logic, are particularly vulnerable to the influence of the managerial mindset and may find themselves delivering what is expected of them rather than following their own framework. This phenomenon, as supported by Simonsson and Heide's (2021) research, further underscores the impact of this dynamic on communication practice. This explains why consultants, despite expressing scepticism towards the focus on quantitative measures, still rely heavily on them when demonstrating success to clients. This results in a situation where the softer values, which form a significant part of PR work, are overlooked in favour of measuring only the outcomes that can be quantified. As a result, the expertise of PR practitioners is not fully appreciated, and the true impact of their work is not accurately captured. Thus achieving legitimacy for the PR profession remains a complex and ongoing journey.

5.5.2 The Industry's Internal Legitimacy

During discussions with practitioners about legitimacy and trust for the industry, it became clear that the PR industry faces internal legitimacy issues as well. These issues arise as a consequence of the industry's overall legitimacy issues and the adoption of a managerial approach to measuring success. In this approach, success is often equated with quantifiable results and big numbers, leading to competition among agencies to present the most impressive results. This can create an atmosphere of arbitrariness and a lack of trust among practitioners, further eroding the industry's reputation.

> I think that the industry is very much driven by the desire to hype things up and sugarcoat them, often choosing what may be a bit wrong but looks better. (Consultant 5)

> I think internally it feels like a bit of a playhouse. That people just exaggerate, there are many who blow up numbers. (Consultant 3)

As Consultant 1 and Consultant 3 demonstrates, there is a lack of trust regarding other consultants' measuring and evaluation practices. There is currently no consensus on how the success and impact of PR should be measured, resulting in each agency deciding what and how to measure by themselves. While many aspects have been present in PR history and continue to be measured, the methods for calculating for example reach and PR value can vary greatly, resulting in unreliable results. Since agencies often compete with each other in various aspects of communication, they may use their achievements in campaigns as part of their submissions. Media coverage is often included in these submissions. Potential clients and existing ones may look at the impressive numbers achieved by other agencies and expect similar results for themselves. Which in turn can create added pressure on PR consultants to deliver big numbers.

> When we competed with this campaign and won some awards, we wrote about our achievements, including media coverage and surveys. We then saw another agency that has done something similar with a competitor, claiming to have achieved twice as much. And then you don't really know, it feels like they have counted in a different way. (Consultant 3)

> If you start backtracking the entire result and how it was calculated, there may be errors in both PR value, ad value, and reach figures. (Consultant 5)

As highlighted by both Consultant 3 and Consultant 5, there are different ways of measuring these figures, which can create problems. Many of the consultants highlighted the issue of arbitrariness in calculating PR value, noting that numerous agencies often approach it in different ways, leading to inconsistencies. When measuring PR value, there is often a multiplication factor involved, where a reach figure is multiplied by a value that represents ad value. Some agencies use a factor of 2.5 while others use 2.7, 3 or even 4. Moreover, different standards for measuring ad value and reach figures can lead to unreliable results. Large news media outlets have a high flow of news information, which can make it difficult to determine how long a specific news item remains relevant or how long readers stay engaged. The consultants we spoke to conveyed that the process of measuring PR activities is marked by a high degree of subjectivity and that the industry is often motivated by a desire to present results in a positive light, even if it means sacrificing accuracy. The lack of trust and questioning of each other's practices suggests that there are internal legitimacy issues prevalent in the PR industry. This is because the absence of trust is commonly regarded as a symptom of legitimacy concerns (Merkelsen, 2011). These issues are influenced by the context in which agencies operate, which is often driven by a management logic that prioritises quantifiable results. This focus on big numbers as a measure of success can ultimately damage the industry's reputation. The lack of a common framework and standards for measurement highlights a need for the industry to work towards greater standardisation and transparency to ensure greater legitimacy within the industry.

5.6 The Way Ahead

> We are the biggest tools. And it's important that we sit down and have this dialogue. (Consultant 6)

It is evident that the consultants share a common desire for enhancing the demonstration of the value and impact of PR. While they may not necessarily seek improvements in the measurement and evaluation tools themselves, they aim to foster a better understanding of PR and its crucial role in achieving business success. As Consultant 6 puts it, PR consultants have a lot of responsibilities themselves to improve the conditions. The sought-after goal is the legitimacy of the PR profession. With greater legitimacy, PR agencies' actions would be perceived as more meaningful and trustworthy, thus prompting client organisations to provide more resources (Suchman, 1995). This, in turn, would assist practitioners in demonstrating the value of their work more effectively, especially since it can be time-consuming and costly to illustrate qualitative aspects, such as attitudinal change. Moreover, with increased trust in their expertise, practitioners would have more room to evaluate long-term objectives, which are often integral to PR initiatives.

As seen, the management logic that dominates in many organisations has a significant impact on PR practices, leading to major issues. Many clients expect PR teams to demonstrate accountability and a quick return on investment. Internal pressure to demonstrate accountability and a rapid return on investment is also commonly felt by clients' communication teams. However, the methods used to measure PR effectiveness often capture only a fraction of its value, overlooking critical aspects. As a result, the unique expertise of PR practitioners is often lost in translation to a managerial perspective, which can hinder the profession from receiving the higher status it deserves. This is because the challenges in demonstrating the true worth of PR can make it difficult for practitioners to establish credibility with stakeholders and prove their value to clients.

When analysing the suggestions put forth by many of the consultants, a balanced approach between a business and a communication logic was proposed, rather than an either-or scenario. In fact, there was a consensus that placing a greater emphasis on the communicative logic may be the way forward.

> Try to find a golden mean between this quantitative data-driven way of measurement in combination with this qualitative one. For one should not exclude the other. I believe there is no perfect value, but rather that one explores both of these aspects, with perhaps a slightly greater emphasis on the qualitative. After all, it is the earned perspective that matters; it is about moving in contexts where the target groups are active. And this is easily forgotten when focusing solely on numbers. (Consultant 6)

As recommended by Consultant 6, it is important to recognise the value of both quantitative and qualitative measurements, although there should be a greater concentration on the qualitative aspects. While quantitative measurement can still be a valuable tool, relying solely on it to demonstrate the impact of PR is misguided, as it cannot fully capture the qualitative aspects. “Thinking” PR is focusing on softer values to cultivate relationships and trust, it is about earning space with the target group. The consultants believe that this approach is more effective than relying solely on purchased space, as it allows PR professionals to earn the attention and trust of their target audience, particularly in an information-saturated environment like today. This aligns with the organisational benefits described by Likely and Watson (2013), emphasising the earned value that PR can deliver. The consultants are clear about the importance of PR and what it can achieve, but they also acknowledge that there are significant issues with a general understanding of its value. During our analysis, we discovered that initiating a dialogue on the definition of success at the onset of each project with a client was a recurrent recommendation. By fostering a more collaborative and transparent approach to communication, PR professionals can establish trust and credibility with stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the organisation (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). However, it proved challenging to get all clients to engage in this type of conversation.

Another area of improvement is the establishment of a common framework to measure PR efforts. Despite being a topic of discussion in the PR literature for years and various attempts to implement it, such as the Barcelona Principles, there has been little success in this regard.
The profession currently faces internal legitimacy issues due to the "wild west" climate of measuring, as one consultant put it. Transparency would be a key tool in establishing such a framework, which would promote consistency and enable PR professionals to demonstrate the true value of their work. If more agencies worked together in a unified manner, it could become a stronger norm that could counterbalance the managerial approach to PR work to some degree. This, in turn, would allow practitioners to work more based on their expertise, and over time, more people would understand the value of this approach.

6.Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis results reveal a pressing need for a deeper comprehension of the value of PR. In response to the first research question (*"How do the PR consultants perceive the current measurement and evaluation methods in demonstrating the value generated by PR activities?"*), the consultants acknowledge that PR contributes immense value, yet they rely on tools that fail to fully capture this value, fully aware of and sometimes frustrated by their limitations. Scholarly literature, such as the work of Simonsson and Heide (2021), has also criticised the reliance on outputs for its inability to adequately measure the impact of publicity. Such as capturing the qualitative aspects or the overall influence of the publicity in terms of changing perceptions, shifting attitudes, or driving desired actions. Despite being aware of this and recognising these shortcomings, consultants persist in using these methods due to a lack of viable alternative measurement tools and client expectations. This situation is largely a consequence of the prevailing management logic that dominates most organisations and society today, coupled with what Simonsson and Heide (2021) underscore as the absence of a distinct professional logic specific to communication. In order for PR agencies to be perceived as meaningful and trustworthy, they conform to the same language and practices used within their clients' organisations, a phenomenon referred to by Kvarnström and Pallas (2019) as a quest for legitimacy. Consequently, the consultants are well aware that the complete value generated by PR is repeatedly lost in translation. This situation has not only presented the challenge of showcasing the value to clients and management but has also fueled scepticism among PR consultants regarding each other's methodologies and practices. As they are aware of the inherent limitations in the calculation of these measurements, trust in the presented numbers has diminished. Consultants have developed a sense of scepticism towards other agencies that may engage in "sugar coating" or "hyping up" their results. However, from the client's perspective, these figures become desirable and are perceived as attainable, further increasing the pressure on the consultants to deliver such results.

Despite their awareness of the limitations, the consultants persist in utilising arbitrary measurement and evaluation methods. This raises the second research question (*"How does the current measurement and evaluation logic impact their work? Do they view it as an opportunity or constraint?"*) of how it affects them in their work. The answer is that the current measurement and evaluation logic significantly influences their work and has a direct impact on how they carry out their responsibilities as consultants. On one hand, PR practitioners feel restricted in their ability to guide clients with their professional expertise, and on the other hand, they have adapted to the prevailing management logic and see it as an opportunity to provide tangible evidence of their value to clients. There is undoubtedly a tension between short-term objectives and long-term communication goals. While measuring and evaluating performance has become crucial for showcasing value, the consultants affirmed that the metrics monitored do not always align with the values they aim to achieve. This misalignment guides their practice and challenges their professional expertise. As failing to adhere to the managerial logic would make it increasingly difficult to secure income and could result in client dissatisfaction, particularly among those who prioritise immediate returns. This could potentially even lead to contract termination, highlighting how client expectations often take priority over the professional expertise of PR consultants.

We have observed that many consultants have attempted to find ways to circumvent this issue, as they are deeply committed to their work and its potential impact. While some clients may already appreciate the value of PR and therefore place a great deal of trust in the consultants' expertise before entering into a relationship with an agency, not all clients share this perspective. The main challenge facing the profession is the issue of legitimacy. In legitimacy theory, Suchman (1995) emphasises the importance of organisations acquiring legitimacy to establish themselves as meaningful and trustworthy entities. Our analysis shows that by adhering to the management logic, practitioners may achieve short-term legitimacy. However, for the profession to achieve sustainable legitimacy, this approach will not be enough, as the language and logic of management do not fully capture the important value PR can offer. To truly showcase the impact of communication efforts and foster trust, it is crucial to transition towards measuring value creation instead of merely tracking metrics such as reach and exposure. For this reason, consultants must prioritise their professional expertise.

The adoption of a communication logic has the potential to be a game-changer for the PR profession by establishing sustainable legitimacy. As Simonsson and Heide (2021) put it, this shift would allow communication to be viewed not only as an output-centric function but as a strategic function with significant value for the organisation's business. By leveraging their expertise, PR consultants can fully utilise the potential of PR work. To foster this approach sustainably, clients and consultants must engage in a dialogue to define expectations and what success means. This suggestion is reinforced by the insights put forth by the consultants and supported by the research conducted by Simmonson and Heide (2021). Building strong relationships with clients allows professionals to work collaboratively and achieve shared goals. This approach would integrate communication and PR work as an essential part of the organisation's overall strategy, ensuring that the agencies keep their business. PR practices are often carried out in the context of organisations and businesses, but it is important to note that the PR agencies themselves are also organisations and businesses. As such, they must balance their own business objectives with those of their clients.

As concluded by the consultants it is not an either-or scenario with working with quantitative or qualitative values. It is to find a balance that would be the most beneficial for all parties involved. This balance is crucial for fostering credibility and trust among stakeholders. It allows PR consultants to maintain their professional expertise while effectively meeting the needs of their clients. Ultimately, striking a balance between these two professional logics would be mutually advantageous for both the consultants and their clients.

6.1 Suggestions for Future Research

The PR industry has long struggled to demonstrate the value of its work in a way that is sufficient and fair. However, this challenge is not unique to PR alone; many professions within the communication industry face similar difficulties. Proving the value of communication work is a common issue in organisations today. To better understand this problem, conducting more interviews and considering a wider range of perspectives would be beneficial. Specifically, future research could investigate in-house communication professionals and explore the potential for mutual learning between them and PR consultants. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing, future research can facilitate a more effective and productive relationship between these two groups, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of communication strategies and practices.

Future research should also consider adopting a communication logic approach, as this perspective has thus far not been extensively explored in the field. This approach offers a unique perspective that focuses on the fundamental principles and processes of communication within professional contexts. By adopting a communication logic approach, researchers can explore how communication practices, strategies, and norms influence the credibility, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of communication professions.

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Appendix

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1. Intervjuguide

Introduktion:

- Välkomnande
- Syfte
- Etiska förhållningssätt
- Besvara eventuella frågor

Uppvärmningsfrågor:

- Kan du berätta om din roll och vad den innebär?
- Hur länge har du arbetat inom PR-branschen?

Tema 1: Mätning

- Hur vet du hur framgångsrik en PR kampanj/aktivitet är?
    - Kan du ge ett exempel på ett arbete ni gjort, och hur utvärderade ni det?
    - Och om ni inte hade behövt utvärdera det på det här sättet, hade du gjort något annorlunda?
- Av vilka anledningar väljer ni att mäta resultatet av och utvärdera PR-aktiviteter?

Tema 1: Utfyllnadsfrågor

- Anser du att det är viktigt att mäta effekten av PR-insatser?
    - Varför eller varför inte?
- Är alla PR-mål mätbara?
    - Varför eller varför inte?
- Vilka PR-aktiviteter anser du är viktigast att mäta?
    - Varför?
- Finns det några PR-aktiviteter som ni inte mäter?
    - Varför eller varför inte?

Tema 3: Värdeskapande

- Vilket värde anser du att PR har? Utifrån exempelvis samhälle, organisationer och personligt värde.
- Upplever du att de verktyg ni använder för att mäta och utvärdera PR-insatser mäter det värdet? Och på ett rättvist sätt?
    - Om ja, kan du ge exempel?
    - Om nej, vad är det som missas, och hur hade det kunnat mätas?
- Vilka utmaningar möter ni vanligtvis när ni mäter och utvärderar PR-resultat?

Tema 3: Utfyllnadsfrågor

- Vad tror du är det viktigaste att tänka på när man mäter PR-resultat?

Tema 4: Arbetet med mätning

- Skiljer det sig mellan uppdrag och kund hur mycket ni mäter?
    - Upplever ni ett större tryck på mätning från vissa och skiljer sig det i arbetstid då också?
- Upplever du att det finns enighet i hur PR mäts på er byrå?
    - Och hur är det inom branschen?
- Hur tror du att arbetet med mätmetoder och sätt att visa effekt kan påverka PR-branschens förtroende och rykte?

Avslutande frågor

- Vilka tips och råd kan du ge för att mäta PR-aktiviteter till morgondagens konsulter?
- Finns det något annat du vill tillägga om mätning och utvärdering av PR-aktiviteter?

Avtackning