

TITLE: Measuring Stakeholder Engagement for STOP Obesity Alliance
CONFIDENTIAL Budget not for publication
SUBMITTED BY: Chandler Chicco Companies

OBJECTIVE

Public relations programs are increasingly focused on building relationships with stakeholders and influencers, particularly in the area of public affairs and issues management. But measuring “stakeholder engagement” - a less tangible aspect of public relations than “traditional” measurement, such as media impressions - has been a challenge for PR practitioners.

The Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance - an organization working to prevent the further spread of obesity-related chronic diseases in America through practical yet innovative methods - wanted to measure its success in engaging the advocacy organizations that make up its Steering Committee and Associate Members, in activities that furthered its mission. In addition, they wanted to understand the depth of the relationships they had forged, demonstrate progress toward their goals and discover best practices in creating alliances.

STRATEGY

The Alliance charged Chandler Chicco Companies (CCC) to create a customized approach to measure engagement and track the outcomes of influencer communications. The objectives were to:

- › Go beyond traditional metrics to provide a measure of relationships with the advocacy groups that make up the Alliance Steering Committee and Associate Members
- › Provide metrics of engagement used to set future goals and targets
- › Compare engagement levels among these organizations
- › Provide a basis for future comparisons as a means of illustrating success or modifying approaches

CCC created the METRIC (Measuring Engagement and TTracking Infliuencer Communications) Model, which was piloted using data from the Alliance’s 2009 activities to create a baseline. Results from the pilot study were used to inform Alliance activities and Associate Member recruitment efforts, and to set program goals for 2010. In December 2010, with the development of a second scorecard to reflect that year’s work, the METRIC Model fully met all of its objectives by providing year-on-year comparisons and data to enlighten future stakeholder engagement.

EXECUTION/IMPLEMENTATION

Core to the METRIC Model was the identification of a customized list of the desired actions of each Steering Committee and Associate Member organization. Each potential action was assigned a weighted score based on its significance in moving toward the overall desired outcomes. CCC collaborated with the STOP Obesity Alliance to identify a range of potential activities, and assign point values and classifications as follows:

Limited (1 point)

- › Touching base periodically with Alliance staff and/or providing feedback on initiatives
- › Providing organizational information for the Alliance website

Basic (2 points)

- › Participating in internal Alliance meetings and calls
- › Submitting featured news items to STOP Obesity Alliance E-Newsletter
- › Using Alliance listserv to distribute organization news and announcements

Intermediate (3 points)

- › Contributing as guest bloggers on STOP Obesity Alliance “Weighing In” blog
- › Attending Alliance public events (in person, via webcast or teleconference)
- › Asking Alliance to support and sign position statements or letters to policy-makers

Advanced (4 points)

- › Requesting content from STOP Obesity Alliance or featuring Alliance materials on communications channels (e.g., website, publications and internal newsletters)
- › Recruiting/suggesting potential members and/or funders for the Alliance
- › Including Alliance news on social networking sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)
- › Following the Alliance on social networking sites (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)
- › Participating in Alliance projects, discussions or task forces

Full Engagement (5 points)

- › Participating in media outreach - quotes in press materials, media interviews, etc.

- › Participating in speaking events/conferences on behalf of the STOP Obesity Alliance or where the Alliance has a presence/role
- › Leveraging public affairs/policy relationships to further STOP Obesity Alliance policymaker efforts (includes STOP messaging and materials in outreach)
- › Referencing the Alliance or its body of work in their writings, presentations or website (e.g., Obesity GPS, surveys, recommendations, research)
- › Inviting Alliance leadership to attend, speak, co-sponsor or participate in a non-Alliance event
- › Collaborating with the Alliance to guide or inform programs executed by Steering Committee or Associate Member organizations
- › Suggesting or creating synergies between the Alliance and other third-party partners
- › Referring media or other organizations to the Alliance for comment/expertise

The requisite points are assigned to each organization for every activity they engage in throughout the year. The accumulated points for each classification results in the total engagement score for each Steering Committee or Associate Member organization. A custom spreadsheet was designed for documenting member activities and appropriate points throughout the year as they occurred.

RESULTS

At the end of 2012, each organization's overall level of engagement showed a greater level of commitment compared to the 2009 benchmark period:

- › Nearly 90 percent of Steering Committee members have interacted on the Full Engagement level, up from 80 percent in 2009.
- › As in 2009, nearly 65 percent had participated in activities at all levels at some point throughout the year.
- › Steering Committee membership increased by 15 percent in 2010.

The Associate Member engagement also improved from the pilot phase:

- › Membership nearly doubled from 17 to 32.
- › Several Associate Members came to the Alliance through referrals from existing members - a new level of engagement that has benefitted growth and demonstrates commitment to the Alliance.
- › Nearly 40 percent of Associate Members interacted on the Full Engagement level, down from 2009 due to the positive development of a 47% increase in Associate Membership.
- › Seventy-five percent of Associate Members have interacted at or above the Intermediate level, up from 53% in 2009.

CONCLUSION

Results of the METRIC Model allowed the Alliance to demonstrate to its industry sponsors the dedication and passion of each organization in supporting the work of the Alliance. The data helped the Alliance think strategically about recruitment plans, resulting in the creation of a Task Force on Women to target a specific need identified by the Alliance leading to the recruitment of several advocacy groups for women.

Perhaps most significantly, in late November 2011, the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced its decision to make coverage available for Medicare beneficiaries for obesity screening and preventive services. Previously, a patient with obesity (and not another complicating condition) would not have any services covered. While the CMS decision is a culmination of work from many organizations, this has been a major goal of the STOP Obesity Alliance and their Steering Committee and Associate Members, and is a significant outcome of their collective efforts.

