

Media Relations Measurement for the Tourism Industry



CLIENT

Travel Alberta is the tourism marketing agency of the Government of Alberta, and is responsible for driving tourism value to the province, a mark which reached \$8.3 billion in 2014.

THE ISSUE

As an indicator of media coverage, advertising value equivalencies (AVEs) have their flaws. And [Travel Alberta](#) knows this. With the ratification of the [Barcelona Principles](#) in 2010 — a set of seven voluntary guidelines established by the public relations industry to measure the efficacy of PR campaigns — it was made even more clear, as the Principles stated unequivocally that AVEs are “not the value of public relations”. Instead, they proposed that accurate measurement requires transparency, replicability, and consideration of business results.



Banff Avenue in the winter. Photo credit: Paul Zizka

The proliferation of social and mobile apps and information has fundamentally changed the way travelers research, plan, and purchase vacations. This, combined with the fact that AVEs don't accurately measure online coverage, prompted Travel Alberta to shift from AVEs as its core metric for measuring coverage. The provincial tourism marketing agency needed a new framework to measure the success of its media relations more accurately and more reliably. They wanted something that measured not just the quantity, but the quality of its earned coverage.

THE SOLUTION

In 2013, Travel Alberta partnered with [Destination Canada](#) (then known as the Canadian Tourism Commission) to build a new measurement to replace advertising value, according to [Susan Darch](#), Travel Alberta's director of global media and content. Through a series of surveys and workshops in consultation with [Katie Delahaye Paine](#), the founder and CEO of Paine Publishing, Travel Alberta methodically developed a framework for a much deeper measure of editorial content than simply counting column inches or broadcast minutes.

It was determined that an earned media story needed to contain certain elements in order to have an impact on a traveler's decision to visit. Travel Alberta devised a rubric containing 11 such elements — also aligned with the agency's business objectives — to help standardize the measurement and allow them to rank their coverage. For example, if the article in question appears in a top tier outlet, it receives 1.5 points; if it's published online, 1 point; if it contains a CTA, 1 point; a desirable visual, 1.5, and so on. Under the system, a perfect story — one that contributes absolutely to Travel Alberta's stated goals — will earn a perfect 10.

They called it the Media Quality Score (MQS), and turned to Agility PR Solutions to help them operationalize it.

As a media monitoring and analysis firm, Agility PR Solutions relies heavily on its patented analytics engine. But equally important is its team of client success consultants, dedicated to the continued success and satisfaction of each of its clients. By combining the two — powerful analytics and the

human touch — Agility PR Solutions was perfectly positioned to help Travel Alberta deliver these new metrics to stakeholders.

Travel Alberta knew that adopting the Media Quality Score would require a lot more analysis — and the Travel Alberta media team simply couldn't analyze the 200+ articles from North America in which Alberta is mentioned on average each week. So Agility PR Solutions was chosen to do the scoring analysis legwork for the U.S. and Canada.



The Peace Bridge over the Bow River. Photo credit: Corey Myke

The client success consultants at Agility PR Solutions are experts at analyzing media coverage and considering context so that sentiment, quality, and various other metrics can be determined, metrics that are difficult or impossible to determine with purely automated solutions. The human curation means that the MQS data — arrived at after the consultants score each article based on the presence or absence of each of the 11 elements — is extremely reliable. Instead of a list of hundreds of media hits, each month the Travel Alberta media team has a succinct list of the top-performing items and can confidently state the impact that each of them had.

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SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW

Trust Agility PR Solutions to help you find influential media, amplify messages, monitor coverage, and measure impact. Our cloud-based, easy-to-use media database, monitoring, and analytics tools simplify the communications lifecycle (and your life).

Learn more at www.agilitypr.com/oursolutions

THE OUTCOME

With the MQS, Travel Alberta has a system that can apply consistent metrics across all media types in all of its seven target markets: Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, South Korea, and Mexico. The benefit is that they are now able to reliably compare all of their coverage month over month and year over year, no matter if it appeared in a newspaper in Beijing or on television in Calgary.

“ Thanks to media monitoring and analysis firms like Agility PR Solutions, we know we can trust the data we see. ”

Every morning, Agility PR Solutions sends Travel Alberta a daily brief outlining the previous day's North American coverage, organized by media type and outlet size. Among the 30 or so hits that appear every day, the media team flags which of these are to be scored and included in their monthly MQS reports. From there, it's up to the analysts at Agility PR Solutions to apply the scoring system and determine which media coverage had the greatest impact in achieving Travel Alberta's business objectives.

By distilling many value metrics into a single number, Travel Alberta can clearly see which efforts in each of their markets have produced the most effective results in reaching and influencing potential visitors to Alberta, thus helping them tailor and focus their future efforts. “The MQS system provides meaningful insights into the effectiveness of our communications efforts, and what exactly is helping us achieve our business goals,” explains Darch. “And thanks to media monitoring and analysis firms like Agility PR Solutions, we know we can trust the data we see.”

This is especially important when it comes to proving impact to executives and key stakeholders.

The Travel Alberta team can quickly respond to requests and provide a list of top articles and their impact on specific objectives, versus providing a long list of articles of varying value.

The hours that Agility PR Solutions spends curating daily media briefs and appraising the roughly

100 articles every month that the client wants scored, means that the Travel Alberta media team can instead focus their energy on strategic planning and outreach efforts to earn more valuable coverage for their province.

“Agility PR Solutions is an invaluable partner in helping to monitor and measure our media relations programs in the North American market,” says Darch.

The daily briefs provided by Agility PR Solutions, and the analysis of the articles they want scored, gives Travel Alberta more reliable, more transparent, and more easily replicable results, allowing the tourism agency to analyze, pivot, and evolve its media relations efforts as needed. The bottom line is that, with the help of Agility PR Solutions, no longer are they wondering which of their coverage was having the greatest impact. And as the Travel Alberta C-suite know, it's this type of insight that will set you apart when growing tourism revenues to a destination.

**No matter what PR challenges you have,
our experts are always ready to help.
Reach out — we're happy to answer any
and all questions you might have.**

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ABOUT AGILITY PR SOLUTIONS

Agility PR Solutions provides media database, monitoring, and analytics solutions to simplify the communications lifecycle. For over 10 years, organizations have trusted us to help them identify influencers, amplify messages, monitor coverage, and measure results of their PR and communications strategies.