

**Q: How do you measure the perception/behavioral changes as a result of communication (similar to how advertising measurement works)?**

**Cynthia Buckley**  
**Manager, Employee Communication**  
**American Express**

*Perceptions* generally need to be quantified by a survey methodology administered to your key audiences. For example, if you are trying to strengthen particular elements of your brand identity, you would conduct a survey before your campaign begins to establish a baseline on the elements you plan to reinforce through communication, perhaps quality, reliability or. During and after your campaign, you would continue the measurements to see if favorable perceptions of your company have increased.

*Behaviors* are better measured by tracking outcomes. Not all people who say on a survey that they will do something differently actually do so. So, if your communications are intended to improve safety, you should measure the number of accidents or the cost of accidents in different locations where you pilot a particular communication approach versus locations where no communication changes were made. If you want to increase employees' commitment to your organization, track changes in turnover rates among different groups where you use different communication approaches. Make sure that other factors affecting turnover remain constant among the different groups. Then you can be sure that it was communication that made a difference.

*Angela Sinickas, ABC, is CEO of Sinickas Communications, Inc., a communication consultancy specializing in helping corporations achieve business results through targeted diagnostics and practical solutions.*