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Organization's Name: Sinickas Communications, Inc.
Category/Division/Subdivision: Communication Skills/Division 16/Subdivision 16.02
Title of Entry: **BPMS Column on Communication Measurement**
Time Period of Project: February through November, 2001
Brief Description: A recurring column in the Melcrum publication *Best Practice Measurement Strategies* to help communicators build measurement into all they do, from tactical communications to strategic plans. The goal is to provide practical tips to make communicators more successful.

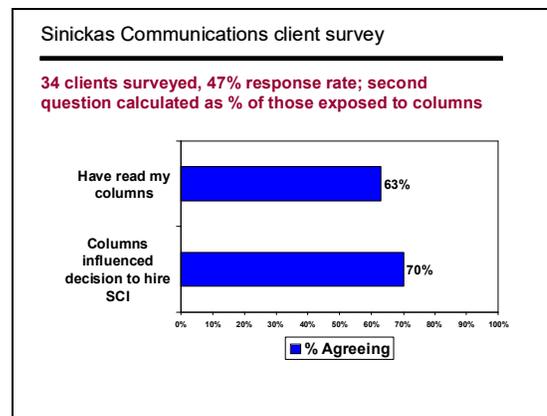
Need/Opportunity

Audience needs: Communicators are now being expected to prove the value of their functions to their leadership teams, just like any other business function. However, a number of barriers have made it difficult for communicators to do this effectively:

- **Lack of knowledge:** Communication research was not normally part of a journalism or PR education when most current managers and directors were in college.
- **Lack of budget:** Especially during this past year of recession, budgets for communication have been even tighter than usual.
- **Lack of staff:** Again, while communication staffing has long been lean, the recession has led to record numbers of lay-offs.
- **Aversion to numbers:** Individuals in these roles often chose communication as a profession because they prefer being “word” people rather than number-crunchers.

Having experienced first-hand the power of communication measurement to increase an employee communication budget and staffing levels (during the early 1980s, another recessionary period), I have become a missionary trying to convert communicators to not only conduct measurements, but to get excited about doing it.

My business needs: I decided to make communication measurement a major element of the consulting firm I opened in June 2000. My need is to manage a financially successful business, making myself known to prospective clients and having them think of me when they need help with a measurement project. Over several years of informally asking all new clients or prospects how they learned about me, the most prevalent answer was that they had participated in one of my training sessions, followed secondarily with having read my articles or columns in professional journals. This was confirmed in a survey of 2001 clients conducted in early 2002, when 63% said they had read my columns and 70% of those said it influenced their decision to work with us.



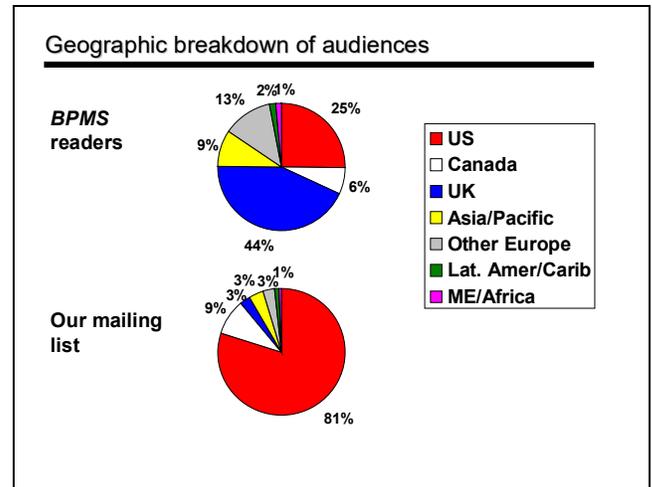
Intended Audience(s)

Primary audience: The actual subscribers of *Best Practice Measurement Strategies (BPMS)* are the primary audience, along with the readers of *Strategic Communication Management* where the columns were regularly excerpted. Although subscribers' job levels, job types and experience levels vary, I target the column to experienced communicators in large corporations holding a title of manager or above. These are my potential clients.

Geographical dispersion of readers around the world is reflected at right. All regions are in my target group because Sinickas Communications, Inc. also sells a number of “products” that are easy to purchase around the world and don’t require a local consultant.

Secondary audience: About 3,445 communication professionals on the Sinickas Communications, Inc. reprint mailing list. Most of these individuals are highly motivated about communication measurement because they have either been a client or have asked to receive reprints by either:

- Giving me their business card at the end of speeches and workshops I present.
- Requesting to be put on the reprint list when they visit my web site, www.sinicom.com.
- Returning the reply card in my capabilities brochure.



Goals/Objectives

1. **Use the column to help generate revenue by building the reputation of Sinickas Communications, Inc. as the pre-eminent consulting firm for measuring the effectiveness of employee communication.** As mentioned above, our research told us my column directly impacts the financial success of my business since 70% of clients who had seen it said it influenced their decision to hire us. Our measurable goals were to:
 - a. Obtain at least 50% of our consulting revenue from projects where no competitive bidding was required because the client perceived us to be the only or the best partner for the project due to our reputation. This saves us very valuable time that can be better spent in other ways.
 - b. To win more than 33% of competitively bid proposals (most of our 2001 bid processes involved at least three vendors, although one involved eight contenders), because this would indicate that reputation helped beat the typical odds of winning.
2. **Provide enduring value to communication practitioners and the BPMS publishers,** as measured in several ways:
 - a. Have at least 75% of my 2001 clients who have read the column say that it has been useful to them.
 - b. Obtain positive feedback from qualitative research of subscribers conducted by BPMS’ publishers.
 - c. Be prominently covered in at least 3 other publications in 2001 as an expert on communication research.

Solution Overview

I have been a columnist for various Melcrum Publishing, Ltd. communication journals since 1998, so I didn’t need to convince them to give me the opportunity to write a column in 2001. Each issue of the newsletter has a theme identified in advance by the editor, Paul Wright, and the publishers in London, Victoria Mellor and Robin Crumby. Paul would typically call me several weeks in advance of a deadline to discuss the other articles scheduled for publication. He and I would kick around different potential topics for my column and decide upon one. Then I would write the column and e-mail it to him, generally at the very last minute before his deadline. However, he said that was fine because he needed to do very little editing. Paul often changed the headline, sometimes edited text for length, and added “blurbs” to match the format of the other items in the publication.

I've expanded on the visibility the column receives, especially in the U.S. (see comparison by geography under "Intended Audiences), by periodically sending reprints of selected columns to the 3,445 communicators on my mailing list who are already interested in measurement, as well as editors of other communication publications. Articles and columns for which I own the copyright are also posted on my www.sinicom.com Web site. The three columns included in this entry are read by anywhere from 4 to 32 visitors a month, with the column on "Communicating for Change" out-drawing the other 2001 columns each month.

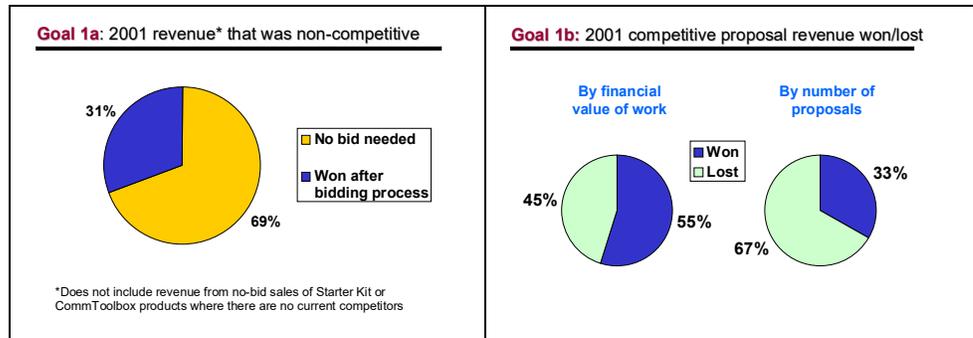
Implementation and Challenges

- **Fixed topics.** Because of the nature of BPMS, there was no opportunity to write about a topic that might have been top of mind in the communication profession at the moment. The column needed to focus on the specific theme to which that edition was devoted.
- **Limited space.** I try to write concisely, with heavy use of bullets and graphics to maximize the amount of valuable tips I can share within the restrictions of a 750-word allotment.
- **Lack of time.** Due to a heavy schedule, the column was often written during late hours shortly before the deadline.
- **Budget.** There is none. I write the column for free.

Measurement/Evaluation of Outcomes

1. Use the column to help generate revenue:

- a. Obtained 69% of our consulting revenue without competitive bidding (goal of 50%).
- b. Won exactly our goal of 33% of



competitively bid proposals, but what we won represented 55% of available project money, so we won the biggest projects and lost some smaller ones to local consultants.

2. Provide enduring value to communication practitioners and the BPMS publishers:

- a. 100% of 2001 clients who responded to a client survey saying they read the column also said that it has been useful to them (goal of 75%). In fact, 78% chose "Very useful."
- b. Obtained positive feedback from qualitative research of subscribers conducted by BPMS' publishers. The direct quotes from survey write-ins are provided behind the "Research Results" tab. They were 100% positive.
- c. We were prominently covered in at least 7 other publications in 2001 as experts on communication research (goal of 3), including *PR Strategist*, *Investors Business Daily*, *HR Magazine*, *NetGain Update* and the *Journal of Better Communication in Government*. (Samples are behind the binder tab "Other Documentation.")

