THE BGM GUIDE TO B2B PR MEASUREMENT

BIG GAMES MACHINE

THIS GUIDE IS BASED ON 20+ YEARS OF B2B PR KNOW-HOW

Everyone wants to measure PR's impact, but nobody seems to agree on the best way to do it. The problem is that creating and running a PR campaign costs money, and so businesses naturally want to see what they get for their investment. But it's not as simple as that; as much as a great piece of media coverage can get a reader to click on a link or buy a particular product, it can also affect how they feel and think in a way that can't be tracked with a simple metric.

That's not to say that measuring PR is impossible! If it were, this would be the shortest guide ever. What we've tried to do over the following pages is to show you some practical ways to measure your B2B PR results so that they can be evaluated more fairly and give businesses and PRs themselves a way to show the contribution PR is making to the bottom line.

Measurement is something that every PR agency needs to be better at, regardless if you work with video games (like us), fashion, food or any other industry sector.

This guide is the result of many collective years of experience transitioning clients from traditional, coverage-focused B2B PR to modern, inbound-led B2B PR. It will:

- Start by explaining why there have never been so many exciting opportunities in B2B PR measurement
- Examine how to choose the right objectives
- Cover the best data to collect, where to collect it and how to benchmark your performance (via some mildly diverting geeky references along the way)

Measuring PR effectiveness can be super simple, or it can be as complex as you want it to be. The important thing is that you're measuring something that changes over time due to the PR campaign you are running. Otherwise, how will you know whether you've done a great job?

Because so much of what PRs do doesn't seem to be measured, many old-fashioned ideas and bad habits persist. Hopefully, after reading this, armed with your newfound measurement knowledge, your colleagues will treat you with the respect you deserve.

WHY IS PR MEASUREMENT SO IMPORTANT?

Marketing (and especially PR) is often treated as a cost centre rather than an investment in helping to increase sales. So, if you're not measuring the effectiveness of your public relations in a way that links it back to broader business objectives, then you're giving the C-suite upstairs an easy excuse to cut your budgets and ignore all your great ideas.

Traditionally, PRs would measure campaigns in a few simple ways:

- The number of pieces of coverage you generated
- The sentiment towards your brand or product
- Something called AVE (of which more later)

But in today's social media landscape, there are more ways than ever to get your message out there, which means measurement has also needed to change to keep up. We now need to measure more things across more channels and platforms.

(By the way - if you like the idea of PR being more than press clippings, you may want to check out our other guide, B2B Marketing in the Games Industry: A Beginners Guide, to learn about the power of an 'omnichannel' PR approach.)

STEP 1: DECIDING WHAT TO MEASURE

Regardless of your industry or sector, your inbound B2B PR strategy should deliver measurable business outcomes, like the number of quality leads generated, increased revenues, or reduced sales cycles. So, when it comes to measurement, you shouldn't limit yourself to the usual surface-level metrics such as coverage volume or number of social shares - as these won't match the business outcomes you aim for.

Ideally, your chosen measurement methodology will be linked to the objective you want to measure. So, for example, if your PR campaign aims to drive people to a specific web page, measuring how many pieces of coverage you get won't tell you that; you need to be measuring increases in web traffic, Google searches and clicks on specific URLs.

Most importantly, choosing the right things to measure allows you to direct resources to what's working and ditch what isn't. So, to prepare for evaluating your B2B PR efforts, you first need to define the outcomes you want to achieve.

Outputs, Outtakes or Outcomes?

The things that we can measure fall into three categories - outputs, outtakes and outcomes.

- **Outputs** – An output is a task or action that we can treat as a measurable unit. For example, how many social posts you've published, how many events you've attended, how many press releases you've sent out, etc
- **Outtakes** – Outtakes are indicators of how your audience feels about you or your product. That might be sentiment (how positively they feel towards you) or engagement, measured through things like shares, likes or comments
- **Outcomes** – Outcomes are what your target audience does **after** experiencing your PR campaign, ideally in response to some kind of call to action you've targeted them with. An outcome could be really simple - like visiting a web page or clicking on a link - or something a bit more complex, such as a behavioural change over time. In a B2B context, a positive outcome would be making a sales enquiry, registering interest in something, or attending a special event

You'll probably want to measure some element of each to get a good overall picture of your PR campaign.

The simplest way to do this is to start with your ideal outcome - a sales target, generating a specific action or response, or a measurable increase in profile or awareness - and work backwards to understand what measurement is possible. Usually, there will be a tool or methodology you can use to measure most things, but the caveat is that some of these are more expensive than others. (The cost of measuring things in PR is a significant factor in why it's not done as much as it should/could be.)

So, let's create an example. In B2B campaigns, it's common to task PR to help drive an increase in sales leads.

Imagine that our PR campaign is centred around a really great piece of research we've commissioned and turned into a report, which we want to use to create inbound leads.

We'll take the best insights from the report and pitch them to relevant journalists. We'll also turn parts of the report into shareable content for social media channels, linking to a form where people can get the full report.

Finally, we've created an audio ad about the report and will broadcast it as part of a popular industry podcast.

Our measurement strategy will end up looking something like this:

Outcomes	Outtakes	Outputs
An increase in inbound sales enquiries	An increase in engagement with social media content	Number of media contacted
	An increase in positive sentiment towards the company/brand	Press release distributed
	An increase in content downloads from the company website	Number of social media posts
		Number of paid media opportunities/ reach of paid media opportunities

The table shows that our outputs are a simple measurement of what we plan to do. We expect measurable growth in our outtakes based on our outputs. Finally, the combination of outputs and outtakes should correspond to our desired outcome.

So when your boss asks what your PR campaign has achieved, you'll be ready with a host of measurements that link your work with positive sales lead changes. Job done!

Later we'll discuss in more detail the different measurement methods and KPIs you can use for each of these outputs, outtakes, and outcomes.

Don't forget to benchmark!

Developing a measurement plan is all well and good, but what are you measuring your success against?

Before you start, it's essential to benchmark where things are now so that you can see the results after the PR push is done.

If you use the same metrics and KPIs as you plan to use post-campaign, you'll be able to do a direct before-and-after comparison.

For extra bonus points, you would carry out your benchmarking before you finalise your PR campaign, as getting real data on how marketing and PR are performing is an essential part of coming up with a plan that's likely to work.

Plus, it will likely give you great insights into what's happening.

It may sound like common sense, but you'd be amazed how often we work with companies looking for PR to help them grow but who have not thought to benchmark anything to find out if PR is what they need most!

What do the PR experts say?

Here at BGM, we know a lot about PR, but we're far too modest to call ourselves PR measurement experts! That's why we follow practitioners like Steve Waddington, Gini Deitrich and others, who have spent years shouting from the rooftops about how PR can and should be measurable.

The good news is that there is broad agreement that the approach we've outlined above is the best one, even if the terminology is slightly different.

For example, instead of 'outputs and outcomes', Steve Waddington describes metrics as 'intermediary and organisational'. Intermediary indicators are simple things like downloads, clicks, and media coverage (outputs), and organisational indicators are things like sales conversions, financial performance, and attitudinal change over time (outcomes).

Waddington believes PR should be intrinsic to a company's long-term communications strategy, and his organisational metrics are long-term. So, while our example of PR measurement is geared slightly towards a time-limited campaign, there's no reason you can't include those long-term metrics in your desired outcomes.

Gini Deitrich's approach to measurement is very similar. She calls basic measurements like shares, followers, clicks, and downloads 'feelgood metrics' because they can look good but don't really show meaningful business results.

If you are serious about developing your PR skills, both Waddington and Deitrich have plenty of great insight on their websites: https://wadds.co.uk/blog and https://spinsucks.com

STEP 2: THE TOOLS TO USE FOR MEASURING YOUR B2B PR KPI'S

In this section, we'll run through some of the B2B PR KPIs you can measure and the corresponding tools and metrics we suggest. As you'll see, there is often more than one method, so it comes down to what works best for you.

It may sound obvious, but you also need to remember that the metrics you choose will only show the thing or things you want to measure. Or, to put it another way, if you want to measure social media engagement, you need to put out social media content that you can measure. There's no point choosing a measurement mix that doesn't reflect the things you are actively doing or trying to improve.

The other consideration is whether you can access the data you want to measure. This is often a roadblock to effective PR measurement, as PR teams often don't have direct access to things like Google Analytics, CRM platforms like Hubspot, sales data and more. This is especially true if you are working at a PR agency and the client doesn't want to give anyone external access to these tools.

For measurement to be effective, it's fundamental to have access to the data and publishing channels you need - otherwise, you'll fail at the first step.

Mapping measurement using the PESO approach

If you're unfamiliar with the PESO model, it's a fantastic approach for mapping all the components of a PR and marketing campaign and grouping them into Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned categories.

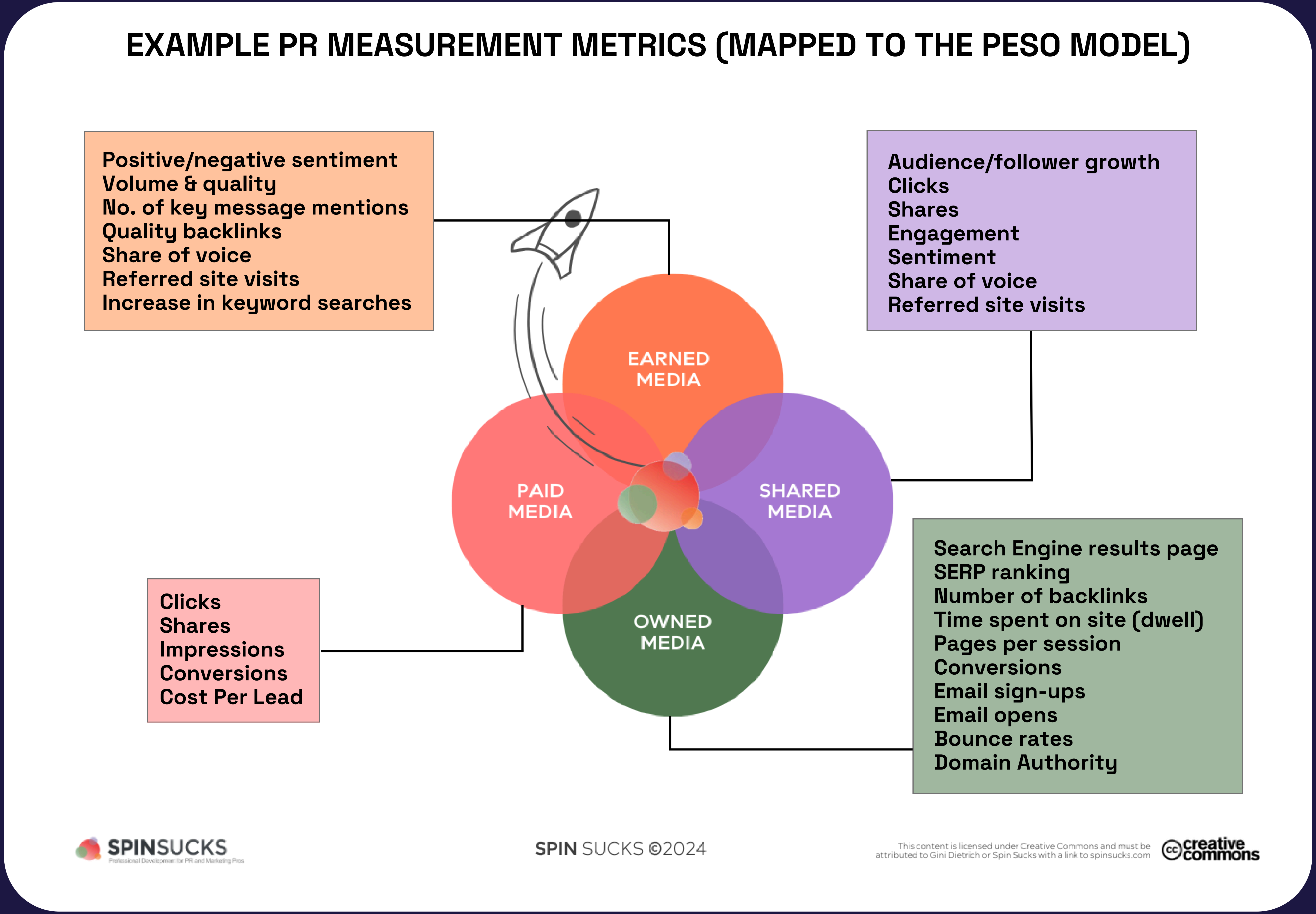
The idea is to help PR practitioners build campaigns that combine tactics across different categories and, by doing so, become more effective due to the synergies you get as a result.

The PESO model was invented by Gini Deitrich, whom we mentioned earlier. We think it's an essential foundation for smart PR, so go and check it out at Spin Sucks.

A great thing about using the PESO model for your PR planning is that you can also map your measurement planning to the same categories.

Here’s one we made earlier: as you can see, for the PESO categories of Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned, we’ve compiled the main metrics you can use for measuring and the tools or platforms we suggest.

We appreciate that not everyone reading this will have loads of money for subscriptions, so we’ve tried to include completely free solutions - or ones with a free entry-level tier.



Metrics and tools for measuring PAID media

Paid media in the PESO model typically means advertising and sponsored posts on social media channels or sponsored content placed with media outlets. With paid media metrics, you're typically trying to understand whether your content resonates with your audience and whether you're targeting the right audience groups through the proper channels.

Typically, a piece of paid or sponsored content will include a link or call to action that you want the relevant readers to follow; this is key to measuring its effectiveness and is the basis for the metrics you can track:

- **Clicks:** the amount or percentage of your audience that clicked your sponsored content or the links embedded in your sponsored byline (this is why it's so important to have some 'owned' content to link back to)
- **Impressions:** social media platforms will typically tell you the number of people who saw your sponsored content or ad but didn't necessarily click on it (or read it!)

- **Conversions:** the percentage of your audience that responded to your call to action - the exact definition of which depends on your campaign. For example, if you want someone to click on a link which takes them through to a contact form where they can leave their details, the conversion will be when a form has been completed. If your campaign is quite lead-gen orientated, you might even have several points where you want to measure conversions; think of how the typical sales funnel has several stages. Some social platforms, like LinkedIn and Facebook, offer lead-generation ads with embedded forms to cut out this extra step.

- **Cost Per Lead (CPL) or Cost Per Conversion (CPC):** the cost of each lead or conversion, essentially the campaign cost divided by the number of leads generated

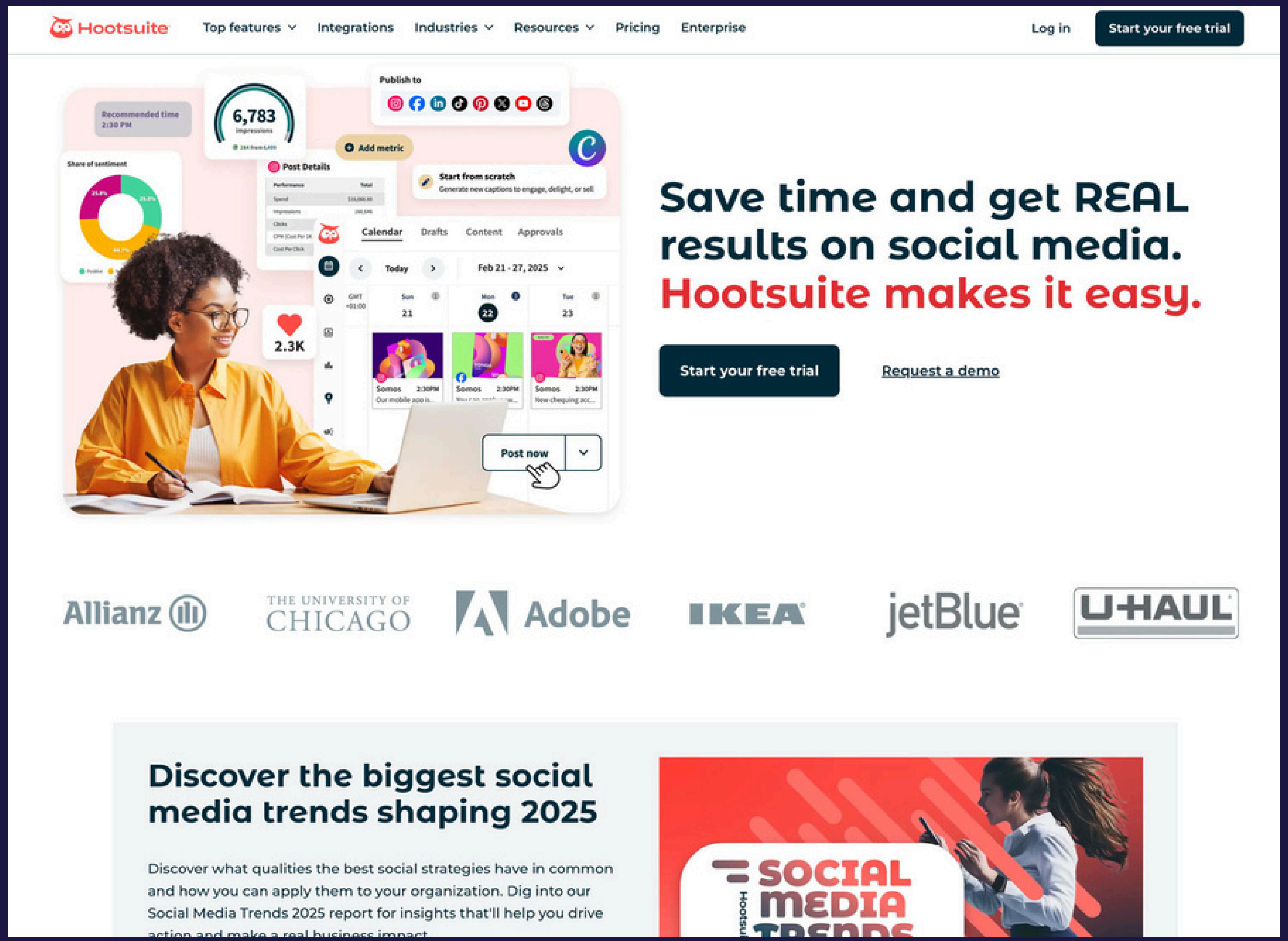
- **Engagement, e.g. shares, comments, likes or views:** the number of people who enjoyed your content so much that they shared it with a friend, watched a video past a certain point or left a comment

Often, a paid media or social placement will come with some metrics, whether that's a guaranteed number of views or the supply of post-campaign data. Other tools for monitoring paid opportunities include:

- **Social platforms like X, LinkedIn and Facebook** provide real-time data via their analytics interfaces as well as reporting tools

- **CRM or marketing automation platforms** will capture referrals to your site from paid media and any engagement or conversions resulting from those referrals

- **Hootsuite** is a centralised dashboard for scheduling, managing and reporting across all major social media platforms, which will also show engagement metrics



HootSuite is a very popular platform for managing multiple social media channels from a single dashboard. Similar alternatives include Buffer, CoSchedule, Sprout Social, Sendible, and many others

Metrics and tools for measuring <u>EARNED</u> media

Earned media is at the heart of most B2B PR campaigns, as it includes all the organic (i.e. non-paid/non-sponsored) media coverage about your product or brand.

Utilising a combination of the suggested metrics we outline in this section should tell you whether your media relations team is delivering results and whether the media coverage is a) reaching the right people **and** b) prompting them to act (outcomes, not outputs, remember?)

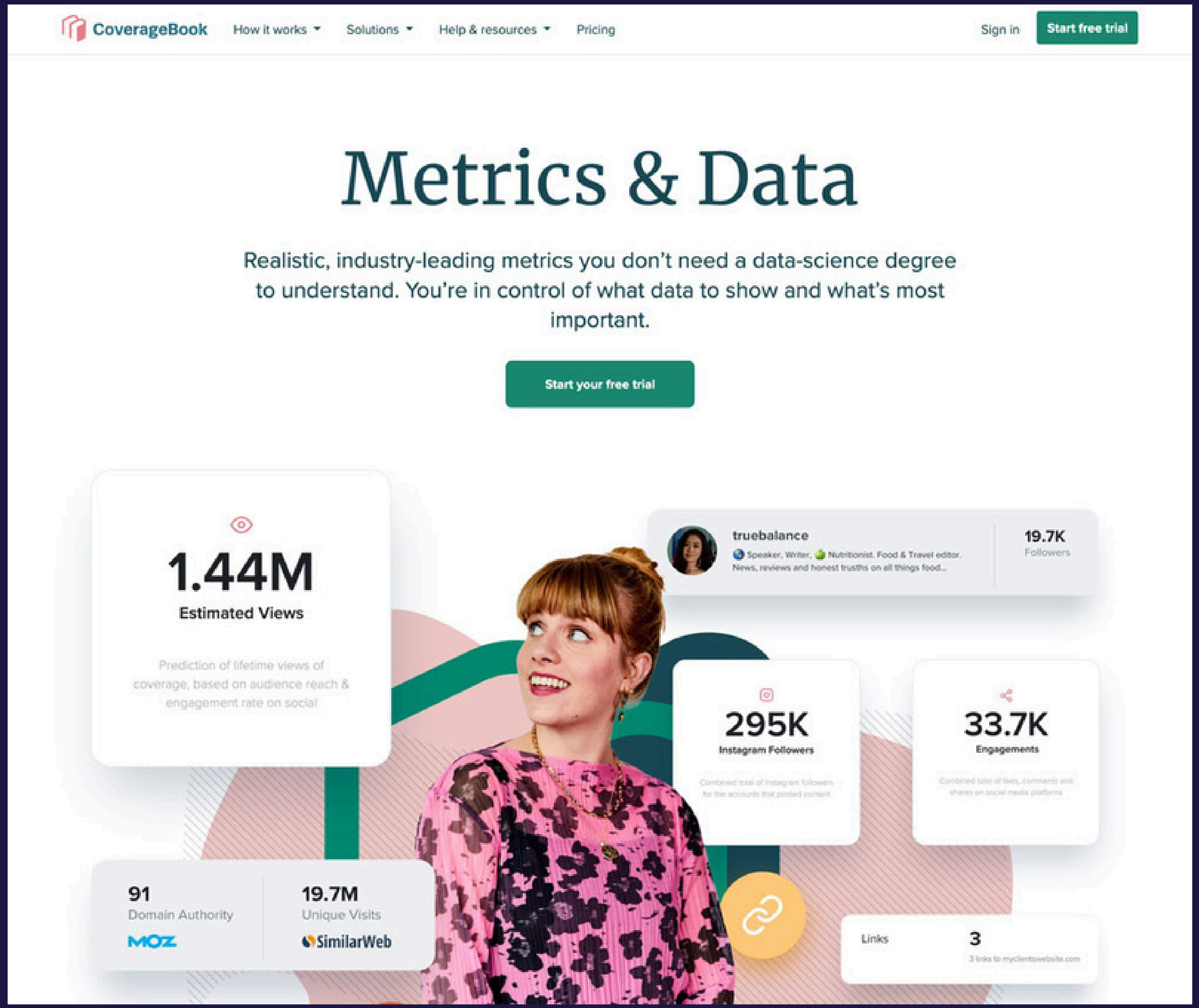
Ideally, your goal is to get readers of earned media coverage to click through and engage with your owned channels in a way that lets you track clicks and conversions (mainly website and social media content, but it could be event attendance or joining a Discord community, for example.)

That's the gold standard. Otherwise, media coverage is about building awareness, positive sentiment, and brand equity, and it is an essential part of any bigger marketing and sales funnel.

When it comes to awareness and sentiment, there's a lot you can measure:

- **Volume and quality of media coverage:** media coverage volume speaks for itself, but the quality of that coverage is also important, which can be measured using Domain Authority (DA), which is an SEO measurement of how important search engines regard a site in terms of authority and importance

Getting one piece of coverage from a high DA site can deliver much better results than multiple pieces from low DA sites - but this is often overlooked in a rush for coverage volume over quality.



CoverageBook is one of the best ways to collate online media coverage

Check out CoverageBook to generate beautiful coverage reports with metrics. Use the free tool Talkwalker Alerts to track coverage when it appears; it's like Google Alerts on steroids.

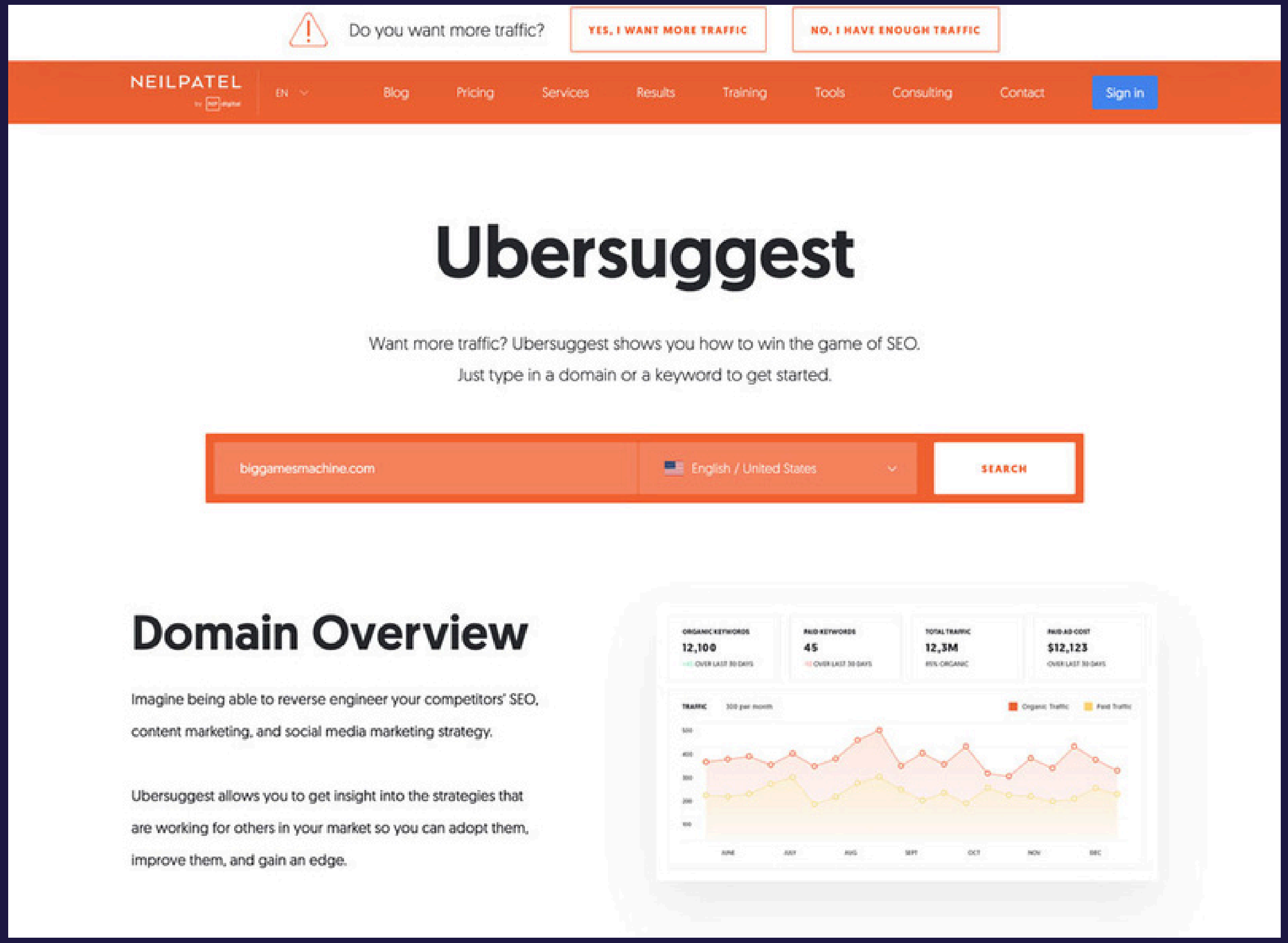
- **Share of voice:** how often are you getting covered relative to the competition? Share of voice is typically based on how many times a keyword (e.g., a company or product name) appears online over a defined period across blogs, online media, and social media. Many monitoring tools, such as Meltwater, Cision, and Awario, will do this quickly and easily, but be aware that the results are not especially accurate unless you spend time filtering out irrelevant results

- **Positive versus negative sentiment:** if you're 'earning' negative coverage, you have serious problems. Nevertheless, tracking positive versus negative sentiment in coverage is important - this is another thing most monitoring tools can do automatically

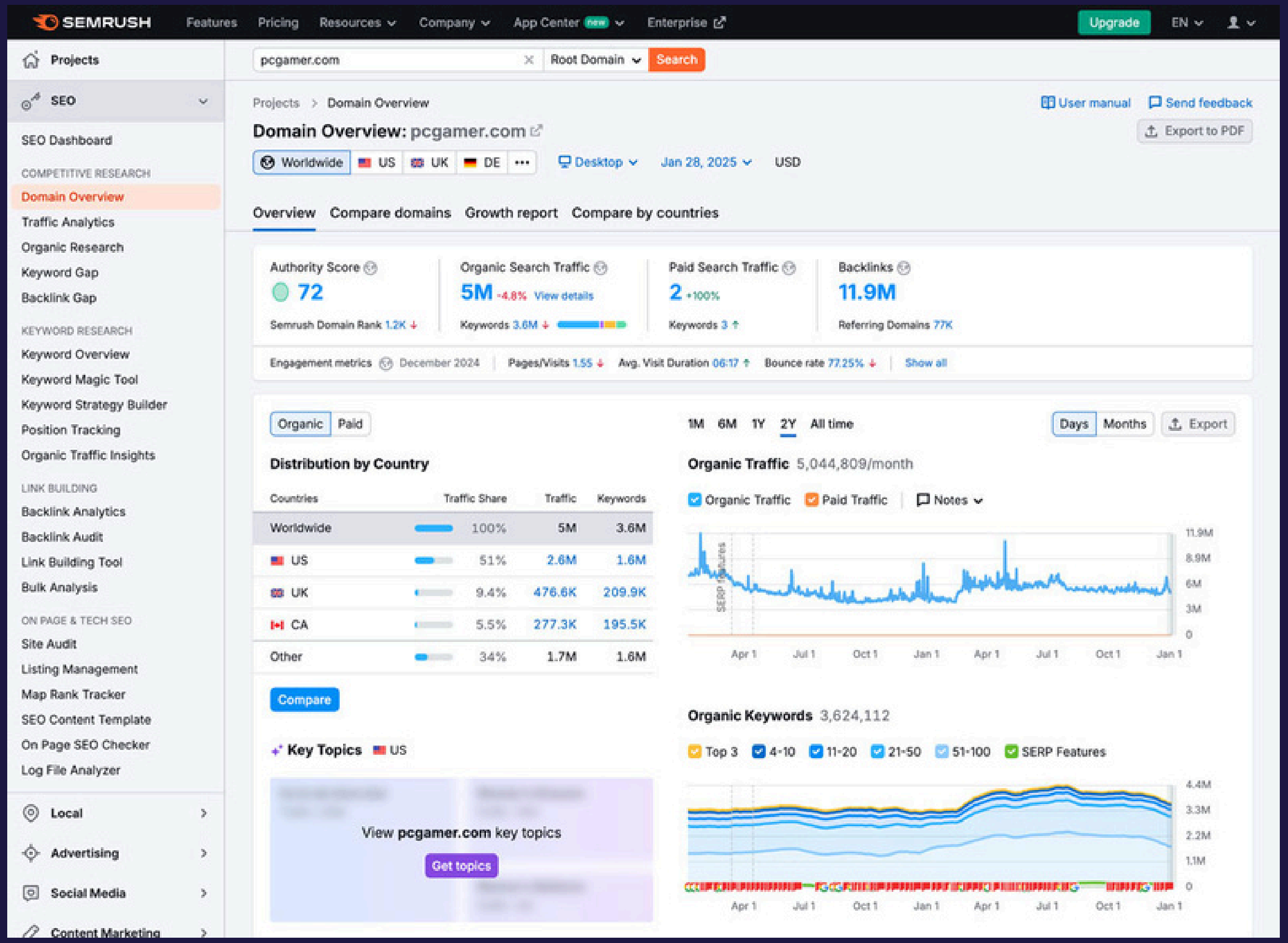
- **Key message mentions:** this is a qualitative metric where you physically count how many of your key messages have been captured in subsequent media coverage

- **Backlink volumes:** backlinks are essential (especially from high-DA sites) to climb the Google rankings and bring readers back to your site. For more about this, check out Brian Dean's definitive guide

Use SEO tools to measure the volume and quality of backlinks from media coverage and guest posts:
  - Ubersuggest is a very cost-effective web analytics tool (and FREE to a large degree) for measuring key web data
  - SEMRush
  - Ahrefs
  - Serpstat
  - Moz
  - Google Search Console is a less intimidating and more stripped-back version of Google Analytics that measures leads and links to content on your site



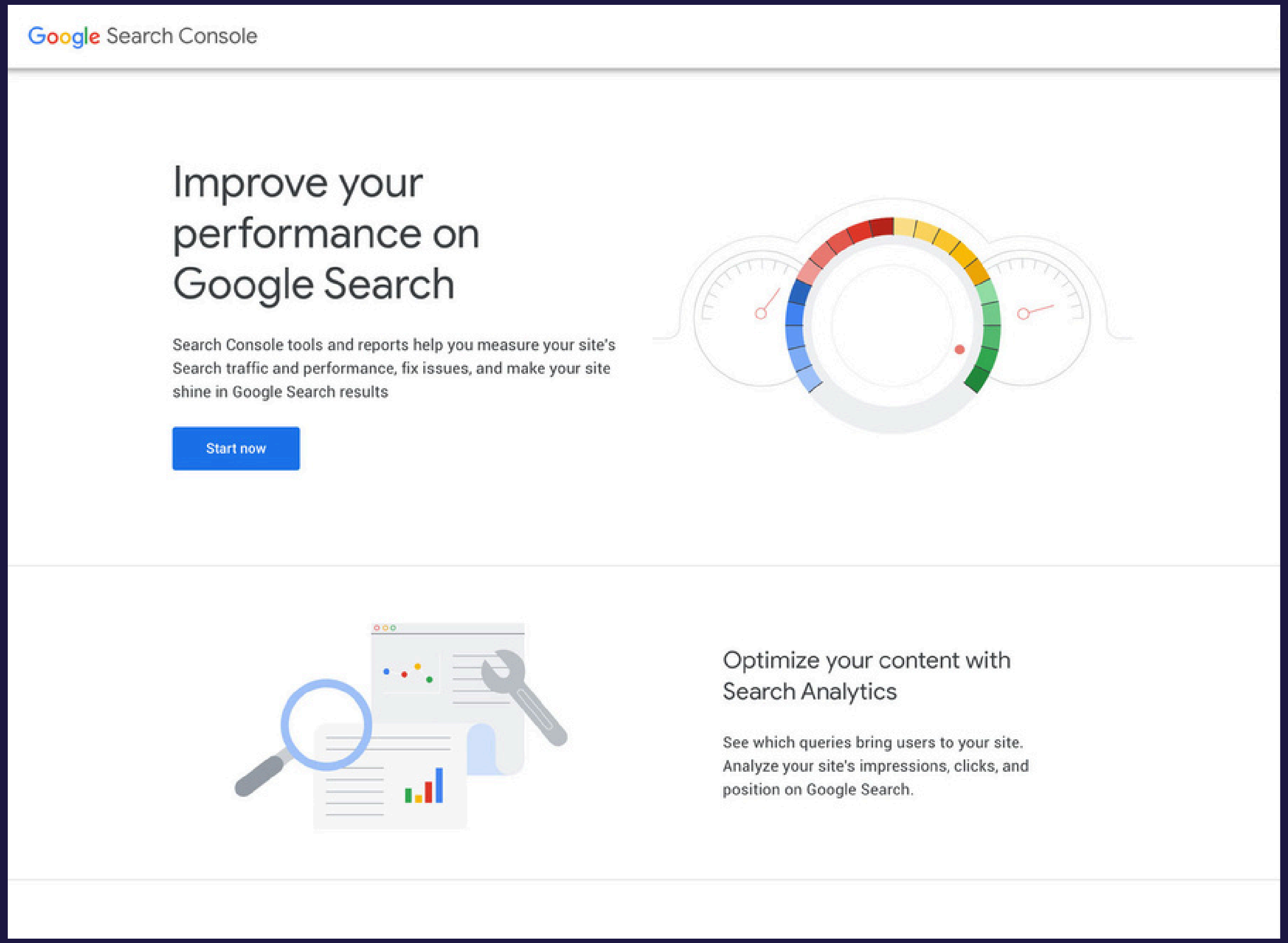
Ubersuggest is our go-to tool for understanding how content performs as part of a digital PR strategy. It's especially good when looking at backlinks and how content is driving inbound traffic from referring sites



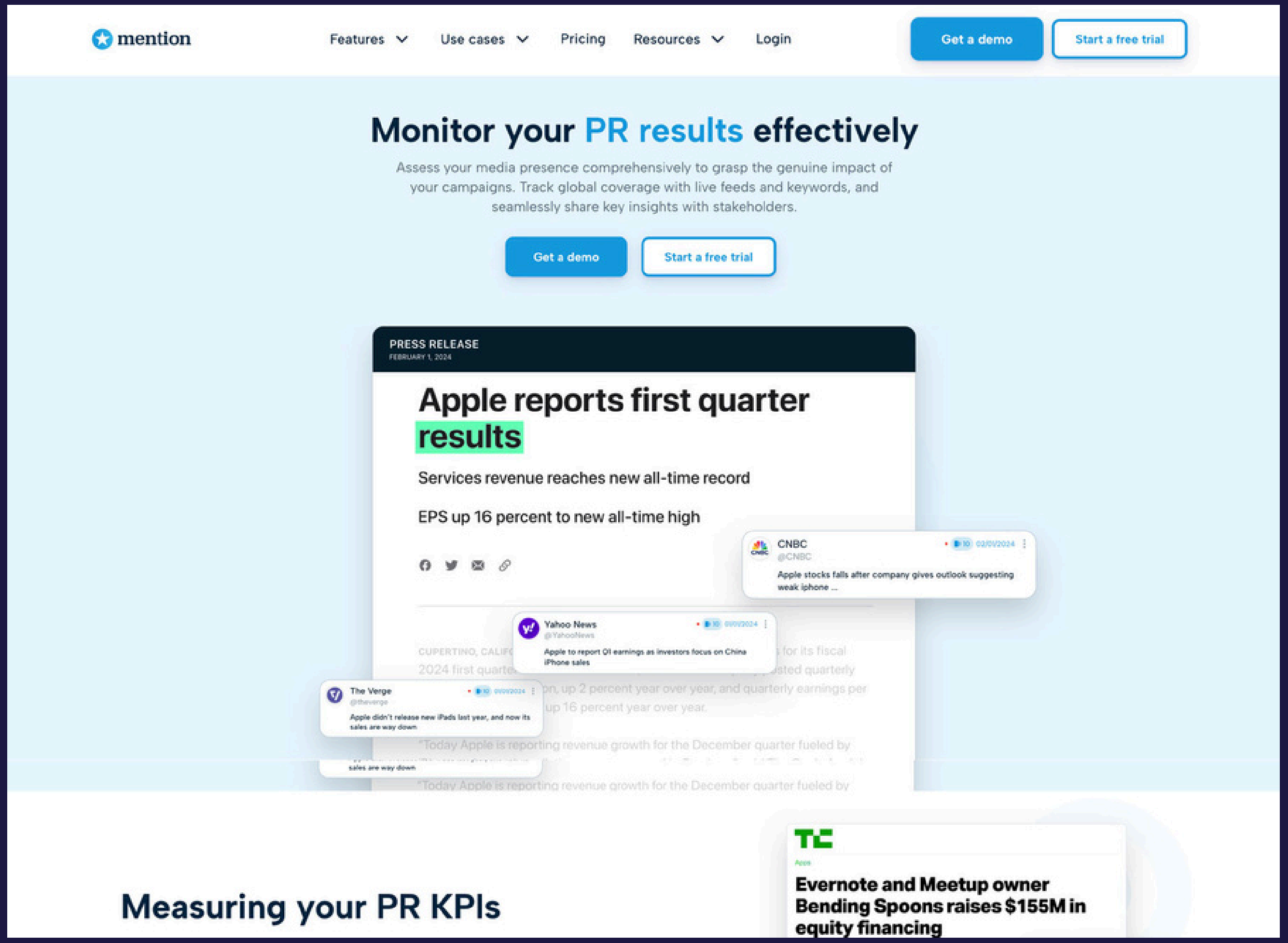
SEMRush is one of the best tools for data on website traffic and unique visitors, and it's free account tier lets you compare up to 5 websites in a single chart - very handy when doing competitor research

You can also use the SEO tools noted above to benchmark your backlink performance against competitors, and your share of voice and sentiment analysis should also be benchmarking against your competition.

- **Increase in branded searches:** a 'branded search' is any search engine enquiry that includes the name of your company, business or brand. Google Search Console is a great free tool to measure this and we also recommend trying Google Trends. By monitoring branded searches over time, you can map the peaks to your B2B PR activity as an indirect indicator of its impact on interest in your company. Awario and Mention provide real-time brand mention monitoring from the web and social media



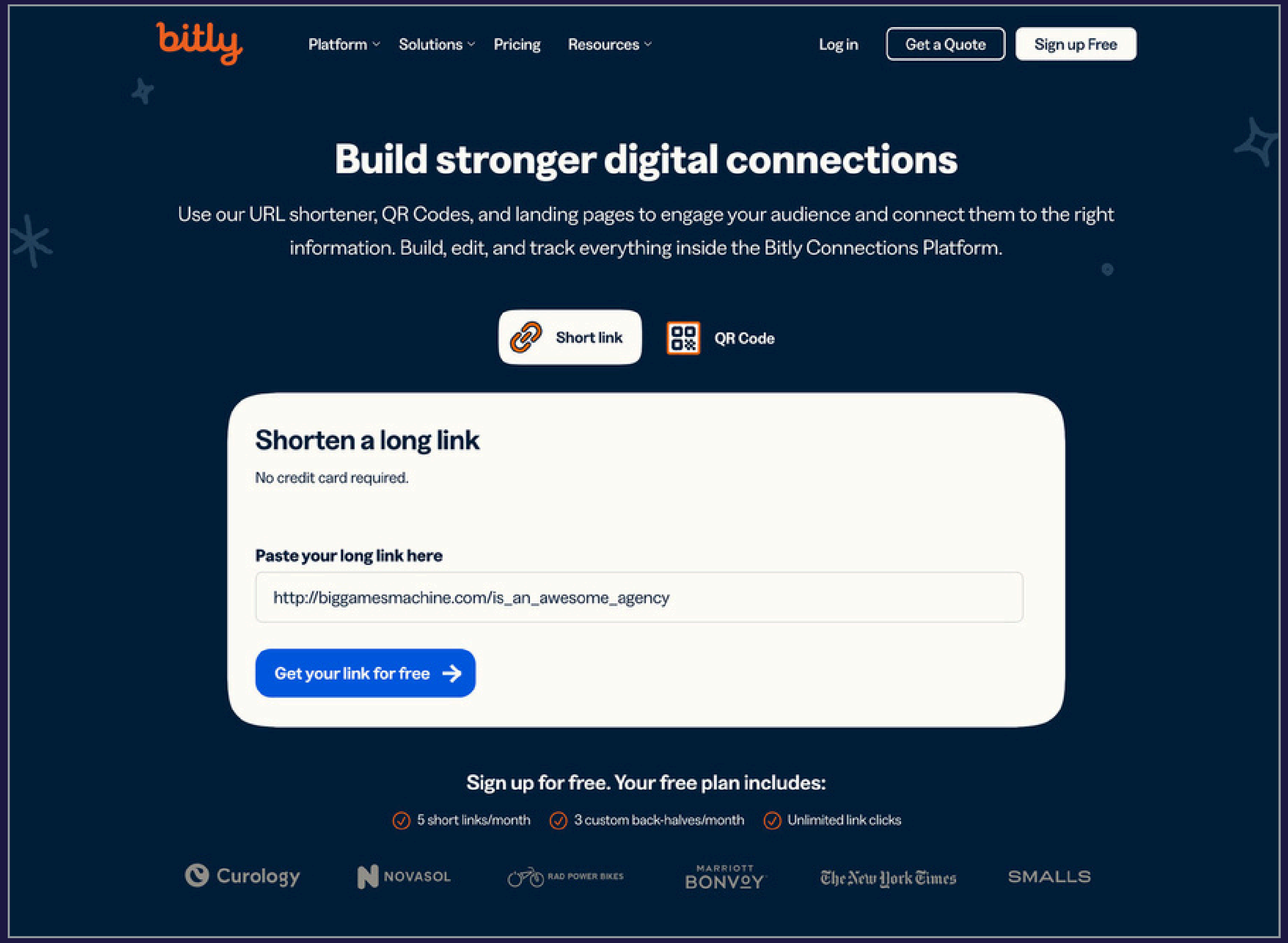
Google Search Console is a free tool that helps you monitor and improve how your site appears in Google Search results. It provides information about how Google crawls, indexes, and serves your site



Mention is a real-time monitoring tool, with added sentiment analysis and share of voice measurement. You can also use it as a platform for scheduling social media content

- **Clickthroughs or referred site visits:** Google Analytics will tell you the domains referring the most traffic to your site so you can see which pieces of coverage generate the most clicks. You could also provide trackable URLs with your guest posts, which makes it easier to attribute clicks to specific pieces of content; use Bitly or your marketing automation tool (if using one such as Hubspot) to generate trackable links

- **Estimated coverage views:** this estimates how many people actually read an article, which is a bit more accurate than the old metric of 'readers', which assumes everyone that visits a site reads everything on it. There is a great post by Coveragebook that explains more about how it's calculated



Bit.ly is a quick and free way to generate links from URLs that are trackable - it also means you can create customised links that are on-brand. You can also create QR codes from a link - very handy for marketing collateral

Metrics and tools for measuring SHARED media

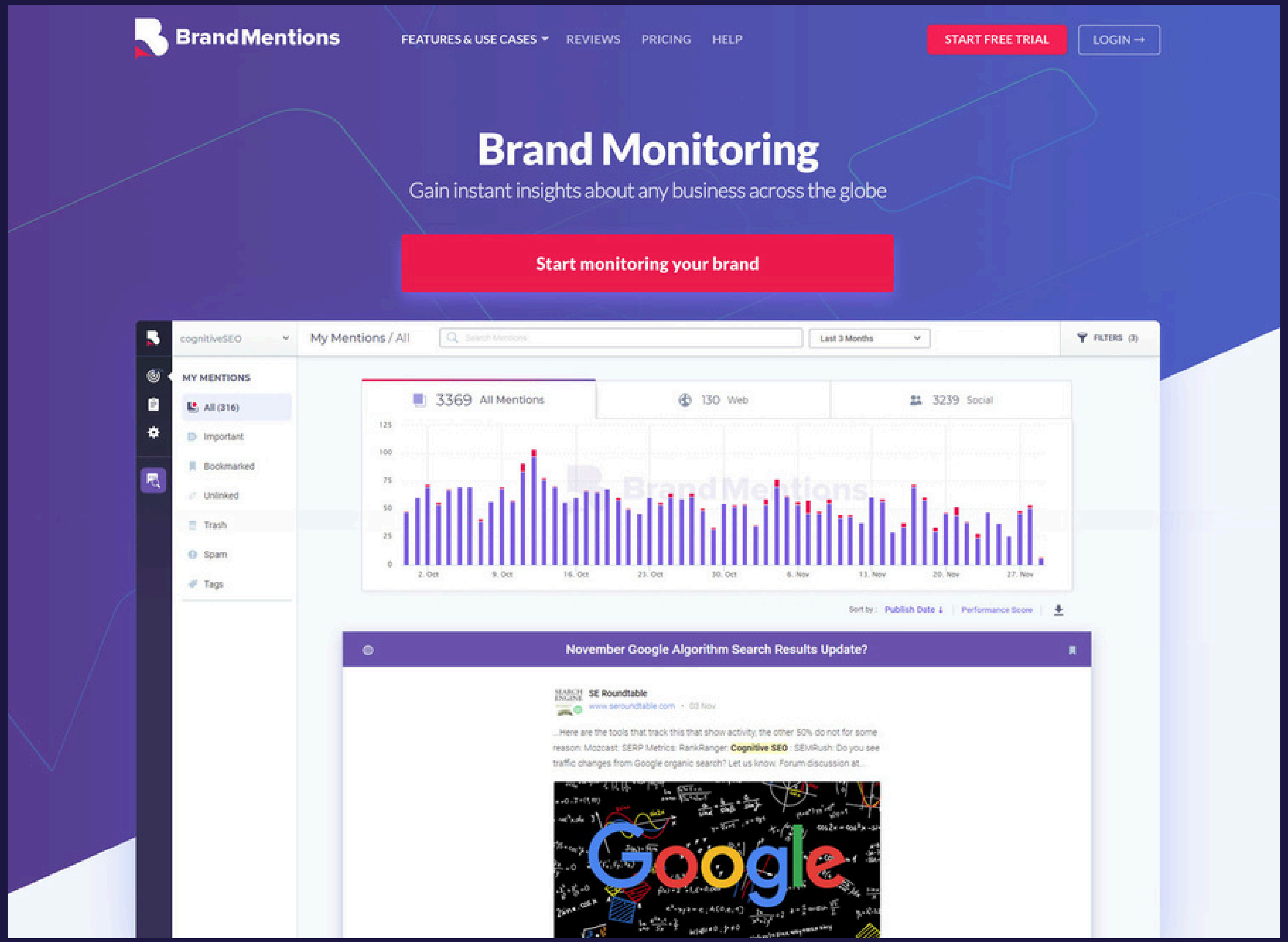
When we talk about shared media, we mainly mean social media - as social media content is 100% designed to be shareable. Social channels have become pivotal for direct marketing and creating conversations with customers and prospects. They should be seen as parallel (and complimentary) channels to earned media. It's also a great barometer for overall brand engagement and interest, as you can see real-time clicks, likes and comments.

These are some key metrics you might monitor. Most of them can be measured using the built-in tools social platforms offer.

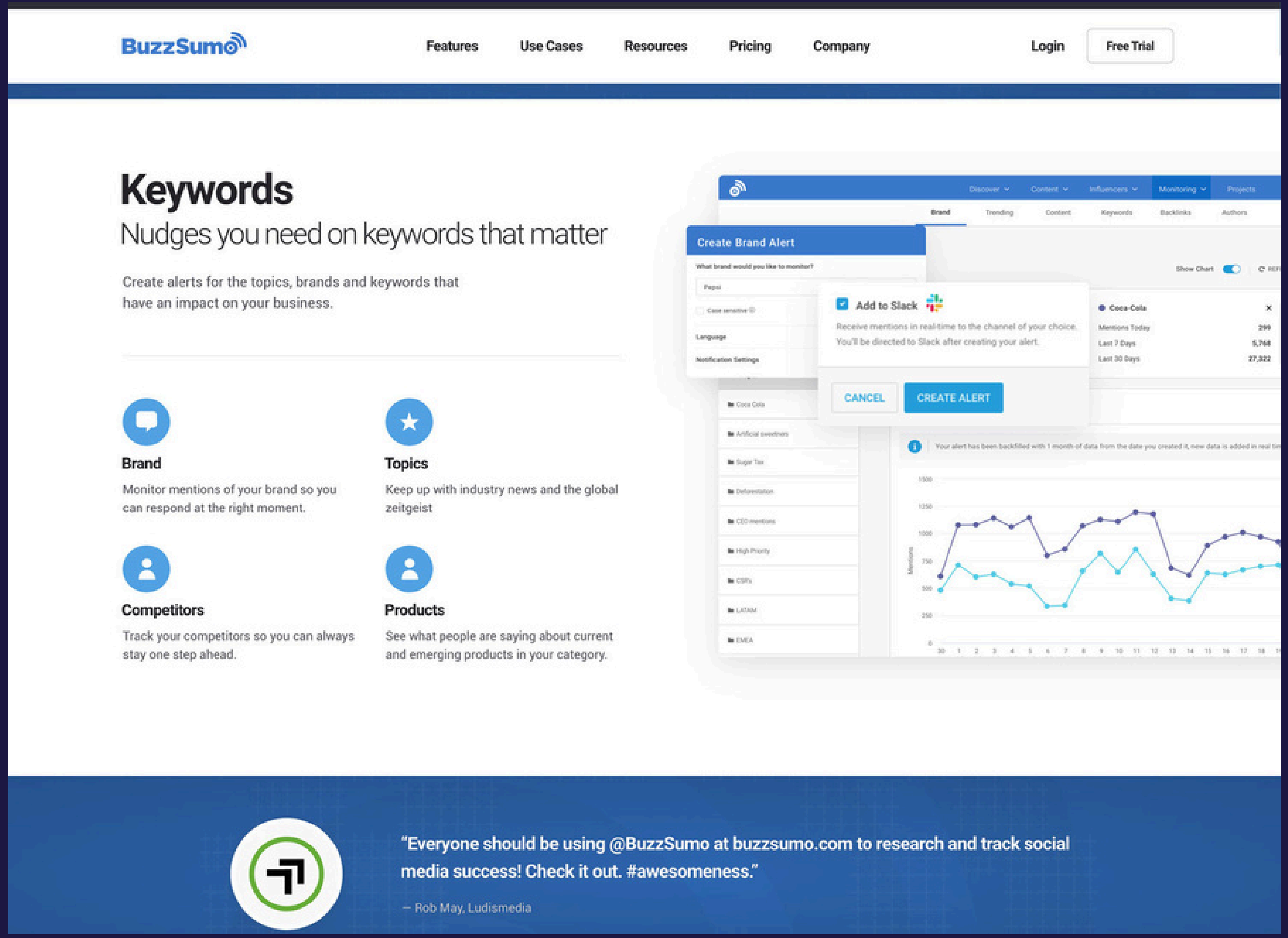
- **Engagement rates:** measure what percentage of your audience actively engages with your content. Regularly checking post engagement rates can help you remove the deadwood and instead focus on giving users what they want
- **Impressions:** regularly share relevant and engaging content, and you can expect an increase in the amount of users viewing your material. An impression is basically the same as a view; it measures how often users view or visit a specific page
- **Follower growth rate:** all social media platforms can 'follow' a page or profile. Your followers will likely increase over time if you post good and relevant content. Don't just note how many you have each month; track the speed at which your accounts are growing
- **Sentiment:** this measures whether mentions of your product or brand are positive or negative. Identifying spikes in either and retracing your steps to see what might have caused them is also highly valuable for optimising all your B2B PR efforts. However, automated sentiment analysis is not always accurate, so consider checking the results in more depth if you can
- **Share of voice:** this is a side-by-side comparison with other products or brands based on the times they get mentioned online. How are your mentions and engagements tracking against that of your competitors? Seeing what's working for them is valuable intelligence for defining or optimising your strategy
- **Referred site visits:** you want to know which platforms send the most traffic back to your site so you can prioritise accordingly or rethink your strategy for underperforming channels. A third-party site that sends traffic to yours is a referral or referring site

Beyond the measurement and monitoring tools offered by the social platforms, you might also want to consider using some (paid) dedicated tools that can be helpful when you want to monitor multiple channels and keywords and streamline your workflow.

- **BrandMentions** – claims to "dig every corner of the internet to find all the relevant mentions about anyone or anything"!



BrandMentions is a monitoring tool that's similar to platforms like Mention and Awario, but is more specialised at helping brands to get insight into what people are saying about them



BuzzSumo helps you dig into the details of how and why people engage with your social media content, helping you to understand what works best so you can do more of it. It also lets you search for relevant influencers that could help you boost awareness of your content or channel

- **Buzzsumo** – a social listening tool for analysing best-performing content, topics and competitors
- We already covered Talkwalker, Awario, and Mention under earned media, and Hootsuite's features are covered under paid media

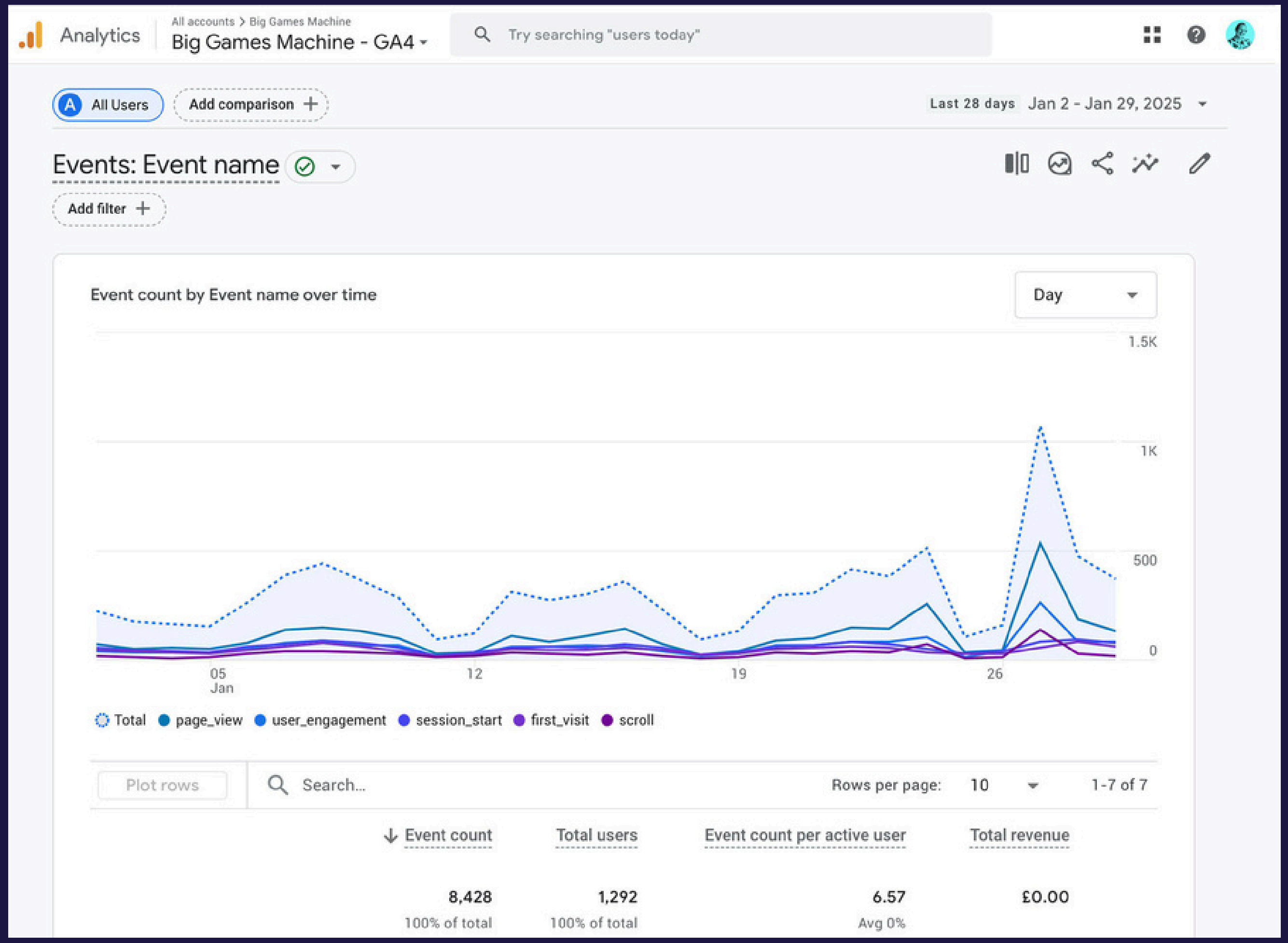
Metrics and tools for measuring OWNED media

Owned media is the heart of your content strategy and the foundation of your inbound B2B PR campaigns. In theory, all the other parts of PESO start here, as none of them is possible without the interesting, relevant, quality content that should make up your owned media strategy.

Owned content is typically part of an inbound marketing funnel. That means content should be designed to help inbound leads progress towards a sales enquiry. Usually, this means making great content that answers important questions and solves problems from prospective customers. This earns trust and demonstrates the value and uniqueness of what you're marketing.

Because of this, the metrics we want to look at can be quite detailed and relate to where inbound traffic comes from and what they are doing once they encounter your owned content. They include:

- **Lead quality score:** this is the mother of all inbound marketing metrics, and it's usually something you'll use a marketing automation platform to track. In simplified terms, the system can track all their content interactions by creating a contact record for each site visitor or lead in the database. This information helps sort highly engaged from dormant contacts, and you can target each accordingly for priority treatment or reactivation



Google Analytics is a free tool that helps you understand how customers interact with your websites and apps, with insights into how people engage with content and navigate around

Bonus Freebie!

If you want to impress your marketing peers with your knowledge of what kinds of content work best on which social platforms, we recommend reading the latest free report from Rival IQ - get it here: [Rival IQ's 2024 Social Media Industry Benchmark Report]

- **Search Engine Results Page (SERP) analysis:** this is a detailed look at where and for what you rank highest in Google searches - the higher on the page you rank, the more likely people will click through. There is a lot of voodoo technical stuff in optimising Google search, but you should start by targeting winnable keywords before gearing up to take on the higher competition

- **Backlink volume:** a measure of how many other sites and articles link to yours; backlinks are a key indicator of your authority on a topic

- **Domain Authority:** the higher your Domain Authority (DA), the better your search rankings should be. DA is influenced by factors such as how many other sites link to your website, whether there are links from your website to others with equal or higher Domain Authority, and the age of your domain name/website address (older is often seen as more reliable/authoritative)

- **Time on site or time on page:** the 'dwell time' of visitors to your site is a crucial indicator of your content's quality and usefulness. If people leave quickly (see Bounce rate), they're either not getting what they want, or they're getting it but don't think you have much more to offer and are not navigating to other pages on your site

- **Pages per session:** works in tandem with the above. The more pages a visitor checks out on your site, the more engaged they will likely be

- **Bounce rate:** 'bounces' are visits that end after landing on only one page. Too many bounces, and you'll take a battering in the search results. To avoid this, structure your site and content to entice people to keep exploring by making generous use of internal links to read more high-quality content

- **UVPM (Unique Visitors Per Month):** UVPM counts each visitor to your site just once, regardless of how many times they stop by in a month. Working out the UVPM gives you a good idea of what proportion of your target audience engages with your content

- **Conversions:** a more specific measurement related to engagement, looking at whether someone has followed through with an action you've prompted them to take. Usually, this will involve completing a form for newsletter sign-ups, contact requests, or content downloads. Volume is one factor here, but quality is important too. Students researching their dissertations are not promising sales leads. Where these conversions come from is essential; can you accurately track referring platforms or digital campaigns?

- **Email database growth:** also often the result of form fills but could be generated at events and shows. It is similar to the above in terms of the pursuit of volume and quality

- **Email performance:** metrics including click-thru rates (CTR), opens, and unsubscribes are key indicators of your emails' quality; underwhelming results could point to a content or database issue

- **Key tools for owned media measurement:** Google Analytics is the industry standard for website analytics, including UVPM, traffic sources, bounce rates, and conversions. The Google Analytics Academy offers extensive training and certifications

There are plenty of very good SEO tools you can use to measure keyword ranking as a result of the content that you have created - but be aware that, as we've already mentioned, this is a complex and technical subject, so it is worth involving someone who knows what they are doing or maybe think about some kind of free online training in the basics. We use a combination of the following:

- **SEMRush**
- **Ubersuggest**
- **Ahrefs**
- **Serpstat**
- **Moz** - the free **MozBar** plug-in gives you "instant metrics while viewing any page or SERP"

Knowledge bit... lead scoring explained

Lead scoring in the context of CRM/marketing automation platforms is a method used to rank prospects based on their perceived value to your business. This system assigns scores to leads according to certain attributes and behaviours, helping marketers and sales teams prioritise which leads to focus on.

Key Aspects of Lead Scoring:

1. Demographic Information: Assigning points based on who the lead is (e.g., job title, industry, company size, geographic location).
2. Behavioural Data: Points are given based on actions a lead takes, such as:
   - Visiting the website
   - Downloading content
   - Attending webinars
   - Opening emails or clicking links
3. Engagement Level: The more a lead interacts with your brand and engages with your content, the higher their score.
4. Lead Qualification: Once a lead's score crosses a certain threshold, they're considered "sales-ready," and the sales team can reach out, improving the chances of conversion.

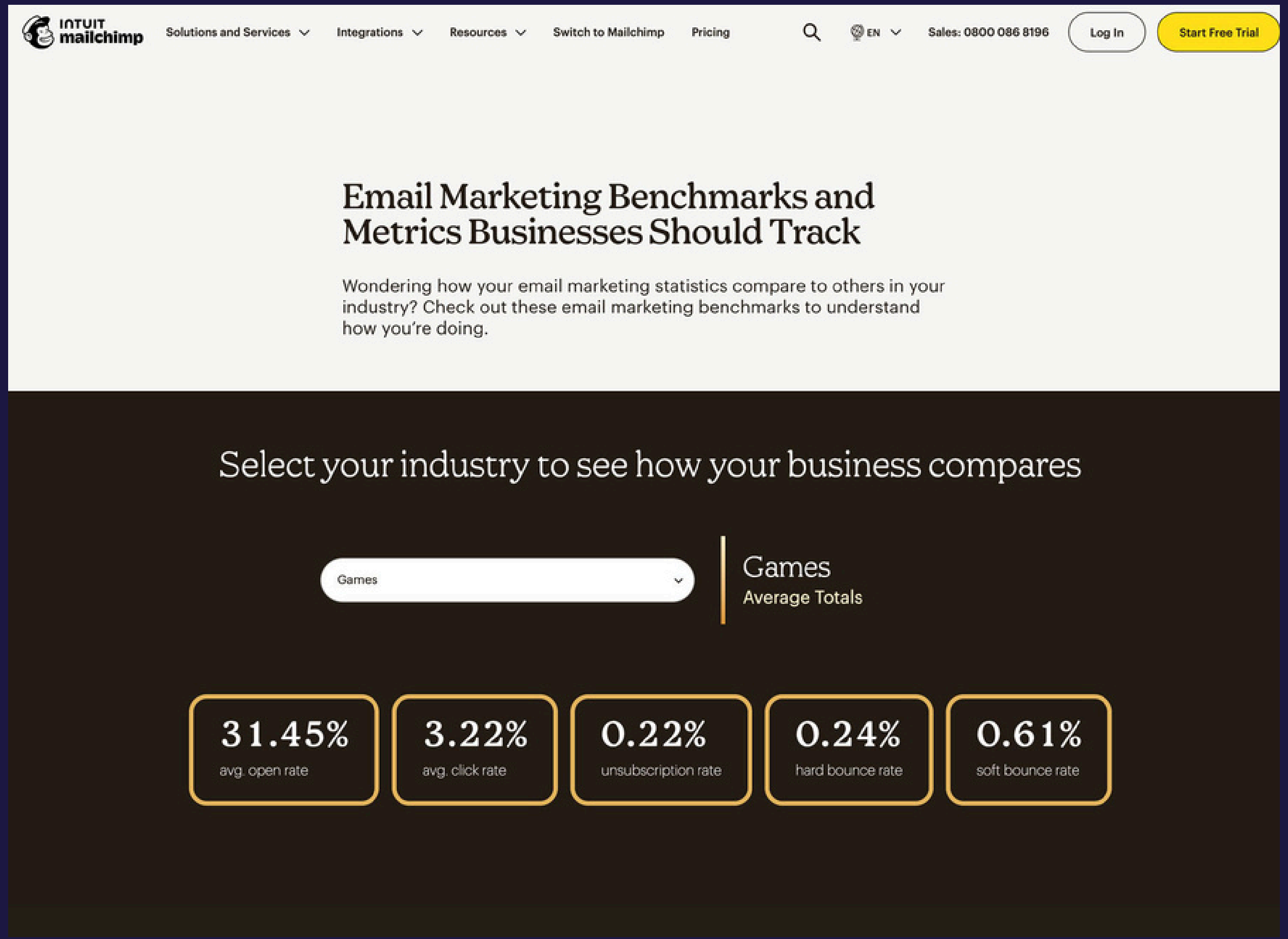
Marketing automation platforms use these scores to automate follow-ups, tailor messaging, and move leads more efficiently along the sales funnel. Someone with a high engagement score may then become an MQL - a Marketing Qualified Lead.

Key tools for measuring content engagement:

- **Buzzsumo** is good for looking into content performance and intelligence gathering
- Form submissions captured by your marketing automation or CRM platform (for example, Pipedrive, Hubspot, SharpSpring, etc.) if the content is gated or digital downloads
- For newsletters, **Mailchimp** has a great form builder that tracks content sign-ups
- Click-through rates on your emails, social media, and website, as well as external site referrals captured by Google Analytics, are done via a service like Mailchimp or a marketing automation system if you are using one
- Heat mapping, like that from **Hotjar**, allows you to see where users are directing their attention on your web pages, so you can be sure poor layout and UX aren't scuppering otherwise great content
- Marketing automation/CRM tools like **Active Campaign, SharpSpring, Marketo** and **Hubspot** are game-changing for B2B PR strategy and measurement. They can track engagement with specific content pieces for optimisation or trigger the following actions to nurture prospects, such as sending emails or making phone calls from sales

Most of your owned media benchmarks will focus on improving your performance month on month, but some helpful resources include:

- MailChimp's **email benchmarks**. These let you see performance benchmarks across 40 different industries. For example, newsletters related to 'hobbies' lead the way for open rates at 27.35%, while 'daily deals/e-coupons' bring up the tail at 14.92%
- The advertising platform WordStream provides a free **analysis of the conversion rates of thousands of landing pages**. In this cross-industry study, the average landing page conversion rate was 2.35%, but the top 25% converted at over 5%



Email marketing platform MailChimp has data on email benchmarks for many different marketing verticals. For example, this screenshot shows the benchmarks for games-related content

WARNING - too much measurement can be a bad thing!

As you can see, it's relatively easy to collect data, and there are loads of different ways to capture and analyse how your PR and marketing is performing. But just because you can collect it doesn't always mean you should!

You risk being overwhelmed by 'analysis paralysis' if you collect too much too soon. Plus, data, for data's sake, is pointless. Data is only helpful if people understand it, learn from it and do something with it to refine campaigns.

Just as the PESO model takes an integrated view of content distribution, combining your chosen metrics is important to create your overall measurement picture. Some of these metrics tell very little - so it's important to choose the **right** mix so that you feel informed and in control - rather than swimming in a sea of numbers.

AVE's - the PR measurement that refuses to die...

Back in the mists of time, before things like smartphones and social media existed, PR people didn't have clever ways to measure how their work delivered results.

Just as today, simply measuring the volume media coverage didn't give any real idea of the ROI of the money invested in PR. This is where Advertising Value Equivalent, or AVE, comes in.

AVE was a way to link the monetary value of media coverage to the cost of an advert in the same publication (remember, this is all back before digital media, so advertising was mainly priced by whole, half or quarter pages). So if you secured coverage in, say, PC Gamer, you'd literally measure it with a ruler and compare it to the advertising rate for a similarly sized advert. And bingo - your coverage has an AVE of £500 or £1000 or whatever.

Of course, this approach goes against everything PR claims to be about. It's a measurement that does nothing to understand sentiment or intent, and it's certainly not appropriate in a landscape of digital and social media, content-based marketing, events, and experiences.

Yet, according to a report by PR coverage tool Releasd, a shocking 6% of PR agencies surveyed still use AVE. The folks at Talkwalker also have a good post explaining why it's a terrible way to measure PR.

It's crazy to us that in an industry swimming in a sea of data, people would still use a metric that was never fit for purpose. If you come across anyone who thinks it's a good idea, run away!

AMEC - one measurement framework to rule them all?

In recent years, leaders within the PR industry have attempted to develop a framework for creating PR campaigns that incorporate clear measurement principles.

AMEC, the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, was created to improve the measurement and attribution of PR and communications and help educate and improve PR practices worldwide.

In 2010, AMEC met in Barcelona to discuss how to destroy AVEs for good and better define effective PR measurement, which resulted in Barcelona Principles.

These seven principles outline how measurement should be designed into your PR campaigns from the outset.

The Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles 3.0

Principle #1 Setting goals is a prerequisite to communications planning, measurement and evaluation.

Principle #1 Measurement and evaluation should identify outputs, outcomes, and potential impact.

Principle #1 Outcomes and impact should be identified for stakeholders, society, and the organisation.

Principle #1 Communication measurement and evaluation should include both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Principle #1 AVEs are not the value of communications.

Principle #1 Holistic communication measurement and evaluation includes all relevant online and offline channels.

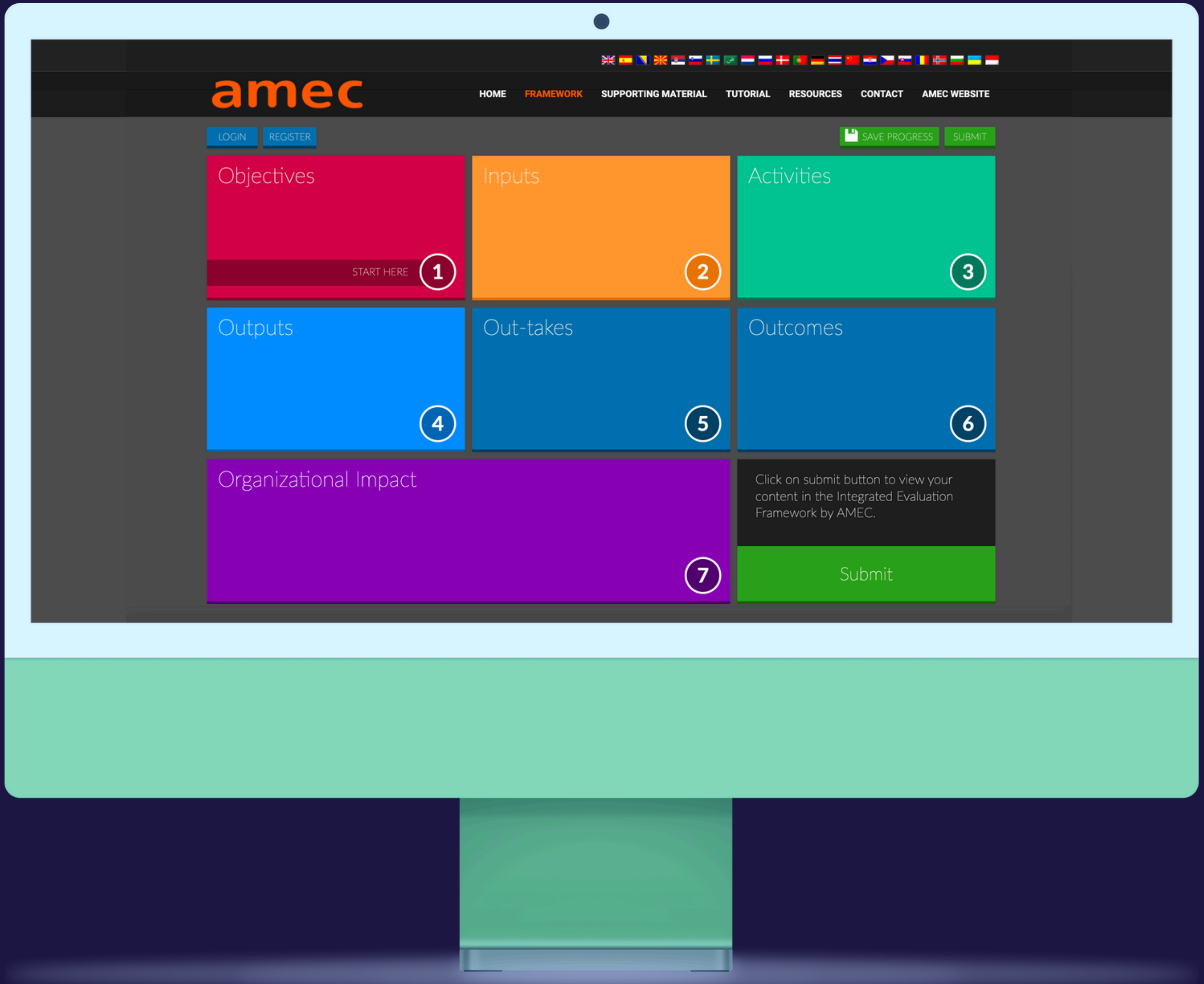
Principle #1 Communication measurement and evaluation are rooted in integrity and transparency to drive learning and insights.

The most useful output from AMEC's work is the 'Integrated Evaluation Framework' tool.

This is a free-to-use website where you can detail your whole PR campaign, starting with your objectives, inputs and activities (i.e. what you want to achieve and the tactics you are using) and ending with outputs, outtakes and outcomes (i.e. what your campaign will deliver). A final section allows you to list the organisational impacts the PR has had.

This is a handy way to capture all of the essential elements of a PR strategy and organise them in a way that helps visualise your objectives and shows the impact and results generated.

There seems to be a slow adoption of this approach within the PR industry, but in our experience, it's pretty rare to work with a client in such a structured way that tools like this are appropriate. But why not try it and find out for yourself?



Let's get ready to... ...measure!?

Measuring B2B PR success in the games industry and PR, in general, has been the source of intense discussion for decades.

As marketers have become more comfortable with a data-led approach, the PR industry has struggled to demonstrate its value in comparison.

However, as this guide has shown, measuring the ROI and impact of PR using a blend of metrics is perfectly possible. That means that whatever your strategy, and however big or small your budget, there's no excuse for not being smarter with your measurement.

And if you're an agency reading this, there's no excuse for not being more transparent about your results, too.

> "NOT EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE COUNTED COUNTS, AND NOT EVERYTHING THAT COUNTS CAN BE COUNTED."

WILLIAM BRUCE CAMERON (SOCIOLOGIST)

ABOUT BIG GAMES MACHINE

We think we're a little bit special. Why? Simply put, we do more than the average games marketing agency when it comes to who we work with because we work on B2B campaigns as much as we do consumer ones.

The video game industry is home to some fantastic consumer marketing agencies, but most don't dabble in the B2B side of games PR and marketing. Similarly, the tech industry is full of talented B2B specialists who don't live and breathe video games.

This means that, for the many companies that offer services and technology platforms and tools to developers and publishers, there isn't an obvious solution for marketing agencies that combine B2B tech and video game know-how. Or at least, there wasn't until Big Games Machine was born.

James Kaye

John Ozimek

BIG GAMES MACHINE IS A LEADING PR AND MARKETING AGENCY SPECIALISING IN GAMES PR & MARKETING

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