



**MARKET INSIGHTS ON  
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION  
OF COMMUNICATION**

**ASIA PACIFIC  
2023**

**amec**

# INTRODUCTION

Asia Pacific is a region of great diversity. When we took up the challenge of leading this Chapter for AMEC, following in the footsteps of Aseem Sood, now AMEC's Global Chair, we started by asking members what they were seeking from their membership.

Members immediately and generously stepped up and said they wanted to contribute in meaningful ways. This Asia Pacific Market Insights paper is one of those meaningful ways we have been able to tap into the deep intelligence and broad experience of the members of our region to provide some insights into what is happening with communication measurement and evaluation in their markets. It complements other AMEC resources that support communication and measurement professionals to mature their markets including the Barcelona Principles and reasons to say no to AVEs (Advertising Value Equivalents).

We would like to express our appreciation and acknowledge the contributions from our members and thought leaders who have presented their views and observations on the outlook for measurement and evaluation in their markets:

- Australia:** Amrita Sidhu, Managing Director, [Medianet Insights](#)
- China:** Jane Tung, International Business Director and Fiona Fang, International Business Specialist, [Xinlian \(Beijing\) Media Watch](#)
- Hong Kong:** Carbo Yu, Regional Executive Director, [Sinclair Communication](#).
- India:** Harsh Jain, Founder, [iExadia](#) and Durgesh Garg, Vice President, [Impact Research and Measurement](#)
- Indonesia:** Ong Hock Chuan, Managing Partner, [Maverick Indonesia](#)
- Malaysia and Thailand:** Robert Kabus, Chief Insights Officer, [Dataxet](#)
- New Zealand:** Ngaire Crawford, Insights Director ANZ, [Isentia](#)
- Philippines:** Brian Herrera, Managing Director, [Media Meter](#)
- Singapore:** Andrew Nicholls, Managing Director, [Carma Asia](#)
- Taiwan:** Miki Lai, Senior Strategist Asia Pacific, [Golin](#) and Sherry Lee, Assistant Account Manager Golin Taipei.

We value the shared discussion and debate of these important regional perspectives. Our aim is for this Market Insights paper to become a resource that can be updated in response to market contributions and developments.

In the meantime, AMEC has a wealth of resources for practitioners wanting to learn more about how to demonstrate their value which can be found here <https://amecorg.com/resources/>. Five resources that may be of particular interest to readers are:

- AMEC's Integrated Evaluation Framework <https://amecorg.com/amecframework/>
- Barcelona Principles 3.0 in 25 languages and to become an official supporter of these foundational principles. <https://amecorg.com/2020/07/barcelona-principles-3-0/>
- The Long and Winding Road Away from AVEs in South East Asia <https://amecorg.com/2022/04/the-long-and-winding-road-away-from-aves-in-southeast-asia/>

- 22 Reasons to Say No to AVEs  
<https://amecorg.com/2017/06/the-definitive-guide-why-aves-are-invalid/>  
(also available in Chinese)
- “Showcase of Client Success”, a webinar featuring three APAC winners in the 2022 AMEC Global Awards for Communication Effectiveness  
<https://amecorg.com/video/2022-amec-awards-apac-finalists-insights-and-lessons/>

We would be delighted to receive feedback and any other questions readers may have who are seeking insights with a multi-market Asia Pacific focus.

Yours in measurement,  
AMEC Asia Pacific Co-Chairs



**Felicia Nugroho**

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# 1 What is the state of measurement for communication in your market? How much is AVE still being used as a metric to measure communication?

## AUSTRALIA

In Australia, it's been relatively static over the last three to five years and we have not seen a lot of new concepts, metrics or approaches within the industry.

As part of delivering additional value and measurement innovation, Medianet Insights has, over 2022, developed two new metrics which we now provide to nearly all of our clients as part of their standard media insights and analysis reports. AVE is very rarely being used by our clients as a measurement metric. We only have one using it and they are a legacy client. Over the last 12 to 24 months, we have not seen AVE raised as a requirement in any new client conversations (and we certainly don't raise it from our end).

## CHINA

First, rather than only gathering some traditional quantitative indicators like coverage, number of clippings, AVE, our clients are increasingly focusing on complete and scientific measurement of communications. This is now a trend.

Second, especially in the recent two years given the impact of the pandemic, clients are increasingly asking for communication analysis to get actionable insights and recommendations that can help complete their future communication strategies or campaign planning.

Regarding AVE, a small number of clients still ask for it as one of the metrics to measure communications, but this number is steadily declining. In order to fully assess their communication efforts, our clients prefer to have access to various quantitative metrics, such as engagement, reach, brand health, and key message penetration, that can measure and evaluate communications in a more comprehensive way. But whether these metrics are as simple and quantifiable as AVE, and whether they are widely acknowledged as a uniform standard in the industry, are the areas of concern for our clients. It takes time and trust to establish a consistent perception with clients in this area.

Last but not least, the media landscape in China is complicated and has its own distinctive characteristics. This requires us to use comprehensive

measurable metrics rather than the expected one size-fits-all metrics like AVE. We don't think there is one metric can adequately measure and evaluate the full picture of PR in China.

## HONG KONG

As an industry, we are still going through a transitional stage where the market is gradually placing higher value on measuring the output of communication efforts. As the way we practice PR evolves, the prevalence of integrated communications campaigns means that measurements will look beyond the traditional indicators towards more diversified and sophisticated approaches. The likes of influencer metrics, conversion tracking, competitor share of voice (SOV) and sentiment analysis provide extra dimensions and context into the value generated by modern communication efforts.

As for AVE, the debate continues on its value in the field of measurement. A segment of market players has moved away from using AVE as a sole measurement of PR outcomes in pursue of insightful metrics. On the other side, AVE remains popular among large corporations to articulate the value of PR results due to traditional and historic reasons. From time to time, we still receive client requests for AVE figures.

## INDIA

Our clients are based out of India and in some parts of the United States. The state of measurement in PR is somewhat stagnant in both these regions. The PR space has been relying on the same providers offering mostly unchanged monitoring solutions for far too long.

Many monitoring solutions are automated – providing mentions, potential reach, and social shares and “likes”. These are only pieces of the overall media and PR intelligence measurement puzzle, and unfortunately, much of the data isn't capturing what's important, that is, meeting an organisation's key objectives.

AVE has been dying a slow death for over 10 years but it's not dead yet! Surprisingly, some PR professionals and corporate communications leaders are still

clinging to AVE, even though they know it has very little (if any) meaning in today's PR and comms world.

We have seen rapid advancement in terms of incorporating media measurement into PR programs. If we talk about 10 to 15 years ago, people would not even think about media measurement. They will either ask questions like "why do we need media measurement?" or comments like "we do not have that kind of budget". In recent years however, things have changed significantly with clients now discussing media measurement even in meetings/calls about their basic media monitoring needs.

Regarding AVE, we can segregate clients into 2 buckets as listed below:

- Where PR firms do media evaluation for clients: In this case, many PR firms use AVE as a measure to demonstrate their value to clients.
- Clients who work with specialised media measurement firms: AVE is hardly a measure for most of these clients as their media measurement program is designed around their objectives and measured accordingly without any need of AVEs. AVEs may still be used in rare cases primarily where it is a multi-national and the request for AVE is directly from their head-office.

## INDONESIA

Indonesia has improved considerably from its position three or four years ago where AVEs were still used extensively. We don't have figures but from the webinars we conducted introducing AMEC, we have received significantly more inquiries from companies across industries wanting to know more about the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework. Subsequently, we no longer use AVEs as a success metric for our clients.

Nonetheless, up until recently we still received requests from clients, domestic as well as global, whose KPI is still AVE.

We have seen progress in the state of measurement in this market, yet demand for AVEs is still observed from across sectors.

## MALAYSIA AND THAILAND

AVE is still a go-to measurement, but clients are increasingly receptive to adjustments that factor in more PR-specific measures (ie. share of exposure, sentiment/tonality, spokesperson inclusion and key messaging).

## NEW ZEALAND

There's always a desire for a universal metric; it's human nature to try to capture complex ideas in their simplest form. New Zealand communicators punch above their weight for creativity and innovation – a smaller market and smaller teams with greater exposure within an organisation means that work is tightly linked to behaviour and impact – and supporting them to measure with this lens is easier than some of the other markets.

AVE still exists, with some people holding onto it because they believe it's a board or client requirement, but usually we find that senior leadership like deeper data and are easy enough to shift away from this if the right alternative is provided.

## PHILIPPINES

The current market for measuring media performance mainly focuses on the following:

- Story value or relevance and understanding of the impact of news, campaigns, CSR (corporate social responsibility) activities, corporate projects, and the reputation of the brand
- Entities will be looking for the volume of news, social media engagement, and reactions
- Topic analysis and impact
- Influencers/authors and key opinion leaders (KOLs), Emerging Opinion Leaders (EOLs)
- Share of voice and rate of exposure by volume and AVEs
- Focus on competitor analysis - benchmarking comms vs comms messages (multiple)
- Sentiments and tonality
- Growing areas are reach, the growth rate of social media profiles, audio/video views and comments
- Social media virality rate.

Presently AVE is still being used by most companies and PR agencies to measure communications in terms of volume. It is challenging, since top management also look for an ROI of the communication efforts to quantify spending value vs budget.



## SINGAPORE

In Singapore, it is generally accepted that AVE is not a valid metric, but it is still used begrudgingly by many PR agencies and in-house teams.

Those that have dropped AVE from reporting tend to focus on exposure metrics, particularly reach and engagement. A growing number of organisations are adopting outcome-focused approaches, but they remain in the minority.



## TAIWAN

AVE is still being used to measure PR efforts in some cases, to justify the value of the efforts, but it is being challenged for its accuracy and relevance. Many are now emphasising quality indicators such as tier 1 media penetration and key message pull-throughs over AVE. However, brands or marketers still want metrics that prove the business impact or monetary value of PR.

## FELICIA AND DEB'S KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- There is a consistent theme across all markets in Asia Pacific that, notwithstanding reluctance among some clients, AVEs are indeed on their way out.
  - Indeed, this metric fails data testing since the methodology remains opaque and not replicable across sources.
  - Some markets face greater challenges than others, yet they have been innovative in coming up with alternative metrics as a stepping stone to transition away from AVEs.
- When it comes to alternatives, clients are
- generally receptive to more diversified and sophisticated approaches rather than the “one size fits all” proposition offered by any single metric.

## 2

## In your experience, what are the challenges in moving away from AVEs?



### AUSTRALIA

There has been an occasional but still relatively rare issue when some of our clients have changed their monitoring partner as they used to receive AVE from the previous provider. In the significant majority however, we have had no difficult (explicit) conversations around AVEs.

We do wonder though if there has been an implicit impact to the media intelligence industry and analysis service with the phasing out of AVE. We believe in and support this, but pose a question/reflection that as an industry we aren't replacing it with another metric that clearly shows ROI or PR effectiveness in a dollar sense that helps justify comms budgets.

Is there a discussion to be had about how this may have impacted the perceived value of media insights by clients in certain sectors?



### CHINA

AVE is still one of the metrics that some clients want to use to gauge the effectiveness of their communications, although the number of these clients is dwindling. In addition, these clients did not view AVE as the only major metric, which is another difference we've noticed.

If we want to completely abandon AVE use, we need to continue supporting the industry by coaching and communicating with our clients on best practices. This will drive consensus on how the communication effect can be accurately evaluated. Sometimes we even need to work together with our clients to develop a new measurement approach that properly fits their brands and businesses and this is consistent with measurable objectives.

In addition, we must offer our clients other proven PR metrics that are more objective and scientific than AVEs. The best choice is unquestionably an internationally recognised measurement like the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework (IEF).

We think that as AMEC gains greater support in Asia, more clients and monitoring and analytics firms will know and use the AMEC IEF in accordance

with the Barcelona Principles. We are aware that a journey is seldom made in a straight line.

The AVE evolves along with China's media environment. With regard to PR statistics, it does indeed have some importance. Both data mining and statistics need to work for producing value in both communication and business. Because of this, how you use AVE depends on the objectives of statistics and the relevance of business scenarios.



### HONG KONG

As a long-standing metric for media measurement, many corporations have worked with AVE for a long period of time. AVE provides a concrete figure which is easily understood across relevant stakeholders and senior management. This familiarity has made it very difficult for an entire organisation to fully transit away from this method.

Another key challenge that we see is how to measure the metrics that matter to the brand, and the challenge is even more complex when the brand side has a complicated horizontal deployment structure such as PR and media, branding and reputation, digital and social media teams.

With the evolving use of social media and online channels, measuring communication efforts in the form of out-takes, outputs and outcomes becomes more empirical. A variety of metrics such as media reach, opportunities to see (OTS), SOV and sentiment can provide meaningful insights into communication outputs while awareness, interest, liking, engagement and consideration determines out-takes performance.

Lastly, outcomes can be measured by attitude change, satisfaction and trust level, brand preferences and purchase intentions. All of these contributes towards the value created via a total mix of communication efforts.

 **INDIA**

There are three challenges. The first is a matter of client education. We shouldn't be afraid to educate our clients on what they are doing wrong. If they are still clinging to AVE, tell them why it's dated, and explain why it's usually inaccurate. Encourage them to change their thinking on the metrics that should matter most to them.

The second challenge is that many PR and comms pros know AVE is meaningless, however, their direct reports are still requesting it, so the PR and comms pros feel obligated to deliver. To meet this challenge, we must help our day-to-day contacts educate their bosses on the pitfalls of AVE. This is a great opportunity for us to act as a partner and collaborators to C-level leadership in our clients' organisations.

Thirdly, the challenge lies in the fact that some media monitoring providers are still pitching and selling their clients on AVE. The main reason is that providers have access to AVE and won't hesitate to sell it to their clients, even though the AVE data they are selling is typically inaccurate and relatively meaningless.

The challenges are mostly is the lack of a better metric in dollar terms that can show management the value of their work. There is somehow an impression that top management only understands dollar ROI, and that we need to convey the value of our work to them in the same language.

 **INDONESIA**

Firstly, directors and top executives are unaware that there is a better way of measuring success in communication.

Secondly, if they are aware, they expect a monetary metric as success measure that can mistakenly translate into ROI.

Thirdly, the in-house PR and communication professionals expect a single metric, as they are used to with AVEs.

Inertia is definitely the most challenging obstacle. Many organizations have used AVEs for many years and feel they would lose an anchoring reference if AVEs are no longer used.

Through client education we have persuaded the local representatives of our clients that AVEs are mere vanity metrics but often their regional and even global head offices are the ones insisting on AVEs.

The ongoing challenge is to educate the C-Suite as their communicators are reluctant to push the envelope with them in a hierarchical Asian work structure.

 **SINGAPORE**

PR teams do not feel empowered to question the status quo. Typically, we hear "It's what we've always done" or "it's what our management / clients expect".

 **MALAYSIA AND THAILAND**

These challenges are mostly legacy and lack of a universally accepted alternative. There are also issues with the inability to actually measure traffic/viewing to a specific item.

The legacy factor is pretty strong. Many clients agree that AVEs have little relevance to PR value, but it has become the accepted measurement in their organisation (and sometimes how they are evaluated). So, moving away from a system that has some level of predictability can be worrisome. Even if the methodology made more sense, they worry the outcome may cast a negative light on their performance.

 **NEW ZEALAND**

AVE is in its death march with communicators that are focused on behaviour change, and that is a high proportion of the NZ profession. There are still pockets of interest in media "value" but they are typically agency based, and that is largely due to limited exposure of alternative metrics, and a desire to prove their worth compared to what their clients are spending on a campaign. It will continue to improve over time as there is more exposure to better ways to report on business impact to clients.



## PHILIPPINES

The challenges are mainly attributed to PR agencies and companies' history using the AVE data to quantify PR efforts and campaigns. It has been used significantly in the past to determine ROI in monetary value. Though certain companies have moved away from such measurement, a significant number still use this due to the monetary metrics for ROI.



## TAIWAN

Brands want to justify the value of their PR efforts and AVE has been the conventional metric to do so. Therefore, the challenges for moving away from AVE will be finding a new measurement standard that you can easily explain to others with no PR/marketing background, as they have more concerns about monetary value over the quality of coverage.

## FELICIA AND DEB'S KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Legacy is one of the main challenges in moving away from AVEs.
- Another is an expectation from clients for a one-size-fits all metric that provides monetary values to justify PR budget spent, rather than measuring success against communication objectives.
- Organisations still lack measurable objectives and default to 'off the shelf' metrics instead of KPIs against their specific objectives.
- Media intelligence (MI) providers are taking a lead in educating in-house and agency clients about best practice.
- The Barcelona Principles and AMEC's Integrated Evaluation Framework are flexible and readily accessible resources that effectively address the challenges media intelligence providers experience in their individual markets throughout Asia Pacific.
- Some MI providers recognise there may be an opportunity to innovate and to replace AVEs with metric or metrics that clearly show PR's effectiveness in dollar terms.

# 3

## What is the outlook in your market when it comes to communication measurement? (eg. any thoughts about innovation, AI, technology etc)



### AUSTRALIA

A core pillar of our strategy is ongoing innovation so we are very focused on this at a product and way of working level.

Our outlook on the Australian market is that more education is required on:

- The presentation and value of automated insights and qualitative insights. Dashboards and widgets vs meaningful and actionable media analysis
- The role of different media intelligence technologies, what they do and how they should be applied by both the insights providers and the clients.

We also see a lack of clarity on how to practically apply AI into communication and media measurement, especially for smaller clients with smaller budgets (and as a result have less appetite for experimentation).



### CHINA

We believe the communication evaluation and measurement market in China has a promising future because there has been an increase in demand in recent years. These days, supplying data round-up alone is no longer sufficient to meet clients' needs for communication measurement. Actionable insights obtained from data analysis are what clients need most.

Technology is necessary for communication measurement to advance further, in addition to analyst expertise and knowledge. Because of this, Xinlian has been increasing its investment in technology, notably artificial intelligence (AI), including crawling, sentiment analysis, and machine learning. Our automated procedure has been streamlined as a result of our ongoing technological advancement. This aids in enhancing user experience and efficiency.

Together, technology advancement and algorithmic development make improved communication measurement possible. Success in communications can be measured from the very beginning. Instead of only gathering and analysing data after the campaign, we need to sit down with the clients to discuss and set the objectives even before the

campaign begins. Additionally, it's important to be open-minded about the rapidly emerging trends in marketing and communication, as the two are intertwining.



### HONG KONG

We foresee the field for communication measurement will continue to evolve. Measuring business impact will be a common practice utilised to prove the worth and help identify strengths and weakness of communication efforts. To fully understand and capture the impact, measurement and evaluation metrics should employ a richer, more nuanced, and multi-faceted approach.

In the near future, we firmly believe technology advancement will continue to shake the landscape of measurement in communications. We are seeing brands that are starting to integrate internal data with communication metrics to map trends and patterns. We also anticipate a boost in SEO as a metric for PR and communications as traditional PR tactic such as landing online editorial story with the right set of keywords becomes more intertwined in the digital media space to amplify brand presence. With the vast amount of data available, big data analytics and artificial intelligence will be enable the evaluation of consumer behaviour and other relevant metrics at scale and at a much greater accuracy than before.



### INDIA

Is A.I. important to PR measurement and monitoring?  
Of course!

Are we relying too much on A.I. and "automation" in PR and media measurement? Yes!

Is an organisation's public relations strategy automated? Nope!

Are PR pro's relationships with the media built on artificial intelligence? Of course not!!

Good PR is built on human intelligence – years of professional experience, relationships with the media, creativity, and good old-fashioned storytelling. A good media monitoring and PR measurement strategy should also be built on human intelligence.

There is no doubt that media monitoring should continue to innovate and automate, we should continually find new and better ways to uncover key data points and metrics, but any innovation should also include the human component. Perhaps part of the innovation that needs to take place in PR measurement is to rely just as much on human intelligence as we do on artificial intelligence.

Firms are experimenting with the latest technologies such as Machine Learning, etc. to automate communication measurement and deliver results to clients on the go especially when clients have a very tight deadline or in crisis situations. Although promising, they are still in their early stages.

## **INDONESIA**

Two forces are at play to funnel organizations to more meaningful communication measurement.

First is the precipitous decline of traditional media that has hastened the realization that once you push information out online you never really know how many people sees it, and if they did, what effect did it have on them.

Second is that the economy is getting tougher, forcing management and investors to question the worth of communication. They want to see how communication impacts the business, not vanity metrics that have no connection with business performance.

Combined, they contribute to a rosy outlook for meaningful communication measurement where outcomes and impact are the metric that matter most and outputs become contributory factors.

## **MALAYSIA AND THAILAND**

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) has made quality sentiment analysis possible at scale. We see clear potential for AI (and more basic automation) to provide better measurement through integrated analysis. This enables us to move past just the story focus (what's the media saying) to include audience response (what impact is messaging having on audience engagement, sentiment and behaviors).

The ideal measurement is customised to client goals. But we're also seeing how a more holistic view has the potential to provide measurements that apply consistently across all PR programs (eg. influence perceptions). There's also a lot of focus on automating everything that can be automated in order to reduce

the manual workload that comes into play when new methodologies are used (like some of the adjustment factors for AVEs mentioned above).

## **NEW ZEALAND**

The interesting thing about smaller markets is that you can get really lost in discussions on big data. Generic approaches that over-rely on only software or AI can miss market or cultural nuance which is really important. We are seeing a shift to insights and measurement specialisations within communications which should hopefully help add context in a data rich environment.

The other challenge that readily available data brings is the expectation on speed of insight or "real-time" expectation on information which can be tricky because of the previous point.

The other key shift we can see is a move away from an over-reliance on survey and claimed behaviour studies to measure audience reaction and behaviour change, the ability to combine more types of data, as well as an increase in online behaviour that demonstrates this change through action rather than only through conversation, means that a much broader picture can be painted.

## **PHILIPPINES**

We believe that innovation will play an important role and also the generation that follows will focus mainly on the reactions and real metrics which are published or can be seen within different applications and platforms for communications. Consumers will also focus on the impact and uniqueness of messages and campaigns. The battleground will change whereby end-users, readers, and viewers will be considered the actual focus market due to online connectivity. Innovations to track these measurements are underway and AVE will eventually diminish as the only way to measure monetary value.

## **SINGAPORE**

The awareness of best practice (AMEC) is improving which should lead to further reductions in the use of AVE.

Technology adoption is already commonplace, but mainly in monitoring, databases and distribution.

## TAIWAN

Measuring social and new media platforms is increasingly important, hence any data on trends, behaviors, value in these platforms are sought after.

The constantly changing algorithm of social platforms and search engines will be a challenge to standardise measurement.

Technology such as AI is increasingly used to mine data for accuracy, especially when there is a huge dataset.

## FELICIA AND DEB'S KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- The outlook for media intelligence is positive across all Asia Pacific markets.
- Some of the emerging opportunities across all markets lie in:
  - Focusing on measuring business impacts and involving clients in objective setting.
  - Educating clients about the role of MI technologies such as AI and basic automation
  - Innovating around measurements focused on the actions and reactions of audiences within different applications and platforms.
- While AI and automation are integral to the future of measurement and evaluation, human involvement still lies at the heart of PR and communication with its focus on human connections and relationships.

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For more information and resources:  
visit **AMEC International Association for the  
Measurement and Evaluation of Communication**  
<https://amecorg.com/>