

# 5 Steps to Data-driven Decision Making for Comms



# Take the Guesswork Out of Your Media Strategy

Creating the best communications strategy starts with knowing where your brand is winning and where the competition is sprinting ahead. Do you know what campaigns, initiatives, and tactics are driving the most readership for your brand? What about your competition?

Understanding what and where people are reading about you is half the battle. Understanding how and where your competitors get more readership is the other half. In this eBook, we break down the five steps to smarter, data-driven decision making, so you can take the guesswork out of your media strategy and take your comms strategy to the next level.

## 1 Assessing reporter readership



Every comms team has a list of friendlies, a list of high-priority targets, and a list of folks to keep in the loop. Chances are they are prioritized by publication reputation, social following, and maybe a handful of other assumptions. What reporters are actually moving the needle when it comes to brand awareness? It might not be who you think.

### Most-Read Reporters: #Product News

CNET Scott Stein

The Verge James Vincent

WIRED Lauren Goode

**Readership adds a new layer of intelligence, revealing the beat reporters who actually get the most eyeballs on their coverage.**

Comms teams who also track competitor readership have built-in benchmarking to understand where their readership sits relative to other content authored by a reporter. This helps surface reporters who are *only* covering the competition. With a clear view of readership by reporter, you have direction for who to target and can tailor your activities accordingly.

Don't neglect reporters outside of your industry either. For example, an office-supply store could pitch its new category of "work from anywhere" products to one of its go-to retail industry reporters. But if the goal is to place thought leadership content about hybrid work more broadly, they need to look beyond retail beat reporters to the people writing industry-agnostic content about the future of work.

Memo tip: Lean on our Insights team. Understanding the reporters writing about thematic issues that span multiple brands and industries is one of our [most-requested insights reports](#), especially as comms groups map out priority channels for upcoming campaigns.

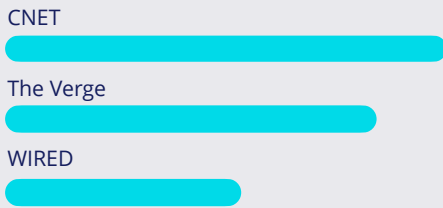
### TO DO

- Know which reporters draw the highest readers in articles covering your brand
- Uncover what new reporters you should be targeting

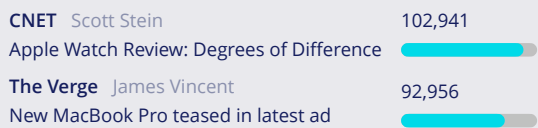
## Uncovering the most powerful media outlets 2



### Most-Read Publications - Product News



### Most-Read Articles



As a comms person, you've probably been asked about a company profile and appearing on broadcast once or twice. Whether it's The New York Times, Fortune, Bloomberg, CNBC, or Good Morning America, securing high-profile coverage is only impactful if it's reaching the right people. If it isn't, it's just a vanity metric.

**Leveraging readership to better understand what outlets attract the highest number of readers for news about your brand (and your competition) can help you make better decisions when it comes to media relations.**

Are you offering exclusives to the right outlets? What outlets are your competitors investing in? Answers to all these questions can help you ensure that you're maximizing your impact with every decision you make.

### TO DO

- See what media outlets attract the most readers about your brand
- Understand what publications engage the most readers for your competition

## 3 Understanding topic drivers



If you look at all your coverage by topic, you can easily see what topics and campaigns garnered the most pickup. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. What's actually garnering the most readers and awareness?

Filtering their readership by topics and outlets helps comms teams **spot factors that drive readership on a theme, like headline angles, publications, and reporters** – all intel that can inform content planning for the year ahead. (For more on this, see ["All about article topics, Memo's secret weapon for readership insights."](#))

These topic-based analyses are also an area where users often lean on Memo Insights Analysts, who help countless brands understand readership trends in areas ranging from broad themes like [ESG](#) to specific moments like the [Super Bowl](#).

### Most-Read Topics



Ranking topics by readership clearly shows you what you should keep doing (or do more of) from a comms perspective. But what about what's not working?

"We saw an example where a brand kept giving exclusives to a particular reporter from a top publication, but the stories weren't being read," Eddie Kim, Memo CEO and founder told Axios. "Meanwhile, when that same reporter wrote about the brand's competitor, it would get a lot of traction."

"The data showed that their current narrative wasn't resonating, so they were able to tweak it and see a change in readership."

#### TO DO

- Understand what topics drive the most readership for your brand
- Gain visibility into when messaging is *or isn't* working

## Learning from past events to inform future campaigns 4

For annual campaigns or specific moments in the coming year – product launches, seasonal campaigns, events, etc. – review readership from similar moments in the previous year. That can highlight the publications that are likely to drive the highest traffic and awareness for your brand.



Impressions can be highly misleading and can prompt teams to overlook publications that attract high readership for specific topics. As our Insights Team illustrates in a [report that compares actual readership to potential reach](#), publications with relatively low monthly traffic often outperform highly-trafficked outlets in certain subject areas. This visibility into a publication's strengths is especially important when allocating scarce resources such as exclusives, press day invites, and executive interviews.

In addition to looking at your own historical performance, comms teams with competitor tracking can analyze comparable moments from industry peers. The benefits here are twofold: you see the publications covering competitors that you're under-indexed on, revealing a clear path to [grow share of voice](#), and you get readership benchmarks for their industry to set measurable goals around.

#### TO DO

- Review year-over-year readership for similar campaigns to help inform your strategy
- Analyze competitor campaigns that are similar to your upcoming plans so you can take a page from their playbook (or know what to avoid)

## 5 Tracking results over time



Understanding which placements drove readership in the past provides valuable signals about the tactics to lean into next year. Looking at changes in how readers engaged with coverage from previous rounds can identify the strategic and tactical shifts moving the needle.

What topics overall drive the most readership for your brand? Is it scalable? Do more of that! What does the competition do to get more readership for their brand? What can you do to close the gap? Start doing that!

Tracking year-over-year can also reveal when one topic is losing momentum and it's time to shift focus to something else. Don't let your comms tactics go stale.

### TO DO

- ▶ Run year-over-year readership comparisons by outlet, topic, and reporter for you and your competition

## Your comms strategy is only as strong as the data behind it.

Data-driven decision making starts with understanding where people are reading about your brand and your competition. From there, you can get a deeper understanding of what you should do more of, where you should dial back your efforts, where you can take a page out of your competitor's playbook, and what you can learn from their missteps.

Tracking results over time allows you to see when your campaigns are going stale and what tactics are building momentum for your brand. You can increase the efficiency of your comms program by making data-driven decisions.

Accurate data is your launchpad for success.

To learn more about how accurate readership can uncover real impact and help you make smarter comms decisions, check out [Memo's approach to comms measurement](#).

# Accurate data leads to better decisions.

Only Memo reports readership direct from publications.



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with readership



Demonstrate the  
true value of PR



Maximize impact with  
a data-driven strategy



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