



How to measure your impact: 8 tips (& 3 great examples)

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MAP YOUR REACH

Start with a clear idea of the difference that you think that your organisation makes - and that it should.

Sit down with colleagues from your team and others. Think about the people whose lives you touch, the materials you use and what you put out into the world. Every time your organisation creates change, write it down.

The output might be a lovely mind map but it could also be a list on a board, a spreadsheet or a heap of post-it notes. This is the start of your impact map.





REFER BACK TO YOUR PURPOSE

Compare the list of places you currently create change with the purpose of your organisation. Divide your initial list into three: key indicators that align with your purpose, any impacts that are a concern or need to be monitored, and a pile that aren't important right now.



DON'T OVERCOMPLICATE

Now concentrate on those first two piles: key indicators and concerns to monitor. Whittle them down. Ask what really matters. Are there ways to keep an eye on several indicators at once? Which number or story will you use to make a decision? Which one does your boss care most about? Or the investors or the journalists? Which numbers do you already collect for another purpose?



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MIX 'LEAD' AND 'LAG' INDICATORS

For some impacts the journey is long. You can't always measure the final outcome reliably from month to month, or to do so might be unbearably demotivating.

Try to include a mixture of lead indicators (inputs, outputs) that show how much effort is being put in, as well as 'lag' indicators (outcomes) that show change after the fact – they lag behind the real change.

Lag indicators may be more accurate but they can't tell you the whole story fast enough. Use all of the resources available to you.



BE AN EVIDENCE MAGPIE

Impact isn't all about numbers.

Use a mixture of methods to showcase your impact from lots of different perspectives: case studies, press coverage, photos, interviews, hours spent, meetings arranged, money raised, public polling.



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MEASURE TO LEARN AS WELL AS TELL

Measuring impact isn't just about reflecting after the fact. A great impact measurement framework helps you to improve as you go. Include measures that will show you where you could do better and make sure that this isn't just an exercise to feed the annual report. Ask who sees the figures, who wants to, who should?

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FOCUS ON THE AUDIENCE

What do your audience care about?
What data are they used to seeing?
You don't need provide yours in that
format only but make sure you
include some measures that will
make each audience group
comfortable – and make them easy
to find.

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SEEK OUT GOOD EXAMPLES FROM THE CHARITY SECTOR

Companies can learn from the way that charities map out a 'theory of change' to explain why they are carrying out the work that they are. This is required by the Charity Commission and helps to focus minds and measurement. The best charity examples use impact measures to raise funds as well as to prove their efficacy.



3 INTERESTING BUT DIFFERENT CHARITY EXAMPLES



Short and simple. The impact page of this website gives just two key figures but it sets the work of the charity in context and tells a powerful story about what they do.



The MIND website has great 'at a glance' figures, then the annual reports delve into more detail, including case studies and figures showing progress towards strategic goals



The Good Food Institute annual report is a masterclass in mixed method reporting and audience targeting. It mixes timelines, figures, case studies and quotes but stays brief.

CLICK THE IMAGES TO VISIT EACH EXAMPLE

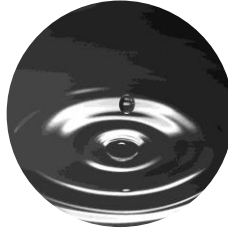


IN SUMMARY

CLICK TO VISIT



MAP



PURPOSE



SIMPLE



LEAD/LAG



MIX METHODS



LEARN



AUDIENCE



CHARITIES



EXAMPLES

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WANT MORE?

If you need support measuring and demonstrating your impact get in touch on dpc@meyland.co.uk

Or visit our blog [*The Reputation Coach*](#) for thought-provoking articles about corporate reputation and tips on how to measure and improve your corporate reputation.

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