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Learning Outcome

- Evaluate the effectiveness of a message

If only this were easy! A communicator can produce messages all day long, but they are not effective unless the audience receives them, consumes them, understands them, and (if applicable) provides the requested response.

Trying to pin down evaluative data like that is similar to your cat trying to catch the spot of light generated by a laser pointer. But you can actually gain some understanding through data collection with the right tools.

- **Did the audience receive the message sent?** Companies like ContactMonkey or Politemail provide email tracking services to help a communicator determine how many of your readers opened your message. If you use a collaborative intranet platform to share your messages, a web tracking program like Google Analytics can give you myriad insights as to who is “landing” on your message.
- **Did the audience consume any of the message?** If your message is encouraging a reader to click through to a video or webpage, this can help you understand better if the reader engaged with the content. How many readers clicked through to watch the video?
- **Did the audience understand the message?** This is where it gets dicey. Certainly if you’ve requested a behavior of your audience and they’ve responded accordingly, then you know your message was understood. For instance, if you requested that customers update their passwords, you can tell how many audience members understood the message by measuring how many customers changed their passwords. However, if your message was about company strategy, about strengthening employee engagement, or about increasing customer confidence in the company, it’s not as easy to gauge the effectiveness of these more nebulous messages. Long-term, you’re likely to see the results of these messages (whether positive or negative), but you likely want to know relatively quickly if your message was successful. You can use tools like surveys to determine if you’re on the right track.

Practice Question

As a communicator, you can determine if your audience understood your message by _____.

- ☐ seeing how long people lingered on the web page on which your message is located

[See this interactive in the course material.](#)

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