Paine Publishing's
Checklist for Picking the Perfect Measurement Vendor

Step 1: Define your goals and your leadership's expectations

☐ Meet with leadership to understand their expectations for what your measurement reports should include.

☐ Make a list of people who will use the measurement tool you are buying. To conveniently gather information about the types of data you will need to collect, have each of them fill out Paine Publishing's "RFP Questionnaire."

☐ Put them in a meeting room and help them hash out their various needs for data and reporting. Then work with them prioritize those needs. (Hint: Open our "Vendor Evaluation Spreadsheet" that lists some of the most important criteria. Feel free to add your own. Then, look at the weightings for each and make sure they align with your management's priorities. If they don't align, simply adjust the numbers in column B.)

☐ After the meeting, summarize the agreed-upon definitions in a document. Include a list of the key metrics (including the KPIs) you'll be reporting on in your dashboard.

☐ Ask senior management to sign off on the KPIs and dashboard.

☐ Based on approved KPIs, make a list of data you'll need to report on.

☐ Make sure you answer these questions:

- Question 1: Are my messages and issues too nuanced for a computer?
- Question 2: Do I get sufficient volume to warrant automated coding?
- Question 3: Is there budget to have humans code a random sample?

Step 2: Determine who is going to use the tool and how

☐ Make sure you can answer these questions:

- What decisions will be made with the data?
- How often do your metrics need to be updated?
- Who will see and use your dashboard and/or your reports?

Step 3: Identify your data sources

☐ Make a list of your key target audiences and where they get information.

☐ Based on where your key target audiences get information, create a list of key media outlets, websites, and social influencers. This is data that you will need to complete the "RFP Questionnaire."

☐ Decide how far back you need data. Almost everyone can go back three months, only a few tools can go back years.

☐ Define any specific quality indexes or engagement indexes.

☐ Define messages and sentiment, as well as any other important parameters such as post quality, media source quality, message integrity, etc.

Step 4: Define what you're benchmarking against

☐ Identify what peer/competitor keeps leadership awake at night.

☐ Estimate the amount of data you will need to collect on your competition.

☐ Do you have the budget to do competitive benchmarking?

☐ Do you have consistent data for the past 13 months? If not, how far back can you gather data?

Step 5: Create your RFP and send to measurement vendors

☐ Put all the data you've gotten together into an RFP. (For further RFP guidance, see "6 Steps to Managing a Measurement RFP Process").

☐ For clarity on sources and methods, use the "Transparency Reporting Template" developed by the Conclave on Social Media Measurement Standards.

☐ Create a list of possible vendors. Screen out any that can't meet the basic requirements.

☐ Send out the RFP. Give them two to three weeks to respond.

Step 6: Evaluate your responses

☐ Reopen your "Vendor Evaluation Spreadsheet" and fill it out for each response.

☐ Check the scores after you've reviewed all the submissions.

☐ Check the references of the top three.

☐ Call the winner into a meeting. Review the parameters and make sure the price they offered really *does* include all the parameters that you have specified. Get clarity on what happens if the scope begins to creep. If you think they've low-balled you and you get any sense that they'll nickel and dime you to raise their profits, move on to the runner-up.

☐ Notify the losers. (And be gentle with the news; you may need their help if it doesn't work out with the one you've selected.)