

Communication Strategies for Investor Relations:

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING THE PERFECT

IR WEBCAST STRATEGY

As the demand and supply of content available to investors increases exponentially, the use of webcasting has empowered IR Professionals to better comply with disclosure regulations, increase the visibility of their companies, engage investors and the media, and track who is accessing their content. Webcasts and online video provide interactive, cost effective and measurable formats to help IR Professionals reach and engage a global and mobile audience. Here are best practices for using these tools across your IR communications.

In many sectors, organisations are working hard to manage relationships with their internal and external stakeholders. This is even more difficult if the audience is hugely dispersed in terms of geography, time zones and level of knowledge. Many organisations are now looking to technology to help with the challenge of both reducing costs while meeting these complex communications challenges.

The fastest growing and most compelling technologies for these challenges are webinar and webcasting technology to deliver a range of Online Events and content.

These are becoming increasingly popular in Corporates as they allow Organisations to meet a number of the complex IR challenges that are currently being serviced by 'In person' meetings.

Core Characteristics in Designing IR Online Event Strategy

1. You Cannot not Communicate

For individuals, not communicating is almost impossible, because every action, utterance or gesture has some meaning for those receiving it. Even in a silent room people are still receiving and forming opinions from body language, facial gestures etc. It is almost the same for organisations.

Top teams may not want to disclose information but all the time they do. Not releasing a press release when the public are expecting it creates all sorts of rumours, grapevine chat and public speculation.

In times of Joint Ventures and mergers and acquisitions, often because of fast

breaking news stories and the plot changing by the hour, it is difficult to keep a hand on communication and that is why we both, as experts in our fields come together to agree that you have to "start with the end in mind".

2. Communication: Start with the End in Mind

Central to designing Online Event and Multimedia content is the need to agree the desired outcomes and the impact the content will have on your audience. This is especially important when talking with customers, potential customers, those in Investor Relations and the general public.

3. Specific Communication for Specific Audiences

IR professionals have a variety of stakeholders to communicate with, all with different needs. For instance, large Government bodies will have to communicate with their staff, the end users of the service or products, a supply chain, regulatory and statutory bodies, sponsors and the general public. Any announcement has to be carefully crafted to a specific audience. This is one of the key issues that many forget when

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they are constructing any web based delivery - have specific objectives to appeal to specific audiences. Further, the medium of delivery should also be reviewed so that we can create a matrix of audience types, desired outcomes of the communication, methods for attracting and retrieving valuable feedback etc. See Diagram 1.

4. The meaning of the message is the response you get

When designing the content it is critical to ensure that you define your outcomes, and more specifically, the messages that you want people to take away. We see it everyday in corporate communications. A team will send out a general communication once and expect instant action. What's more, they become annoyed that they have to resend the same material in a different format. In reality, what is required is to repeat the message very clearly.

Experts in communication tell us that most people have what is known as a 'convincer' strategy. That is, very few people will be convinced to believe or take action after one simple reference of action to a specific point or issue. Like retail items where choice is available, we run the buying decision through our minds a few times and then take action. This also applies to corporate communications. What appears logical and straightforward may be received in a different context from the one intended. Are there phrases or buzzwords to avoid? What core messages need to be

imbedded in the Online Event and how should these be reinforced visually i.e. through Video, PowerPoint, Demonstration or other graphical means.

5. Communication is not what you send but what is received

Even with the utmost care what is sent and what is received is often very different. The tone of the communication and sensitivities are also critical in any event. Because most of the Online Event can be presented by people using the spoken and written word it can convey very different messages. Where and what the presenter emphasises in a sentence can put different meaning for the audience - that's why rehearsal is critical.

This becomes even more critical if the Event includes video. Does the body language match what and how things are being presented? Does body language reinforce the message or distract? Are any PowerPoint slides or graphical aids sufficiently simple to be congruent with the spoken words. These are all areas we cover in our planning, training and delivery with clients.

6. Measure Communication of what is Received and Retained

We have left feedback loops to the final point but here we have to agree how we are going to measure what has been received.

What can we do to build feedback processes into the event? How are we going to collect information about the participants prior to the event? What does our client want us to do to ensure that the audience signs in and, more importantly, responds to the content?

There are multiple processes that can be built in at the design stage to ensure the client can track attendance and engagement. After, all an online event should not be simply a broadcast but an opportunity for the audience to interact and ask questions. Content can always be viewed after the live session - but you'll want to collect information on when and for how long the audience member was On-line even if you are not.

7. Feedback is the Breakfast of Champions

What many companies and organisations fail to realise about communication with their stakeholders, is that communication without feedback is a waste of time and energy. To complete the communication loop various feedback mechanisms designed into the online events to ensure that 'the initial communicator' receives a quality response, so better to test the accuracy and planting of the key messages.

Best Practice IR Webcast Strategy

See who is Monitoring your Company with Content Registration

Create a registration page to collect intelligence about each user accessing your multimedia content. Use this data to identify current and prospective investors interested in your company - this insight will help you prioritise your road-shows and investor meetings.

Find a Partner to Extend your Reach

Work with a partner who can extend the reach of your webcasts and multimedia presentations to the institutional investment community using targeted distribution channels.

Create Engaging Video Content

Keep videos concise (aim for 2 minutes or less) and focus each on only one topic. Use graphics and text sparingly to support speaking points and consider an interview-style format for a more compelling experience.

Meet Disclosure Requirements

Live webcast your earnings results and other corporate announcements to comply with disclosure regulations while offering an interactive forum for delivering your

METHODOLOGY FOR DESIGNING ONLINE EVENTS

1. Objectives of communications - desired outcomes and actions to be stimulated
2. Invitation and registration of those people intended to receive message
3. Delivery of Content - Multiple different ways using webcasting e.g. Live, On Demand. Video of people or just audio and assets e.g. PPT
4. Call to actions - Questions, Polls, Surveys and further communications
5. Post event (if Live) communications to recording
6. Reporting against objectives

company messages and receiving real-time feedback from the investment community.

Be Interactive and Turn Attendees into Participants

Webcasts should feature interactive elements such as Q&A to increase audience engagement. Consider using streaming video to improve the user experience and personalise your content.

Use Referrer ID's for Increased Intelligence

Track the effectiveness of each of your promotional channels by using a unique URL in each activity. Referrer ID's give you a real-time view of the online sources

referring investors and the media to your content.

Your Audience is Mobile, is your Multimedia Content?

Ensure your content is accessible on mobile devices to extend the reach of your messages to investors and journalists on the go.

“Webcasts should feature interactive elements such as Q&A to increase Audience Engagement”

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Extend the Life and Reach of Content by implementing IR Multimedia Portals

If your IR team, marketing and communications department is like most, you're creating an increasing amount of multimedia content—webcasts, webinars, videos. A challenge has appeared of how to aggregate your content in a way that keeps older presentations fresh while continuing to grow an audience for new material?

Typical content that needs to be aggregated includes:

- Webinar series
- Product information
- Client testimonials
- Executive interviews
- Analyst Days
- Advisor communications
- Online conferences
- Training

An IR multimedia portal can be an effective way to meet this challenge, providing you with powerful content management and aggregation tools which enable you to increase engagement with existing viewers while continually attracting new ones. They also support a shift from promoting a single piece of content with each communication toward building an on-going, more integrated content strategy.

Presenting a variety of content types (webcasts/webinars, on-demand audio or video clips, and supporting resources for download) in a single, branded experience creates a true “destination” and unique experience for viewers.

- Single sign-on access to all content in the portal means viewers aren't repeatedly asked for their information, easing discovery of all the events and clips available.
- Event- and portal-level reporting allow you to track users' activity across multiple content sets, providing meaningful feedback on which pieces are resonating most with viewers.
- Custom branding ensures the look and feel of your portal is consistent with the rest of your campaign, your existing web properties and corporate identity.
- Working with your webcast provider to create a multimedia content portal eases reliance on your own internal IT and web development teams, and provides a faster path to market, than creating a similar infrastructure on your own company website.
- Creating compelling content costs time and money—a multimedia content portal can help you get more out of that investment by extending the shelf-life of your multimedia assets.
- Cross-promoting older content by presenting them alongside newer, related content can help increase engagement for viewers looking for more information and deeper insight.

A portal acts as a complete repository for your IR content—from webinars and webcasts to video clips, podcasts, presentation slides, company reports and documents—enabling you to tell a compelling story for viewers that goes far beyond a single event.

CASE STUDY— TELECOMS PROVIDER

This major UK provider had a major branding and service announcement to make to the Global Media.

They chose for their key executives to deliver this via a panel based video and presentation webcast to a subscribed global media audience.

OBJECTIVES

- The purpose to make a significant announcement about their brand and network offering
- Reach a Global media audience in a controlled, engaging, traceable and secure way
- Create a media asset that could then be shared on-demand







SOLUTIONS

- Live Video Webcast from a Unique venue in Central London
- Deliver key messages in a presentation
- Discuss additional messaging and takeaways in a panel discussion format
- Receive and handle live questions from a global online audience

BENEFITS

- Consistent and planned message delivered securely to Global Audience
- Feedback and Engagement tracked via registration, attendance and audience participation
- Media asset created for post event distribution and viewing
- Cost Savings

Diagram 1

Communication	Activity	Event Type	Channels	Frequency
Regulatory Compliance	Earnings and Results Presentations	 Live and On Demand Video Webcasts	 Media and Event Channels	Quarterly
Investor and Analyst Engagement	Analyst/Investor Days	 Virtual Event and Briefings		Annually
	CEO and Executive Interviews	 Live and On Demand Video Webcasts		Monthly/Quarterly
	Strategy and Performance Updates	 Webinars & Webcasts		Monthly/Quarterly
Brand Awareness and Visibility	Corporate announcements, news and updates	 Webinars & Webcasts		As Required

Key Attributes for IR Portals

Ease of Access

Users only need to register once to gain full access to your portal and allow you to track their activity across each item they view. By eliminating the need to register for each individual presentation, your audience is encouraged to explore additional content and spend more time on your portal.

Integrated Analytics

Track user activity across each piece of content to gain feedback on how each item—and your portal as a whole—is resonating with your audience. You gain a more complete view of engagement and streamline measurement by eliminating time-consuming tasks such as logging into multiple platforms and combining disparate reports.

Embedded Play

Video players can be embedded directly into your portal pages for a more streamlined user experience. Your players can be customised with features that include synchronised slides, polls, surveys and social sharing.

Branding

A key consideration is the maintenance of Corporate Identity and Branding of the

content. Historical methods of distribution such as the dissemination of a dvd or a presentation make this control of brand and distribution very difficult. Many suppliers of webcasting services can now offer complete control of brand within brand guidelines on the systems and content that is distributed. The brand can be represented through all the communications surrounding the registration process as well as the in the viewing of the content itself.

Security

Security of certain types of content are of obvious concern and the content can now be protected with a number of different access control mechanisms through many suppliers. Registration, usernames and passwords are obvious ways to control and protect the content as well as being a good way to track attendance and viewings, but content can be protected even further if required by using such as Digital Rights Management, meaning the ability to watch the media expires after a certain number of views or period of time.

Conclusion

As budgets including communications, marketing and training come under increased pressure but the requirement to reach a more dispersed, time poor audience increases, the use of webcasting technology is a highly effective alternative

and complementary method for IR professionals to communicate.

Historically, webcasting has been seen as expensive and difficult to implement due to production costs and the expertise required tracking the interaction and engagement of the attendees. Webcasting service providers are now starting to unlock the barriers to this through their ability to deliver many different types of content in a cost effective way from a single platform.

This enterprise approach is now giving IR professionals to ability to create hubs and microsites for many of the communication channels to their stakeholders.

Author

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