

What you told us about the Society's annual conference

In June, the IR Society welcomed 350 delegates to its annual conference. Here Christian Kerrigan analyses the feedback and insights that the delegates provided.

Encompassed in the title of the conference theme of 'Moving the Dial' was an agenda that focused on how IR professionals can tackle some of the critical trends, issues and opportunities within the ever-changing landscape of investor relations.

Feedback was kindly provided by almost a third of those who attended the conference this year. There was a strong consensus that the day was time well spent, with the vast majority (96%) reporting that the conference met their main requirements and 86% saying that, overall, it was either 'successful' or 'very successful.'

For corporate delegates in particular, the IR Society's annual conference is clearly an essential forum to learn about the latest industry and regulatory trends, with 91% stating that it is important for this reason. More generally, everyone rated the conference's networking opportunities very highly, with over 70% stating that this was a key objective for attending.

“ Many delegates were surprised by the panel's optimism for the UK market and their debunking of a US listing as a solution to undervaluation ”



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The feedback also told us that the conference agenda is going from strength to strength, as the level of satisfaction among attendees for this in 2024 continued to build on an already strong approval rating in 2023. The effort the Society put into getting this right was critical to the overall sense of value that attendees took from the event.

Some highlights

Rightmove CFO Alison Dolan opened the day with a keynote session that attendees considered valuable, with an audience member summarising it as: "Interesting conversation to get started, and great to hear a CFO really appreciating the value of a good IRO."

As with previous years, sessions featuring buy-side and/or sell-side expertise were well received. 'Views from the buy side' was a must-see panel session for many delegates, with 100% of those who attended finding the material covered in the conversation valuable.

However, the most engaging topics were market-level discussions, such as the possibility of further reform of MiFiD II and the outlook for UK equities, especially in relation to comparisons with valuation dynamics

“ Senior leaders are seeking more information on how IR teams will adopt AI ”

in the US. Several attendees expressed surprise at the panellists' optimism regarding the UK market and their debunking of a US listing as a solution to perceived undervaluation.

In total, 94% of delegates who attended the session on the future of the UK-listed environment said it was either a 'valuable' or 'very valuable' session. Typical comments included: "Really good conversation about the future of the UK," and "Good positivity but also realism about where we're at and how we can try and change this."

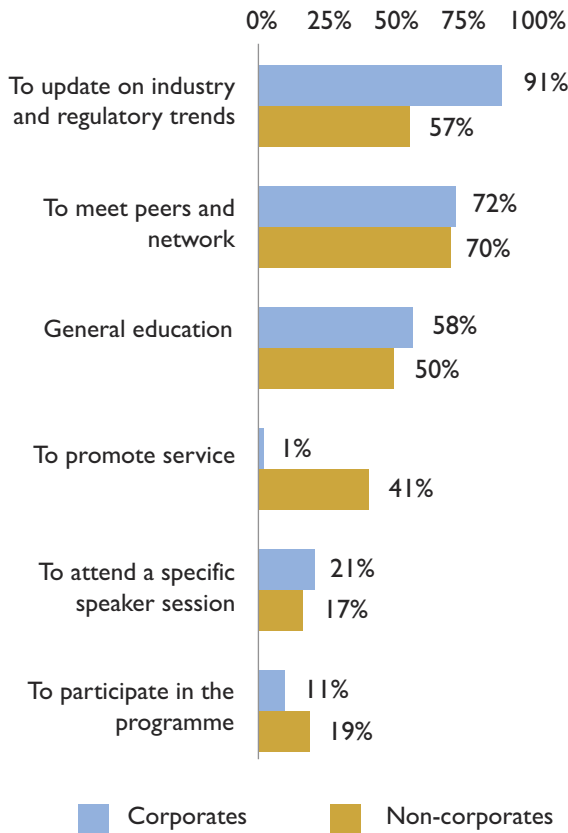
It became apparent that many IROs are giving an increasing amount of thought to retail investors.

They are interested in attracting and engaging with this community and are considering the multichannel strategies they'll need to develop to do so successfully.

Dominic Mahoney, partner EY Lane4, EY Professional Service, gave an afternoon keynote that attracted similar praise. One delegate said, "Leadership is very important, and Dominic provided good food for thought around this area with a lot of different examples."

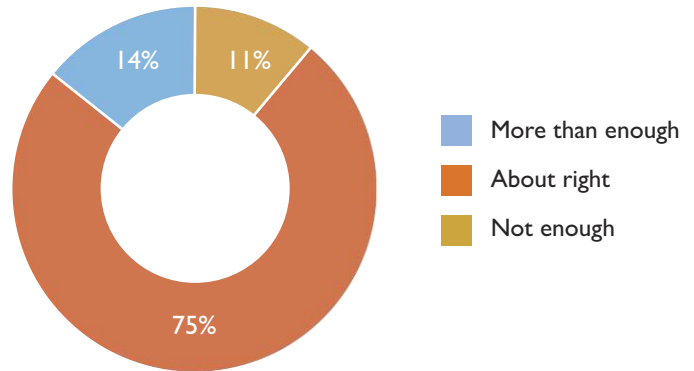
Lastly, it wouldn't be 2024 without some conversation around artificial intelligence (AI). IR is still in the early stages of adopting AI to any meaningful

The main reason delegates attended conference

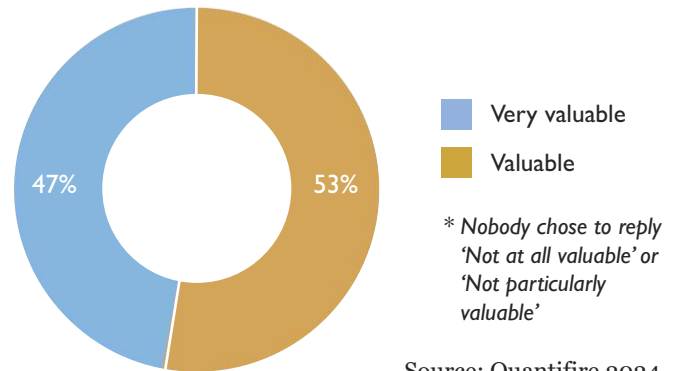


* Respondents could choose more than one reason

Audience opinion on time dedicated to networking



Perception of overall value of the conference



* Nobody chose to reply 'Not at all valuable' or 'Not particularly valuable'

Source: Quantifire 2024

degree, but there is a strong emerging interest in how AI will impact IR teams. This year's AI plenary session was considered valuable or very valuable by 68% of attendees.

Audience members were keen to better understand the opportunities (and risks) that this new technology offers, both in terms of their own use of AI to improve efficiency, and also how AI analytics are

“ Retail investors are also clearly on the minds of IROs ”

applied to corporate financial data and other documents by the investment community.

Conclusion

With so much ongoing change across investor relations, the IR Society's annual conference continues to be an essential calendar event for corporate practitioners and the rich ecosystem of service providers.

The 2024 post-conference feedback shows that the IR Society, once again, did a fantastic job of nailing a comprehensive and appealing agenda. The conference schedule allowed for ample networking and an enjoyable day overall.

We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to submit their feedback, as it will directly help the Society to serve the needs of our industry and ensure the success of future events. ■

QuantiFire specialises in generating and analysing feedback from investors. For the last 10 years we have also been collecting feedback following the summer conference and helping the IR Society to understand what drives the success of these events.

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