

Creativity as capital in investor communications

With so many channels by which investors can receive news and information, Sonal R Patel explains how story-telling is changing – and offers tips to IROs who wish for their company to stand out from its peers.

The challenge for IR teams is no longer whether to embrace creativity, but how to use it most effectively. How do you equip leaders to show presence in formats they can't control? How do you design communications that meet disclosure requirements and still command attention? How do you create assets that not only inform, but inspire confidence and build value?

These are not marginal concerns. Leadership today is judged through digital formats that are fast, fragmented and rarely forgiving. Authority and presence that once belonged to the stage or the boardroom is now tested in a 30-second LinkedIn clip, a broadcast-style capital markets day (CMD), or an employee town hall streamed across time zones. Conviction has to hold up under conditions leaders do not own.

For investor communications, this is a profound shift. The discipline has always been defined by accuracy, disclosure and timing. Yet delivery too often defaults to text-heavy decks and filings that meet the letter of regulation but miss the spirit of engagement. Many companies are making strides with film, digital and social channels, but the opportunity is much bigger: to treat creativity as capital – the means by which conviction becomes visible and credible to the market.

Creative evolution

It's a challenge I've been working on for two decades. In fact, you may not know that Brunswick pioneered the use of film for investors 25 years ago – a move considered radical at the time. Why bring creativity into the capital markets? Because investors are not immune from the same forces shaping every audience. They are sophisticated consumers of information who inhabit the same digital environments as the rest of us. Investors



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expect clarity and pace. They want to see conviction, not just read about it.

Fast-forward to today and film has become central to investor engagement. Transition films at moments of leadership change, results films that bring numbers to life, CMDs staged with cinematic rhythm and broadcast rigour – all are now mainstream. We have evolved these formats in line with how people consume information: shorter, sharper, digital-first, built to live on beyond the event itself. The impact is tangible: engagement rates several times higher than text-only disclosure, stronger recall of strategy, and greater confidence in leadership. More importantly, these approaches deepen understanding – tactics that make up what I call the show and tell strategy: tactics that strengthen the equity story and shape how value is perceived and priced.

The belief case

This is about trust. In an ecosystem where algorithms often shape sentiment before humans do, leadership can't afford to be absent or flat or forgettable. Creativity is what ensures authority survives in these environments. It makes complex strategy tangible, gives leaders presence in formats designed for distraction, and provides audiences with a reason to believe.

Some call this articulating the equity story. I define it as something bigger: the belief case. Investors don't just interrogate numbers – they test conviction. They want to know whether leaders can hold the moment when scrutiny is sharpest, and whether the narrative underpinning strategy runs consistently through every investor touchpoint. Creativity is the lever that makes that conviction visible.

For IR teams, this means rethinking the financial calendar. A CMD film signed off at the highest level can continue to work across platforms long after the event. A results day staged with clarity can set the market conversation. An annual report, while first and foremost a regulated disclosure document, can also, when designed with intent, bring strategy, storytelling and evidence to life as the definitive capture of the year. And every other moment, from scheduled disclosures to strategic announcements and even crises, can be treated as an opportunity to apply design, storytelling and leadership presence to strengthen belief.

The challenge is no longer whether to embrace creativity, but how to embed it with discipline and rigour that allows companies to truly differentiate. Creativity is not a soft edge to hard numbers – it is the multiplier that converts disclosure into authority, strategy into story, and presence into belief that inspires confidence and builds value. ■