

connect.IQ the Connected Content™
benchmark for corporate websites.

Global 100

Connect.IQ Special Report

Every year, Investis Digital evaluates thousands of IR and corporate websites, measuring the effectiveness of their digital presence. This year, we collaborated with the National Investor Relations Institute (NIRI) to match up the key initiatives of IROs along with the leaders that are doing it right. This report includes research results, a snapshot of the investor relations “digital agenda” and new benchmark for 2021.

investisdigital.



The Results are in



Welcome to an industry first. The Investis Digital 2021 Connect.IQ Global 100 Report is our most far-reaching, in-depth assessment of the performance of global investor relations (IR) and corporate websites.

In the past year, we have evaluated over 1,000 websites of leading publicly traded firms around the world to analyze the effectiveness of their digital presence. Using our proprietary Connect.IQ methodology, we reviewed what they do well in telling their story, and what they can do better based on 300 criterion—ranging from the strength of their investor case to how well they articulate their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) story. And then, we ranked the Top 100 companies around the world for the first time ever.

We also wanted to find out how well websites of public firms align with the needs of IR and corporate communications professionals (referred here collectively as IROs)—those on the front lines of building a brand narrative and investment thesis for publicly traded firms. We worked with the [National Investor Relations Institute \(NIRI\)](#) to survey NIRI members. The results cement the importance of the corporate website to building shareholder value—and the magnitude of the opportunity for websites to support IROs more than they are now.

For instance:

- 59% said that their IR and corporate websites have either a large or major impact on their IR efforts.
- But only 18% believe their IR and corporate websites reflect their IR efforts very well. Only 47% procure help to support their digital efforts.

Our survey has been made possible thanks to the participation of members of NIRI. We would like to thank NIRI members for taking the time to respond to our survey and contributing to the greater investor relations and corporate communications community at large.

We invite you to read our Connect.IQ Global 100 report for more insight into what the top publicly traded firms are doing to connect with their audiences on their sites—and what all firms can do better.

Connect.IQ Special Report: Global 100

Investis Digital and Connect.IQ

For over a decade we have scored and ranked Corporate and IR Websites from the perspective of their key audiences—investors, influencers, employees and more—with Connect.IQ, our Connected Content™ benchmark report.

With Connect.IQ, we analyze over 300 criteria that measure how well audience needs and expectations are met with a company's digital presence, from the narrative to content and channel mix, optimization and amplification efforts. This Special Report includes both the challenges and research insights specific to select industries across major markets in the US, UK and Europe.

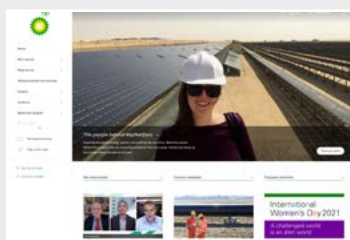
With over 1,600 clients and 9 offices across the globe, Investis Digital is one of the world's leading providers of digital IR and corporate communications services.



The Global 100: Ranking Leaders



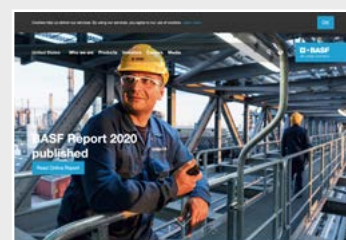
1 Shell 76%



2 BP 73%



2 Nestle 73%



4 BASF 73%



5 Eni 72%

Never have so many forces of change converged on the business world at one time than now. Consider some of these realities:

Businesses and people have rapidly adapted to digital-first living. One telling signpost: in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to e-commerce by five years, according to an IBM study. Entire industries that exist offline, such as higher education and brick-and-mortar retail, were forced to figure out how to adapt to a world in which behaviors shifted online. Some fared much better than others.

Being purpose-driven—a priority for many companies going back for years—has become a front-and-center need with a newfound sense of urgency. The pandemic caused employees, customers, investors, and other essential stakeholders to ask businesses to show how they are making society better, such as responding to the mental health needs of their own people. Then, the social unrest of 2020 challenged businesses to step up and help make the world more racially just. Businesses that thought they were doing enough by tweeting their support for social justice found themselves being told, “I’m not going to join your firm, invest in your company, or do business with you unless you show me what you are actually doing to fight racism and inequality of all types.”

Innovations in technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) are rewriting rules everywhere.

Industries ranging from life sciences to retail are adopting AI to improve business functions such as drug discovery, supply chain management, and more. Still many other businesses are accelerating their deployment of immersive

digital technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality that promise to change how people learn, do their jobs, and manage more everyday (but important) tasks such as making consumer purchases. Digital innovations are only going to accelerate in 2021 and beyond thanks to the advent of our digital-first economy.

It is understandable that a CEO might ask, “What’s next?” But the leaders are asking, “How do we shape what’s next?” Many leaders figured out how to innovate during COVID-19, as this website illustrates. Many others—the game changers such as Amazon—had been defining “what’s next” all along. At Investis Digital, our job is to help businesses create and share their narrative about who they are, what they stand for, and how they are creating “what’s next.” We do all this everywhere a business shares its narrative. All those touchpoints are an opportunity to build an emotional connection with an audience. A company’s website is at the center of this conversation—and there is plenty of room for improvement.

Our own survey of IROs bears witness to this reality. We recently collaborated with NIRI to understand the wants and needs of their members. 59% said that their IR and corporate websites have either a large or major impact on their IR efforts. But only 18 % believe those sites reflect their efforts very well. About 43% believe that their sites reflect their IR efforts only “moderately well.”

So, what exactly do websites of publicly traded firms need to do in order to improve? How can they do a better job sharing their own narrative in a way that builds a stronger emotional bond with their customers, shareholders, and employees? Our Connect.IQ report provides an answer.

The Connect.IQ Global 100 is the first-ever ranking how well companies share their brand narrative in a digital-first world. We think the report can help any company understand how to build relationships with their audiences today and tomorrow. As you’ll see in this report, the Top 100 firms do many things well—so don’t expect a tongue lashing from us. This ranking shows you what the leaders do exceptionally well—and we also point out the areas for improvement.

We err on the side of pointing out improvement opportunities because, first of all, it’s clear that IR and corporate communications professionals need help sharing their narratives at a time of constant and rapid change; and also, because we think the companies that seize the opportunities to improve will put themselves in a better position to define what’s next and show that they’re the ones setting the change agenda. It’s not enough to innovate and grow—you need to shout your story from the mountain top and get credit for your efforts.

Success is yours to have.
Seize the opportunity.

Sincerely,



Don Scales
CEO, Investis Digital



What Do Investor Relations Professionals Need?

What are the priorities of investor relations officers (IROs)? What's keeping them up at night? What topics are driving their corporate agendas as they communicate with a growing audience that includes investors, employees, and many other shareholders? To find out, Investis Digital collaborated with NIRI to survey NIRI members. Consider our findings to be a snapshot of their investor relations agenda for 2021.

Who We Surveyed

Most of the respondents represented large-to-global publicly held corporations. Our survey also covered the entire range from small (99 employees or less) to global (20,000+). In addition:

- The IROs represented a cross-section of industries ranging from retail to healthcare.
- Approximately half the companies included represent the business-to-business sector (B2B), with the remaining firms comprising business-to-consumer (B2C) and a hybrid of both (B2B2C).
- 71% of the respondents were either vice presidents or directors, with their responsibilities landing largely in the IR space, as well as corporate communications, finance/accounting, and business development.

Respondents also said they either have final decision-making authority or are part of the team that plans and implements their organization's IR and/or corporate website.

Websites Are Essential—but Need to Get Better

Websites are important to IROs, and they need to do a better job supporting their efforts.

These findings tell us:

- The IR and corporate website is essential to telling the brand narrative for any publicly traded firm. At a time when new social apps such as Clubhouse seem to explode on the scene each year, websites remain the home base for public firms.
- Businesses have a big opportunity to improve their sites. How? The answer is simple: by supporting the needs of IROs. But the way forward is not always obvious. Businesses exist in a dynamic world in which priorities are always changeable. Going into 2020, COVID-19 was on no one's radar screens—but then the pandemic forced IROs to take all their IR communications online. And the rise of the socially conscious investor (institutionally and individually) has created a need for public firms to amplify their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) story. Websites don't always catch up to those changing priorities as quickly and effectively as they should.

In 2021, what do IROs need their sites to do? Read on to find out.

59% of IROs said that their IR and corporate websites have either a large or major impact on their IR efforts.

Only 18% believe their IR and corporate websites reflect their efforts very well.

Only 47% procure help to support their digital efforts.

The Investor Relations Digital Agenda for 2021

Which of the following topics / initiatives do you plan to prioritize in your IR and corporate website and digital channels in 2021?



On the following pages are the top four priorities of the IROs we surveyed:

- Long-Term Strategy & Purpose
- ESG & Sustainability
- Investor Content
- Virtual Events, Webcasts & Webinars

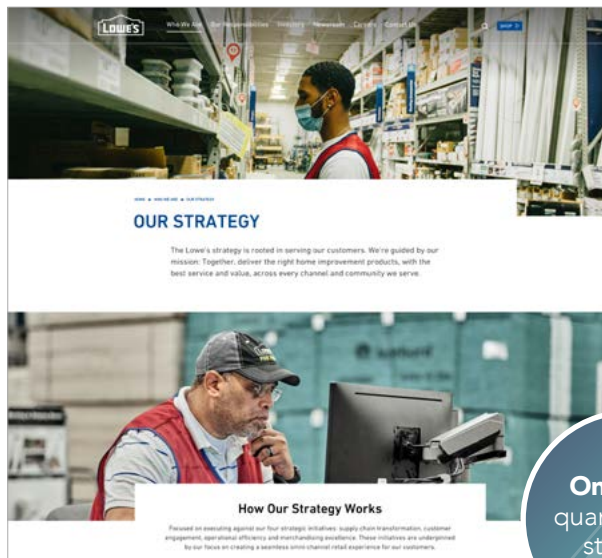
The 2021 Digital Agenda



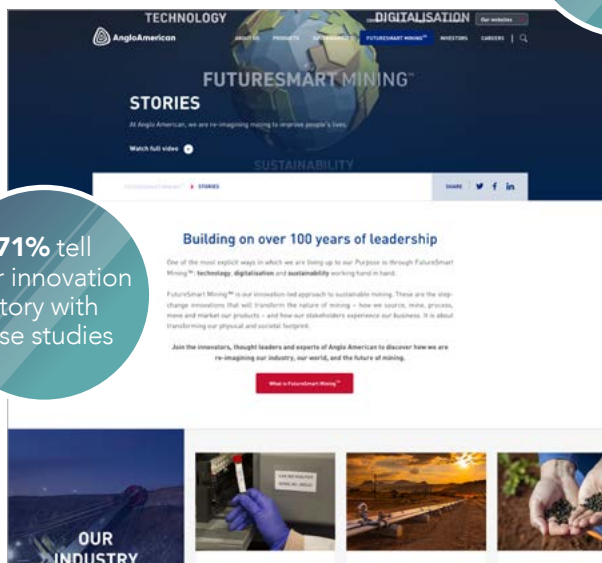
Long-Term Strategy & Purpose

To no one's surprise, the number one top priority for the IROs that we surveyed is connecting strategy to purpose, which is an ongoing concern. And no wonder. In 2018, BlackRock noted that "purposeful companies outperform their peers"—a reality that played out dramatically in 2020. It is clear that being connected to stakeholders—establishing trust with them and acting with purpose—enables a company to understand and respond to the changes happening in the world. As BlackRock notes, "The more your company can show its purpose in delivering value to its customers, its employees, and its communities, the better able you will be to compete and deliver long-term, durable profits for shareholders."

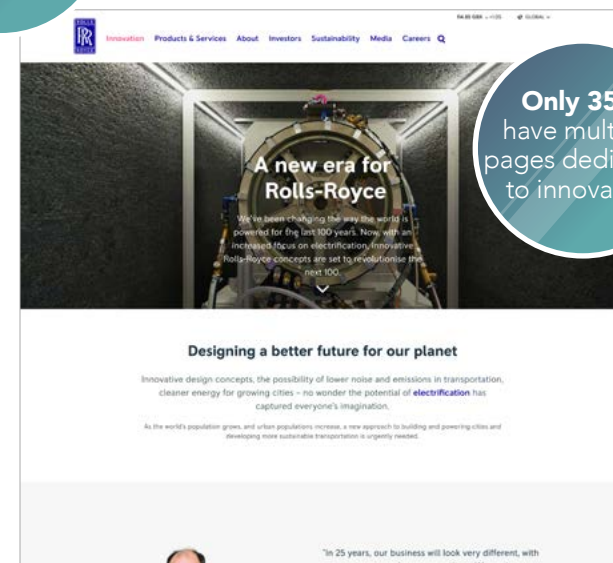
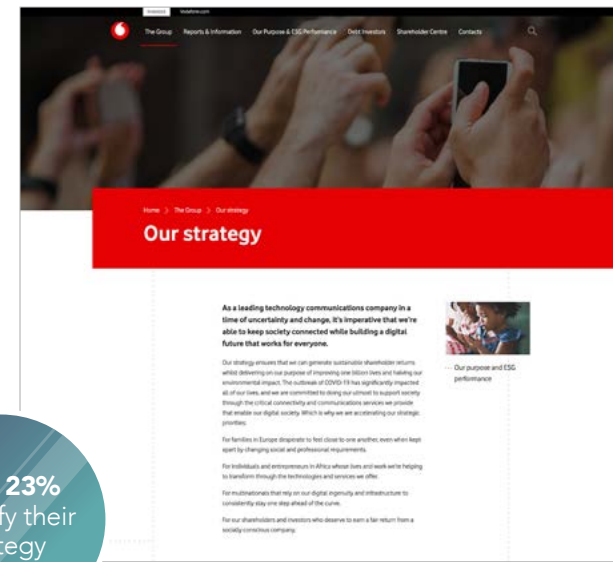
A company's Strategy section should articulate its long-term vision for success—and, even better, demonstrate how it will attain its strategic goals. In 2020, the short-term strategy for many businesses was defined by their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the companies that performed exceptionally well stated a clear case for how their business growth was a byproduct of their long-term vision, for example how Target and Walmart executed brilliantly on contact-free shopping services such as curbside pick-up and home delivery that they had put in place years before the pandemic. Going forward, it is essential that businesses show they are defining, quantifying, and following through on their long-term imperatives as long-term strategy creates long-term investors.



Only 23% quantify their strategy



71% tell their innovation story with case studies



Only 35% have multiple pages dedicated to innovation

The 2021 Digital Agenda

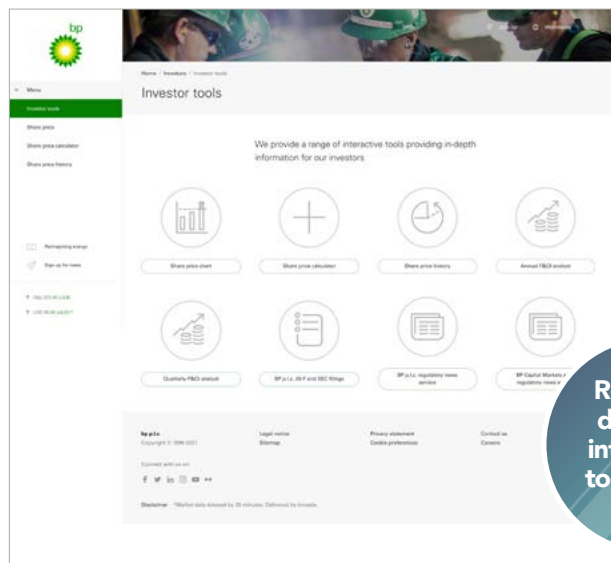
Connect.IQ Special Report: **Global 100**



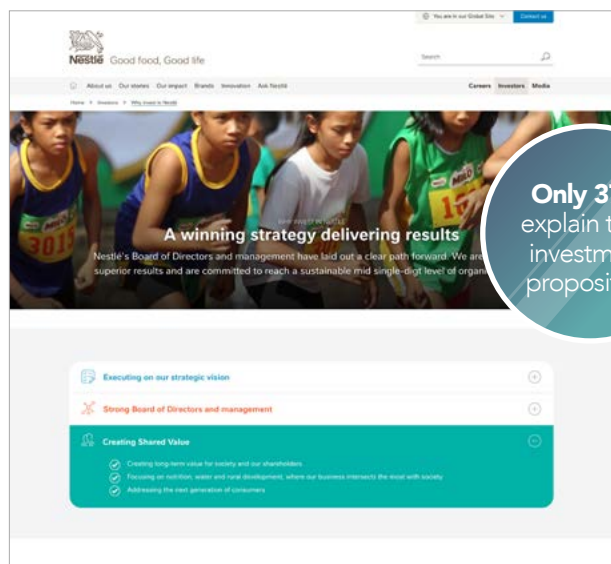
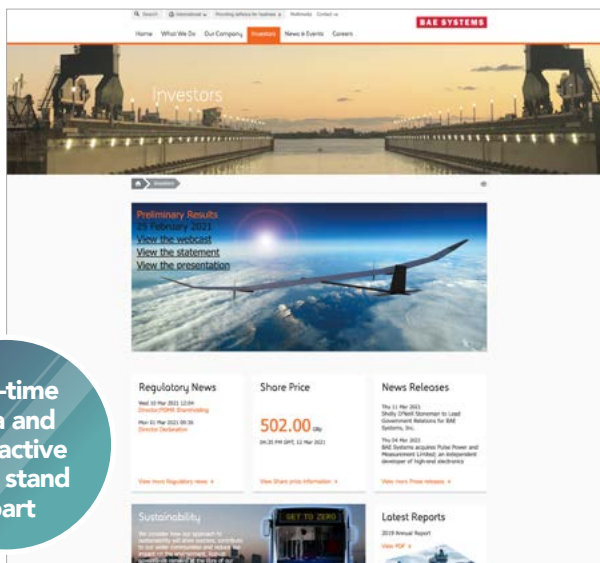
Investor Content

The second top priority of the IROs in 2021 is to share great investor content, according to our NIRI survey. We're talking about the nuts and bolts of building an investor case such as an explanation of the company's investment proposition, key financial data, integrated IR content, real-time share price, and a robust archive of investor presentations. Investors have many sources of information to research your company—some of which may surprise businesses. It's never been more important for a website to share a compelling business case. The Dow and Standard & Poor's 500 reached record highs in 2020, and initial public offering around the world skyrocketed. But only the businesses that shared a compelling investor case benefitted. In 2021, institutional and individual investing activity continues unabated, thus underlining the need for corporate websites to respond to the uptick in investing.

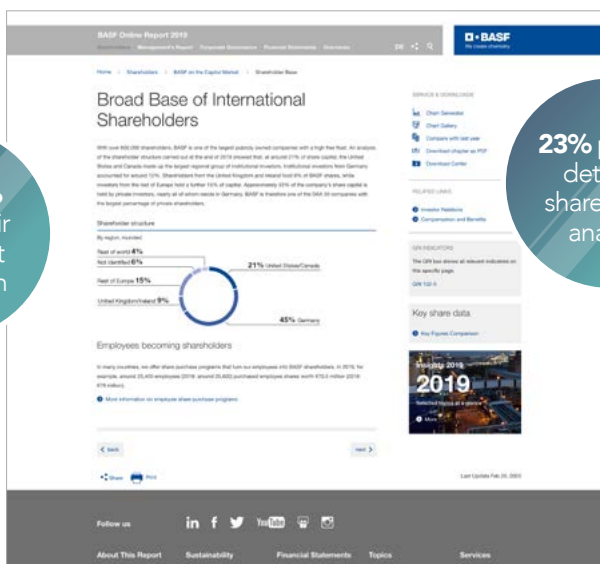
When we analyzed the websites of publicly traded firms for our report, we noticed a common thread. Every public firm shares the same compliance and disclosure information, such as share price, results presentations, share ownership, capital structure/debt, and other fundamental financial data. But the leaders don't stop there. They understand that how to share this information is also important—how it's interacted with, how it's received, and how it reaches its target audience.



Real-time data and interactive tools stand apart



Only 37% explain their investment proposition



23% provide detailed shareholder analysis

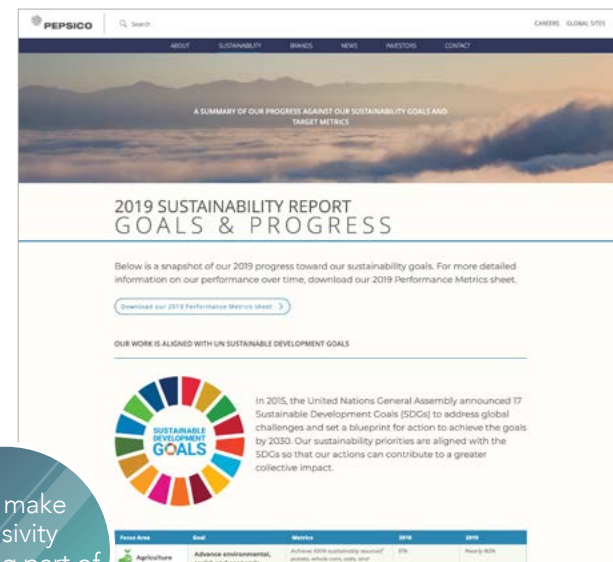
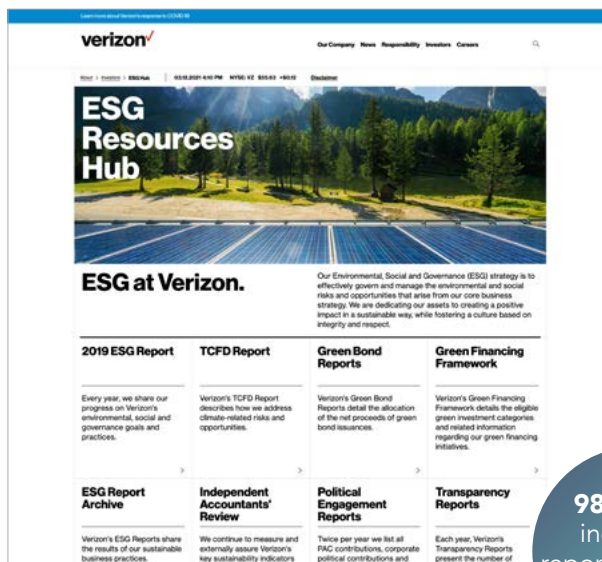
The 2021 Digital Agenda



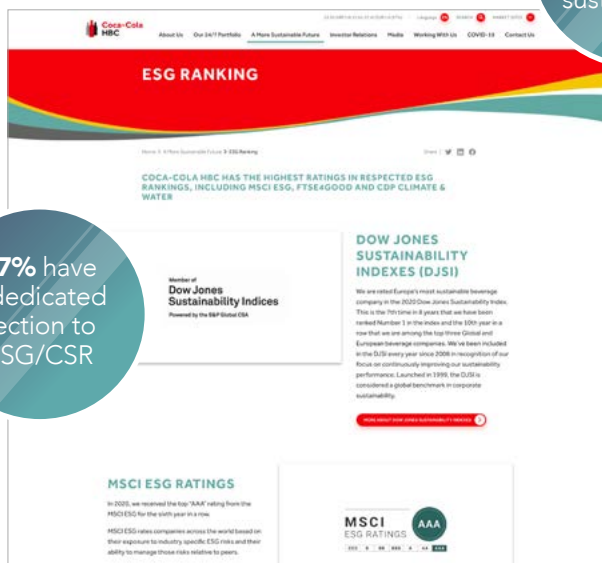
ESG & Sustainability

ESG is the third-highest priority for IROs, and no wonder: the COVID-19 pandemic put more pressure on publicly traded firms to demonstrate how truly sustainable they are. We've known for years that the Millennial and emerging Gen Z investing generations place a premium on companies whose values align with their own. And the social unrest of 2020 made it clear that businesses need to demonstrate their commitment to making society better, especially in the area of racial justice. As a PWC survey of CFOs' 2021 priorities put it, "A diverse workforce and deliberate inclusion efforts help drive better outcomes and elevate growth. Diversity is more than just doing the right thing—it's good for business. And driving business value is always top of mind for CFOs."

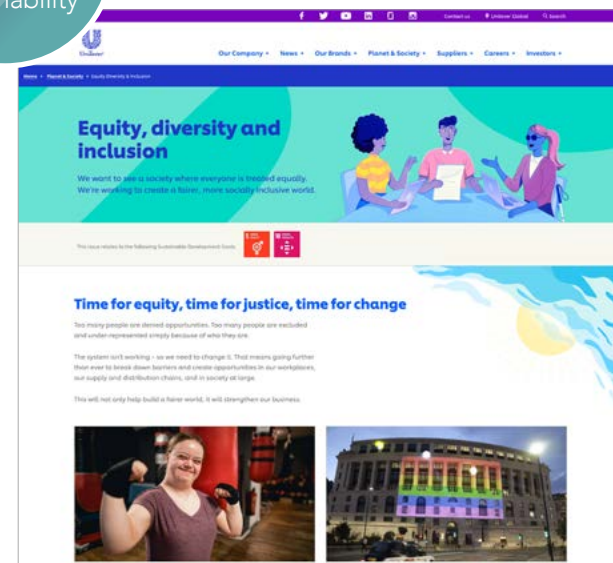
One finding is also clear from our analysis: companies that tell a compelling ESG and sustainability story enjoy business benefits—similar to the "sustainability premium" that BlackRock CEO Larry Fink described in his 2021 letter to CEOs. This holds true for both companies that have the most and least to lose not investing in these efforts, from minimal impact to those with business models in direct conflict with climate change. Yet, the impact of great ESG and sustainability content is clear. While "climate risk is investment risk," (per BlackRock) those companies most at risk have found incomparable ways to make it right and tell that story.



98% make inclusivity reporting part of sustainability



87% have a dedicated section to ESG/CSR



The 2021 Digital Agenda

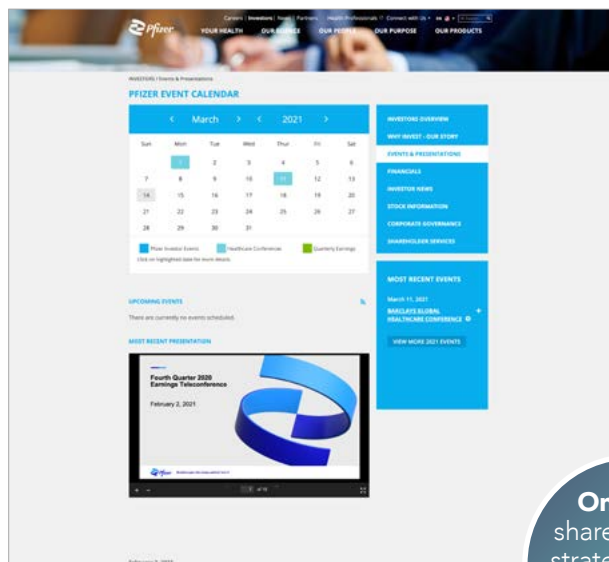
Connect.IQ Special Report: **Global 100**



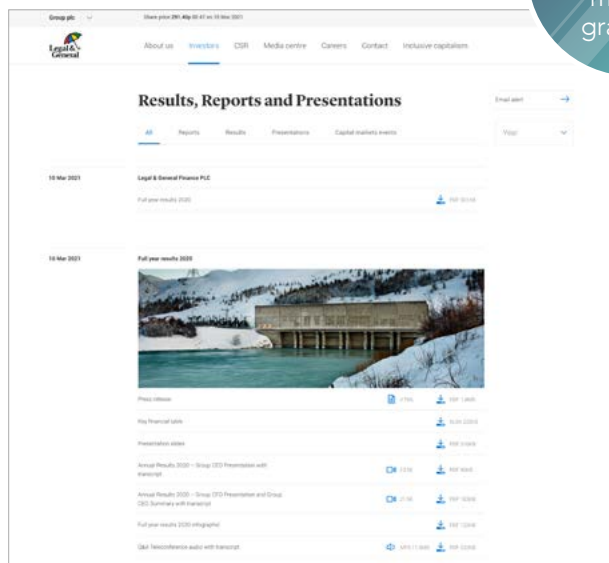
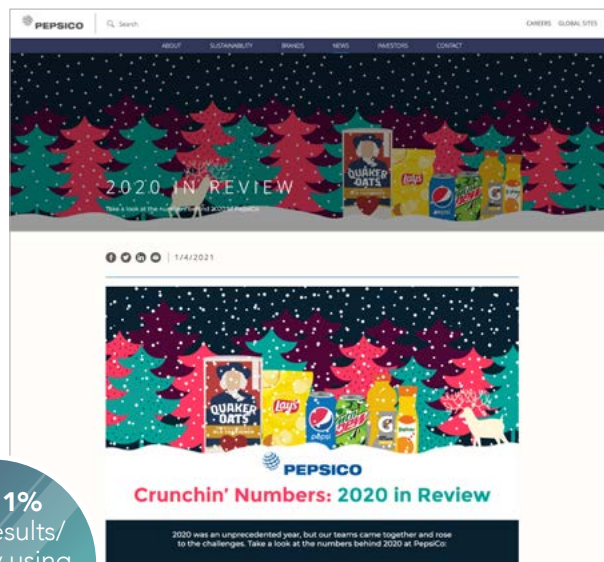
Virtual Events, Webcasts & Webinars

Virtual events are here to stay as a powerful way to build engagement with audiences everywhere—and they are a top priority for the IRO Digital Agenda based on our survey. Virtual events took off because businesses had no alternatives. Just about everything—from employee communications to investor relations—went online. Many large organizations are getting accustomed to managing events virtually, and they're discovering that virtual makes it possible to reach more people cost-effectively. Throughout 2020, many businesses realized that pulling off a big-time change like that could be achieved—not perfectly, but well enough to remain connected with crucial audiences.

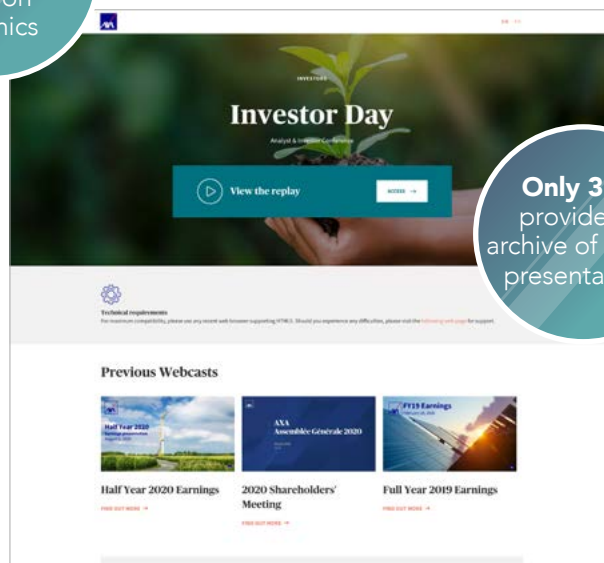
Organizations are starting to improve the state of the art. Tools and platforms are emerging that make it possible for businesses to make virtual not just an acceptable alternative to in-person events, but a desirable one. Virtual opens the playing field for immersive experiences, livestreaming and video, to engage with people at a much larger scale—through their laptops, mobile devices and beyond. Companies are being challenged to think strategically now: for example, how can virtual events help attract more high-value shareholders and build relationships that will enrich their market capitalization? Companies are also learning how to use tools such as polling and Q&A to engage with all audiences, including investors. In a digital-first world, virtual events will make or break how well businesses build trust with investors.



Only 1% share results/strategy using motion graphics

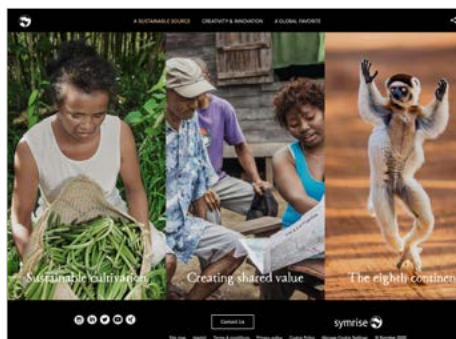


Only 31% provide an archive of results presentations



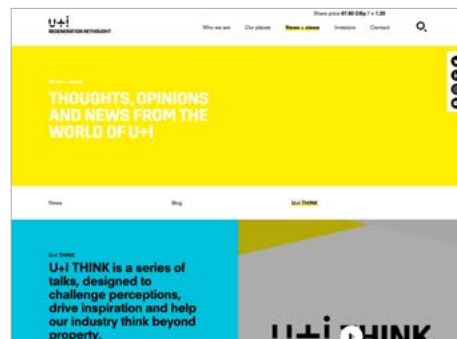
The Global 100 operate at a time of breathtaking change. As our CEO Don Scales noted in his opening letter, never before have so many forces of change converged at one time. What will separate the companies that manage change successfully from those that fall behind?

In a word, trust. The ability to forge a close bond of trust with all stakeholders—shareholders, yes, but also consumers, job seekers, and employees, especially at a time when the surging Gen Z and Millennial populations are carefully scrutinizing how well corporations align with their personal values. Companies that build and maintain trust lock in long-term relationships based on an emotional bond that all the great, enduring brands create year after year. Connecting with these audiences and building trust is a complex effort, bringing different departments in any company together. This effort is as much about getting your story heard in a credible way, managing its perception, and getting your story heard. We believe that building trust in the post-pandemic age means managing the following elements of a brand successfully.



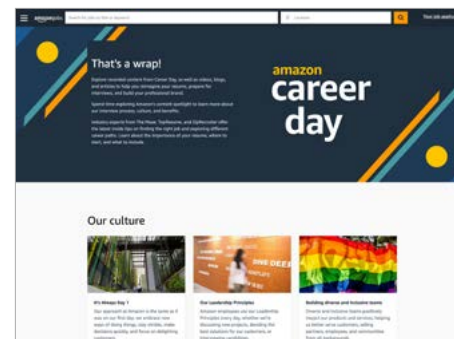
Responsibility

Responsibility encompasses digital content, creative, and communications that demonstrate the measures any company takes to be a good corporate citizen. Responsibility is about rising to meet the ever-increasing expectations of today's investors, consumers, employees, and other stakeholders. Issues such as climate change and diversity/inclusion form the bedrock of responsibility. At the same time, our collective notion of responsibility is constantly evolving, and the benchmark of stakeholder expectations of a corporate entity are constantly increasing.



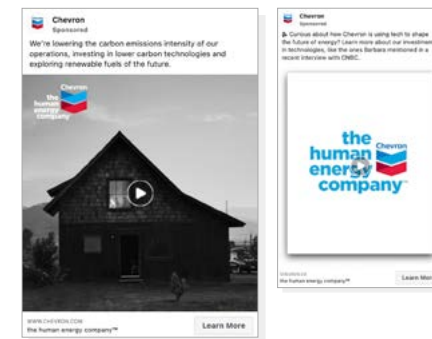
Reputation

Reputation consists of digital content, creative, and communications that bolster a company's reputation—proactively and reactively. Reputation is partly about creating ongoing, positive content to balance out any negative press, content, search results, activist / retail investor activity or market manipulation that may arise.



Recruitment

The next wave of talent has new expectations, and competitors are rising to the challenge. Recruitment is more than posting job openings online and mastering the art of the virtual interview. Recruitment is all encompassing, reflecting corporate culture through content ranging from employee testimonials to case studies. Targeting qualified talent, and highlighting company culture, purpose, and vision helps recruit and keep top talent as effectively as business performance does—perhaps more so at a time when people seek to align themselves with companies that share their values.



Reach

What good is an amazing investment thesis if no one hears it or sees it? Leading IROs are using performance marketing to make sure that their message reaches their target audience, whether promoting thought leadership and research to a select group of institutional investors or making sure their ESG and sustainability initiatives don't go unnoticed. SEO, social engagement, accessibility, optimization and amplification should be equally important to the digital agenda for 2021.

What is measured?

Overall Score—weighted average of all 300 criteria measuring the effectiveness of a corporate website and associated social channels

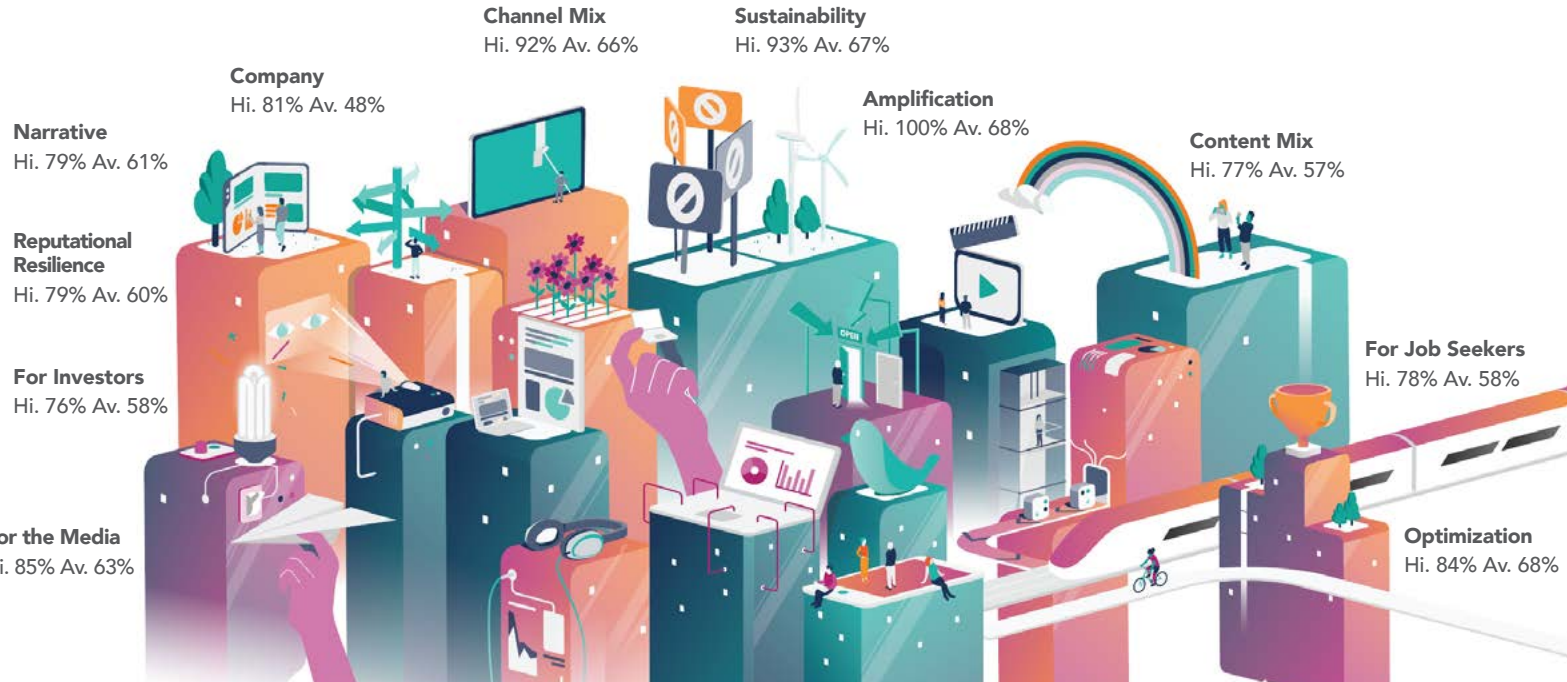
Narrative—assessment of narrative content across all website sections, with a focus on showing, not just telling

Content Mix—how well companies are engaging audiences by using images, video and interactivity alongside blogs, articles and case studies

Optimization—the elements that create a frictionless user experience and signal to search engines that a site takes its audience seriously

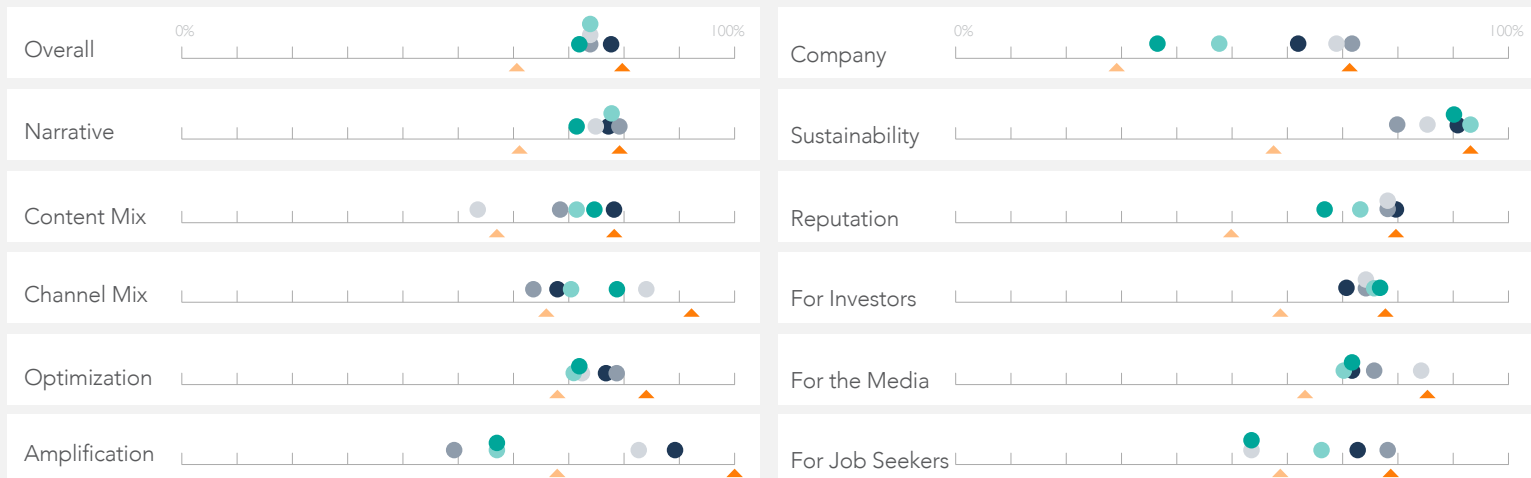
Amplification—how well companies are using performance marketing (organic and paid) to increase awareness and drive website traffic

Channel Mix—visibility across the social channels audiences use every day



KEY

- Shell
- BP
- Nestle
- BASF
- ENI
- ▲ Global 100 Average
- ▲ High



The Global 100

1. Shell	76%	35. Corning	62%	69. PepsiCo	60%
2. BP	73%	36. Direct Line Group	62%	70. Schlumberger	59%
3. Nestle	73%	37. DSM	62%	71. Barclays	59%
4. BASF	73%	38. ING Group	62%	72. GSK	59%
5. Eni S.P.A.	72%	39. Microsoft Corporation	62%	73. British Land	59%
6. Vodafone Group	70%	40. TUI Group	62%	74. eBay	59%
7. Credit Suisse	70%	41. Cisco Systems	61%	75. Chr. Hansen Holding AS	59%
8. BAE Systems	69%	42. EcoLab	61%	76. Boeing	59%
9. Merck Group	69%	43. IBM	61%	77. BNY Mellon	59%
10. Roche	68%	44. Pfizer	61%	78. Allianz	59%
11. Rolls-Royce	67%	45. Aviva	61%	79. Legal & General	59%
12. Anglo American	67%	46. Duke Energy	61%	80. Texas Instruments	59%
13. Essity	67%	47. Procter & Gamble	61%	81. ConocoPhillip	59%
14. Verizon	66%	48. Zurich Insurance	61%	82. Arcelor Mitta	59%
15. Novartis	66%	49. AstraZeneca	61%	83. Hewlett Packard	59%
16. Intel Corporation	66%	50. Total S.A.	61%	84. British American Tobacco	58%
17. Centrica	66%	51. Telenor Group	60%	85. Boston Scientific	58%
18. AT&T	66%	52. BHP	60%	86. ExxonMobi	58%
19. Unilever	65%	53. AXA	60%	87. Equinor	58%
20. Coca-Cola HBC	65%	54. Bank of America	60%	88. Zaland	58%
21. Tesco	65%	55. Johnson & Johnson	60%	89. L'Oreal	58%
22. Yara International	64%	56. Mondi plc	60%	90. Lowe's	57%
23. Beiersdorf	64%	57. Sainsbury's	60%	91. ADP	57%
24. Novo Nordisk AS	64%	58. Citigroup	60%	92. DS Smith	57%
25. Lockheed Martin	64%	59. Standard Chartered	60%	93. Wells Fargo	57%
26. Medtronic	64%	60. Chevron	60%	94. SGS	57%
27. BT Group	63%	61. 3M	60%	95. Estee Lauder	57%
28. UPS	63%	62. Accenture	60%	96. Adobe Systems	57%
29. Royal Bank Of Scotland	63%	63. Analog Devices	60%	97. NXP Semiconductors	57%
30. Walmart	63%	64. General Electric	60%	98. Ocado Group	57%
31. Orsted	63%	65. National Grid	60%	99. Prudential Financial	57%
32. CVS Health	63%	66. Danone	60%	100. Workday	57%
33. UBS	62%	67. Exelon Corporation	60%		
34. HSBC Holdings	62%	68. Norsk Hydro	60%		

Connect.IQ Special Report: Global 100

Overall

Shell: 76% | BP: 73% | Nestle: 73%

Content

BP: 79% | BASF: 77% | Shell: 75%

Company

BP: 81% | Nestle: 78% | Rolls-Royce: 77%

Sustainability

BASF: 93% | Shell: 91% | Unilever: 91%

Reputation

Shell: 79% | Nestle: 78% | BP: 78%

For Investors

Eni S.P.A.: 76% | Coca-Cola HBC: 76% | Centrica: 76%

For the Media

eBay: 85% | Nestle: 84% | Intel Corporation: 78%

For Job Seekers

Intel Corporation: 78% | BP: 77% | Vodafone Group: 77%

Content Mix

Shell: 77% | Eni S.P.A.: 75% | BASF: 71%

Channel Mix

Citigroup: 92% | L'Oreal: 88% | Total S.A.: 88%

Optimization

Boeing: 84% | Tesco: 83% | AT&T: 81%

Amplification

Orsted: 100% | Vodafone Group: 97% | Unilever: 94%

Measure the effectiveness of your own digital presence

At Investis Digital, we unite compelling communications, intelligent digital experiences and performance marketing to help companies redefine how they communicate online. If you want to build stronger connections with your audiences and drive business performance—request your custom Connect.IQ Assessment today.