

# Corporate reporting in the digital age

Q4's *Darrell Heaps* offers some tips on telling better stories and building better relationships

For as long as I have been in the IR space, my mission has been to help companies build better relationships with shareholders and be competitive in the capital markets. And I firmly believe the web is an integral part of establishing and growing these relationships.

With research from Brunswick Group showing investors and analysts increasingly relying on a company's online resources for their investment research, now is an excellent time to re-evaluate how you present your company to investors online. Below, I outline how your IR website can expand the reach of your IR efforts while promoting engagement with your investor community.

## Your website is more popular than you think

In November 2012 Rivel Research released the results of a survey polling 404 buy-side investors on their use of corporate websites. It found that 65 percent visit corporate websites at least monthly as part of their regular research on a company, while 79 percent feel the corporate website is the source they would trust most if a discrepancy arose between the website and an external source.

A great IR website should tell a well-rounded, meaningful story about your company that will reinforce your investment proposition and strengthen your relationship

with the investor community. What follows here is a series of recommendations on how to get the most out of the web for your investor relations program.

## Be visual and tell your story

To leverage what your website is capable of, it's important to understand how visual the web has become. Whether on desktop or mobile, our primary recommendation to our clients is to be visual. Images and clear messages, infographics and diagrams are far more effective than blocks of text when communicating your story.

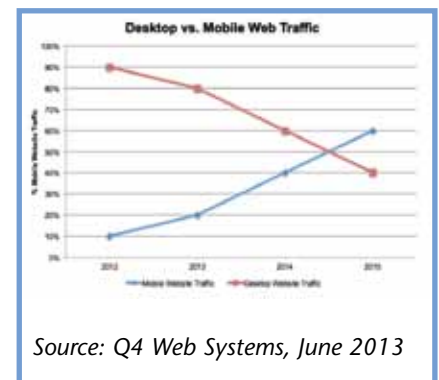
A great example of this visual approach is the Salesforce IR website (see below), which combines striking imagery with key corporate messages, all of which can be easily accessed on desktop, tablet or phone. No matter what the device, Salesforce has ensured a meaningful and consistent experience for all its users.



The Salesforce IR website makes great use of imagery

## Mobile is the new delivery system

Another aspect of the web IROs need to consider is the number of people accessing their site via mobile devices. In the last two years, mobile traffic to our clients' sites has increased by 60 percent and, according to a 2013 report from GlobalWebIndex, is now forecast to be larger than desktop traffic by sometime next year (see *Desktop vs mobile web traffic*, below). At this rate, mobile devices will soon be the primary devices people use to browse the web.



Juniper Networks has a dedicated IR web app (see opposite), specifically designed for tablets, that allows users to easily view the latest press release, stock quote, earnings report and upcoming events, all from the home page. From this one page, Juniper's audience can navigate through a varied amount of information with minimal effort: perfect viewing for people on the go.



Juniper Networks' IR app allows for seamless navigation across a range of mobile devices

The Voya Financial (previously ING) IR website (see below) uses a responsive website to deliver a consistent experience across an unlimited number of screens. Whether viewing on a TV, desktop, tablet or phone, all of the content changes to display perfectly.



Voya's website keeps content delivery consistent across devices

Use analytics to understand your investors' behavior

With the vast majority of investors using websites as part of their research process, it's critical that every IRO understand the behavior and actions of those investors. Knowing which institutions and cities your visitors come from, along with which social channels, search engine keywords and landing pages are driving site traffic, can be incredibly valuable during non-deal roadshows.

Did investors you are meeting access the website before or after the meeting? What type of research did they do? What outside source brought them to the site and how long did they stay? These questions can be answered via sophisticated analytics solutions that IR teams need to be using today. By monitoring how your audience interacts with your content, you get a better sense of what aspect of that content is most valuable to it.



Q4 Analytics' tools provide useful information about what's driving your web traffic

Technology allows us to connect with one another at an unprecedented rate. In order to

keep focusing on continually growing and developing, your online presence is essential. Your investors expect your company to provide them with the content and tools they need in order to make an informed, confident investment decision. By making use of the tactics outlined above, along with a continued focus on using technology to strengthen your relationship with investors, you will undoubtedly see your investor community grow and its relationship to your company reinforced, time and time again. ■■

**ABOUT Q4 WEB SYSTEMS**

**Q4**  
WEB SYSTEMS

Q4 Web Systems is the leading provider of IR websites, social media and mobile solutions for public companies in North America. Hundreds of Fortune 1000 clients and global brands use our web platform to manage their online communications efforts. We're known for innovation and pushing the boundaries of the web, social media and mobile apps. Through active best practice research, Q4 has earned a position at the forefront of the investor relations market, sharing knowledge through webinars, white papers and articles on the Q4 Blog.

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