

Giving IR a stronger voice

Kay Bommer explains what drives the evolution of the strategic importance of investor relations and how working together internationally can help to further advance the profession.

When people look at the German capital market, they often focus on its industrial strength, its listed global champions, or its regulatory framework. Less visible – but equally important – is the maturity of investor relations as a profession. Germany has developed one of the world's most advanced IR communities, and DIRK, the German Investor Relations Association, has played a central role in that journey.

Founded in 1994, DIRK has grown into one of the world's leading professional associations for IR. Today, more than 300 member companies represent over 95% of the market capitalisation listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. Our mission is straightforward: We give IR a voice!

We see ourselves as more than a network. Through education, thought leadership, publications, conferences, working groups, and dialogue with regulators, policymakers, and market participants, we actively contribute to the continuous development of the profession. Investor relations has become an indispensable bridge between companies and capital markets – and our role is to ensure that this bridge remains strong, credible, and future-oriented. The following two topics currently shape much of our work.

Strategic IR: a seat in the boardroom

A recurring argument suggests that the growing importance of IR can be measured by the number of IR professionals who eventually become CFOs. Indeed, we increasingly observe experienced IR executives moving into these positions, which is an encouraging development. Leaders with an IR background often bring a deep understanding of capital markets, investor expectations, and financial communication into the boardroom.

Yet, this trend alone does not prove that IR has gained the strategic standing it deserves. It takes more than career progression to earn a permanent seat at the executive table. Strategic IR means becoming an integral part of corporate



Kay Bommer is general manager of
Deutscher Investor Relations Verband
kbommer@dirk.org

decision-making – not merely communicating decisions after they have been made. It requires early involvement in strategic discussions, a systematic use of capital market intelligence, and the ability to translate investor perspectives into actionable insights for management.

IR professionals occupy a unique position. They are among the few executives who maintain a continuous dialogue with investors, analysts, governance experts, and ESG stakeholders. This gives them valuable intelligence that can help boards better understand market expectations, anticipate concerns, and strengthen corporate resilience. The challenge is therefore not simply to produce more CFOs with an IR background, but to ensure that IR itself is consistently recognised as a strategic function. That is a conversation we actively encourage within our membership and across Germany's listed companies.

Building a more international DIRK

IR has always been an international profession. Capital flows across borders, investors compare companies globally, and best practices increasingly emerge through international exchange. For many years, we have maintained close partnerships with our neighbouring associations – CIRA in Austria and the Swiss IR Club in Switzerland – as well as

Letter from



with the leading IR associations: NIRI in the United States, CIRI in Canada, AIRA in Australasia, and of course the UK's Investor Relations Society.

Our ambition now is to broaden that international dialogue even further. To support this goal, we have introduced several initiatives that make DIRK more accessible to IR professionals worldwide. International practitioners can participate in our activities under the same conditions as DIRK members – including webinars, publications, professional development programmes and our annual conference.

Our conference itself has become significantly more international. In 2026, we introduced a 'guest country of honour' concept, welcoming Denmark as our first partner. We also made all keynotes, panels, and workshops available in English or with an English translation, and we established a dedicated gathering of representatives from national IR associations.

These steps reflect a simple conviction: regardless of where we work, we are all part of one global IR community, and DIRK is committed to strengthening it.

An opportunity to meet

The strategic evolution of IR and the internationalisation of DIRK's activities are only two examples of the work currently shaping our agenda – but they illustrate where we believe the profession is heading.

I look forward to welcoming many readers of this column to the 30th DIRK conference, taking place on June 28th and 29th next year in Frankfurt. It will be an excellent opportunity to continue these conversations – and to shape the future of IR together. ■