



Q4



GUIDE

A Buyer's Guide to Investor Relations Technology: Picking the Right Partner

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The needs of IROs are evolving in the face of rapidly advancing technology as well as the current climate. IROs need to be agile in how they develop their IR program, from the right technology to choosing the best partners to help effectively engage, target, and acquire quality investors. The latest and most innovative technologies can enable investor relations teams of all shapes and sizes to optimize processes and run impactful investor relations programs.

In this guide, we'll help you understand how to choose the right partner to help understand your unique goals, identify opportunities for improvement, and build an investor relations program that pairs you with the right technology and customer support to meet your own unique business needs and objectives.

IR Websites

Your IR website is your primary channel for communicating with investors, analysts, and key stakeholders. In fact, according to Rivel Research, 75% of respondents say their interest in a company is diminished when the website is poorly designed. Given the important role of your website, selecting the right partner is critical in building a world-class online experience capable of successfully telling your compelling investment opportunity, connecting with a global audience, and increasing your shareholder base.





Design

With **65% of the buy-side** visiting your website on a monthly basis, it's imperative to provide an engaging visual experience to visitors that conveys your brand and tells your compelling investor story. By ensuring that your website is not only visually appealing, but easy to navigate, you can move visitors smoothly throughout your website, and create a pleasant user experience enabling them to find exactly what they are looking for.

Award-winning Designers & Developers

- It's essential to find a team that partners with you to translate your vision into an engaging, branded, and easy-to-navigate responsive website.

Fully Responsive Website

- Rivel Research Group's study regarding insight on the global buy-side, it was found that 42% of the buy-side lists ease-of-use as what makes a website best-in-class. A responsive website is easily viewed and navigated on mobile, desktop, as well as tablet. Deemed an essential for modern websites, many solutions offer baked-in responsiveness, ensuring that your website is user friendly across all devices.

Customized to Brand Standards

- By working closely with a design team, you can ensure that your website is not only consistent across all online properties but also matches your branded vision, creating a cohesive digital presence.



Content Management & Updates

Share the latest news and update content on your website quickly and easily with a robust content management system (CMS).

Automated Preparation and Publishing of Content

- Leverage a CMS that allows you to prepare and publish website content easily and quickly, especially at critical earnings time. Additionally, features such as timed publishing can ensure that you meet disclosure requirements.

Easy-to-Navigate

- Consider how much time you'll be spending in the CMS and how fluidly you're able to navigate around the website and easily make the essential updates and changes that you need.

24/7 Customer Support

- If something goes awry regarding your website or an important update is needed, it's essential you're able to receive support whenever you need it. Finding a partner that provides 24/7 customer support via email or phone will ensure that your website is always up and running.

A Dedicated Contact to Manage Website

- Having a contact that is solely dedicated to managing your websites ensures that you have a positive experience with someone who is consistently up to speed with your needs, goals, and website intricacies.

Proprietary vs. Open-Source CMS

- Consider which of the two main types of CMS platforms your vendor offers: open source or proprietary. An open-source CMS has no customization for the IR specific industry, whereas a proprietary CMS will have been developed specifically for the IR industry, offering robust customization.



Automation & Newswire

Keep the investment community informed with automated data feeds, regulatory filings, and press release distribution.

Update SEC Filing

- Ensure that your CMS allows you to post to your website in HTML, PDF, XLS, DOC & XBRL so visitors can easily access the documents.

Automated Data Feeds

- Determine if the CMS you're considering has automated stock, news, and regulator filings, and modules for events calendars, share price tools, and email alerts.

Automatic Email to Subscriber Base

- Manually sending email updates to your subscriber base can eat up a substantial amount of time. For effective time management, it's essential that your vendor allows for automated emails.



Security & Compliance

Safeguard your story and comply with web protocols to ensure your website is always accessible.

SEC and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Compliant

- Whether it's financial reporting or disclosure, adherence to listing rules, or the treatment of inside information, oversights can be costly. Ensure that your provider, and by extension your website, is up to date with SEC and GDPR protocol.

SSL Certified

- SSL certification authenticates the identity of the website, guaranteeing visitors know it's a legitimate website, as well as encrypting the data that's being transmitted.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

- It's important to work to make businesses accessible. In order to provide equal access to all and be in compliance with the ADA, it's an ongoing relationship between designer and company to optimize for compliance. Asking the right questions can help to ensure that your website is properly set up for user-friendly compliance.

Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) Attack Mitigation

- A DDoS attack is an attempt to make an online service unavailable by overwhelming it with traffic from multiple sources.

Web Application Firewall

- A WAF or Web Application Firewall protects by filtering and monitoring HTTP traffic between a web application and the Internet. It typically protects from attacks such as cross-site forgery, cross-site-scripting (XSS), file inclusion, and SQL injection, among others.

SOC-2 Certified

- SOC-2 is an auditing procedure that ensures your vendor is securely managing your data to protect your organization and the privacy of your sensitive data. Having this compliance makes certain that systems are set up so they assure security, processing integrity, confidentiality, and privacy of data.



Support & Infrastructure

The right infrastructure and support team will ensure your website has the foundation needed for today and into the future.

99.99% Uptime or Higher

- Reliability is essential for hosting your IR website. Consider the uptime statistics of your potential vendor and how often it has experienced downtime or outages.

AWS Cloud-Infrastructure

- With AWS, you receive a virtual environment that lets you load the software and services your application requires. Furthermore, AWS is widely considered to be the most secure, extensive, and reliable cloud platform.

Disaster Recovery Plan

- An exemplary disaster recovery plan protects you and your data from loss of connectivity, power infrastructure, and other common location-specific failures. Other measures include a full backup copy of production data, saved to this at least once per day and tested semi-frequently to ensure they can be successfully restored.

Infrastructure Monitoring

- Infrastructure monitoring is the process of monitoring network infrastructure for vulnerabilities. Infrastructure monitoring tools monitor the health status, availability, and performance of devices throughout the network.

Apdex Score

- Application Performance Index, also known as Apdex, is an open standard intended to simplify reports of application performance and analyzes the perceived satisfaction of the application's end user. As a reference point, scores that fall in the 1.00-0.94 are considered to be excellent.



Analytics & Insights

Tracking and analyzing the actions taken by website visitors can provide valuable insight into the behaviors and preferences of investors or key stakeholders.

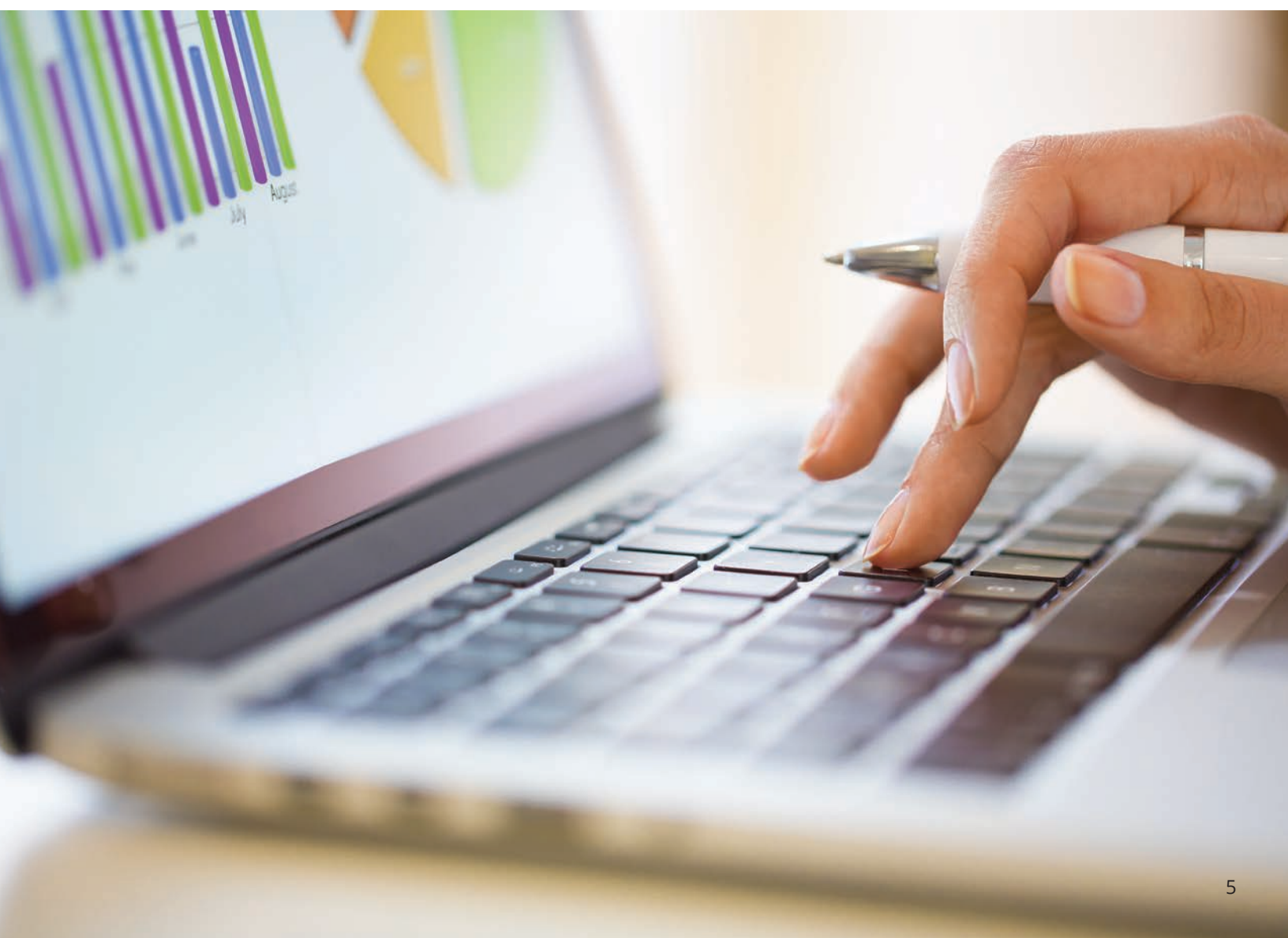
Web Analytics Provided

- Web analytics can help you understand how your message is resonating and identify who is visiting your investor relations website. Determine whether the provider offers fully integrated analytics, MI, Google, or Adobe analytics.

Ability to Correlate Data with Other Program Activities

- Determine how the CRM you're considering allows you to leverage your data and integrate with other aspects of your IR program holistically. For example, the ability to see if webcast attendees have visited your IR website after an earnings call.

When evaluating a potential web vendor, download the [Website Vendor Checklist](#) to aid in your search and ensure your unique needs are met.



Virtual Events

When **as much as 20%** of your stock movement is attributable to what's been said in your corporate communications, it's never been more important to communicate effectively. Between geography and evolving audience preferences, hosting an in-person investor event isn't always possible, or optimal. With virtual events that can easily scale to any audience size, you can communicate your story online, with the same impact and engagement as your physical events.





Event Types Supported

When looking at a partner for your event needs, consider the breadth of events that you intend on hosting in the future. Determine if the provider is able to support:

- Earnings Calls / Results
- Virtual NDR / Investor Meetings
- Virtual Shareholder Meeting / AGM
- Corporate Town Halls
- Breakout / 1:1 Meetings



End-to-End Provider

While there are many providers that concentrate solely on virtual events, others offer a larger suite. Determine whether the provider you're considering has other tools that you're likely to use and find helpful through ongoing engagements across your workflow, such as pulling all of your relevant analytics together in one succinct and easy-to-digest view.



Meeting Support and Coordination

One of the fundamental needs for an event such as a conference is having people to handle the 1-on-1 meetings, logistics, right people in the right place at the right time, and itineraries.



Reliability

Ensuring your event is online when you need it is paramount. Make certain that the provider you're choosing has a strong reputation for reliability in terms of error and issue free events. Determine if your vendor is 90% or above in terms of reliability and up time.



Branded Event

Ensure that your event is in line with your company brand and experience. Determine if your provider is able to offer fully branded events that seamlessly act as an extension of your organization.



Tools and Platform Availability

Determine what features the event platform offers. Tools such as polling, chat, and links to content can help to deepen engagement with your audience and give you instant insight into how your call is fairing. This can help you shape your calls, understand what is important to your participants and get the right information and message across.

Moderated Polling and Q&A

- Polling and Q&A features allows users to directly ask questions and interact with the presenter providing a two-way conversation. The presenter will also have the ability to filter questions and respond publicly or privately to help you get to key questions or insights that could be pertinent to your audience. Additionally, consider if the provider offers the option to supply a moderator to take on the role of monitoring the polling and Q&A on their end to filter questions, assure quality and overall a seamless experience.

Device and Browser Agnostic

- For mass accessibility, determine if your provider is compatible with a wide variety, if not all, browser types and devices. It's strongly encouraged to find a provider that is device and browser agnostic to ensure that all attendees are able to easily access your video event.

Multi-Presenter Video Streaming

- Carefully assess the presentation capabilities of your provider and if they're able to offer presenting for more than one presenter (video stream).

Engagement Tools

- With engagement tools, such as surveys, polls and downloadable resources, you're able to engage with your audience effectively in real-time.

Chat Feature

- Provide attendees with the ability to connect with each other and members of your team by providing a chat option. Chat discussions can also provide additional insight in terms of which messages are resonating and where there may be confusion.

Post-Event

- Ensure that you're able to email and distribute the recorded version of your virtual event so that those who could not attend may view, as well as for those that want to re-watch.

Transcription

- Inquire if a transcription of the event is available from the provider, or if this is something you need to do internally.

Attendee List

- Confirm that the provider is able to deliver a list of those who attended your virtual event, as well as who registered but did not attend.



Secure Events

Security is of paramount importance when hosting a virtual event with sensitive information. Ensuring that your events are only accessible to those permitted, along with the accompanying data needs to be a top consideration when determining a provider.

Password Protected Authorization

- Ensure that your event is only accessed by those it's intended for. Assess if your vendor offers password protection for secure event access.

Email Domain Filtering

- Determine if your provider offers domain filtering to permit or deny certain domains from accessing your event.

Custom Attendee Approvals

- Assess if your provider allows your custom attendee lists and approvals to ensure that your event is secure, and only attended by the approved list.



IR CRM & IR Program Analytics

When the capital markets are disrupted IROs don't have the time to manage inefficiency. You need a solution that simplifies your workflow and integrates all of your analytics, monitoring tools, and relationship management functionality in one easy-to-use platform.

An effective CRM is designed to aggregate all the data generated by your IR program into a single centralized platform. This enables you to easily report on stock performance, shareholder composition, and investor engagements, while reducing the amount of time spent on manual reporting **by 50%**.





Monitor and Aggregate Information and Insights

Carefully determine what the CRM you're assessing allows you to do; Better track your own program, improve targeting, and increase your competitive intelligence. Below are some of the features and abilities that your CRM should allow you to do, consider if your provider offers these options:

Dynamic Natural Language Processing

- An important feature that can process and recognize speech, aiding in the live updating of market commentary, surveillance updates, and market summaries.

Document and Track Interactions

- Ensure the provider offers the ability to create contact lists, tag interactions, and log any meetings, calls, events, or emails.

Calendar and Itinerary Development

- Track upcoming events and view the month at a glance. This feature can assist in creating an itinerary for upcoming events so you can effectively use your time.

Advanced Search Functionality

- Confirm the ability to quickly search vast amounts of important data to easily find transcripts, contact information, and more.

Universal Data

- Monitor the latest market movements by accessing stock quotes, ownership news, and press releases.

Ownership

- Consider the degree of insight your provider can provide into ownership. Whether it's premium ownership (Factset 13F, D, G Filings, Current and Historical), Buy and Sell-Side in-depth profiles, or ownership activity charts including peer comparison, view ownership vs. share price and events activity.

Research & Estimates

- Determine the research and estimate offerings that your vendor is able to provide. This can range from earnings estimates, consensus on multiple fundamentals, detailed estimates and broker details.

Activism

- Inquire what tools the provider can offer for identifying when an activist is in your stock. These can include flagging activism ownership or triggering an alarm.



Report Building

A comprehensive CRM can aid IROs in creating a streamlined and integrated approach to aggregating the IR program highlights that are critical when reporting on performance, strategy and opportunities to the C-Suite.

Data Export Ability

- Confirm the different data export formats available (HTML, PDF, XLS, DOC & XBRL).

Briefing Books

- Does the provider offer the ability to quickly develop briefing books with accurate insights that can be formatted for easy sharing.



Analytics

Analytics plays a crucial role in helping IR teams track, benchmark, and evaluate their IR programs. That being said, it's integral that your CRM provide considerable insight into the health and success of your program through access to the right data and analytics.

Feedback Analysis

- Analyzing feedback from key stakeholders is integral for IROs to understand the performance of not only their IR events, but their IR program as a whole. Consider if the CRM you're assessing has comprehensive tools for effective feedback analysis.

Impact Analysis

- Holistically understand how your IR program is performing and resonating. Your CRM should have the ability to aggregate all the data generated by your IR program and enable you to easily report on stock performance, shareholder composition, and investor engagements.

Website and Event Analytics

- Website and event analytics provide insights to better understand investor behavior and intent that is simply not possible without analytics tools. The result is better and more informed predictions on who you should be speaking to.

Trading Analytics and Insights

- Trading analytics can help you to identify trading trends and patterns that management needs to understand. Additionally, these insights into company, peer, and sector share prices can allow you to effectively report on industry ownership trends.



Support Your Ongoing Program

In addition to analytics, consider how the CRM you're assessing supports the administrative side of your IR program. This could include managing your meeting schedule, meeting notes, and other important operational information in one centralized location.

Shareholder Intelligence

Over 62% of board meetings require insights into investor movements and activities. Surveillance can help deliver key insights and analytics you need to understand the markets and movements within your shareholder base throughout the quarter, for actionable intelligence to drive business decisions. Gain a truly real-time assessment of who is driving your stock price, why they are doing it, and know how to respond.





Equity Surveillance

When evaluating a surveillance offering, consider how that partner is able to illuminate previously hard-to-see changes and patterns within a shareholder base. The right analysis and tools can empower IROs to more precisely refine your company's investment thesis, not to mention target criteria.

Capital Markets Intelligence

- With capital flows happening constantly, it is critical for your analytics vendor to be able to provide trading and shareholder analytics for your review with management. From relative performance, to key trading indicators, to an aggregated view of quarterly shareholder changes - capital markets intelligence needs to adapt to your program with the right type of reports and data assessments to respond to management questions.

Surveilling DTC Settlement

- Vendors with powerful insights regarding DTC settlement information, give you the ability to turn opaque markets more transparent. DTC information provides tremendously valuable information in understanding which investors are likely taking a position into your corporate security in-between 13F filings, delivering actionable observations on your shareholders.

Activism Monitoring and Response

- Finding a partner that provides activism monitoring can allow you to react faster to irregular trading patterns that could impact your business. Consider what mechanisms are built into the platform to notify you, such as alarms triggered by unusual activity.

Custom Reporting

- Your analyst must act as an extension of your team, ensuring that your critical analytics and intelligence needs are proactively addressed. Consider what reports are available to you, how granular the information is, and what is needed for that to have the right added insights to be deemed actionable. A solid reporting offering should offer analyst commentary available in detailed weekly and monthly reports that highlight the specific insights into ownership changes that you are about.

Vendor Details

Outside of specific technology requirements, it's important to consider what makes each potential vendor uniquely able to serve your needs.



Solutions Designed for Investor Relations

- Certain technology solutions (such as CSM) are open source, meaning they leverage technology that is created for a variety of use cases. Confirm the solutions offered are created specifically for certain use cases such as investor relations, allowing for detailed customization.

Demonstrated Leader in the Space

- Doing some research on your own and asking your peers in the IR community can help paint a picture of how your vendor stacks up in the space. Reviewing their online content such as blogs, best practice guides, and case studies can be a powerful indicator.

Ability to Meet Changing Requirements in Evolving Landscape

- Something to both ask your sales representative about and research on your own, consider how often the CRM is updated with new features, security measures, industry best practices and more. This will ensure that you're choosing a partner that is committed to keeping your website modern and reliable.

High NPS Score

- NPS stands for Net Promoter Score. It's a customer satisfaction benchmark that measures how likely your customers are to recommend your business to a friend. Scores 0-6 are Detractors, scores 7-8 are Passives, and scores 9-10 are Promoters.



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To win big in the fight for capital, you need to effectively position your investment story and identify, attract, and retain high-quality investors against a constantly changing landscape. Finding the right partner, and the right technology, can help you achieve those objectives.

Q4 is a global leader in cloud-based investor relations and capital market solutions. Our full suite of IR products including websites, webcasting, IR CRM, and intelligence solutions arm our customers with the insights and tools they need to better understand the capital markets, engage with their investors, and experience a seamless workflow. To learn more, visit www.q4inc.com.