



# *The Convergence of IR & PR:*

## *12 Ways to Strengthen Your Communication Team*

In this guide, Business Wire looks at the 12 ways public relations and investor relations teams can work closer together to build a stronger, more impactful communication program including:

- Creating a Regulation Fair Disclosure (Reg FD) friendly communication program
- Understanding how today's audiences perceive public companies
- The role of visuals in financial and non-financial corporate storytelling
- How to save time and money with asset sharing, media relations and measurement

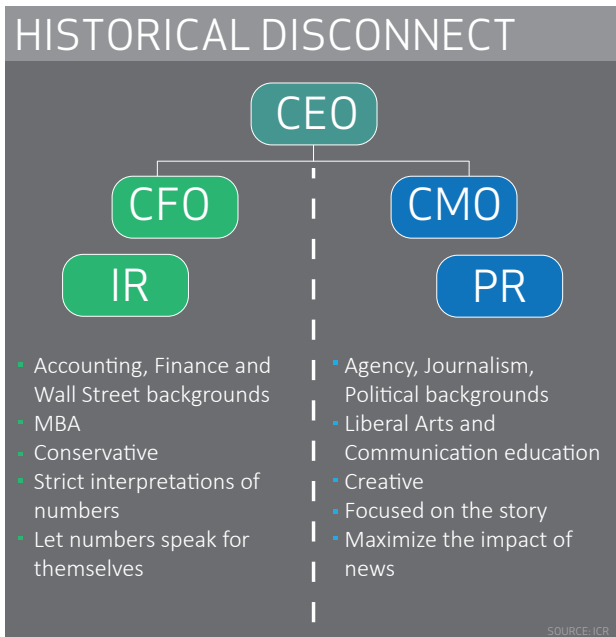
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# *The Convergence of IR & PR: 12 Ways to Strengthen Your Communications Team*

In this guide, Business Wire looks at the 12 ways public relations and investor relations teams can work more closely together to build a stronger, more impactful communication program.

We recently had the pleasure of listening to an excellent presentation hosted by Integrated Corporate Relations, Inc. [ICR](#) on the topic of marrying investor relations (IR) and public relations (PR) to create a stronger company communication program that ultimately results in solidifying reputation, stabilizing stock price, garnering more impactful coverage and building relationships with all key constituents. Whether you are an analyst or consumer, when you look at a company, what do you see? You see the company – you don't see the individuals or teams making up the company, PR team, IR team or marketing team.

**So why do these internal teams work in silos when the company is viewed as a whole by outsiders?** The truth is PR and IR departments have very distinctive roles, working with different branches of management and each attending to separate constituencies. In 2015, it is even more important for these two teams to communicate and cross-educate, presenting a single, homogeneous company to all audiences.





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### Aligning Team Goals

**So how do you create a team when each group has completely different responsibilities?**

Let's first take a look at how these teams are usually set up and the tasks they have in common.

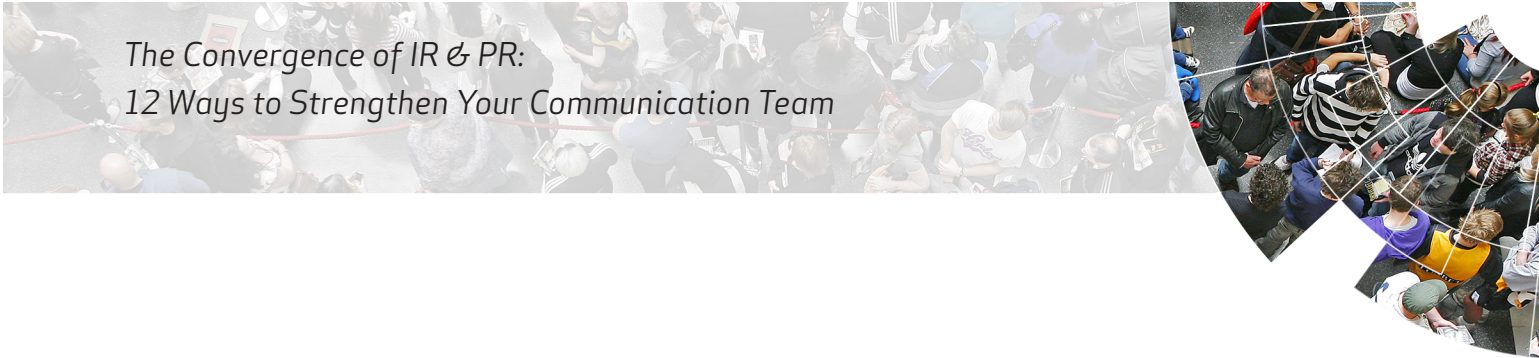
In most public companies, both teams are already managing company websites, news releases, media and analyst outreach through audience relations, content creation, social media and crisis communication.

Each department is responsible for creating and updating the messaging platforms related to its respective communication program and goals. This means that in most cases, both teams are writing content, updating websites and making decisions related to assets and social sharing.

Two different parties that create content separately introduce risk – risk of message disconnects, duplicate costs and wasted time.

Now, let's look at a few ways IR and PR can work together to communicate a stronger, more stable company.





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# 1 *Take the time to understand each side's audience - what spurs action, what they need to see, and what makes them trust your company.*

Each side of the house has very different audiences to activate and these audiences respond in different languages. By understanding what information and tone of voice influences the behavior of investors and prospects alike, your company can create a single voice that speaks for both – the audience interested in your financial health and the one interested in being a part of your revenue stream.

As noted in the ICR webinar, IR teams should be reading and following the outbound communication generated from the

PR side of the house, while PR teams should be sure to join earnings calls and review analyst reports.

“Today’s post-Regulation FD environment is fertile ground for manipulation and distortion of the facts, making it essential for the IR and PR function to work together to present a unified front to investors and the media,” said Michael Fox, managing partner, ICR. “Public perception is shaped primarily by the investor and media audiences, and a disconnect between the two can negatively impact company valuation.”

# 2 *Create a glossary of terms to ensure each side can speak each other's language.*

### TERMS TO CONSIDER

Non-GAAP earnings	Earnings per share (EPS)
Guidance	Marketing value
RegFD disclosure	Quiet period
FTC disclosure	Embargo
Engagement	Stakeholder
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	EBITDA

As we noted earlier, each corporate audience speaks a different language. While analysts need to understand GAAP and EBITDA, prospects may be looking for product technical specs. By creating an internal glossary of terms, both teams can utilize the same lingo, ultimately creating and reinforcing the same consistent message.

### 3 *Proper Disclosure. Cross-train teams to understand RegFD and other legal rules that may impact what is communicated.*

While both teams utilize their legal department to approve communiqués, it is imperative that each team understands the rules governing what information can and cannot be shared.

For PR teams, this means thoroughly understanding the rules surrounding the disclosure of news that may impact your stock price, RegFD and regulations established by the SEC. For IR teams, this means understanding [influencer engagement best practices established by the FTC](#).



### 4 *Tell a better story by developing a set of key phrases that activate all audiences.*

Many companies suffer from split personalities. The IR team tends to be serious and fact-based, while the PR and marketing team presents the business in a more relatable manner. The truth is, both parties are human, and in 2015 it is the interesting or thought-provoking content that really

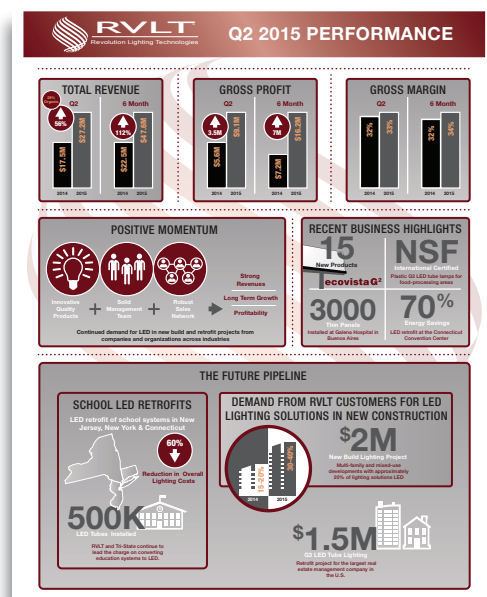
activates audiences. This doesn't mean you should insert promotional ads or YouTube clips into your earnings releases, but it does mean that both sides of the house should humanize their news so it showcases the company in the same light.

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### 5 Go Visual.

People are visual creatures. In fact, [more than 63% of the world's population learn by seeing, hearing or touching, not reading!](#) While historically it was perfectly fine to communicate to audiences via text-only news updates, this no longer works in 2015. Visuals can help demystify earnings and other more complicated news, while reinforcing your company branding and reputation.

Smart companies like Revolution Lighting Technologies Inc. are creating infographics to help engagement with the non-financial audience.



### 6 Save time and money with multimedia asset sharing.

Multimedia is everywhere. It is in news releases, social updates, analyst presentations and more. In many public companies, the creation and use of these assets is managed by each individual department. Instead of duplicating this work, perform a [comprehensive asset audit](#) to centralize all photo, video, audio, white papers, sales and analyst presentations into one location for easy access by all teams.

Create a matrix of company assets to keep track of the information in the chart to the right. This could include logos, images, videos, ads or textual content.

ASSET AUDIT	
Asset information	Usage parameters (if any)
Asset name	Asset size
Description of asset	Asset host URL (if needed)
Asset type (text, image, video, PDF)	Asset location
Asset source	Use date(s)
Asset usage type (print, web, broadcast)	Last update date
Asset owner/creator	Approved uses
Creation date	Approved users
Digital rights	Update needed?



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# 7

### Combine media relations efforts.

One of the most obvious ways that PR and IR teams differ is when it comes to media relations. Investor relations teams tend to focus on financial reporters, major media, and of course, analysts. PR teams tend to focus on industry publications, major media and consumer activation found via social media. The truth is these media outlets and consumers alike do not separate the news they read

by type of publication. When doing research, both are frequently weighed equally. To ensure consistent messaging, communicators must present the perception of one single company structure. After identifying friendly reporters, analysts and influencers, relationships should be developed with these individuals by both the PR and IR teams.

# 8

### Cross promotion of news media coverage and feedback by both teams' key constituents.

For many PR teams, it is common to promote [media coverage](#) of their organizations. This has two effects – first, it expands visibility of the coverage, and second, it helps jump start social sharing. In 2013, Nielsen determined that [content shared by a 3rd party \(Word of Mouth\) had a trust rating of 84%](#), making it even more beneficial for companies to promote news coverage.

Nonetheless, PR teams are often the only groups to take advantage of coverage sharing. We recommend that these teams share both IR and PR coverage, providing audiences with a well-rounded view of the company and its news.



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# 9 *Create a centralized social promotional program.*

Most PR teams leverage social platforms to promote the company directly to employees, consumers, prospects and media outlets. Creating a centralized social media program that promotes financial and non-financial news alike ensures greater reach and greater transparency for your news. Sharing best practices as they relate to follower demographics, activation cues, content amplification, share timing, hashtags, and social terminology will increase the success rate of any shared content. This consistency builds trust by reinforcing your company's commitment to clear, transparent communication.



# 10 *Build thought leaders.*



ARC Resources, winner of IR Magazine Canada's 2014 'Best Investor Relations in the Energy Sector' award, produces 'Myron's Minute' - a quarterly video of their CEO, Myron Stadnyk. ARC's efforts earned Stadnyk IR Magazine Canada's 2014 'Best IR by a CEO' (mid-cap) nomination - affirming their thought leadership building efforts.

Reputation is based not only on products or balance sheets, but many companies promote their internal experts to help solidify industry standing. In recent years, department heads have been tapped to speak on earnings calls providing weight to the financial news, just as PR teams utilize quotes by these experts to support product launches or company news. Utilize these experts, not only when news is breaking, but as a part of a reputation building strategy that will increase their visibility and reputation, thereby reflecting upon the strength of the entire company.



# 11

## Connect your online newsroom and your IR site.

Company websites are frequently used by media outlets, financial audiences and potential customers who in 2015 are [doing more research](#) and taking a better look at the businesses they support and those they invest in than ever before.

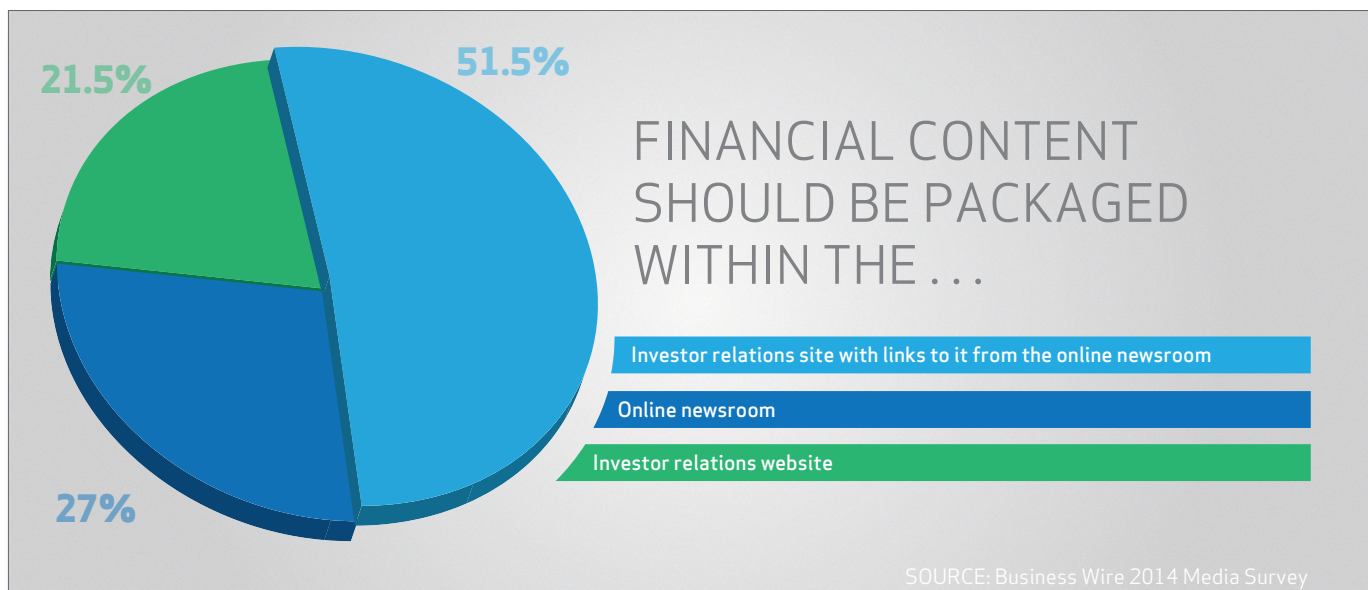
In 2014, Business Wire released the results of our media survey that provided two significant insights related to company hosted news sites.

- › [77% of reporters use the company's online newsroom to round out coverage pieces](#)

- › [52% preferred that public companies keep financial and company content separated](#)

Although your [online newsroom](#) and [IR site](#) each cater to different audiences, there is often an overlap of interest in certain content such as: financial earnings releases, statements from senior management, biographies and background material.

Rather than duplicate your work by posting each piece of content twice, use reciprocating links to ensure audiences can access relevant content quickly and easily.



# 12 *Create a centralized measurement and monitoring program.*

While much of the convergence of IR and PR tends to be around community building and information sharing, it is important to note that IR and PR must both be equally involved in communication program measurement and monitoring. In most companies, company monitoring programming is led by PR or analyst teams. This is a major mistake and here's why. It is just as likely for a company to be attacked by an activist on social channels as it is to receive a customer complaint.

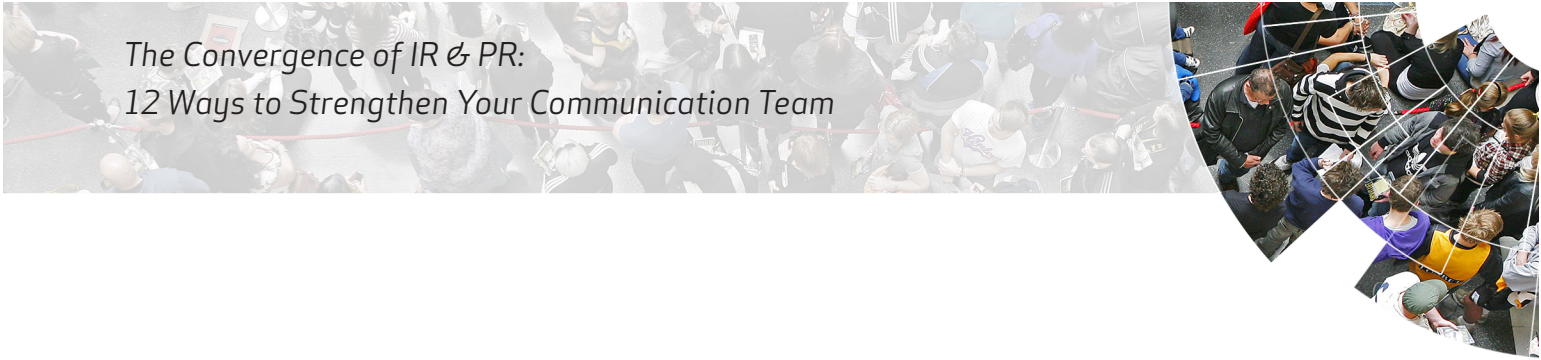
As monitoring tools evolve, it is now much easier to spot emerging trends that can affect company stock price. IR teams need to get more involved in understanding how company news is shared via social channels, as well as how rumors spread across the internet.

With tools like the [Market Impact Report](#), which provides companies with information on exactly how much their news release, or industry event, impacts their stock price, monitoring is easy.

In today's fast-moving news cycle, news is as likely to begin in social channels and spreads outward to local media, trade press, major media and ultimately financial audiences, as it is to be begin with a major feature published by an established news source.



The sooner IROs can be alerted to potentially incorrect or unpleasant conversations online, the faster they can activate a plan to refute this data.



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### Looking Forward

Thanks to the onslaught of mobile devices and audience touch points, company communication is more important today than ever before. Communication teams that can combine their resources as outlined above will create the perception of a stronger, healthier, more transparent business. This perception not only drives to business goals, it reduces costs and duplicated workload.

To learn more tips and best practices related to successful communication, consider reading:

- › [Let's Get Visual: The Role of Multimedia and the News Release](#)
- › [Best Practices for Enhanced Earnings Releases](#)
- › [A Guide to Press Release Optimization: Engage- Inform- Share](#)
- › [Considerations for Building a Better Online Newsroom](#)
- › [IR Sites: A Guide to Requirements and Best Practices](#)
- › [How News Releases Impact Stock Price?](#)

For more information related to integrating a stronger IR and PR program, or best practices in amplifying your news, contact Business Wire at 888.381.9473 or email [info@businesswire.com](mailto:info@businesswire.com).