NIRI Virtual Chapter

Program Wrap-Up

Program Title: State of the Art Technology for Greater Investor Engagement

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At its most basic, IR is about crafting and delivering a message to an investment audience through an available medium – be it in person, over the phone, on paper, or through a screen. Marshall McLuhan might suggest that the medium itself is also the message, and that the capability to approach the mind of an investor through a new and more engaging medium actually changes and enriches the message as well. While we won't take a stand on McLuhan, it's worth being aware of the capabilities of new technology to expand the available channels to deliver your message.

As you'd expect from us, to tackle this topic, the *NIRI Virtual Chapter* brought together representatives from each of the different participants in this communication process. PGI's SVP of Global Enterprise Sales, Andrew Denlow, represented the *medium*, Laura Graves, VP of IR at AMD, the *message*, and Eileen Durey, Investment Officer at Hemenway Trust Company, the *audience*. With Frank Schieber, Senior Demand Generation Manager at PGI, serving as the moderator and helping us tie the entire channel together, here's what we learned:

Audio-only communication isn't going away – but it is giving way to richer media. The classic quarterly earnings call, with audio and Q&A, is deeply ingrained in the investment community and is still effective in both synchronous and asynchronous timing. However, more companies are adding slides and displays that aid in comprehension, as well as video messages or even live video that deepens the experience. One of the benefits of deeper media is increased engagement data – for example, the ability to measure viewing durations and effectiveness of the message.

Valuable content for investors doesn't necessarily have to originate from IR… Physical events hosted by your business are an excellent source of richer content including video, and if it's important enough for your customers, you can bet your investors will show interest as well. Further, in-house marketing departments are far more comfortable with video production than in the past, and costs to create a quality video experience are falling; producing content doesn't always require an outside design studio and a six-figure sum.

…**nor does the budget, and technology can be a "force multiplier" on your IR budget and executive time.** Panelists discussed sell-side sponsored video sessions, which can help reach audiences across the globe and can be conducted from research broker offices to the benefit of all three parties. Keeping IR involved in the content also makes sure your message is 100% consistent with existing disclosure. Given the explosion of video content, you're also less likely today to need to give your executives video training – they're more likely to be comfortable in front of a camera and skilled at getting the message across.

New formats produce a different level of engagement for both your management team and investors…Live videoconference communication forces both sides to be more fully "present" than audio-only; there tend to be few distractions (checking email, side conversations on mute) when engaged in a

live video discussion, and both sides generally need to be well-prepared for the event in advance. The same rules apply for hosting any meeting – a preset timeframe, clear goals, and sufficient prep naturally push these events to be a good use of time.

Organizing and distributing your content through the right channels is nearly as important as producing the content itself. Email is still the standard distribution method for richer-media content – maintaining your investor email list and sending webcasts, video, and other media out to your investor audience remains effective, though spam filters can occasionally be a hurdle. The buy-side audience isn't always expecting to receive information through social media channels (LinkedIn, Twitter), but you might find an audience of retail investors and wealth managers there that you haven't tapped into before, along with the tools to measure their engagement.

For more information, members can listen to a replay of the event, download the slides, review speaker biographies, and access speaker contact information at the NIRI Virtual chapter website, Nirivirtual.org. Additionally, those who are interested can contact chapter sponsor PGI at their website PGI.com.