

Following an audit of the ICR website, content, social media platforms, and overall digital presence, Right Source identified a few major concerns and opportunities.

THE SITUATION

ICR is a strategic communications and advisory firm that specializes in investor relations, digital branding, public relations, crisis communications, and capital advisory solutions. Founded in 1998 by a team of former Wall Street analysts, ICR has since grown to become a one-of-a-kind firm whose clients include multinational brands such as RBC Capital Markets, Lululemon, Campbells, and more.

Prior to working with Right Source, ICR had a recently redesigned website, established messaging, and an existing blog with a sporadic publishing schedule, but the company wasn't actively marketing itself or using its established brand equity and existing content to maximize exposure. In 2019, ICR acquired Westwicke, a healthcare IR and IPO advisory firm that was a longtime Right Source client. After realizing the synergies that could be effected and the results generated during the Westwicke/Right Source relationship, ICR approached Right Source with a request to analyze existing marketing tactics, make strategic recommendations, and execute on the strategy.

In initial conversations with ICR stakeholders, it became evident that there were three major concerns:

- ICR is a large, globally recognized firm that was providing investor relations, capital markets advisory, PR, branding, and social media marketing to its clients, but was not focused on it's own marketing.
- Many of ICR's competitors were much more active in terms of content, social media presence, and SEO.
- ICR was known for investor relations and was generating a majority of its business from that service offering. ICR's goal was to increase awareness around PR, crisis communications, and related offerings to achieve an even mix between those and its IR business.

THE CHALLENGES

ICR was starting with a solid foundation. The strong ICR brand and relatively new website made strategy and execution smoother, but some hurdles existed.

1. ICR had a well-designed website and effective messaging, but neither were optimized for search engine traffic. Further, the website was not integrated with a CRM system, so it was difficult to identify, track, and nurture any leads that came in via the website.

2. ICR had an existing blog which some team members were contributing to on an ad hoc basis, but there was no real strategy or goals in

place. Additionally, there was no anchor content or gated pieces, and posts were not optimized for search engine crawling.

3. ICR had established itself as a thought leader in IR services, but had not generated significant awareness about other offerings. The company felt that it was perceived as an IR-only specialist in the market versus a full-service strategic communications firm.

THE WORK

After performing an in-depth audit to identify ICR's needs and opportunities, Right Source created a strategy and plan that addressed content marketing, social media, search engine optimization, and overall promotion. As ICR's strategic content marketing partner, over the first 12 months Right Source:

- Published more than 50 blog posts, 14 eBooks, and more than 1,000 social media posts.
- Established processes to maximize content between Westwicke and ICR.
- Created new content, edited and optimized existing content, and worked with ICR's subject matter experts to publish internal expertise.
- Developed a full content marketing strategy to promote ICR's first virtual conference after years of being hosted in person. Output included a robust paid media schedule, email, organic social, and more. The result was record-breaking attendance with more than 3,500 attendees (2x the target!). In addition, there were 300+ presenting companies — the highest in conference history — and 700 buyside attendees (again, the highest ever).
- Helped launch and promote a weekly podcast hosted by ICR Co-Founder and CEO, Tom Ryan. The podcast features interviews with ICR's clients, Wall Street professionals, and more.
- Developed regular, consistent content with a mix of trending subjects, unique insights, and high-traffic search terms.
- Helped ICR create more anchor content to generate leads and further establish themselves as a thought leader.
- Managed ICR's social media to promote content, build brand awareness, and increase engagement. Nearly doubled following on LinkedIn over 12-month period.

ICR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & ADVISORY




5 Tips for Effective Analyst Communications

Analysts play a key role in a company's investor relations plan, so executives should approach these relationships carefully. Properly handled analyst relationships can become a significant asset to a company, while missteps may create unnecessary problems. To maintain successful analyst relationships, follow these recommendations:

- 1. Communicate and Respond in a Timely Manner**
 Analysts are under time pressure to issue commentary and investment advice, so they require speedy answers to their questions. A failure to respond quickly could lead to frustration or, worse, raise concerns since bad news often follows silence. In general, aim to respond to analyst calls as soon as feasible.
- 2. Establish a Clear IR Communications Timeline**
 Be consistent in letting the Street know when you plan to announce earnings and attend investor conferences and other events. It's helpful to issue a calendar of events and press releases and announce your plans in a timely manner; neglecting to do so suggests that your communications are unpredictable, which detracts from your company's overall story.
- 3. Maintain a Professional Relationship**
 No matter how much you like analysts, don't become overly familiar or view them as friends. Maintain professionalism and remember that anything you tell an analyst may be broadcast directly to the public markets. While a good, conversational relationship will allow you to add nuance to the analysts' understanding of your story, the utmost care must be taken to not provide non-public information.
- 4. Don't Play Favorites With Analysts**
 Appearing to favor one analyst in scheduling road shows, conferences, and meetings can produce ill will with other analysts. Analysts who don't feel close to a company tend to be less enthusiastic about covering it. In most cases, you should aim to be consistent and offer all analysts the opportunity to take your company on a road show.
- 5. Respect Analyst Share Ratings**
 Analysts downgrade shares to neutral or sell for a number of reasons. While it can be tough to see a downgrade to your company, refrain from putting that person in the "penalty box" holding a grudge against an analyst for a rating will just make them want to dig in more with that rating. Instead, talk to the analyst to address your challenges and his or her concerns.

It's important to nurture open, balanced, professional relationships with analysts. Westwicks can help you develop a successful plan to manage this vital piece of your company's IR strategy. To learn more, get in touch.

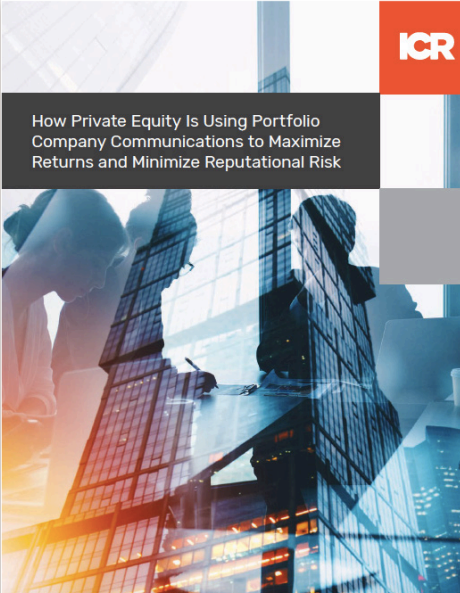
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Registration Opens Fall 2021



ICR

How Private Equity Is Using Portfolio Company Communications to Maximize Returns and Minimize Reputational Risk



ICR

Crisis Simulation Playbook: Put Your Crisis Response Plan to the Test

THE RESULTS

+196%

Increased traffic from organic search by 196%

+2,800%

*Increased traffic from social media
by 2,800%*

+68%

*Increased average social engagement
by 68%*

+475%

*Increased average new page views
per post by 475%*

+434%

*Increased attendees to virtual conference by
434% YOY*

+87%

Increased social media followers by 87%

+88%

Increased website leads by 88%

"While ICR specializes in helping companies tell their story, we have benefited greatly from RSM helping us tell ours. With our team primarily focused on servicing clients, the RSM team has provided the discipline, structure and creative guidance to greatly expand our external communications, resulting in meaningful increases across all marketing metrics, including — most importantly — unsolicited new business inquiries through our website. The team is proactive, very well organized and consistently suggesting new ways to increase our brand awareness and better target prospects and influencers." — *Michael Fox, Chief Client Officer, ICR*

RightSource M A R K E T I N G

Right Source is a strategic marketing consulting firm that helps companies create and implement content-driven, digital-focused initiatives designed to fuel business growth.

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