



## Three Ways to Better Tell Your Investor Relations Brand Story

The Associated Press recently reported that it will use artificial intelligence (AI) to write full earnings reports, more than 3,500 each quarter, for U.S. companies. I get the rationale. Newsrooms are strapped – fewer journalists, demand for more content and lingering deadlines. Yet, does this not signal a more troubling trend for brands re: putting robots in charge of writing earnings releases and financial communications? Let me take a step back.

Earnings announcements, M&A deals and financial communications tend to be stodgy, conservative and, quite frankly, boring. Yet, for publicly traded companies, this information is fundamental in conveying the financial health and momentum of the company. Brands' earnings reports and broader financial communications carry significant implications for shareholders, customers, regulators, and employees, just to name a few. This is only part of the picture, though.

Lengthy copy and numbers are insufficient in today's contemporary communications environment where stakeholders are interacting with your brand across social channels, websites, apps, television, podcasts, and radio. While easy enough to piece together and distribute quarter to quarter, companies that take this route are missing out on highlighting their unique story, building their brand image and ultimately augmenting their investor relations story to illustrate a more dynamic, integrated and engaging brand personality.

Consider the following:

1. **Take out the detective work and use visuals to tell your investor relations story.**

Consider, 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual, and visuals are known to improve learning and retention by 400%. What does this mean for your earnings, M&A, and other financial content? Extract the main takeaways your brand wants to convey, and leverage these in infographics or animations. Readers do not have time to do detective work – long-established trends reflect shorter attention spans and changing media consumption habits. Brands, particularly investor relations teams, need to keep this in mind.

2. **Connect your investor relations story to your broader brand ecosystem.**

With your newfound multimedia assets, meet your audiences where they are. As it stands today, 15 of the 20 largest U.S. banks (75%) post earnings on their corporate websites rather than distributing them via a newswire. This is a mistake. The amount of time that is spent on developing assets and elements to tell your financial story can and should be more widely distributed. Why not try to amplify great content further with the use of newswire services and email communications – an older but no less impactful way of distributing financial news in a targeted and scalable fashion.

3. **Consumers want to feel a personal connection to your brand. They want to hear from your CEO via video and other formats and channels.**

According to HubSpot, 54% of consumers want to see more video content from a brand they support. Couple that with the finding that seventy percent of consumers feel more connected to brands with CEOs that are active on social, and you have the recipe for an effective multimedia asset. Supporting a financial announcement with a video from the CEO is a great way to fulfill demand for video content, and to build an intimate connection between a brand's head and its investors.

Multimedia assets, channels, timing – these all converge to boost financial communications beyond one humdrum press release. But the last takeaway is it does not matter if you have not defined the story your organization wants to tell. As mentioned earlier: think of your company's bigger picture. If you lose sight of this, you might have well-designed graphics, but they will not support your business objectives. Brands spend millions of dollars on carefully cultivating a brand image. Your investor relations story is an important part of your brand narrative and should not be overlooked.