



Redefining Engagement

2024 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Communicating
with impact

The stakeholder imperative

Today's business environment is a demanding one. Regulations and voluntary disclosure frameworks are increasing pressures on companies to share more and better quality data. The next wave of technological innovation in the form of AI is disrupting markets and business processes. There is a proliferation of channels giving stakeholders a voice and placing ever-increasing pressures on companies to communicate and to ensure their voice is heard.

Those who harness the digital transformation will be better empowered to deliver engaging and authentic content, to own their corporate story and protect their reputation.

This will ensure they are better understood and more valued in the eyes of their stakeholders.



**Digital
Transformation**



**Channel
Proliferation**



**Increasing
Regulation**



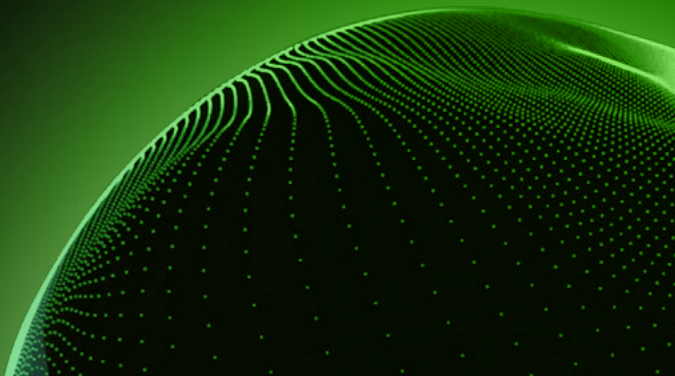
Harnessing AI

The Digital Index

We have been analysing the digital landscape for nine years, understanding how companies are rising to the challenge of digital communications, assessing both the content and the drive for engagement, to help our clients understand how they can better leverage their channels to deepen stakeholder engagement.

The analysis we do is grounded in our deep understanding of stakeholder needs drawn from our own experience and from expert organisations that represent these stakeholder groups.

The result is a powerful tool to create enriching digital experiences that will deepen stakeholder engagement and improve the performance of your digital communications.



Our methodology

We assess approximately 200 variables and three constituent groups: a select number of global companies, the FTSE100, the STI30.

For our analysis of websites, the variables we examine address each of the key stakeholder groups' content needs – investors, employees, customers and job seekers, the media and society at large – along with the overall corporate narrative which, of course, bridges all stakeholder groups.

We also assess the commitment to drive engagement in terms of interactivity, types of content designed to increase recency and frequency of visits, providing contacts and feedback loops.

For social media, we have analysed the different social channels used, and the primary content shared through the channels.



Appeal

How well do companies deliver the curated **content** required by their diverse stakeholder groups?



Attract

Do companies provide opportunities and content that will continue to attract and sustain **engagement** with their stakeholders?



Amplify

Is the power of **social media** being leveraged by organisations to amplify their content to reach and engage with their stakeholders?

Communicating with impact

Every year, based on the research results, we develop themes to communicate the shift in company priorities.

This also provides an insight into the changing landscape.

The 2022 theme 'Sparking value from a purposeful website' reflected the rise of Purpose up the corporate agenda.

2023 saw companies 'Bringing their story to life' as they enhanced their corporate narrative and enriched the user experience.

This year the theme 'Communicating with impact' reflects, in our view, the desire for companies to better communicate their impact and positive outcomes to their different stakeholder groups. To go beyond strategy and narrative, and evidence their wider stakeholder value creation, build their reputation and earn a licence to operate.

93%

Provide sustainability data

76%

Provide sustainability case studies

55%

Deliver thought leadership content

44%

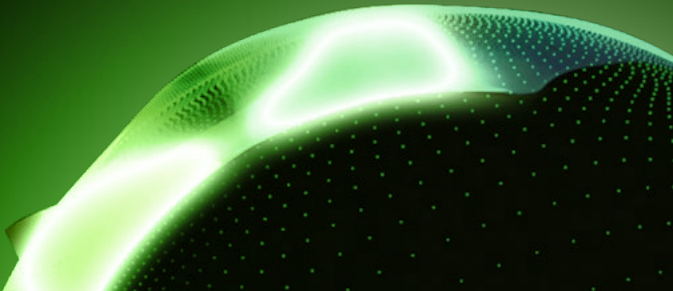
Present customer stories

90%

Enable search and apply for jobs

c.5%

Growth in use of social media





Improving stakeholder narrative

Two years ago, we highlighted the dramatic rise in purpose-led corporate narrative, with last year bringing this to life for each stakeholder group. This year we see sustained efforts to deliver a clear corporate narrative for each of the key stakeholder groups – with a greater emphasis on outcomes.



Promoting sustainability outcomes

How companies communicate their wider value creation story has undergone a total transformation. This year we see a step change in providing specific sustainability objectives, sharing performance data and evidencing impact through case studies and stories.

+23%

Increase in
sustainability data

90%

Provide specific
sustainability
objectives

76%

Present
sustainability
case studies



3 Attracting the best talent

Attracting the best talent continues to be a top priority. Companies continue to make their career sites work hard to recruit talent – articulating their employee proposition, addressing their priority audiences, enabling search, applying for jobs and creating talent communities.

2/3

Address specific audiences

90%

Enable search and apply for jobs

+16%

Offer talent community



4 Deepening levels of engagement

This year, we have enhanced the research to encompass how well companies are using their sites to deepen engagement. There has been a marked increase in content that evidences market leadership through insights and research, and content and features designed to extend readership.

31%

Publish podcasts

42%

Publish leader articles and interviews

55%

Deliver thought leadership content

5

Extending stakeholder reach

There is a clear trend for companies looking to extend their reach. Firstly by better harnessing the power of social media to reach and engage their audiences and secondly through search engine optimisation to raise visibility and presence.



100%



News
Sustainability
Careers
'Life at' Events



94%



News
Sustainability



93%



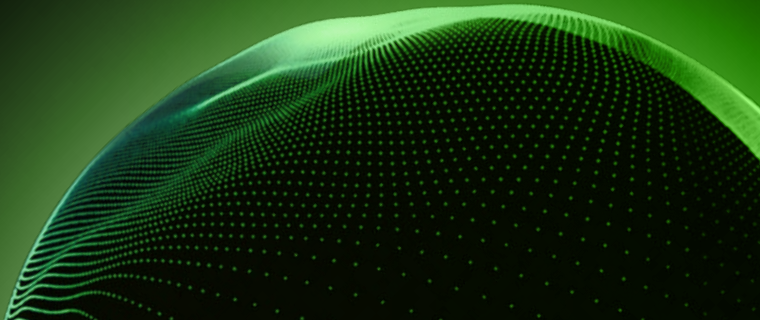
Corporate
Leadership
People



88%



People
Brands
Products



Laggards & leaders

There is a growing gap between those companies actively embracing their digital channels to better communicate their corporate story, actively engaging with their stakeholders and leveraging channels to reach and engage with their audiences.

Whilst we recognise that every company's position is unique, and that different channels or stakeholder focuses vary, it is striking that there is now a 52% gap between the top and bottom scores in our analysis.

Leaders

Are recognising that their website is their primary 'owned' channel. They have invested in crafting and communicating their corporate narrative, creating content that evidences or reinforces their leadership position, and share with stakeholders how they have made a difference – through 'business in action', sustainability case studies, employee profiles and customer stories. They also actively amplify this content through social channels to extend their reach and engagement.

Laggards

Are adopting a more minimalist approach, presenting only the essential content required, without a strong corporate narrative or providing ways for stakeholders to engage with them. They also typically have a minimalist approach to social media.

How we can help

We can help you build trust and deepen engagement with your stakeholders. Our expertise in digital communications enables us to create enriching digital experiences that deliver on your communications objectives.

We have in-house expertise in regulatory, reporting, ESG and sustainability requirements through which we can help clients develop more effective communications strategies.

We design and develop award-winning websites for some of the world's most recognisable brands, and help create and deliver social media communications to reach and engage new audiences.

So how do you stack up?

If you are interested in finding out more, get in touch:

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