

Advice Note

COVID-19

Digital Leadership on Earnings

COVID-19 has swiftly become a leadership issue during Q1's earnings. Investors and broader stakeholder groups alike are closely monitoring how a company communicates its response, recovery, and results. Outside of traditional communications channels, many business leaders are still missing an opportunity to engage financial stakeholders online.

Why Should Executives Communicate Earnings on Social Media?



It matters to key stakeholders

38% of investors want to hear from a range of company leadership via digital channels, including the c-suite and board members.

90% of financial readers in the U.S. and U.K. believe it is important for CEOs to communicate on social media during a crisis.

83% of employees prefer company COVID-19 communications at least a few times every week.



You can shape media coverage

Social media provides a platform for leaders to not only communicate directly to their audiences at scale, but also influence broadcast and traditional coverage.



Reach your employees from the outside-in

Employees are eager for details on business performance and resilience. Moreover, they value hearing corporate leaders express their gratitude for employees in public venues.

Takeaways and Opportunities

1 Bring your priorities to the forefront.

While you have the attention of investors and broader stakeholders, there is an opportunity to root your financial story in the broader purpose, values, and objectives of the enterprise.

2 Highlight COVID-19 response and recovery.

Ground earnings messages in the context of the current crisis, showcase your resiliency as a company, and signal how you will adapt and recover. Display gratitude for employee contributions and share specific examples of the ways you've gone above and beyond.

3 Establish new opportunities for engagement.

New audiences are now interested in your story—allow them to discover and engage with you on social media. Paid targeting can ensure you reach key investor audiences.

4 Use video.

Video has become a best practice among business leaders this earnings period and is favored by social media algorithms, increasing the likelihood that your message reaches your audience. Keep it brief, clear, and authentic.

5 Highlight the leadership suite.

While your earnings calls should place emphasis on the role of the CEO to underscore leadership, social media can be utilized to showcase the breadth of your team. Deploy other executive and expert voices, such as your CFO, to reinforce key messages online.

Leading Examples



Bernard Looney, CEO of bp shared a video on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to outline bp's earnings and highlight the company's COVID-19 response. CNBC presenter Steve Sedgwick acknowledged he'd been following the CEO's LinkedIn content and noted his reinforced commitment to bp's climate ambition during an interview—showcasing the efficacy of social media to shape traditional coverage.



Novartis CEO Vas Narasimhan posted a video on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#) to highlight Novartis' contributions to COVID-19 solutions. His tone was optimistic and resilient, instilling confidence in the company's clear path forward.



While **David Gibbs, CEO of Yum! Brands**, did not post to his own platform, earnings content on the corporate [channels](#) included messages from the CEO. This is a great tactic to exhibit leadership to broad audiences where the CEO's own channels may not be established or appropriate.



Bill Winters, CEO of Standard Chartered Bank, linked to results via [LinkedIn](#) and grounded the company's COVID-19 response in the context of its purpose: [#HereForGood](#). The CEO highlighted Standard Chartered's resilience and commitment to communities to reassure investors despite a fall in net profits.



Twitter CFO Ned Segal shared a clip on [Twitter](#) from an interview with CNBC where he discussed digital ad markets during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The CFO's candor and confident outlook for the future demonstrated strong leadership.



GE CEO Larry Culp posted his opening remarks to a [LinkedIn](#) article, expanding the reach and audience of his message. Notably, the CEO only began posting to LinkedIn two months ago. For CEOs without active platforms now is a great time to start.