Thinking Vertically: Building Your Organizational Influence

Panelists:
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A lively look at how IROs can boost their profiles (in good ways) included these suggestions:

**Ways to build your credibility internally:**
- Take steps to ensure your CEO realizes you are much more than a “scheduler and note-taker.”
- Ask to participate directly in board meetings or related committee meetings to further your relationship with senior management and Board members.
- Share the bad as well as the good news.
- Know your company’s financial results – and know its operating and long-range plans, too.
- Educate managers about what you do … and how their actions affect share price.
- Your audience is the entire organization. Make yourself known to colleagues; educate them; learn from them.
- Stay in close touch with the corporate communications head and team.
- Make friends with your financial reporting team; they’ll help you understand complex issues, such as pension accounting.
- Frequently ask yourself, “What new information can I provide to my CEO and other executives?”

**And externally:**
- Share bad news with investors as well as the good. Don’t surprise them. Don’t make your leaders look bad.
- Get out of the office. For example, go to investor conferences, even if your company isn’t presenting, so you can learn about trends and competitors.
- Seek broad relationships within the investment community, which is not monolithic. Talk to hedge funds. Know your pockets of support and opposition.
- In addition to knowing accounting and finance, you must be a good writer, communicator, storyteller and salesman.

— Mary Jo Bohr
September 20, 2013