Investor Relations (IR) on Corporate Websites

3rd Edition

By Hoa Loranger and Jakob Nielsen

Nielsen Norman Group

WWW.NNGROUP.COM | 48105 WARM SPRINGS BLVD., FREMONT CA 94539–7498 USA

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Executive Summary

Investor relations (IR) is one of the "Big Four" standard components of a corporate website (along with public relations (PR), employment, and "About Us"). In the modern world, investors assume that they can go to www.company.com to research a current or potential investment.

While companies must provide IR information to attract and retain investors, they must also be realistic about the types of content and features that users need most. Offering a simple design and a coherent story about the company is better than drowning users in incomprehensible data.

USABILITY RESEARCH

To assess the usability of corporate websites' IR information, we conducted two rounds of user studies in five cities in the U.S., U.K., and China: New York, Boston, San Diego, London, and Hong Kong. We chose these cities because they include the main centers of the investment business as well as more mainstream locations.

We tested a total of 63 users: 35 individual investors and 28 professionals (institutional investors, financial analysts, and business journalists). Although we typically aim to recruit an even balance of men and women, 73% of the participants in these studies were men, reflecting the current state of the investment business.

We employed a range of usability methods:

- User testing in a usability lab
- Eyetracking
- Card sorting
- Interviews
- Expert reviews

We observed our test users as they performed investment-oriented tasks on 52 company websites, selected to cover a range of industries and countries. We also reviewed 42 additional websites, to get insights from even more industries. Thus, our recommendations are based on evaluations of 94 companies' IR information.

INVESTMENT PROFESSIONALS

We tested three categories of professionals:

- **institutional investors** who work for mutual funds or other companies that invest large sums;
- **financial analysts** and advisors who recommend investments to others; and
- **journalists** who write about finance for business publications or major newspapers.

All of the professional users had the same general conclusion: They would not rely on a company's own website for most finance data. Instead, they'd use specialized services that their companies subscribe to, such as Bloomberg, Reuters, and First Call. Investment professionals often rely on downloading large amounts of financial data into their own modeling tools or spreadsheets, and they prefer doing so in standardized formats from a single source so that they can easily compare multiple companies.

This does not mean that companies can ignore professionals when putting IR information on their own websites, but it does mean that companies must be resigned to having their websites play a secondary role in satisfying professionals' information needs.

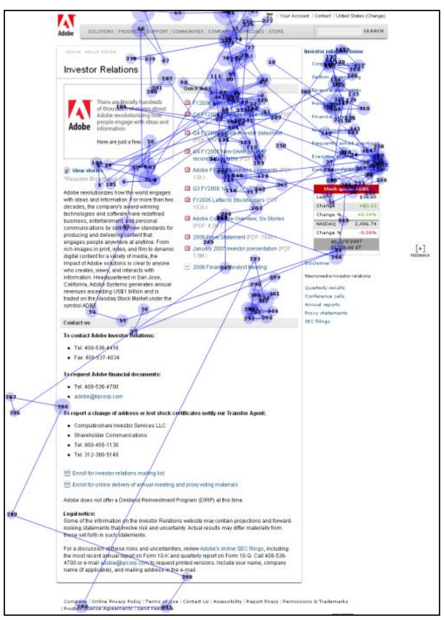
Interestingly, even though professional users despised overly promotional or marketing-oriented information on company websites, they did appreciate getting the company "spin" through such things as recent CEO speeches that outlined goals and prospects. Professionals wanted management's vision of where the company was going, along with a brief company background and overview of recent news. Basically, they wanted the company's past, present, and future summarized in a way that told the story behind the numbers.

INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS

Typically, private investors don't have access to professional data services, even though they often get data from their broker's website or from services like Yahoo Finance.

Individual investors are often intimidated by the vast amount of financial data available, even from these simplified services. While they expected websites to offer annual and quarterly reports, they admitted that they spent very little time reading them.

As the following gaze plot from one of our eyetracking sessions shows, the user scarcely glanced at the dense text, but focused intensely on the lists of links. The user also spent considerably more time on the information above the fold than on the info on the second half of the page.



Gaze plot of a user reading a page of investor information.
Each numbered blue dot indicates one fixation of the user's eyes.
(For a full-sized version of this image, please see page 183.)

Companies can help individual investors by presenting simplified views of financial data and summarizing the highlights. Although you must offer more detailed data as well, users commented positively on websites that summarized essential stock information on a single page.

Individual investors also wanted the company to tell them a story about its potential as an investment. Key questions include: Where does the company come from? What is it doing now? What are its innovation and research prospects? What is its vision? Note, however, that there is a difference between telling a credible, interesting, and concise story, and junking up people's browsers with superficial hype and marketing-oriented language. It's a fine line, but an important one if you want to convince investors of your company's prospects.

STANDARD INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

In most of our projects, we provide guidelines for interaction design and for principles of information design. We usually cannot recommend the specific website structure, nor can we specify the labels needed for navigation systems. Consider, for example, a company that sells five different kinds of X-ray machines for dentists, and a company that sells 10,000 different kinds of pumps and valves for OEMs. These two companies require very different information architectures for their website's product areas.

In contrast, shareholders and potential investors visiting a website's IR area have similar tasks, regardless of the company type. Also, the information that must be supplied to satisfy users' needs is much the same.

Because users and their tasks highly overlap for websites' IR areas, we can recommend a standard information architecture based on our research of users' information needs and navigation behavior. If all websites organized their IR information accordingly, it would be substantially easier for users to research investments.

We actually recommend three different, but related, information architectures, depending on the resources a company wants to devote to online IR. These low, medium, and high designs gradually add more features based on the priorities we derived from user research. With limited resources, it's best to focus on the features that users need most, and implement them well, rather than clutter the site with many poorly designed features.

Many companies failed in the area of "macro-IA"— that is, the way they distribute and integrate information across multiple sites or subsites. People widely follow Peter Lynch's advice to "invest in what you know," but potential investors who know a brand often can't find how to invest if they start on its website. It was common to see microsites (or even full sites) for branded products that didn't provide prospective investors any information about investing in the parent company.

SIMPLE INFORMATION DESIGN

IR areas are plagued by PDF files, probably because they're a cheap way to put annual reports online. It is indeed helpful to let users download full reports, and you can save a lot of money when people make their own printouts rather than requesting printed material by mail. But to view information online in a way that lets them rapidly understand key information, users need simpler formats that don't require them to slowly page through presentations that are optimized for print rather than interaction.

In our study, interactive stock charts were much prized, but often so difficult to manipulate that users couldn't get the overviews they wanted. To be useful to individual investors, graphing features and labels must be simplified; professionals are going to use their own high-end tools anyway.

CHANGES IN IR USABILITY

Our lab-based testing was conducted across two rounds, of which the first was 6 years ago, allowing us to assess changes in IR usability over time. In fact, the second study didn't reveal many changes relative to the findings from the first study's findings: investors continue to approach IR sites in a similar way. (Of course, we don't test whether investors have a bullish or bearish market outlook, but only how they use companies' IR information on the Web, and what makes such sites easy or difficult to use.)

Since the first study, webcasts of earnings announcements, analyst days, and similar events have become much more prevalent. Although users now like the idea of webcasts, they rarely find the time to sit through them. As one user said, *"My time is very valuable. I don't know what the content is going to be in this."*

However, users do appreciate the ability to look executives in the eye, so to speak. One user said, *"I usually go to Q&A first because that is usually the meat. [...] The questions and answers are good because this is the only chance people have to put executives on the spot. Are you going to do this or that? Hear the nuances."* As this quote highlights, it's important to treat recorded webcasts as interactive media rather than a linear stream: break the recording into segments, describe each one, and let users directly click into specific content.

Another change since our earlier IR research is that people are much more receptive to video on the Web now. Users continue to resist long video clips, but they like shorter videos to get a sense of who the executives are through facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and so on.

Still, users often prefer an older technology: the much derided PowerPoint slides. As one user said, *"This video is 28 minutes long. I spent only 5 minutes to go through [the slides]. If possible, do a separate online presentation. Make the online version easier to understand—shorter."*

POTENTIAL FOR IR ON THE WEB

IR is a natural for the Web. Investments are all about information, as the growth of online brokerage services shows. Similarly, companies can provide many types of IR services as self-service — at hugely reduced costs — as long as the user interface is sufficiently easy.

Investors, both individual and professional, want more than just the data that independent services can provide. They want the **company's own story and investment vision**. What they don't want is to wade through complex or irrelevant information. Balancing all this is the challenge for the IR user experience: You must provide both simplicity and vision, connect with investors without antagonizing them, and serve both professionals and people with little financial knowledge. To achieve this balance, your design must focus on users' needs.

Research Overview

The information in this report is a culmination of usability findings from several years of studies and expert reviews, including new studies conducted for this second edition.

This report offers guidelines and suggested information architecture for improving Investor Relations (IR) usability on websites. The main purpose of this research was to learn how various groups of people use company websites to find financial and investment information. The usability guidelines are based on methodical observation, interviews, and user feedback. We summarized our research results in this report, which includes explanations and discussion for each recommendation.

THE PROCEDURE

We conducted our research in three countries (the U.S., the U.K., and China) and five cities (Boston, New York, San Diego, London, and Hong Kong).

We used a combination of research methods, including:

- Usability testing — both traditional lab testing and using an eyetracker
- Interviews
- Card sorting
- Expert reviews

Our research consisted of two parts. The first part was usability testing (one-on-one "Think-Aloud" protocol). We gave participants several tasks to accomplish on corporate websites. The main task was to research an organization for investment or financial information. We observed users as they worked and encouraged them to think out loud as they tried to accomplish their tasks.

In the second part, we asked some participants to perform a card-sorting exercise, categorizing topics on index cards into meaningful piles and then naming the piles. This method helps us better understand how people view content in the information space. We also gave the same participants an opportunity to prioritize financial information into three main groups: very important, important, and not important.

Combining several methods helped us identify user needs, learn how people think about and categorize information, and find out what worked and didn't work on websites.

THE PARTICIPANTS

A total of 63 people participated in this study. We targeted four user groups:

- Individual/private investors
- Professional investors
- Financial analysts
- Business journalists

All participants used the Web every day, or almost every day, for research.

For full details about our testing procedures, please see the *Methodology* section of this report, which begins on page 196.

WEBSITES STUDIED

We tested 52 websites of U.S., European, and Asian companies that varied in size, design, and industry. Some of the companies were somewhat famous and would be known to most members of the investing public; others were less well known, but still possible investment targets for people interested in exposure to a certain sector.

In addition to the websites tested, we reviewed 42 more websites. Please refer to the *Methodology* section for a complete list of websites evaluated.

Examples in this Report

The examples included in this report cover several years of studies. Because websites are continually updated and changed, some of the sites have significantly improved since the time they were tested by participants.

The screenshots in this report do not represent, in most cases, the current appearance or behavior of the sites. Given the pace of the Web these days, even some of the most recently tested sites have already changed.

In some cases we've included examples of website changes made over the years. In other cases, we've shown a screenshot taken years ago, because the example still applies. The important thing to keep in mind is that regardless of when the examples were taken, the recommendations stand.

What Various Audiences Need from Company Websites

We asked users for the top reasons that they go to a company's website when researching financial information. What you ultimately include in your website's IR area will depend heavily on your target audience. Although each group has different approaches to researching investment information, much of the information that people from various user groups wanted on company websites overlaps.

All user groups indicated that they went to the company website to find:

- Press releases
- SEC filings
- Annual reports
- Quarterly reports
- Company background and overview
- Company historical financial information

INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS

Individual investors reported that they use various websites when researching investment information. The websites used include both company websites and online financial services. Almost all individual investors indicated that they would eventually go to the company website for financial information and to learn about the company.

Participants who have accounts with online brokerage companies such Charles Schwab often refer to those websites. Many users said they would start their research on Yahoo! Finance, because it gives them a good company overview in one place.

Some of the other resources that individual investors use are:

- finance.yahoo.com
- money.cnn.com
- www.sharebuilder.com
- www.NYSE.com
- www.morningstar.com
- Broker sites, such as www.etrade.com, www.fidelity.com, www.schwab.com, and www.tdameritrade.com

Most individual investors said that they weren't investment experts and that many financial reports and figures were too complex and detailed for them to understand. Although they expected websites to offer annual and quarterly reports, they admitted that they spend very little time reading through them. Too much detailed financial information overwhelmed individual investors, as these user comments indicate:

> "I feel like I'm having to search too hard for the information. For someone with not much experience, it's nice to have it simplified."

> "These are too difficult to understand. Too comprehensive. For a simple investor, this is too much... . Don't know… . Don't know. Too much information… . Too much information."

Financial information that was presented in a short, simple, and summarized format was most useful. Several users commented positively about websites that had a page summarizing the important stock information:

> "This gives you the current everything. It brings up the basic stuff and a ticker, high/low — this is the stuff I would look for."

> "It gives you basic stuff in two seconds. It tells you if it's worth investing."

One of the most important things people immediately look for on a company website is the company stock chart. Stock charts give people a quick overview of stock performance over time, which is critical in making an investment decision. Some users said the following about stock charts:

> "First thing I want to know is how the stock is doing — eyeball a chart to see how it's doing in a ten-year span."

> "I like graphs, so that's kinda cool. I'm a visual person."

> "I like this [site] better because it has a chart."

> "I like that I could pull up a chart and see what they are doing in a year, three years, almost every day. I would pull that up."

Individual investors noted the following information as the most important on a company website:

- Press releases (current news, business strategies, and acquisitions)
- Company overview (the company's purpose and its history, such as when it was founded and where it's based)
- Product information (innovative products, services, and research)
- Stock information (current and historical share price, charts, and graphs)
- One-page financial overview
- Annual and quarterly reports
- Dividend information

FINANCIAL ANALYSTS

Financial analysts indicated that they use company websites in conjunction with other specialized tools and resources to evaluate financial data and make investment recommendations.

Some of the main resources that financial analysts use are:

- Reuters
- Bloomberg
- First Call
- Edgar

Analysts said that they rely heavily on these specialized tools and services to get detailed financial information and analysis, and charts and graphs in formats that they need. Analysts often use spreadsheets to calculate the reported numbers and make necessary adjustments before arriving at recommendations and conclusions. In this study, analysts spent most of their time carefully combing through financial figures and readjusting the figures to get a more accurate impression of the company's earnings and losses:

> "Now I want to get a sense of their financials. All the numbers are going up, that's the right way. I would try to download financial statements and look at some ratios … . Excel files help me analyze their financials. I try to analyze what's going on because the bottom-line number might go up … . Did their income go up more quickly than their expenses — and why? … Basically, what's going on behind the scene. What I would like to do is just take their financials … . I would adjust the numbers. Companies can tell you what they want. That doesn't mean that it's bad, but you have to get behind that."

> "I would go back and look at it from a different perspective. Everyone adjusts it a little differently and applies that same standard to everybody. I wish they would show me how they got the return on equity."

> "We do adjustments. My presentation is different from the way the company does it."

Analysts said that they get the bulk of their information from specialized resources, then use the company website as a secondary resource to verify the information they have and to get a better understanding of the company's purpose and background. The total time analysts spend researching investment information varies and can take one day or several weeks, depending on their research scope:

> "It takes a day to a week to research from scratch."

> "I need to research several weeks to understand the industry and the company."

Although detailed financial information is critical for analysts, they *didn't* expect company websites to provide this information and usually referred to other professional services. They did expect to find annual and quarterly reports on company websites and said SEC filings were a plus. Analysts expressed that using services such as Bloomberg is much more efficient than going to the company website, because the information is retrieved and displayed consistently for all companies. Rather than having to learn the navigational structure of each company website, analysts said that it's easier and more reliable to get financial information from a familiar resource.

> "Bloomberg makes graphs and direct comparisons … . It's a financial tool that I know how to use. If I put in a company name, it would give me the information on that company and lead me to their website."

> "I go to Bloomberg to see what the stock is trading for, get a general sense, and see what the general pattern has been — see what it has been doing for the last 15 years."

> "Edgar takes SEC info and breaks it into a simpler format."

> "I use First Call to have them do a comparative analysis and get sell-side analysis reports."

During our studies, financial analysts named the most important things that they look for on a company website. They wanted the same first four things the individual investors wanted, but also more-specific details:

- Press releases (current news, business strategies, and acquisitions)
- Company overview (the company's purpose, size, and markets)
- Stock information (current and historical share price, charts, and graphs)
- Annual and quarterly reports, and SEC filings
- IR contact information (names, phone numbers, and email addresses)
- Financials calendar (dates for events such as conferences, earnings releases, and reports)
- Executive information (management bios, previous positions, business concepts and direction)

PROFESSIONAL INVESTORS

Like financial analysts, professional investors are diligent in calculating financial figures and depend heavily on other professional financial resources to provide them with the in-depth financial figures that they need. They use company websites mainly to supplement their research.

Some of the main resources that professional investors use are:

- Reuters
- Bloomberg
- First Call
- Edgar
- Advisor Insight
- CBS MarketWatch
- Yahoo! Finance

During our studies, professional investors named the most important things that they look for on company websites. Professional investors want the same basic things as financial analysts at a different level of detail, and they also need the last two items in this list:

- Press releases (current news, business strategies, and acquisitions)
- Company overview (the company's purpose, size, and markets, and its business philosophy and values)
- IR contact information (names, phone numbers, and email addresses)
- Stock information (current and historical share price, charts, and graphs)

- Annual and quarterly reports, and SEC filings
- Financials calendar (dates for events such as conferences and earnings releases)
- Executive information (management bios and previous positions)
- Competitor information (who they are, how they're performing)
- List of analysts following the company

FINANCIAL JOURNALISTS

Journalists work under tight deadlines and don't have time to wade through complex financial reports and marketing-oriented content. The website must provide journalists with digested information that is easy to scan to help them find facts quickly. The journalists in our study tended to avoid wading through the detailed financial figures. Rather, they typically scanned quickly through press releases for financial highlights, notable stories, and quotes from management. Many of the journalists looked at the stock charts to get historical data and said they would contact financial analysts to find out what they thought of the company.

> "Seven minutes to find information is realistic, given the time pressure. I wouldn't spend a lot of time reading."

Journalists noted the following information as the most important for them on the company website:

- Press relations contact information (names, phone numbers, and email addresses)
- Press releases (current news, business strategies, and acquisitions)
- Company overview (the company's purpose and its history, such as when it was founded and where it's based)
- Stock information (current and historical share price, charts, and graphs)
- One-page financial overview
- Annual and quarterly reports
- Executive information (management bios and previous positions)
- Competitor information (who they are, how they're performing)
- List of analysts following the company
- Latest speech from chairman or CEO (with quotes)
- Pictures of executives

Many financial journalists said they frequently go to company websites to get PR contact information.

> "Phone numbers of press officers are a must. Going through all of this [complex financial information] is a long process, unless you want to figure it out yourself. It's good to have all that info if you can't go through it."

> "Have all direct telephone numbers, not just email, so you can call straight through rather that just to the press office."

"There's usually a press officer listed at the end of the press releases. I would ask the press officer … which analysts are following the company."

"I mainly use the website to get press contacts. That's the best source."

Prioritizing Financial Information

The following is a guide for prioritizing information for your website's IR area. These groupings are based on the several methods used in this study: user testing, card sorting, and prioritization exercises.

We grouped the topics into three main categories — high, medium, and low priority — for ease of use. It's best to think of them as items on a continuum, however, with no real division. We offer this information as a tool to help you prioritize and decide what your company's IR section needs, based on your budget, resources, and company focus. For example, if you have a small budget, then you might want to focus on the information in the high-priority category. If you have a larger budget, you can afford to include more items from the medium- and low-priority categories.

Also, the type of information you include should always match your target audience and your company profile. For example, if only institutions can purchase your company's stock, you might want to omit shareholder resources and provide more information targeted to analysts and professional investors.

HIGH PRIORITY — MOST IMPORTANT

- Company information
- Stock quote
- Stock chart
- One-page financial overview
- News releases
- Quarterly reports
- Annual reports
- SEC filings
- FAQ
- Purchasing stock
- Shareholder resources
- Information request
- IR contact
- Corporate governance[1]

MEDIUM PRIORITY — NICE TO HAVE OR HELPFUL

- Analyst contact information

[1] Since the previous publication of this report, we've added corporate governance as a high priority. In light of the collapse and corruption found in some large institutions, there has been renewed interest in this area, especially by institutional investors, business journalists, and stock analysts.

Prospects are interested in knowing the policies by which your corporation is governed in order to ensure the accountability of major decision makers. Our review of corporate websites shows that most sites don't present this information well. The information is too difficult to access and understand.

- Company events
- Dividend history
- Stock splits
- Insider trading activity

LOW PRIORITY — NOT IMPORTANT OR NOT OFTEN USED

- Email alerts
- Analyst ratings
- Historical price lookup tool
- Investment calculator
- Webcasts
- Presentation slides

Notice from the lists above that often-hyped features were classified as low priority for many investors. Good, old-fashioned content tended to be ranked higher than fancier features and tools. People researching company financials are more interested in getting facts quickly than in the technology used to deliver them.

Information Architecture for IR

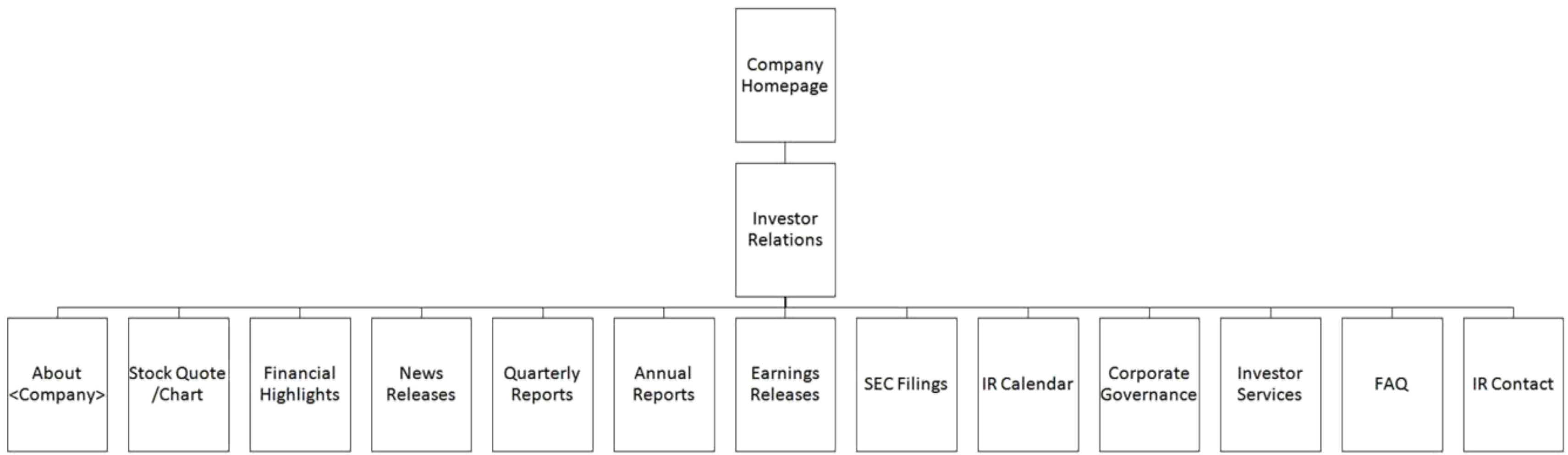
The following are information architecture (IA) suggestions for structuring the information on your website's IR section. We included the things that are relevant to most companies. It's important to emphasize that this is only a guide; you might need to modify it based on your company and users' needs and as laws change. You should make such modifications only if they actually enhance usability and better serve your target audience. Remember that features you think are important might not be important for your users.

People don't want to have to learn how a website is structured. They just want to get in, get their tasks done, and get out. Users in this study liked sites that had a simple navigational structure — one that reflected their view of the information and had the information where they expected to find it.

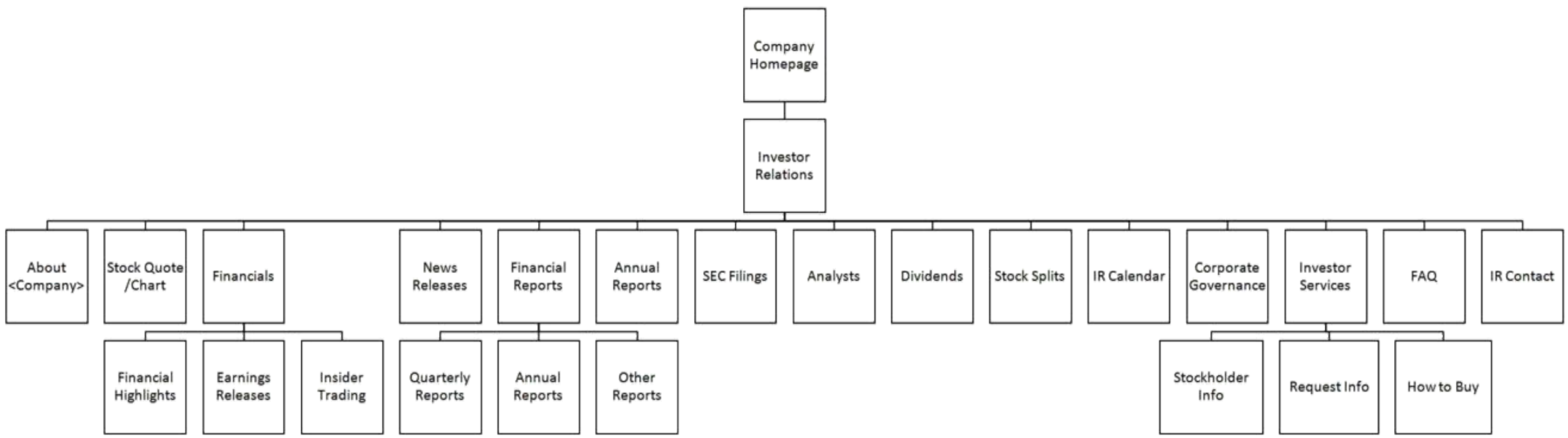
The most helpful sites had a simple IA. Rather than having many page levels, the important links were typically at the top, where users could easily find what they needed without having to guess at the category the information might be in.

The diagrams on the following page show suggested IA for IR based on various content and feature priorities.

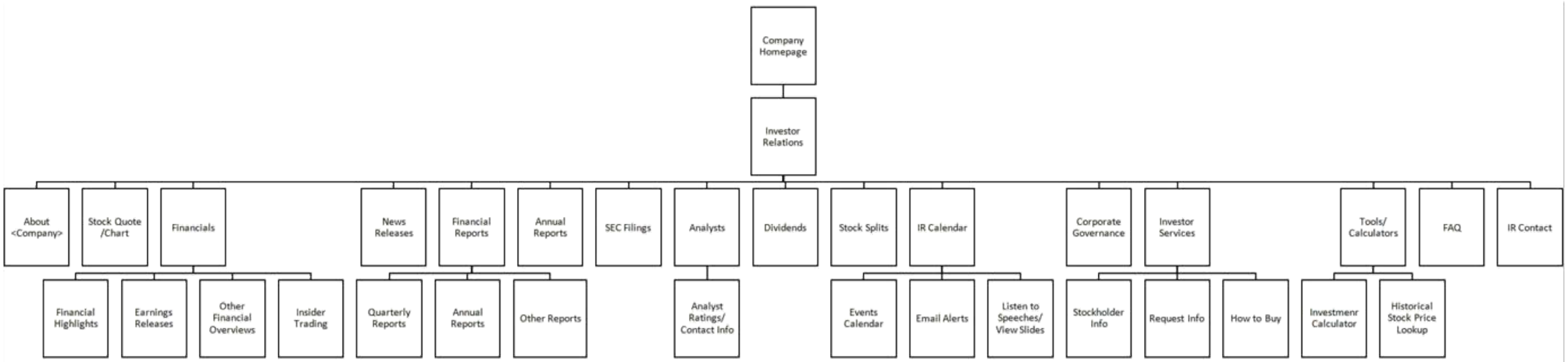
SUGGESTED IA FOR HIGH-PRIORITY CONTENT



SUGGESTED IA FOR HIGH- & MEDIUM-PRIORITY CONTENT



SUGGESTED IA FOR HIGH-, MEDIUM- & LOW-PRIORITY CONTENT



Notice that these diagrams show only *About <Company>* and *News Releases* in relation to the website's IR area. We did not provide the IA for the entire website.

Most companies consider the *News* and *About* website sections as independent of their IR area. *News*, for example, is often part of the site's PR area. Even though these sections might have their primary location elsewhere, you should include links to them from the IR area.

Guidelines Summary

The following list summarizes our usability guidelines for designing your website's Investor Relations area, based on findings from our user research. These guidelines are recommendations for improving your website's usability.

Detailed discussions and examples for each guideline are included in the next sections of this report.

Getting to Corporate Information 30

1. **Make your company's Web address easy to guess. 30**
2. **Make sure your company has a presence at Google and other popular search engines. 30**
3. **Name the link to investor information Investor Relations, Investors, or Financials. 30**
4. **If *Investor Relations* is a high priority, feature a direct link to it on every page of your site. Otherwise, place this information in the *About Us* section. 32**
5. **Keep the link to *Investor Relations* noticeable, not hidden by surrounding visual elements. 37**
6. **Include a link to corporate information on all subsites. 39**

Company Information 46

7. **Make sure the corporate overview explicitly states what your organization does in plain language. 46**
8. **Make key corporate facts in the company overview scannable. .. 49**
9. **Include high-level, easy-to-understand information about the breadth of your company's products and services. 51**
10. **Provide information about the organization's high-level executives. On the overview page, include the person's name, job title, recent picture, and a link to the full biography. 52**
11. **The full biography pages for executives should have links to downloadable pictures, transcripts of speeches, presentations, and other related information. 53**
12. **Emphasize what your company does that's valuable from an investor's point of view, as well as how you differ from key competitors. 53**

13. Provide access to financial coverage of subsidiaries, major businesses, and geographic regions. 56

14. Acknowledge the challenges your company faces and explain the company's plan to address them. 57

15. If you get press coverage for your company, provide a visibly noticeable link to *Press* on both the homepage and in the IR area so that people can get news and press releases. 57

16. Define the term "corporate governance" because most people don't know what it means. 58

Stock Quote 59

17. Provide the stock symbol (clearly labeled) in visible places in your website's IR sections. 59

18. Provide current stock quote information grouped together in a high-priority area of the IR section. Call this area "Stock Quote." 63

19. Explain how people can buy the stock. 66

20. For FAQs, keep the information concise, including only questions that are actually asked frequently. 68

21. If analysts are covering your company, provide a dedicated area that lists each analyst's name, company, telephone number, and email address. 71

22. Provide links to the source of credit ratings. 73

Stock Charts 75

23. Offer easy access to an interactive stock chart. 75

24. Linking to a graphing tool on another website is fine, but the website you choose should represent your company well. 78

25. Make sure that the information on the chart page is specific to the target company. 78

26. Provide a way for people to graph the stock over one, five, and 10 years. 79

27. Let people compare your company stock with other popular market indices, such as S&P 500 and Dow Jones. It's also helpful to let people compare the company stock with several competitors. 80

28. Make sure that important graphing elements and options appear above the fold. 82

29. Avoid having too many complex and detailed graphing options. .84

30. Show the price chart first, not the percentage-of-change chart. .90

31. Make sure that graph line colors are distinguishable by most color-blind users. 90

32. Position chart labels close to the parts they correspond to. 91

33. Label each axis on the chart. 92

34. Round off numbers on charts. 93

35. Show dates and times for time-sensitive information. 94

Company Financials 95

36. Dedicate a page to company facts in the corporate areas of your website (for example, in *Press* or *Investor Relations*). Name it something like "Fact Sheet" or "Company Snapshot." ...95

37. Place financial reports in the *Investor Relations* section under a descriptive category, such as "Annual Reports." Don't make up unique names for the sake of being different. 97

38. Present basic financial information, such as earnings, sales, and income, for nonspecialists. Offer a snapshot page that's easy to understand and gives people a quick overview of the company's historical financial information. 97

39. When reporting facts and figures, offer comparisons to help people gain a perspective on the relative sizes of the numbers. 103

40. When reporting financial figures, indicate the monetary units and currency. 103

41. Make it easy for people to find quarterly and annual reports. Call the link to these reports "Financial Reports," not something vague, such as "Financial History." 104

42. When prioritizing financial reports, give the earnings release, and annual and quarterly reports high ranking. 105

43. Post at least five years of annual and quarterly reports. 106

44. Place SEC filings in an area clearly marked as *SEC Filings*. 106

45. Describe the reports and SEC filings succinctly. 107

46. **If SEC filings are hosted on another site, ensure that navigating to them is seamless. 109**

47. **If your company has had stock splits or dividends, provide a summary table that shows the amounts and dates for these events. 112**

48. **Provide facts; don't place advertisements in the IR area of your site. 113**

49. **Offer information people want to read online in HTML, including reports. Don't require people to install additional software to look at your reports. 115**

50. **Keep the features in the HTML annual report basic. 117**

51. **When offering reports in several formats, make the HTML version primary and other formats (PDF, Word, Excel) secondary 117**

52. **Offer a table of contents at the beginning of each report. 120**

53. **For PDF documents, provide a gateway page with a summary of the content, page count, and file size. 122**

54. **Set the default for PDF documents to open at a legible size. 122**

55. **For large PDF files, allow people to download the document in sections. 125**

56. **If a link opens a PDF (or another application), tell people what to expect *before* they click it. 128**

Calendar/Events 130

57. **Provide a *Financial Calendar* or *Calendar of Events* that shows the dates of past and future investor events. 130**

58. **If new event dates aren't available, give expected dates, offer alerts, or tell people when to check back. 132**

59. **If event names aren't descriptive, offer a short explanation of the event's agenda, who's invited, the time and location, and how people can participate. 133**

60. **For the calendar of events, list the most recent year first, but show events in chronological order within each year. 136**

61. **Feature email alerts in context, for particular areas of interest. 137**

62. **For event alerts, give people reasonable advance notice. It's best to allow people to schedule the alerts. 140**

63. **Don't require people to register to receive email alerts. 140**

64. **Make sure alerts are timely. Otherwise, they are useless.........142**

Webcasts 143

65. **Explain what webcasts are. 143**

66. **Provide detailed information for each webcast event...............145**

67. **Divide long webcasts into sections, so that people can go directly to the section of interest. 148**

68. **Place materials related to events (for example, webcasts, presentations, and transcripts) in the same area. 150**

69. **Set the presentation slides to match the webcast as it plays. ...151**

70. **Offer a dial-in number for conference calls and webcasts. 153**

71. **Don't give plug-in icons more prominence than the links they reference. 154**

72. **Don't require people to choose plug-ins and video players. 154**

73. **If registration is required for participation in live webcasts, keep the questions minimal. 155**

Slide Presentations.. 156

74. **In presentations (and in other corporate areas), emphasize facts and minimize jargon and hype...156**

75. **Create presentation slides so they can be understood on their own, without having to listen to the full presentation. 157**

76. **Show the presentation's length and the user's current progress toward completing it. 157**

77. **Test your presentations to make sure that they're legible when printed as well as on the computer screen. 159**

78. **Avoid using dark background colors for presentations meant to be viewed online or printed. 161**

Contacting IR 163

79. **Feature links to *IR Contact* on all IR related pages AND include IR contact information on the company's main contact page. ...163**

80. **Provide full IR contact information, including the person's name, telephone number, address, and email address. 164**

81. When listing multiple IR contacts, help people select the best contact by indicating the person's specialty or another helpful differentiating characteristic. 165

82. Show email addresses with the person's name, rather than something generic such as IR@thecompany.com. 165

83. Offer a contact form in addition to a telephone number, not as a replacement. 167

84. For email requests, tell people when to expect a response (if you can predict it). 168

85. Invite investors to contact the board and high-level executives. 169

Usability Basics 170

86. Speak your users' language by avoiding fancy or technical terms. 170

87. Keep the tone of your site authentic. 171

88. Post time-sensitive content (for example, financial reports, webcasts, and press releases) regularly and quickly. 172

89. Provide printer-friendly versions of content people would normally want to reference offline, such as simplified versions of financial reports, press releases, and manager bios. 172

90. Provide a consistent navigational structure. 173

91. Minimize complexity by featuring a link only once on a page. 176

92. Designate a visited link color that's visibly distinct from both unvisited links and text. 179

93. Name links clearly, avoiding names that are vague, generic, or have overlapping meanings. 179

94. List navigational elements in priority, not alphabetical, order. 184

95. Employ menus and content that are static and easy to control. Use dropdown menus sparingly. 185

96. Open new browser windows only for non-Web applications. 187

International Considerations 192

97. Internationalize your site if you have an international audience, at the very least. 192

98. Spell out the month or use month abbreviations, not numbers. 192

99. Indicate the monetary currency of financial data and offer an exchange rate. 193

100. Show large numbers in a format that international audiences understand...193

101. Include names and phone numbers of IR and PR personnel in other countries...194

102. For each contact, note the time zone and the hours of availability. 195

103. If the stock is traded on international markets, clearly say so. .195

Getting to Corporate Information

The examples shown in this section include screenshots and eyetracking gaze plots. Gaze plots show a person's eye movements on a page. The blue dots represent eye fixations — the larger the dot, the longer the fixation. The fixation sequence is numbered. Screenshots were taken at various points in time, and some have been updated since they were captured.

1. **Make your company's Web address easy to guess.**

   People must be able to guess a company's domain name quickly. Homepages for commercial websites should have addresses like www.company.com (or an equivalent for your country's top-level domain, such as company.co.uk, which is especially important for sites whose identity is closely connected with that country). Make sure your site responds to both www.company.com and company.com. If the site also has U.S. customers, it's good to register the name with ".com" also.

   If available, register domain names for alternative spellings, abbreviations, or common misspellings of the company name. This tactic is especially important if you have any punctuation in the name, such as Wal-Mart, or names made from several words, such as Johnson & Johnson.

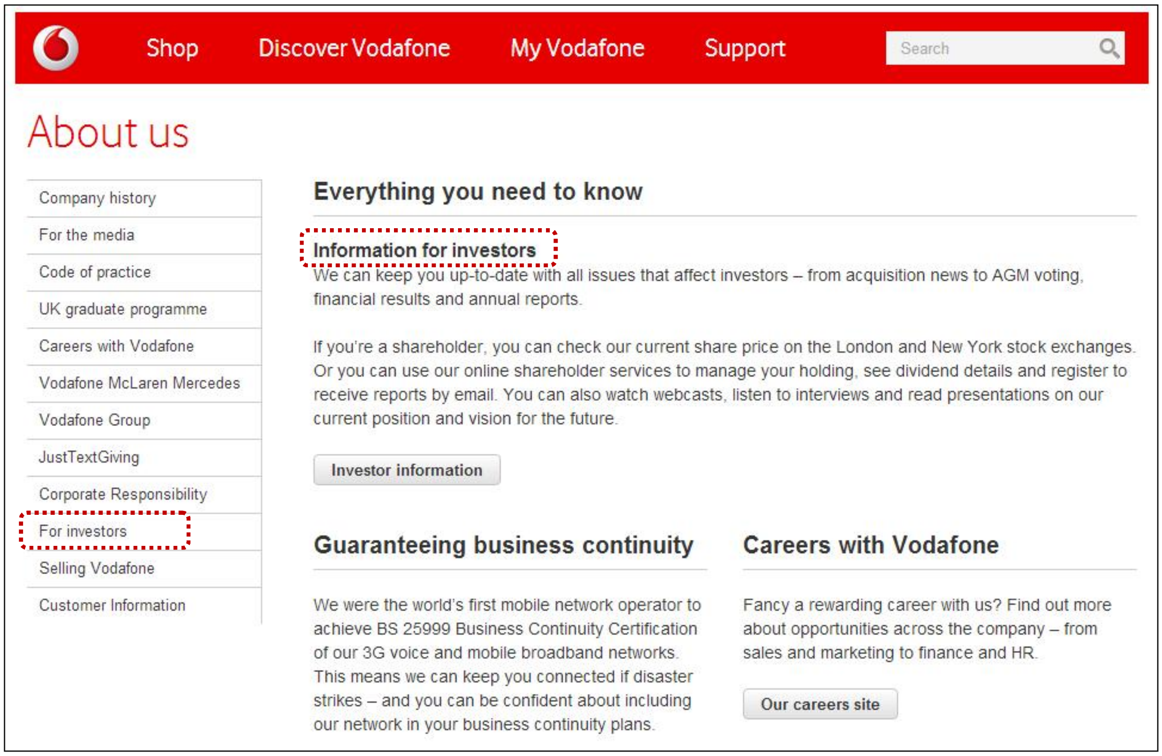
2. **Make sure your company has a presence at Google and other popular search engines.**

   We've seen an increase in user reliance on search engines over the years. Although some people still guess a website's URL, many more people type the company name into search engines. This trend is another indicator that search engine optimization is important in directing traffic to your site. Keep in mind that when researching company information, people are typing in not only the company name, but other key terms as well, such as the CEO's name or company name plus the word "revenue." Make sure you know which words people are using to find information about you, and match those terms with the ones used on your website.

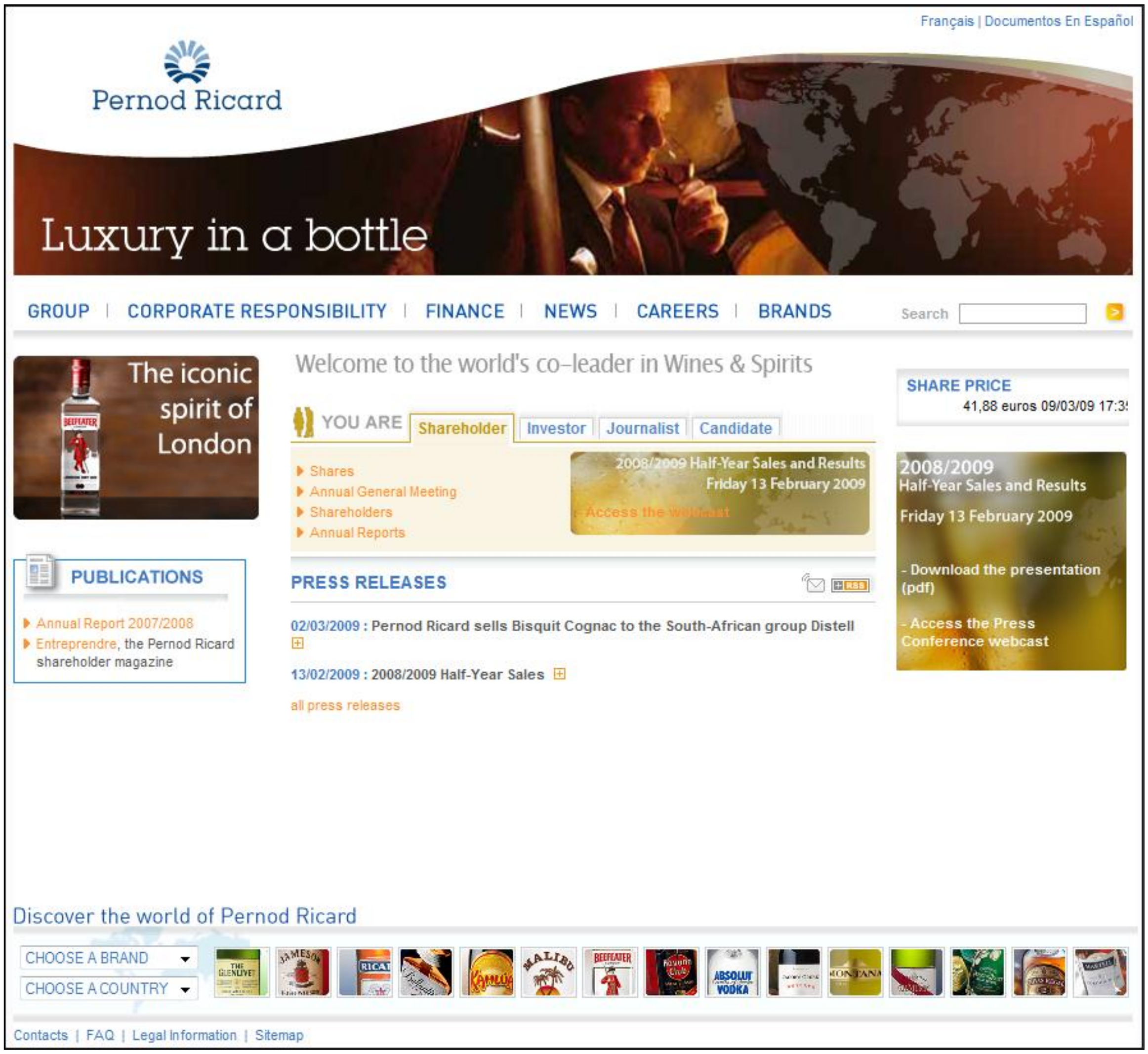
3. **Name the link to investor information Investor Relations, Investors, or Financials.**

   Naming conventions have emerged. The link names that we suggest tested well in usability studies and represent today's standard. A slight variation on one of the recommended names might work, but the further a link name strays from the standard, the greater its chance of being misunderstood.

   The homepage is your website's primary gateway and plays an important role in determining whether users will succeed in obtaining the information they need. Homepages with clear categories help users choose the correct path. Vague links and navigation often lead users down paths that are difficult to retrace or frustrate them to the point that they give up before getting the information they need. In our study, users found investor information most easily when the site used familiar terms such as *Investor Relations*.



Vodafone.co.uk: Putting a superfluous word in front of a key term is unnecessary. “Investors” is better than “For investors” or “Information for investors.” Our eye-tracking studies show that people tend to scan the first one or two words in a list. Starting each list item with keywords makes scanning more successful.



Pernod-Ricard.com: Featuring a link called *Finance* is not as effective as calling it *Financials* or *Investor Relations*. Although the substitution isn't horrible, such a minor change can cause people to interpret it to mean something completely different. It's best to be consistent with the norm because those are the terms people scan for.

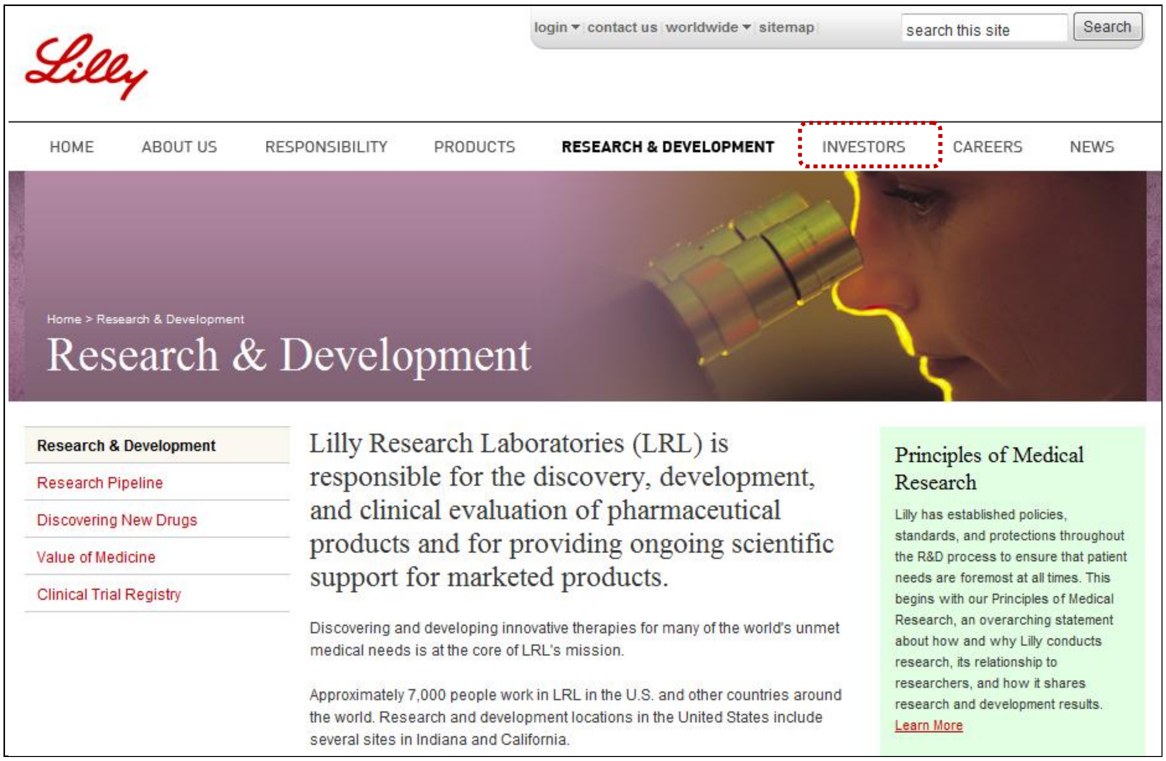
4. If *Investor Relations* is a high priority, feature a direct link to it on every page of your site. Otherwise, place this information in the *About Us* section.

Links to high-profile corporate information are commonly featured in the global navigation of many websites. Providing strong entry points for key visitors ensures that the information is located with ease.

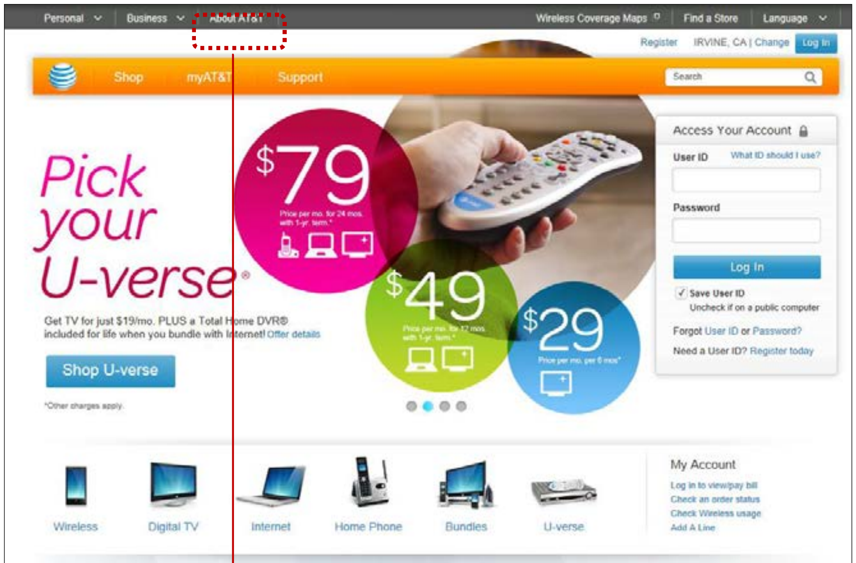
Placing the *Investor Relations* link in the main navigation makes it most visible; that's where people look first. If giving people financial information is a high priority for your company, place the link there. Doing so minimizes scrolling and thus captures a broader audience. But depending on your site's priorities, an acceptable secondary location is at the bottom of the page, next to other corporate links, provided that it stands out and is not obscured by other nearby visual elements.

Not all websites have room in their designs to feature these links on every page, however, nor do all sites have the same priorities for content. It is suitable for many organizations to feature all of their company information in a single *About Us* area. Our research shows that investors, journalists, and job seekers are just as happy clicking *About Us* and then getting to the submenus relevant for their respective needs. The extra click is not a nuisance when the path is smooth.

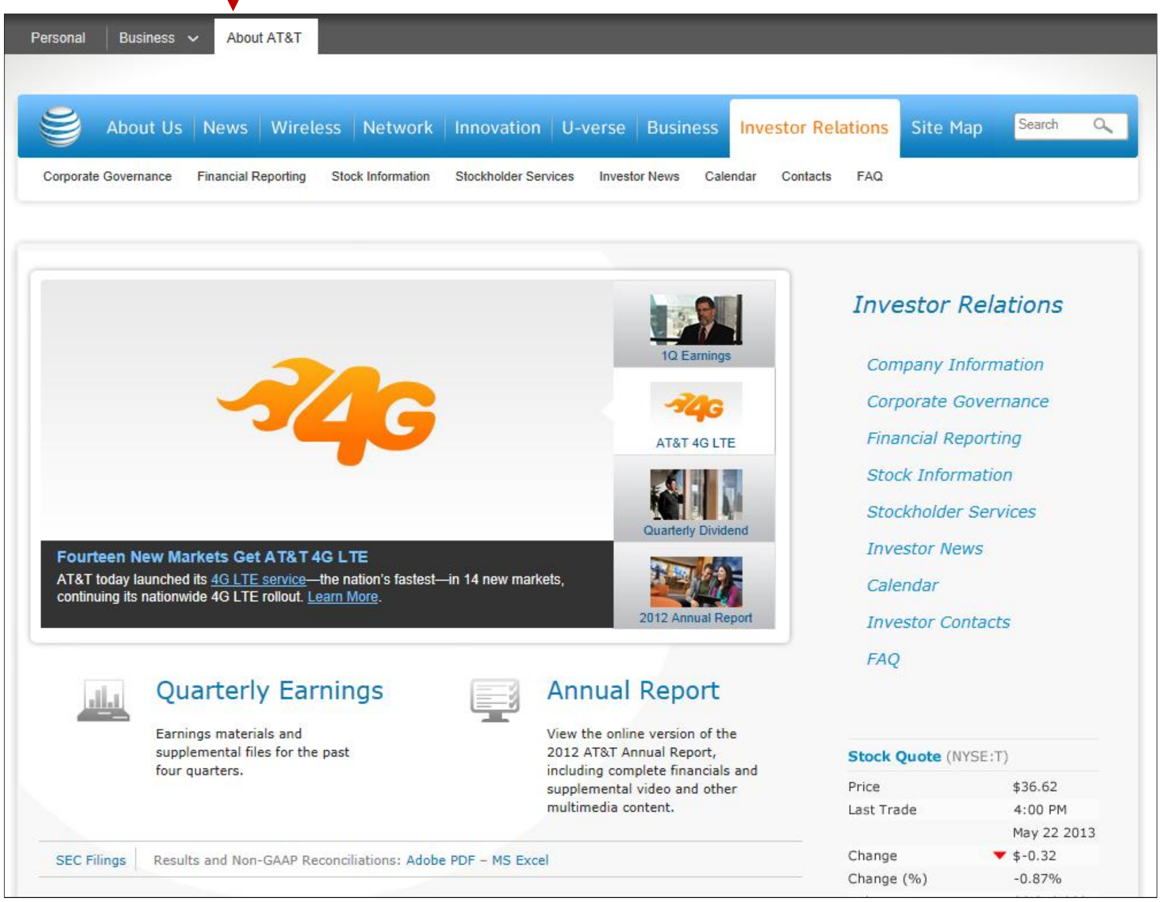
For guidelines on optimizing usability for journalists, refer to our report, *PR on Websites*. www.nngroup.com/reports/pr-websites/http://www.nngroup.com/reports/pr/

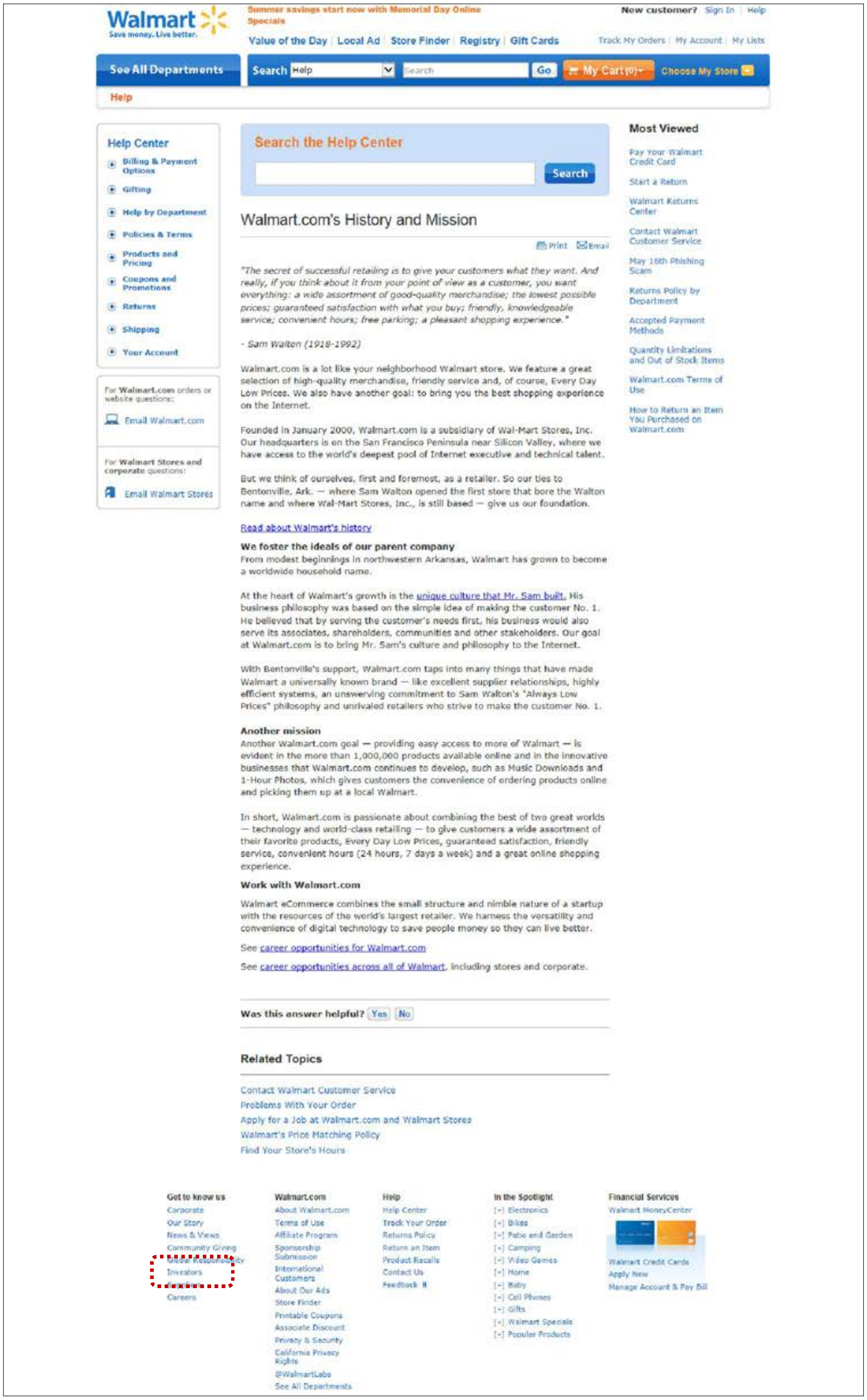


The Eli Lilly website features corporate information consistently in the top navigation, which makes it easy for investors to find.



The AT&T website places *Investor Relations* under *About Us*. Investors are comfortable going to *About Us* when *Investor Relations* is not available on the homepage.





On the Walmart site, clicking on *About Walmart.com* brings up this page that appears not to have a direct path to investor relations. People expect the main corporate options (*Press, Investor Relations* and so on) at this level. However, this information is under the separate heading *Get to know us* in the footer.

CVS.com: This gaze plot from one of the eyetracking sessions shows the participant having to look all over the page to find *Investor Relations*. It was buried too far down the page, along with many other seemingly unimportant links. He ultimately found *Our Company* (top right), but it took more time than necessary.

5. **Keep the link to *Investor Relations* noticeable, not hidden by surrounding visual elements.**

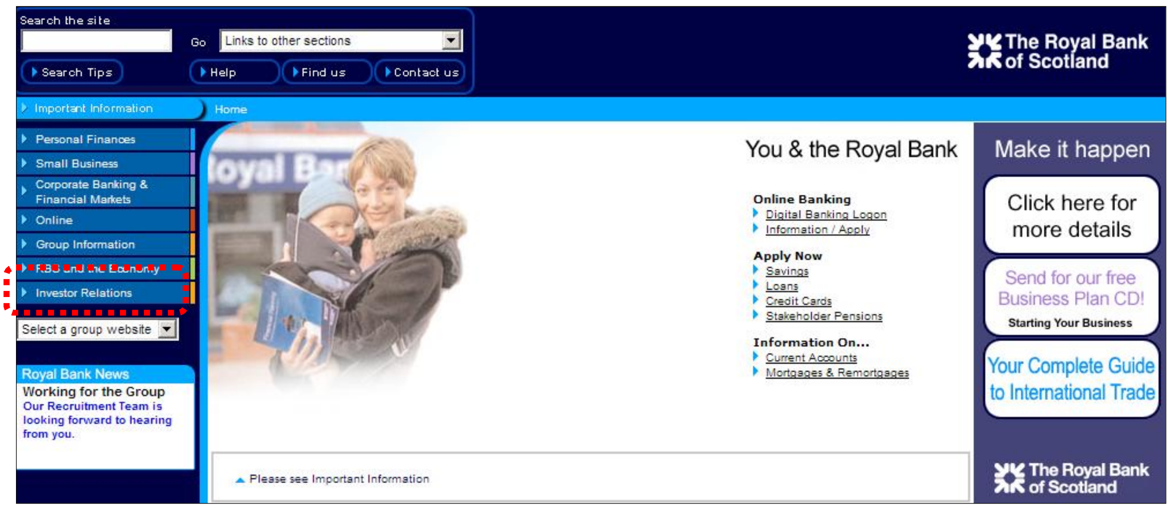
Make sure your *Investor Relations* link is easy to recognize and not obscured by other items on the page. These links don't need to be the most prominent thing on your site, but they need to be placed where people expect them, and the location should be free from overpowering distractions.

In our study, users quickly found the financials area when the site provided appropriately labeled and visibly obvious homepage links to investor information.

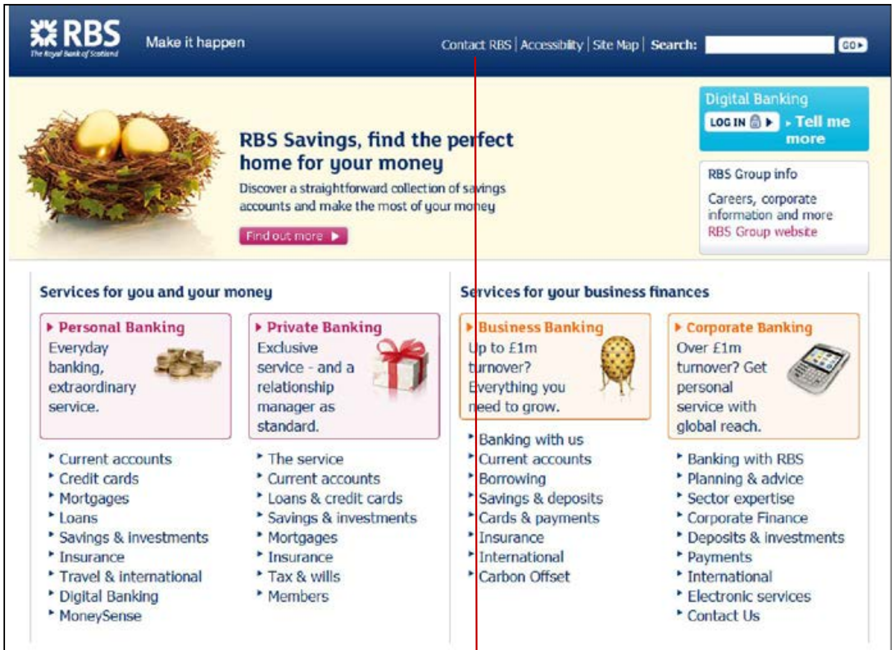
> "I like that *Investor Relations* is on the first page there. Sometimes you have to search for it."

> "I'm looking for something that says *Investor Relations*."

> "I would call this entire area 'Company Financials' or something like that."

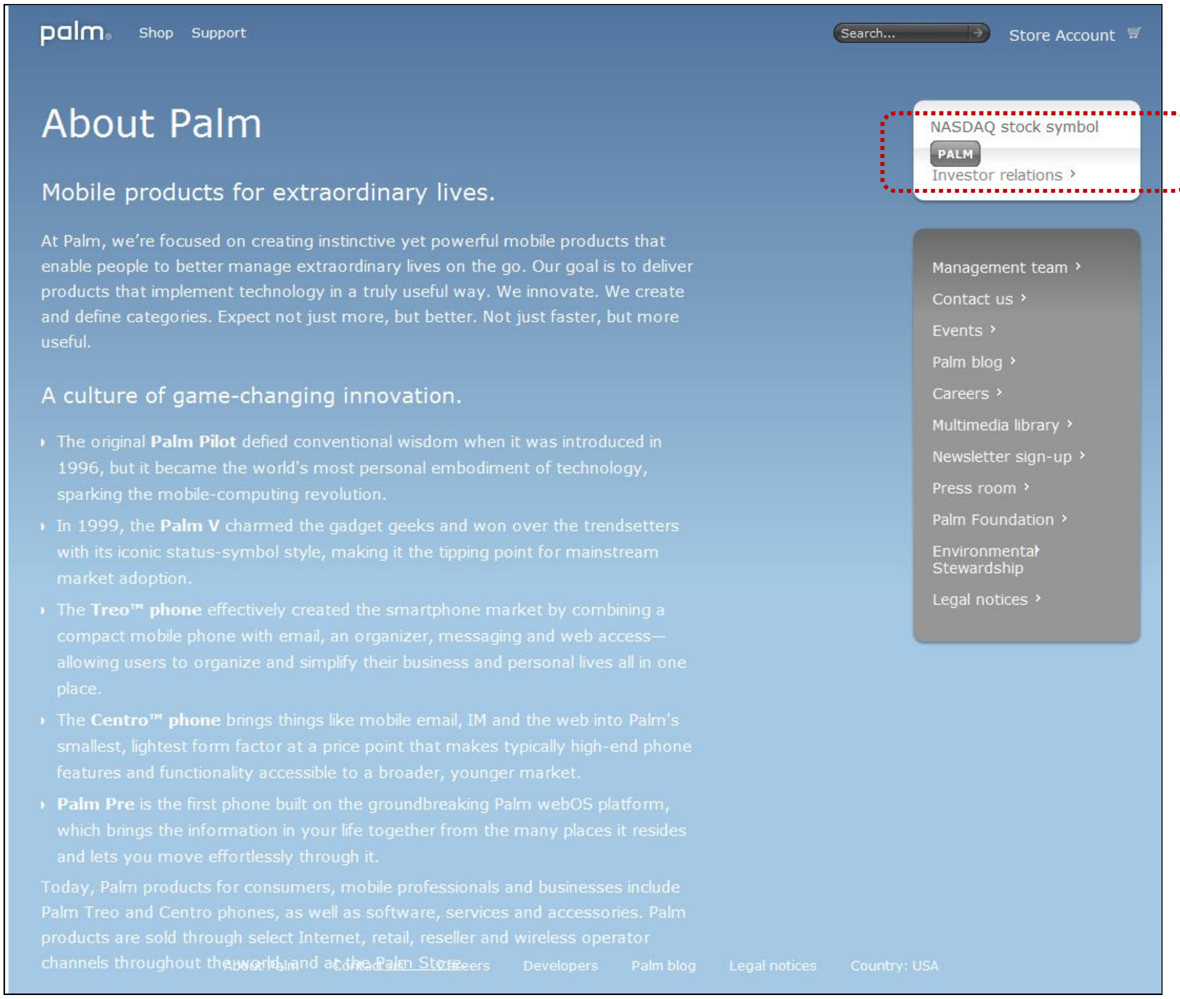


The previous design for The Royal Bank of Scotland website gave *Investor Relations* prominence on the homepage.



The Royal Bank of Scotland's new website design hides *Investor Relations*, making it nearly impossible to find.

Most people will not know to click *Contact RBS* to get to *Investor Relations*, because that path is not familiar.



The *Investor Relations* link on the Palm website was overshadowed by the PALM stock symbol icon and not properly grouped with the other major corporate links.

6. Include a link to corporate information on all subsites.

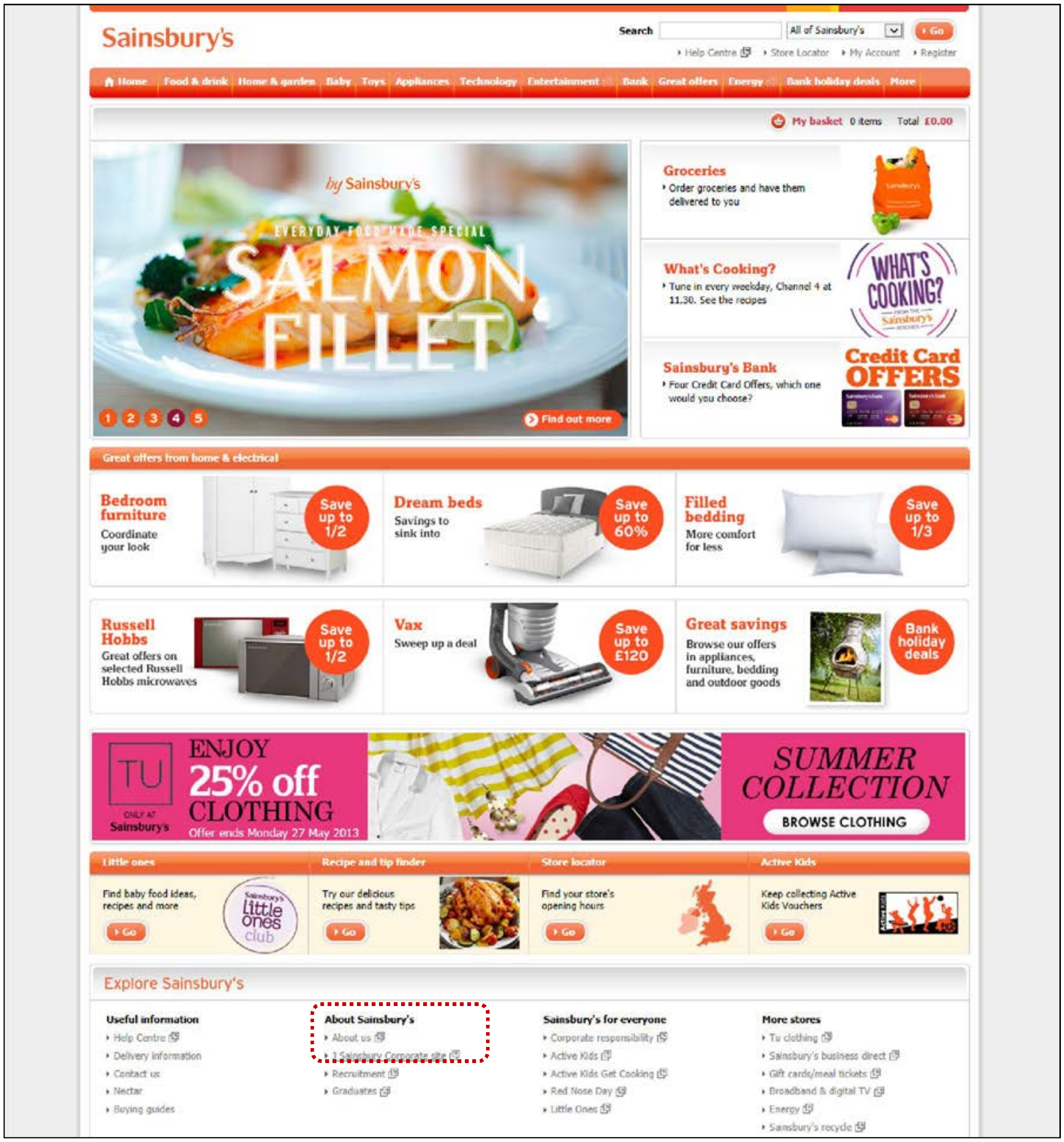
If your organization has many brands and subsidiaries, you should link directly to corporate information on all brand sites, even if the information is on its own site. People go the brand site for corporate information because they are familiar with brands. Many small investors adhere to famed investment guru Peter Lynch's maxim to "invest in what you know" — and a good brand is certainly known, and often better-known than the patent company.

When people don't see links to corporate information on branded subsites or microsites, they assume that this information isn't available. Consider:

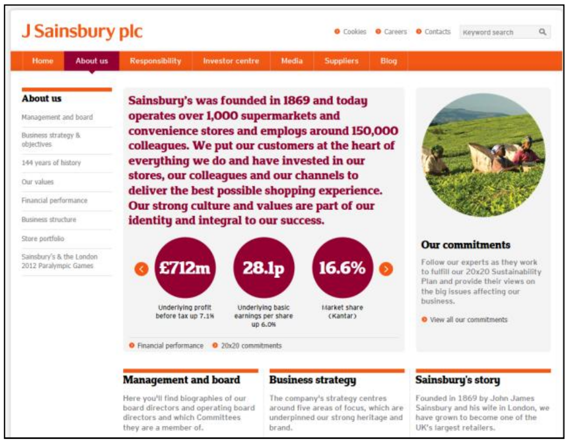
- Users often don't even know a parent company exists
- Users don't know that corporate information is on a separate site

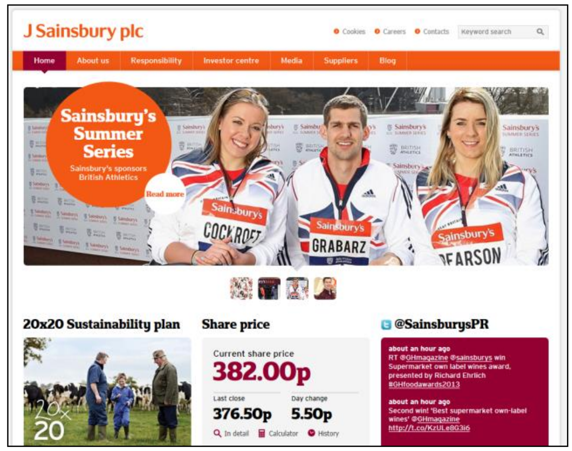
If your company has several divisions with their own separate sites, make sure that each site has links to major corporate topics, including *Investor Relations*. It's better to provide a direct IR link than for people to assume the site doesn't provide company financials. Also, don't make IR a separate website. Most people expect to find IR information on familiar corporate websites and can easily miss this information when they are required to go to a different site.

Failing to direct people to IR information affects the credibility of the organization. People who seek this type of information are in fact-finding mode. If they think the company is not forthcoming with information or not being transparent, they are highly likely to leave the site.



The Sainsbury's website has two main corporate links, *About Sainsbury's* and *Corporate Site*. Many people will not know when to click on which one, because it's not standard to separate this information. People expect *About Sainsbury's* to house the bulk of corporate information that's (ahem) about Sainsbury's. In fact, both links go to the same website (see following screenshots).



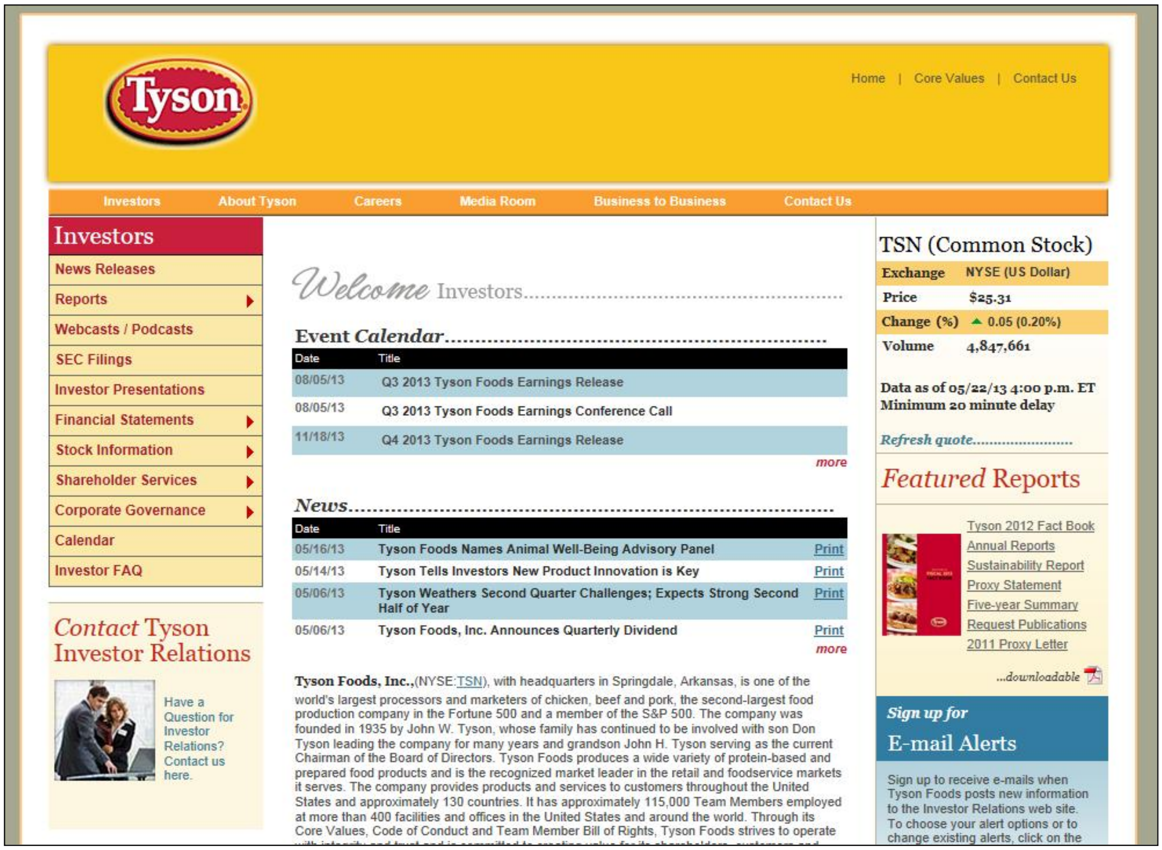


The About Sainsbury link on the Sainsbury website links to the About Us page on the corporate site. This is not clear from the link label on the Sainsbury page and could lead to confusion when people are trying to learn about Sainsbury.

Users on the United Parcel Service (UPS) site had difficulty getting company financials; to do so, they had to navigate to a specialized UPS website that locked them out of the main company site. To get IR information, people had to click first on *About UPS*, then select *UPS Websites*, then find *Investor Relations* among a long list of vaguely worded links.

> "I'm looking for investment information and I can't find it. It should be easy to see it … . They have it lumped in with UPS Racing … . There should be something on the homepage."

Tyson.com doesn't offer an obvious way to get IR information. Users have to know to look in *Other Tyson Sites* and select *Tyson Corporate* at the bottom of the page.

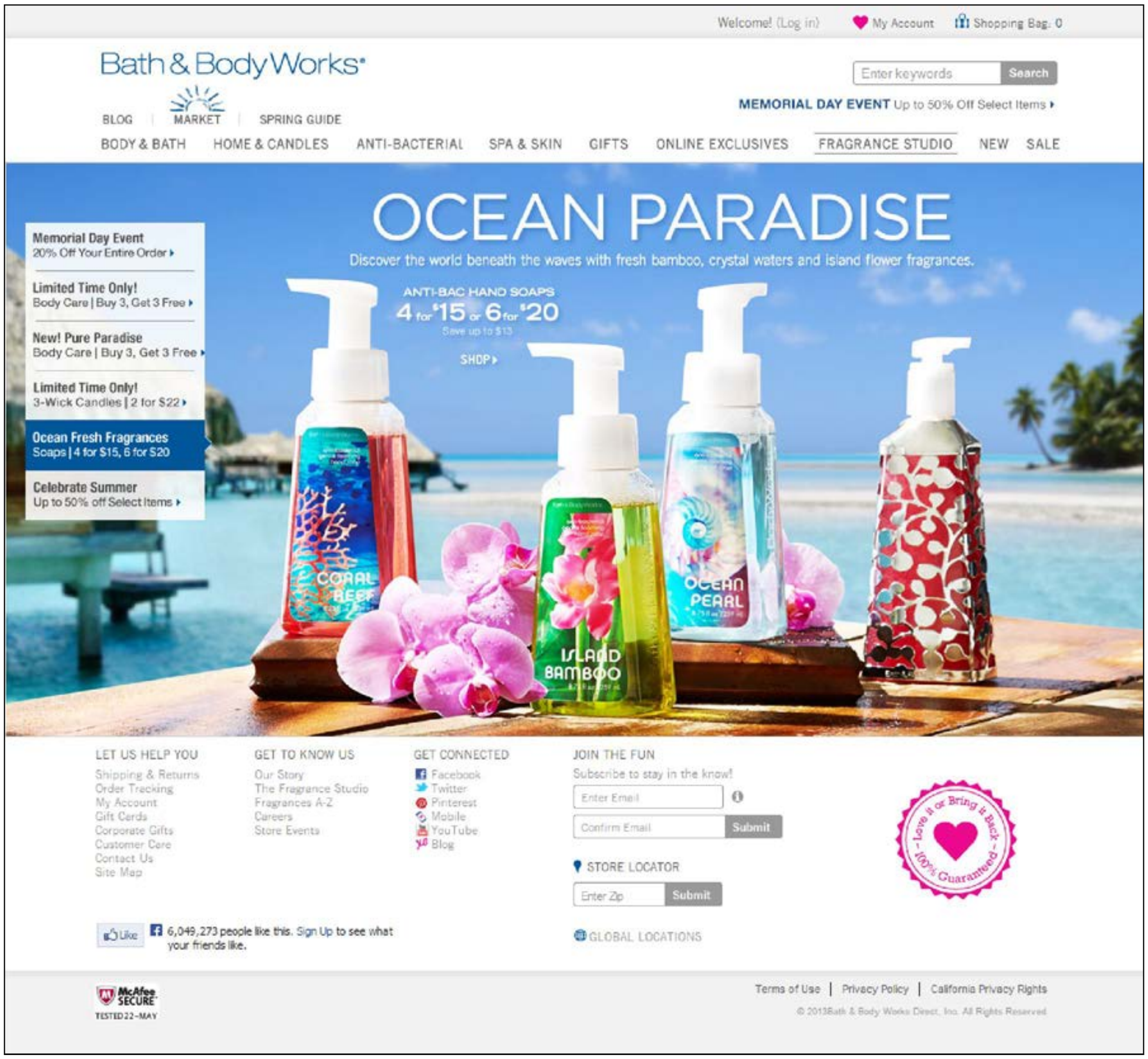


The Tyson Corporate page has investor information front and center, but this page isn't accessible from the many Tyson subsites.

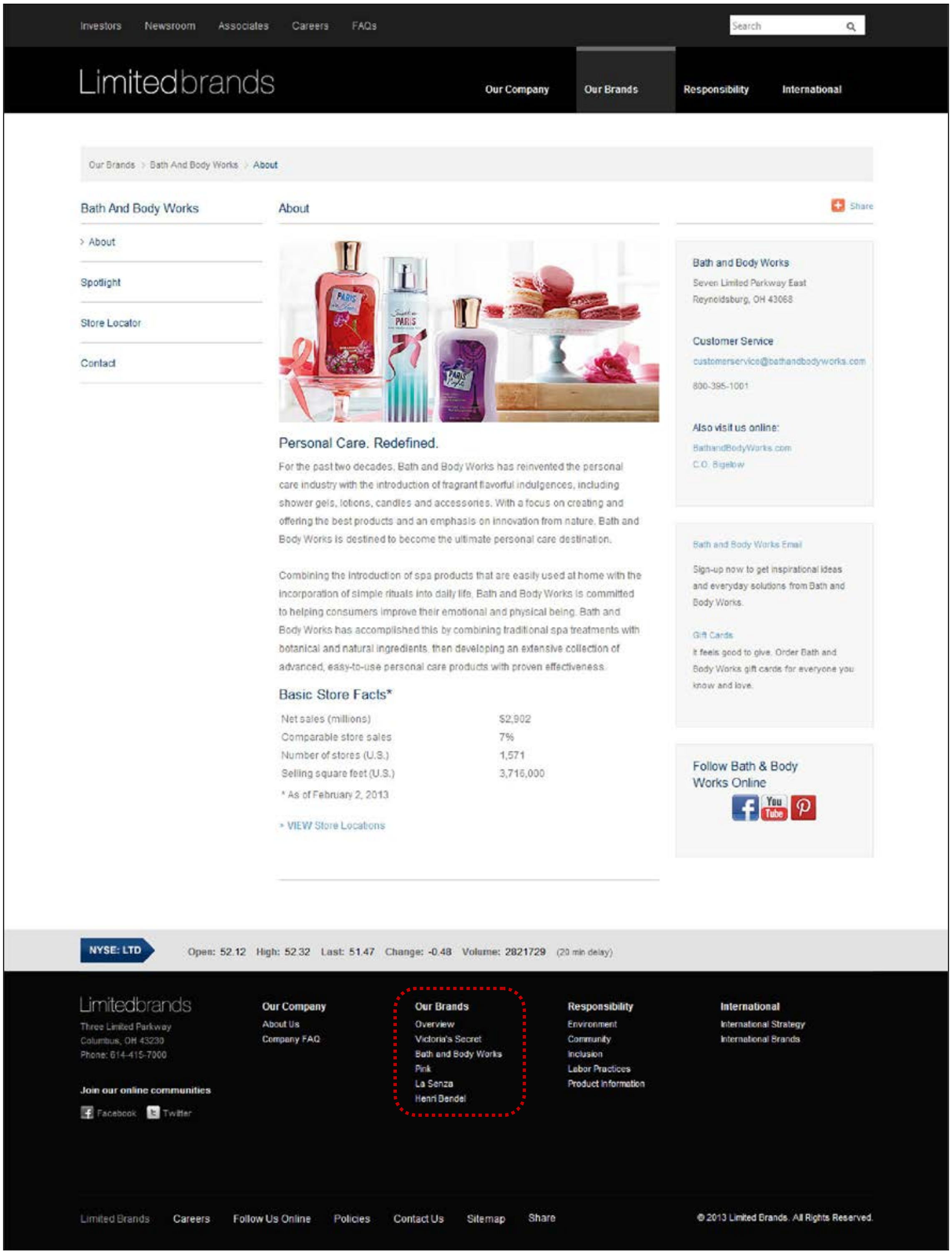
We tested a previous version of the Tyson website with the *Other Tyson Web Sites* dropdown at the top of the page. None of the participants noticed or used the dropdown list. Only one user clicked on *Tyson Foods, Inc. Home* at the bottom of the page and successfully found the investor area.

People on Vodafone's main website (vodafone.co.uk) were also unable to find investment information. They didn't realize that they had to go to another Vodafone site, Vodafone Group (vodafone.com), which had links to IR buried in unexpected areas such as *Press Releases*.

> "I couldn't find a way to get to the investor section. There's no place to contact the company; it only has ways you can buy products."
>
> "This is the basic About Us — a little bit about the company. It's not giving me the financials. In the U.S., sites usually have a page for financials. I don't see that here."
>
> "I've been here before, and I wasn't able to find it. I'm really getting annoyed. I can't find this information."



The Bath & Body Works website does not provide links to major corporate topics, such as *Press* and *Investor Relations*. People who are familiar with this brand won't know to look up the parent company, Limited Brands.



Bath & Body Works is one brand of Limited Brands, but people can’t get to the Limited Brands corporate website from a brand site.

Company Information

7. Make sure the corporate overview explicitly states what your organization does in plain language.

When researching investment information, one of the first things people want to know is what the company does, especially when the company is unfamiliar. Visitors should be able to answer this question in the first few seconds after arriving at a website.

Always provide a straightforward summary of what your company does. Avoid jargonistic descriptions — at best, jargon tends to confuse users; at worst, it makes people mistrust the site, especially when they perceive descriptions as being marketing hype.

We also recommend that you provide short descriptions on the homepage, and in any sections dedicated to IR or press relations (PR), especially if your organization is new or has low name recognition.

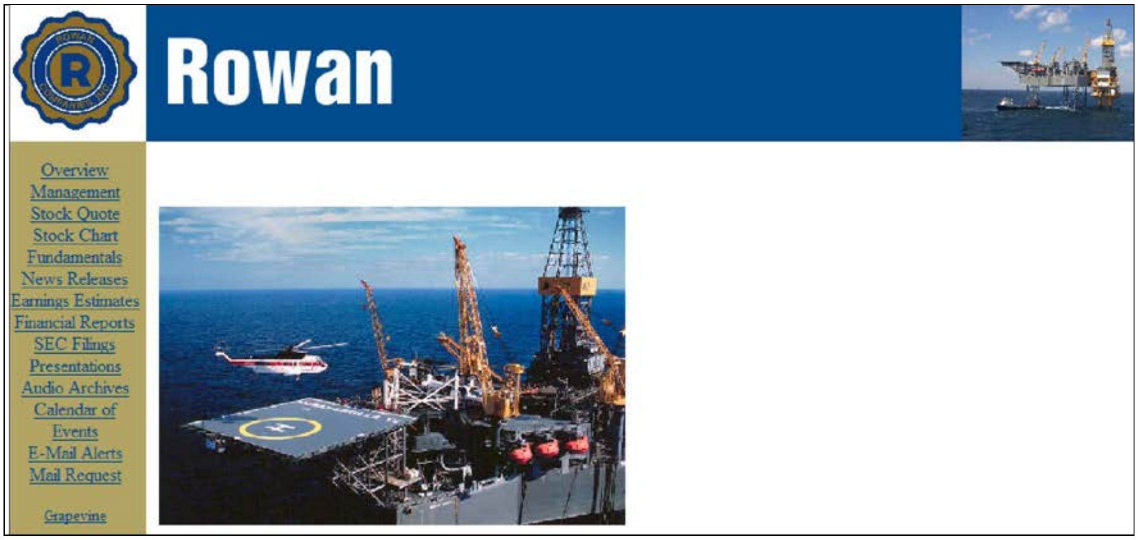
Don't assume that your audience is as educated about your products and services as you are. Don't force customers, investors, and journalists to visit *About Us* if all they want is a basic idea of what your company does. You can provide this crucial information in one or two lines, supplemented by a link to a full *About Us* area.

In our other studies, we've found that when companies establish this basic context, it significantly helps people interpret product information, as well as IR and PR content. Even a short description is enough to situate users and facilitate understanding.

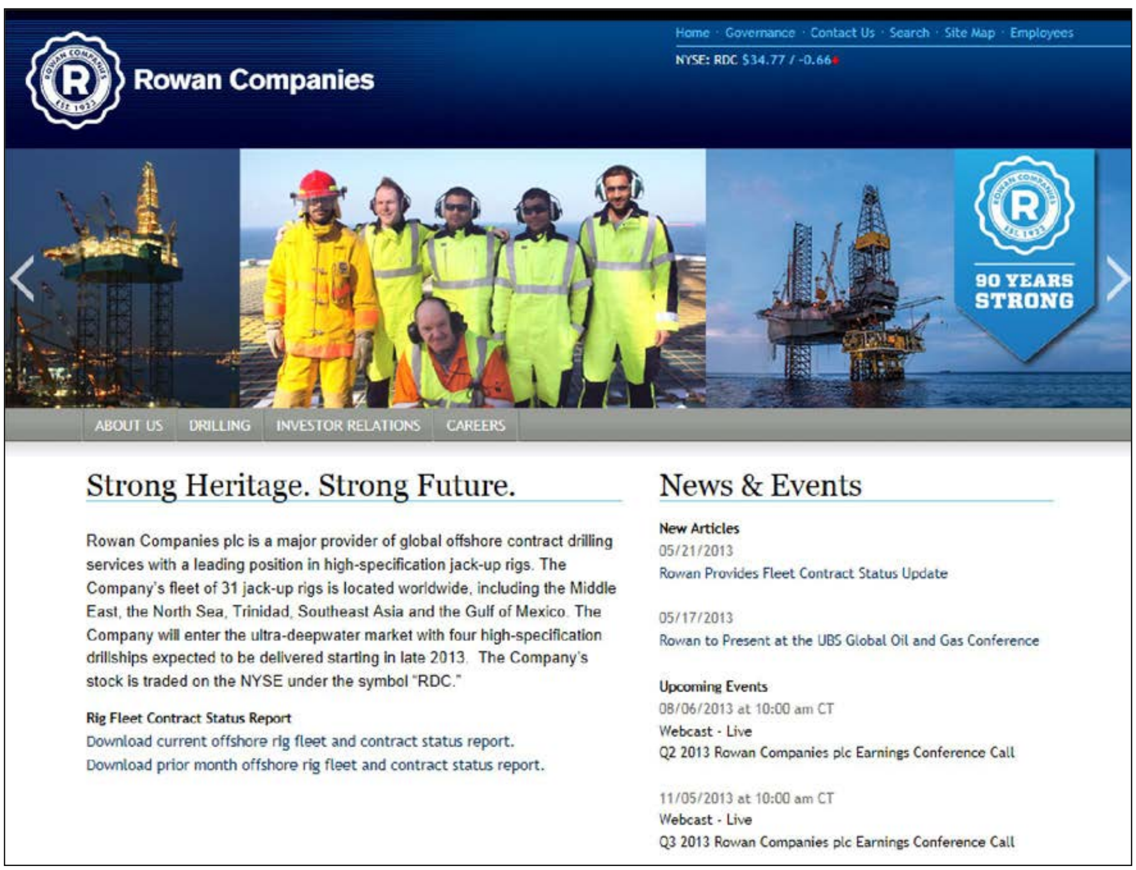
> "First thing, find out what this company does."

> "You want to find out what the company does first. What I'm going to do is look for 'investor relations'."

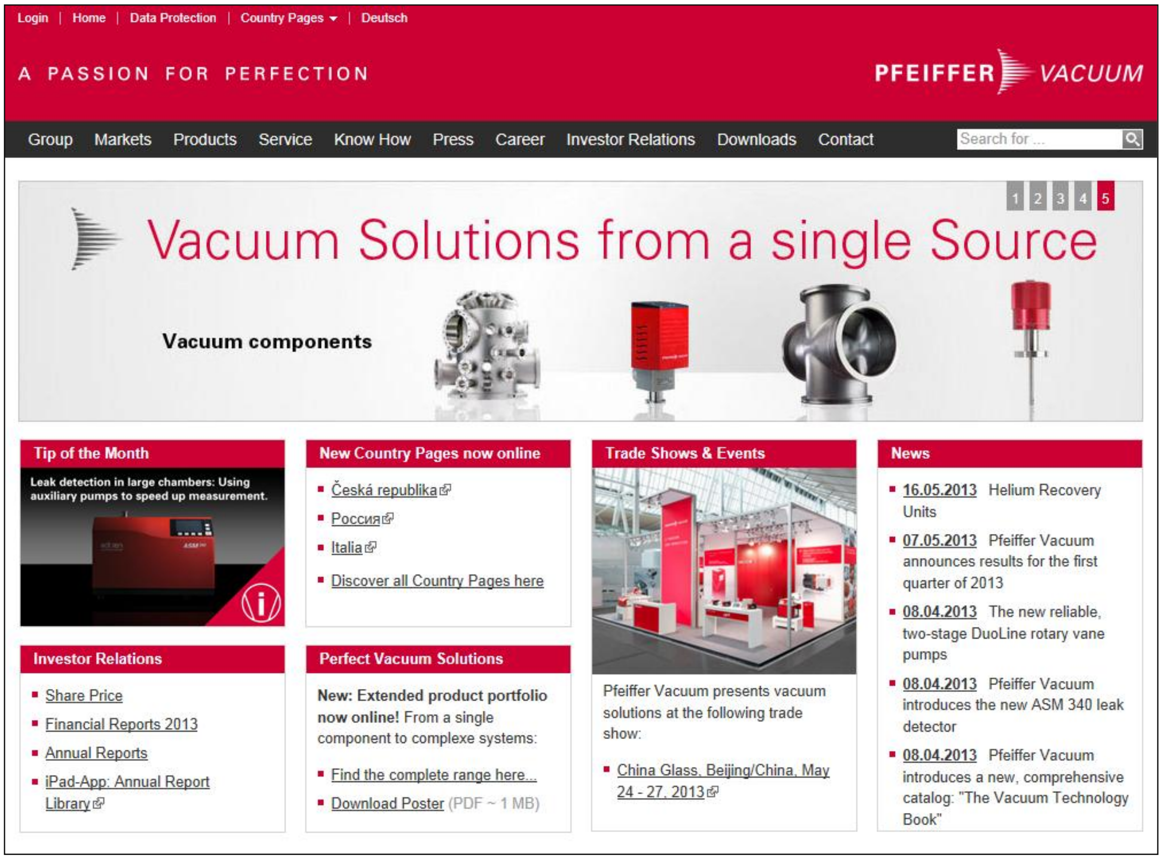
> "When I research a company that's not familiar to me, I need to know what they produce."



Rowan Companies (Old): People complained that the website didn't properly introduce itself. "The homepage doesn't even say what the company is."



Rowan Companies (Updated): The new website does a better job of explaining what the company does. Incorporating the blurb and illustrative images better communicates the company's purpose. These changes can favorably influence how people perceive the company.



Using a previous design of the Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology website (not shown), people had difficulty figuring out what the company does. "By name, I thought this was just vacuum cleaners. I didn't know what they did until I got into the annual report."

Even on the current design, it's not immediately obvious that the company's main business is as a vacuum pumps manufacturer.

A participant noticed the straightforward writing style on the ImmunoGen website. This overview provided an appropriate level of information. The gaze plot shows her reviewing much of the information on this page.

8. Make key corporate facts in the company overview scannable.

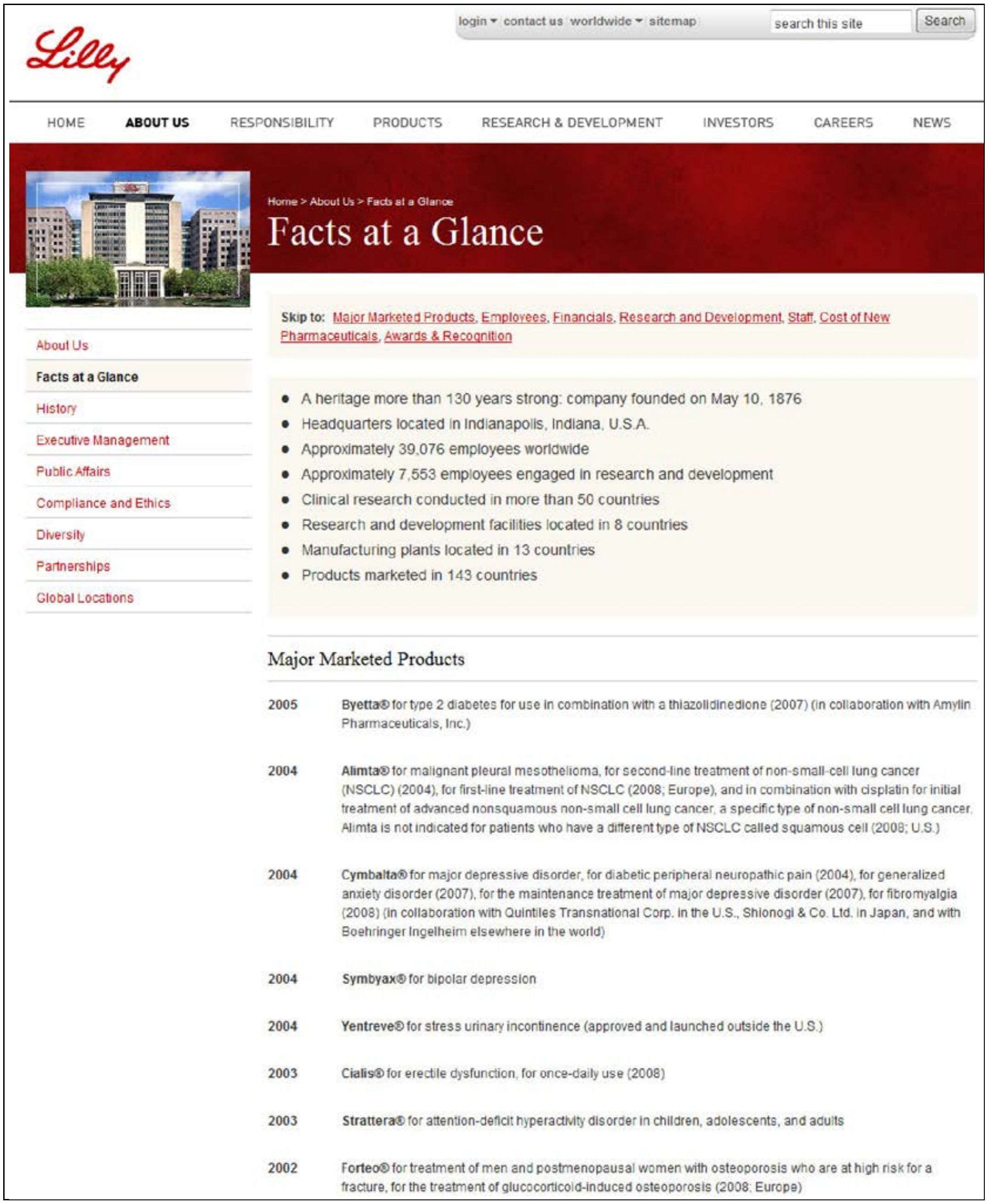
Once on the *About Us* page, users expect to find pertinent organization information right away. Bombarding them with numerous links without offering content on this page is jarring and makes people work too hard to get what they need. It's fine to have links that lead to more specific information, but first provide an overview.

The summary should include answers to top questions such as:

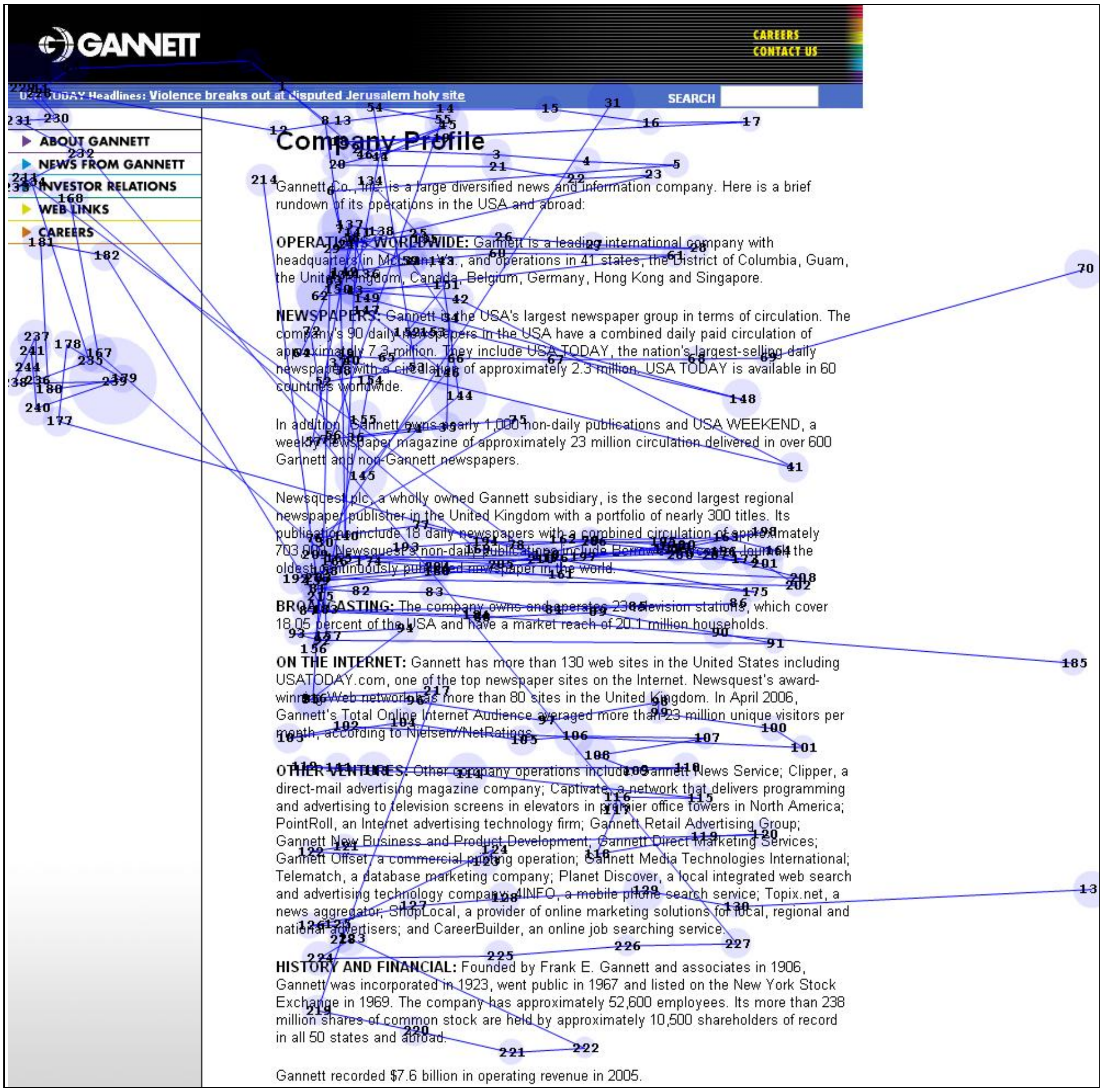
- What does the organization do?
- How long has the organization been around?
- How large is the organization?
  - Number of employees
  - Number of locations
- Where is the organization located?
- What is the organization's revenue?

This information helps users understand the organization's background, stability, and credibility. It's important to answer these questions succinctly to retain user interest and establish proper relationships with your visitors.

Remember, people come to the *About Us* area to check you out. If this information isn't available or is hidden, your company will appear evasive or unhelpful.



Example of a good overview on Lilly.com: This page provides the main facts that people in the initial research phase want, in a format that is easy to scan and understand. The bullet points contain the information users need to get a basic understanding of the company. It would be even better to start each bullet item with the keyword. For example, instead of "Approximately 39,076 employees worldwide" it's more scannable to say "Employees worldwide: 39,000 (approximately)."



This example shows the participant engaged with the company profile. The bold headings and concise paragraphs kept his attention.

9. Include high-level, easy-to-understand information about the breadth of your company's products and services.

Provide information about your company and its flagship products or services on the homepage, on product pages, and in the corporate area of your website. Make it possible for people to understand exactly what you do within the first few seconds. Help them determine why your company is different and important. Journalists can't write about you if they don't understand your business.

The Li & Fung Limited website made an effort to explain their business on the homepage and *About Us*. But investors still had difficulty getting the basics, such as the company's main business. Getting general information isn't enough. People want to know how companies stand apart from their competitors.

10. Provide information about the organization's high-level executives. On the overview page, include the person's name, job title, recent picture, and a link to the full biography.

Journalists, potential customers, and investors typically want to scan through information about an organization's key players, including their age, position, and background. They also like to see a photograph. Scanning management information is part of the research process, and people form impressions of the organization based on the executives' background, age, and gender. If people are important enough to list with the other managers, they should also be important enough to have biographies associated with their names.

Websites can be very impersonal. It's difficult for people to get a feel for the company. People want to see pictures of executive members because they put faces on the company, thereby making the site seem more responsive and connected.

> "From the board of directors, you get decision makers and what's going on in the company … . By reading their biographies, I see where they have pull in other companies. I would do a quick read of the CEO's bio and get a feel of what they're doing and where they've been.

> "I look to see if there are any women … and if there are any minorities. The other day, I was looking at a company that had 50 guys and one black woman. That gives me a good ol' boy feeling."

> "It's nice that management isn't old … so they're hiring new talent. He's experienced enough, but not set in his ways. That's a good sign. He's been there 11 years. He's experienced in the company. I haven't seen any negative news, so that's a good sign."

> "They promote people from within. That's a good thing. And very smart people. You can see from their degrees."

> "I'm looking at the board of directors to see if I know anyone. I'm looking for names that are familiar."

> "I always check out the directors and the board. I like to have an idea of who is running the company and who is the director of the board. They have someone who is from DIRECTTV and France Telecom. I'm impressed by the list."

11. The full biography pages for executives should have links to downloadable pictures, transcripts of speeches, presentations, and other related information.

One of the reasons journalists gave for visiting corporate websites is to get downloadable images of top executive members, mainly the CEO, for their articles.

Professional investors and analysts scan through speeches and presentations to round out their understanding of the company. Although professional investors have access to financial information at their fingertips, company websites can offer something that professional data services do not — a personality and spin.

> "I'd like to see a president statement. If a president is making a statement every quarter — sometimes they say we had a good year and you can read between the lines."

> "I'm looking to see if there is a message from the CEO — to see what their goals are. Management tends to sugarcoat things, but you want to see what their upcoming endeavors and focus are."

12. Emphasize what your company does that's valuable from an investor's point of view, as well as how you differ from key competitors.

Companies need to make the case for why people should invest in the company. Getting people to visit your website is half the battle. The other part is to get them hooked. In our studies, we see investors being disappointed repeatedly by companies that do not make good arguments for the company's growth potential.

On the Johnson & Johnson site, a user was disappointed when he couldn't find information about the company's future plans for potential products:

> "I haven't found a page to see their plan for the future — what's on the drawing board with respect to the buyout and what potential products they will be working on."

> "I want to take a closer look and see if the products are cutting edge technology — if they put something on the market that could be a big boom … . I'm not finding out what's it about, whether or not it's innovative enough, protected by patent. Is it unique?"

A user on the Vodafone website combed the site looking for information that would explain why the company would be a valuable investment but couldn't find it:

> "This is a Vodafone site. It should tell me why it's a good investment. I expect to be told what Vodafone is expecting to do."

> "Tell me what they do, what they can do, and how can they change. I expect them to pitch me. If they don't tell me, I have to find the story myself … . I'm horribly bored with this website. I can't tell what they're going to do."

> "I need enough to give me a taste of what the company does and what makes them special. By looking at the site, I expect to see their products and what they do. I expect them to give me a hook, especially if someone has technology that is extraordinary."

> "Instead of showing the innovation, it's just showing me its commitment to it. Talk about its significance."

A professional investor from Hong Kong complained when he thought the Li Fung website did not have information about future projects:

> "It doesn't say if they have completed or future projects. As an investor, I want to know about future projects. Websites tell you what they have done; stock price reflects what they will be doing. This company has ongoing projects, but they don't have it here [on the website]. How many projects are you doing? How much more will you be able to collect rent on? What is the business outlook?"

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IMMUNOGEN, INC.

COMPANY OVERVIEW | OUR TAP TECHNOLOGY | PRODUCT PIPELINE | INVESTOR INFORMATION | JOIN OUR TEAM

- Leadership in Product Design
- Our Latest Innovations
- Development Expertise
- Manufacturing Capabilities

Latest Technology Innovations

New Linkers for MDR Cancers

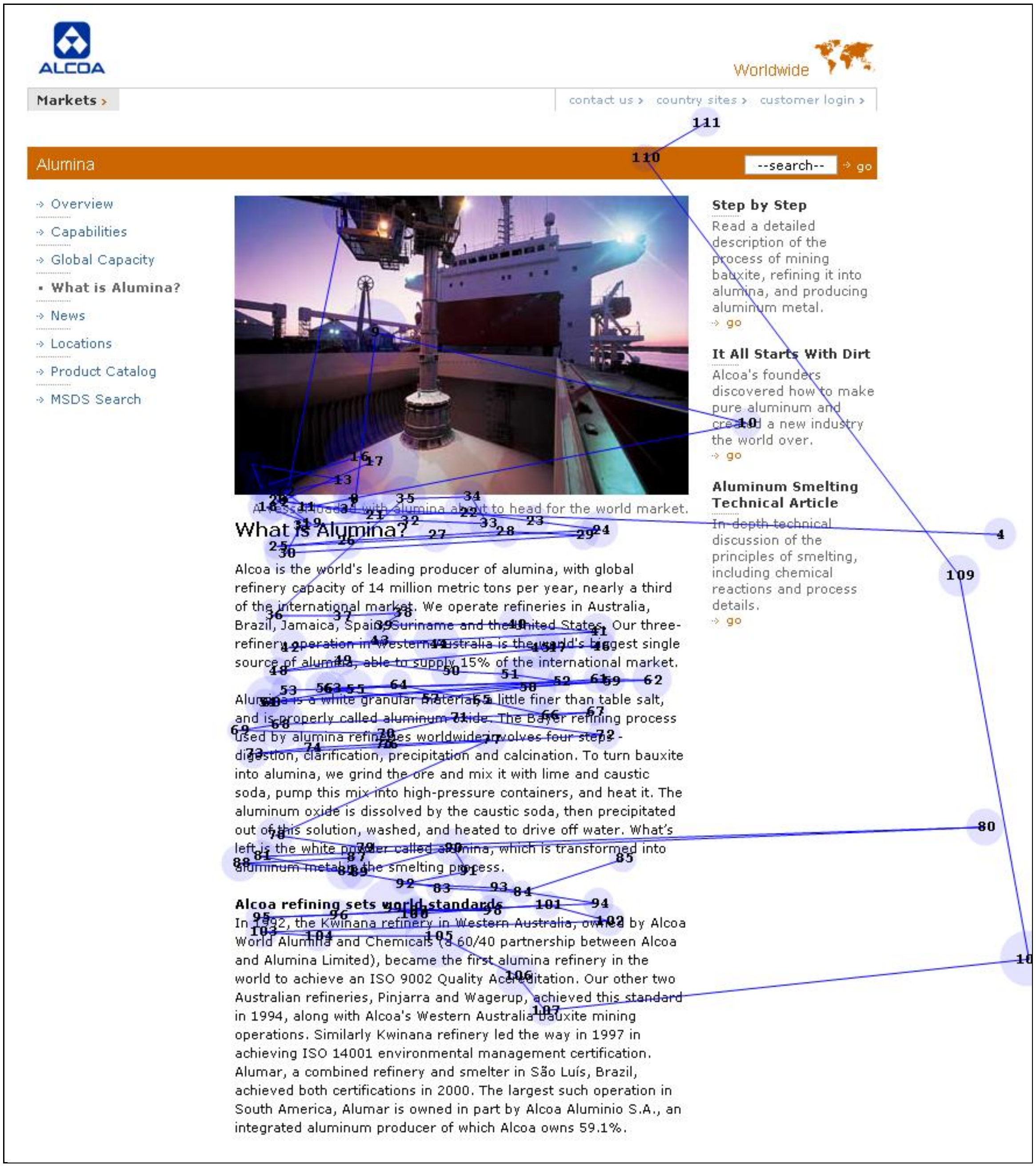
We have recently disclosed to our existing partners that we have filed patent applications for a new generation of linkers particularly well suited for multi-drug resistant (MDR) cancers. These linkers also offer potential for conjugates against cancers that express the target antigen at low density. We are starting to present on these linkers at scientific conferences and also wanted to use this opportunity to make companies that are not currently our partners aware of this innovation.

Our new hydrophilic (POL) linkers can be used to attach our maytansinoid cell-killing agents (DMx) using either reducible or non-reducible bonds ("cleavable" and "non-cleavable" bonds, respectively). Like our other linkers, they remain intact while the antibody-DMx conjugate is circulating in the bloodstream and enable the DMx to exert its full potency once inside a cancer cell.

The enhanced activity of these new linkers against MDR cells can be seen in studies we conducted with EpCAM-targeting conjugates. EpCam is expressed on HCT15, a human colon carcinoma cell line with naturally evolved MDR. It also is expressed on the human colon carcinoma cell line, COLO 205, and on COLO 205-MDR, which is a COLO 205 clone engineered to over-express P-glycoprotein (Pgp). Pgp is one of the best studied mediators of MDR.

We made conjugates using a monoclonal antibody (MAb) that binds to EpCAM with: a reducible disulfide linker (MAb-SPDB-DM4), the non-reducible linker (MAb-MCC-DM1) used in trastuzumab-DM1, and one of our new hydrophilic linkers (MAb-POL-DM1).

The ImmunoGen website explains the company's technologies well, emphasizing the latest developments in simple terms.



The Alcoa website goes beyond the norm and educates site visitors about the behind-the-scenes technologies and processes, which can pique people's interest. In this example, the user was intrigued by what the company does and wanted to learn more.

13. Provide access to financial coverage of subsidiaries, major businesses, and geographic regions.

It's important to provide information on the company's overall performance, but investors are also interested in the performance and status of each major business, project, and regional area. Showing a snapshot helps potential investors better understand your business and how each sector affects the potential growth of companies.

A professional investor on the Li & Fung Group website complained when the information about the company's major businesses was too difficult to find:

> "It should be put higher up in relevance. This information is not about property. This is only on the railroad business. What about the property business?

An analyst on the Henderson Land Development Company website wanted to get information about current projects:

> "You also want to know what projects are going on … . This is a conglomerate … . Ideally you want a link to the other sites. This has a totally different list of financial information."

14. Acknowledge the challenges your company faces and explain the company's plan to address them.

Companies that openly acknowledge challenges are seen as more trustworthy than companies that paint only a rosy picture. Journalists in particular do not empathize with companies that try to cover up a situation or that completely ignore it on their website. Prevalent Web usage makes it easy for people to find out about whatever happened anyway.

Although you shouldn't create legal issues for the company, if negative information is generally known and out there, it will benefit you to acknowledge it. Failing to acknowledge it will make it appear as though the company is trying to cover it up, or that its leaders think nothing is wrong.

An analyst was nervous about a company that seemed to feature only positive information. He commented:

> "It could be interesting to talk about challenges. Companies only talk about how good they are. When things are too great we get worried, and when they are bad we get worried too."

A journalist explained the steps for following up on a story:

> "How are they going to remedy the problem? … If I want to feature an article, I get financial data or comments from senior management. They might have some agenda that they won't tell you. I use other websites that might have more comments on those issues and get a different spin on the issues. After that, I might make some phone calls to financial analysts and to some bankers within the industry. If I could, I would go for people who have banking experience. … . Companies often aren't explicit about how they will remedy a problem."

15. If you get press coverage for your company, provide a visibly noticeable link to *Press* on both the homepage and in the IR area so that people can get news and press releases.

The Press and Investor Relations sections are highly related. Investors and journalists often rummage through both areas of websites, often in no particular order. To support this behavior, provide links to *Press* in the *Investor Relations* sections and vice versa.

Journalists in particular rely on such sections when covering a company. They often search press releases for notable facts and quotes, but also dip into the IR area to find supporting evidence.

Investors (potential and existing) rely on press releases when researching investment information and appreciate it when there's an easy way to get that. They use press releases to get the latest news. For example, they can find out where the company is heading, what's happening within the company, get financials, and scan the headlines for anything interesting that could impact the stock price.

> "A friend of mine says press releases are the best place to find out what's in the news about where the stock is going."
>
> "I would go to the website for press releases."
>
> "It's good to see what's going on. So if I invest in it, I know what the potential is."
>
> "I'm looking for comment pieces — what people say about their past. Is there any fraud or problems?"
>
> "I would look and see if there are any quotes in it and cut and paste it into a Word document."
>
> "I would look to get a general sense of their business strategy and acquisitions."
>
> "I want to know about things that are going on. Press releases are the best place to find out about a company."

16. Define the term "corporate governance" because most people don't know what it means.

Corporate governance has recently started attracting a good deal of public interest, especially from the investor-relations perspective. Prospects are interested in knowing the policies by which your corporation is governed in order to ensure the accountability of major decision makers.

A professional investor in Hong Kong was pleasantly surprised to see information about corporate governance on the Li & Fung Limited website. He talked about how corporate governance makes the company appear more transparent and responsible:

> "This is very good. It's quite nice that they have this. Asian markets are not as sophisticated and efficient. Corporate governance has an impact on stock price. The companies with poor corporate governance are not that successful — not transparent. Asian companies tend not to be quite as transparent as their Western counterparts. This company is serious; they have checks and balances in place. Management is not going to engage in dodgy dealings. You want to know as an international investor that you will not be at risk."

Although having a corporate governance section enforces the notion of accountability, the concept of corporate governance is still poorly defined, and there is no general agreement as to its exact meaning. Whenever appropriate, offer a brief explanation of what it means (corporate responsibility, business conduct, and so on).

Stock Quote

17. Provide the stock symbol (clearly labeled) in visible places in your website's IR sections.

One important piece of information potential investors need to know immediately is the company stock symbol (ticker), especially when trying to research company information using other resources or websites. Once people know the stock symbol, they can enter it into other databases and continue their research, or use it to purchase the stock.

Place the stock symbol in highly visible places on your website. Put the stock symbol and stock quote on the company homepage, especially if IR is a high priority for your company. At minimum, display the stock symbol clearly on the IR homepage. It's better to display the stock symbol on other relevant IR pages as well.

Label the stock symbol so that it's easy to recognize, with "Stock Symbol: <stock symbol>," especially if the symbol is unintuitive.

A user on the Biogen website appreciated having the stock symbol and quote on the homepage:

> "That's good. That's something I want to see."

A user on the Pacific Sunwear site had difficulty finding the stock symbol:

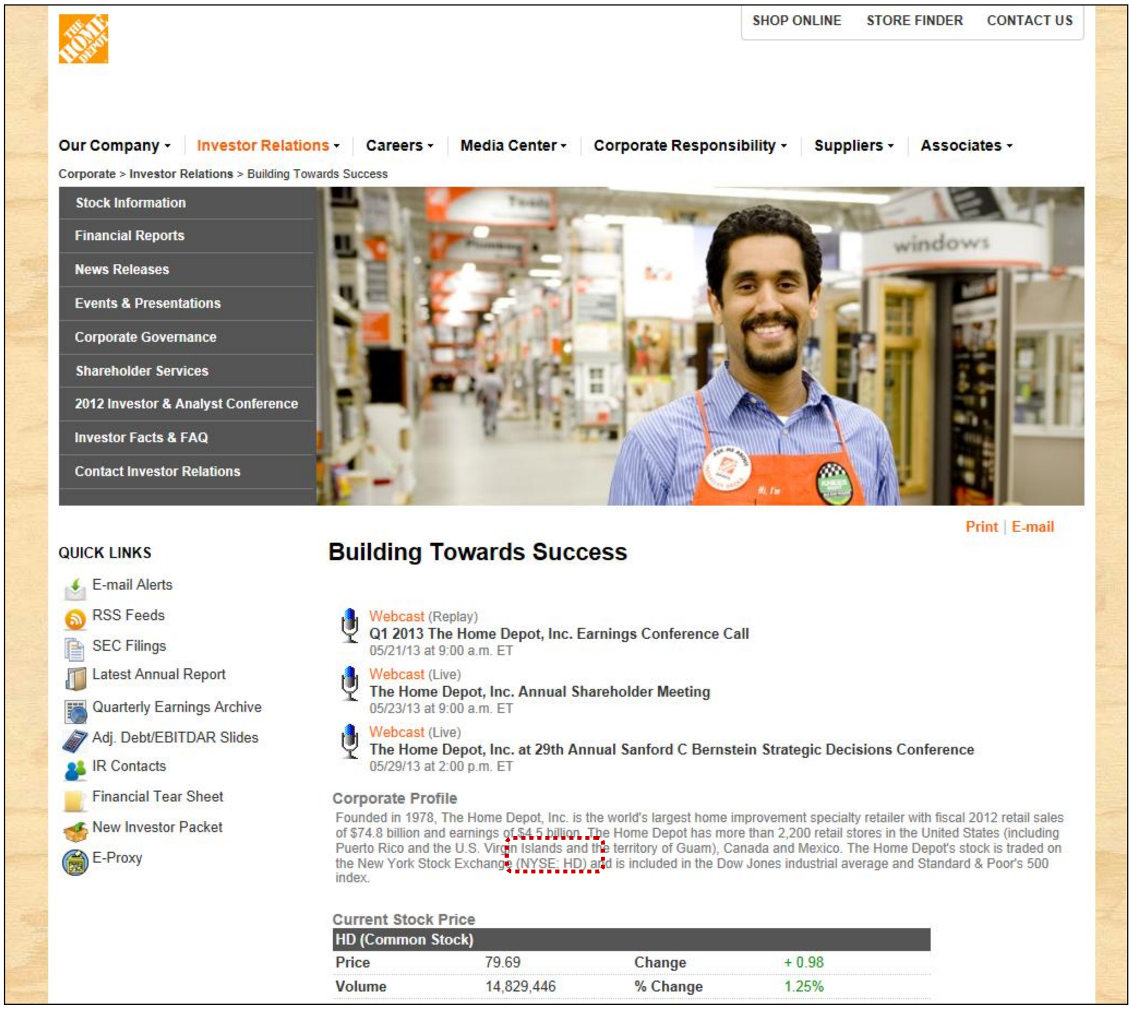
> "Do we have a ticker symbol for Pacific Sunwear? I need it so I can plug it in on Yahoo!"

A user on the Labor Ready website noticed the stock symbol but wasn't confident that she was correct because it wasn't labeled:

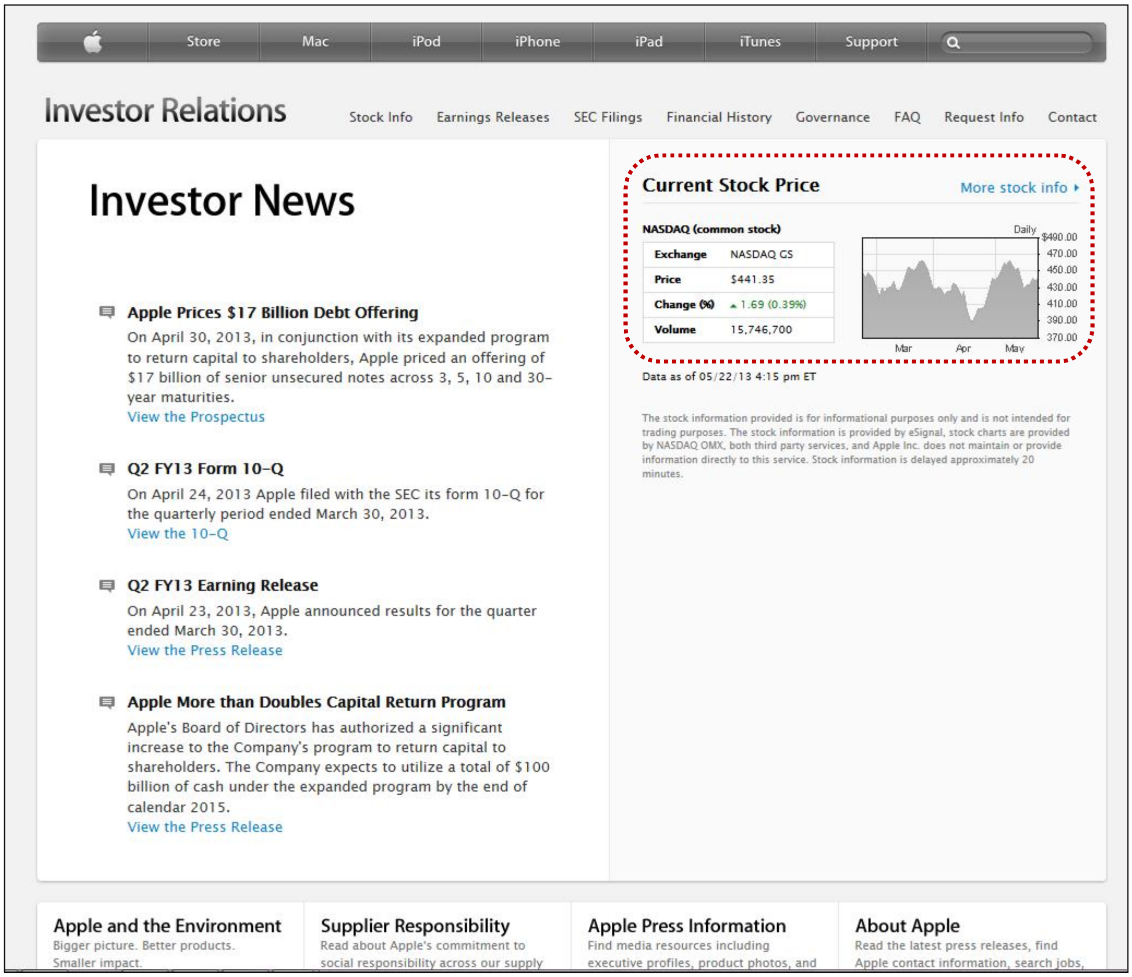
> "I'm not familiar with this. The LRW looks like the stock symbol, but I'm not sure."

A user on the Ceridian website found the ticker symbol only after wading through the IR section:

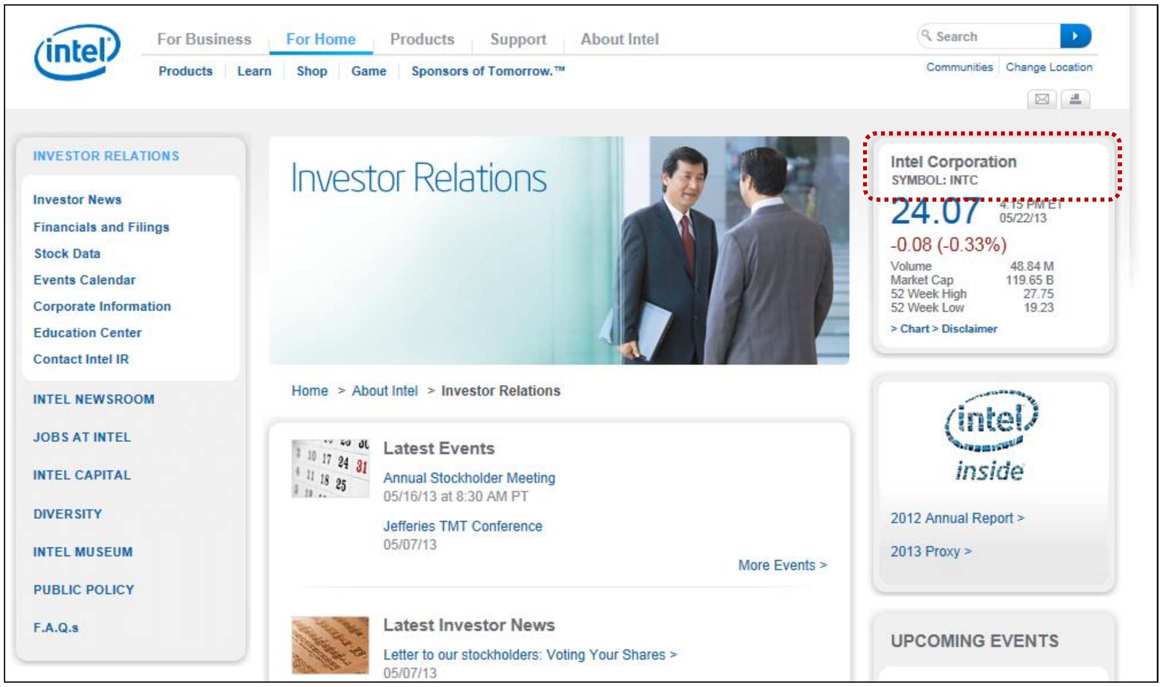
> "This is the first time I saw the ticker. I would like to see it quicker."



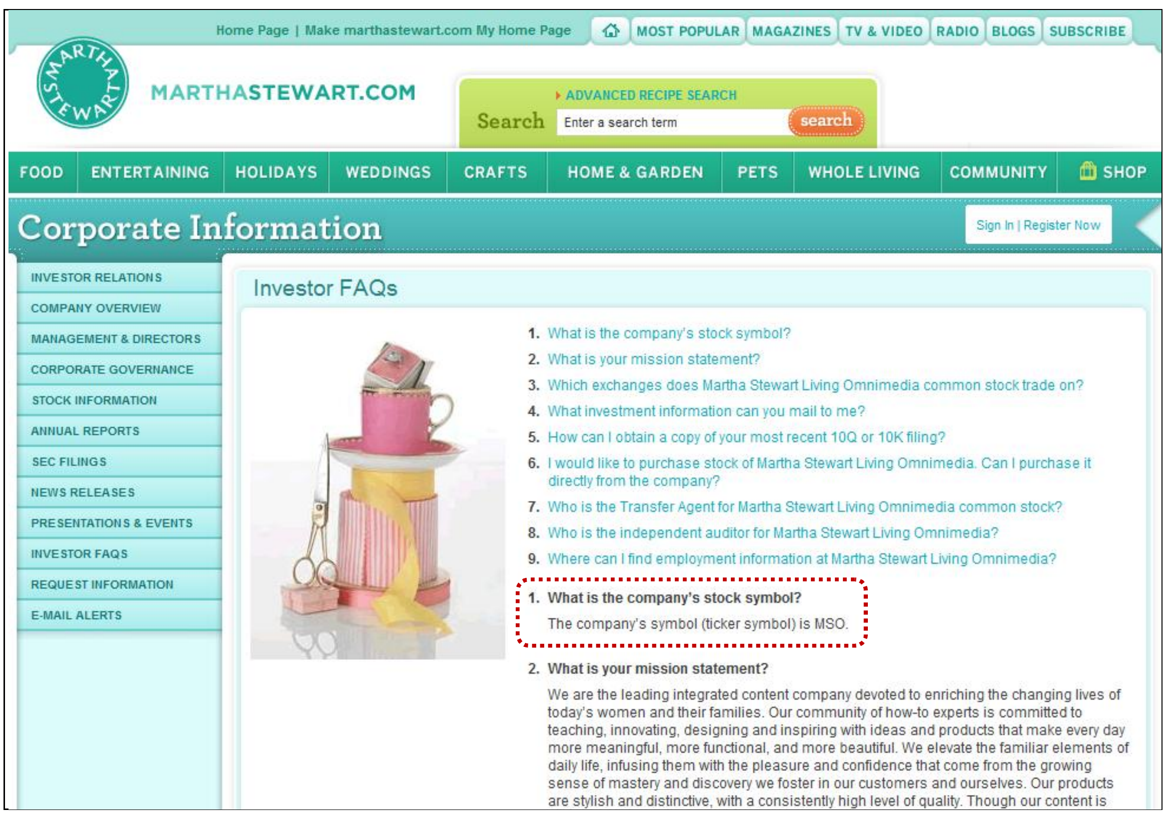
The Home Depot website features the stock quote on the main *Investor Relations* page, but the ticker symbol is buried in the wall of prose.



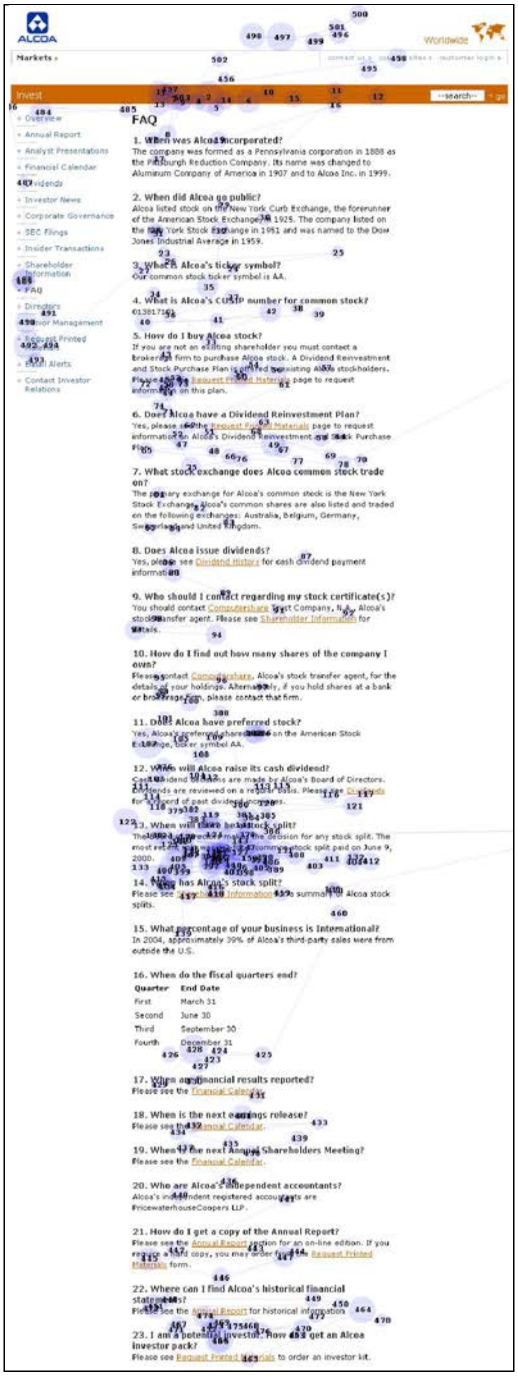
The Apple website displays the stock information, but not the AAPL ticker. Users have to click on *More stock info* to find this. Also, beginning investors likely don’t know what *Common Stock* means.



The Intel website appropriately labels the stock symbol, thereby minimizing confusion.



The Martha Stewart website appropriately features the company's ticker symbol in the FAQ.



Alcoa.com: This example shows the participant scanning virtually the entire FAQ page. He used the FAQ as a way to get background information and find out if he might have missed something important.

18. Provide current stock quote information grouped together in a high-priority area of the IR section. Call this area "Stock Quote."

Stock quote information helps potential and existing investors get a quick glimpse of the current stock price. Many individual investors said that they check the stock quote daily to monitor the progress of stock they already own.

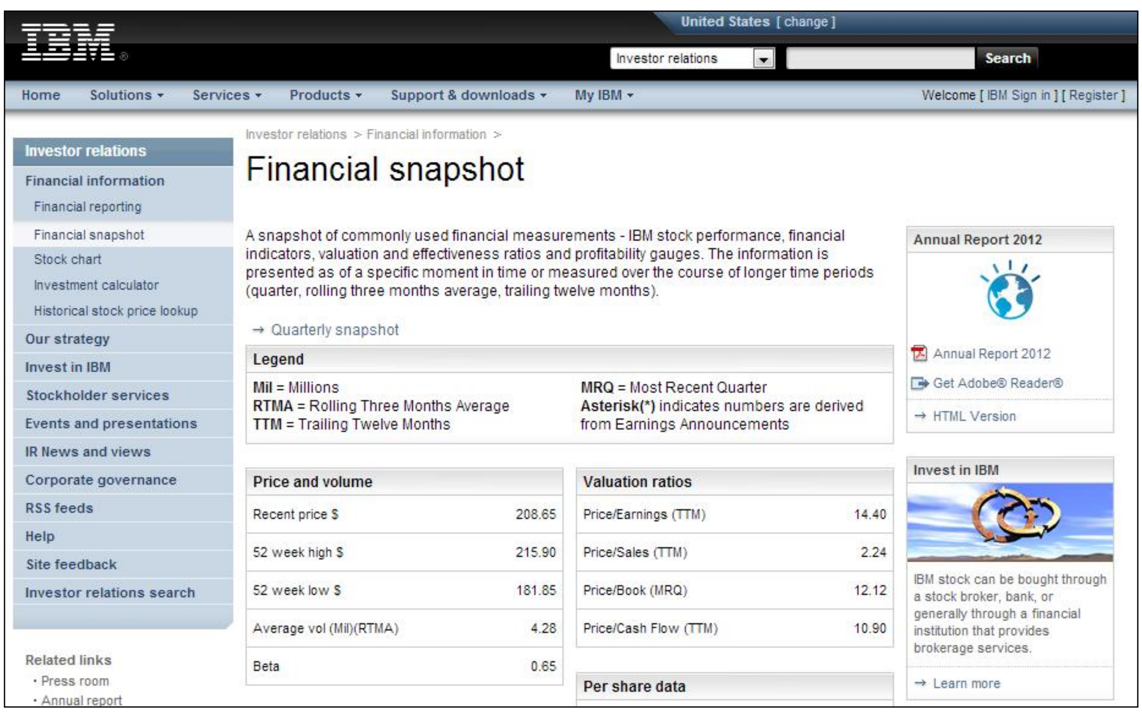
Provide a stock quote page in your website's IR section that clearly shows:

- Update time and date
- Current stock price
- Current day's high/low
- Percentage of change
- 52-week high/low
- Current day's volume
- Stock symbol
- Market(s) the stock is traded on

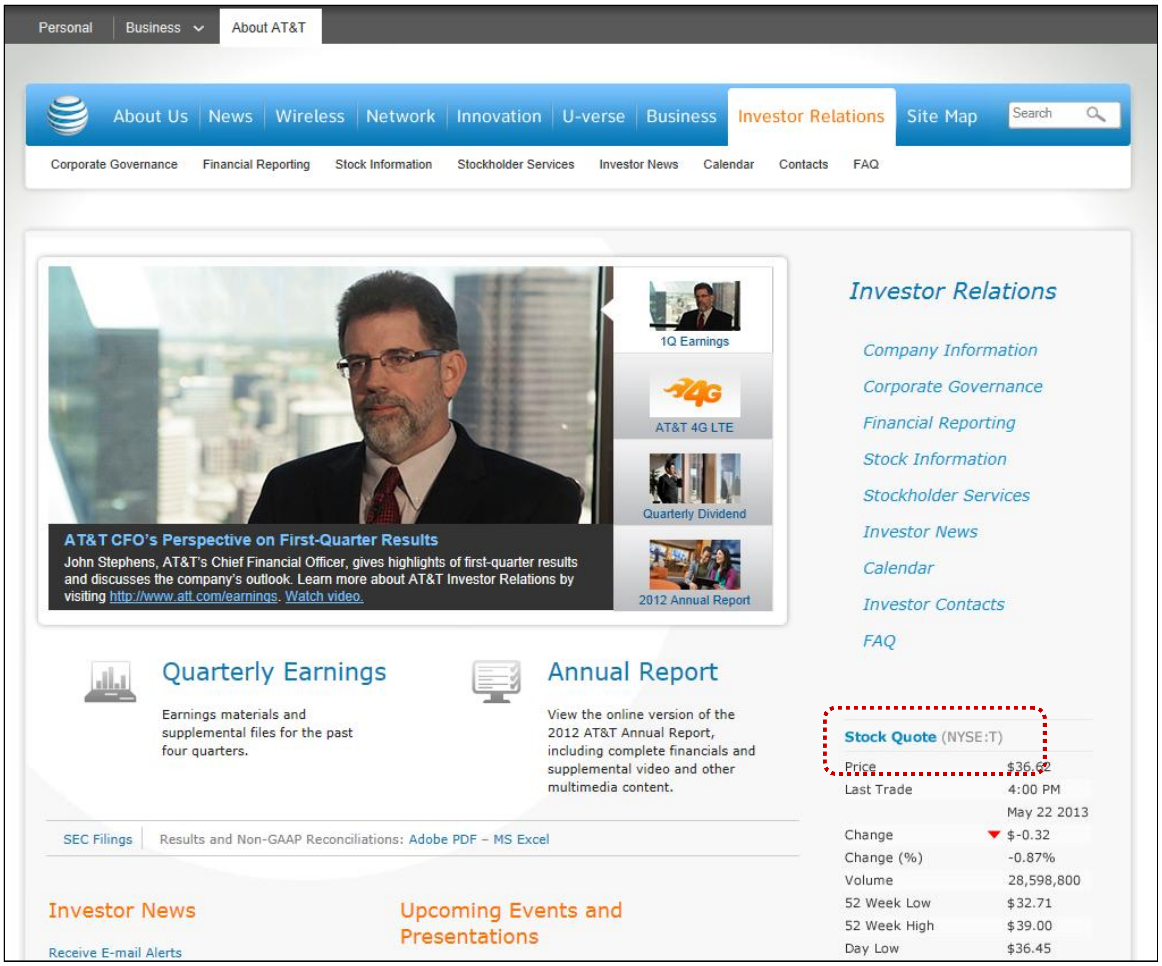
Name this area *Stock Quote*, not something unusual like *Stock Data* or *Share.* In our studies, American users were unfamiliar with the terms *Share Price* and *Share Data*. In Hong Kong, a professional investor complained about the term *Share Data Analysis* and said, "The language you use is important. "Stock Price" is clearer."

A professional investor made the following comment when he couldn't find stock information on the Li & Fung Group website:

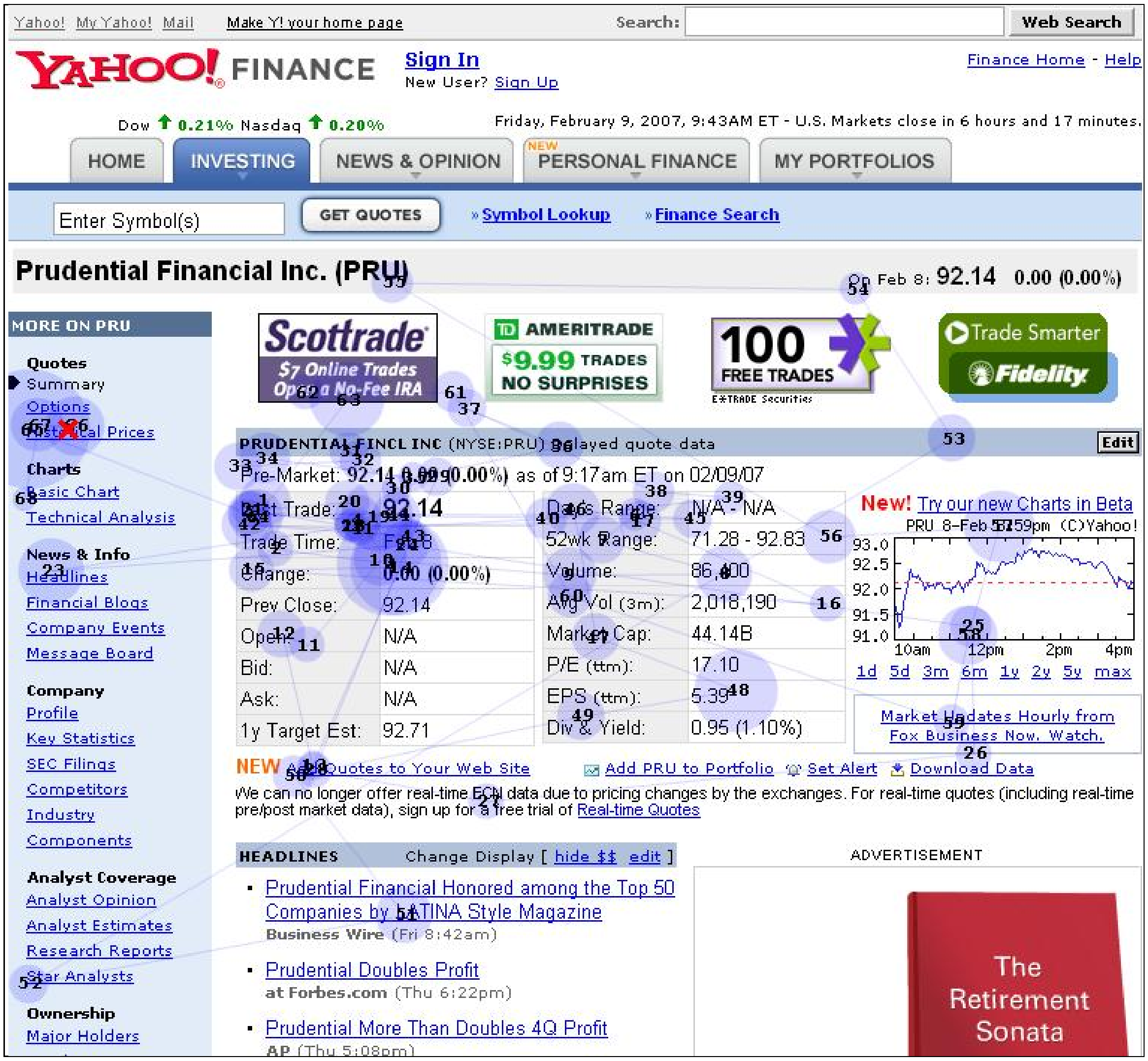
> "They don't have share price information or a graph, or a calendar for yearly performance. It makes sense to put it here [on the IR homepage]. Companies should not tell you projections. They should report how they are doing and future planning. Give transparency — let investors exercise their judgment."



The IBM website displays stock quote information but does not show the time and date of the information presented. Time-sensitive information, such as the stock quote, becomes useless without this bit of information.



The stock quote on the AT&T website is clearly featured with the proper level of detail. It would be better to label the stock symbol, though. The shorthand *NYSE:T* is not sufficient.



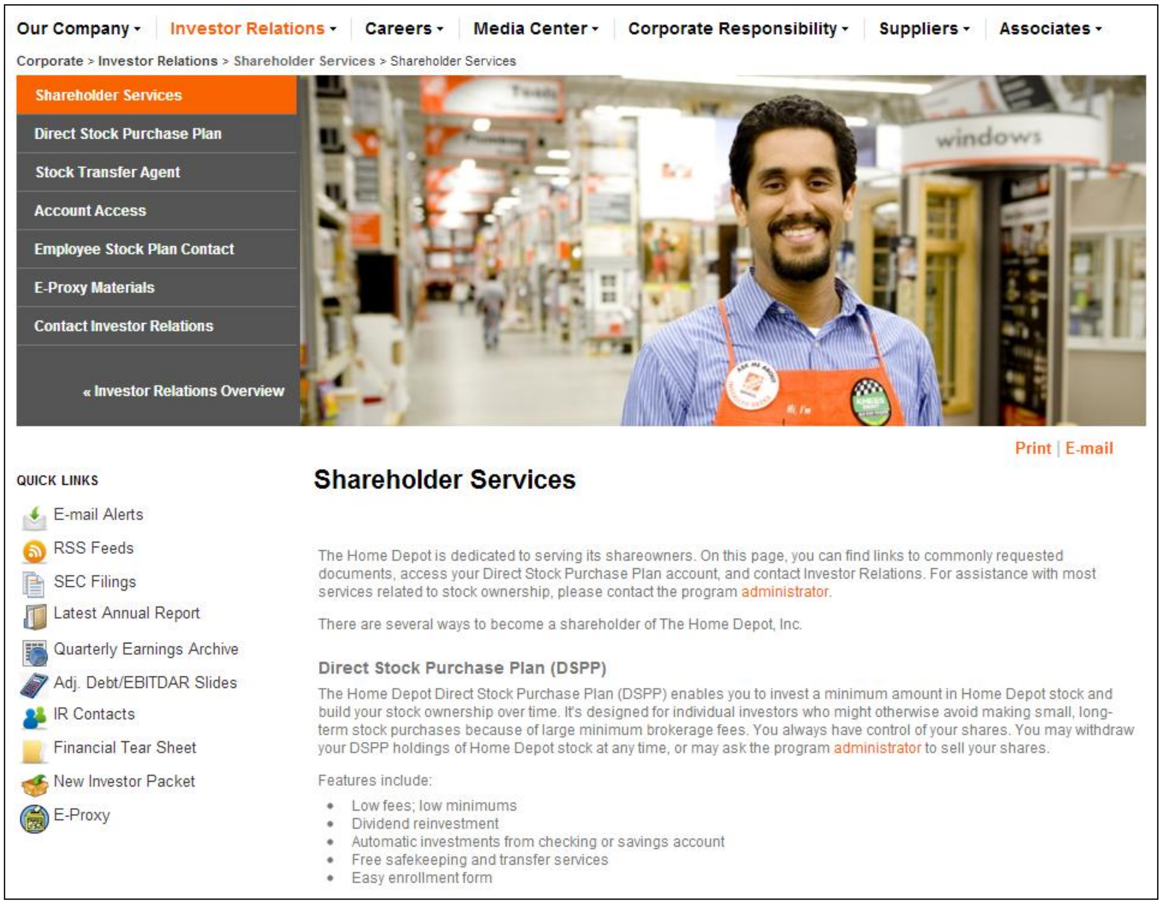
Many individual investors used the Yahoo! Finance website to get background information on companies. The stock quotes section is one of the most visited areas. In this example, the user scanned almost the entire stock quote area. Corporate websites should try to emulate this presentation because people are used to this simple table format.

19. Explain how people can buy the stock.

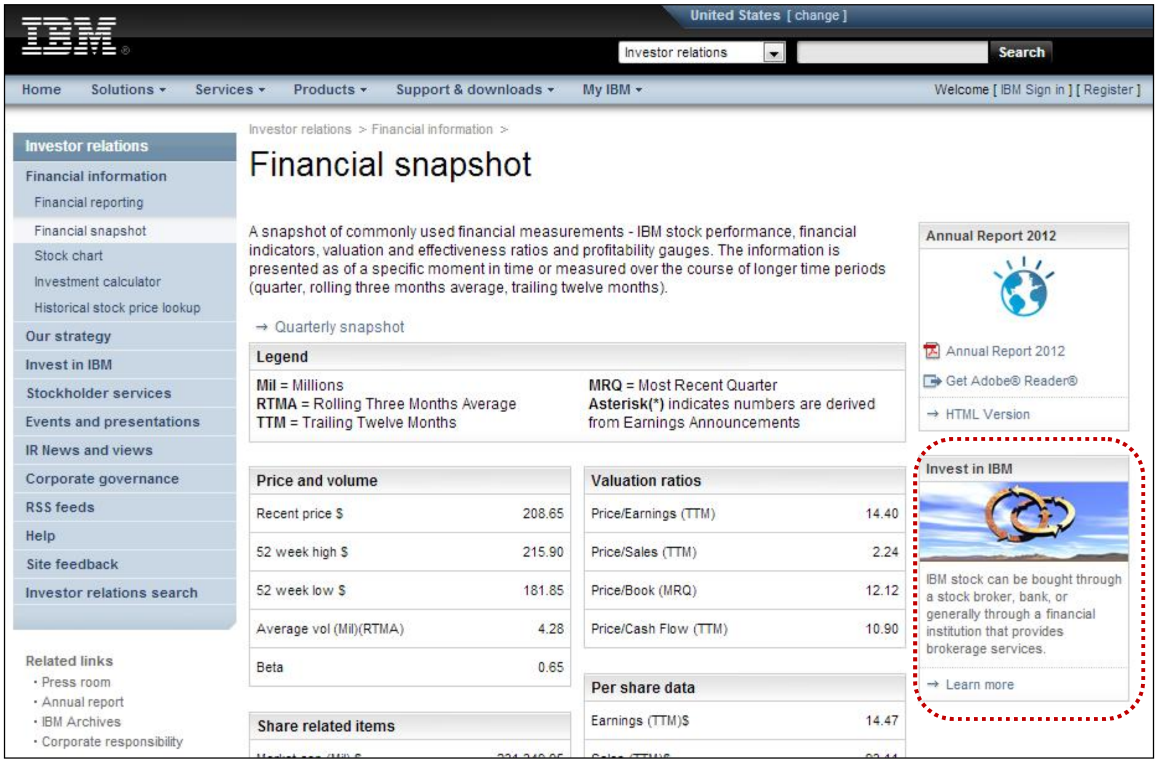
If individual investors can buy your stock, consider explaining in a prominent place in the IR section how people can purchase stocks. Use simple language to explain complex terms like "Dividend Reinvestment Plan" (DRIP) and "Transfer Agent"; don't assume people understand them. Describe each term concisely. For DRIP, highlight the benefits, such as no brokerage fees. Remember to avoid using marketing language to convince potential investors. Stick to presenting the facts.

People on the Home Depot site appreciated that the site explained the purchasing options:

> "It's nice that they spell out how you can do it. Low fees, easy enrollment — sounds good."
>
> "What are the fees and what is the ease of doing it? I'm big on not having to do things by paper."
>
> "This is a great program … . I like it — no fee, no commission."



The Home Depot website explains how people can become shareholders. We didn't test the information on this version of the page, but we anticipate that people would want more information about each bullet item, such as how much the fees are.



The IBM website appropriately features a link to information on how to invest in the company. The title *Invest in IBM* is concise and noticeable. The double ring graphic is distracting and does not communicate anything useful to the reader. Images work best when they augment the content, because otherwise they can be mistaken for advertising, causing important content nearby to be overlooked. (We have countless examples of banner blindness from our other research. For an example in this report, see the eyetracking gaze plot from Yahoo! Finance on page 66 and note how the advertisements didn't get any fixations, except for two short fixations totaling less than half a second on the one ad that looked the least like a banner because it was all text.)

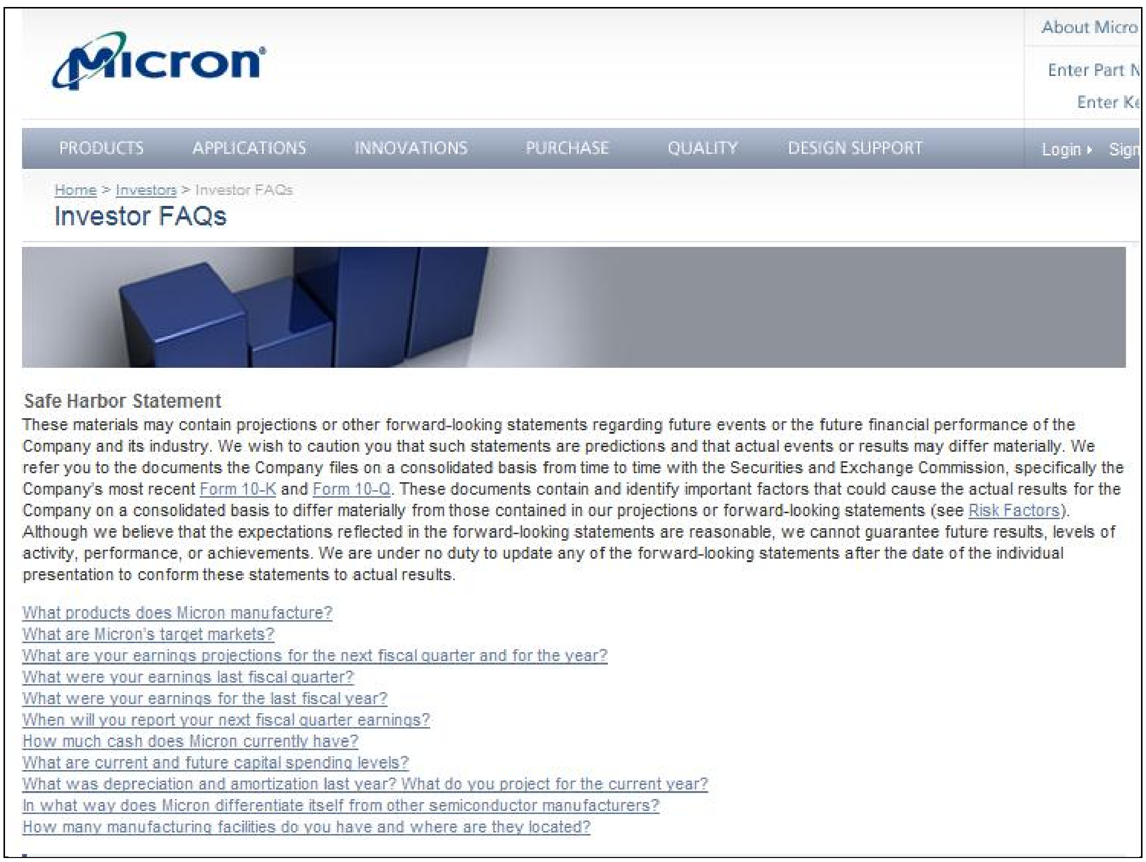
20. For FAQs, keep the information concise, including only questions that are actually asked frequently.

Address real user questions, not those you or your colleagues imagine that people might have. Too many websites have FAQs that list questions the company wished users would ask. The FAQ feature is helpful only when it's reserved for real frequently asked questions. Also, FAQs have a simplistic information design that does not scale well. In this study, some of the FAQs were too long and contained too many infrequently asked questions. Such questions undermine users' trust in the website and damage their understanding of its navigation.

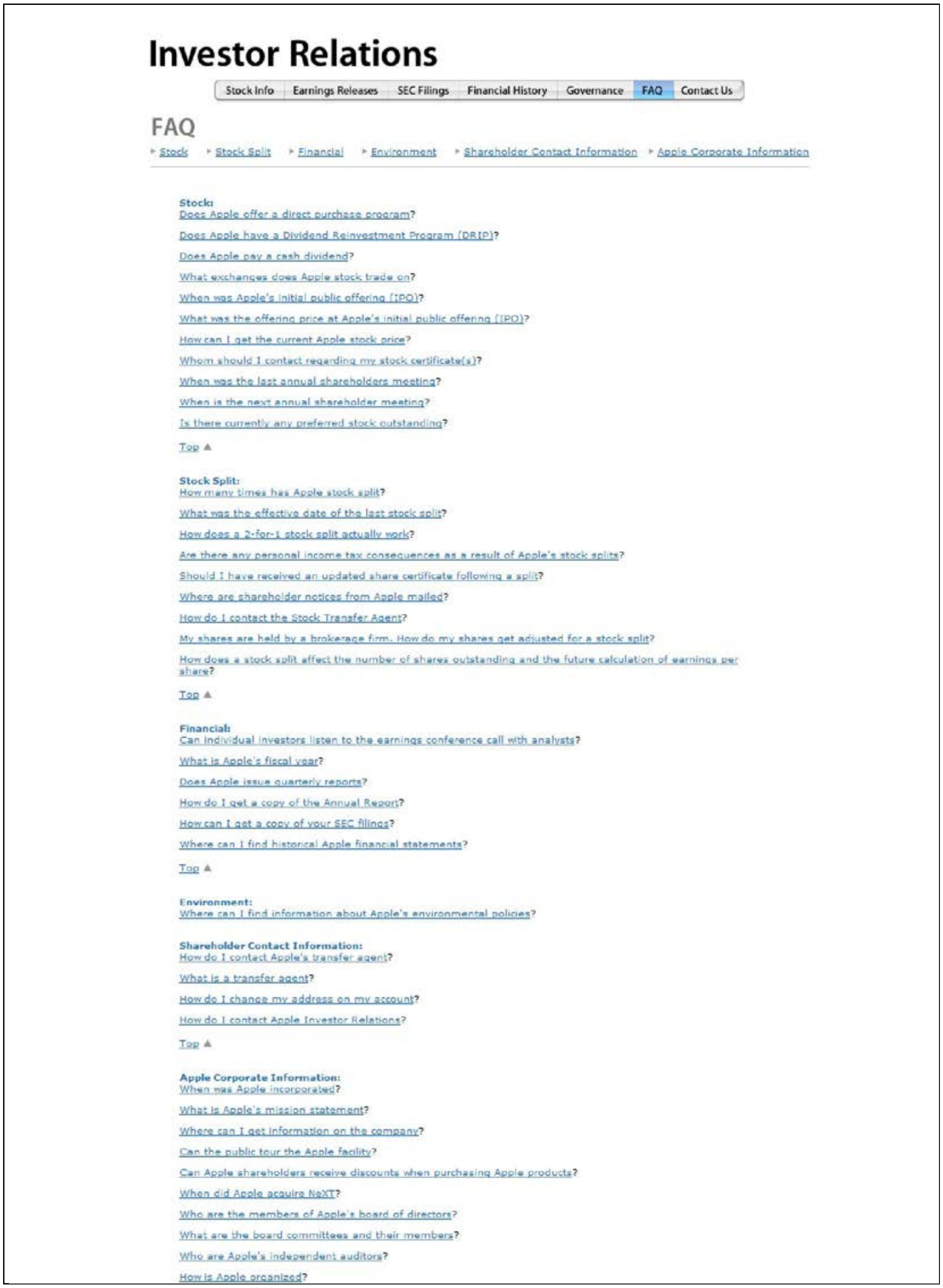
There are several things you can do to determine users' most frequent questions. For example, monitor support lines and email inquiries, check search logs to see what people are looking for, and conduct field studies and usability tests. Also, check with your customer service groups to discover the top 15–20 inquiries that people make.

In this study, participants indicated the following as important FAQs:

- What is the company stock/ticker symbol?
- Is <company name> a publicly traded company?
- Can I buy stocks directly from <company name>?
- When was <company name> incorporated?
- How do I participate in your Dividend Reinvestment Program (DRIP)?
- Do you have a direct stock purchase plan?
- Who do I contact to change information on my account?
- When is your next earnings release date?
- Has there ever been a stock split?
- When was the last stock split?



The FAQ list on the Micron website serves potential investors and business journalists well. It contains common questions that people ask.



The FAQ on the Apple website continues for more than 11 pages at screen resolution 1024x768. It's nice that the listings are organized by topics, but the questions are too plentiful and not all represent actual frequently asked questions. Answers to question such as, *"Who are the members of the board of directors?"* should be addressed on the corporate areas of the website, not the FAQ. Break huge FAQs into topical sections on separate pages.

21. If analysts are covering your company, provide a dedicated area that lists each analyst’s name, company, telephone number, and email address.

In our study, some financial analysts and professional investors said that they would contact other analysts covering the company to get other expert opinions or perspectives. Although individual investors were less likely to contact analysts, some individual investors reviewed the analyst list to make sure that analysts from big, reputable companies were monitoring the company.

> “I would call up a list of analysts and find out what they think of the company.”

> “I want to see what their comments are — short and brief — and what their last recommendation on the stock was.”

> “It’s important, as an investor, to get information from people outside the company.”

> “Analyst coverage, that’s good. This is quite helpful. It gives me the name and the firm. I can call the analyst directly and ask for a report or ask for advice and their thoughts and why they like UPS … . I liked in UPS that it gives analyst names and numbers.”

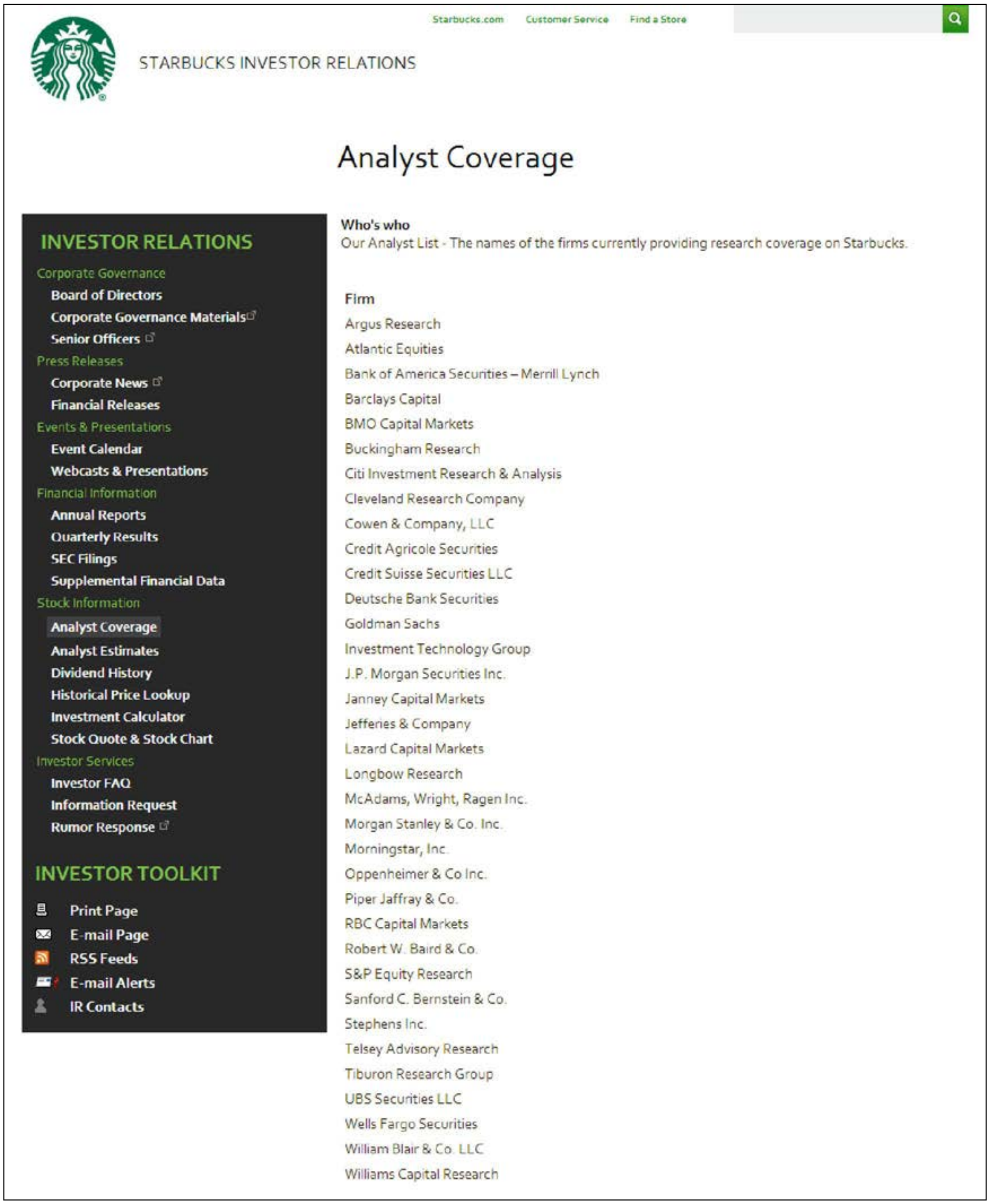
> “I want to see coverage from big firms, so that’s good. If they weren’t covered by anybody, I would be concerned.”

> “They have analyst contacts, great!”

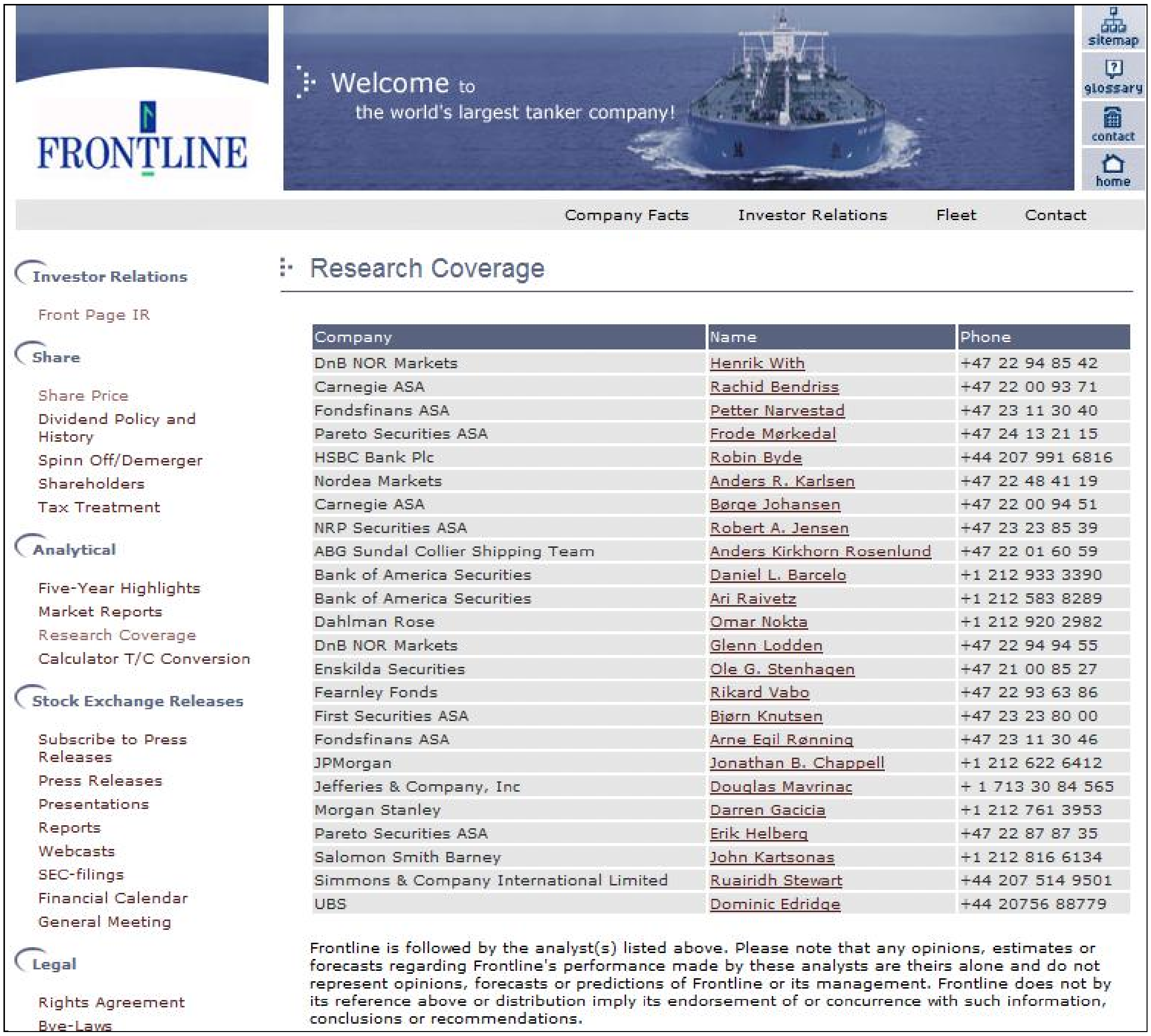
> “They analyze stock and can give you opinions about the company and what they forecast. I would probably contact one of them and get more information … more than just one, to compare.”

A person on the Home Depot website complained that the analyst page didn’t give him phone numbers.

> “I see who they are, but I don’t see any of their analysis … . It doesn’t have phone numbers, either.”



The analyst page on the Starbucks site is unhelpful; it gives only company names. Professional investors need names and contact information.



Company	Name	Phone
DnB NOR Markets	Henrik With	+47 22 94 85 42
Carnegie ASA	Rachid Bendriss	+47 22 00 93 71
Fondsfinans ASA	Petter Narvestad	+47 23 11 30 40
Pareto Securities ASA	Frode Mørkedal	+47 24 13 21 15
HSBC Bank Plc	Robin Byde	+44 207 991 6816
Nordea Markets	Anders R. Karlsen	+47 22 48 41 19
Carnegie ASA	Børge Johansen	+47 22 00 94 51
NRP Securities ASA	Robert A. Jensen	+47 23 23 85 39
ABG Sundal Collier Shipping Team	Anders Kirkhorn Rosenlund	+47 22 01 60 59
Bank of America Securities	Daniel L. Barcelo	+1 212 933 3390
Bank of America Securities	Ari Raivetz	+1 212 583 8289
Dahlman Rose	Omar Nokta	+1 212 920 2982
DnB NOR Markets	Glenn Lodden	+47 22 94 94 55
Enskilda Securities	Ole G. Stenhagen	+47 21 00 85 27
Fearnley Fonds	Rikard Vabo	+47 22 93 63 86
First Securities ASA	Bjørn Knutsen	+47 23 23 80 00
Fondsfinans ASA	Arne Egil Rønning	+47 23 11 30 46
JPMorgan	Jonathan B. Chappell	+1 212 622 6412
Jefferies & Company, Inc	Douglas Mavrinac	+ 1 713 30 84 565
Morgan Stanley	Darren Gacicia	+1 212 761 3953
Pareto Securities ASA	Erik Helberg	+47 22 87 87 35
Salomon Smith Barney	John Kartsonas	+1 212 816 6134
Simmons & Company International Limited	Ruairidh Stewart	+44 207 514 9501
UBS	Dominic Edridge	+44 20756 88779

Frontline is followed by the analyst(s) listed above. Please note that any opinions, estimates or forecasts regarding Frontline's performance made by these analysts are theirs alone and do not represent opinions, forecasts or predictions of Frontline or its management. Frontline does not by its reference above or distribution imply its endorsement of or concurrence with such information, conclusions or recommendations.

A professional analyst was impressed with the Frontline website for providing names and telephone numbers of the people following the stock. International phone lists should indicate country as well as country codes.

22. Provide links to the source of credit ratings.

If your company has outstanding credit ratings, it's good to show that on your site. Linking to the actual publication gives you more credibility, however, because it directs readers to the source. In Nielsen Norman Group's study of e-commerce sites, the research found that links to outside sources are a good way to generate trust with customers.[2]

Here's what individual and professional investors said about credit ratings:

> "It has a rating for S&P, but there should also be a link so you can confirm it. It would be good to see the differences in ratings over five

[2] E-Commerce User Experience, Vol. 09: Trust and Credibility, Nielsen Norman Group http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce-ux-trust-and-credibility/http://www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce/trust.html

years. When I check Bloomberg, I check corporate ratings and see where it changed in the past and the reasons. If it upgrades, you can get a better idea of how the company has evolved."

"I don't know who their main competitors are. I want the analyst reports to find out more about the companies and the risks involved."

"This is telling me who, not what they are saying about it. I would like a link if the reports are available for free, so I don't have to go hunting. This doesn't do me a lot of good."

Stock Charts

23. Offer easy access to an interactive stock chart.

Make sure that it's easy to find the stock chart on your site. Name it "Stock Chart," rather than "Trade History Graphing Tool," "Stock History," or "Share." Having the chart on your site offers an integrated user experience.

Almost every participant in our study wanted historical data from stock charts and was disappointed when a chart wasn't available.

> "It's good that you can see the historical data on the stock. And you can compare it to S&P."

> "I'd like to see a graph … . This is good that they're giving me history. I'd like a graph."

> "I like graphs, so that's kinda cool. I'm a visual person."

> "This gives a little history, depending on how far back they want to go."

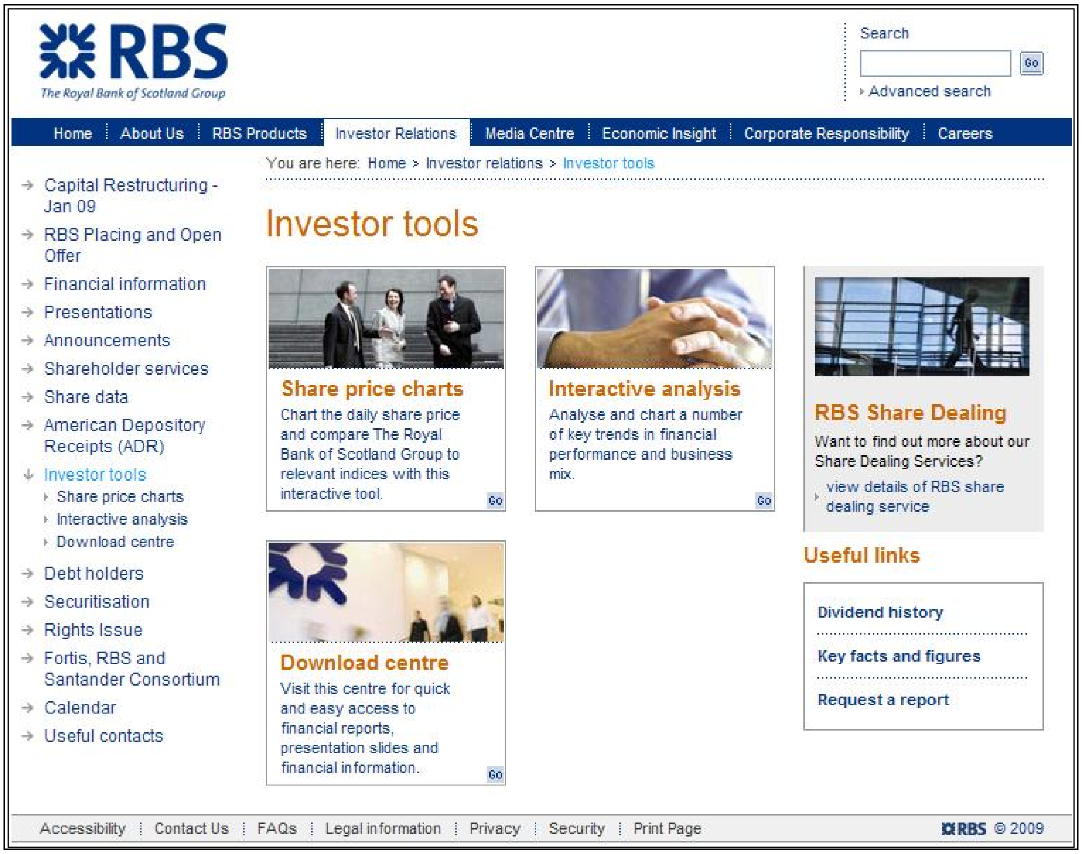
> "I like this [website] better because it has a chart."

> "It's hard to tell if they're doing better or worse than the market. I want to see where their stock has been in the last year. I don't see it here. I need historical information on stock price."

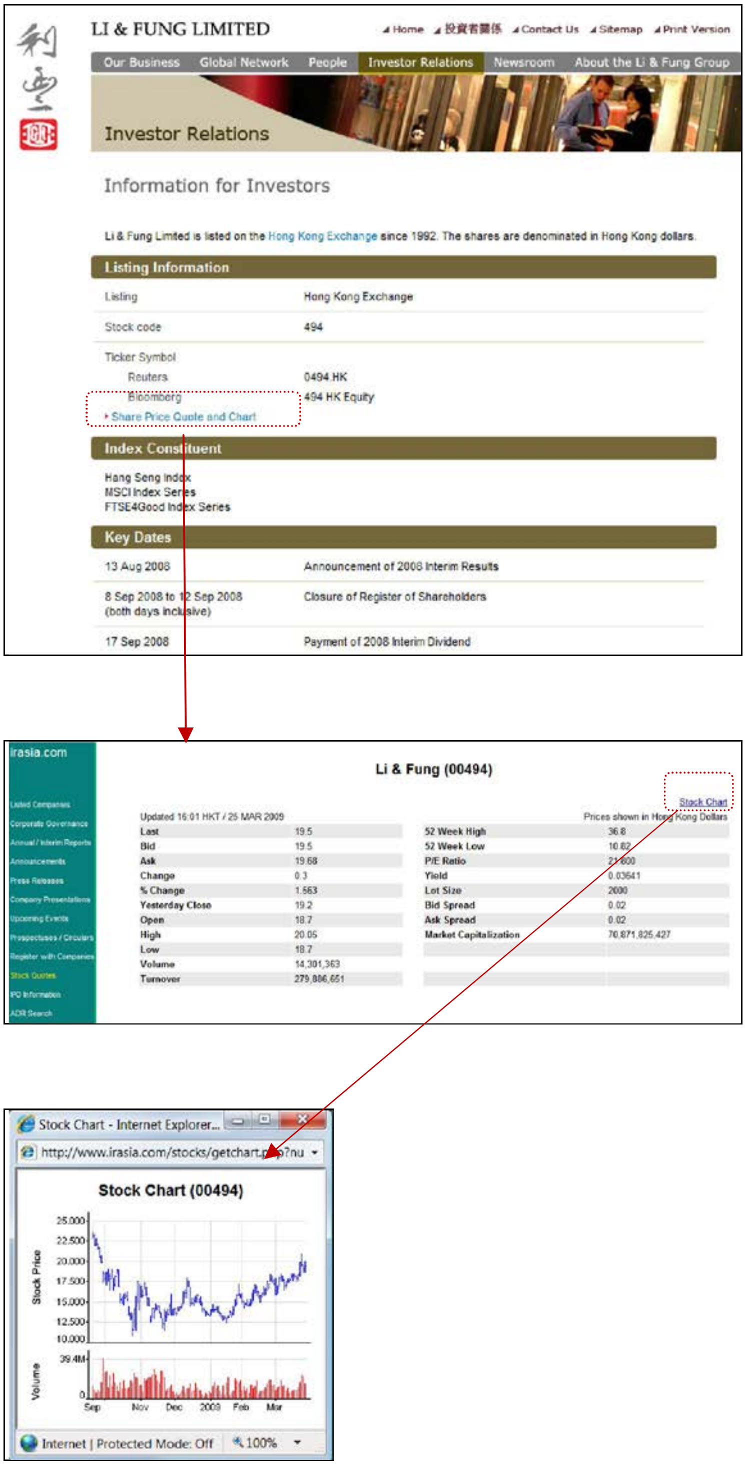
> "I look for trends more than the figures."

American users did not find the charts on the Vodafone website because they didn't know what *Share Price* meant. Also, the site required people to notice the tiny link to *Chart* at the top of the page. One user couldn't find the stock chart when he needed it, even though he'd stumbled across it before. He eventually left the site and found the information he needed on the NYSE website.

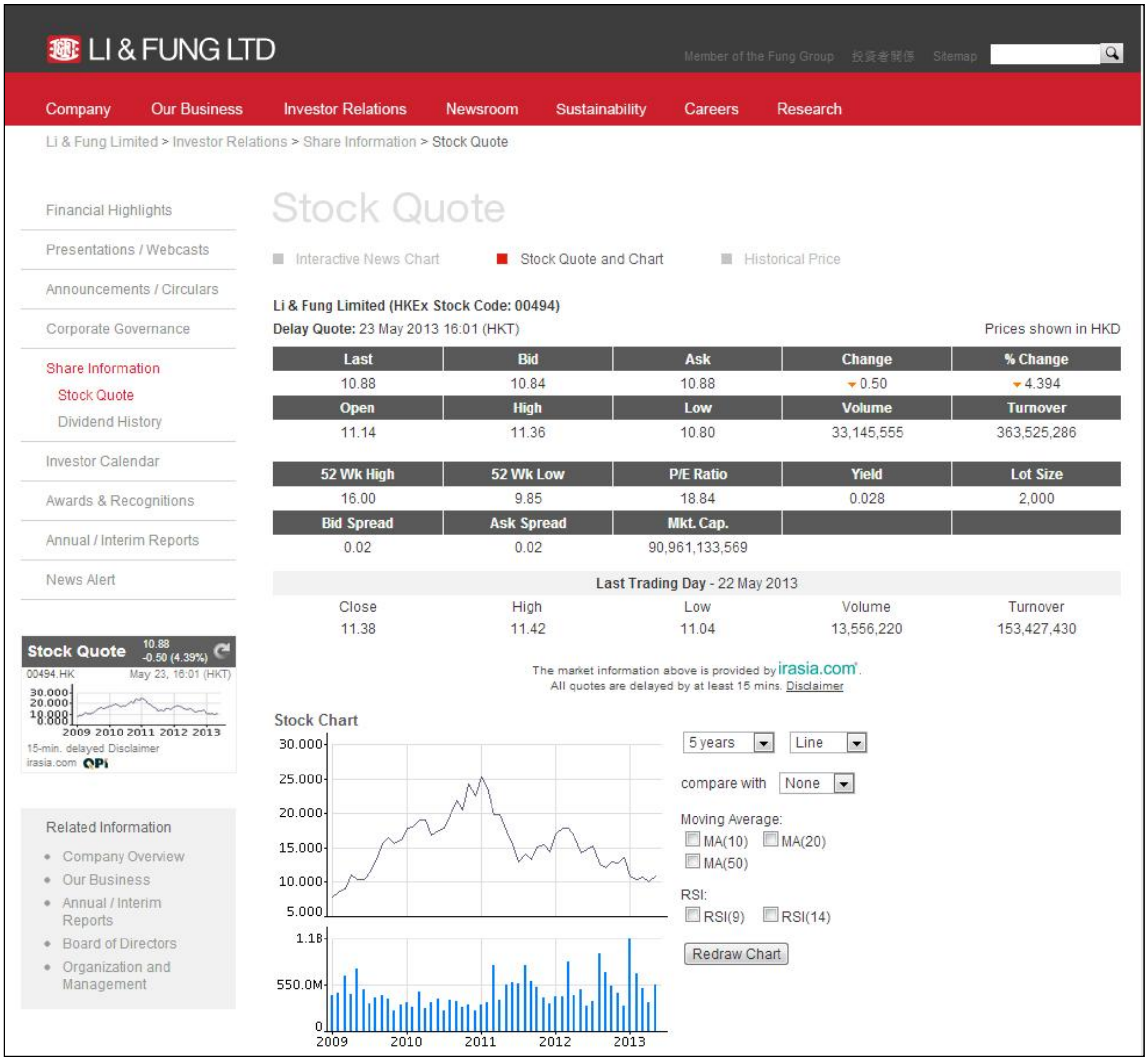
> "I should look at their performance for [more than one] year. Where do I do that? This site is confusing. There are things that I saw before that I can't find now. I'm looking for the page that shows me the chart that shows me how the company performed for the year and longer."



The Royal Bank of Scotland Group website places the stock chart in an unexpected place, *Investor tools*. “Tools” can encompass many different things. Placing the chart under *Stock Quote* would be more appropriate.



Li & Fung (Old): Getting to the stock chart on the Li & Fung Limited website was not easy. First, the user had to find the link within the body of the page, then locate an even smaller link on the second page. Finally, clicking on *Stock Chart* revealed a tiny chart that was too small and basic to be usable.



Li & Fung (Updated): The new design makes it makes easier to find the stock chart on the *Stock Quote* page. This page is also the landing page when users click on *Investor Relations* in the main navigation, giving it even more prominence.

24. Linking to a graphing tool on another website is fine, but the website you choose should represent your company well.

People don't mind using tools hosted on another website, but make sure the host site follows usability guidelines. People's experience on the host website affects their perception of your organization. Make sure host sites are vetted well before you direct people to them. Host sites should be usable, credible and helpful.

25. Make sure that the information on the chart page is specific to the target company.

Although it's acceptable to link to outside websites for charts, make sure that the information you link to is specific to your company. Don't dump people on a generic page of the website and then require them to navigate to the information they need. People become frustrated when they must hunt for company-specific information in a general-information website.

Users on the Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology site were confused when the link to charts automatically took them to the New York Stock Exchange website. Most users didn't know that they were at a new website and thought that all of the information on the charts page was specific to Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology. For example, people thought *Quick Facts* contained facts about Pfeiffer; instead it was about the New York Stock Exchange.

> "I'm getting information on the market in general … . These are general states, nothing on the Pfeiffer that I'm looking for … . I can't see a trend comparing the market with Pfeiffer … . I'm starting to have doubts."

26. Provide a way for people to graph the stock over one, five, and 10 years.

When researching investment opportunities, it's most helpful for people to see how the stock has done over a long time span. Graphing charts over long intervals gives people the stock trend, which is critical in determining whether the company is likely to be a good long-term investment. Most users in the study tried to graph the stock over one-, five-, and ten-year time frames.

> "Five years is good, 10 is even better."

> "The closing stock price range during the year, that's interesting to me. I like to know where it started and ended."

> "I want to see all the dates because I want to see how long they've been around. I would look at general trends."

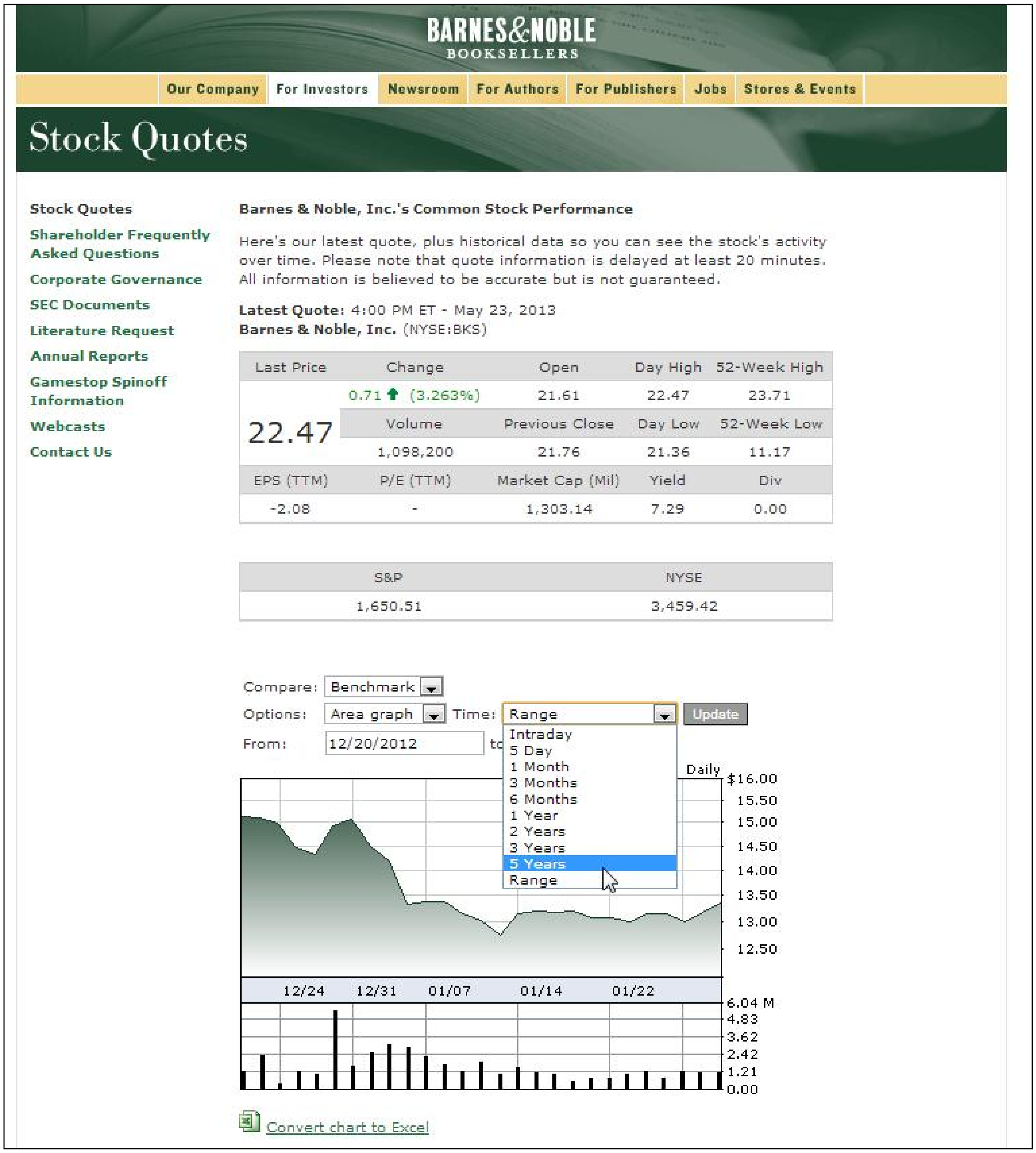
A user on the Rowan Companies website complained that, unlike Yahoo!, the site's charting tool didn't let him graph the company stock for the year:

> "Yahoo! has high and low for the year."

A few users on the Ceridian website learned that the company was new just by plotting the stock graph over a longer time span.

> "Oh, here's something I didn't know — that it hasn't been around that long."

> "I'm taking a look at the long-term chart to see how it's doing … . I see it's a new company."



The stock chart on the Barnes and Noble site allows users to view the stock price history for many different periods. Users can even select their own range, increasing the period to more than 5 years.

27. Let people compare your company stock with other popular market indices, such as S&P 500 and Dow Jones. It's also helpful to let people compare the company stock with several competitors.

Make it easy to compare your company stock with other popular market indices. If yours is a small or medium company, let people compare the stock to common small- and mid-cap indices. It's even better if people can graph the chart for several competitors.

A user on the Ceridian website liked that he could compare the stock to other market indices:

> "I want to see how it's doing compared to other indexes, and it lets me do it — cool!"

A user on the UPS site complained that it didn't let him graph the chart with competitors:

> "I can't compare it to comparables, other shipping companies. Tell me how FedEx and other shipping companies did. I can see UPS has been holding up quite nicely compared to the Dow. I want to compare the sector first, then the industry."

A user on the Allied Domecq website was discouraged when he couldn't find a way to graph the company stock with the FTSE 100, a popular British market index. Although there was a way to do it, the interface was too complex and he didn't see that feature.

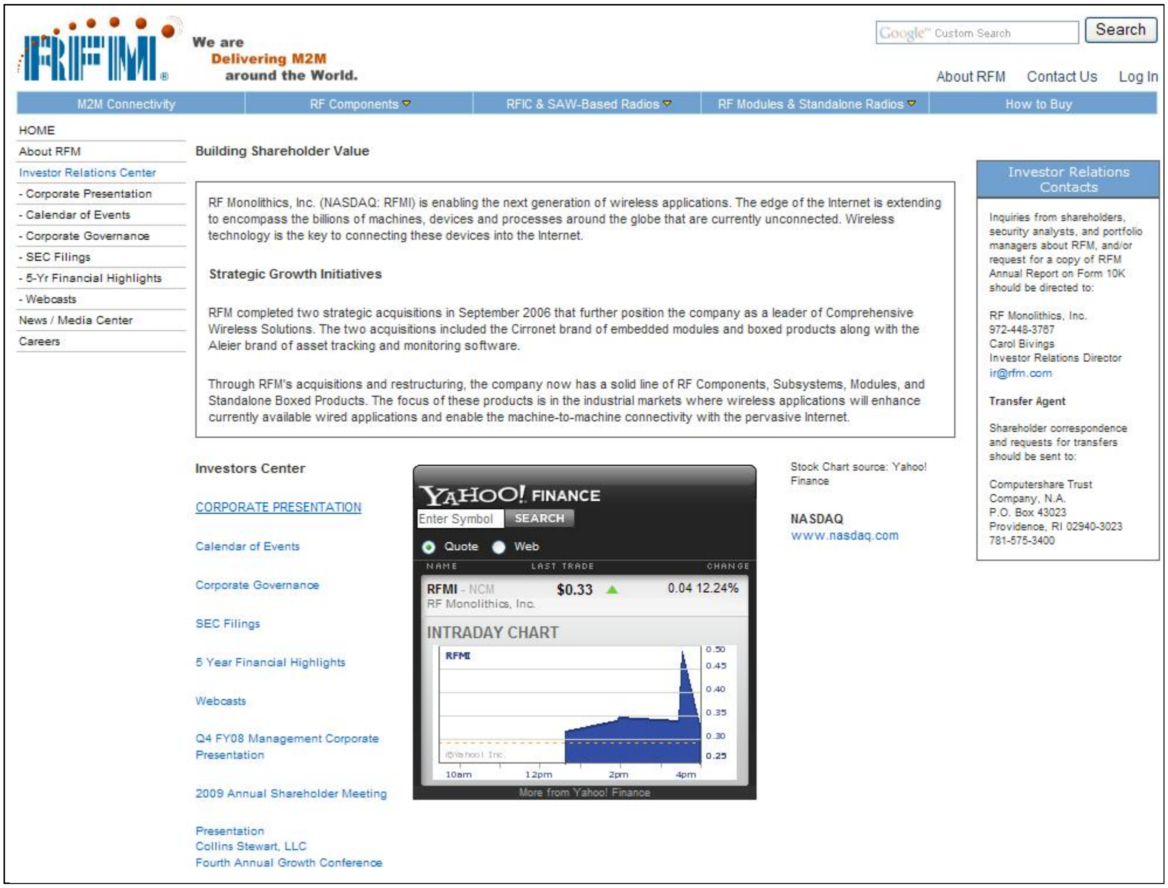
> "What I'm concerned with right now is long term … . I thought I could put in another company and compare another company with it … . It's a very basic website, I would have to compare with FTSE 100, the market. I want to see how the stock has performed."

Users on the Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology website wanted a way to compare the company with its competitors:

> "How would I make a comparison with the market itself?"

> "I would plot a graph of this company against other pharmaceuticals in Europe to see how they performed."

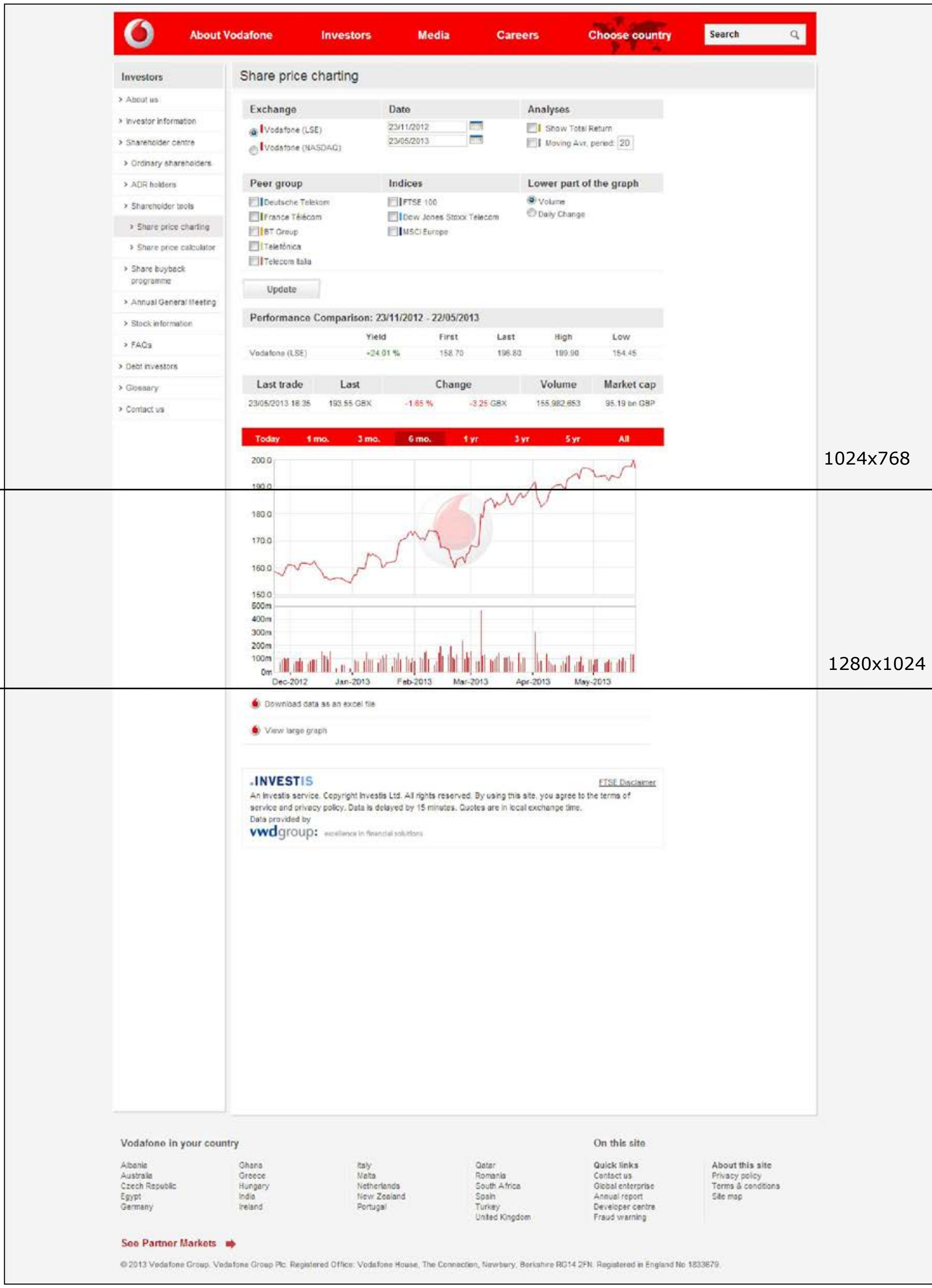
> "This doesn't give me a comparison with the markets at all … . I'm still looking for a comparison with the markets and it's not giving me that."



RFM.com: The design of this embedded chart varies from the rest of the page and looks like an advertisement. It also does not allow people to view long-term performance of the stock, nor does it allow comparisons between other stocks or market indices.

28. Make sure that important graphing elements and options appear above the fold.

Even though more Web users are getting used to scrolling, there are a few people who rarely scroll or who are tempted to choose the first option they see. Such people often miss choices below the initial viewing area, especially when there is white space between the last element on the page and the bottom of the viewable area. Also, grouping important elements together above the fold helps people see the control and interactive area without having to move up and down constantly.



The chart graphing tool on the Vodafone site pushes the chart below the fold at 1024x768 screen resolution. This makes it difficult to see when (or if) the chart has updated. Even at 1280x1024 some of the chart options might go unnoticed.

29. Avoid having too many complex and detailed graphing options.

Keep the graphing feature simple. Prioritize the graphing options by making the top few particularly prominent and easy to access. Defer less-important features to less-prominent placement, and leave out low-priority features completely.

Professional investors and analysts said that they use their own specialized tools to create complex graphs and don't rely on company websites for robust graphing options.

Individual investors said that they want the ability to:

- Chart the company stock performance over a long period of time
- Compare the company stock with popular market indices
- Compare the company stock with competitors

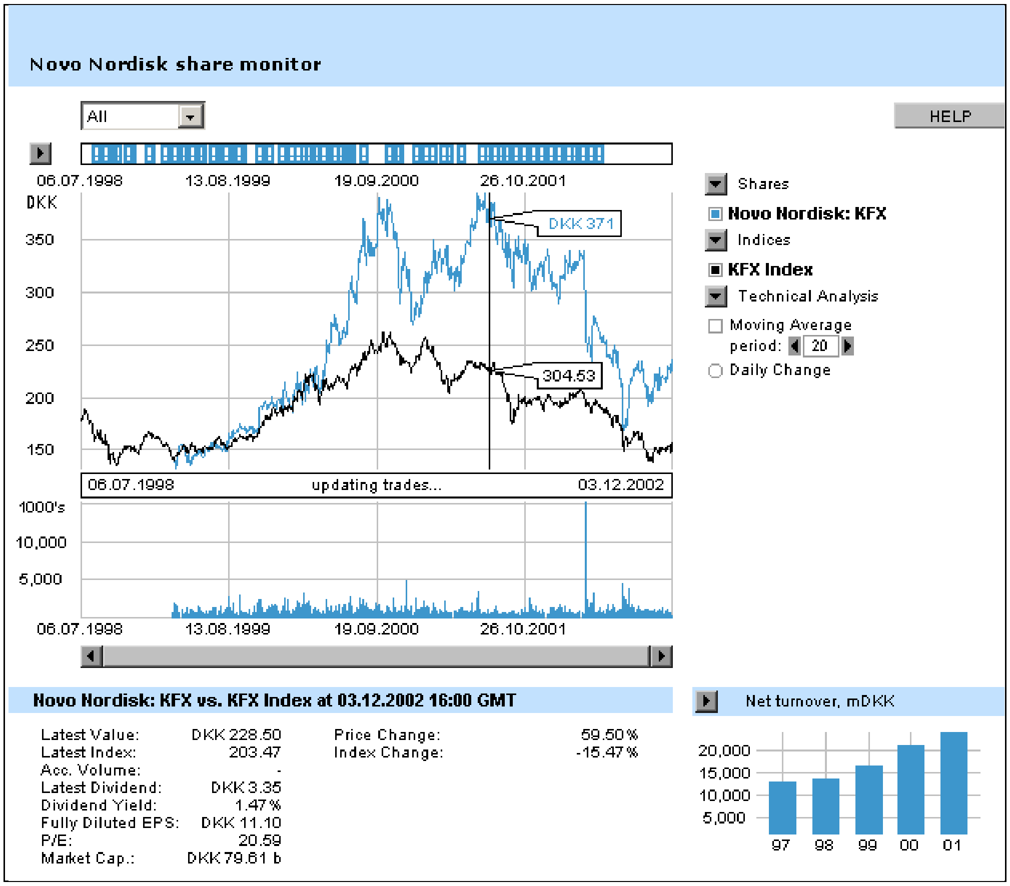
People were overwhelmed by the many graphing tool features on the Novo Nordisk and Stora Enso sites. They were particularly confused by the inconsistent use of arrows: some controlled scrolling, while others expanded and collapsed lists. It was nice to get daily share prices, but the feature cluttered the page, and it wasn't that helpful, because most people preferred to see the general stock trend over time. Also, it was impossible to determine the exact date for each stock price, because the labels weren't detailed enough.

The exclamation points on top of the chart were confusing. One person figured out that they represent press releases for a particular day, but he couldn't figure out how to access them. Hovering his mouse over the symbol showed only part of the headline. He didn't figure out that he had to click on it to get the full release.

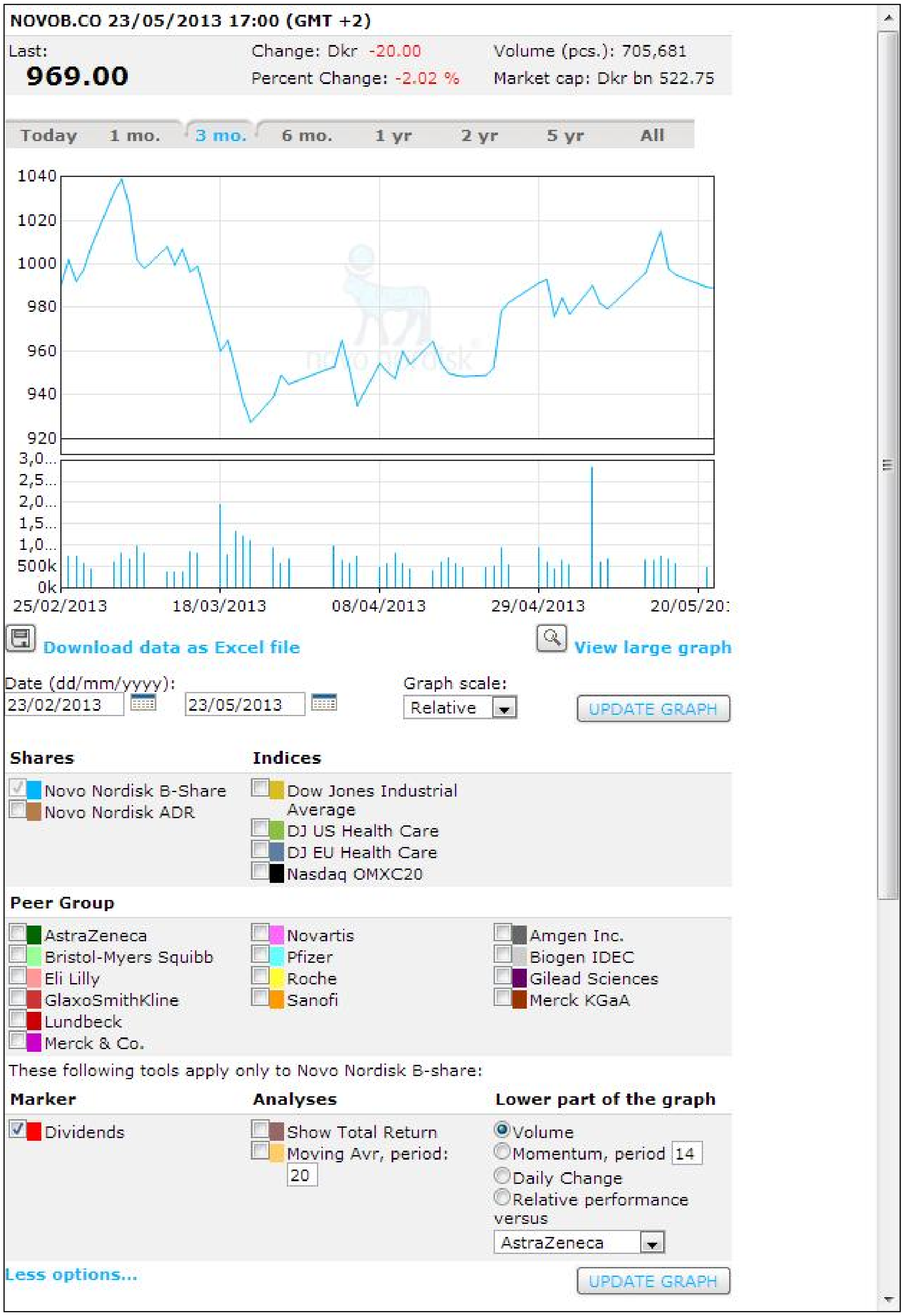
> "They're trying to give you a lot of information, but it's confusing me … . I'd also want to know what date that is, I haven't got a clue what date that is."

Another user turned to *Help* to learn how to use the graphing feature, but when he clicked the *Help* link, the application froze.

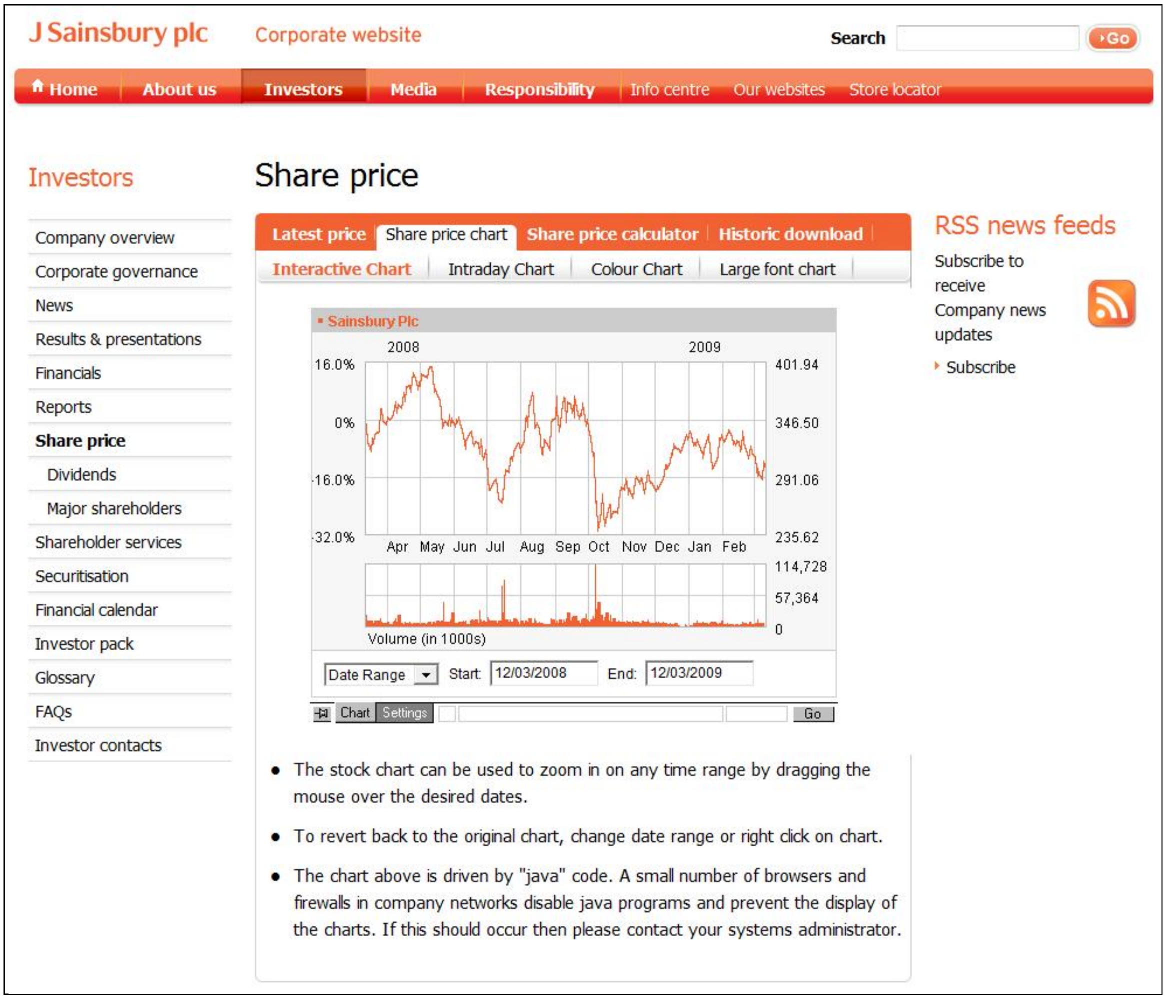
> "I'm not sure what this is."



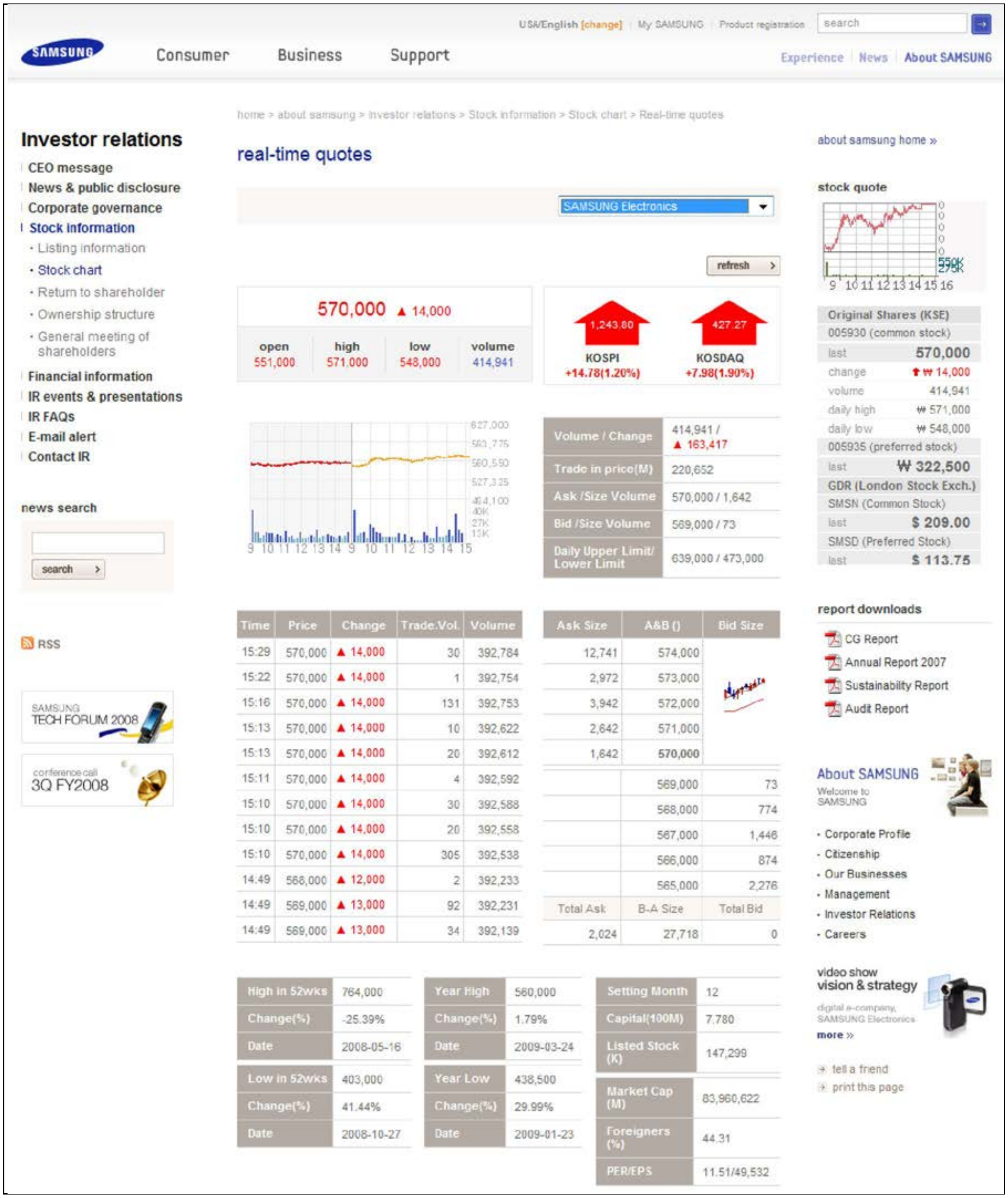
Novo Nordisk (Old): The multitude of graphing features and unusual interactions on the Novo Nordisk site confused users, even financial analysts who are accustomed to working with charting tools.



Novo Nordisk (Updated): The graphing tool on the updated site is still overkill. Most investors won't use many of the features offered, not even professional investors. They have their own graphing tools for conducting complex analyses. However, it is good that the options listed first are the ones that are the most important to investors: shares, indices, and competitors.



This chart is complex enough to require detailed instructions below it. With multiple tiers of tables above and below the chart, required mouse dragging and right-clicking, as well as the use of Java (which, at the site's own admission, won't work on some people's computers), this chart is likely to overwhelm the typical visitor.

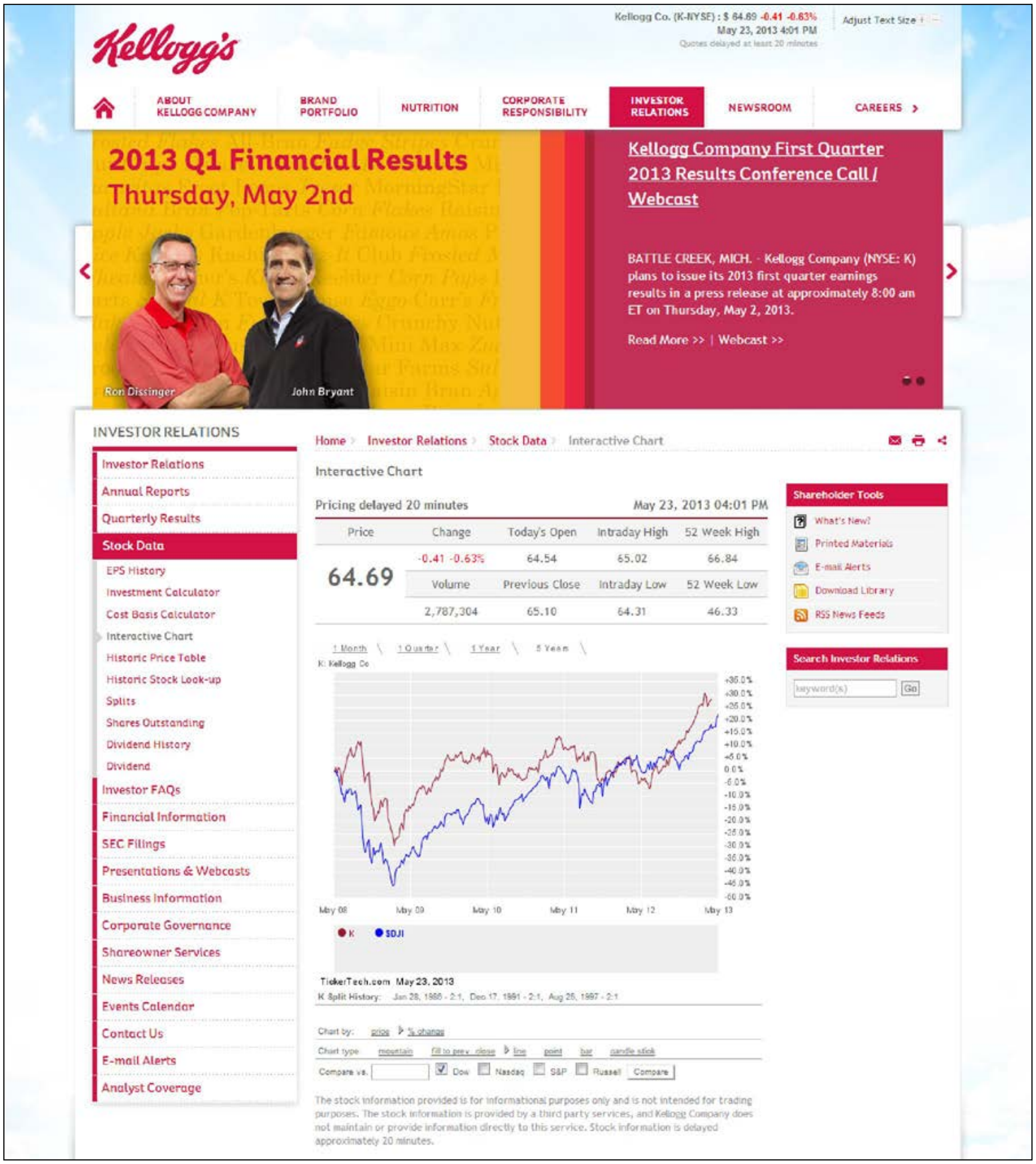


This page provides useful information, but too much can cause information overload. More is not always better.

The following example shows a well-presented stock graphing feature. The design is good for many reasons, including:

- The layout is clean and uncluttered
- It offers only the features that most users need
- The labels for the options and axes are clear and concise

- It shows the stock symbol and current stock price
- Users can chart the stock over a long time span and see the trend
- Users can compare the company stock performance to its competitors and to popular market indices
- It shows the date and time that the information was last updated



Kellogg's well-designed charting tool is simple and emphasizes important features. Even better would be to remove the large banner at the top of the page, because it pushes the graph and its controls down, making them less discoverable.

30. Show the price chart first, not the percentage-of-change chart.

Try to present information in the order that people need it. When charting stocks, people tend to look for the stock chart first, not the percentage-of-change chart. Therefore, it's best to present the stock chart first, and then give people the option to view it in other formats.

Most of the sites we tested presented the information in the correct order; the UPS site was the exception. UPS gave people the stock performance based on percentage-of-change first, and people didn't understand it. They expected to see the stock price and didn't understand the positive and negative percentages. They didn't know that they had to check the *Price* box to get the right view.

31. Make sure that graph line colors are distinguishable by most color-blind users.

Carefully consider color use in charts or graphs. If the colors can't be distinguished from each other, the graph will be useless. Indicate each company or index on the graph with highly contrasting colors so that people can easily differentiate between them. For example, people in our study had difficulty distinguishing the difference between black and navy blue. Also, legibility suffers most for color schemes with very low contrast, such as light gray text on a gray background. Use background colors that strongly contrast with the foreground text and graphics.

Another consideration is that a significant percentage of the population is color-blind[3] and can't distinguish all of the colors that a person with normal vision can. Although there are various types of color-blindness, nearly all color-blind people have difficulty distinguishing between red and green. It's thus best to use bright colors, and to stick with safe colors such as blues or yellows, or, even better, apply different textures to each color.

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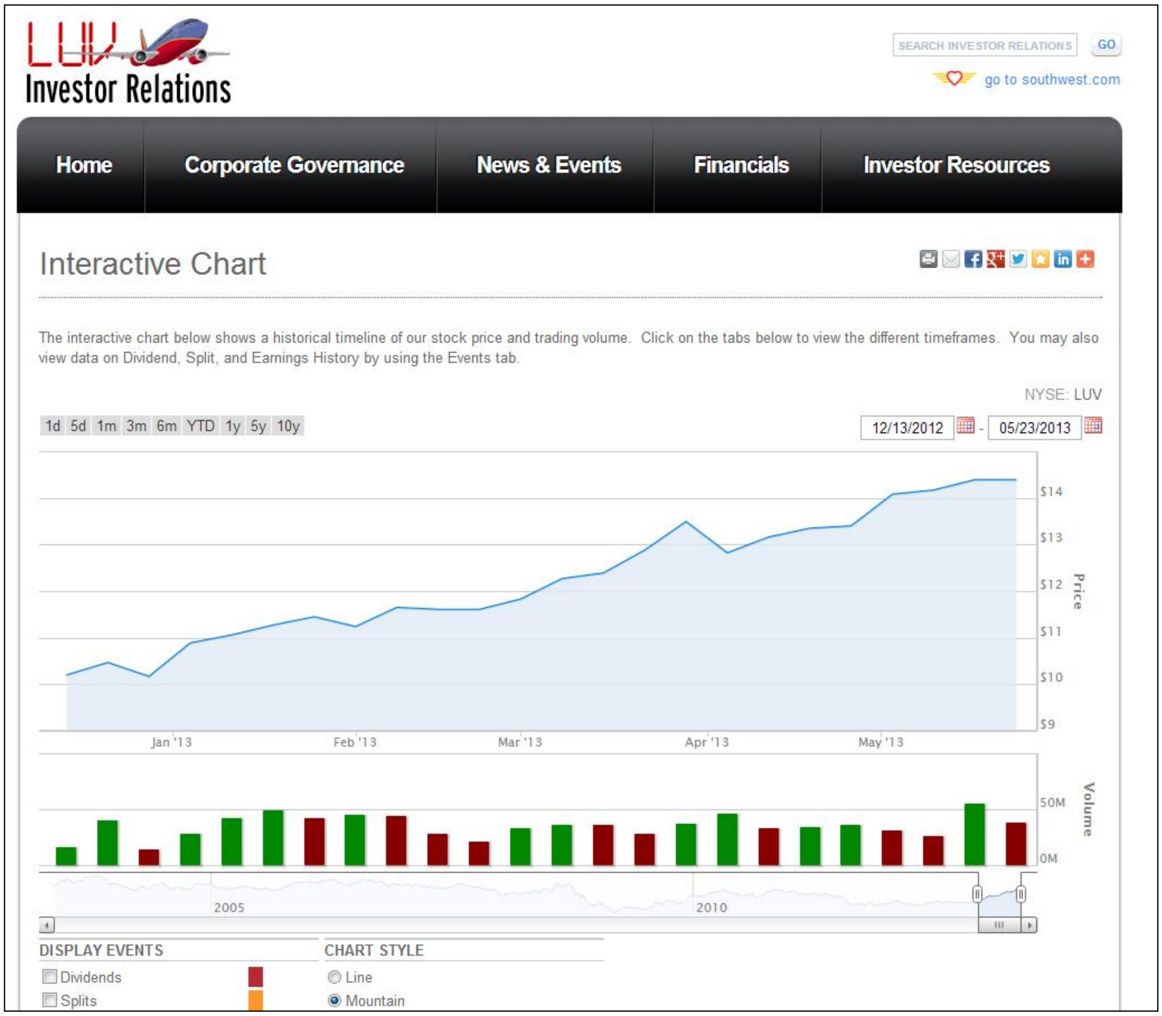
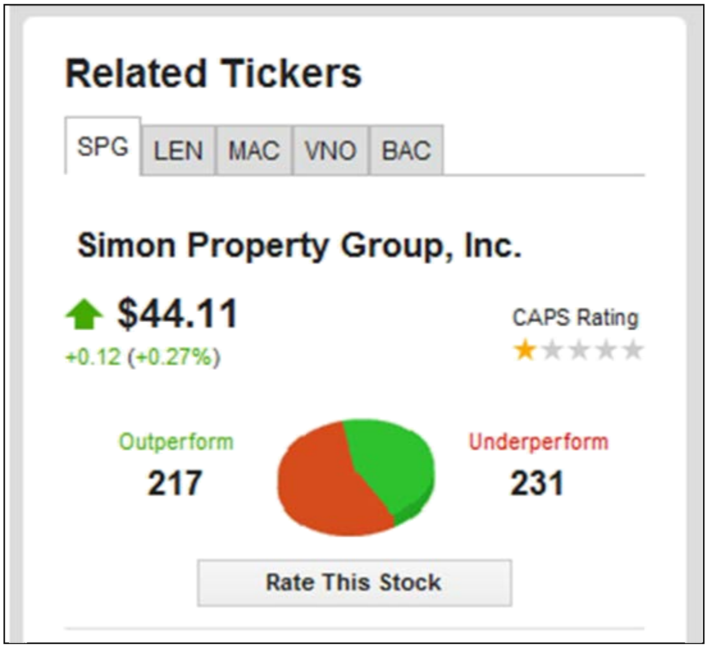
[3] Color-blindness is particularly prevalent among men who are over-represented among investment professionals. (Women can also have various forms of color-blindness, but this is less common.)



The Southwest Airlines site's chart, although well-designed, uses red and green bars that are virtually indistinguishable to those who are color-blind.

32. Position chart labels close to the parts they correspond to.

Misplaced labels increase the risk that people will misinterpret the information, especially if they just glance at it quickly. For pie charts, it's good to position the labels inside the segments or next to the segments.



This example from Fool.com shows how misplaced legends can cause major confusion. The problem is that the labels for the two pie chart segments have been swapped.

At first glance, it appears as though most analysts expect this stock to outperform because the label "Outperform" is positioned next to the larger segment of the pie. Upon closer look you might notice the color coding and number of votes indicate the votes leaning towards "Underperform." But the wrong placement of the labels will trip up Web users, who tend to scan quickly.

Also, red/green contrast is known to cause problems for color-blind people. Careful label placement helps ensure that people can read a chart even if they can't differentiate among the colors.

33. Label each axis on the chart.

A good general rule for all charts is to have labels for each axis, with values such as currency, time, or number denominations, as appropriate. Charts are useless if people can't figure out what they represent. If international investors can purchase your company stock, then it's particularly important to indicate the currency.

An American user on Denmark's Novo Nordisk website didn't understand what the numbered values represented. He wasn't sure whether the numbers represented dollars or some other currency.

> "I'm confused how they laid this out. It's incomplete. They don't have labels here. I would have to guess … . I don't understand the numbers."

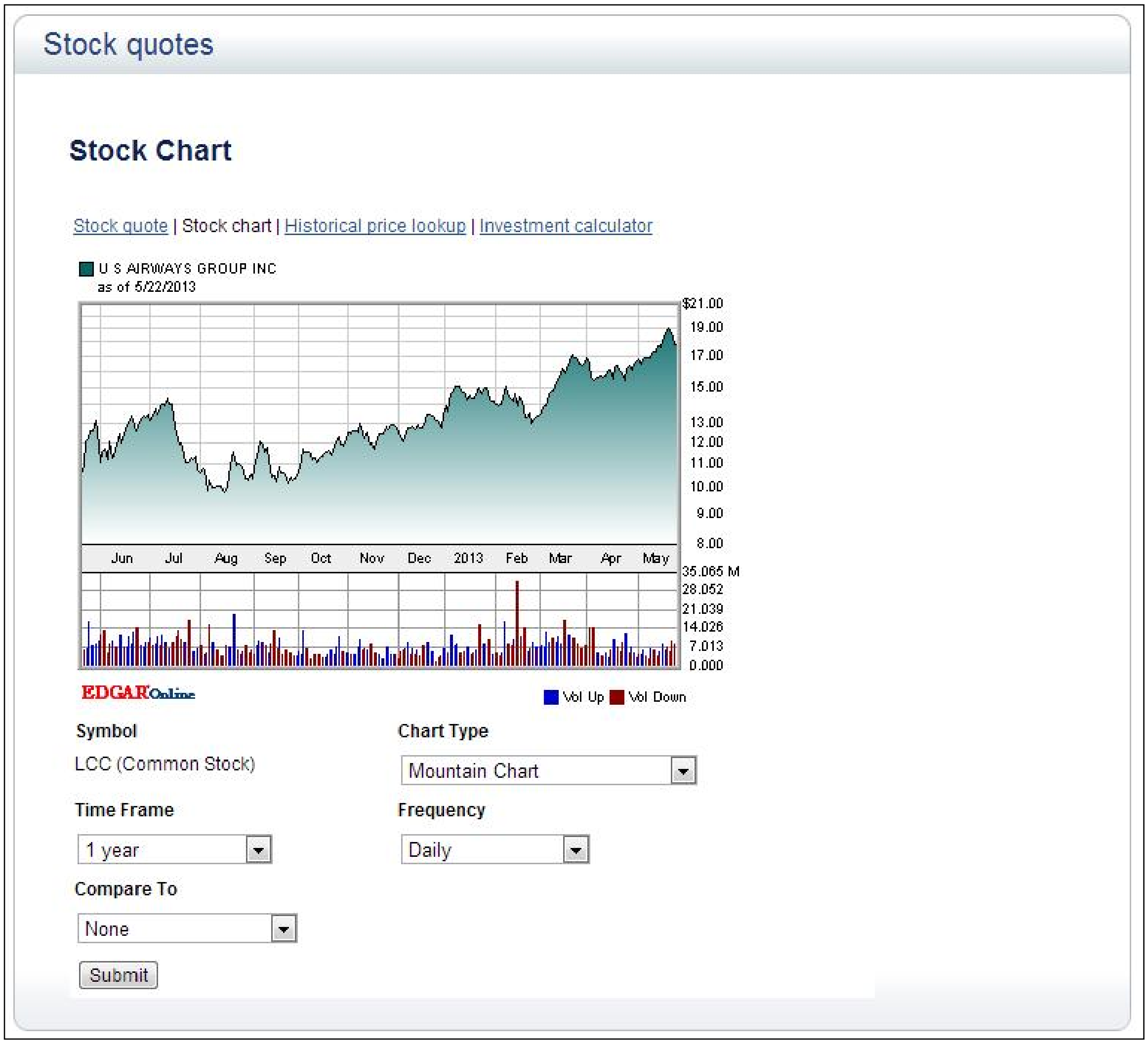
The stock chart on the Eli Lilly site could confuse users because the y-axis numbers are not labeled to indicate their value.

A user on the Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology website didn't understand what the numbers 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8 represented. Without labels, he couldn't figure out if they were dates or hours, so he mistrusted the site.

> "I don't understand the graphs, frankly … . It has these markings here in green on these lines, but it doesn't give me a date. If it's an hourly chart, it doesn't give me the hours either. Because of the lack of information, I'm sort of suspicious, and [I'll] say these people don't know what they're doing."

34. Round off numbers on charts.

Reduce page clutter by rounding off numbers to a reasonable value. People tend to look at charts for general trends and don't need to be bogged down with exact values, especially when values can't be deciphered from the graph. For example, round off values to dollar amounts, not cents; the latter adds unnecessary complexity.



US Airways unnecessarily displayed values with decimal places, increasing complexity.

> "They split the graph in two-dollar bands. They should be exact dollars and not with the cents. I think it would be appropriate because people tend to look at dollar prices. These are not penny stocks."

35. Show dates and times for time-sensitive information.

Let people know when content was last updated. Clearly indicate this distinction with a phrase such as "Updated <date, time>." People tended to trust sites with updated content and said that a 20-minute delay was acceptable as long as the time was posted. Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology had stock charts for the day, week, quarter, and year but didn't show the dates, so people couldn't decide if the information was current or when the charts were last updated.

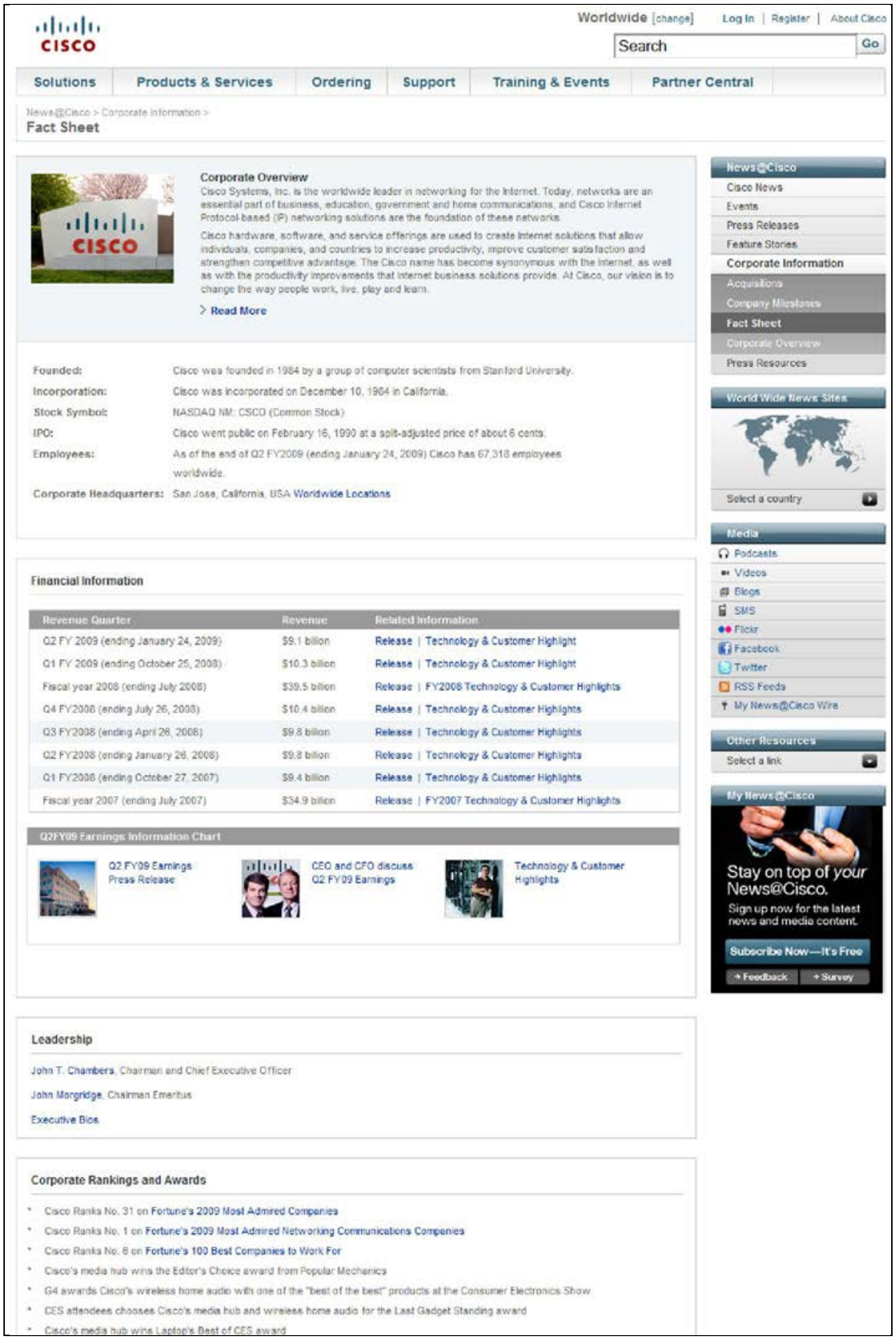
"What does one day mean? Does it mean today? Or does it mean yesterday?

Company Financials

36. Dedicate a page to company facts in the corporate areas of your website (for example, in *Press* or *Investor Relations*). Name it something like "Fact Sheet" or "Company Snapshot."

People gravitate toward areas that appear convenient. Terms like "Fact Sheet" or "Company Highlights" are enticing because they connote simple and fast.

Fact sheets are only effective if they include poignant items that are well written. When compiling the list of facts, think about what users might want to know about you or what they might find surprising. Journalists in particular appreciate these tidbits because they can make their articles more interesting. The facts as a whole should help people gain insight into how the organization originated, what it's currently doing, and where it's heading.



The *Fact Sheet* on the Cisco website provides a good example. It includes information that potential investors and journalists want to know in a format that is easy to scan. This page could be made even better by removing the extra space between the sections. This much buffer might falsely signal the end of the page, causing some people to overlook the information at the bottom by not scrolling all the way down.

37. Place financial reports in the *Investor Relations* section under a descriptive category, such as "Annual Reports." Don't make up unique names for the sake of being different.

People expect to find corporate financial information in the *About Us* or *Investor Relations* areas. Use these standard names to label corporate sections. When sites use creative names such as *Performance*, people are less likely to understand its meaning and might bypass that section entirely.

38. Present basic financial information, such as earnings, sales, and income, for nonspecialists. Offer a snapshot page that's easy to understand and gives people a quick overview of the company's historical financial information.

Do not make people read a balance sheet, income statement, or annual report to get basic facts. Many investors and journalists have either never worked in financial reporting, or they haven't had recent experience in the area. For them, choosing the right accounting statement and understanding that statement can be difficult or impossible. It helps if you make such statements easy to find and present them in such a way that people can feel confident about their grasp of the most basic financial information.

People in our studies indicated several types of information that were important to them, which could be appropriate for your financial highlights page:

- Stock price and volume
- Revenue and earnings
- Current assets and liabilities
- Net income/cash
- Return on equity ratios
- Growth rates
- Dividends
- Earnings per share
- Gross profit
- Percentage of institutional holdings

In our studies, investors and journalists complained that the financial information available on corporate websites was too complex:

"I'm a layman, not a professional. Some if it wouldn't make any sense to me."

"The layman would not use all of this information. Sometimes you get a little overwhelmed. Sometimes, the simpler the better. Most people are not that knowledgeable about it."

"The trick is to find that balance … not so much that it's overwhelming, but if you want it, it's there."

The Tyson website didn't have a financial overview and a user became frustrated:

> "I feel like I'm having to search for information. For someone with not much experience, it's nice to have it simplified. I still haven't found anything about what their stock is per share."

A person on the Vodafone website was overwhelmed by the site's comprehensive financial information:

> "These are too difficult to understand. Too comprehensive. For a simple investor, this is too much."

People appreciated companies that had financial highlights or "snapshots":

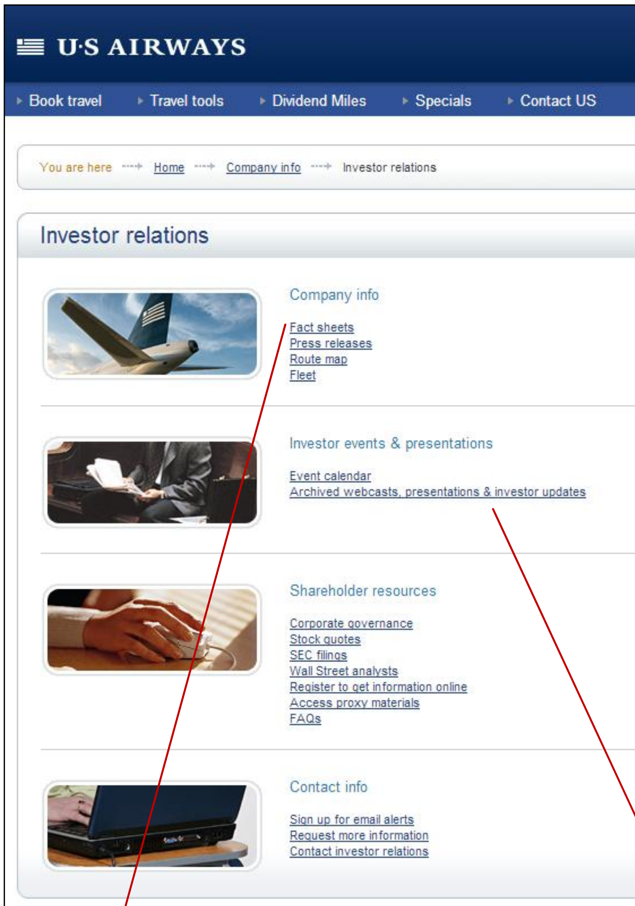
> "It's giving you a quick picture, the address, who UPS is. It gives you a contact … . It's helpful to have an email to investor relations to request information, helpful to see what they send out and see what they think is important."

> "It gives you the current everything — brings up the basic stuff and a ticker, high/low — this is the stuff I would look for."

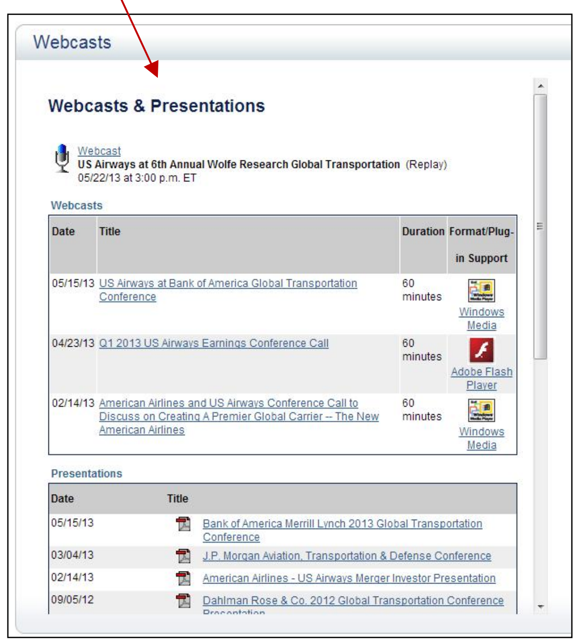
> "This is very good. You want to know the operating margins. You want to have these numbers. You don't have to pull out your calculator, so that's good.

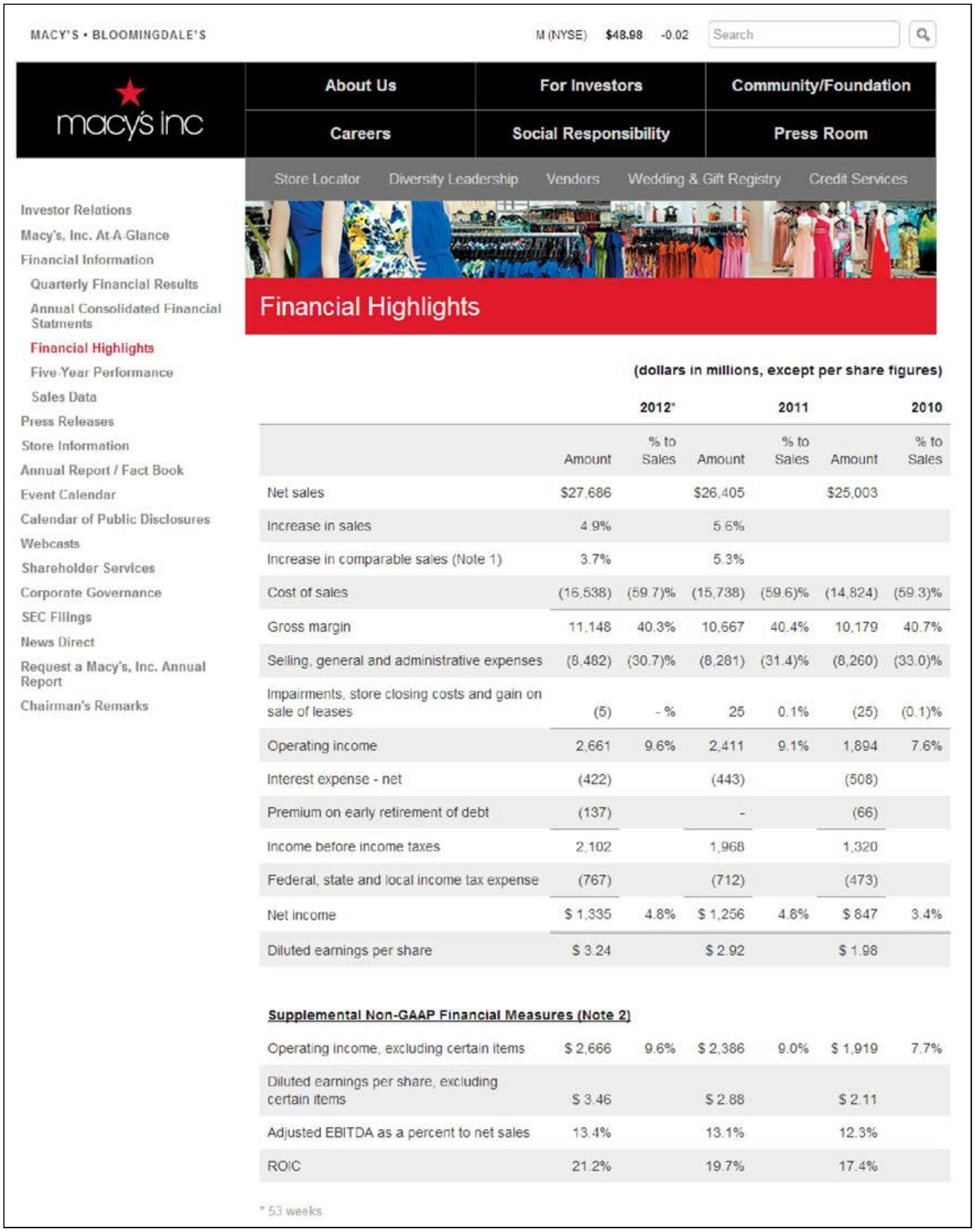
> "This gives me the basics."

> "It is nice to have a snapshot and information on the listing like key financials in terms of sales and geographical focus so you don't have to do the details. This is quite good if I can export and can print it out. If I have a meeting, it would be useful to have this information at my fingertips."



The US Airways website does not offer an easy way to get basic financial information. People can extract the highlights from PDF fact sheets, presentations, or webcasts, but Web users aren't likely to spend the time downloading these documents.





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Financial Information
Quarterly Financial Results
Annual Consolidated Financial Statments
Financial Highlights
Five-Year Performance
Sales Data
Press Releases
Store Information
Annual Report / Fact Book
Event Calendar
Calendar of Public Disclosures
Webcasts
Shareholder Services
Corporate Governance
SEC Filings
News Direct
Request a Macy's, Inc. Annual Report
Chairman's Remarks

Financial Highlights

(dollars in millions, except per share figures)

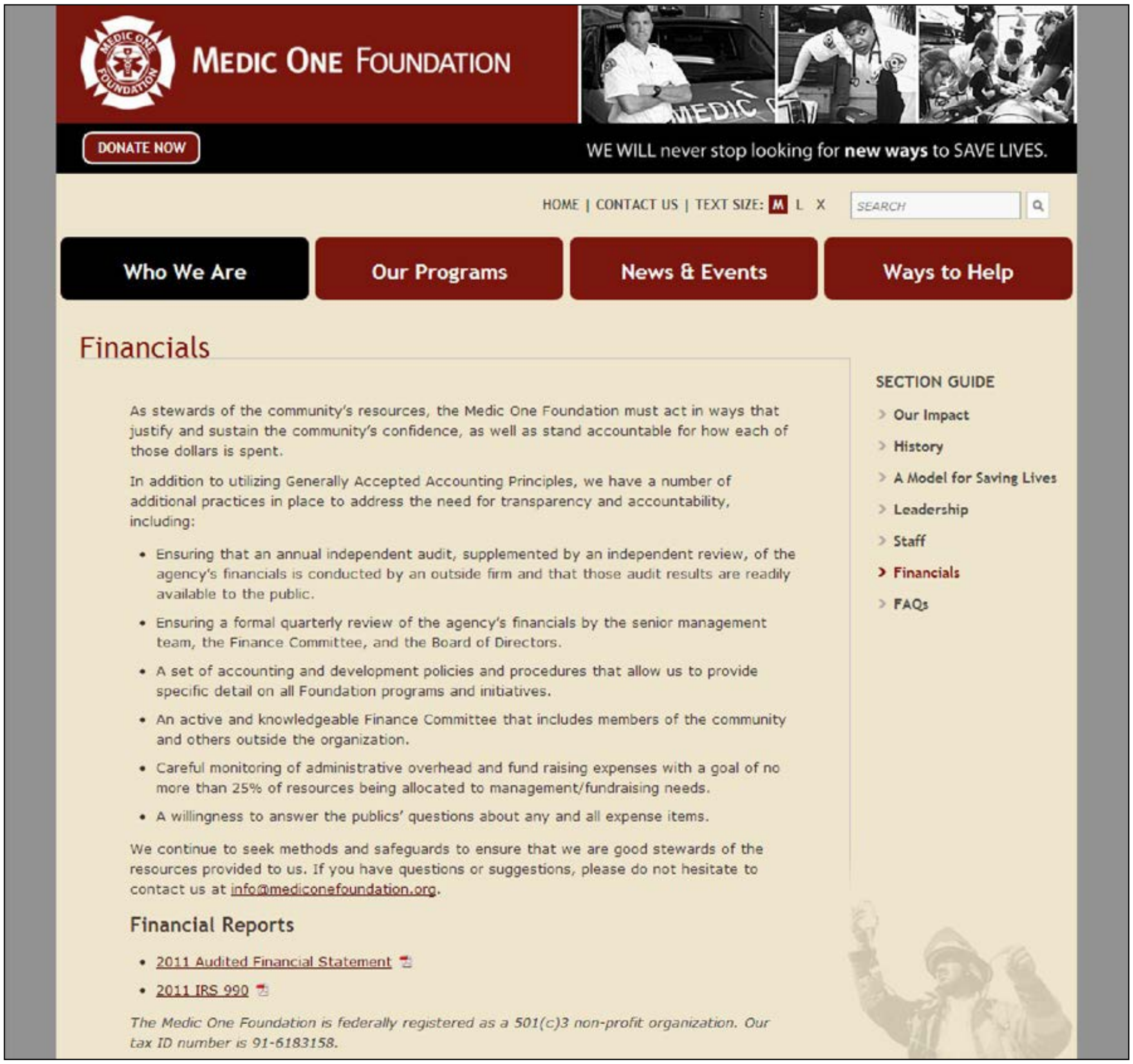
	2012*		2011		2010	
	Amount	% to Sales	Amount	% to Sales	Amount	% to Sales
Net sales	$27,686		$26,405		$25,003	
Increase in sales	4.9%		5.6%			
Increase in comparable sales (Note 1)	3.7%		5.3%			
Cost of sales	(16,538)	(59.7)%	(15,738)	(59.6)%	(14,824)	(59.3)%
Gross margin	11,148	40.3%	10,667	40.4%	10,179	40.7%
Selling, general and administrative expenses	(8,482)	(30.7)%	(8,281)	(31.4)%	(8,260)	(33.0)%
Impairments, store closing costs and gain on sale of leases	(5)	- %	25	0.1%	(25)	(0.1)%
Operating income	2,661	9.6%	2,411	9.1%	1,894	7.6%
Interest expense - net	(422)		(443)		(508)	
Premium on early retirement of debt	(137)		-		(66)	
Income before income taxes	2,102		1,968		1,320	
Federal, state and local income tax expense	(767)		(712)		(473)	
Net income	$ 1,335	4.8%	$ 1,256	4.8%	$ 847	3.4%
Diluted earnings per share	$ 3.24		$ 2.92		$ 1.98	

Supplemental Non-GAAP Financial Measures (Note 2)

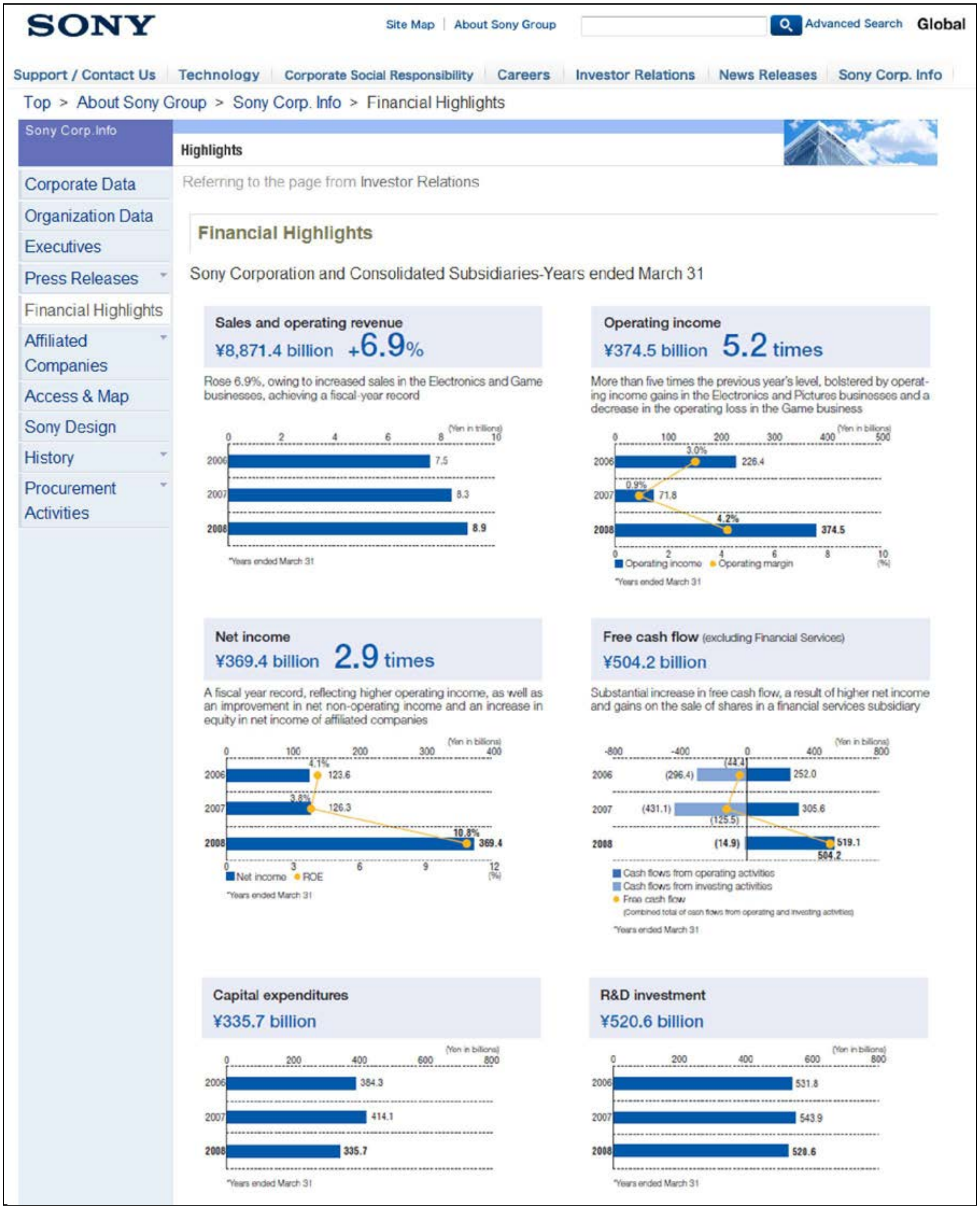
Operating income, excluding certain items	$ 2,666	9.6%	$ 2,386	9.0%	$ 1,919	7.7%
Diluted earnings per share, excluding certain items	$ 3.46		$ 2.88		$ 2.11	
Adjusted EBITDA as a percent to net sales	13.4%		13.1%		12.3%	
ROIC	21.2%		19.7%		17.4%	

* 53 weeks

The *Financial Highlights* page on the Macy's website is a good example of how to show highlights. The columnar format is easy to scan. Distinguishing the years with extra white space or a vertical line would make it even easier to scan.



The *Financial Highlights* page on the Medic One Foundation website is confusing. This page does not appear to offer any highlights. Instead it refers to processes. Such a mismatch in expectations can quickly degrade the site's usefulness.



The *Financial Highlights* on the Sony website are difficult to understand. It's easier to glean information from simple tables than from these small overly produced charts.

39. When reporting facts and figures, offer comparisons to help people gain a perspective on the relative sizes of the numbers.

In many instances, users wanted to know how one company's numbers compared with other companies in similar industries or market segments. People commented that the numbers are meaningless if they don't understand their relative value.

Some examples of people's reactions when evaluating numbers:

> "What would be interesting would be comparing this stuff to other companies. You can pick a similar industry and have the numbers sit next to each other … . Like if this company has a debt, how would I know if this is high or low?"

> "I was looking for a comparison of their numbers and other company numbers. I want to be comparing it to other similar stocks. How do their numbers look, UPS compared to FedEx?"

> "Ideally, I always want to see the comparison figures next to the current figures because I don't want to jump from one chart to another, one screen to another, one piece of paper to another."

> "I want to know how this company is doing in relation to its peers. I probably have to do another search."

> "I would be interested in how they stack up against [the] competition. They have a very good cost-to-income ratio. I'd like to see the peer comparison — a little more than they're giving me."

40. When reporting financial figures, indicate the monetary units and currency.

It is surprisingly difficult to find the increments in which numbers are presented on many websites. In similar studies, users often wondered if numbers were in millions, billions, or something else. Also, they were sometimes unsure which currency was being used.

Make sure that such notations are visible when the page is scrolled. Even if currency and increments are noted at the top or bottom of a page, it's easy to overlook or forget the legend when scrolling through a long table of financial results.

One standard convention in financial reports is to note millions as "m" (for example, $2m to mean $2 million). Other such abbreviations are common (k for thousands, b for billions). It's better to write out the whole word to avoid any confusion, however, and sometimes it's better still to show the long number, to avoid ambiguity.

Please also refer to guideline 100 that discusses international issues regarding numerical terms such as "billion".

41. **Make it easy for people to find quarterly and annual reports. Call the link to these reports "Financial Reports," not something vague, such as "Financial History."**

Provide major navigational links to quarterly and annual reports so people can locate them easily. In our study, people in all user groups identified quarterly reports, annual reports, and SEC filings as highly important.

It's best to group quarterly and annual reports into categories and list them in order, with the most current first. For example, Home Depot did a good job of grouping its reports by type and used bold headers for the year, which made scanning easy.

"It's helpful that you can get annual and quarterly reports."

"I would like the annual report."

"It's good that the report is on the site."

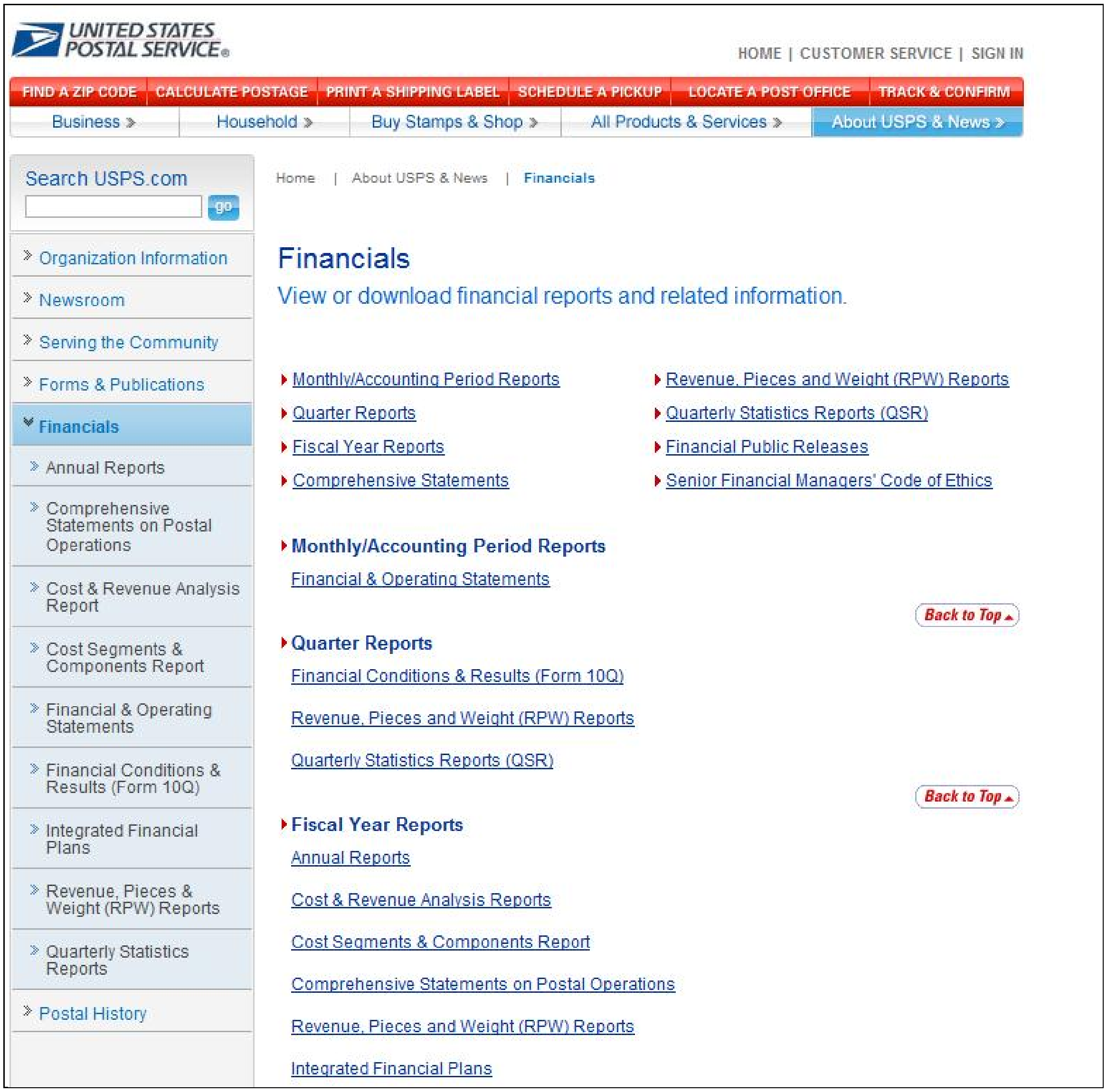
"I would call them up and say I want a copy of the 20F and their annual report."

The Apple website places annual reports under a nondescript category called *Financial History*. "Financial Reports" would be better.

The Infocus website features financial reports well by using a simple layout with descriptive headers and links.

42. When prioritizing financial reports, give the earnings release, and annual and quarterly reports high ranking.

Investors and business journalists listed these three types of financial reports and releases as being most important to them.



The USPS website camouflaged important financial reports by mixing them with less-important documents. Separating the earnings releases and annual and quarterly reports would make them easier to find.

43. Post at least five years of annual and quarterly reports.

Even though many people will not bother to read annual and quarterly reports, people still expect to see them archived on corporate websites. Posting only the minimum of what is legally required ensures compliance, but going beyond that will set you apart from other companies. Companies who have financial reports publically available are perceived as being transparent and responsible.

44. Place SEC filings in an area clearly marked as *SEC Filings*.

Financial analysts and professional investors in particular were interested in the SEC filings to get detailed financial figures, specifically the 10K and 10Q (10F and 20F for European companies). Although some people appreciate the visual nature of quarterly and annual reports, professional financial people said they view the SEC filings as having less marketing spin and use them as a basis for their investment recommendations.

> "The company annual report has a spin. SEC is not as spin driven, a more plain assessment."

> "This is more straightforward and less marketing … . There is no sales-marketing gloss to this. [SEC filings] have to report what they do."

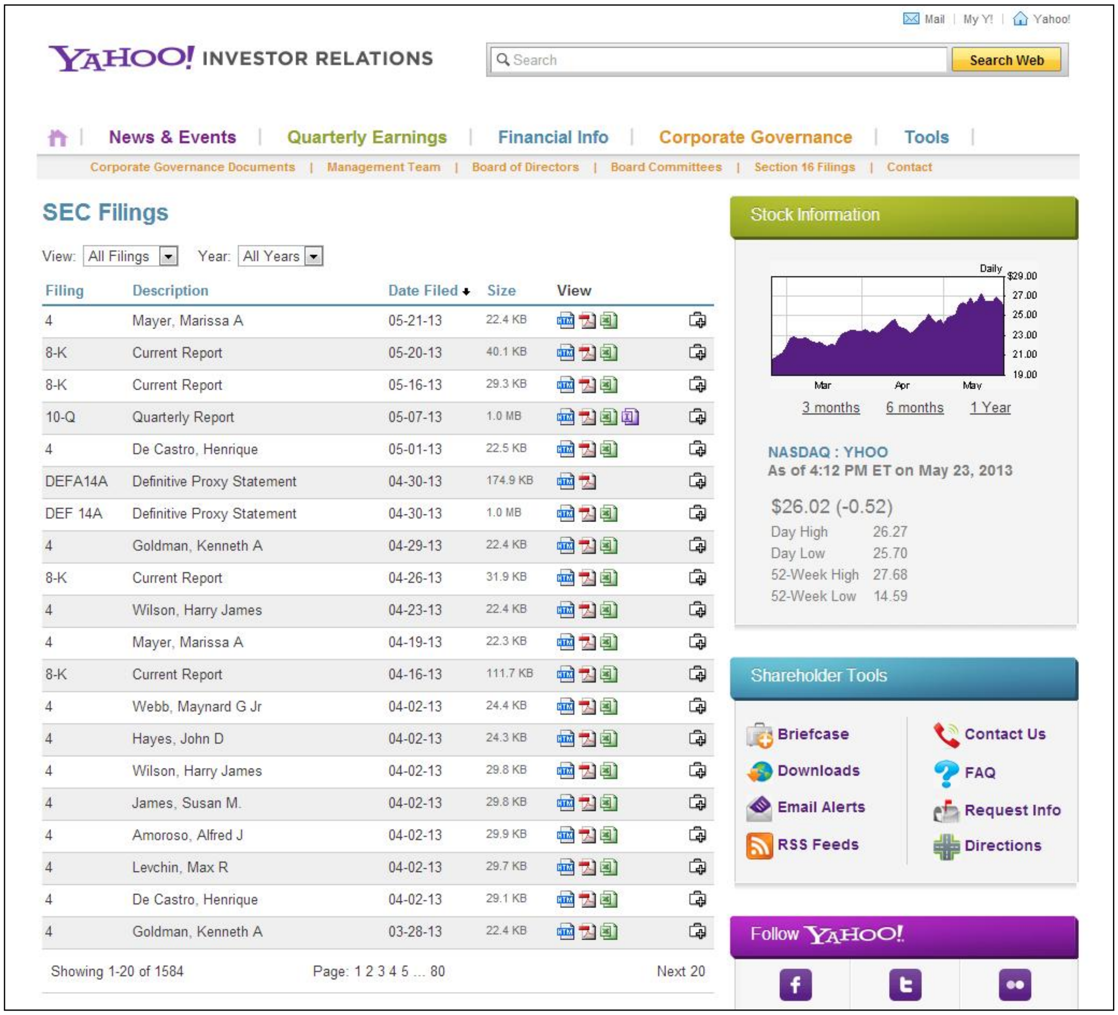
> "I want to look at the SEC filings. I'll find out a lot."

45. Describe the reports and SEC filings succinctly.

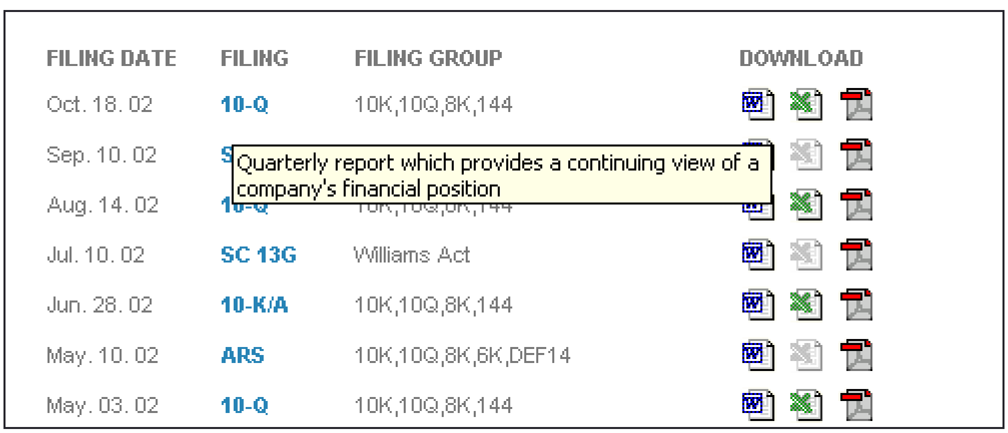
Provide a short, concise description of reports and filings — especially those referred to only by number. Many nonspecialists don't know what forms such as 10K and 10Q mean. Rather than referencing only the report number, it's better to say something like: "10K — Annual Financial Report" or "10Q — Quarterly Financial Report."

Include report numbers next to the descriptive labels; more-experienced users know the numbers and look for these codes when they scan a page or use search engines.

Don't rely on rollover descriptions. People can easily overlook rollovers, because they appear only when users move their mouse over the link and wait for the descriptions to appear.



The *SEC Filings* page on the Yahoo! website appropriately provides a short description for each filing.



The Biogen website provided report descriptions when users moused over the links, but most people didn't notice them. It's better to have the descriptions on the page itself.

InFocus® Corporation

Total Results: 75

Symbol	Company Name	FormType Re-Sort Ascending	Date Re-Sort Ascending	MISC
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	10-Q	11/13/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	10-Q	08/12/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	SC 13G	07/10/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	8-K/A	06/04/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	8-K	05/23/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	SC 13G	05/15/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	10-Q	05/13/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	DEF 14A	03/22/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	10-K405	03/15/2002	Filing
INFS	INFOCUS CORP	SC 13G	02/25/2002	Filing

Infocus.com (Old): The Infocus website's previous design showed the form type but didn't give a description.

Home »Company »Investors

Select Category

- Investor Relations Home
- Corporate Overview
- Financial Reports
- Stock Information
- Fundamentals
- Press Releases
- SEC Filings
- Management
- Information Request
- Events
- Corporate Governance

SEC Filings

SEC Filing Keyword Search (View search tips)

Groupings Filter (View SEC Groupings descriptions)

All Forms Search

View Section 16 Filings (3,4,5)

<< First | Previous | Next | Last >>

Filing Date	Form	Description	Filing Group	Downloads
03/16/09	10-K	Annual report which provides a comprehensive overview of the company for the past year	Annual Filings	
02/17/09	8-K	Report of unscheduled material events or corporate event	Current Reports	
02/13/09	4	Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities	3,4,5	
02/13/09	4	Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities	3,4,5	
02/13/09	4	Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities	3,4,5	
02/13/09	4	Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities	3,4,5	
02/13/09	4	Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities	3,4,5	
02/13/09	4	Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities	3,4,5	
02/13/09	SC 13G/A	An amendment to the SC 13G filing	Other	

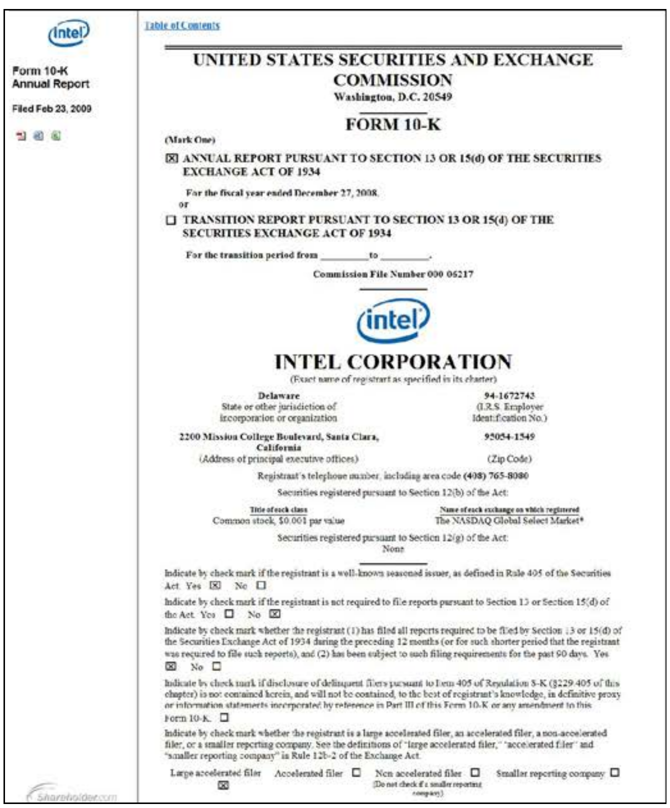
Infocus (Updated): The website's updated design features descriptions for SEC filings, making it easier for nonspecialists to understand what they mean.

46. If SEC filings are hosted on another site, ensure that navigating to them is seamless.

It's fine to link to the actual filing on a reputable third-party SEC website like Edgar. We've found in other studies that linking to the actual publication or document can give the site more credibility. The transition from the company website to the actual filing should be as easy and seamless as possible, however. Don't drop people off on a generic landing page and expect them to find their way.

In our study, we found that the process of getting to the actual report was sometimes awkward, especially when the filing was on a different site. The interface often had a jarring and inconsistent look and feel, extraneous steps, and unclear descriptions and links. For example, when people clicked on a link for a specific filing on the Ceridian website, they expected to see the actual filing. Instead, they got an intermediate page that contained ambiguous language and excessive red text. People were overwhelmed by pages like this and backed out.

On the Ceridian website, clicking *SEC Filings* led people to this page. Users were intimidated by pages that looked like this because of the ambiguous language and nonstandard link colors and formatting.



The Intel website does a good job of leading people to reports. Each filing name goes directly to the report, as people expect.

A link to a table of contents appears at the top of each report page, making it easy for people to get to the page they want.

Getting to the SEC filings on the InFocus site is easy. The category name *SEC Filings* accurately describes the content. The site offers people the option to download the entire document or open parts of it at a time.

47. If your company has had stock splits or dividends, provide a summary table that shows the amounts and dates for these events.

People tend to think positively about companies that have dividends or stock splits, because those indicate that the company is doing well. If your company reinvests dividends, say so.

Several people noticed that UPS had dividends and said:

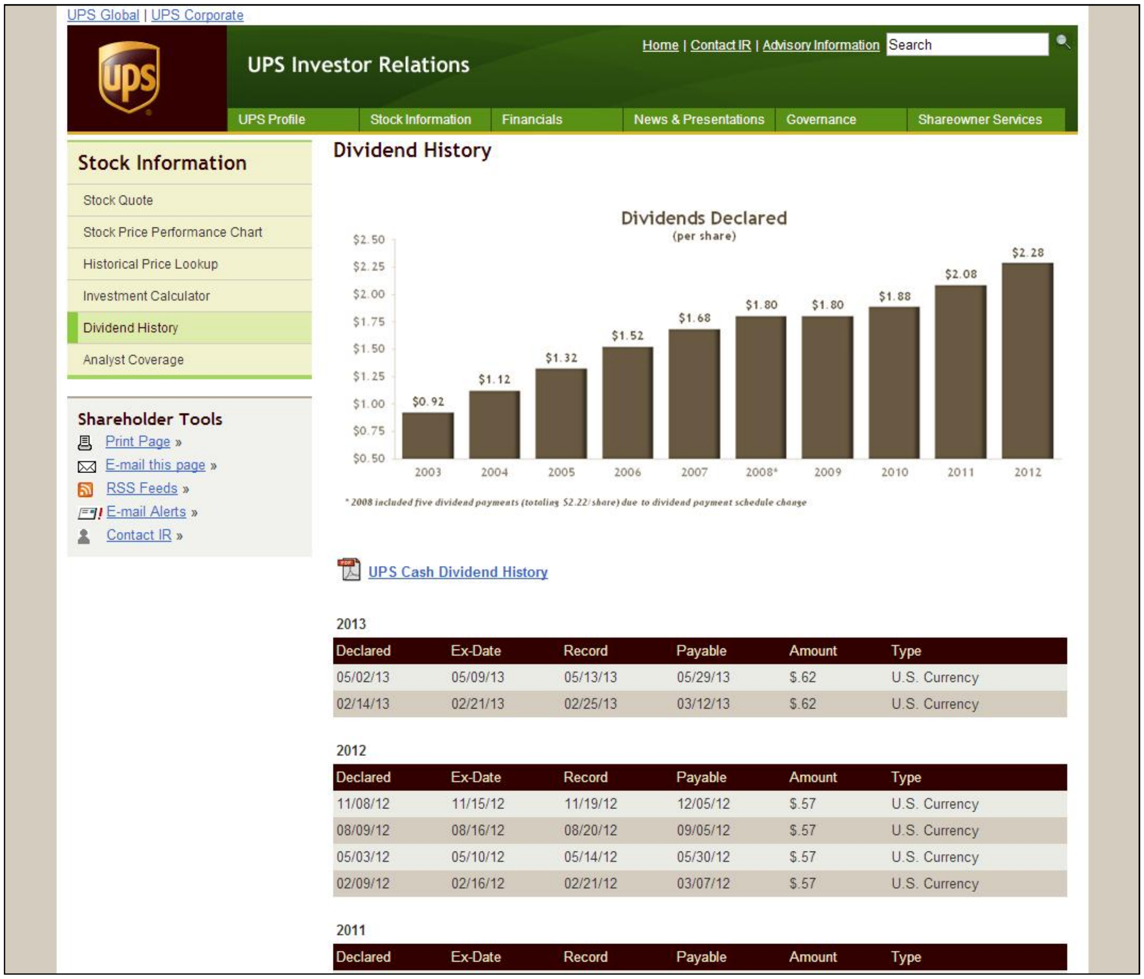
> "UPS is a lot more well known to me … . I assume that UPS is a major player in shipping. They have dividends. That's a plus in long-term investing."
>
> "That's good. Getting dividends is a good thing."
>
> "It's good that it tells you dividend per share."

A person on the Royal Bank of Scotland site said that he mainly looks at the stock quote and dividend information, especially if he's familiar with the company.

"I would stop and not do anything else. I just look at stock quote and dividend information. I'm already familiar with the company. I'm already familiar with the company as a blue chip."

Someone using the Johnson & Johnson website looked for dividends to see how the company had been performing.

"I want to see what they've been doing and see what's going on."



UPS.com: People look at dividend information, such as in this example, to gauge the company's financial health. The UPS site's *Dividend History* chart and table offer two ways to track the dividends issued.

48. Provide facts; don't place advertisements in the IR area of your site.

Avoid anything that looks or sounds like advertising, especially in the IR section of your website. When researching investment and financial information, people want facts. They are skeptical and annoyed by websites that use marketing language or have ads in the financial area. Keep the look and feel of your IR section professional and factual by removing any unnecessary fluff such as ads, motion, and sound.

If you are linking to an external site, make sure it also follows this guideline. Even though an external site might think its advertising is appropriate, when an IR user navigates a company's site and follows a link elsewhere for a specific report, being faced with ads there is not acceptable. Be reluctant to link to such sites. It's better to find other solutions instead.

A user on the Johnson & Johnson website was annoyed by the marketing language in the presentation slides:

> " 'Innovation through process excellence' — to me, this is completely meaningless. What I really want to get to is the view of the future, where they see opportunity and growth ahead … . Now it says I can watch a video or download something. Most reporters find that annoying. I want to get one page that gives me the answer. I don't want to sit through a slick thing that's overdone."

A user on the Novo Nordisk site was annoyed by the marketing language in the *Our Vision* section:

> "I imagine this website is run by the company. It's not going to say anything critical. This is company publicity. It's boring me. It's not saying anything for me. Blah! Blah! … . It's rubbish — too much marketing."

The SEC area on the Home Depot site linked to an external Edgar site that annoyed participants with its inappropriate blinking banner and pop-up ads. Even though people were no longer on the Home Depot site, they didn't know this and still considered the material to be part of their IR user experience.

> "Again, there are pop-ups buried in financial data. All the advertising is making me look away … . I would love to make this stuff go away, especially these ones that move."

> "I think this is annoying. This is serious SEC stuff and seeing a pop-up there is annoying."

Don't advertise your products and services in corporate sections of your website. People who investigate these areas want facts and don't want to be distracted by a sales pitch. Anything that sounds or looks salesy in this section can undermine the credibility of your organization.

HTML AND PDF FORMATS

49. Offer information people want to read online in HTML, including reports. Don't require people to install additional software to look at your reports.

PDF was designed to distribute documents that were meant to be viewed in a printed format. The PDF format is horrendous for online viewing because it is usually slow loading and doesn't have characteristics that make reading and navigating easy. The ability to click on links and get reference information is diminished (or nonexistent).

Also, the layout of PDFs makes online viewing clunky and frustrating. Many users get lost in PDFs because the print-oriented Acrobat viewer gives them only a small peephole on a big, complicated layout, and they can't scroll it in the simple, linear manner they are accustomed to on the Web.

Posting PDF documents is cheap and easy, but it can cost you in the long run. In general, Web users are finicky and have low motivation. If something is too difficult, they give up and go elsewhere, especially if there are other websites to choose from. Potential investors who are researching companies might know the information they seek is in a financial report, but if it's in a PDF file, they are less likely to dig for it there. The tradeoff is rarely worth the effort in their minds. Why waste time with a site that offers a lousy user experience when there are other companies to invest in?

In our studies, investors complained that PDFs made it too difficult to look up specific information quickly, especially when the document was long. Some of the reports were almost 200 pages, and people didn't have the patience to scroll through them. Participants didn't want to read PDFs online because it was difficult or impossible to copy and paste text from the report and to navigate using hyperlinks; most people didn't know how to search for keywords within the documents.

On the Royal Bank of Scotland website, users were frustrated by PDFs because they couldn't effectively search and drill down to get the information they needed.

> "Another thing that's good is rather than putting this data in PDF, they can put it in a text format so you can search. I'd rather have it in text format. This is a 198-page document. It has limited value to me because it's too big and unwieldy. It's a flat file. If I can just get into text format."

> "I would use the website to look at 20F and financial statements, but they're in PDF. Would I print out a 120-page document? No. … There's good stuff in it, but you're going to want to search through it and drill down to what you want. They have all this fluff in the first 40 pages — the chairman talking. This is their annual report, it should be on there, but in reality, who would print this out?"

> "PDF is useless to me because it's 200 pages. It's easier to call the company. I need this document, the 20F, in text format."

People on the Johnson & Johnson website also had difficulty viewing the PDF files on the Web.

> "It's a pain that I have to download each PDF. Pain in the ass … . I find it to be annoying. It's slow to load. It's hard to search within it. I find HTML easier to deal with … . This is all PDF instead of a chart. My dream site is to come to a site and get a bar chart for the sales within the last 10 years. And within the bar what the net income is, earnings per share."

> "I hate Adobe Acrobat. If I bring up PDF, I can't take a section and copy it and move it to Word. There could be stuff like graphics I don't want. I prefer documents in HTML format so that [the information is] editable."

> "If you have a very long document, I can't click on any of this stuff to go to the area of interest."

> "Do I want to print this crap? I want to cut and paste text only. Again, it's defaulted to Adobe."

Here are some more quotes in case you are still unconvinced:

> "I don't like to download PDFs. It is too slow to download. It might take a long time to download a file."

> "This is not in an Internet version, it's in PDF version. If it's in a normal interactive approach, it would be useful."

> "PDFs take room on the hard drive, especially if it's something I want to glance at and move on. It takes longer to load than another URL or website. They are unnecessary. Why do they think this is better served as a PDF than a separate URL? Having the option is good. But I don't know why this is the default."

> "This is a pet peeve. I don't know why I have to download something. Where can I get HTML instead of downloading something to my computer?"

50. Keep the features in the HTML annual report basic.

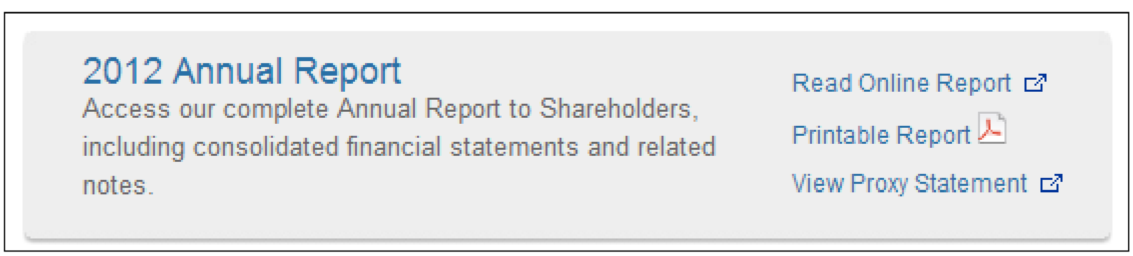
Fancy interactions are overrated and often cause major usability issues. Remember, people who venture into the IR section are in fact-finding mode. They want to find answers efficiently. Fancy bells and whistles such as Flash and multimedia can create obstacles, rendering the report useless to site visitors.

A report that is made up mainly of images glued together with HTML is not usable. It lacks HTML interactions that people want and need, such as:

- Search within the document and search engine accessibility
- Navigate to major sections throughout the report
- Get reference and detailed information by clicking on links
- Copy and paste text and images

51. When offering reports in several formats, make the HTML version primary and other formats (PDF, Word, Excel) secondary.

When people research companies on the Web, they expect to get information in a format that is optimized for the Web. Most people resent having to open a new application to get content, until they are ready to use it in a different way, such as reading it offline.

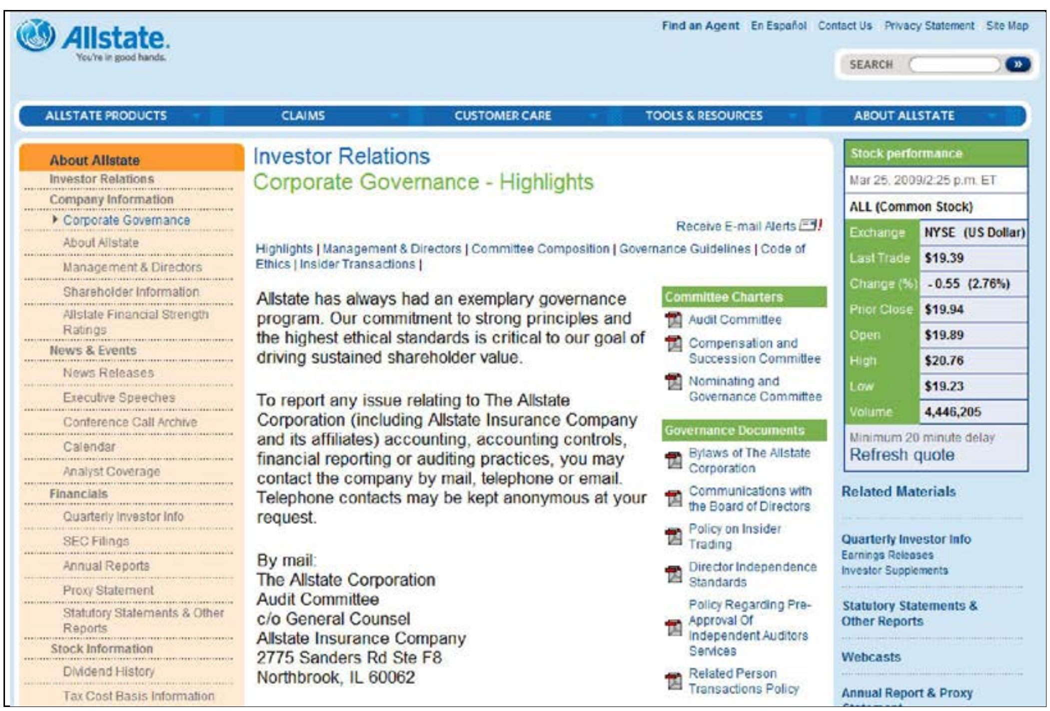


The Cisco website properly offers the online version first. The links to both version of the report are clearly labeled as *Online* and *Printable*. Most users understand these words and can successfully select the correct version.

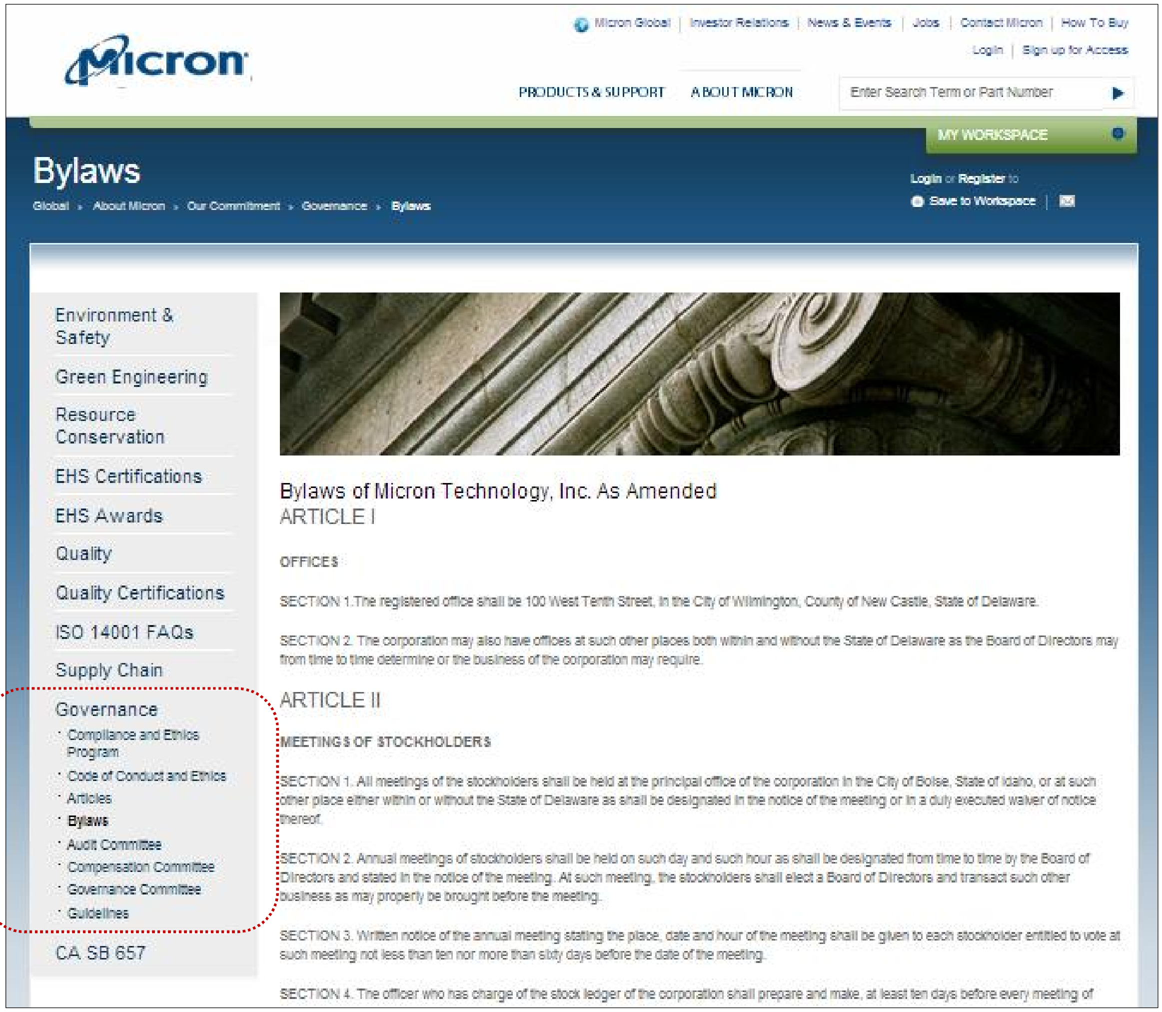
Filing	Description	Date Filed	Size	View
4	Mayer, Marissa A	05-21-13	22.4 KB	
8-K	Current Report	05-20-13	40.1 KB	
8-K	Current Report	05-16-13	29.3 KB	
10-Q	Quarterly Report	05-07-13	1.0 MB	
4	De Castro, Henrique	05-01-13	22.5 KB	
DEFA14A	Definitive Proxy Statement	04-30-13	174.9 KB	
DEF 14A	Definitive Proxy Statement	04-30-13	1.0 MB	
4	Goldman, Kenneth A	04-29-13	22.4 KB	
8-K	Current Report	04-26-13	31.9 KB	
4	Wilson, Harry James	04-23-13	22.4 KB	
4	Mayer, Marissa A	04-19-13	22.3 KB	
8-K	Current Report	04-16-13	111.7 KB	
4	Webb, Maynard G Jr	04-02-13	24.4 KB	
4	Hayes, John D	04-02-13	24.3 KB	
4	Wilson, Harry James	04-02-13	29.8 KB	
4	James, Susan M.	04-02-13	29.8 KB	
4	Amoroso, Alfred J	04-02-13	29.9 KB	
4	Levchin, Max R	04-02-13	29.7 KB	
4	De Castro, Henrique	04-02-13	29.1 KB	
4	Goldman, Kenneth A	03-28-13	22.4 KB	

Yahoo.com: The use of nonstandard icons, such as the HTM and briefcase do not appropriately describe what they mean. Rather than give all formats the same level of prominence, it's better to make the main link to the reports be the HTML version, then offer the PDF and Excel versions as secondary options.

Bayer.com: A journalist thought that she was required to download the annual reports to her computer. Even though the link is named *Online-Version,* the nonstandard icon and link design threw her off course. This example underscores the need to stick with standard conventions when possible.



Allstate.com: Many companies make corporate governance information available only in PDF format. Offering information in a format that is difficult to use online is contrary to the purpose of providing it at all.



The Micron website features corporate governance policies in HTML format, enhancing their company's accountability and transparency by making this information as accessible as possible.

52. Offer a table of contents at the beginning of each report.

For reports in HTML, include a table of contents at the beginning that links to important document sections. It's also helpful to provide a link back to the table of contents from within each section of the report. For reports in PDF, include a table of contents at the beginning and an alphabetical index at the end.

MANUFACTURING

LeTourneau, Inc. operates a mini-steel mill, a manufacturing facility that produces heavy equipment for the mining, timber and transportation industries, and a drilling products division that has designed or built about one-third of all mobile offshore jack-up drilling rigs.

AVIATION

Era Aviation, Inc. is an international aviation organization operating helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

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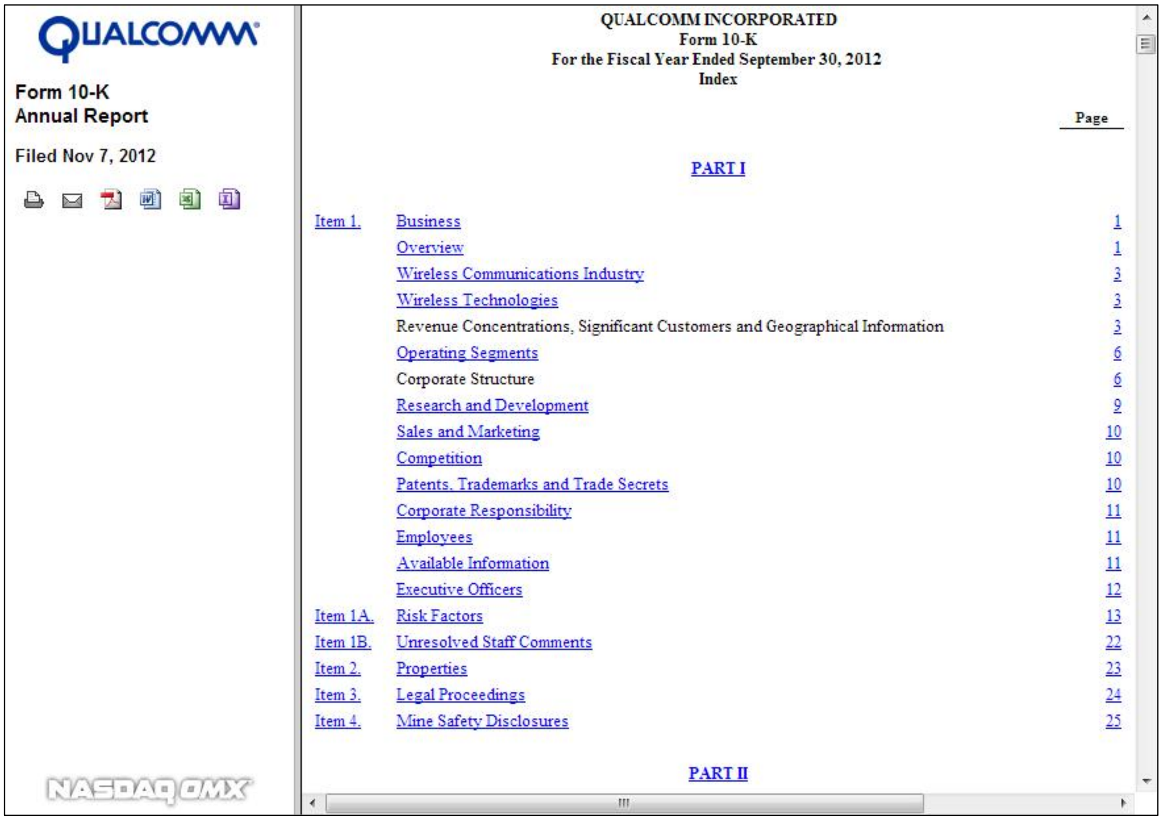
Consolidated Statement of Changes in Stockholders' Equity	26
Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows	27
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements	28
Corporate Directory	38
Stockholders' Information	39
Directors and Officers	40

The Rowan website provided a simple table of contents in the front of its PDF annual report.



QUALCOMM

Form 10-K
Annual Report

Filed Nov 7, 2012

NASDAQ OMX

QUALCOMM INCORPORATED
Form 10-K
For the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2012
Index

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Qualcomm offers a well-formatted table of contents at the beginning of its Form 10-K that links to important areas of the report. Page numbers should normally be closer to the section titles, but here the placement is okay because the ToC is in HTML, and users will mainly click the headlines rather than refer to page numbers.

53. For PDF documents, provide a gateway page with a summary of the content, page count, and file size.

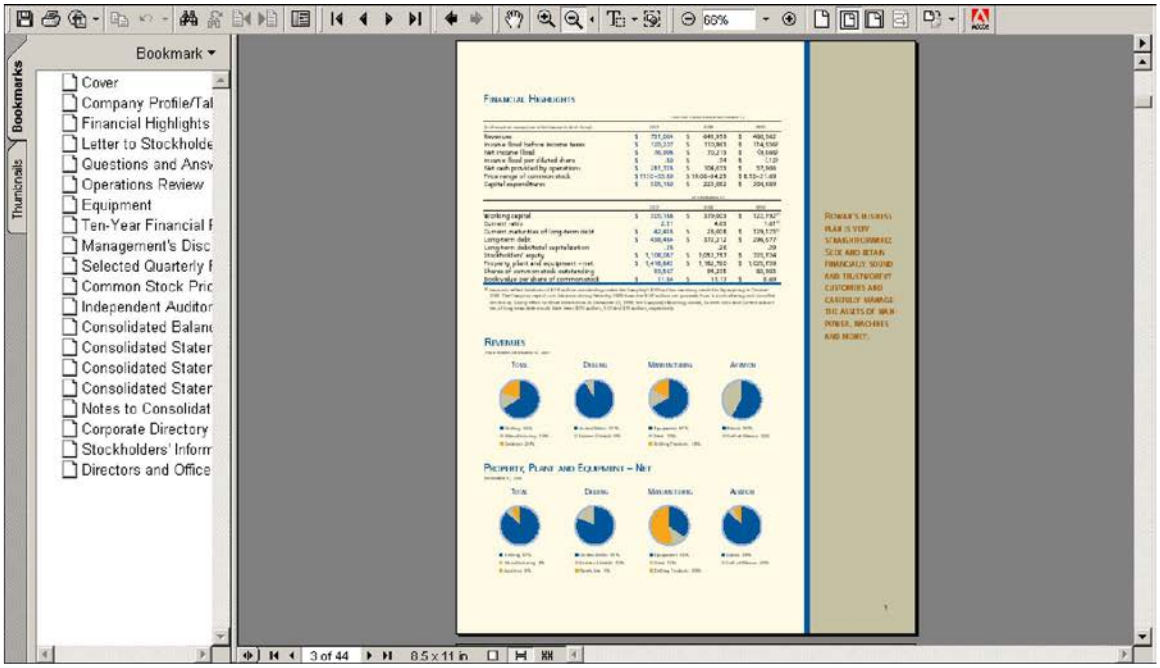
Offer a short description of the document and show the page count and file size so people can decide whether a PDF is worth downloading. Also, label the PDF file for printing only. From any other part of the website, link only to the gateway page, not to the PDF document.

54. Set the default for PDF documents to open at a legible size.

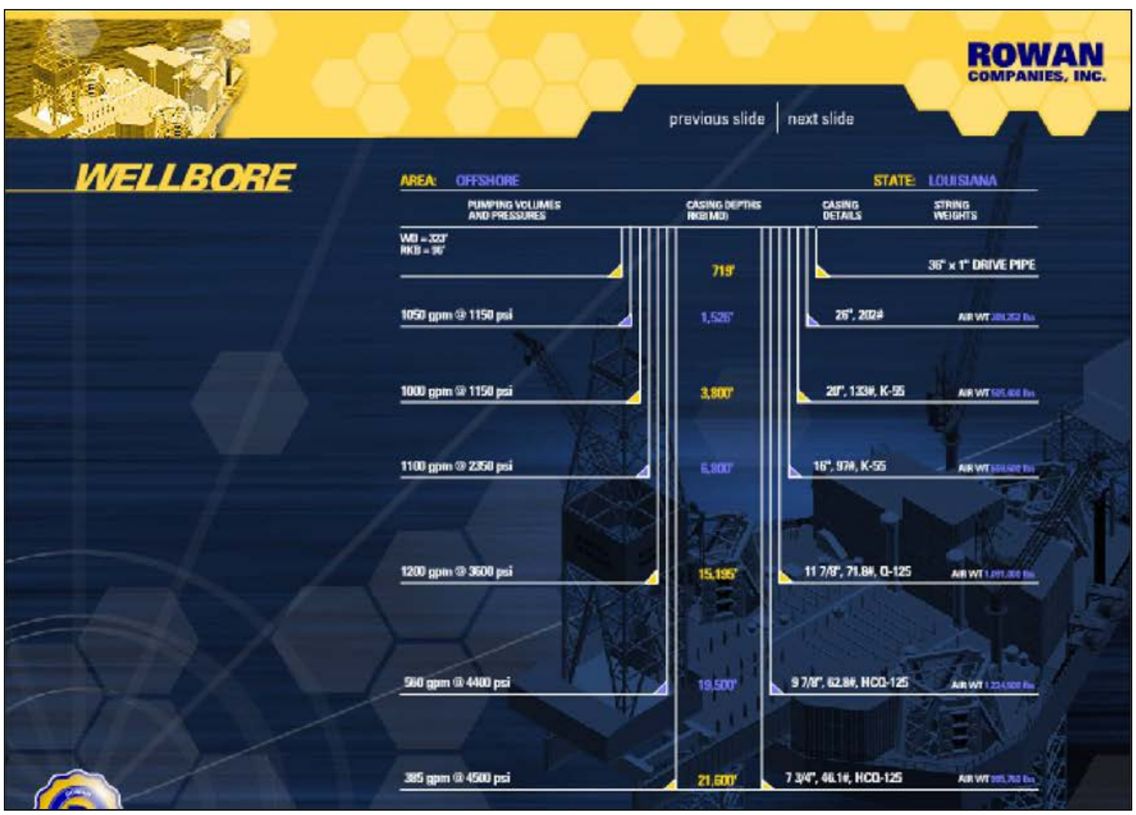
People complained about text size in the Rowan site's PDF files; even at 100%, text was too small to read:

> "I would print this up because it's hard to read."

> "This is at 100% zoom and it's difficult to read. It would be nice if at 100% zoom everything could fit on a page."



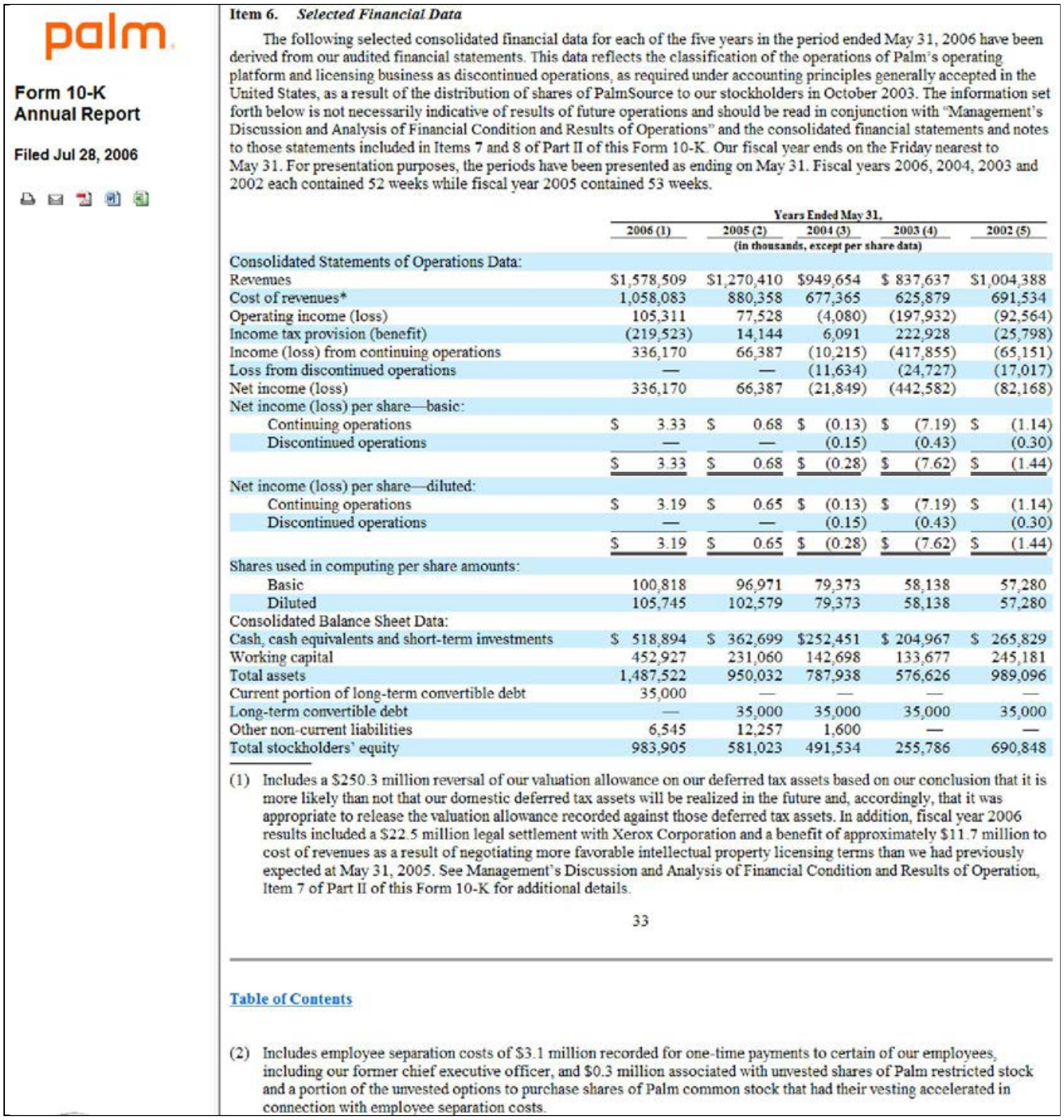
The Rowan website's PDF files were too difficult to read, even when set at 100% magnification.



Pfeiffer offered its financial report only in PDF, which was difficult to read online because of the tiny text and graphs and the graphic background.

The Palm website's SEC filings were in HTML and had good design elements, including:

- A table of contents at the beginning that linked to important document sections
- A link to the main table of contents at the top of each page
- A visible separator that showed page breaks
- Page numbers at the bottom of each page
- Numbers presented in well-formatted tables
- No horizontal scrolling
- A printer-friendly option


palm.

Form 10-K
Annual Report

Filed Jul 28, 2006

Item 6. ***Selected Financial Data***

The following selected consolidated financial data for each of the five years in the period ended May 31, 2006 have been derived from our audited financial statements. This data reflects the classification of the operations of Palm's operating platform and licensing business as discontinued operations, as required under accounting principles generally accepted in the United States, as a result of the distribution of shares of PalmSource to our stockholders in October 2003. The information set forth below is not necessarily indicative of results of future operations and should be read in conjunction with "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations" and the consolidated financial statements and notes to those statements included in Items 7 and 8 of Part II of this Form 10-K. Our fiscal year ends on the Friday nearest to May 31. For presentation purposes, the periods have been presented as ending on May 31. Fiscal years 2006, 2004, 2003 and 2002 each contained 52 weeks while fiscal year 2005 contained 53 weeks.

	Years Ended May 31,				
	2006 (1)	2005 (2)	2004 (3)	2003 (4)	2002 (5)
	(in thousands, except per share data)				
Consolidated Statements of Operations Data:					
Revenues	$1,578,509	$1,270,410	$949,654	$ 837,637	$1,004,388
Cost of revenues*	1,058,083	880,358	677,365	625,879	691,534
Operating income (loss)	105,311	77,528	(4,080)	(197,932)	(92,564)
Income tax provision (benefit)	(219,523)	14,144	6,091	222,928	(25,798)
Income (loss) from continuing operations	336,170	66,387	(10,215)	(417,855)	(65,151)
Loss from discontinued operations	—	—	(11,634)	(24,727)	(17,017)
Net income (loss)	336,170	66,387	(21,849)	(442,582)	(82,168)
Net income (loss) per share—basic:					
Continuing operations	$ 3.33	$ 0.68	$ (0.13)	$ (7.19)	$ (1.14)
Discontinued operations	—	—	(0.15)	(0.43)	(0.30)
	$ 3.33	$ 0.68	$ (0.28)	$ (7.62)	$ (1.44)
Net income (loss) per share—diluted:					
Continuing operations	$ 3.19	$ 0.65	$ (0.13)	$ (7.19)	$ (1.14)
Discontinued operations	—	—	(0.15)	(0.43)	(0.30)
	$ 3.19	$ 0.65	$ (0.28)	$ (7.62)	$ (1.44)
Shares used in computing per share amounts:					
Basic	100,818	96,971	79,373	58,138	57,280
Diluted	105,745	102,579	79,373	58,138	57,280
Consolidated Balance Sheet Data:					
Cash, cash equivalents and short-term investments	$ 518,894	$ 362,699	$252,451	$ 204,967	$ 265,829
Working capital	452,927	231,060	142,698	133,677	245,181
Total assets	1,487,522	950,032	787,938	576,626	989,096
Current portion of long-term convertible debt	35,000	—	—	—	—
Long-term convertible debt	—	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Other non-current liabilities	6,545	12,257	1,600	—	—
Total stockholders' equity	983,905	581,023	491,534	255,786	690,848

(1) Includes a $250.3 million reversal of our valuation allowance on our deferred tax assets based on our conclusion that it is more likely than not that our domestic deferred tax assets will be realized in the future and, accordingly, that it was appropriate to release the valuation allowance recorded against those deferred tax assets. In addition, fiscal year 2006 results included a $22.5 million legal settlement with Xerox Corporation and a benefit of approximately $11.7 million to cost of revenues as a result of negotiating more favorable intellectual property licensing terms than we had previously expected at May 31, 2005. See Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operation, Item 7 of Part II of this Form 10-K for additional details.

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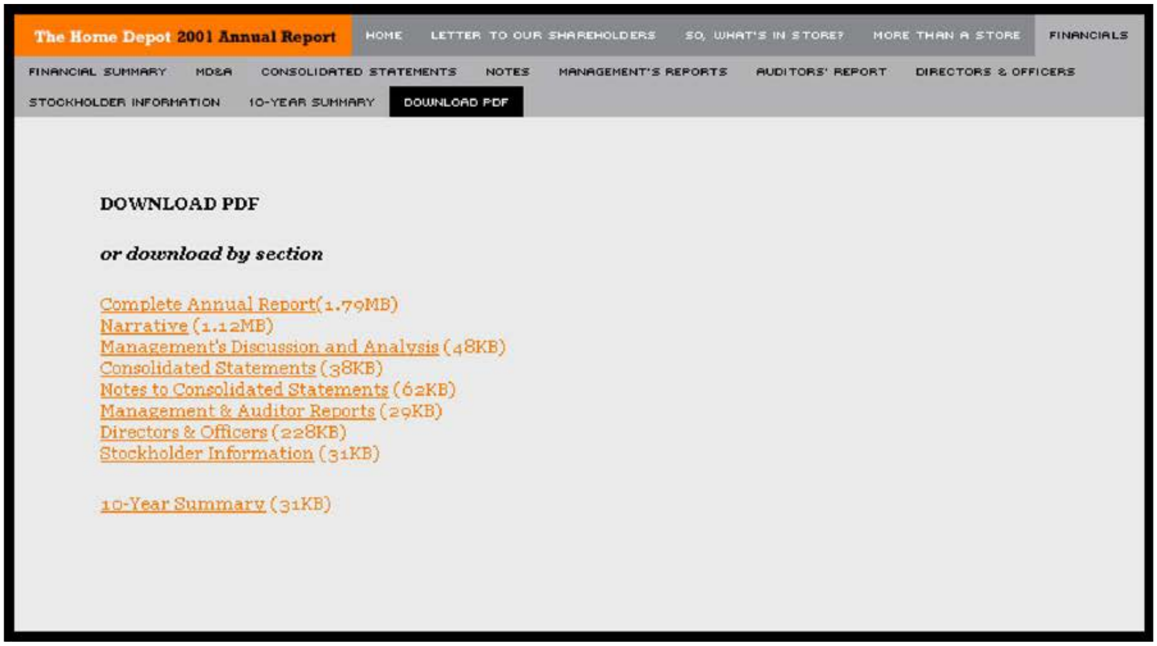
(2) Includes employee separation costs of $3.1 million recorded for one-time payments to certain of our employees, including our former chief executive officer, and $0.3 million associated with unvested shares of Palm restricted stock and a portion of the unvested options to purchase shares of Palm common stock that had their vesting accelerated in connection with employee separation costs.

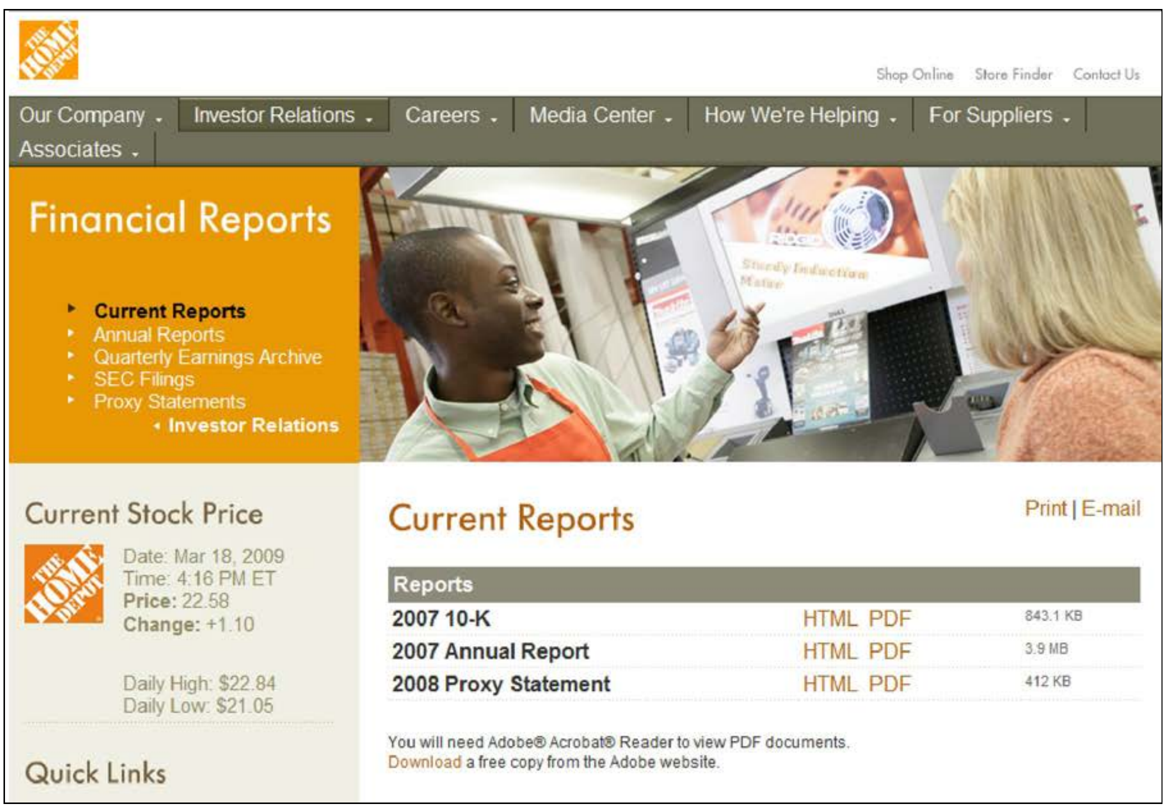
The Palm website's SEC filings were properly formatted and easy to read. The colored bands facilitate reading across the very wide table. Note that the HTML version is primary, while the other formats, such as PDF, Word, and Excel, are secondary options.

55. For large PDF files, allow people to download the document in sections.

If a PDF file is very large (more than 5MB), consider breaking it up into smaller files. Smaller files download faster and more successfully, especially for people with slow Internet connections. Also, be sure to show each section's file size (in MB), so that people can decide whether downloading is worth their time.



Home Depot (Old): Although the low contrast between text and background color made this page difficult to read, Home Depot did let people choose whether to download an entire report or only certain sections.



Home Depot (Updated): The Home Depot website offers reports in two versions, HTML and PDF, which is fine. The PDF document is no longer available in small sections, however, making it more difficult for people to print parts of a report.

Starbucks (Old): The Starbucks website allowed people to download the annual report PDF in two parts. Unfortunately, the content included in each part was not described.

Starbucks (Updated): The annual reports on the Starbucks website are in PDF format only. Even worse, the site does not offer an easy way for people to download sections of the newest report. People are less likely to use PDFs than HTML, especially if they think the file size is too large. Unfortunately no sizes are shown.

56. If a link opens a PDF (or another application), tell people what to expect ***before*** they click it.

People don’t like feeling tricked, even if it’s unintentional. When people click on a link, they expect the next page to be a Web page with standard Web-like attributes. When people inadvertently open a PDF, two things often happen:

1. People become enraged because the site didn’t work the way they expect. Their frustration becomes heightened when the download is slow or, even worse, locks up their computer.
2. Some people wait patiently for the document to open but have no idea that the thing that just loaded is a PDF. They think it’s a regular web page. They try to click on things, but nothing happens. Often the *Back* button is grayed out. These events lead them to believe that the site is broken.

When providing a choice between PDF and HTML, don’t use only these terms. They are geeky and too technical for general Web audiences. You can signal PDFs by using appropriate labels, like *Download the Report (PDF – 2MB)* or *For Printing (4MB PDF)*. For regular Web format, say *Online Version* or *View Online*, or something similar.

The following table summarizes recommendations for presenting documents in HTML and PDF formats.

	HTML format (online viewing)	PDF format (offline viewing)
Gateway page to documents	Offer a summary description of the report. List the HTML format choice first (people are more likely to click on the first link). In general, make the title the link.	State clearly that the PDF file is for printing. Include a summary description. Indicate page count and file size so people can decide whether it's worth downloading. If the file is very large, consider breaking it up into smaller files. From any other part of the website, link only to the gateway page, not to the PDF document.
Other software	Don't require people to install additional software, such as Flash or PowerPoint to look at your presentations and reports.	Ensure that your PDF document format is at least one version behind the latest offering to maximize the probability that users will already have a compatible viewer installed.
Printing	Provide a printer-friendly feature that formats documents for common paper sizes. Some countries use 8.5 x 11, while others use A4. Make sure your documents will fit both.	Format your printable documents for both 8.5 x 11 and A4 paper sizes. Make sure that the printed content is legible.
Typefaces	Use common sans-serif typefaces that are easy to read online, such as Verdana.	Use easily readable typefaces for printing, such as Helvetica, Times, and Bodoni.
Graphics and motion	Avoid any superfluous graphics or movement, particularly those that impact speed. Avoid splash pages.	Avoid backgrounds, especially ones that print out dark or bleed into the content.
Navigation	Avoid complex or fancy navigation. Keep it simple so users can navigate through various sections without difficulty. Follow standard usability guidelines for navigation. For example, provide consistent navigation and limit the use of dropdowns. Always use specific, understandable category names.	Put a table of contents at the beginning of the report and an alphabetical index at the end.
Page numbers	Number each page of the report. If using "Next" buttons, indicate the total number of pages and offer a way to skip over pages to get to desired sections.	Number each page of the report.
Online viewing	Avoid horizontal scrolling.	Default the zoom to a level that's easily readable on screen and doesn't require people to scroll horizontally.

Calendar/Events

57. Provide a *Financial Calendar* or *Calendar of Events* that shows the dates of past and future investor events.

The analysts in our study were particularly interested in getting the dates and times for scheduled conference calls, earnings releases, annual meetings, and other important events. Also, stricter federal regulations may require companies to post important financial dates on the Internet. Many companies are already doing this, which helps bolster people's confidence in the company.

It's also helpful to keep past event dates listed, to indicate the types of events the company holds and when it holds them. Doing so helps people plan for future events and shows that the company is thoughtful in cataloging information.

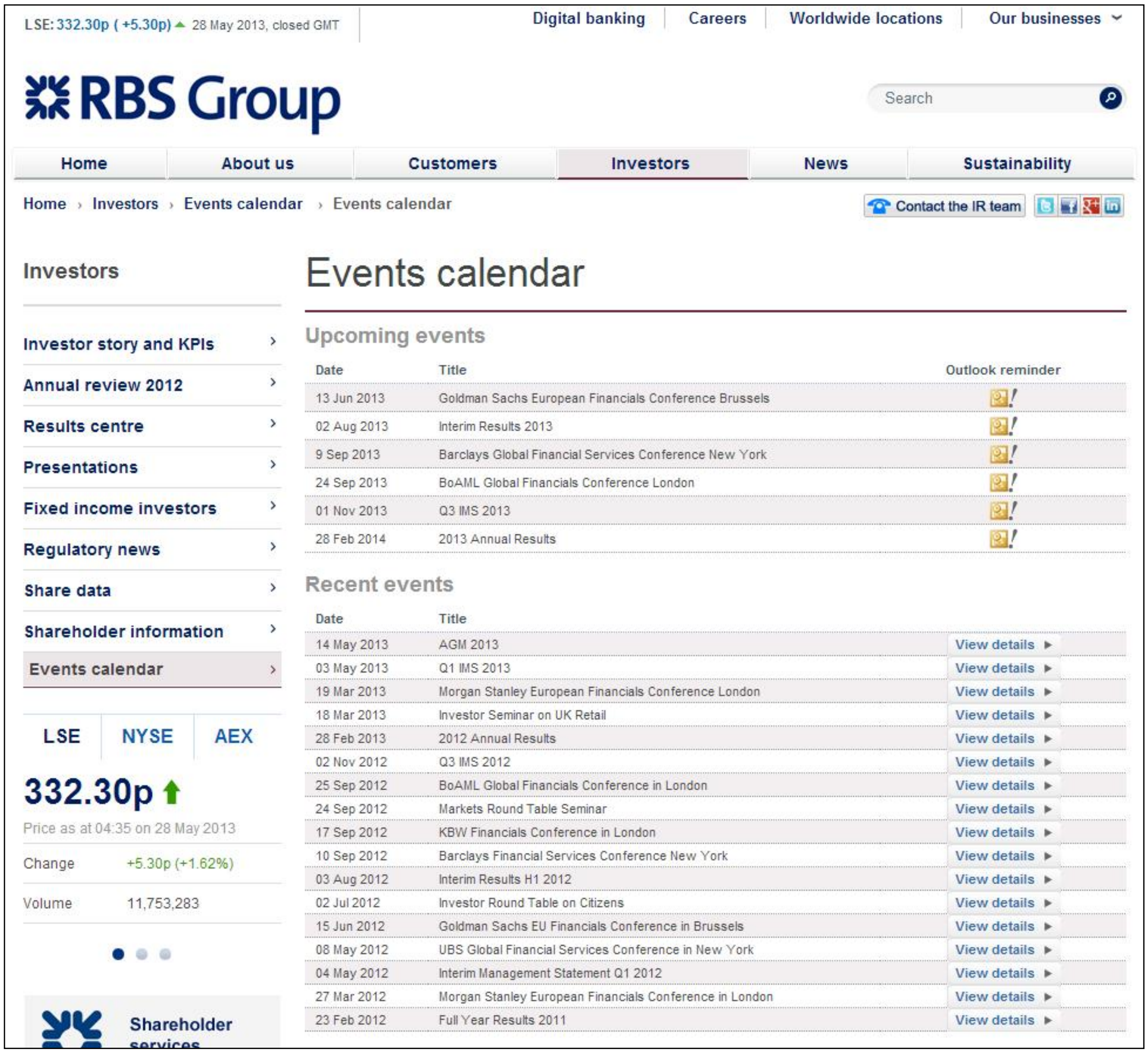
Two financial analysts appreciated the fact that the Royal Bank of Scotland site presented the company's financial calendar:

> "One of the things I have to do is look for when they're going to have their conference calls."

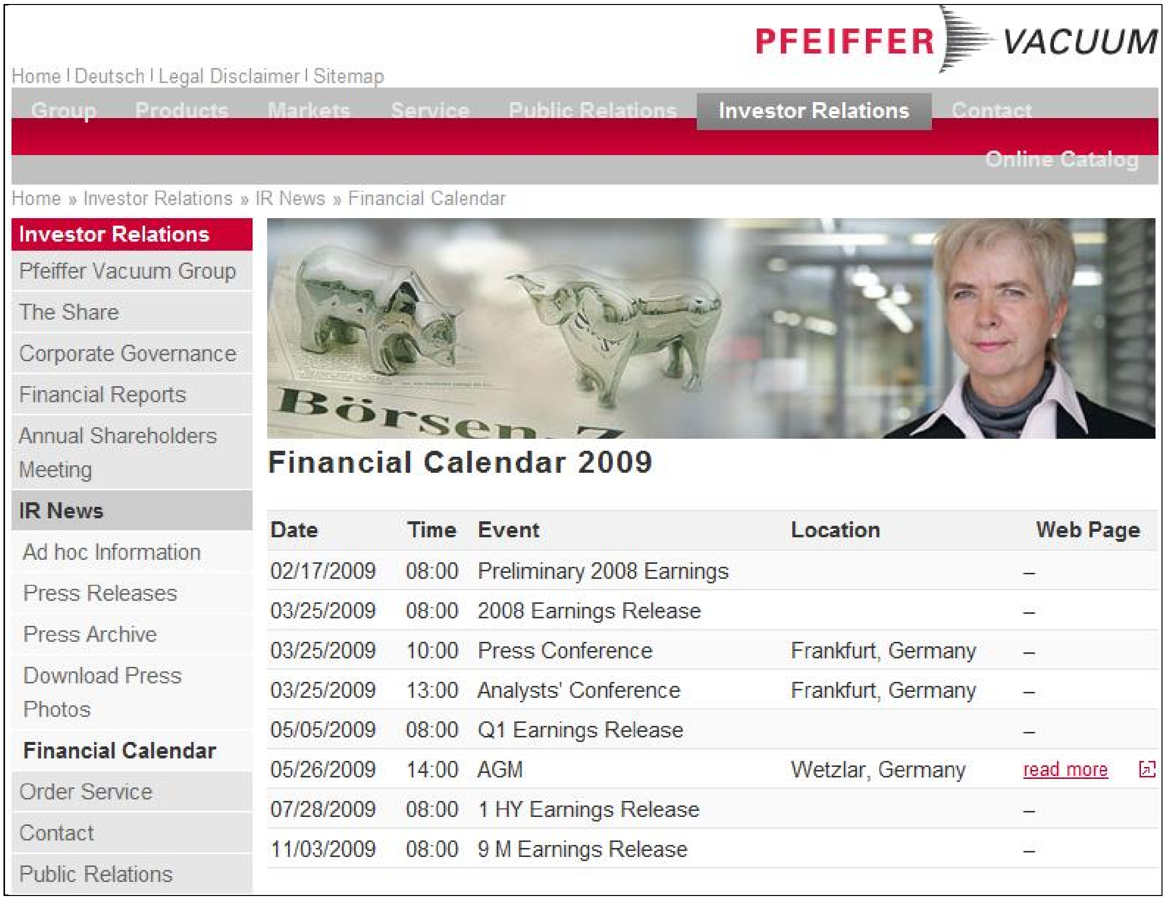
> "Yes! It shows when the results will be announced and the dividend dates."

An analyst liked that Pfeifer Vacuum provided a financial calendar on the company website.

> "This is good: When they're going to release their next quarterly results and when they're having their analyst meeting."



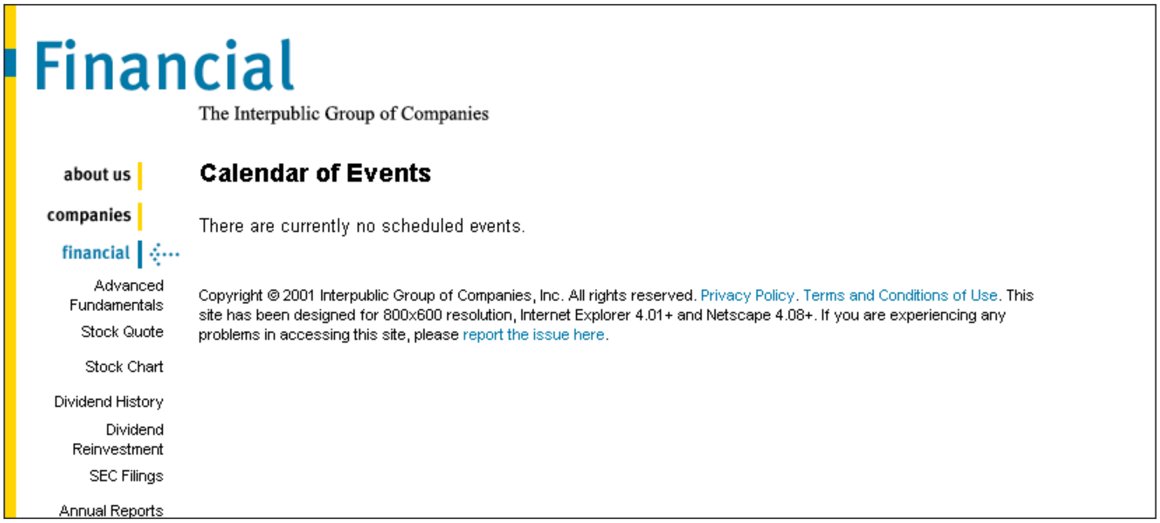
The updated Royal Bank of Scotland site still does a good job showing a comprehensive list of past and current dates. Showing past events gives people a better understanding of the activities the company participates in.



The Pfeiffer Vacuum Technologies website shows meeting times and locations for past, current, and future dates. Such thoroughness reflects well on the company.

58. If new event dates aren't available, give expected dates, offer alerts, or tell people when to check back.

It's helpful to estimate dates for important events or tell people when to check back. Estimating dates helps people plan their schedules, even if it's tentative. Even better, consider having an email alert feature on the calendar page where people can sign up for announcements about upcoming events.

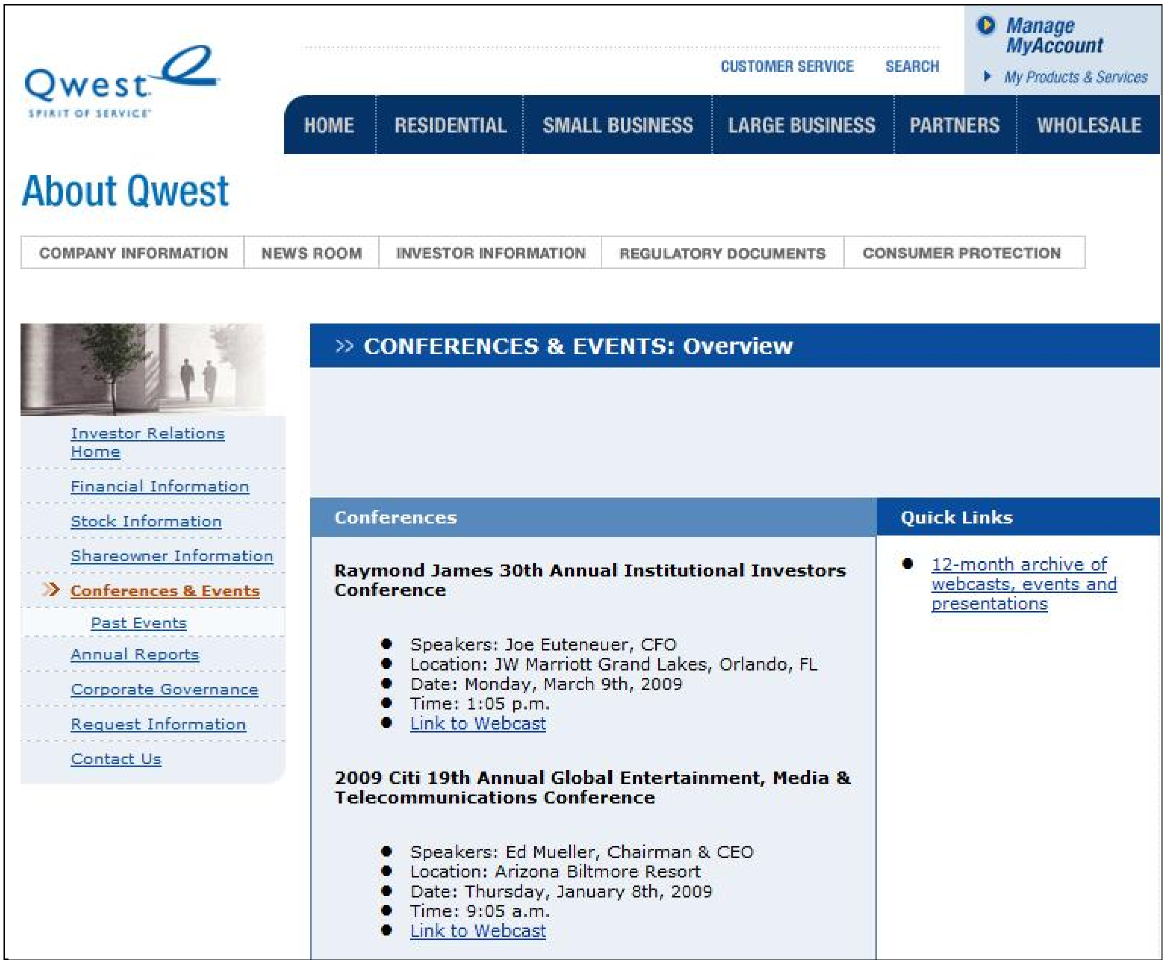


The Interpublic site would have been more helpful if it offered tentative dates or told people when to check back. Such dead ends create an unfriendly exchange.

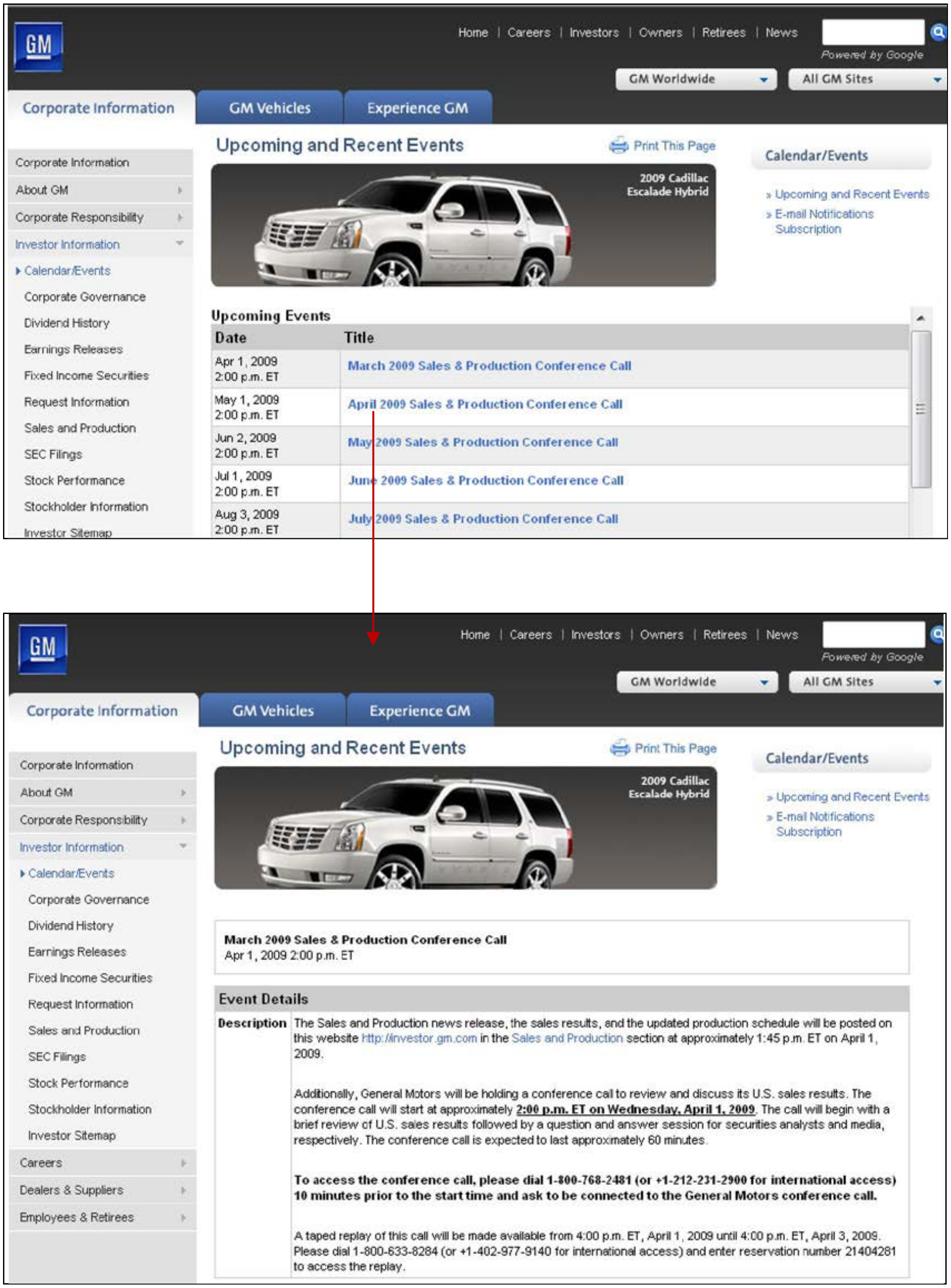
The Royal Bank of Scotland site was helpful in that it listed a tentative date for the next general meeting.

59. If event names aren't descriptive, offer a short explanation of the event's agenda, who's invited, the time and location, and how people can participate.

Give complete information about conferences and meetings so people can participate if they're interested. Many of the sites we tested didn't offer enough helpful information, leaving people wondering which meetings pertained to them and how they might participate.



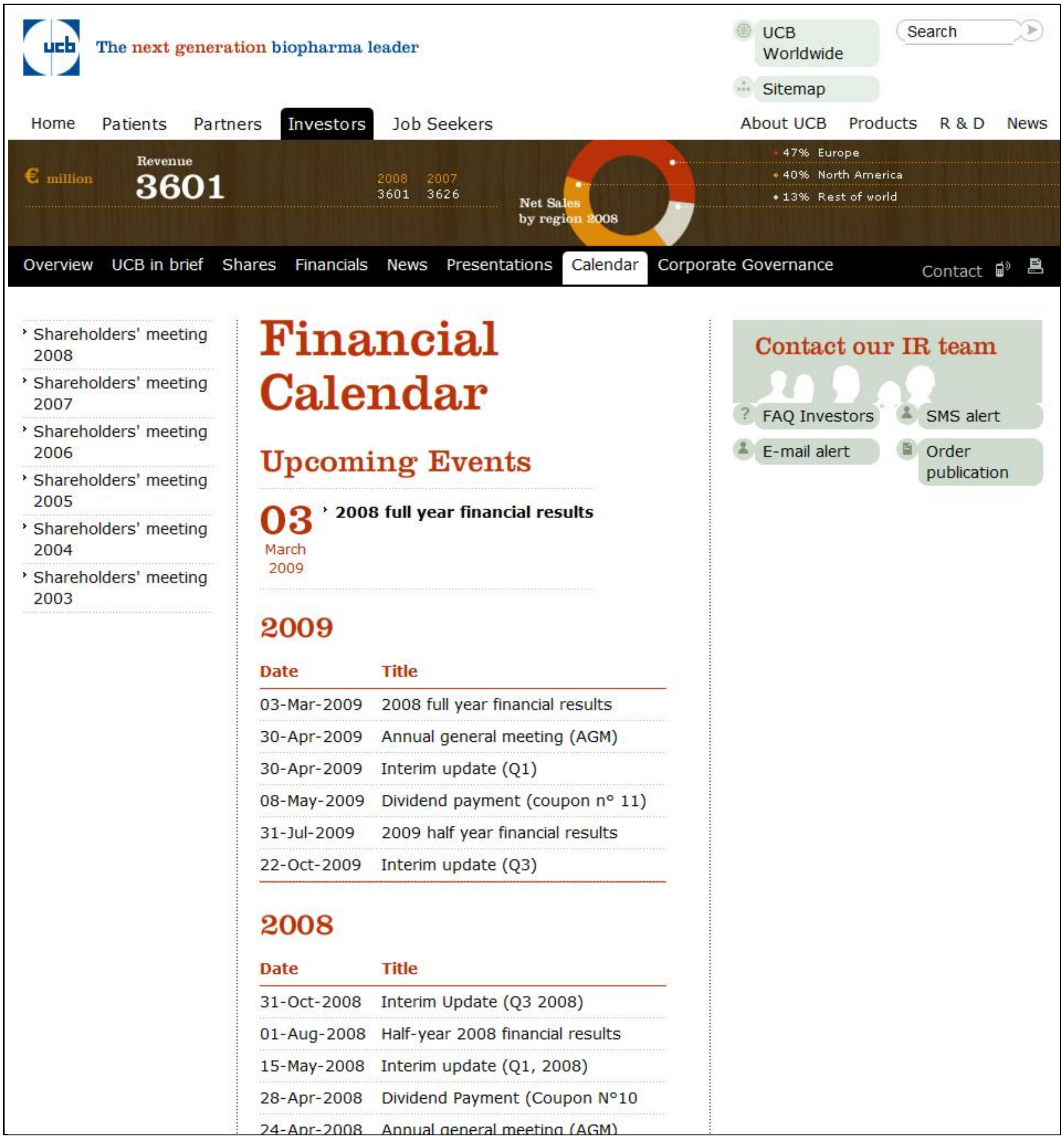
Although the Qwest site offers the time and location for each event, no general descriptions of events are offered, which is a big missed opportunity to entice new attendees. It would be very helpful to provide information about who can attend as well.



The GM website goes beyond listing events. The titles link to full event details.

60. For the calendar of events, list the most recent year first, but show events in chronological order within each year.

Order the list of events as in the following example. Note the ordering for events is different than for company history and financial reports. For company history, milestones should be presented in chronological order. Financial reports are usually organized with the most recent first. Events are a hybrid of the two methods. In this case, using a consistent method across the site is not as important as presenting the information in a way that people can process it easily.



This *Financial Calendar* at UCB is a good example of how events should be presented. Show the most recent year first, but list items within that year in chronological order.

EMAIL ALERTS

Some people said they might sign up for an email alert, especially if they were interested in following the company over a long period of time. Individual investors in particular said they appreciate email alerts for press releases, and analysts said they are interested in financial release meetings.

The following guidelines for email alerts are specific for IR. For detailed guidelines on email usability for subscriptions, newsletter content, and account maintenance, refer to our report *Email Newsletter Design to Increase Conversion and Loyalty.* www.nngroup.com/reports/email-newsletter-design/

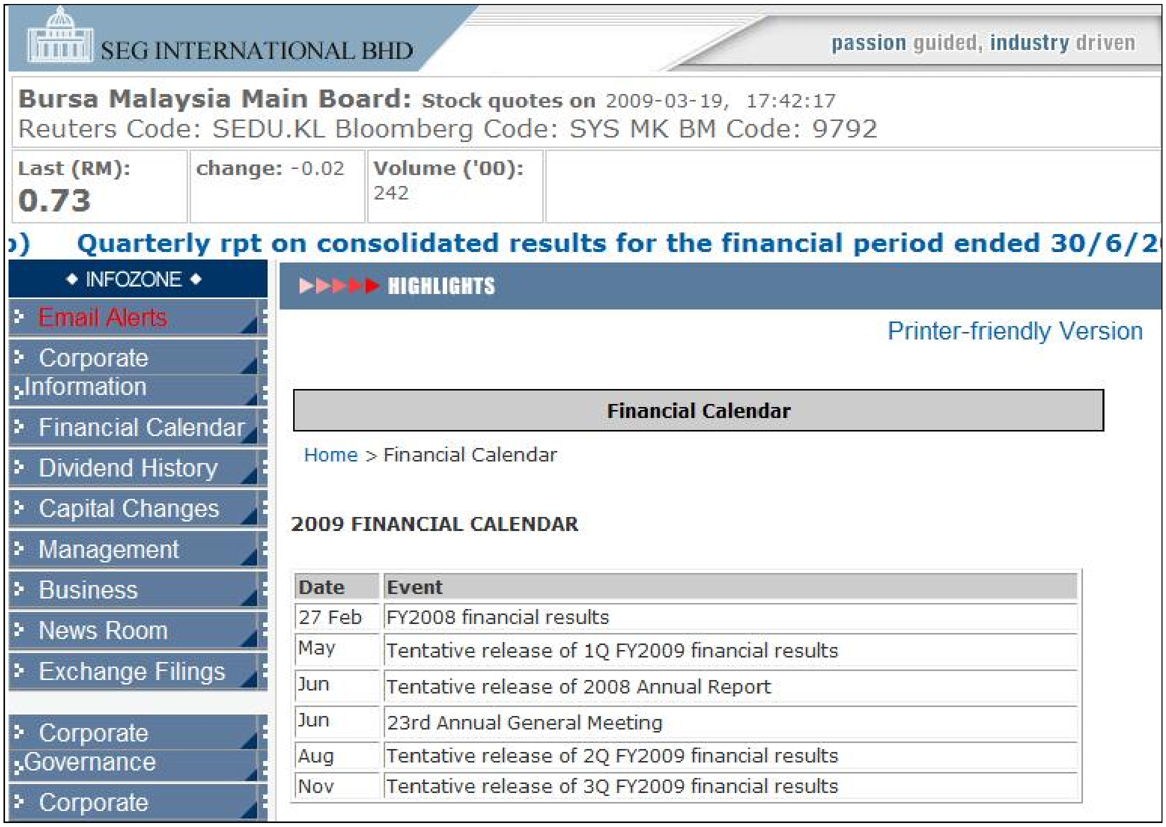
The following quotes are examples of what users said about financial alerts:

> "I would sign up for alerts so I can track them and not have to find it on the Internet."
>
> "I would sign up for alerts … . This is good when you're interested."
>
> "This is good to have."
>
> "I like these. I have these for two of my investments."
>
> "If you are really interested in this stock, you really need this info." [referring to alerts for press releases]

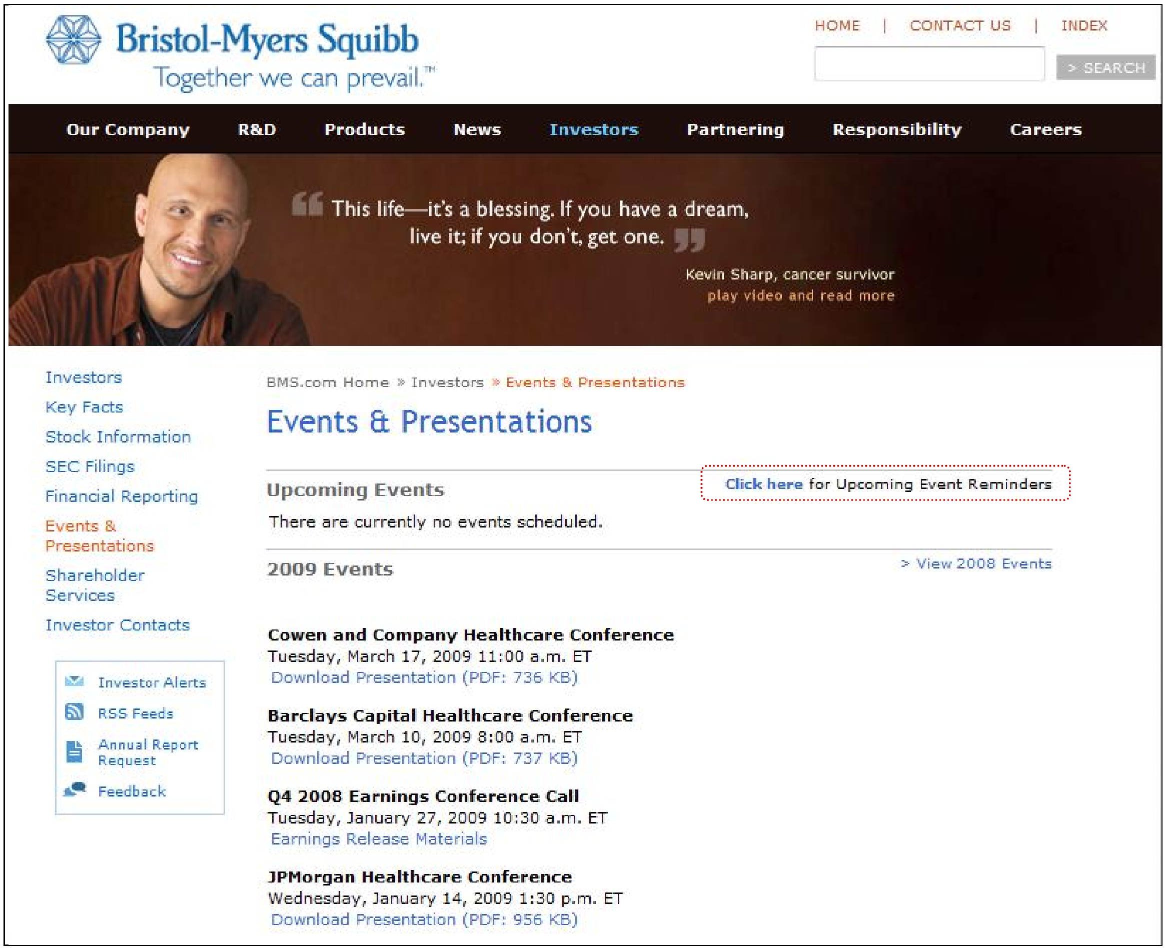
61. Feature email alerts in context, for particular areas of interest.

Integrate email alerts with the website's content, so that they're available when and where people are most likely to want them. Although people don't typically go to a company's website to sign up for alerts, they might sign up if the information in the alerts is compelling enough.

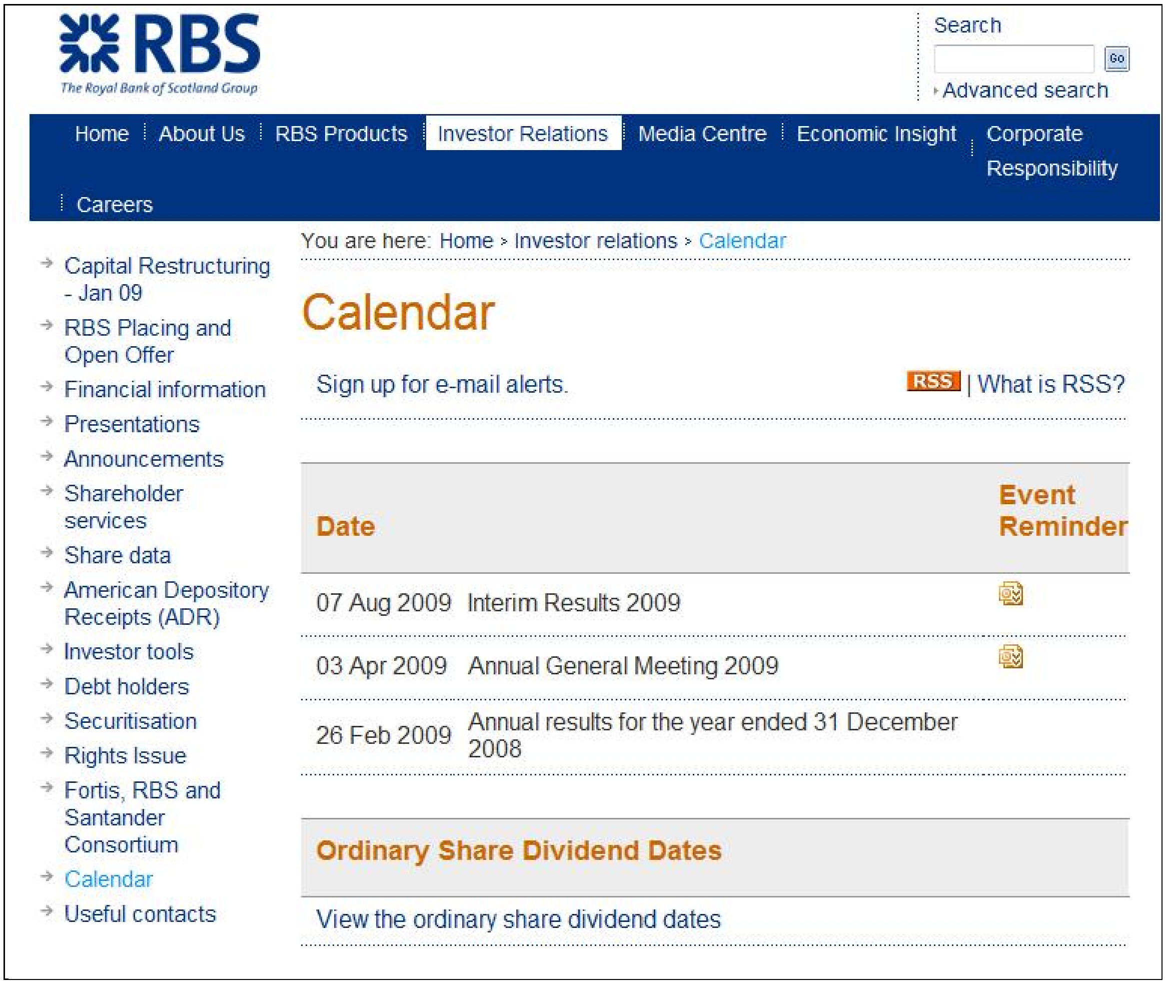
While looking at calendar dates, for example, people appreciated having the email feature available on the same page, so they could sign up right away without having to navigate to a different section of the website.



The SEGi website separates email alerts from the listing of events. Bad move. Offering alerts while people are reviewing the actual events serves as a prompt. Most people will not know (or remember) to go to a separate area of the site to get alerts. Consider people’s workflow when deciding where to place features.



This design is a little better. The alert feature is on the same page as the events. It's not visibly well connected with the listings, however, and people still might not notice it. Also, people might not understand what the alerts are for, specifically. Are they for ongoing events and news, or can they be used for specific events?



Of the sites we studied, RBS had the best IR email alert features. The *Event Reminder* is integrated well with the *Calendar*. The reminder is available when people might need it most, making it convenient for people to be reminded about each event.

62. For event alerts, give people reasonable advance notice. It's best to allow people to schedule the alerts.

Be sure to give people enough notice to plan their schedules accordingly. Many of the sites we tested that had an alert feature let people enter the number of days they prefer for advance notice, which is good to do.

A participant complained that, in his experience, some companies give only two days notice, which is not enough time for him to plan his schedule:

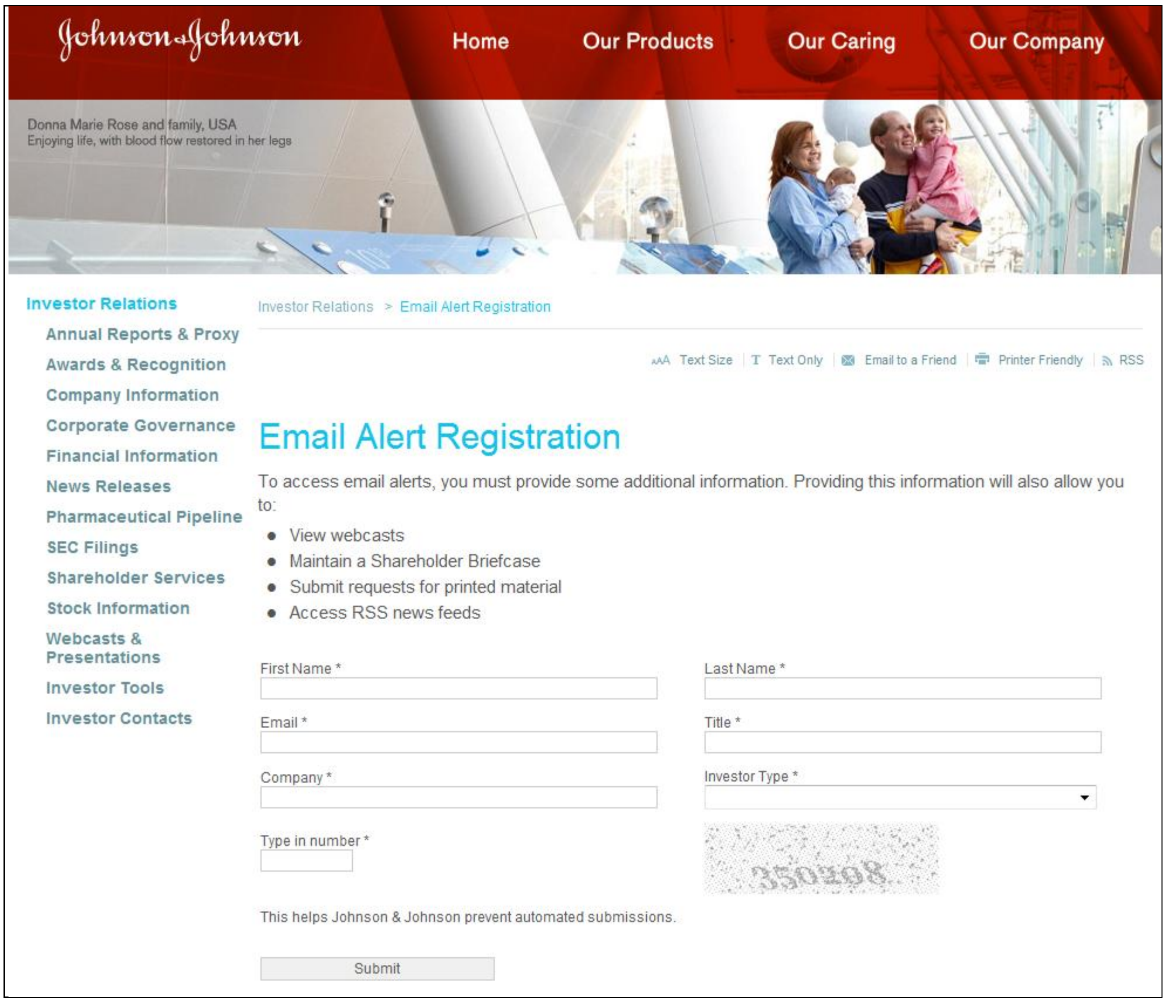
> "Some companies send email two days ahead of time when they're releasing earnings. I want one week's notice."

63. Don't require people to register to receive email alerts.

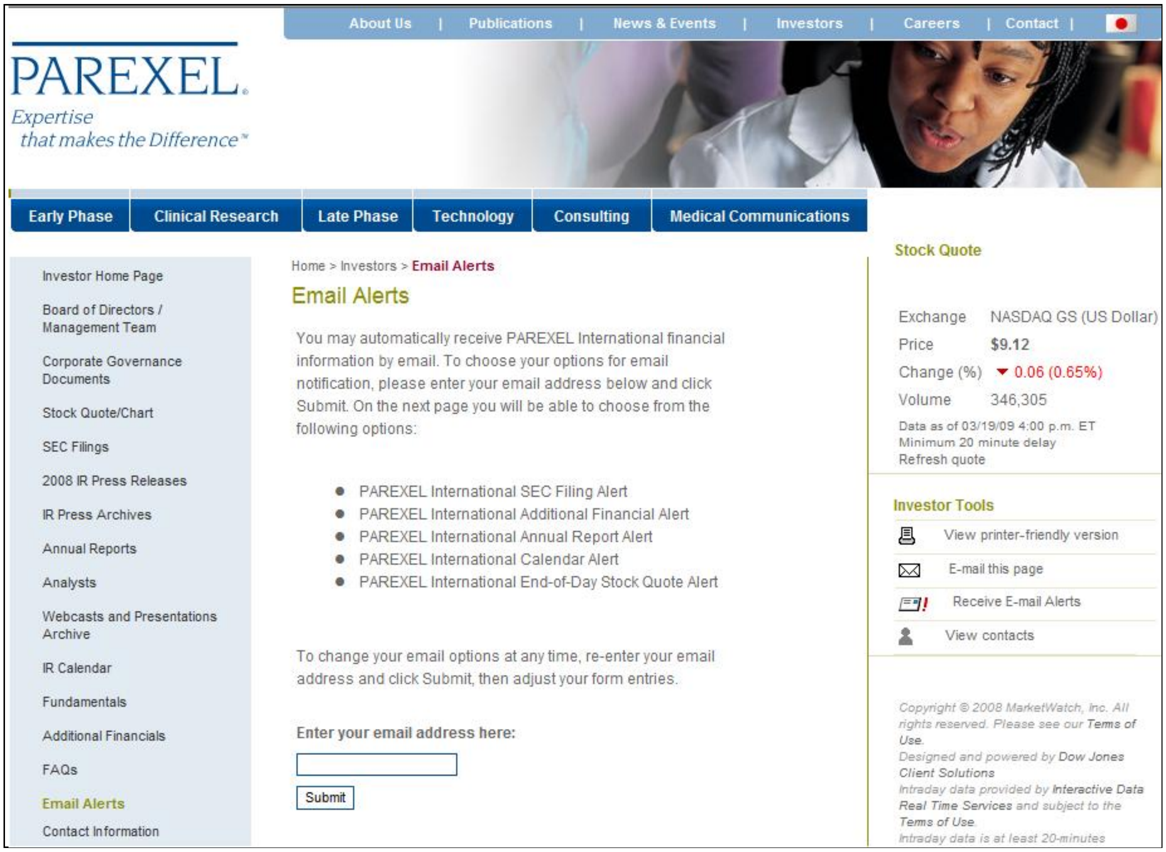
There are a few instances when registration is appropriate, but signing up for email alerts is not one of them. One way to discourage people from engaging with your organization is to require registration. Registration acts as a barrier between you and investors. People don't like providing personal information and messing with long forms, unless it's relevant to the current task; the fewer questions, the higher the completion rate. For email alerts, ask only for the email address.

A user on the Johnson & Johnson website thought it was ridiculous that signing up for email alerts required that he provide personal information, such as name and profile:

> "I find these forms annoying … . I often make up an address. If I want email, I shouldn't have to fill out this junk. Just tell me the info. That's another three to five minutes of my time. I don't want them to have my personal information."



This site required people to provide too much information. A user complained when Johnson & Johnson required personal information such as name and title to get email alerts. The barrier is too high, so the site runs the risk of losing interested users.



The signup process on the Parexel website is inviting, because it requires only a single piece of information — an email address.

64. Make sure alerts are timely. Otherwise, they are useless.

A participant in our study said that, in his experience, some press release alerts come out well after the actual article is released, making the alert useless. Alerts are useful only if they are timely and give accurate information. People sign up for press release alerts to get press releases fresh — immediately, when they're rolled out, not when the information is stale or widely known to the public.

Webcasts

People like the idea of webcasts, but they don't like sitting through them. Many people said that webcasts are generally too long and take up a lot of time; they prefer to use other, quicker methods — such as financial reports and press releases — to find similar information. Transcripts of presentations are sometimes preferred over videos because reading is faster than watching.

Most people prefer getting much of their IR information by reading, not by listening or watching webcasts.

> "I never listen to conference calls because they're too long. I never spend the time to do that. I'd rather look at the press releases and skim through to see what I like and dislike."

> "I wouldn't listen to any webcast, listen to anything audio online. It's frustrating. People are moving jerkily, the sound is not that good. I would rather get the information in an article … . [Webcasts are] disappointing and take forever to download."

> "I thought about doing this once but haven't had the time."

> "I prefer to check out the file first. The webcast can be time consuming."

Other analysts complained that the technology is often buggy or their systems do not support webcasts well:

> "I never get to view the presentation in time. Friendly companies send me slides ahead of the conference. [...] Because it's so slow, the page can never load on time while you are listening. I will call and try to look at the presentation, but it never loads fast enough."

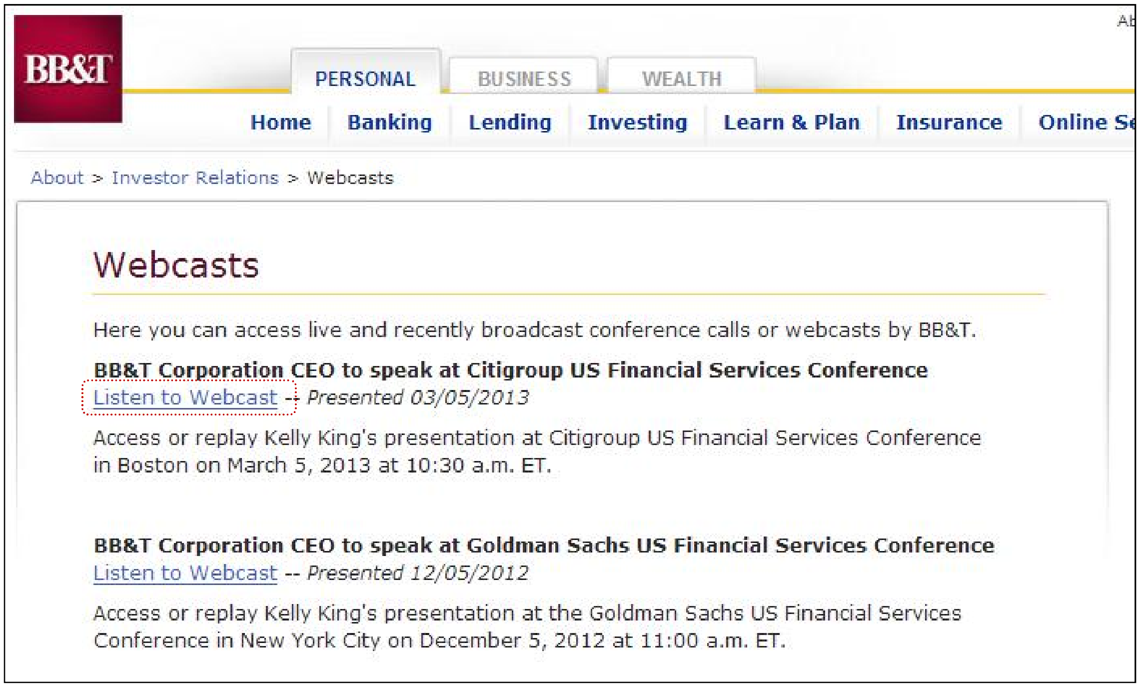
Although webcasts are a low priority for most users (especially individual investors), a few people said they occasionally tune in to get information that otherwise cannot be illustrated easily with words. For example, a financial analyst was interested in analyst meetings, and an individual investor said he might tune in if the topic was innovative products:

> "I usually multitask, reading 3–4 things, and listening, and have slides printed; I usually go to Q&A first because that is usually the meat. I usually don't have streaming video. Usually it's just the call … . The questions and answers are good because this is the only chance people have to put executives on the spot. Are you going to do this or that? Hear the nuances."

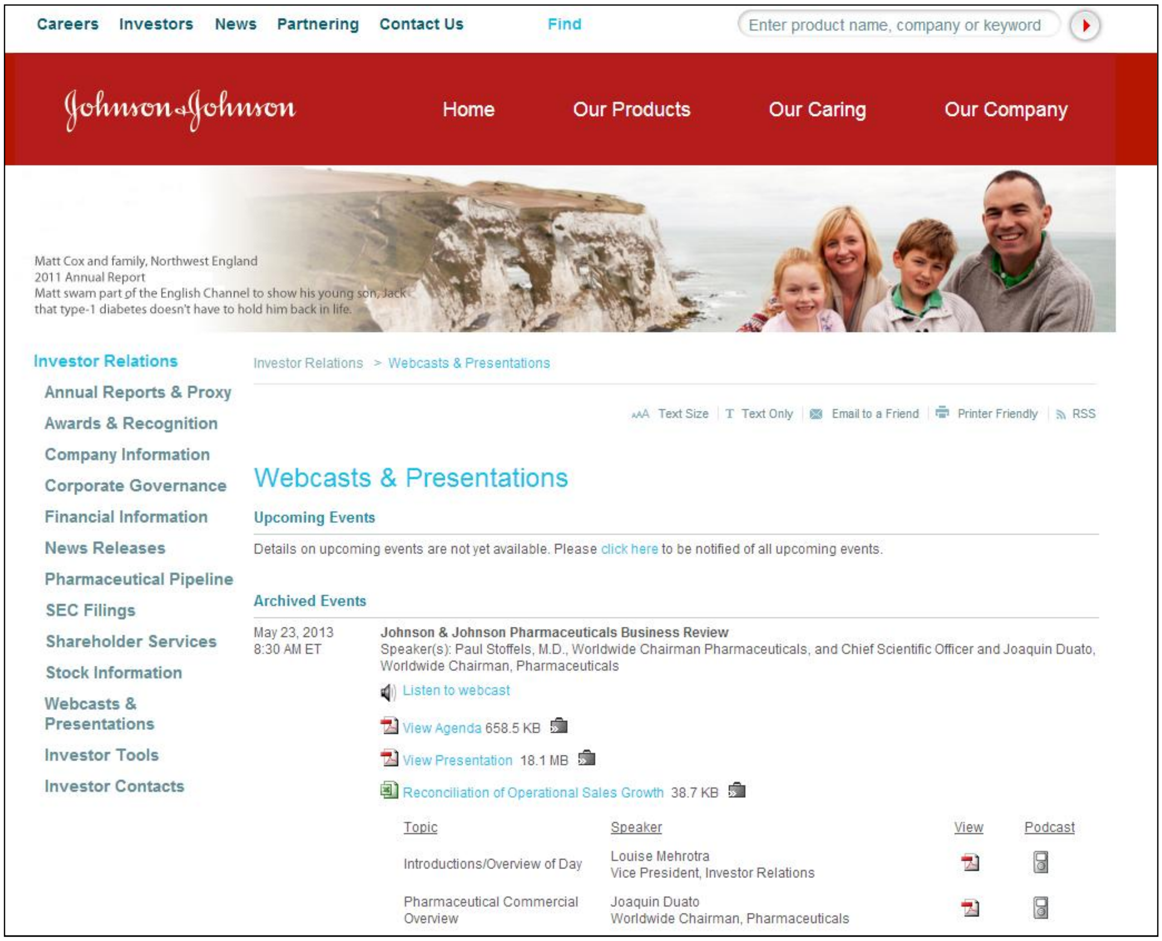
> "Listening to webcasts, I don't think I would. I have done that, but it's not something I would do on a regular basis … only if it's interesting. If it had to do with technological breakthrough — not third-quarter earnings — if it had something to do with something innovative."

65. Explain what webcasts are.

If you're going to have webcasts on your site, make sure you clearly describe what a webcast is. Don't assume that people understand the term "webcast" or "telecast." In addition, don't rely on the microphone icon to represent webcasts; a few people in our study didn't know what that meant. Also, indicate whether the webcast is in video or audio format. Label the webcast something descriptive, such as "Listen to meeting" or "Watch presentation."



The BB&T website includes the key term "Listen" in the link leading to webcasts — doing so helps describe this feature.

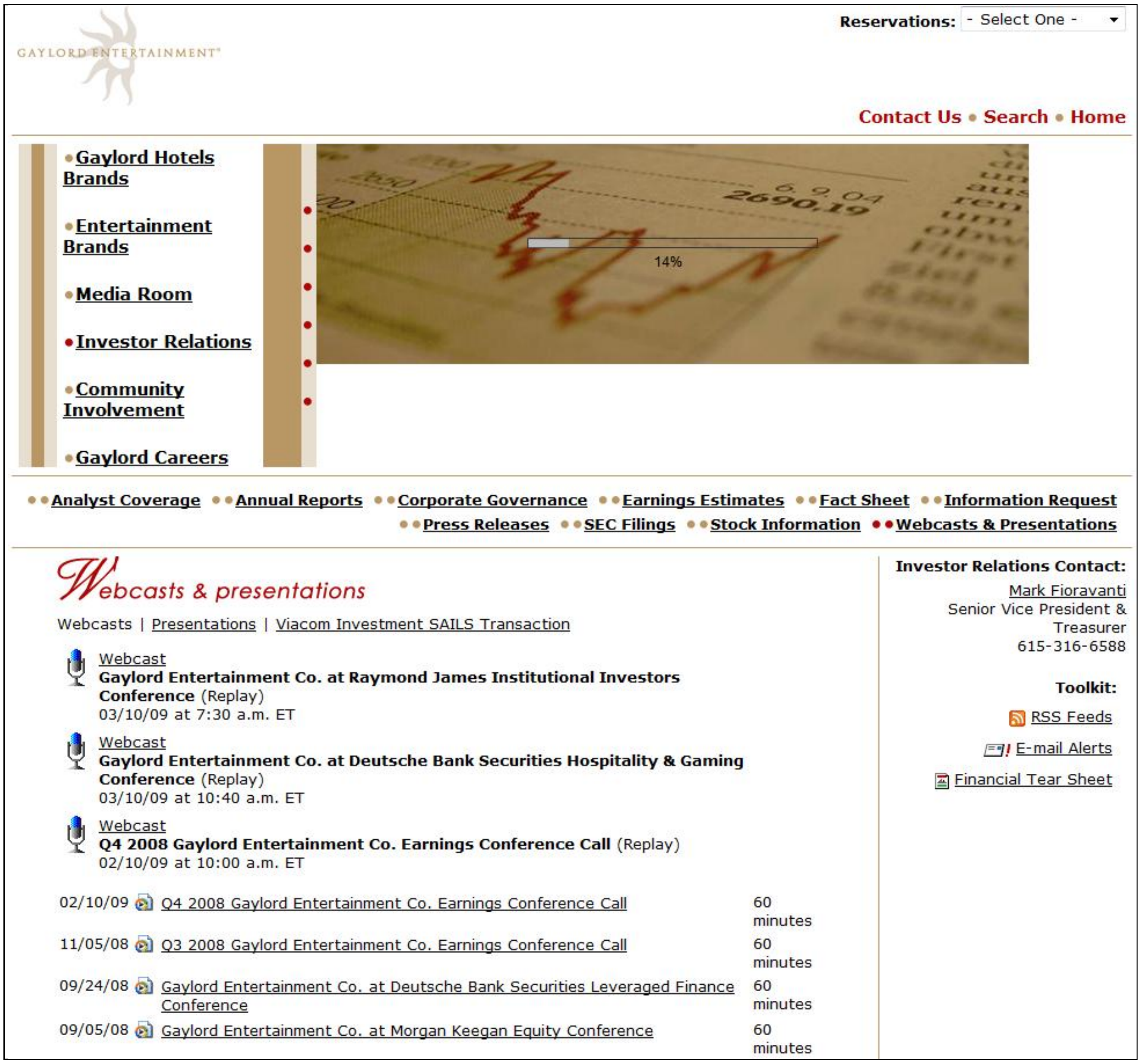


The Johnson & Johnson website features webcasts using links containing familiar terms such as *Listen to webcast* and *View presentation*.

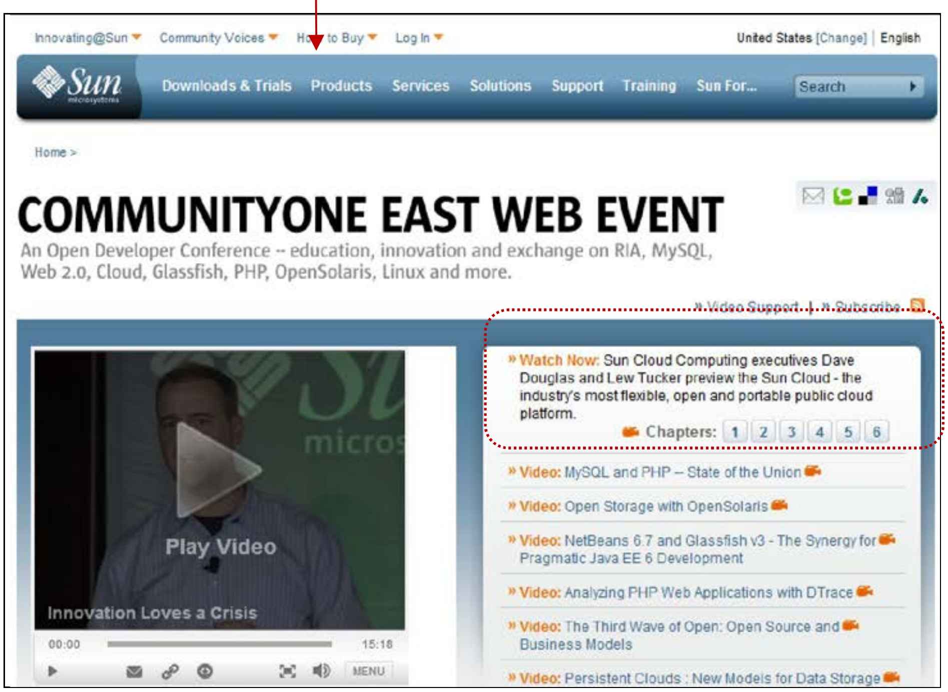
66. Provide detailed information for each webcast event.

Provide a concise event description with a brief overview of the agenda, who should attend, and the date, time, and length of the webcast. Webcasts are useful only if people know what they are about.

> "Hey, here are some webcasts — I didn't know this was possible. Depends on what's going to be discussed, how long it is, who's doing the review, what's the criteria. My time is very valuable. I don't know what the content is going to be in this."



The Gaylord Entertainment Company website would be more helpful if the more uncommon conferences had a few more sentences describing them.



The Sun website offers a brief description of each event once the link is clicked. This method is better than having no description at all. Even better would be to offer feature descriptions without requiring people to click on each event. People conserve clicks. They won't click (and won't see the description) unless the title appears interesting.

67. Divide long webcasts into sections, so that people can go directly to the section of interest.

The use of video has grown substantially on corporate websites. New technologies are allowing Web designers to use videos and multimedia to better communicate with their visitors.

Some journalists and professional investors read or watch speeches, or said they would scan them. Emotions and personality nuances sometimes do not translate well in written formats. Seeing the event or person speak provides an added layer of information that is often missed in articles and transcripts.

For example, reading the transcript of a speech by the CEO provides the content of the message. Watching her give the speech provides greater insight into her personality, however: What does she sound like? Does she hesitate when tough questions are asked? What is her tone and inflection? How does she carry herself? Does she appear confident and friendly?

The Web can be a detached and mechanical environment. Videos can help illustrate your organization's personality and culture, thus bringing site visitors closer to you.

The main reasons users gave for watching videos was to get:

- Quotes
- A sense of the person (facial expressions, body language, and so on)
- The person's perspective on the information

Web videos and multimedia are successful only if users actually find and watch them. Human nature is to scan the Web and move rapidly. Use people's time efficiently, don't design against human nature. The Web is interactive so people want to be in control and move around.

Most people resist sitting through long video clips on the Web, especially when the content is corporate information. If people want to stare passively at a screen, they have televisions for that.

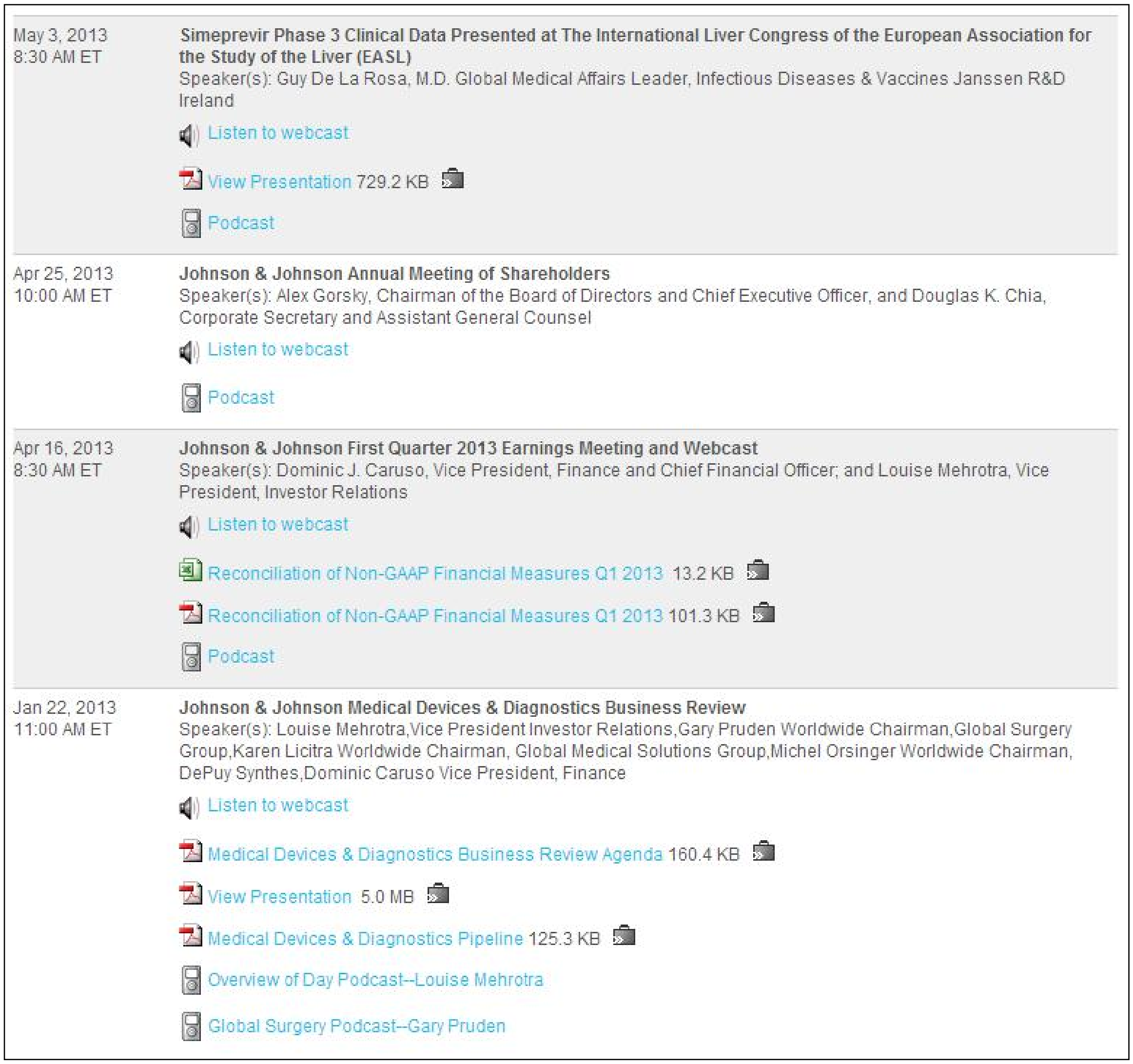
Offering particular sections of video presentations allows people to listen to topics of interest, rather than the entire webcast. Also, offering webcasts in sections keeps the file size smaller, and thus improves download time, especially for people with slow computers and networks.

The FedEx website properly features sections of a conference call. An analyst in our study said he was particularly interested in the *Questions and Answers* section of these types of meetings because it allowed him to hear the executives' responses to on-the-spot questions.

The Sun website segments webcasts. The mouseover is not very helpful here, however, because it requires unreasonable effort. Some people might not even notice the chapter numbers or bother moving the mouse over each number to read descriptions.

68. Place materials related to events (for example, webcasts, presentations, and transcripts) in the same area.

Make sure webcasts integrate well with the content on the rest of the website, so that they are available when people need them. People expect highly related information to be grouped together. Our studies show people spend very little time studying websites. When an item is not placed where they expect, people often assume the information doesn't exist on the site. Guard against that assumption by grouping related content.

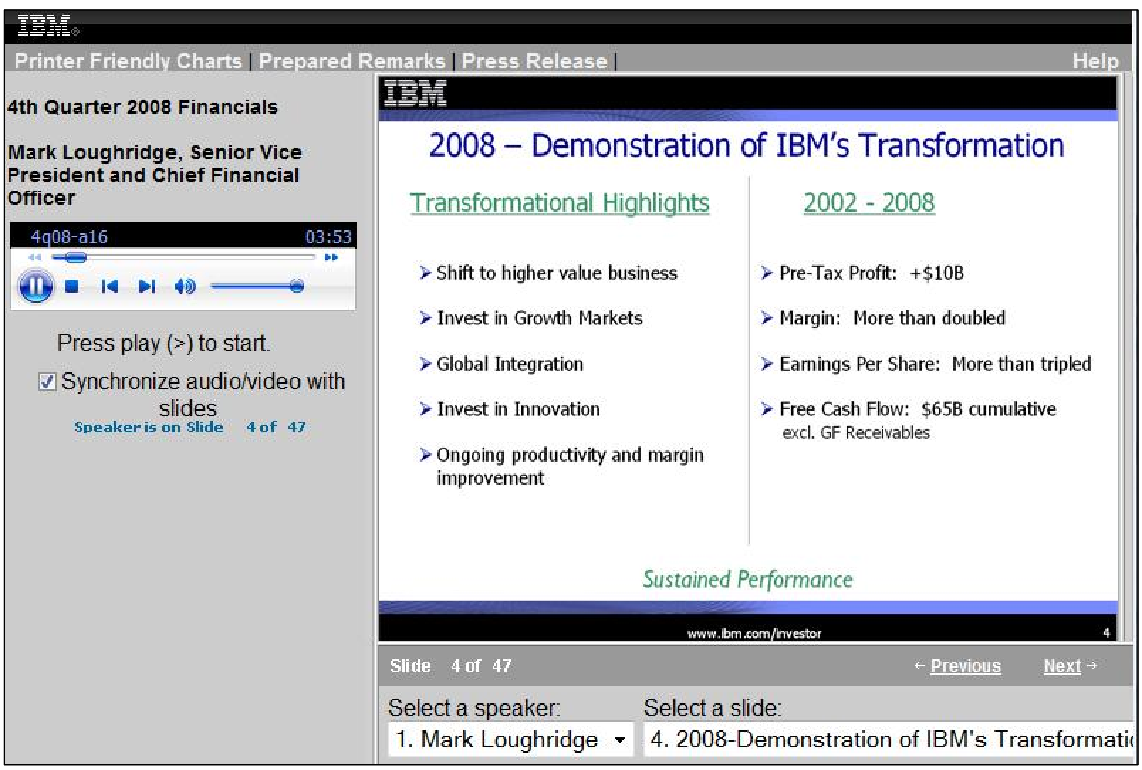


The Johnson & Johnson website does it right by integrating webcasts with presentations, documentation, and event listings. Grouping related information makes information retrieval convenient and piques interest at the right moment.

69. Set the presentation slides to match the webcast as it plays.

Help people follow along with the presentations by synchronizing the webcast with the slides. It's difficult to know which slide the presenter is on unless there is a cue. Matching the slides with the presentation saves investors confusion and allows them to focus on the content.

Textron.com: In this example, the audio webcast advances independently of the presentation slides. Unfortunately this implementation requires users to attempt the matchup on their own. On the upside, the site offers an *Enlarge Slide* feature, which is outstanding. The presentation slides on many other sites are too small to be readable.

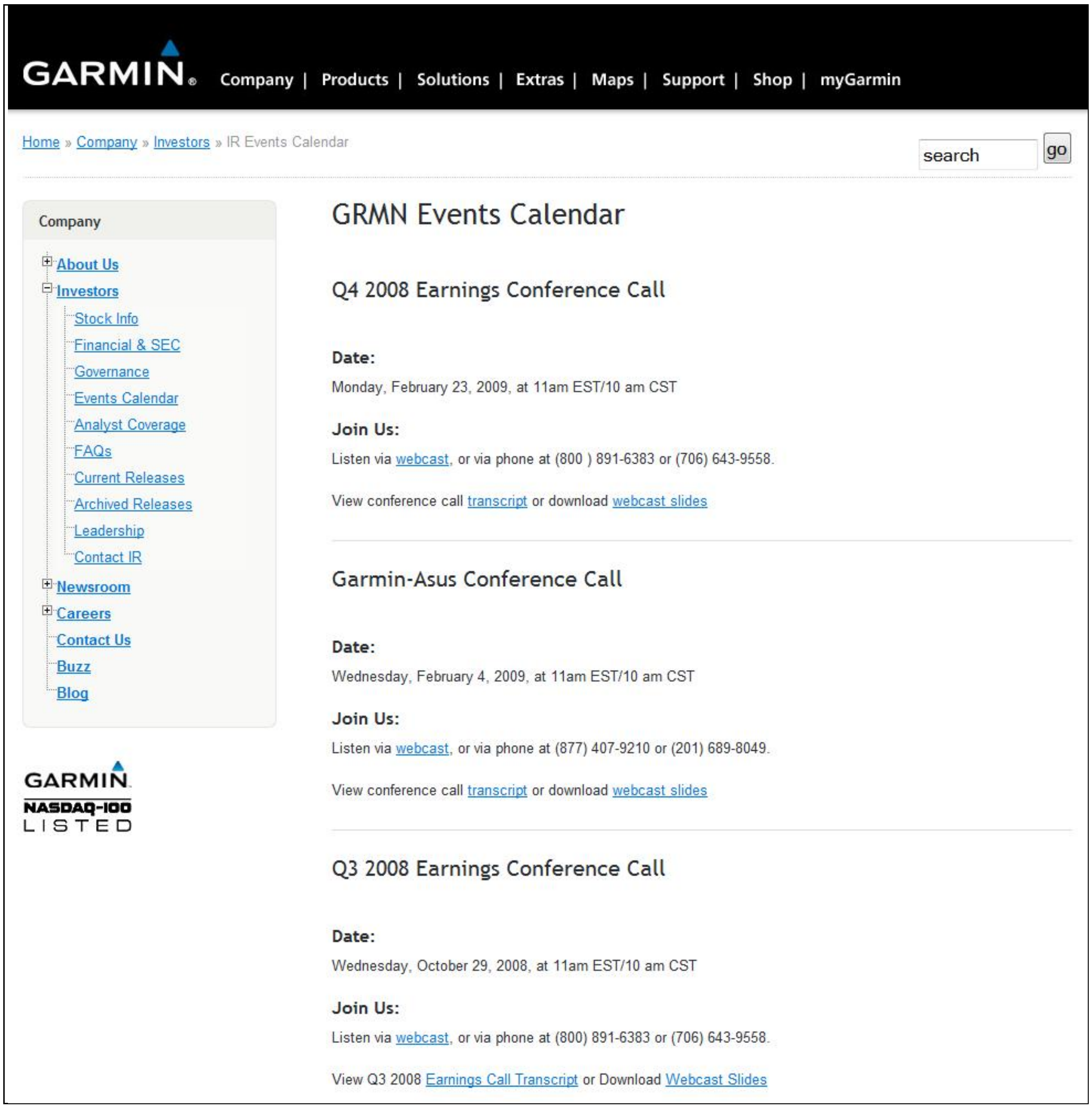


The IBM website shines in this example: The slides can be synchronized with the webcast, the slides are properly numbered (with the current slide number), the slides are readable (good contrast, typeface, font size), and there is an option to navigate to different sections.

70. Offer a dial-in number for conference calls and webcasts.

People sometimes don’t have the equipment available for webcasts, so offering an alternative helps (for example, a conference call). Make sure the call-in numbers, if applicable, are easy to find, and include internationally accessible numbers with country code and time zone information.

Several users said they listened to webcasts to gather information that otherwise wouldn’t be available in press releases. Some people mentioned listening to events while they did other work or using the dial-in option when the technology did not work properly.



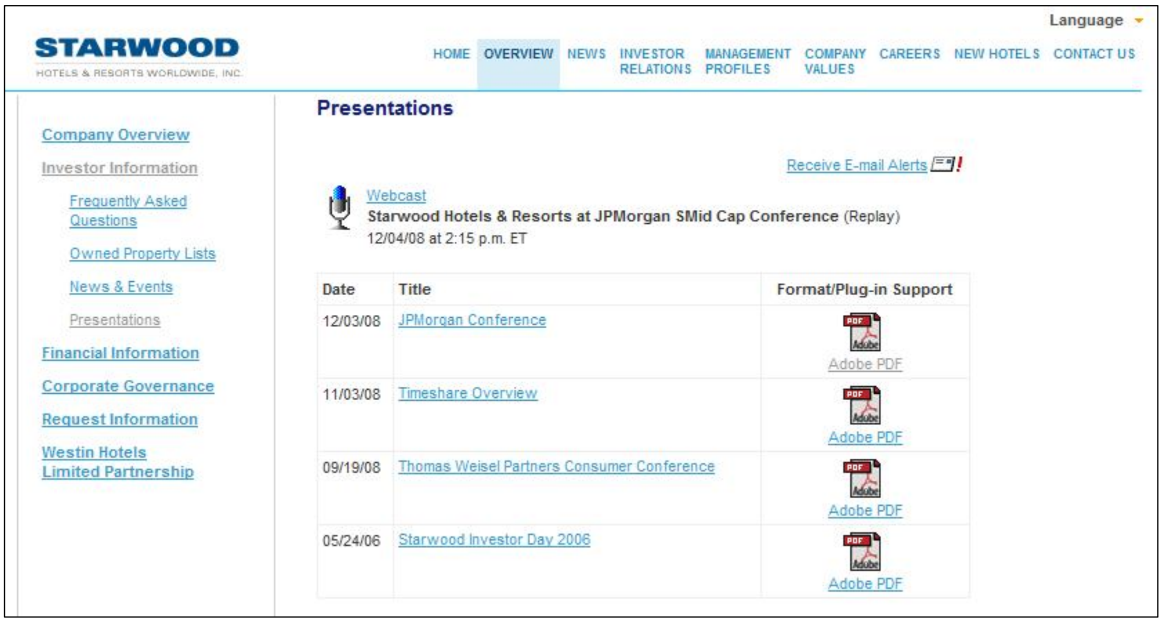
The Garmin website offers several methods for participating in remote events.

71. Don't give plug-in icons more prominence than the links they reference.

Be wary of showing icons for plug-in software such as Adobe Acrobat on your site, especially if the icons are more prominent than the associated links. Better is to present the icons to indicate the document format.

It's common for users to mistake the icon for the document link, because it looks like a button. When clicking it brings them to a completely different site, they become completely discombobulated.

In the following example users expect the PDF icon to link to the document, not to the Adobe website with instructions on how to download Adobe Reader.

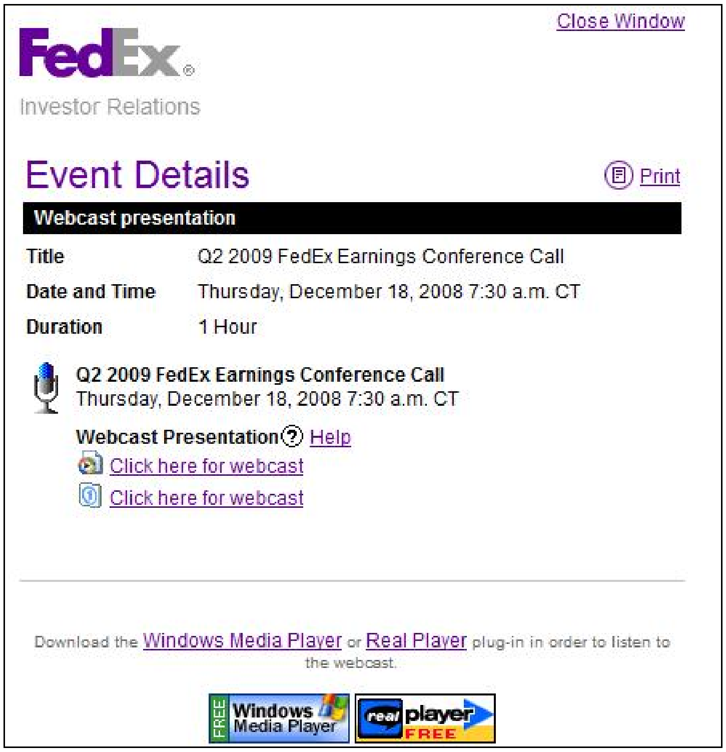


Starwoodhotels.com: People sometimes clicked on the Adobe PDF icon, mistakenly thinking they would get the content. In this example, the icon was much more prominent than the link, but it wasn't linked to the content, as it should have been. The large click target caused people to click on it instead of the link.

72. Don't require people to choose plug-ins and video players.

Even though media players have been around for years, most people still don't know what they mean or which players are installed on their computer. Terms like *Windows Media Player* and *QuickTime* are technical and meaningless to typical Web users. People often agonize over making the correct choice.

People want to click *Play* without having to choose among obscure settings and software. Intermediate steps cause confusion. Take the guesswork out of the interface by auto-detecting the user's plugins.



FedEx.com: Do not present player options like this. Some people don't know the meaning of system-oriented terms or symbols for plugins and players. It's best to auto-detect what people have installed on their computer without the need for this intermediate step.

73. If registration is required for participation in live webcasts, keep the questions minimal.

In this study, a few people clicked on webcasts but immediately backed out when the site required registration. Registration is always a deterrent.

If you must require registration, keep it as short — four questions maximum. Ask for personal information only if it is absolutely necessary. Many people are reluctant to enter personal information that they perceive is unnecessary, mainly for security reasons, but also because they detest spam and telemarketers. If personal information is required, explain your privacy policy and why you need the information carefully. Registration always creates an obstacle, even when there is a good business reason for having it, and it will cost you many potential audience members.

Slide Presentations

74. In presentations (and in other corporate areas), emphasize facts and minimize jargon and hype.

Posting presentation slides for webcasted meetings is helpful in that it lets people follow along and participate in the meeting. People appreciate slides that contain factual and useful content. It's critical to stick to the facts and remove any marketing language. People appreciate accurate charts and graphs that show trends and comparative information, not hype and buzz-words. Investors are smart and analytical. Stick with facts to win them over.

In our study, people were very skeptical of presentations because they often contained biased or unhelpful information. Here are a few of their comments:

> "They're dog and pony shows."

> "I would not be interested in doing this. It's usually some CEO or CFO saying they didn't do so well, but they're going to do a lot better in the future."

> "I probably wouldn't look at this … . It would be information I wouldn't need or care about. What I would look for is right on the top, highs/lows. They're doing analyst meetings, numbers and stuff I don't need. That wouldn't do anything for me."

> "They're not informative. They're going to tell you what you want to hear."

> "What is this? I might click on one just to see what it is, but I probably won't look at it."

A person using the Interpublic website complained that the presentations didn't contain any useful information:

> "I have 26 pages and I'm getting bored."

A user of the Johnson & Johnson site was leery of presentation slides because they contained marketing language:

> "My first reaction is, 'Oh shit!' PowerPoint slides — they're a pain. They're baby talk. There's a lot of clicking just to get through the buzz-words … . 'Innovation through process excellence.' To me, this is completely meaningless."

A person using the Royal Bank of Scotland site looked through several slides and didn't find the information he wanted:

> "If they're trying to appeal to investors, and they want to make my life easier because they have a great story to tell, if they believe they are a compelling investment, then they should show how they stack up to the competition. Give me a little chart that shows how you stack up."

Another person using the Royal Bank of Scotland site found a helpful slide after digging around for a while:

> "This is perfect — income growth slide — this is good stuff. This is perfect, but it took me a while to figure this out. This is what I want to

see. Their income is growth, more than their competition. This company wants to make their case. It tells me how much of it is organic and how much of it is from acquisitions."

75. Create presentation slides so they can be understood on their own, without having to listen to the full presentation.

Several institutional investors in our study used the presentation slides as their primary method of getting information on the company's financial status. Presentation slides can be a time saver when they can be understood without listening to the actual presentation.

An investor using the Citigroup website was pleasantly surprised when a webcast had an accompanying presentation:

> "This is a PowerPoint, not an actual presentation. This is great. This is what I would look at."

On the Li & Fung Group website, a user spent time combing through the presentation slides that he later saved on the computer. He commented:

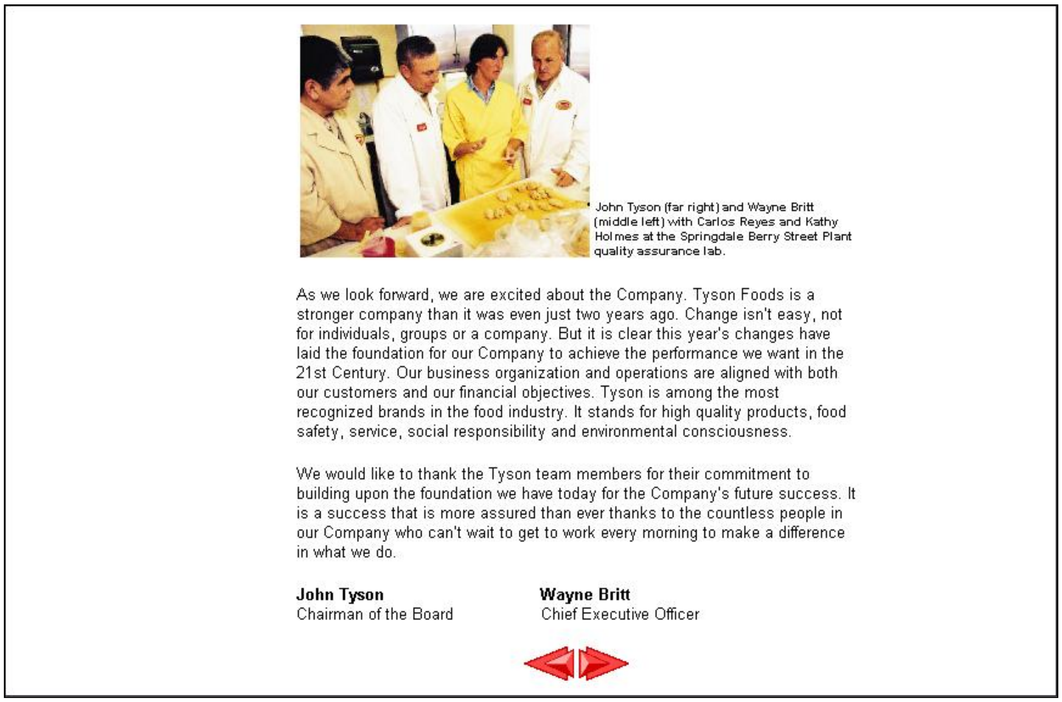
> "This provides a quick reference to the previous half-year performance. Overall, this is good transparency. I have gotten reasonable information in a limited amount of time."

The same person said he prefers reviewing slides over listening to the entire webcast because of time:

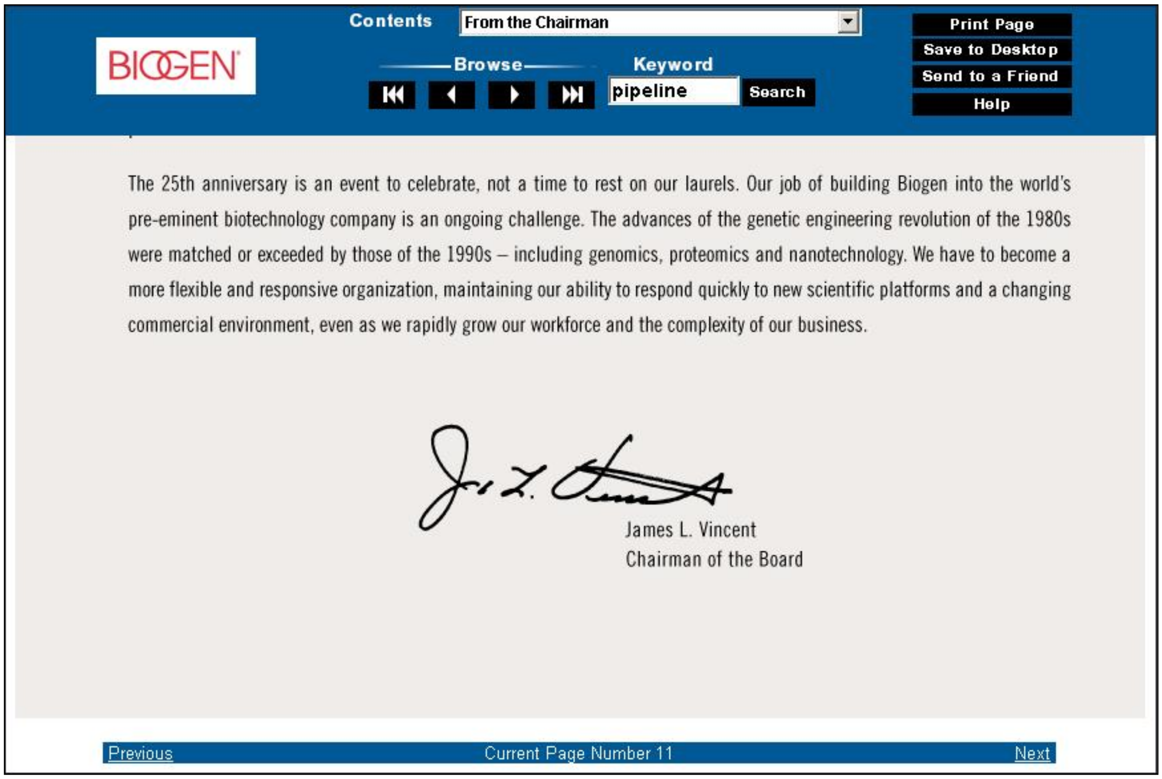
> "This video is 28 minutes long. I spent only 5 minutes to go through the presentation. If possible, do a separate online presentation. Make the online version easier to understand — shorter. 10–15 minutes is good enough. The CEO announcement is boring. The CEO might not be good speaker. IR people should make PowerPoints understandable."

76. Show the presentation's length and the user's current progress toward completing it.

People want to know how far they've progressed and how far they have to go. For example, show the total number of pages and the current page number. Similarly, for reports that have *Next* buttons, show the number of pages people have to click through to complete a section.



The annual reports on the Tyson and Infocus websites had arrow icons that didn’t give any indication of the number of pages each section contained.



The Biogen website showed the page number but not the total number of pages.

77. Test your presentations to make sure that they're legible when printed as well as on the computer screen.

People view presentations on screen and in print. When researching investment information, some people like to print out specific slides so they can refer back to them or give them to a friend or family member. Some people said they printed presentations and took them along when traveling.

> "I really like this. When I travel I don't have presentations. [It's] nice to be able to print it out so I can follow it."

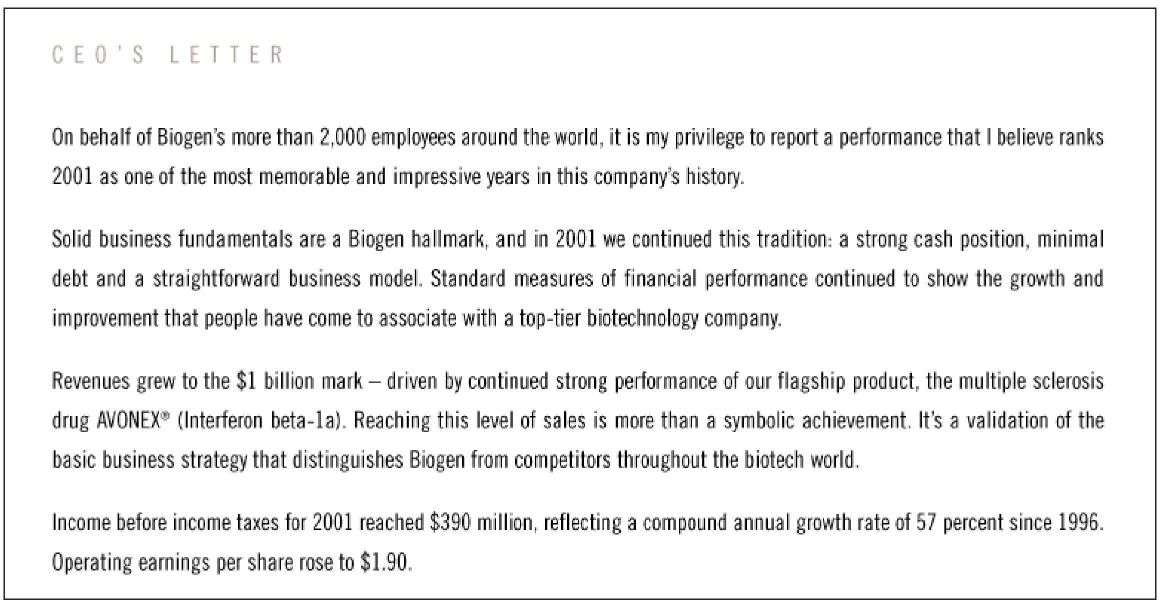
Presentations made for print usually don't display well online. For example, small graphics, graphs, and text that are legible in print are often difficult or impossible to read online. Reading on the screen is much more difficult than reading printed material. Tiny fonts are especially difficult to read, particularly for people with low vision or people over the age of 40. Small fonts might look good at first glance, but when people have to actually use the site and read the text, tiny words can cause eyestrain, and some people can't read them at all.

Consider your target audience when selecting font sizes. Choose sharp, crisp typefaces and font sizes that are easy to read in both formats. Even better, provide two versions of the presentation: One optimized for print and the other for on-screen reading.

THE DISCIPLINE TO DELIVER™

IMPORTANT NOTE TO SHAREHOLDERS In addition to historical information, this Annual Report contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the "safe harbor" provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Reference is made in particular to statements regarding expectations as to the future performance of our stock price, our success at bringing products to market, future financial results, including the potential growth of the market for AVONEX and the potential market for AMEVIVE, the development and commercialization of new formulations and new uses of AVONEX, the potential product launch and commercial success of AMEVIVE, the potential efficacy and uses of products in development, the anticipated results of ongoing clinical trials, the timing of anticipated and ongoing clinical trials, the description of the Company's plans, goals and objectives for future operations and future product development, assumptions underlying such plans, goals and objectives and other forward-looking statements included in the CEO's Letter, the Chairman's Letter, "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations" ("MD&A") and other sections of this Annual Report. Such statements are based on management's current expectations and are subject to a number of factors and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements. In particular, careful consideration should be given to cautionary statements made in MD&A, including under the heading "Outlook" and in the business section of the Company's Form 10-K under the heading "Risks Associated with Drug Development and Commercialization."

The Biogen website used small and therefore illegible fonts. Even people with normal vision would have trouble reading this at default size.



CEO'S LETTER

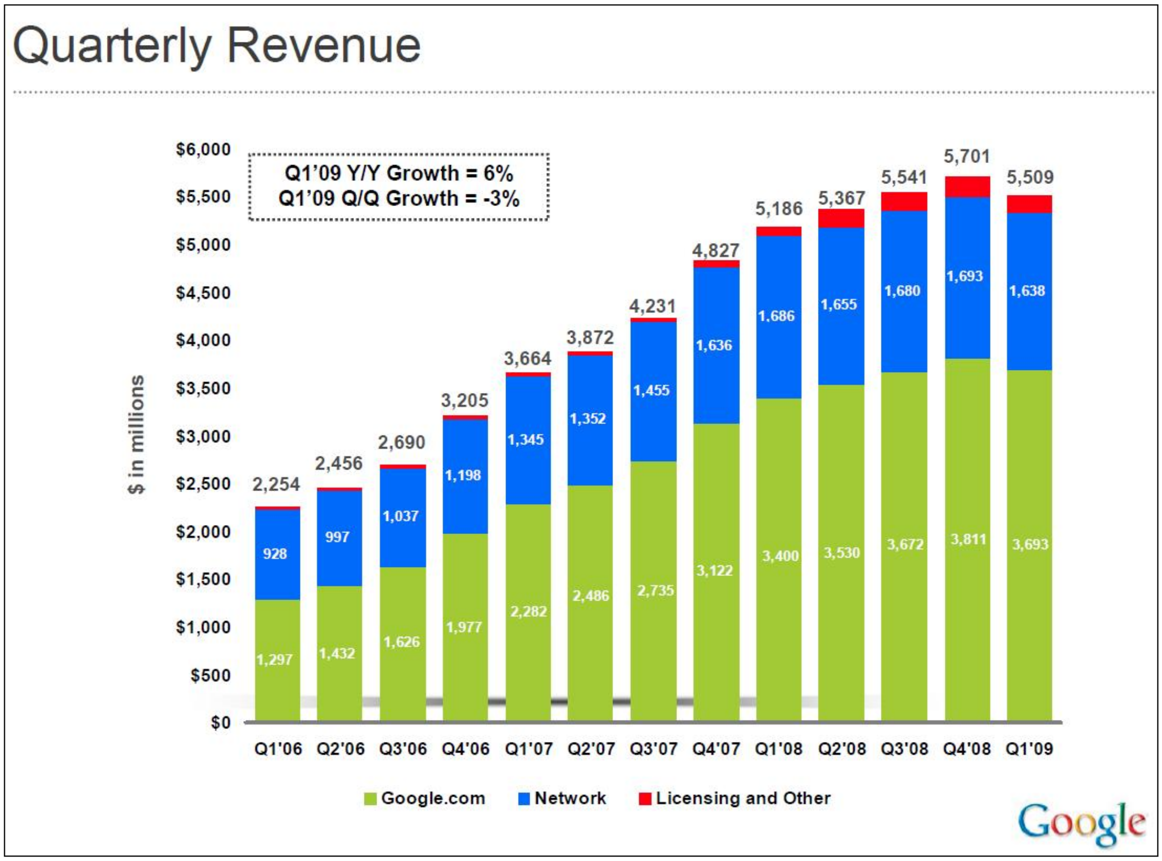
On behalf of Biogen's more than 2,000 employees around the world, it is my privilege to report a performance that I believe ranks 2001 as one of the most memorable and impressive years in this company's history.

Solid business fundamentals are a Biogen hallmark, and in 2001 we continued this tradition: a strong cash position, minimal debt and a straightforward business model. Standard measures of financial performance continued to show the growth and improvement that people have come to associate with a top-tier biotechnology company.

Revenues grew to the $1 billion mark – driven by continued strong performance of our flagship product, the multiple sclerosis drug AVONEX® (Interferon beta-1a). Reaching this level of sales is more than a symbolic achievement. It's a validation of the basic business strategy that distinguishes Biogen from competitors throughout the biotech world.

Income before income taxes for 2001 reached $390 million, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 57 percent since 1996. Operating earnings per share rose to $1.90.

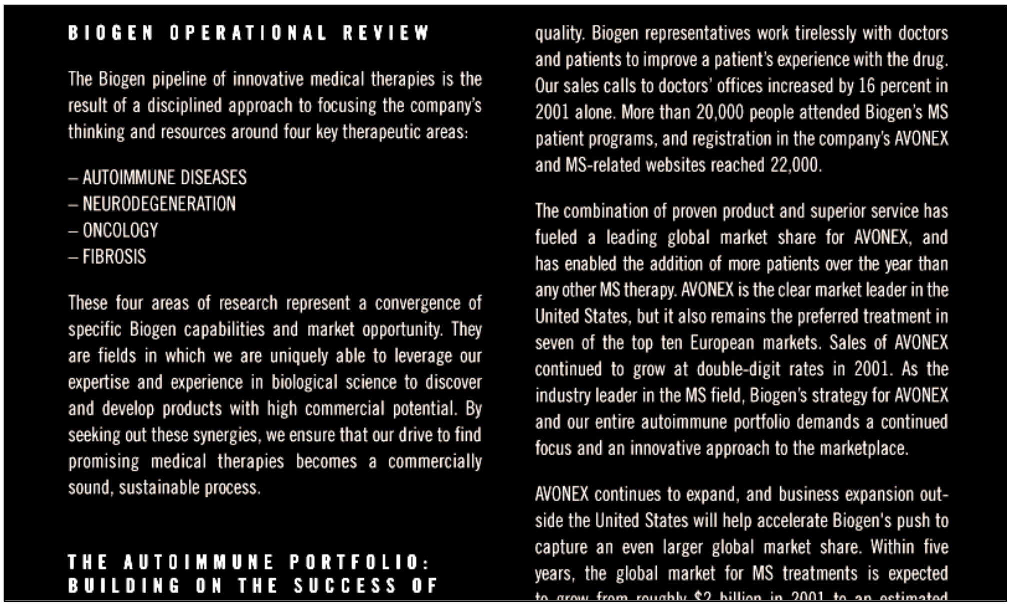
Another section of the Biogen website used a larger sans-serif typeface that was much easier to read at default size. Because many people don't know how to increase the font size on Web pages, it's best to present text at a readable size to begin with.



The earnings slides on the Google website use a plain, white background with highly contrasting text colors and charts. These color choices make the presentation easy for investors to read and follow along.

78. Avoid using dark background colors for presentations meant to be viewed online or printed.

Avoid using dark background colors in presentations that people might print. Such colors take longer to print, use up a lot of ink, and often smear onto text, making it difficult to read. If you must have a background, make it light and faint so that it's "printer friendly." Also, ensure that the background sufficiently contrasts with the graphics and text, so that text is easy to read.


BIOGEN OPERATIONAL REVIEW

The Biogen pipeline of innovative medical therapies is the result of a disciplined approach to focusing the company's thinking and resources around four key therapeutic areas:

– AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES
– NEURODEGENERATION
– ONCOLOGY
– FIBROSIS

These four areas of research represent a convergence of specific Biogen capabilities and market opportunity. They are fields in which we are uniquely able to leverage our expertise and experience in biological science to discover and develop products with high commercial potential. By seeking out these synergies, we ensure that our drive to find promising medical therapies becomes a commercially sound, sustainable process.

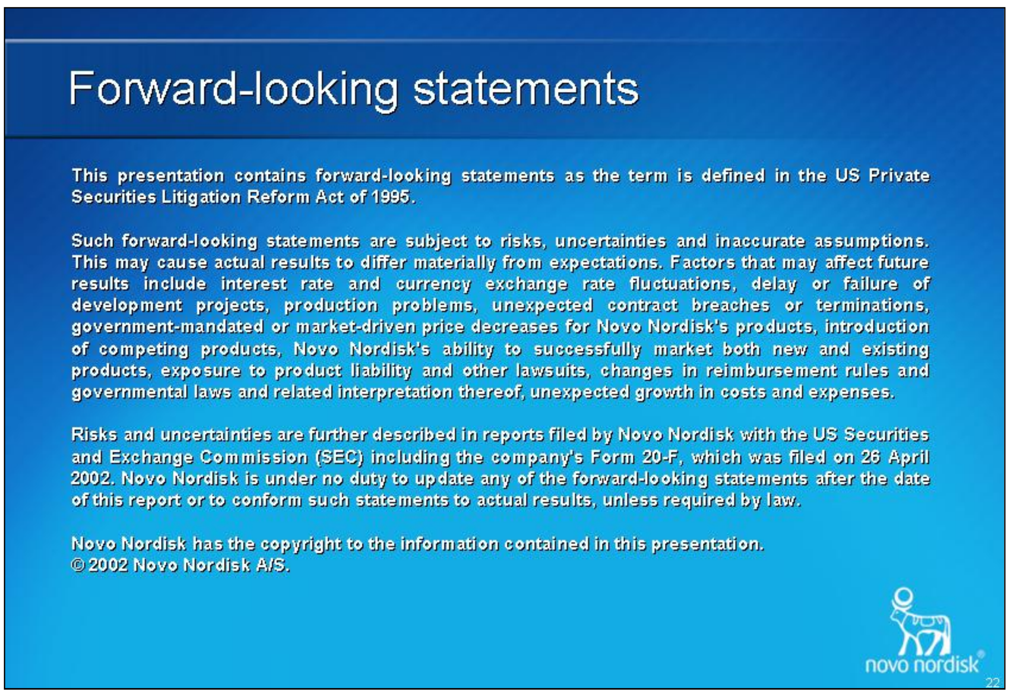
THE AUTOIMMUNE PORTFOLIO: BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF

quality. Biogen representatives work tirelessly with doctors and patients to improve a patient's experience with the drug. Our sales calls to doctors' offices increased by 16 percent in 2001 alone. More than 20,000 people attended Biogen's MS patient programs, and registration in the company's AVONEX and MS-related websites reached 22,000.

The combination of proven product and superior service has fueled a leading global market share for AVONEX, and has enabled the addition of more patients over the year than any other MS therapy. AVONEX is the clear market leader in the United States, but it also remains the preferred treatment in seven of the top ten European markets. Sales of AVONEX continued to grow at double-digit rates in 2001. As the industry leader in the MS field, Biogen's strategy for AVONEX and our entire autoimmune portfolio demands a continued focus and an innovative approach to the marketplace.

AVONEX continues to expand, and business expansion outside the United States will help accelerate Biogen's push to capture an even larger global market share. Within five years, the global market for MS treatments is expected

The Biogen website used a black background, making the printed version difficult to read.



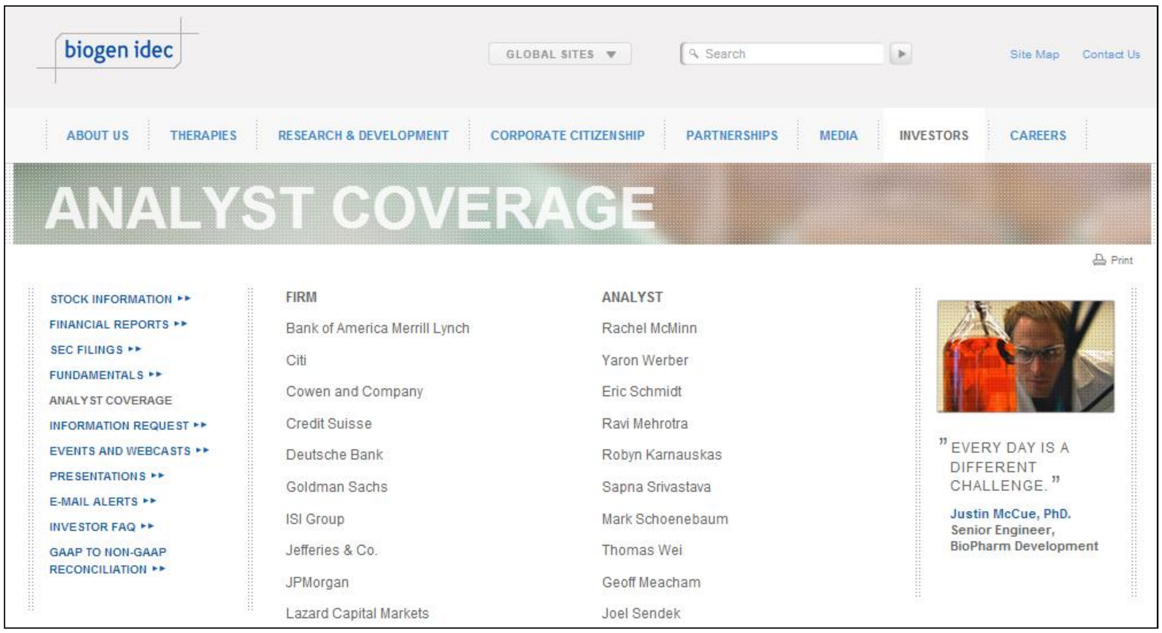
NovoNordisk.com: The lack of contrast between the background color and text and the fuzziness of the text make this slide difficult to read.

Contacting IR

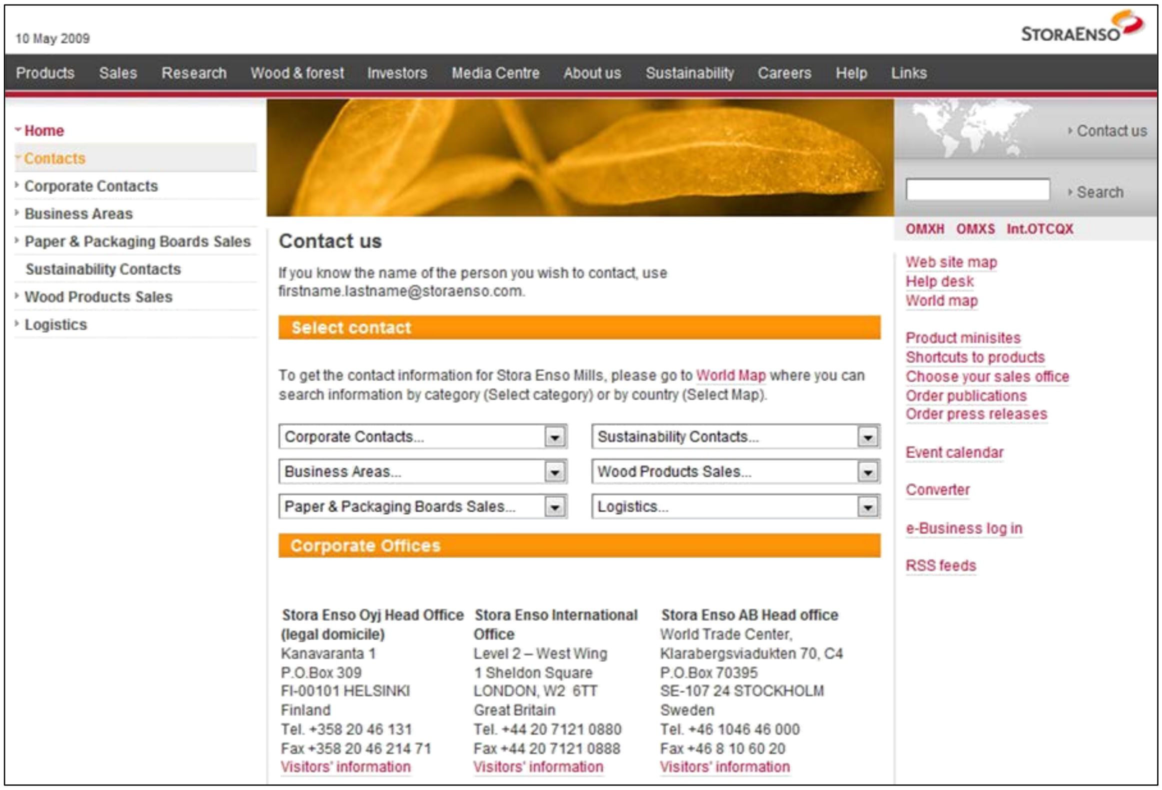
79. Feature links to *IR Contact* on all IR related pages AND include IR contact information on the company's main contact page.

Companies that hide or don't provide this contact information are perceived as being evasive and are thought of less favorably.

Make sure the link to *IR Contact* is easy to notice and not obscured by other items on the page. These links need to be placed where people expect them, and the location should be free from overpowering distractions. Place a link to the IR contact page on every page of the IR section. Also include IR contact information on the main company contact page.



The *Contact Us* link for IR information at Biogen is at the top of every page and easy to find in the top right corner.



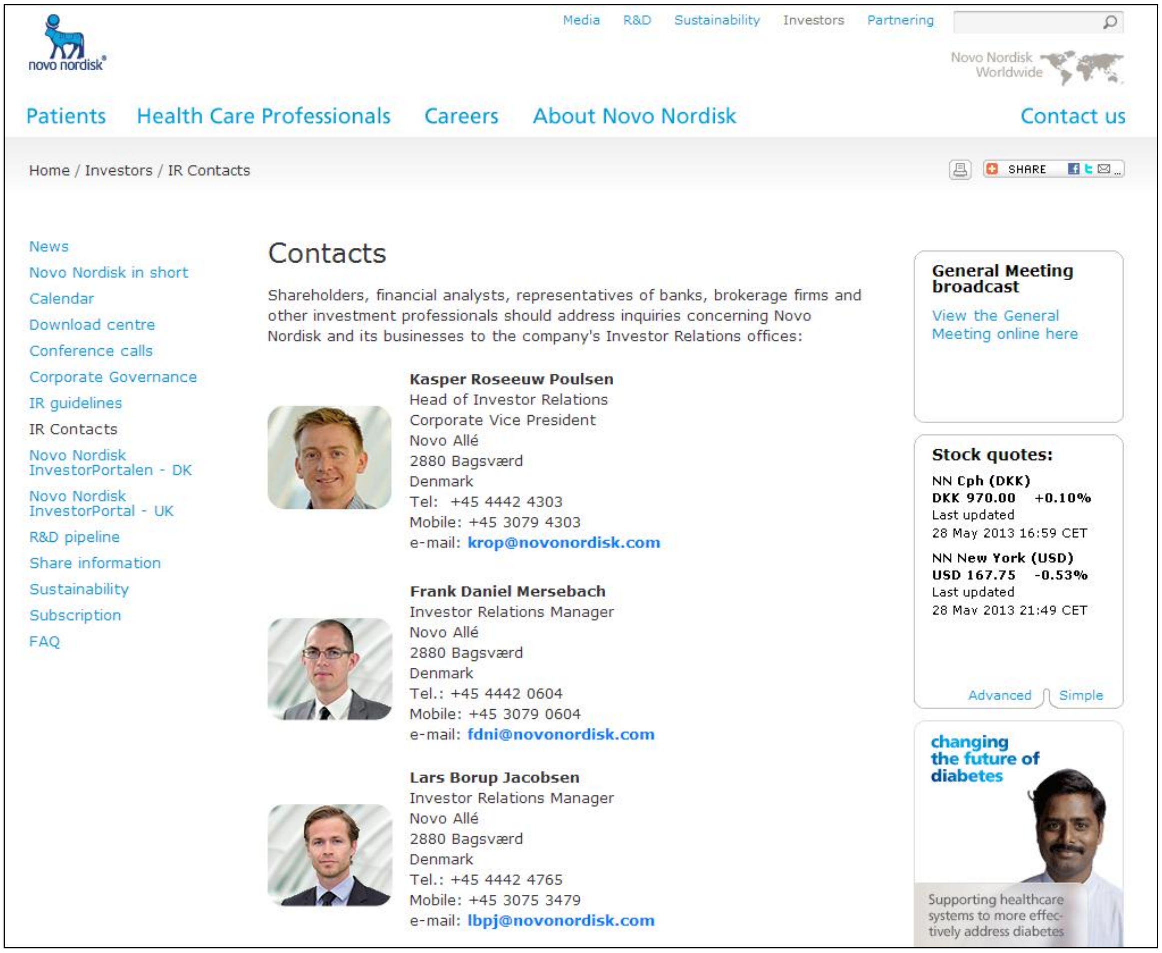
A user on the Stora Enso website was overwhelmed by the six dropdown menus and their many options in the Contact Us section and thus couldn't find the IR contact information. It is best to categorize contacts by a person's reason to call rather than by which company division handles which departments.

80. Provide full IR contact information, including the person's name, telephone number, address, and email address.

The preferred contact method used by investors and business journalists depends on several factors — the urgency of the question, the type of information needed, and the location of the company.

The goal of most companies is to refer people to the corporate website for answers to investor questions. Some users, such as journalists and analysts, however, prefer talking to a real person. Many others might need a question answered quickly and may be unable to wait for a response, via email or otherwise.

Offering telephone numbers shows that the organization cares about their visitors and customers and wants to be available for them. By giving people a way to reach your organization directly, you help ease any misgivings that people might have and, more important, you help establish trust.



The Novo Nordisk site's IR contacts page is good because it offers complete contact information for the IR representatives, including their photos, which help you feel more personally connected when you're on the phone (or on email) with somebody.

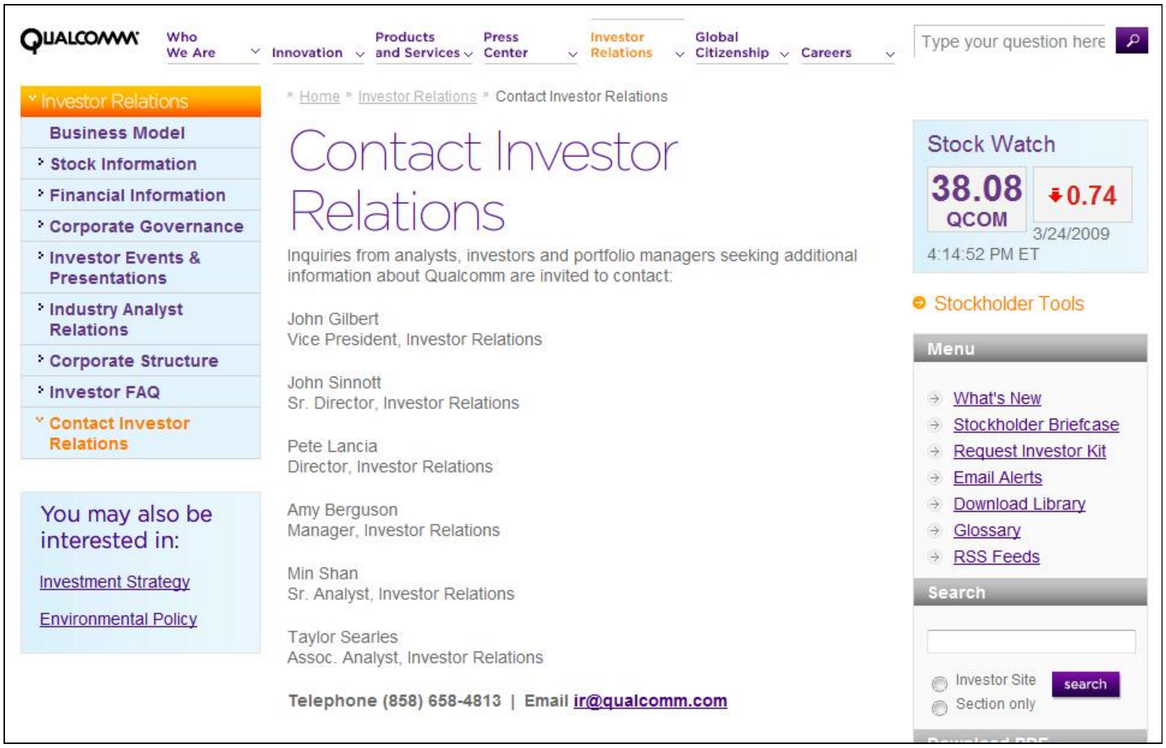
81. When listing multiple IR contacts, help people select the best contact by indicating the person's specialty or another helpful differentiating characteristic.

If you list several IR contact names, help people differentiate among them by indicating each person's area of expertise.

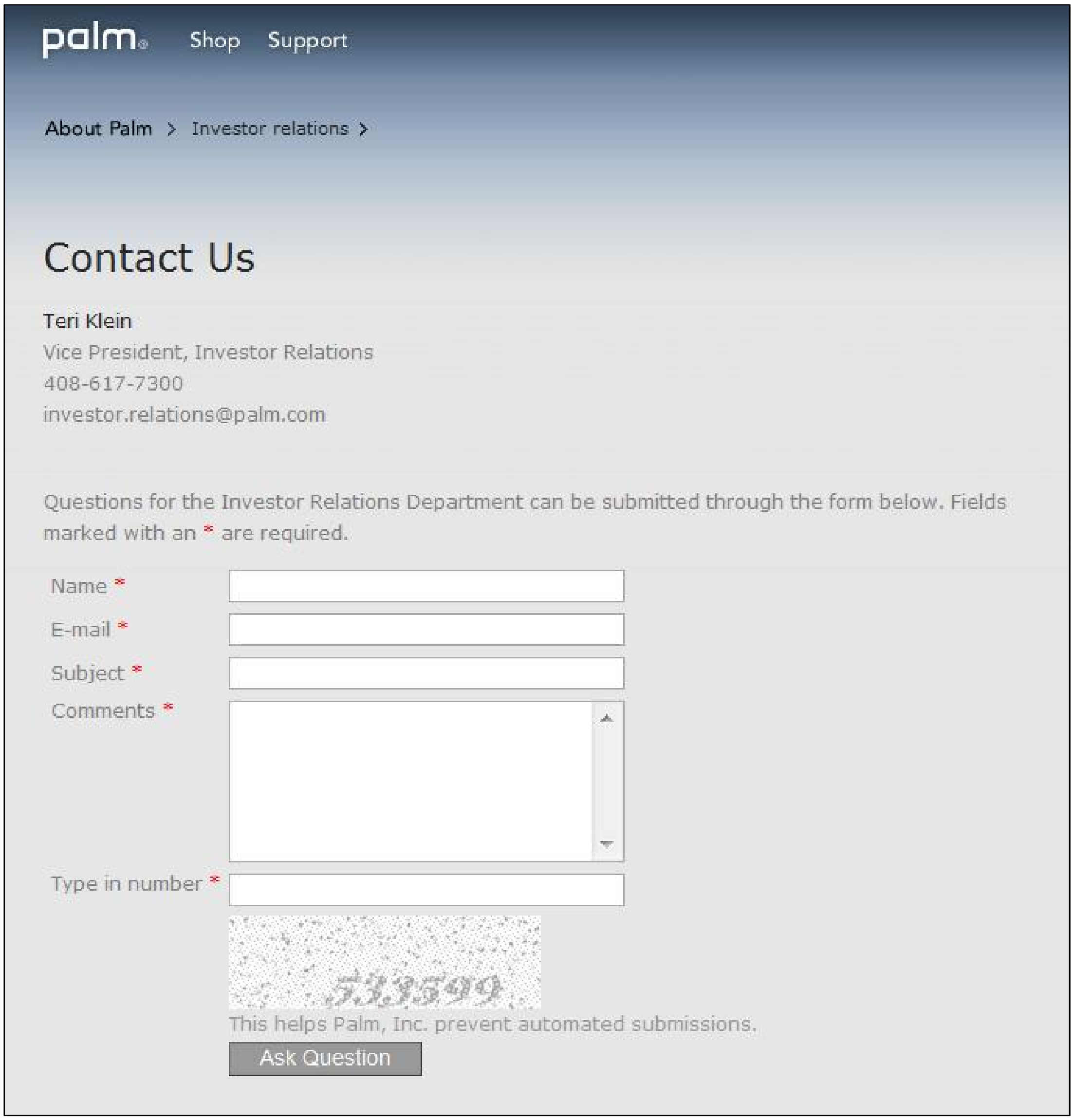
82. Show email addresses with the person's name, rather than something generic such as IR@thecompany.com.

People are wary of sending email messages to addresses that appear automated, unreliable, or that don't appear to be going to a real person. Generic email addresses are seemingly stripped of accountability, so site visitors don't know where the email lands, if someone will address their question in a timely manner, or whether it will get lost in an email vortex and never be heard from again.

Associating a name with contact information creates friendlier interaction. When you let site visitors know who they are corresponding with, it facilitates communication.



It's nice that the Qualcomm website features the names of the various people in the IR department. It would be even better if email addresses for each individual were available. Offering a generic email address deters people from sending messages.

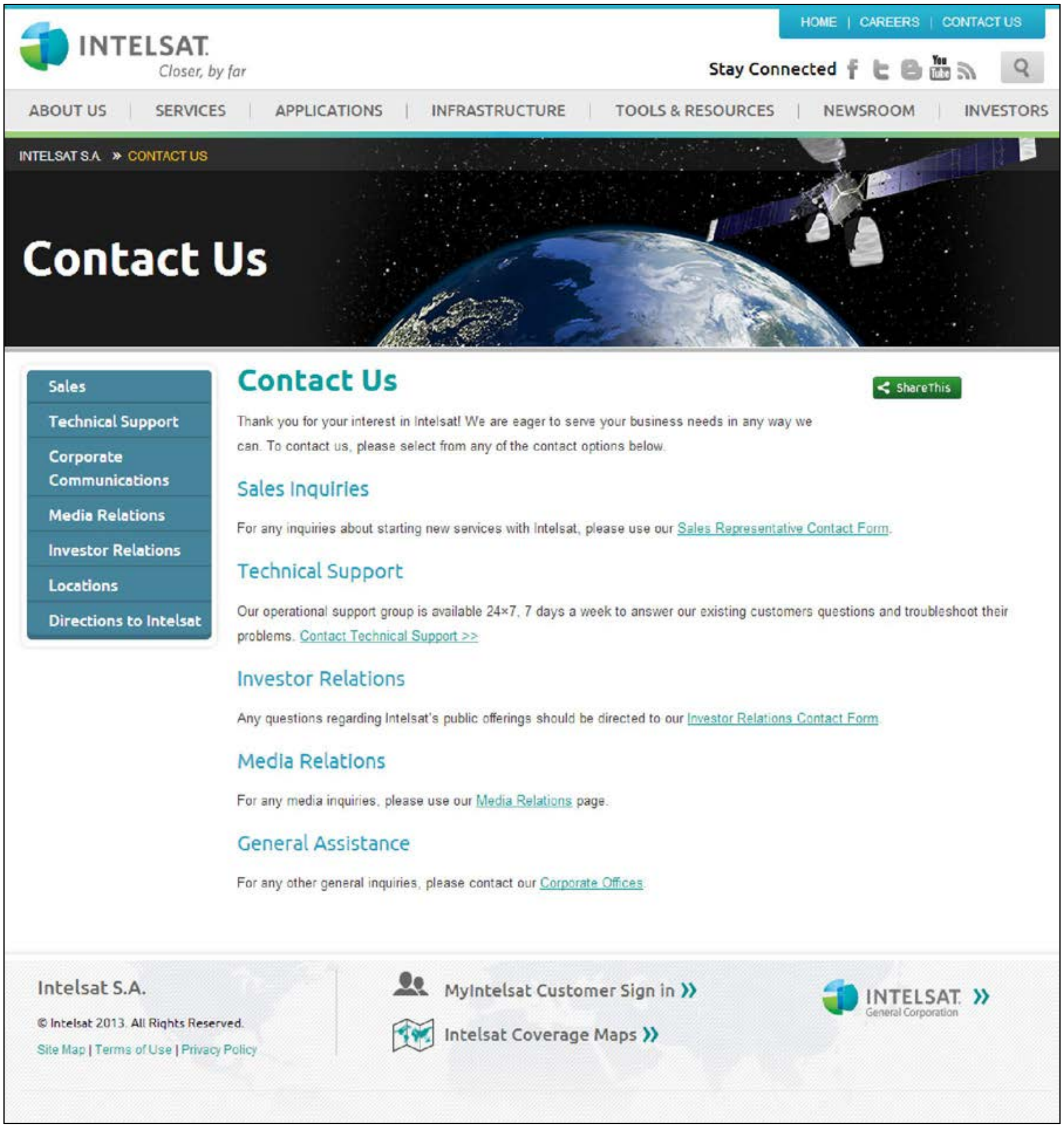


The Palm website offered the name and telephone number for its investor contact. It's impossible to know if the contact form routes messages to this specific person, however.

83. Offer a contact form in addition to a telephone number, not as a replacement.

The Rowan website offered the option of contacting the IR representative directly or completing a contact form. This flexibility is good, especially for people who prefer to send email. The Rowan site could be improved by renaming its *Mail Request* link to something more descriptive, however, such as "Contact." Also, the form had too many superfluous and personal fields that people don't want to fill out, such as title, organization, and address.

"This is really good that they have an investor relations contact here. You don't have to call the general number. And it's nice that they're not hiding anything."



Intelsat only offers technical support phone numbers. All others must find the form related to them and fill it out, making it frustrating and time-consuming to contact the company.

84. For email requests, tell people when to expect a response (if you can predict it).

In a separate PR study, we found that the top reasons journalists don't send questions to an email address is because they don't know who the question will go to, and they don't know when or whether they will receive a response. (In particular, whether they'll hear back before their deadline.) By thoroughly addressing these concerns, you can reduce call volume to your PR and IR departments.

For guidelines on optimizing usability for journalists, refer to our report: *PR on Websites*. http://www.nngroup.com/reports/pr-websites/

85. Invite investors to contact the board and high-level executives.

Offer ways for investors, journalists, and others to engage with the leaders of your organization. Providing outlets for the public to voice their concerns and questions encourages communication and fosters transparency and trust. When offering or responding to email, indicate where the email is going, who is accountable for responding, and the expected response time.

Usability Basics

This section contains information about general issues in Web design to the extent that they have specific impact on the usability of IR sections. For additional discussion of such general issues in Web usability and the way they relate to websites overall, please see our books on those topics.

Prioritizing Web Usability www.nngroup.com/books/prioritizing-web-usability/

Eyetracking Web Usability www.nngroup.com/books/eyetracking-web-usability/

86. Speak your users' language by avoiding fancy or technical terms.

Use language that is familiar to your target audience and avoid technical language or uncommon terms. Your audience will probably not be as educated as you are about your company and investor relations.

Be plain spoken. Simplifying the content does not mean dumbing down or talking down to your audience. People are not impressed by buzz-words and complexity. They are impressed by clarity. In our studies, participants (even experts) appreciated clear and concise information.

The corporate sections of websites are notorious for convoluted content. Often people research companies for an extended period of time without figuring out what the company does. Mission statements are often generic and can apply to any company. Insider reports are too difficult to understand. The codes of conduct seem trite. The list goes on and on.

For corporate websites to be effective, they need to go beyond what's standard. Doing only the minimum required by law or mimicking what your competitors are doing isn't going to give you the payoff you want.

It's better to use simple and precise terms rather than fancy ones that might confuse people. Content is supposed to convey information; when people can't understand it, it's worthless. Even worse, it can leave them feeling frustrated and patronized.

Understand your users. Know their strengths, weaknesses, and wants. Reflect that understanding in your website's design. Companies that convey information effectively are perceived as being more transparent than companies that do not. Getting people to your website is only half the battle. Keeping them engaged and wanting to come back for more is the challenge.

The ImmunoGen website received praise for its consistent navigation and straightforward presentation of information. Even though medical information can be complex, this site was able to explain it well. One person said, "This [website] is easy to navigate. There are bold headings. What they wrote about technology was good for a layperson, without talking down to you. Well written."

87. Keep the tone of your site authentic.

This might be the most important guideline of all. The investor relations section does more harm than good if people don't trust the information. The company's financial standing is only one factor in people's investment decisions. The other factors include how people feel about the company personally. This point is especially true for individual investors, who tend to invest based on both facts and emotions. People's opinion of your company can be swayed by the tone of the site.

Investors are tired of the generic information that many companies post on their websites. It's not good enough to have mission statements and codes of conduct. The information must feel authentic and sincere.

The journalists and professional investors in our study spoke about why they mistrust information on corporate websites:

"I don't want a media contact to get to the HR person. PR has a canned response."

> "I don't go to the press room. They try to put a positive spin on what they do. It's not the first place I go. You can get lazy and click *Press Room*. But it's not writing. It's copying."

> "The first thing I see is marketing [in the IR section]. These guys have been in business school. You want to be clear about what your company does. This picture here [why?] — I like headlines. We have so much info; we just like headlines. I would prefer if they had a couple of headlines … . *Vision* says 'Stay world class' — this is marketing B.S."

Individual investors have misgivings about the information on corporate websites too:

> "Most of my research is done offsite. [There is] too much control on a company website on what is disclosed and promoted."

> "Websites are designed to be self-serving. I understand that, but if you are overly self-serving, it's going to show up. Try to at least to have some level of honesty."

88. Post time-sensitive content (for example, financial reports, webcasts, and press releases) regularly and quickly.

The importance of broadcast journalism has risen steadily in recent years and is likely to increase further as print outlets struggle with economic realities. Broadcast journalists have significantly different needs than their counterparts in print. For example, broadcasters need and expect statements and press releases to be posted to a website within minutes, rather than hours. And analysts expect webcasts to be available within hours, not days. If a company were several months behind in posting financial reports, people would wonder what was happening with that company. Outdated content diminishes credibility.

89. Provide printer-friendly versions of content people would normally want to reference offline, such as simplified versions of financial reports, press releases, and manager bios.

Even if you offer offline or printer-friendly materials, some people might simply print various Web pages for reference. Background graphics and table colors might not print, and the right margin is often cut off on wide pages. Either specify a style sheet for printing or design your pages with printing in mind; at the very least, ensure that no important information is cut off when a page is printed.

When doing extensive research, many people prefer to print out the content, because reading printed materials is less fatiguing than reading online. Most people prefer to read information on standard Web pages and print things that catch their attention and are important either for later reference or for comparisons. Users in our studies said that they would print information from corporate websites so they could review, study, or collect it. The items they would print included event calendars, charts, press releases, financial highlights, presentation slides, and reports.

A user on the Johnson & Johnson site said he would print press releases:

> "I would print some articles."

A person on the UPS site wanted to print press releases:

> "I want the financial info, recent reports, and new reports. And this I would print — I would go through and print up the most recent press releases. I want to see what other people have written up on them. I would print all of these up and put it aside. I probably would print a good portion of these."

Another person on the UPS site said he would print the SEC filings. Other participants mentioned wanting to print several items. A Pfeiffer site user wanted to print the financial statements and balance sheet because the font was small and difficult to read on screen. Another Pfeiffer user wanted to print out the financials to make comparing companies easier.

A user on the Starbucks site wanted to print the press releases:

> "I like to print things out. I would print out press releases. I like to see things in hard copy and work from that."

A professional investor said he was required to keep documentation of the companies they follow:

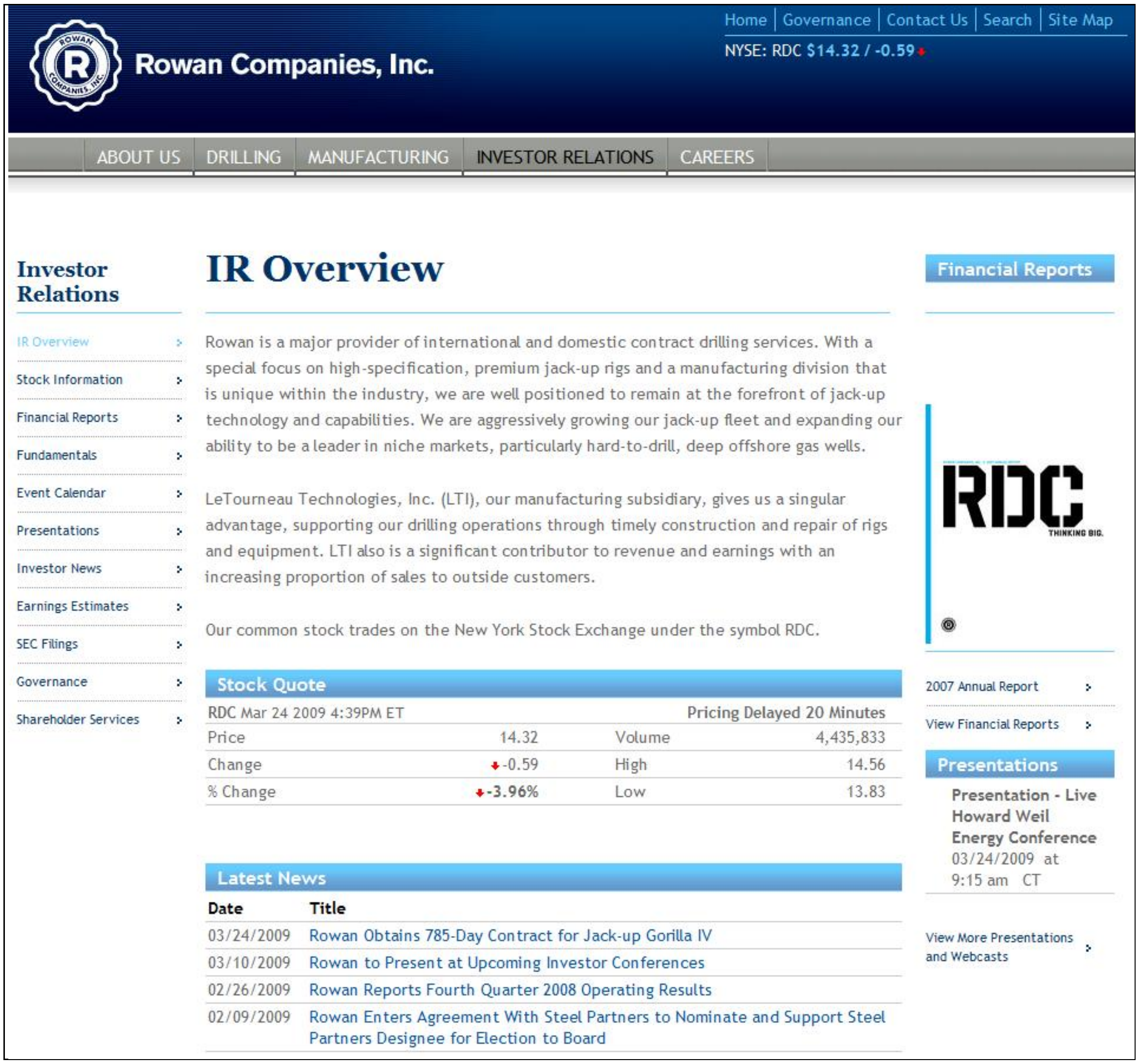
> "I would print out the Financial Statement. Sometimes I need to have a hard copy to save in my file. Our internal compliance requires hard copies of stock we cover. It's also easier to make comments on it."

Another institutional investor appreciated that the IR snapshot was available in a printable format:

> "What is nice is when they have a snapshot, especially if it is downloadable. Printing can be messed up. When I look at numbers, it is good to have a printed version next to me. I keep a folder of the company I analyze. It can take more than a day. I like to print the stuff out."

90. Provide a consistent navigational structure.

Consistency is a major tenet of usability. Keep the navigational structure consistent to help people visualize their current location and their options. When the structure changes unexpectedly, people have difficulty finding information and keeping track of where they are. Implement a navigational structure that reflects the user's view of the site, its information and services.



The Rowan website had a simple navigational structure. The main navigation appeared on the left side of the page and users clicked through those items one at a time to review all the information. A user said, "I would start at the top. I like that it's easy to read. You can just go down the page."

People on the Starbucks website had difficulty finding financial information because of the complex navigation. There were too many navigation areas — at the top, sides, and middle of the page — and people didn't know where to look. Also, having the navigation links embedded in paragraphs made scanning difficult.

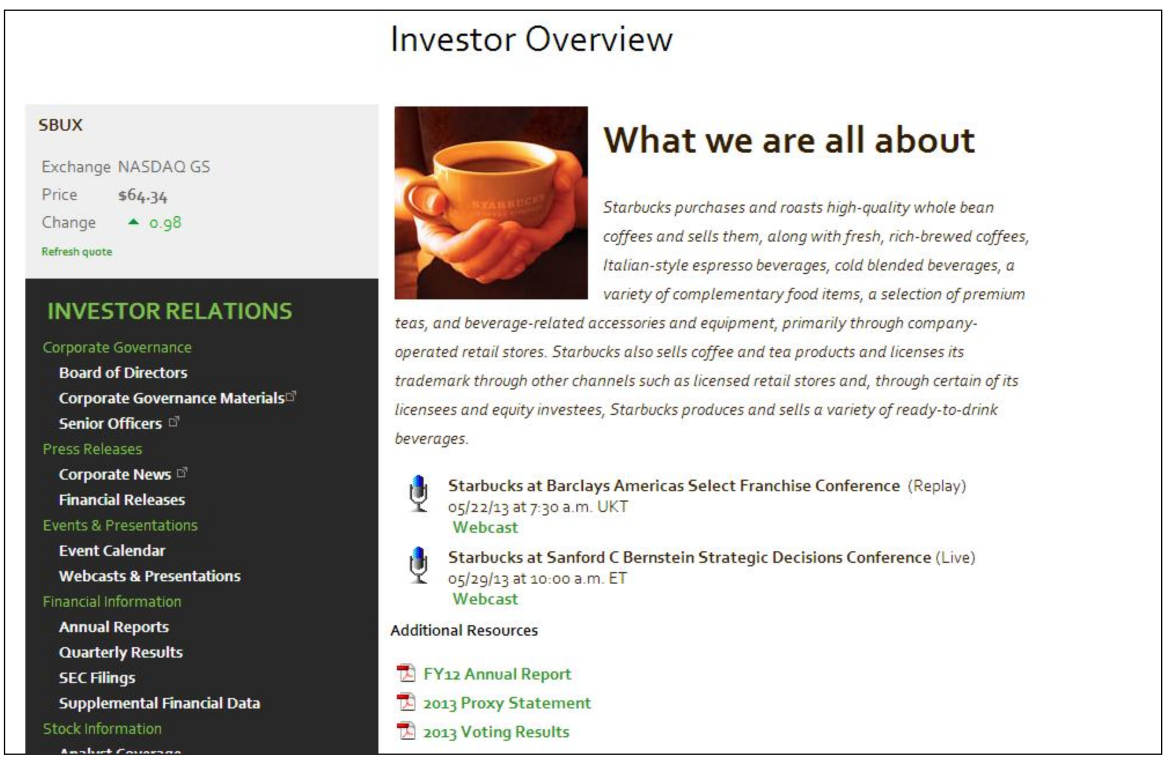
Participants had difficulty finding annual reports because clicking on *Annual Report* took them to a general IR page, instead of the actual document. Even though the link to the annual report was in the middle of the page, people overlooked it because it was buried in a busy page with many other choices that weren't grouped for ease of scanning. One user said:

"It guides me to it, but I get lost there."

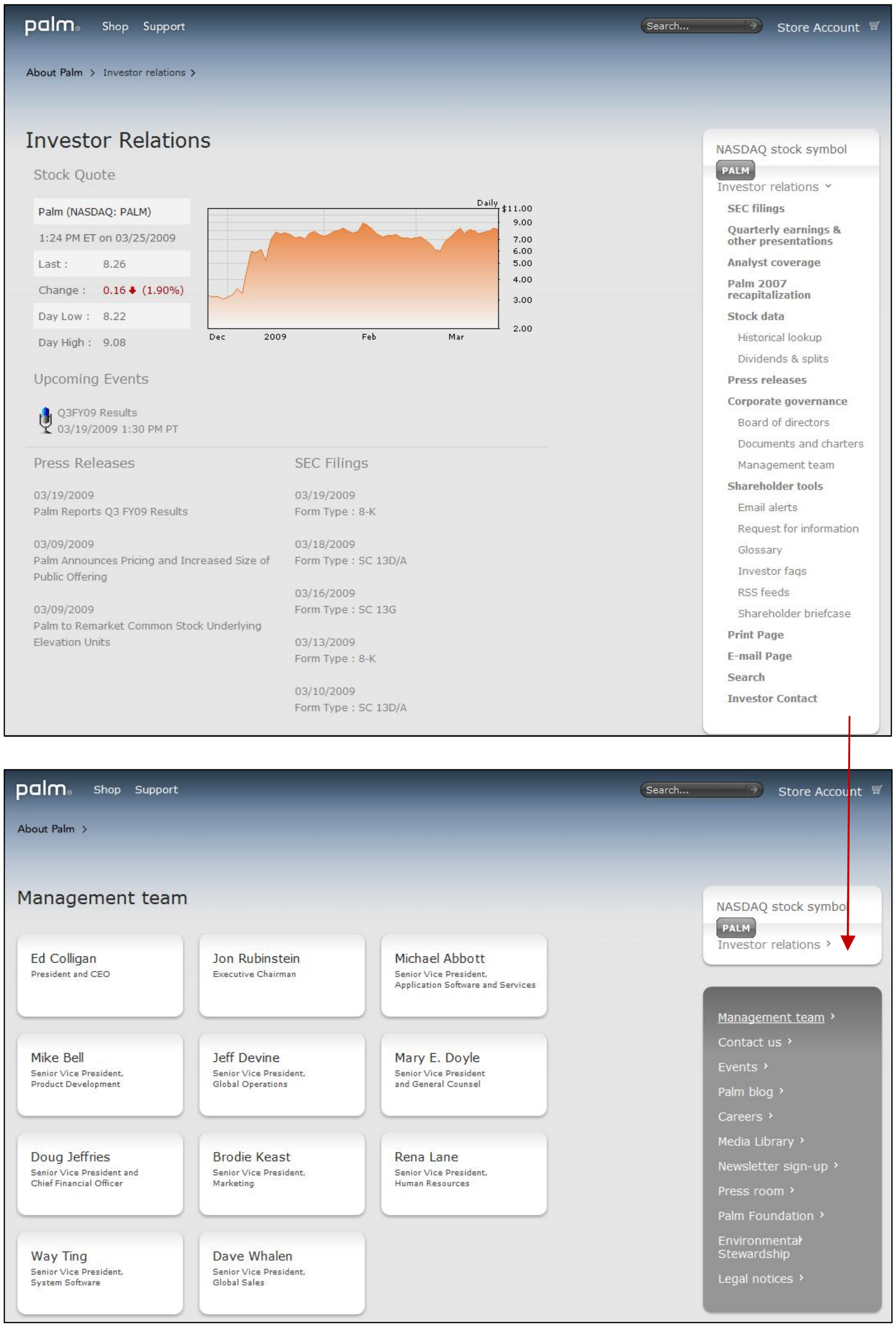
Another user wanted to leave the Starbucks site because he couldn't figure out how to get the high/low stock price.

"Do I have to stay on the website?"

Starbucks (Old): The Starbucks website had many navigational areas that weren't appropriately prioritized and grouped for easy scanning.



Starbucks (Updated): The website features the major investor links in one area, along the left panel, which is an improvement.

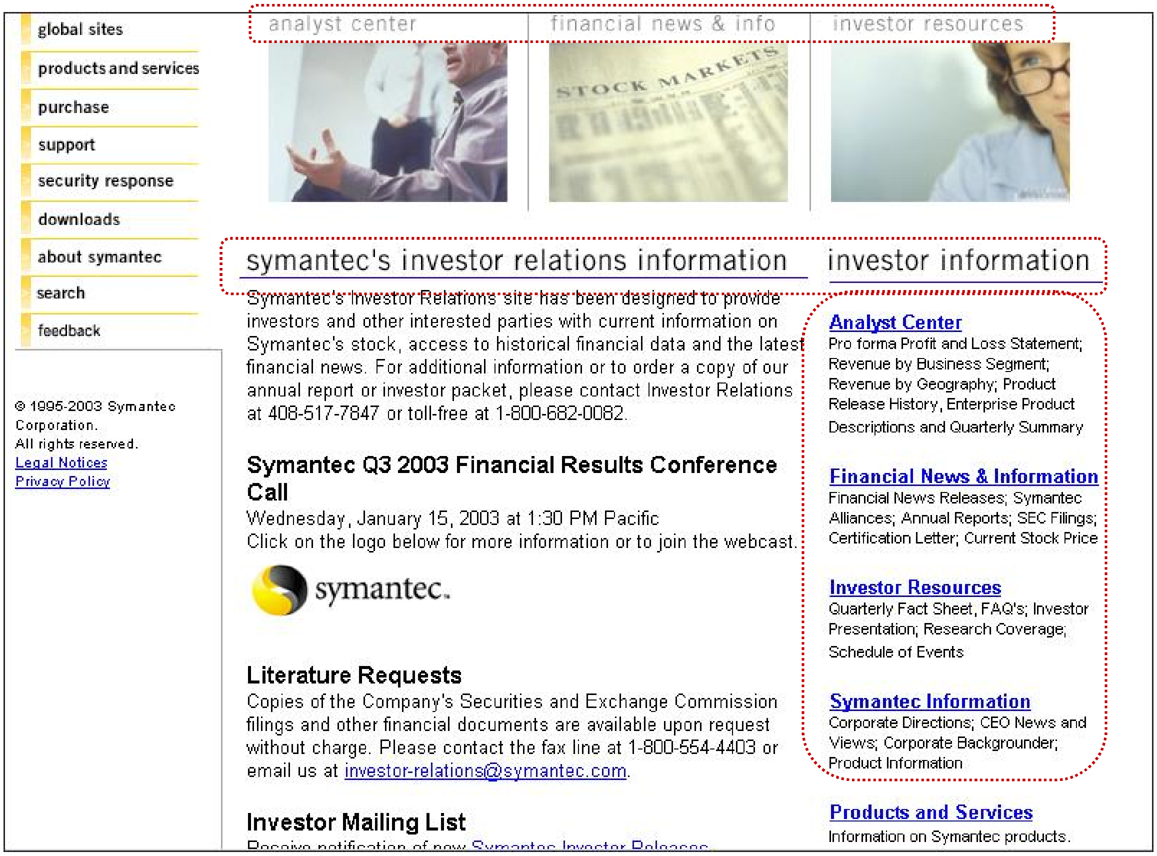


Palm.com: The navigation panel on the *Investor Relations* page and the *Management team* page changes unexpectedly.

91. Minimize complexity by featuring a link only once on a page.

Less is more. Too many similar (or identical) links on a page create clutter and require people to expend more effort than necessary. Categories that are too similar complicate the interface, making users work too hard to create order. Overemphasizing links reduces their impact and clutters the page. And, with so many competing elements, all items lose their impact.

For example, on Symantec's IR homepage, identical terms — such as "investor relations," "financial news," and "investor resources" — were repeated, causing people to stall and wonder where to click.

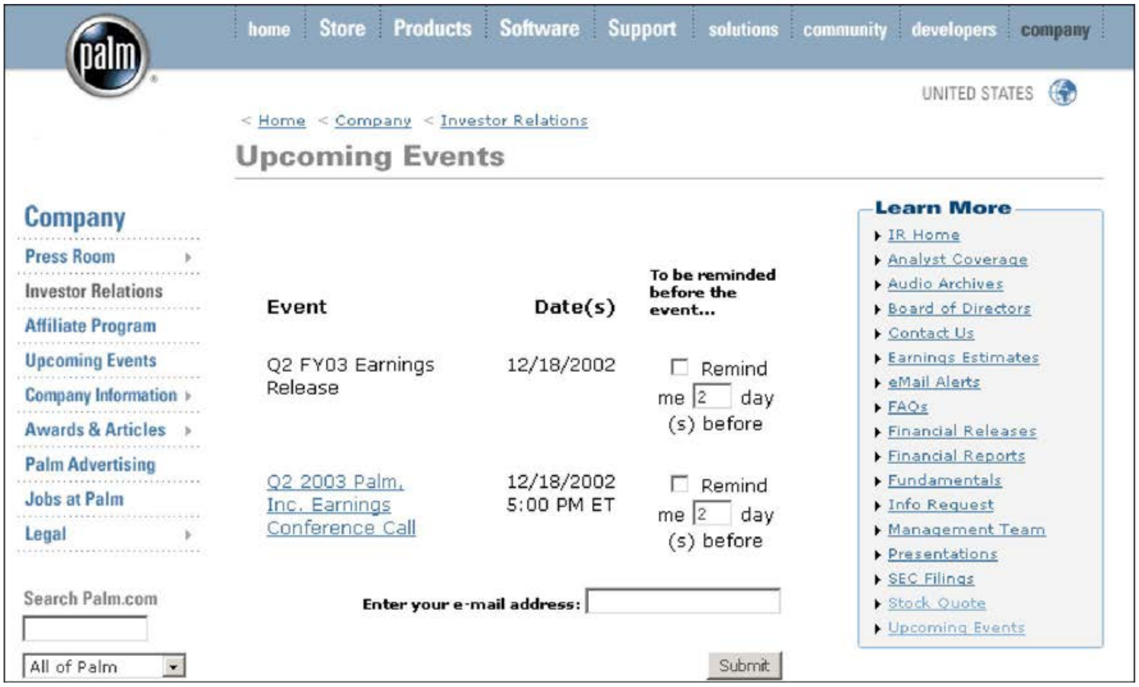


The Symantec website had too many repetitive terms competing with each other.

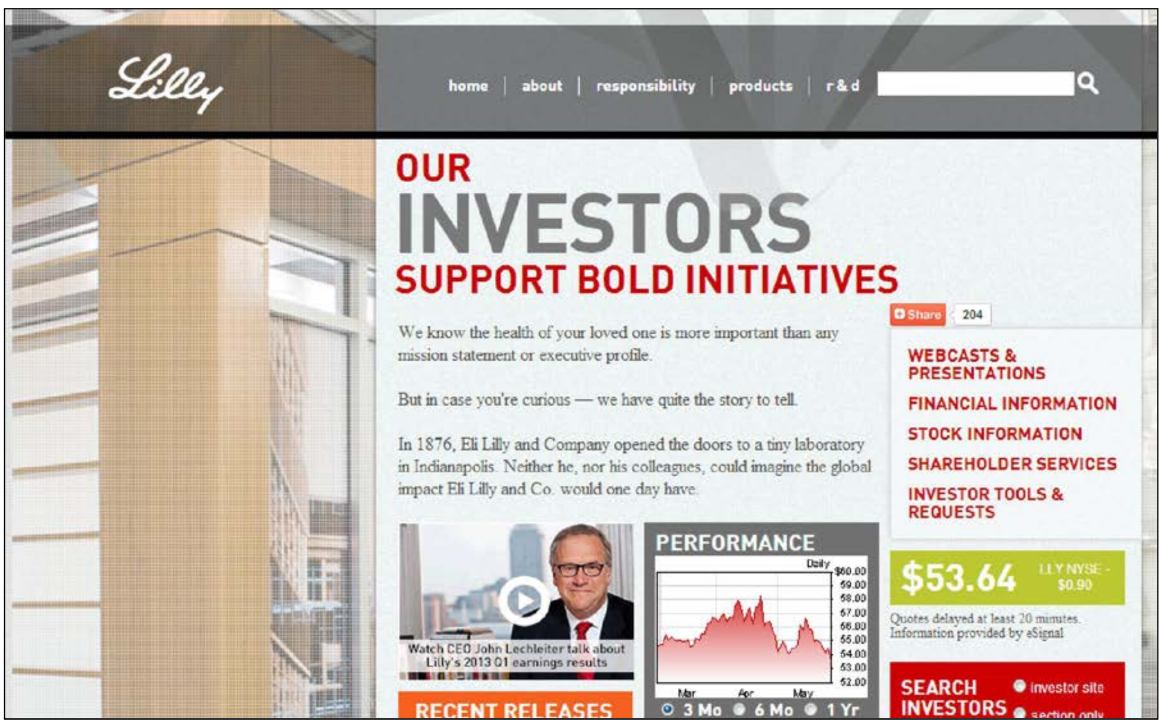
People on the Palm website had difficulty finding financial information right away. The links were in an unexpected area: on the right side of the page in the vaguely labeled *Learn More* box, which looked more like an ad or auxiliary information than a main navigational area. It would have been better to move the navigation to the left side of the page, where people expect to find it and remove the *Learn More* header.

"This little thing is helpful, but it took me a while to find it."

"I expect to find this over here [on the left side]."



People overlooked the Palm site's navigation because it was in an unexpected area of the page and labeled *Learn More*.\



The Eli Lilly website navigation is difficult to find because of its placement on the right side of the page and the many other graphical boxes on the page.

92. Designate a visited link color that's visibly distinct from both unvisited links and text.

When designing content-oriented navigation, it's best to distinguish between visited and unvisited links, so that people can keep track of where they've been and read the information only once. It's also important to stick with the standard paradigm of underlining links and making visited and unvisited links change from blue to purple. If you do use nonstandard link colors, make sure there's enough difference in color between the visited and unvisited links that people can easily distinguish between them, and reserve that color for links.

A user on the Interpublic site had difficulty remembering where he had been because the links didn't change colors:

> "I'm not sure if I should click on one of these — If I've been here already."

The Tyson site didn't indicate visited links and a user accidentally clicked on the same links several times.

The Home Depot doesn't distinguish between visited and unvisited links. On this page that makes it difficult for users to remember which press release they've read already.

93. Name links clearly, avoiding names that are vague, generic, or have overlapping meanings.

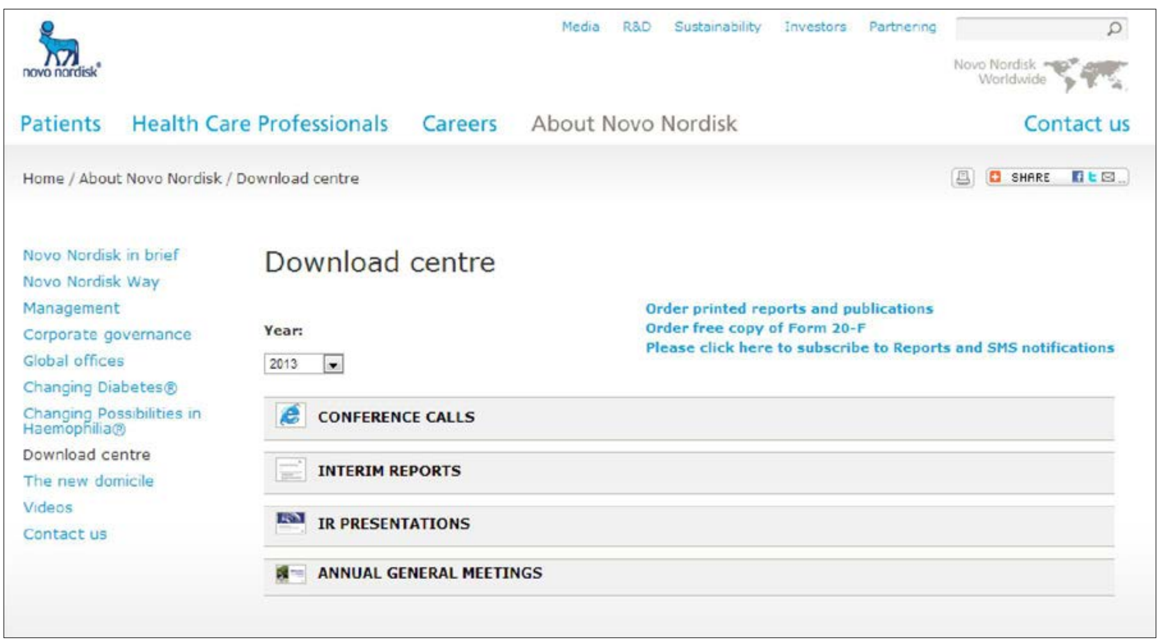
Cleaning up unhelpful link labels helps create a better user experience and can positively impact how your organization is perceived. Improving link labels by using them to carry important information is also one of the most helpful activities for improving search-engine optimization and accessibility. Good link names help people quickly and accurately predict what they will get when they click a link. When names are nondescript, people are more likely to click the wrong link and miss the information they need.

Keep link names as brief and specific as possible. Don't include obvious or redundant information, such as using your organization's name in each link. Listing links that way presents users with a column of identical words, which they must carefully read through to find the differences among them.

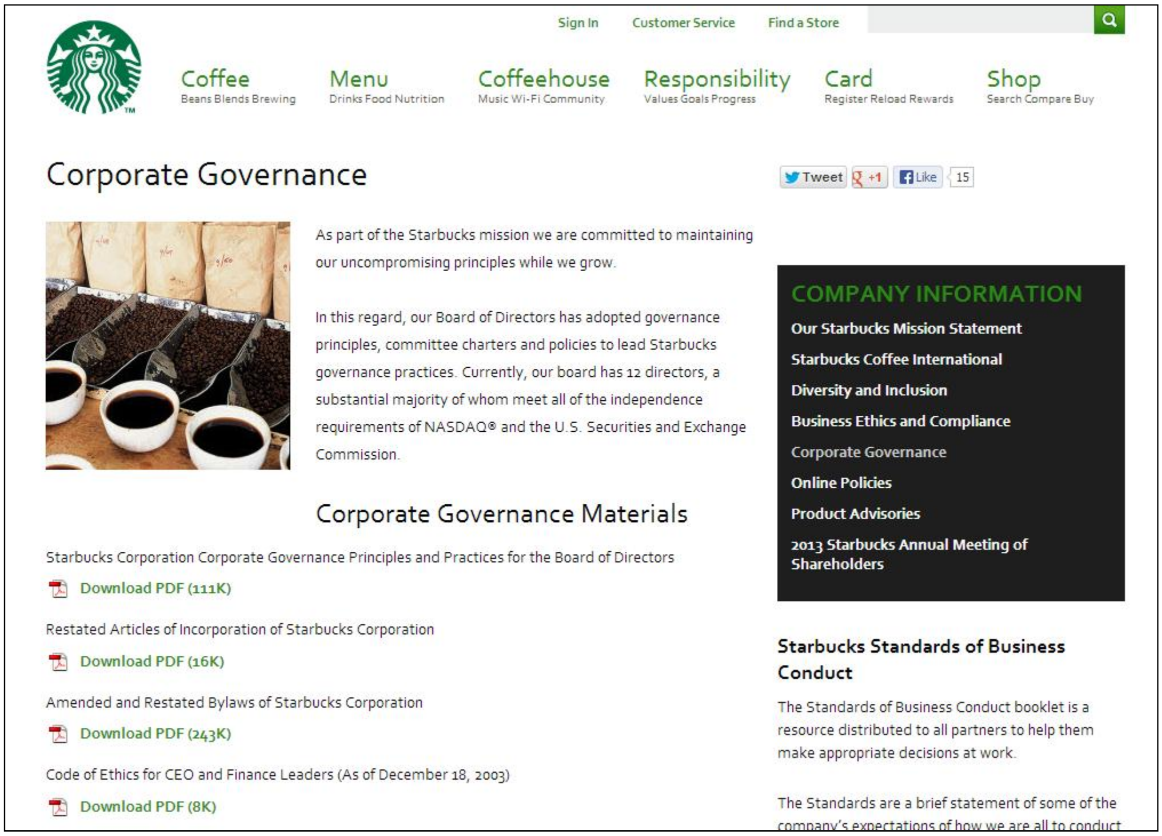
Also, don't use generic instructions such as "click here" as a link name. Instead, help people quickly differentiate among links by naming them informatively. For example, instead of *Click here for Annual Reports*, just go with *Annual Reports*. Rather than just linking to "more," for example, tell users specifically what they'll get more of.

Good link names help users predict quickly and accurately what they will get when they click. Obscure names can cause people to click the wrong link and overlook the information they need.

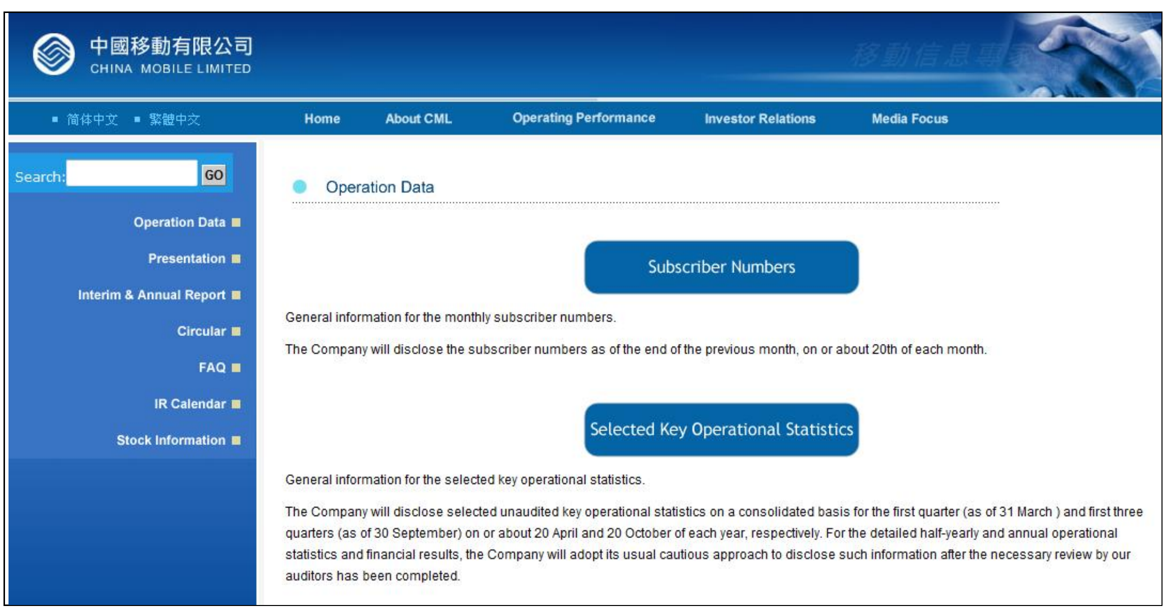
Expedia.com: Label the press releases with the news, not the company name. People already know which site they are on.



NovoNordisk.com: *Download centre* is not a descriptive name. It's better to label categories by the content rather than by the technology or format of the content. In addition, the links on this page contain superfluous information that reduces scannability. For example, rather than *Please click here to subscribe to Reports and SMS notifications*, something like *Subscribe to alerts for reports* would be more concise.



The Starbucks highlights the wrong piece of information, emphasizing *Download PDF* rather than keywords like *Principles and Practices for the Board of Directors*.



The China Mobile Limited website uses uncommon category names, such as *Operation Data* and *Circular*.

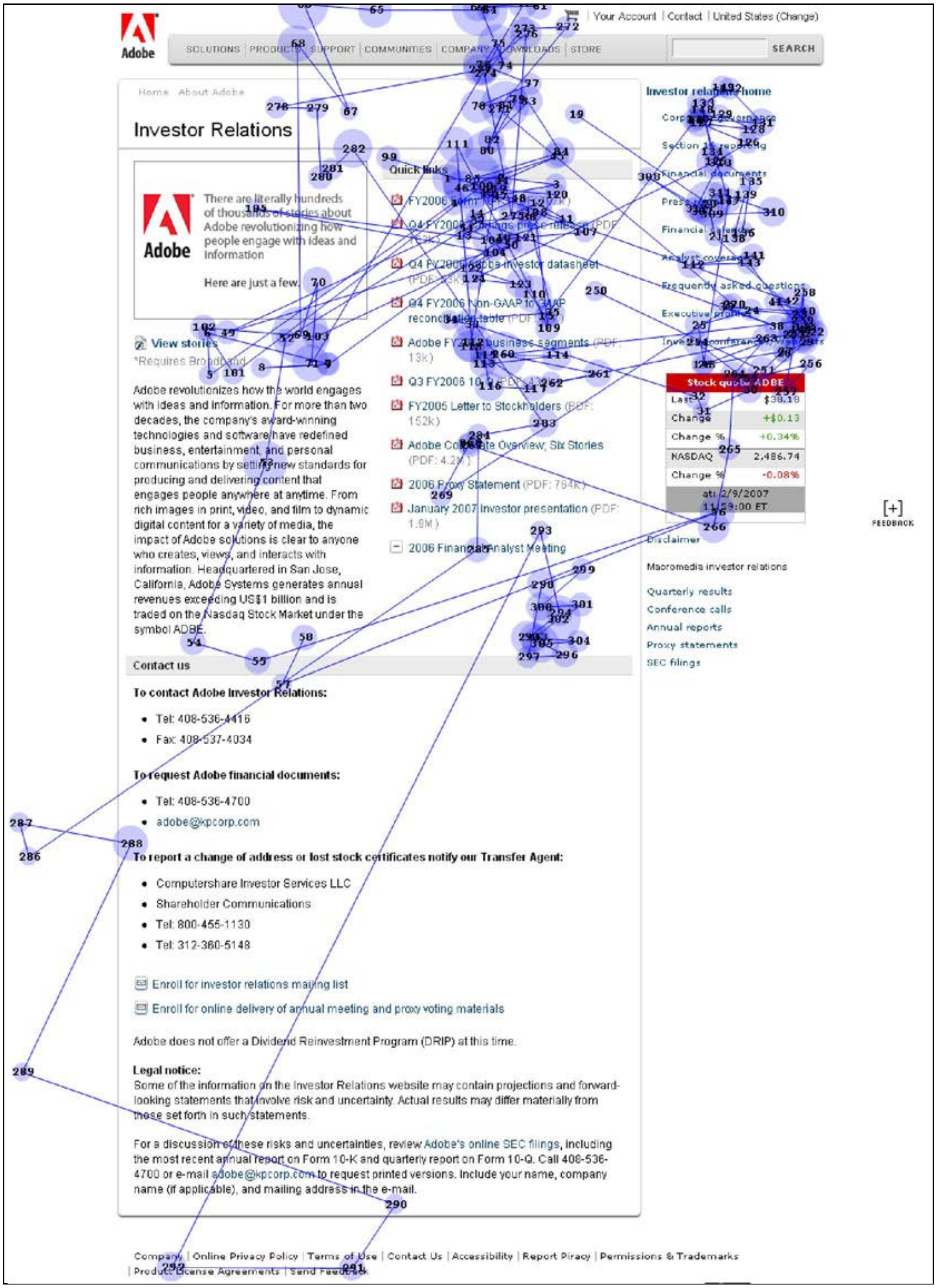
The Pfeiffer Vacuum site had too many category names with overlapping meanings. For example, it was difficult to ascertain the difference between the following categories without clicking on them:

- *Financial Reports* vs. *Financial Documents*
- *Latest Figures* vs. *Latest Information*
- *Facts* vs. any of the other links

The Novo Nordisk site had ambiguous links in the main navigation: *IR Magazine* and *R&D Pipeline*. Some people wondered what *R&D Pipeline* meant; although that is a common term among biotech pros, individual investors with less industry knowledge need more information. Also, the site's lack of visible structure and prioritization was overwhelming. The blue shading and highlighted text made finding important information difficult. When everything is highlighted, nothing gets emphasized. People also had difficulty scanning items in the left navigation because the text was right justified.

> "I'm a little lost."
>
> "I'm trying to find the information with the chart. I'm not sure how to get back to it … . It's a bit messy."
>
> "I would expect to see the share price … . I'm trying to find something that says 'share price.' It says 'share info,' but I don't see a graph."

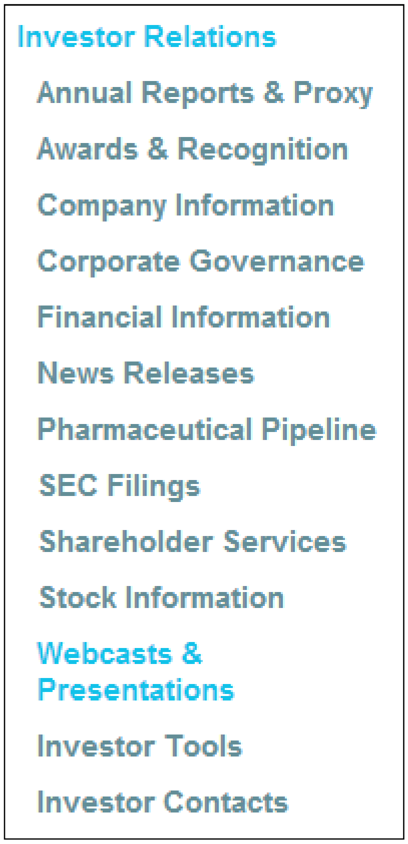
People had difficulty finding important information on the Tyson website because the information they wanted was buried in broad categories such as *News and Information*, *Publications,* and *Presentations*. For example, it was difficult to figure out whether SEC filings fell under *News and Information* or *Publications*. Also, generic link names, such as *Click here* and *More* compounded the confusion. It would have been better to label categories at the top of the IR homepage more distinctly.



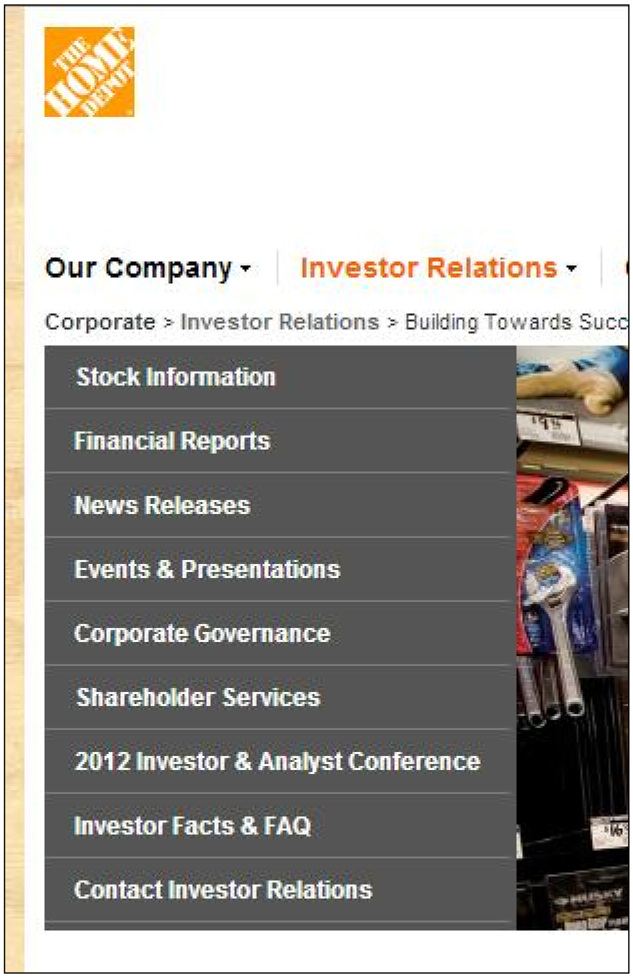
This gaze plot from Adobe's site shows the person scanning the links, while bypassing many of the text-heavy areas.

94. List navigational elements in priority, not alphabetical, order.

Categorize and sort lists to match user expectations. For example, present navigational topics in order of relevance, rather than in alphabetical order. When looking for financial information, people want to see the most-critical information first; if they have additional time, they can look at the less-important items.



The Johnson & Johnson website sorts their navigational links into alphabetical order, making users work harder to find the information they needed. At least the last two items, Investor *Tools* and *Contacts*, are placed at the bottom of the list as secondary information.



Home Depot sorts their navigational links by priority, placing the most important topic (stock information) at the top.

95. Employ menus and content that are static and easy to control. Use dropdown menus sparingly.

Dropdown menus have become a widely used navigational tool. Although dropdown menus have their advantages, they can also be problematic, especially if they are long and finicky. Dropdowns are difficult to operate effectively, and users often over- or under-shoot their target while scrolling and find themselves in an unintended area.

Dropdown menus are often the least-effective navigational devices, because users can't see the full set of choices without taking explicit action. If your dropdown list has only a few items, list them on the page. Otherwise, link to a separate page where you can explain the items and organize them into more meaningful categories than a single dropdown list allows.

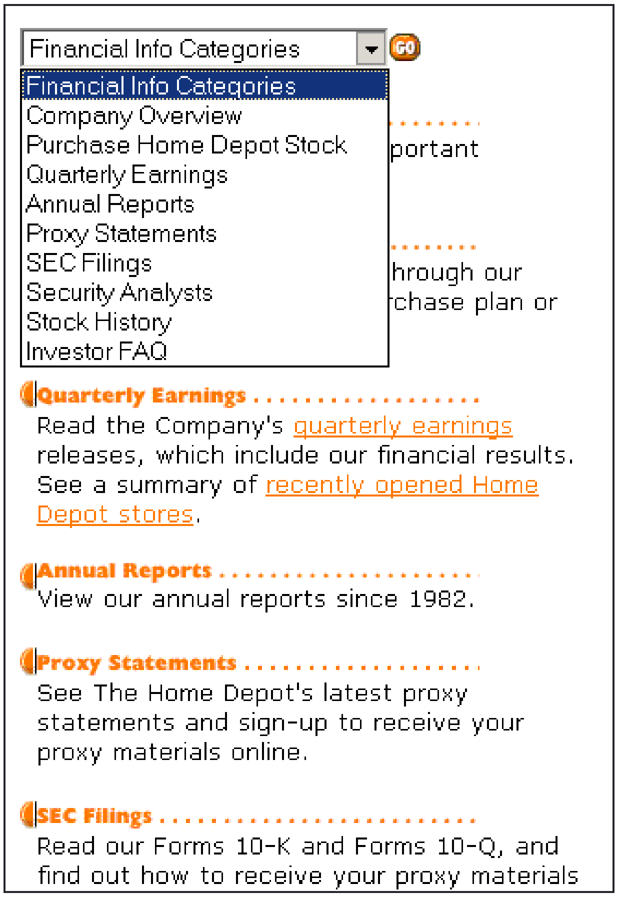
Also, movement on pages is distracting. If you have revolving content, make sure that it rotates at a pace reasonable for reading and has a mechanism to allow people to see missed content.

In this study, we found that people liked to navigate down a list one item at a time. Dropdowns made this process extremely cumbersome, because users couldn't keep track of where they'd been.

Biogen website users couldn't be sure where they'd been by looking at the dropdown menu.

The UPS site's IR link is hidden in the dropdown menu in the website footer, making it difficult to find.

The Home Depot site had unnecessary and redundant navigation. The site offered users two ways to navigate: by using either categories presented on the page or dropdown menus. Having both was overkill and complicated the interface. In this example, it would have been better to remove the dropdown feature and simply let people click on the page links.



The Home Depot site increased complexity by listing financial categories in both dropdown menus and on the IR homepage.

96. Open new browser windows only for non-Web applications.

In general, refrain from opening new browser windows. In countless usability studies, we've seen people accidentally click outside the active browser window and bury it underneath the parent window. Most of these people didn't notice the hidden window icon in the task bar (at the bottom of the screen), and assumed that the parent window no longer worked.

This fact might be difficult for power users to believe, but it's very real: Web users less proficient than you are have a lot of trouble managing multiple windows. Painting potential clients or customers into a corner will rarely compel them to stay on your site, especially if they have slow Internet connections. People who think your site is broken can easily quit to do something else or — even worse — pursue their original task on a competitor's website.

Displaying charts in small pop-up windows can cause even more difficulty for users, because the charts often appear in windows that are smaller than the chart. Information is squeezed into a tiny box, causing the information to be too small to read or forcing users to scroll horizontally.

Displaying reports, filings, and presentations in a new maximized window is also dangerous. It disables the browser's *Back* button, and often people don't realize that a new window has opened, because it happens so quickly. In our study, several people didn't know how to return to the company website when the *Back* button in the new window didn't work. This *Back* button problem is often a show-stopper for blind people as well.

Typically, users who get stuck when a new window opens on top of their main window just quit the browser and relaunch it. That tactic gets them a new, working browser, but they might not be willing or able to return to the page that caused the problem, especially if they've decided your website is broken as a result. Also, when this problem occurs in the middle of a web application or multipage form and the user relaunches to try to fix the *Back* button, work can be lost, which tends to make people very angry and disappointed with the website.

There are a few exceptions to the avoid-new windows guideline. It's acceptable to open new windows for file formats that are not Web-based. People tend to close applications such as Adobe Acrobat, Word and Excel when they are finished with them. In these cases, losing the primary window is not an issue.

The Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology website launched a new browser window for charts, and the information inside was too small to read. A user became frustrated when he tried to make it bigger: The layout was frozen and stayed the same size even when he maximized the window. Then he couldn't go back because the new window's *Back* button didn't work. He didn't realize that he had to close the active window to get back to the website he was working on.

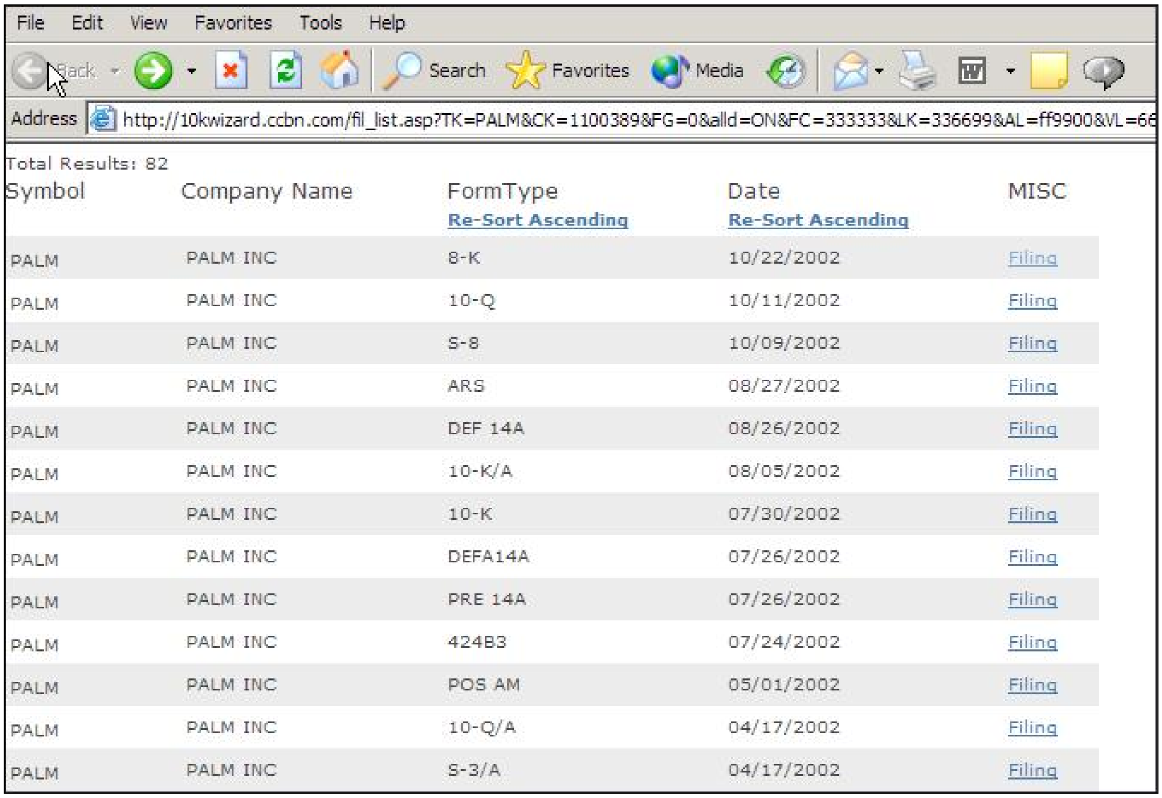
> "*Back* doesn't work at all. Am I stuck here on this page? There's no way out. I have no choice. I either have to completely shut down or click on something else and hope that it will give me a way out."

The Biogen website's financial reports were displayed in a new, fully maximized browser window. This window became a trap for one user, who didn't realize that he was in a new window and that the company website was hidden underneath. To get back to the company site, the user re-entered the company URL and started over.

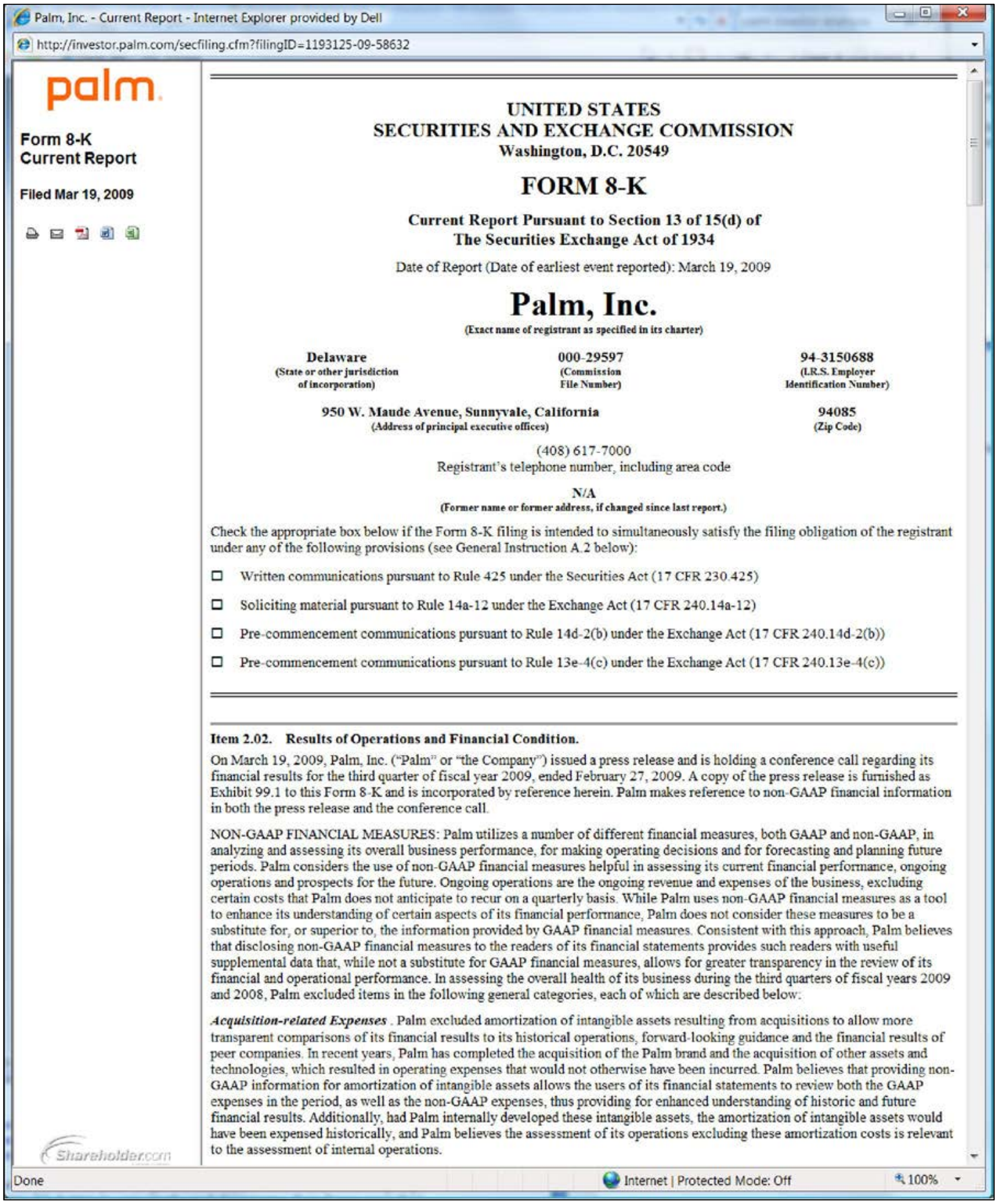
> "It appears that I'm stuck here."

The Palm website opened a new browser window for SEC filings, disabling the *Back* button. A user was frustrated when he couldn't use the *Back* button and had to re-enter the URL to find his way back. He complained that this process was time consuming, especially with a slow Internet connection.

> "Now I can't go back … . I'm stuck here … . I don't know why this happens … . I have a slow connection at work, so this is a pain … . It's a pain to get stuck in a dead end."



Palm.com (Old): The Palm website launched a new browser window for SEC filings, making it difficult for a user to get back to the main window.



Palm, Inc. - Current Report - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://investor.palm.com/secfiling.cfm?filingID=1193125-09-58632

palm.

Form 8-K
Current Report

Filed Mar 19, 2009

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

Current Report Pursuant to Section 13 of 15(d) of
The Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported): March 19, 2009

Palm, Inc.
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware (State or other jurisdiction of incorporation)	000-29597 (Commission File Number)	94-3150688 (I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)

950 W. Maude Avenue, Sunnyvale, California (Address of principal executive offices)	94085 (Zip Code)

(408) 617-7000
Registrant's telephone number, including area code

N/A
(Former name or former address, if changed since last report.)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions (see General Instruction A.2 below):

☐ Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)

☐ Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)

☐ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))

☐ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Item 2.02. Results of Operations and Financial Condition.

On March 19, 2009, Palm, Inc. ("Palm" or "the Company") issued a press release and is holding a conference call regarding its financial results for the third quarter of fiscal year 2009, ended February 27, 2009. A copy of the press release is furnished as Exhibit 99.1 to this Form 8-K and is incorporated by reference herein. Palm makes reference to non-GAAP financial information in both the press release and the conference call.

NON-GAAP FINANCIAL MEASURES: Palm utilizes a number of different financial measures, both GAAP and non-GAAP, in analyzing and assessing its overall business performance, for making operating decisions and for forecasting and planning future periods. Palm considers the use of non-GAAP financial measures helpful in assessing its current financial performance, ongoing operations and prospects for the future. Ongoing operations are the ongoing revenue and expenses of the business, excluding certain costs that Palm does not anticipate to recur on a quarterly basis. While Palm uses non-GAAP financial measures as a tool to enhance its understanding of certain aspects of its financial performance, Palm does not consider these measures to be a substitute for, or superior to, the information provided by GAAP financial measures. Consistent with this approach, Palm believes that disclosing non-GAAP financial measures to the readers of its financial statements provides such readers with useful supplemental data that, while not a substitute for GAAP financial measures, allows for greater transparency in the review of its financial and operational performance. In assessing the overall health of its business during the third quarters of fiscal years 2009 and 2008, Palm excluded items in the following general categories, each of which are described below:

Acquisition-related Expenses . Palm excluded amortization of intangible assets resulting from acquisitions to allow more transparent comparisons of its financial results to its historical operations, forward-looking guidance and the financial results of peer companies. In recent years, Palm has completed the acquisition of the Palm brand and the acquisition of other assets and technologies, which resulted in operating expenses that would not otherwise have been incurred. Palm believes that providing non-GAAP information for amortization of intangible assets allows the users of its financial statements to review both the GAAP expenses in the period, as well as the non-GAAP expenses, thus providing for enhanced understanding of historic and future financial results. Additionally, had Palm internally developed these intangible assets, the amortization of intangible assets would have been expensed historically, and Palm believes the assessment of its operations excluding these amortization costs is relevant to the assessment of internal operations.

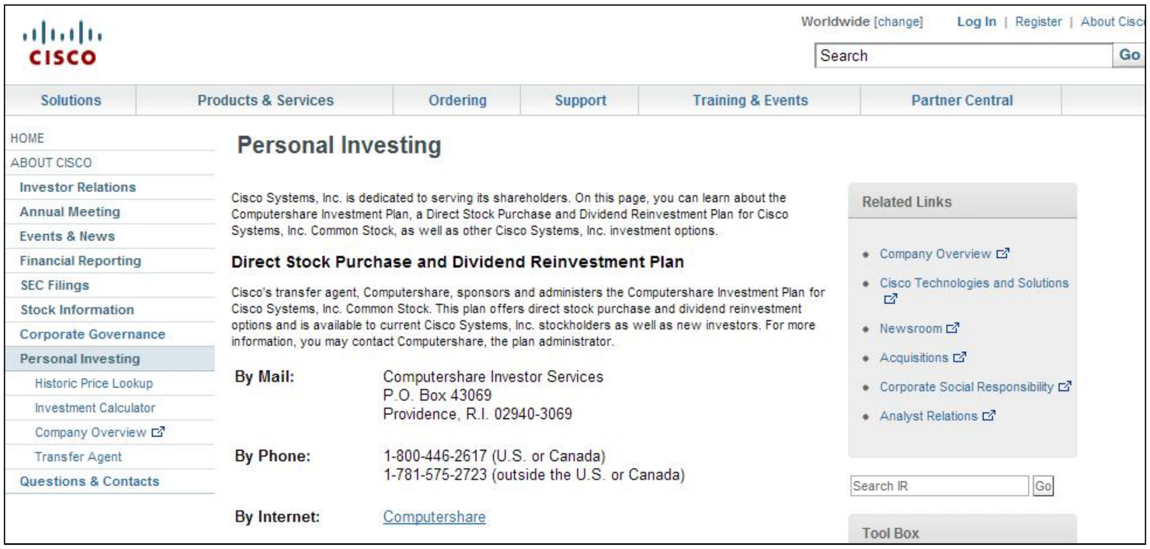
Shareholder.com

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: Off

100%

Palm.com (Updated): SEC reports open in a new browser window without any browser controls, which is also not recommended.



The Cisco website tries to warn people about new browser windows by using the box and arrow icon. This symbol is ineffective because it is not well understood and most people seem to ignore icons they don't understand.

International Considerations

97. Internationalize your site if you have an international audience, at the very least.

It's best to localize your site for your target countries. If your resources and budget don't allow for localization, however, consider internationalizing your site so that most people can still use and understand it.

If you have localized versions of a site, make sure they are complete and done well. Partially localized sites often do more harm than good. When people encounter a site that doesn't work properly, they use lose confidence in its effectiveness and are less motivated to use it.

In this report, we've highlighted international usability findings that are specific to IR areas. For more-detailed information and guidelines on designing for international users, refer to the international users report from our *E-commerce User Experience* series*.* www.nngroup.com/reports/ecommerce-ux-international-purchasers

The Pfeiffer Vacuum homepage lets people choose between English and German versions. The English version was only partially localized, however. In many places, such as the *Latest Info* page, the content was in German only.

> "How did I end up getting German?"

> "It's supposed to be an English-friendly site. It should have been changed and it wasn't. The style is very different. There is no consistency at all. I like consistency because it's easier to compare and digest the information."

> "Here I got a legend. It's in German. I have a black and blue, but I don't know what it means."

> "The bottom of the stock chart is in German … . They don't know what they're talking about."

98. Spell out the month or use month abbreviations, not numbers.

Consider international users when presenting dates. Countries format dates differently. For example, people in the U.S. format dates as month-day-year, but people in Europe use the day-month-year order. Write out the month to avoid confusion: 2/11/10 means February 11, 2010 to Americans and the 2nd of November, 2010 to Europeans. In contrast, it doesn't matter whether you write 2 Feb. 2010 or Feb. 2, 2010 — either way, users in all countries will understand that date.

A British user on the Pfeiffer Vacuum website was confused by dates on press releases because they were written numerically. He wasn't sure what the dates meant and resented that press releases weren't properly written to include international users.

> "They better change these around. This reads the 11th of May, which is 6 months ago … . I want to read something in my terms. They designed it for American customers or readership, or Canadians, but not for the rest of the world."

99. Indicate the monetary currency of financial data and offer an exchange rate.

If your company regularly deals with people in other countries, convert financial data to multiple currencies or provide easy access to a currency converter.

An American user had difficulty evaluating the financial information on the Royal Bank of Scotland site because he didn't know how to convert pounds to dollars.

A British user on the Pfeiffer Vacuum site didn't know how to compare the German market with other markets because the graphs didn't indicate the currency, and there wasn't an easy way to do conversions.

> "Germans and other European countries use Euros. The graph doesn't show currency. These quotes are in Euros and they have not been translated into dollars … . I would give up now."

> "If they did the exchange for me, give me the currency. Then give me a link to get the conversion."

100. Show large numbers in a format that international audiences understand.

The names of larger numbers sometimes have different meanings in other countries. Use the full word to denote the increment (for example, million or billion, not m or b).

The table below shows examples of international differences that can cause confusion when abbreviating with m and b.[4]

NUMBER	AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH/DANISH/GERMAN/FRENCH
10^6	million	million
10^9	billion	milliard (or billion in UK)
10^{12}	trillion	billion
10^{15}	quadrillion	billiard
10^{18}	quintillion	trillion

In this table, you can also see that words like "billion" or "trillion" mean different things depending on country. So you should always write out the full number, with zeros. For example, say "$10 million ($10,000,000)," not "$10m." Zeros are universal and understood by most people.

[4] For more information, see this article: http://mathworld.wolfram.com/LargeNumber.html

Figures in a table should look something like this:

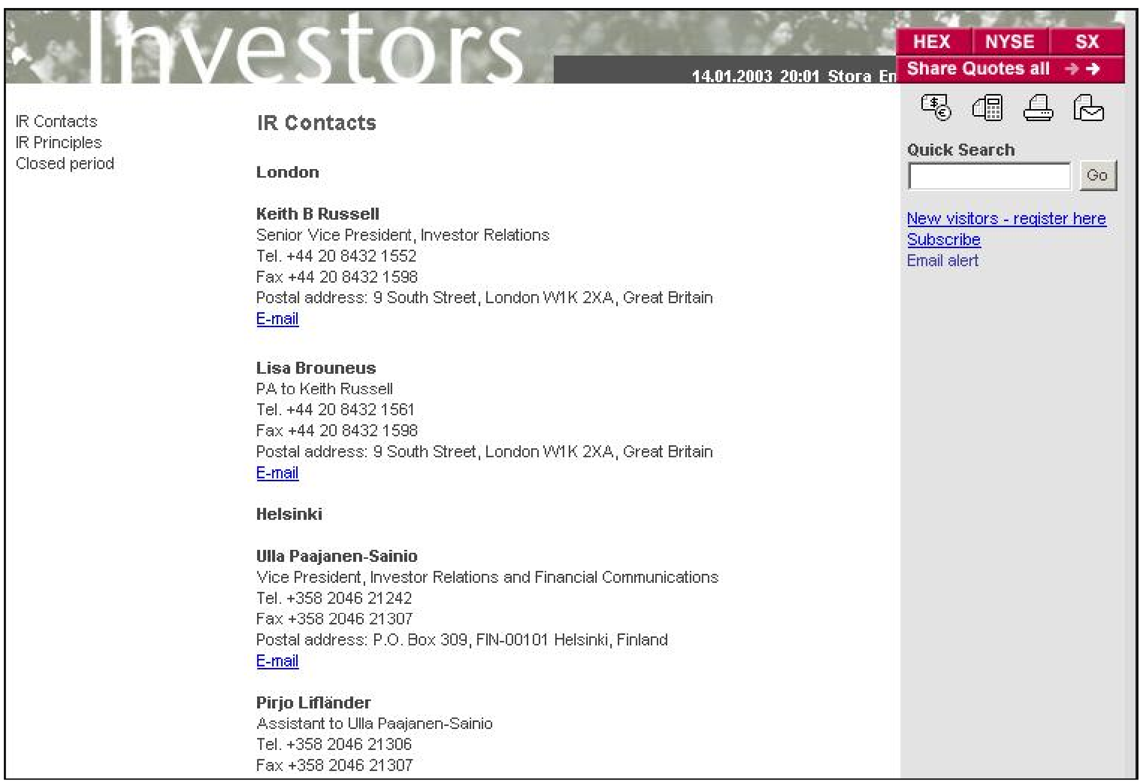
ANNUAL SALES	
2009	$2 billion ($2,000,000,000)
2008	$1 billion
2007	$850 million ($850,000,000)
2006	$675 million

101. Include names and phone numbers of IR and PR personnel in other countries.

Consider how international users might want to contact you. In our studies with journalists, Danish journalists hesitated before calling a U.S. phone number, and U.S. journalists were hesitant to call numbers in Germany or Italy.

The main reasons journalists don' want to call PR contacts outside their own country include:

- **Cost**: They didn't want to pay for the call.
- **Time zones**: They didn't know the current time in the other location, or they knew it was not within business hours.
- **Language barrier**: They didn't want to ask the press agent to speak a different language.



The Stora Enso did a good job of providing IR contacts in the IR section, listing names, titles, and email addresses for each person. They also provided local telephone numbers for each location worldwide.

102. For each contact, note the time zone and the hours of availability.

Our studies show that people avoid making international calls because of the complexities in dealing with the various time zones. Simplify this process by designating the time zone and the agent's availability. Even better, use a Web widget that shows the current time at the location being called.

103. If the stock is traded on international markets, clearly say so.

Indicate which market(s) the company stock is traded on, and explain what the abbreviations mean. Not everyone is familiar with abbreviations for international markets such as LSE (London Stock Exchange) and FSE (Frankfurt Stock Exchange).

An American user on the Vodafone website said:

> "I don't know what LSE or FSE is. I know what NYSE is."

Another user couldn't figure out where the Vodafone company stock was traded, because it wasn't clearly labeled.

> "I still can't find where they're trading. This is especially important for international markets."

Methodology

THE PROCEDURE

We conducted our research in three countries (the U.S., the U.K., and China) and five cities (Boston, New York, San Diego, London, and Hong Kong).

We used a combination of research methods, including:

- Usability testing
- Interviews
- Card sorting
- Expert reviews

Our study consisted of two main parts:

Part 1 — Usability Testing

In the one-on-one sessions, we gave participants tasks to perform. The facilitator sat next to each user and observed, listened, and took notes as the participant attempted tasks on the websites. The facilitator asked users to think aloud as they worked on the tasks. At the end of the sessions, users answered a questionnaire, and a discussion followed. Each session was scheduled for 90 minutes. Participants included individual investors, professional investors, financial journalists, and financial analysts. The same facilitator conducted all of the sessions. Participants used a Windows computer with a high-speed Internet connection.

Part 2 — Card Sorting and Prioritization Exercises

In the card-sorting exercise, we asked some participants to sort topics into meaningful piles and then name the piles. This activity helped us understand how people organize and think about information. We also asked participants to look at examples of financial information on websites and highlight the information they thought was important. Although the highlighting exercise is based on self-reporting, when used in conjunction with observational and interview methods it provides a basis for understanding people's needs and priorities.

During part 1, we learned that many professional financial people depend heavily on professional resources rather than on company websites for financial information. Although they sometimes refer to company websites, they need them less than individual investors, who don't have access to paid resources. Because individual investors were the primary user group, they alone participated in Part 2 of the study.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 63 people participated in the studies: 48 in the U.S., 7 in the U.K, and 8 in Hong Kong. The breakdown by user type was: 35 individual investors, 18 professional investor/financial analysts, and 10 business journalists). The participant age range was 24 to 60 years. There were 46 male and 17 female participants.

Senior citizens can certainly be active investors. They were not the focus of this study, however, and they require special consideration for optimal usability. For more information about designing websites for seniors, please see our separate report on that topic, *Senior Citizens (Ages 65 and older) on the Web*.
http://www.nngroup.com/reports/senior-citizens-on-the-web/

WEB EXPERIENCE CRITERIA

All of the participants were Internet users, ranging from novices to the very experienced. We screened out any participants who were technical experts, such as IT personnel, programmers, and Web or software designers, because they have advanced knowledge about using the Web.

CRITERIA FOR PROFESSIONAL PARTICIPANTS

The following is a general description of the recruiting criteria for each professional user group. Because we promised all participants anonymity, we cannot disclose the names of the professional investors, journalists, and analysts, or the companies they work for.

Business/Financial Journalists

- Must write for financial section of a major newspaper, magazine, or television station (either on staff or as a freelancer)
- Must have published at least one financial article in a major publication or for a major television station
- Must have at least one year of experience as a professional financial journalist

The following are general descriptions of some of the publications they write for:

- Business section of a newspaper with a daily readership of 550,000
- Financial section of a newspaper with a weekly readership of 70,000
- Financial section of a newspaper with a daily circulation of 1 million
- Business topics for The Associated Press

Professional Investors

- Must work for a pension fund or mutual fund company that manages the assets of another company or companies
- Must have at least six months of experience in the field

Some of the participants' job titles were: vice president of mutual funds and operations, investment executive, and fund manager.

Financial Analysts

- Must work for a financial institution (such as a commercial bank, investment bank, or mutual funds company)
- Must have at least six months of experience in the field

Some of the participants' job titles were: associate analyst, senior analyst, and financial consultant.

OPEN-ENDED TASKS

We asked participants to use a pre-selected website to research investment information and determine whether it was worth investing in the company. Each user group was given a slightly different scenario.

Individual Investor Scenario

Your friend just sent you the following email asking for investment advice. Indicate on the form below what you would tell your friend.

I need your help in making some new investment decisions. I'm considering investing $10,000 in <company name>.

* Note: We will not use your advice in any way, and your information will remain anonymous.

Please go to the company website and let me know:

> If, overall, you think this company will do better or worse than the stock market in general.
>
> [ ] Better [ ] Worse
>
> Whether you think this company is a good long-term investment.
>
> [ ] Yes [ ] No
>
> Why or why not?

What are the potential risks, if any?

Professional Investor Scenario

You're managing funds for your company and you are thinking of including shares of <company name> in the portfolio(s).

Go to the company website and figure out if this company will do better or worse than the stock market in general.

* Note: We will not use your advice in any way, and your information will remain anonymous.

> Mr. Erling:
>
> Here are the results of some research I've done.
>
> First, I think that this company will do [ ] better [ ] worse than the stock market in general.
>
> Second, I think this company is a [ ] good [ ] bad long-term investment because:
>
> Third, the potential risks (if any) of including this company in our investment fund are:

Financial Analyst Scenario

A client has asked you to evaluate whether or not <company name> is a good investment. Go to this company's website and figure out if this company will do better or worse than the stock market in general.

* Note: We will not use your advice in any way, and your information will remain anonymous.

Please indicate on the form below what you would tell your client.

Ms. Applegate:

Here are the results of the research I've done:

First, I think this company will do [ ] better [ ] worse than the stock market in general.

Second, I think this company is a [ ] good [ ] bad long-term investment because:

Third, the potential risks (if any) of investing in this company are:

Financial Journalist Scenario

You have been asked to write a story that assesses <company name>'s past financial performance and their prospects for the future. Use the Internet to get information for the story, and then draft your opening paragraph.

* Note: We will not use your story in any way, and your information will remain anonymous.

DIRECTED TASKS

We also asked some users to perform each of these specific tasks:

- What does the company do?
- How long has the company been in business?
- Who is the CEO of the company and how long has s/he been the CEO?
- Get a copy of the company's latest quarterly report.
- Find out the company's next earnings release date.
- Find the company's high/low share price for Q2 2002.
- Find out when the next annual meeting for the shareholders will be held.
- Which public markets are the company's shares traded on?
- Find out if you can buy from or sell directly to the company.

WEBSITES STUDIED

We studied 52 websites in this research project. The companies, organizations, and websites varied by industry, company size, and Web design. Also, we selected some companies based on possible perception issues, either by the products or services they provide, their existing reputation or prominence in then-current news coverage.

In addition to testing these 52 websites, our staff reviewed 42 other websites.

Some of the websites included in this report have changed or disappeared since we tested them. Our purpose here is not to criticize any individual site. Rather, we use the specific sites and screenshots as examples to illustrate general usability issues that apply across many websites.

Thus, a site's redesign or closure doesn't change our recommendations, nor does it make a screenshot irrelevant. Indeed, our hope is that many of the websites we feature here will take any advice offered and correct the problems cited.

WEBSITES TESTED	
COMPANY	**INDUSTRY**
Adobe	Technology
Alcoa	Aluminum Materials
Allied Domecq	Food and Spirits
American Airlines	Airline
ASE Global	Electronics
Bayer	Pharmaceutical
Bear Stearns Companies	Financial
Biogen	Pharmaceutical
Ceridian	Human Resources
China Mobile Limited	Wireless Communications
Citigroup	Financial
CVS	Drug Stores
Eli Lilly	Pharmaceutical
Esprit	Apparel
Exxon Mobile	Oil and Gas
Frontline	Shipping
Gannett Company	Publishing
Henderson Land Development Company	Real Estate
Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing	Financial Services
Home Depot, The	Home Improvement Store
HSBC	Financial
ImmunoGen	Pharmaceutical
InFocus	Technology

WEBSITES TESTED	
COMPANY	**INDUSTRY**
Interpublic Group of Companies	Advertising Agencies
J.C. Penny Company	Department Stores
Johnson & Johnson	Healthcare, Pharmaceutical
KB Home	Home Builder
Labor Ready	Human Resources
Li & Fung Limited	Supply Chain Management
Mc Graw-Hill Companies, The	Publishing
Merck & Co.	Pharmaceutical
MTR	Transportation
Nabi Biopharmaceuticals	Biotechnology
Novo Nordisk	Pharmaceutical
Pacific Sunwear of California	Apparel
Palm	Technology
PCCW	Telecommunications
Peregrine Pharmaceuticals	Biotechnology
Pfeiffer Vacuum Technology	Technology
Rowan Companies	Oil & Gas Drilling & Exploration
Royal Bank of Scotland	Financial
Samsung Electronics	Electronics
Santander	Financial
Starbucks	Specialty Eatery, Coffee
Stora Enso	Paper Products
Symantec	Technology
TNT	Delivery & Freight

WEBSITES TESTED	
COMPANY	**INDUSTRY**
Tyson Foods	Meat Products
UPS	Delivery & Freight
Vodafone	Wireless Communications
Walmart Stores	Discount, Variety Stores
Yahoo! Finance	Internet Information Provider

WEBSITES REVIEWED	
COMPANY	**INDUSTRY**
Allstate	Insurance
Apple	Technology
AT&T	Telecom Services
Avery Dennison	Paper Products
Barnes & Noble	Specialty Retail
Bath & Body Works	Retail
BB&T	Financial
Bristol-Myers Squibb	Biopharmaceutical
Cisco Systems	Technology
eBay	Catalog and Mail Order Houses
Expedia	Internet Information Provider, Travel
FedEx	Delivery & Freight
Fool.com	Internet Information Provider, Financial
Garmin	Technology
Gaylord Entertainment Company	Entertainment
General Motors	Auto Manufacturer
Google	Internet Information Provider
IBM	Technology
Intel	Technology
Intelsat	Telecommunications
Kellogg	Processed & Packaged Goods
Limited Brands	Apparel
Macy's	Apparel
Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia	Publishing

WEBSITES REVIEWED	
COMPANY	INDUSTRY
Medic One Foundation	Medical Services
Micron	Technology
Parexel	Research Services, Biotechnology
Pernod Ricard	Wine and Spirits
Qualcomm	Communication Equipment
Qwest	Telecommunications
RFM	Wireless Technology
Sainsbury’s	Food Retail
SEGi	Education
Sony	Electronics
Southwest	Regional Airline
Starwood	Lodging
Sun Microsystems	Technology
Textron	Conglomerate
UCB Biopharma	Biopharmacology
US Airways	Major Airlines
USPS	Shipping
Yahoo!	Internet Information Provider

About the Authors

Hoa Loranger is Director at Nielsen Norman Group and has worked in user experience for over 15 years. She conducts research worldwide, and presents keynotes and training on best practices for interface design. Hoa has consulted for companies such as Microsoft, HP, Allstate, Samsung, Verizon, and Disney. She authors publications, including a book, Prioritizing Web Usability.

Before joining Nielsen Norman Group, she worked at Intuit, where her group was responsible for the user experience for TurboTax. At TRW (currently Northrop Grumman), she specialized in both hardware and software systems, including navigational and logistical applications, and computer configurations for military vehicles.

Hoa holds a Master's degree in Human Factors and Applied Experimental Psychology from California State University Northridge, and a Psychology degree from University of California, Irvine. She heads the west coast team and is based in Santa Barbara, California.

Jakob Nielsen, Ph.D. is a Principal of Nielsen Norman Group. He is the founder of the "discount usability engineering" movement, which emphasizes fast and efficient methods for improving the quality of user interfaces. Nielsen, noted as "the world's leading expert on Web usability" by U.S. News and World Report and "the next best thing to a true time machine" by USA Today, is the author of the best-selling book Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity, which has sold more than a quarter of a million copies in 22 languages. His other books include Usability Engineering, Usability Inspection Methods, International User Interfaces, Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed, Prioritizing Web Usability, Eyetracking Web Usability, and Mobile Usability.

Nielsen's Alertbox column on web usability has been published on the Internet since 1995 and currently has about 200,000 readers. From 1994 to 1998, Nielsen was a Sun Microsystems Distinguished Engineer. His previous affiliations include Bell Communications Research, the Technical University of Denmark, and the IBM User Interface Institute. He holds 79 United States patents, mainly on ways of making the Internet easier to use.

Report Authors: Hoa Loranger and Jakob Nielsen

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