Best-in-Class Checklist for Evaluating IR Website Partners

We talk with investor relations professionals every day, and there are always questions we know they'll have when selecting a partner for publishing their IR websites. The most common questions we're asked include: "How long does it take to get my site up," "What happens when I need to make changes," and, "How long will it take to see updates to my site."

These questions can be distilled down to one central point: Savvy IR professionals focus on value when they assess potential providers. This checklist highlights expectations to identify a best-in-class partner to design, build, and manage your site.

Speed to Site Launch

An IR expert should expect to see early results well before the website is finalized. However, some providers can take months to reveal their client's new or updated website design and/or functionality, leaving little room for the client to give feedback or participate meaningfully in the project.

In contrast, a best-in-class partner should provide access to early-stage design and functionality within 7 days. This allows the client to see the development of their site throughout the process and encourages both the client and provider to collaborate early and often.

Rapid Time to Response

This is a very common concern clients have, and rightly so. When critical revisions to a website are required, investor relations officers need to know their requests are gaining attention quickly. In a customer service benchmark report done by Superoffice.com, they surveyed one thousand companies in the SaaS industry and found the average time to respond (TTR) to a customer request was **twelve hours and ten minutes**.

That is way too long! As a gold standard, a superior partner will begin working on the majority of requests within two hours or less.

World-Class Client Support

Some providers rely on the same services that have worked in the past, without looking for new ways to solve their customers' problems. For a partner to be a top-tier enterprise, they need to innovate new technologies and show that they are constantly evaluating new ways to simplify their customers' lives.

For example, the modern customer service environment has shown **88% of customers expect their providers to offer an online self-service support portal**, but many companies that build IR websites do not have this feature.

For a business to be seen as a leader in the industry, it should have a self-service platform where clients can update and review many of their services without interacting directly with an agent.

However, we know that not all problems can be solved by a client themselves. When measuring a company's customer service strengths, an IRO also needs to evaluate the live customer support options. Great customer service means low hold times of a minute or less, a team that has been well trained in the specific skills needed to resolve issues, and ideally should have a 1% or less issue rate.

Consistent Request Resolution Timeframes

An IR website publisher should be able to ensure that a client's needs are both heard and resolved quickly. According to JitBit, a customer service ticketing provider, when they analyzed the millions of customer tickets, processed by their customers, **the average customer support ticket resolution time was 3 days and 10 hours**.

To be considered as a service provider in the top ten percent for speed of issue resolution, the majority of requests should be resolved within 24 hours. Meeting that goal requires a client success team that is consistently upskilled with the right specialization training, so they can efficiently resolve any potential customer issues as they receive them.

In addition, their staff should always be available to customers during the customers' trading hours, instead of the typical website publisher's office hours. For businesses in the US and Canadian markets, this means prioritizing client-facing availability from 9-5 EST, and during earnings season starting as early as 6 am and maintaining focus to 6 pm and later. If they also service the European, Middle Eastern and African exchanges as well, the workforce should also be available from 9-5 GMT.

Excellent Customer Satisfaction

Perhaps the most important evaluator of best-in-class service is what current customers are saying about the vendor. What kind of reputation do they have regarding the services they provide? Are they being viewed as a five-star organization by their clients?

Take the opportunity to see a potential partner's reviews, ask for testimonials, and find quotes that show that their customers trust and value their services. If a company is getting this kind of positive feedback, they will be more than happy to make that information available to potential prospects. A trusted vendor should score at least 90% of customers rating the company as a 5 out of 5 rating.

Conclusion

Informative, easy-to-use, and up-to-date websites are essential for your stakeholders and potential stakeholders to understand your organization's value, making them essential to your own success as well. So, it's important to select the right partner!

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