

2026 – Best Innovation in IR

Categories

Small-, Mid-, and Large-Cap Listed Companies

IR Principles

Please note that for all awards categories, companies need to emphasise how they have successfully addressed the following IR principles:

- Having an integrated equity story that is clearly communicated across all stakeholders setting out the company's approach to long-term value creation
- Engaging with investors, analysts and other relevant stakeholders with the depth, transparency, and consistency to enable their fair assessment of the growth and value drivers of the company
- Meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements around disclosure and focusing on greater transparency of communication on material risks, challenges, progress and milestones both internally and externally.

Award Description

Investor relations is a complex and evolving discipline, requiring professionals to be adaptive, strategic and creative in addressing the needs of diverse stakeholder groups.

This Award seeks specific examples of innovation and/or transformation over the past 12 months. Innovation should represent a meaningful enhancement or step-change in how IR challenges are addressed—whether through new approaches, novel application of existing tools, or rethinking of processes, engagement or insight.

This might include (but is not limited to) the use of new resources such as AI and digital communications; pioneering outreach techniques; or novel formats for meetings, events, reporting and stakeholder engagement. The use of technology (including AI) should be clearly linked to a defined problem or opportunity and demonstrable outcomes.

The judges welcome a broad range of innovations across IR, including strategic positioning, stakeholder engagement, internal processes, insight generation and team development, in addition to technology-led initiatives.

Entries should clearly demonstrate the impact of the innovation, whether measurable or anecdotal, showing how it has improved processes, perceptions or outcomes, and contributed to better IR practice.

Entries focused on website or digital enhancements should demonstrate how these represent a broader innovation in IR strategy, engagement or outcomes, rather than standalone design or usability improvements.

AWARD CRITERIA

In sharing your example of innovation, please provide details on each of the following:

1. **Summary** – a concise overview of the innovation
2. **Problem or opportunity** – What specific IR challenge, inefficiency or opportunity was being addressed? Why was this important to solve?
3. **Execution** - How was the innovation delivered? Please include relevant detail on time, budget, stakeholders, internal buy-in and implementation process.
4. **Impact** – What changed as a result of the innovation? Please include:
 - Quantitative evidence where possible (e.g. engagement levels, investor reach, time or cost efficiencies)
 - Qualitative evidence (e.g. investor or internal stakeholder feedback)
 - Comparison to previous approach or baseline, where relevant
 - Whether the innovation has been embedded or scaled beyond initial implementation

Submissions should be 800 words or fewer and may additionally include quantitative and/or qualitative supporting information. To support clarity and enable consistent evaluation, entrants are invited to structure their submission using the headings above.

Judging criteria

The judges are keen to encourage a broad interpretation of innovation and will take account of the scale of the company's resources in judging the entries. To allow for fair evaluation across different types of innovation, a framework will be used by the judges along the following lines:

1. Clarity of problem/opportunity: what was being solved and why did it matter?
2. Originality and appropriateness of approach: how innovative was the response, given the context?
3. Quality of execution: how well was the innovation delivered?
4. Impact and evidence: what changed as a result?
5. Sustainability/scalability: is this an enduring and/or replicable innovation?

Judges will be looking for entries that feel genuinely company-specific, reflecting your own voice, culture, and experience. AI tools may be used to assist with drafting, but the strongest entries will be those that clearly reflect the unique character of your organisation and include concrete, specific evidence of outcomes rather than generalised claims.

Examples of the IR contexts in which innovation may apply include:

Communications and media

- Reporting & Collateral (corporate website, annual report, sustainability report, strategic report, fact book, presentation)
- Access to and distribution/repurposing of company information
- Digital/social media or news flow dissemination

Capital markets

- Financial results or capital markets events
- Corporate access and investor engagement
- Sell-side/buy-side interaction
- Transactional-based or specific event-driven market engagement

Internal development and processes

- Building the profile of IR with the Board or key internal stakeholders
- Collaboration with other departments - strategy, sustainability, co sec, finance, etc.
- IR team structure, staffing, functions

Insight and Intelligence

- Development of performance review framework to assist with fair assessment of IR
- Access to and use of market intelligence – share price, trading, feedback, corporate brokers
- Investor sentiment and feedback to drive enhanced market engagement
- Investor identification and targeting
- Consensus management
- Guidance

Technology

- Development and/or adoption of new technology with specific IR applications
- Consideration of AI and the innovation it can bring in the IR space.

Entry statements, supporting evidence and size categories

Word format entry statements to be uploaded to the website (Max. 800 words).

Please provide any links to relevant material to support your submission and evidence the example and its success.

Please note Large-cap, Mid-cap and Small-cap categories are aligned to FTSE 100, FTSE 250 and FTSE Small-cap classifications as at 31 March 2026. For companies not included in the FTSE indices (including international and AIM-traded companies), size categories are determined by their market capitalisation as at 31 March 2026 as follows:

- *Large cap: above £3.5bn;*
- *Mid cap: £500m to £3.5bn;*
- *Small cap: below £500m.*

Examples of Innovation in Debt IR will be eligible for inclusion in this category from unlisted companies that have listed debt. Such entries should be made for the appropriate size category, determined by the Society Executive and based on evidence provided to support their equivalent market capitalisation.