

Investor Relations Charter (IRC®) Holders Sing Praises for the IRC Program

152 IR professionals have earned the IRC credential since it launched two years ago. They offer powerful testimonials about how it has helped their careers.

BY IMAN HANNON



IRC candidates are dedicated to advancing the field of investor relations. They're also motivated by personal growth and professional challenges because to earn the IRC, they must meet educational and professional experience requirements, adhere to the IRC Code of Conduct and the NIRI Code of Ethics, pass the rigorous IRC exam. And since the first Investor Relations Charter (IRC®) exam was administered in March 2016, 152 such professionals have earned the prestigious IRC credential, the first professional IR certification in the U.S.

In the intervening two years, NIRI has also enhanced the IRC program to increase the value of the credential, create more awareness, and improve the overall experience for IRC candidates. Among these new features is, for example, a digital IRC badge which allows holders to easily share their accomplishment with their social and professional networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. NIRI has also introduced instant exam scoring which provides candidates with their provisional exam result before leaving the testing center.

NIRI's awareness-building initiatives within the IR community include, among other things, IRC-related activities at the NIRI Annual Conference. More than 60 IRC credential holders attended the recent 2018 NIRI Conference, and at this must-attend IR event, NIRI held a new IRC Reception

to honor credential holders and program volunteers. New credential holders were also recognized on stage by NIRI CEO Gary LaBranche, NIRI Board Chair Lee Ahlstrom, IRC, and NIRI Certification Council Vice Chair Mark Donohue, IRC. NIRI also offers an informational session for prospective IRC candidates at the Annual Conference. And by attending the full NIRI Conference, credential holders met the required number of competencies for renewal, and earned up to 10 Professional Development Units (PDUs) toward their certification renewal.

NIRI offers three one-week testing windows each year for the IRC program, and is now accepting applications to sit for the November 13-20, 2018 testing window. The initial application deadline for the November testing window is September 25th, and program information and applications are available on the NIRI website at www.niri.org/certification.

IRC Testimonials

What do IRC holders and other IR professionals have to say about the IRC credential? *IR Update* followed up with several of them to learn about their motivations, views on the credential's potential career impact, its greater meaning for the IR profession, and other thoughts about the credential. Here's what they had to say:



The IR profession is constantly evolving, and the IRC credential represents the knowledge and skills necessary to be a leader in the field.

Shawn Southard, IRC

*Vice President, Kei Advisors LLC
Chair, NIRI Examination
Development Committee
Advisory Board Member,
NIRI Philadelphia*



I took the IRC exam to validate my knowledge, strengthen my standing in the industry, and to help elevate our industry by supporting certification.

I think over time the IRC will help one's career and be viewed as a mark of distinction. I wouldn't say the IRC is as recognized as the CFA and CPA, for example, but I think the investor relations industry is off to a good start and doing the right things to strengthen itself.

I would recommend that my experienced colleagues study for and take the exam even if they have no intention of changing jobs. It's great self-validation, will aid our business, and should be impressive to CFOs and CEOs.

James Grant, IRC

*Member, NIRI Examination
Development
Committee*



The IRC certification tells me the candidate I am interviewing is experienced, knowledgeable, and business savvy. It is a clear-cut advantage for any investor relations job seeker.

Tabitha Zane

*Vice President, Investor Relations
TopBuild Corp.
Chair, NIRI Certification Scheme
Committee*



After 25 years in the IR profession and establishing the investor relations program at four publicly traded companies – none necessarily household names or located within a NIRI chapter geography – I sought the IRC credential as validation and recognition of a high degree of competency in a diverse array of disciplines.

The IRC has also allowed me to further expand my connections within the professional community as I transition to service and counseling opportunities within the public company arena.

Perry Grueber, IRC

*Director, Client Services
ModernIR Networks*



The IRC exam increased my professional confidence by independently validating the competencies and extensive

knowledge I have earned throughout my 20-year career in leading global investor relations programs.

The IRC is a trusted and highly visible professional designation that signals a high degree of competence in the field of investor relations. Investors, analysts and C-suite executives alike recognize the IRC credential as a unique professional achievement that lends greater credibility and trust to the charter holder.

The IRC is substantially more than just a one-time professional achievement – the continuing education and service obligations that are required to maintain the IRC designation are an important sign of professional leadership and commitment to the field of investor relations.

Christopher L. Symanoskie, IRC

*Vice President, Corporate
Communications
American Public Education, Inc.*



I highly enjoy working in corporate investor relations and hope to gain significant experience in this field during

my career. There are very few individuals at my company with investor relations experience who can attest to my abilities, and the IRC designation serves to validate my proficiency and experience against a recognized standard.

The IRC designation demonstrates that my expertise is not limited to

the situations I've encountered in my current role and that I am prepared to embrace opportunities over the course of my career that require the designation's proficiency. The IRC makes it possible to easily identify professionals that possess the knowledge and experience to apply the skillsets and competencies that are critical to a successful investor relations program.

Lisa Goodman, IRC

*Investor Relations
PNM Resources*



My work has centered around investor relations for most of my career. While I was never in a corporate IR role, I have advised companies on best practice in IR and been a partner to them in my roles at three European investment banks and at Thomson Reuters.

I decided to sit for the exam as a personal challenge, more than anything. It was important to me that I test my knowledge and identify areas where I could improve and enhance my skills.

The other charter holders have impressive experience, so this was another motivator – being a part of this group showcases the strength of the IR profession and the diverse backgrounds that inform what we do.

There are many ways to describe a career in IR, and I believe that the IRC brings recognition to this. It's a unifying element and creates an even stronger community of people dedicated to the profession. Whether you are in the first few years of IR or a veteran, the IRC highlights the fact that you are well-rounded.

I would recommend earning the IRC to my colleagues in investor relations who plan to pursue IR over the long-term – it's a nice validation for years of hard work and shows commitment to the profession!

Michele Backman, IRC

*Director, Depositary
Receipts IR Advisory
Deutsche Bank*



I believe the IRC is one of the most important components of elevating the investor relations profession and providing

IR professionals with credibility to CEOs, CFOs and the broader investment community. I took the IRC exam because I wanted to support NIRI and the IR profession to be at the forefront of the IRC certification program.

I didn't complete it for personal growth, but I think it does differentiate those who put in the extra effort and have external recognition of their IR experience. For those in the profession with fewer than 10 years of experience I think it is an important differentiator.

Timothy Sedabres, IRC

*Senior Vice President, Corporate
Strategy & Head of Investor Relations
Banc of California*



With the IRC exam, NIRI has developed a framework that encompasses foundational knowledge such as financial reporting, capital markets, and regulatory compliance alongside more comprehensive and strategic skillsets such as corporate message development, shareholder engagement, and

strategy formulation.

As a newly minted holder of the IRC credential, I have no doubt that I am better prepared to successfully navigate a profession that is increasingly demanding and continually evolving. I look forward to maintaining my IRC through NIRI's comprehensive educational offerings and I encourage eligible new IR practitioners as well as seasoned IROs to sit for the exam.

Laura Kiernan, CPA, IRC

*Senior Vice President,
Investor Relations
Ubiquiti Networks
Member, NIRI Examination
Development Committee*



I sat for the IRC exam because I wanted to earn a credential that would add credibility to the consultative support and guidance I give our IR clients.

I believe my practical experience, coupled with reading and studying the *IR Body of Knowledge*, will act as a litmus test to my current and potential future employers that I can succeed in the various facets of the IR role.

The exam is rigorous, but not overwhelming, and I think IR professionals will appreciate how the exam and material is more based on practicality than some other exams where you have to memorize a textbook or theories which may not hold up in the real world.

Larry Goldberg, CFA, IRC

*Director – Global Markets
Intelligence
Ipreo*

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