

Breaking the Mold in Orlando

The 2017 NIRI Annual Conference co-chairs share details on the fresh content and innovations that attendees will find at the conference.



The 2017 NIRI Annual Conference is just around the corner. The largest gathering of IR professionals in the world will take place June 4-7 at the JW Marriott Grande Lakes, Orlando,

Florida. To get the inside scoop on what's in store this year, *IR Update* reached out to Conference Co-Chairs Karen Fisher, senior vice president, FSW Communications; and Dennis Walsh, senior manager, investor relations, at Zillow Group.

With a theme of “Breaking the Mold,” what should attendees expect?

Dennis: As investor relations professionals, we must adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of the profession. We're faced with strict regulations, a 24-hour news cycle, increasingly engaged investors, and many more challenges that pop up almost daily. In addition, the IR community itself is evolving given the varied professional backgrounds of those serving in IR positions. The Annual Conference Committee has been diligently researching how to bring fresh content and speakers to the conference to provide insight and solutions for solving the challenges that face today's IR professionals and that aren't found in the old IR playbook.

Should we expect any changes or new additions to the conference format?

Karen: Yes! We want attendees of the conference to come away with new experiences each year. You can expect to see innovative session formats, including smaller group sessions that take a deeper dive into niche topics, such as changes

to market structure or debt IR, as well as case studies on topics like responding to shareholder activism. And we listened to past conference attendees. Many of the ideas for this year's conference are based on this feedback. For example, on Sunday, June 4, there will be a first-timers' session to help those individuals attending the conference for the first time get the most out of their participation.

The general session keynote speakers are always a highlight of the conference. Who will we see this year?

Dennis: This year will be no exception! We've got a lineup of stellar keynote speakers, including executive coach Connie Dieken who'll share insights on communicating change and being more influential; Elisse Walter, former SEC chairman and commissioner and current board member with the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board, who will discuss the disclosure of material non-financial information; and representatives from some of the world's largest asset managers who signed the Commonsense Corporate

Governance Principles. (For more details on the general sessions, please visit the NIRI website at www.niri.org/conference.)

What can we expect from the breakout sessions?

Karen: The breakout sessions will cover all of the latest trends facing IR professionals today. In addition to the returning tracks of “Marketing Outreach & Stakeholder Communications,” “Corporate Governance & Regulatory,” “Economics & Marketing,” and “Career Development,” we've added a new “Innovations in IR” track. The sessions under each track are comprehensive and some of the industry's top experts have already been secured as speakers. Attendees will have a variety of sessions to choose from with content developed to meet every level of experience.

Finally, aside from all the professional development sessions, what else is in store?

Dennis: Lots! The networking sessions at the NIRI Annual Conference are invaluable. There will be ample opportunities for attendees from all experience levels to mingle with some of the world's top IR professionals from companies large and small and across all industries and geographic regions.

To register for the 2017 Annual Conference, please visit www.niri.org/conference. The advance registration deadline is February 27, and attendees can save hundreds of dollars by registering by that date.

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