



THE IRO VOICE

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THE 2009-2010 SEASON KICK-OFF

Now that summer is officially over and football season has begun, it's time for all of us to reconnect with each other and benefit from each other's experiences in order to enhance our own roles within each of our companies.

I want to thank last year's board members along with all of our other volunteers for helping NIRI Atlanta achieve three awards in the small chapter category from NIRI National—Best Overall Chapter, Best Overall Programs, and Best Member Services. Wow, what an accomplishment!

I appreciate the trust you all have placed in me by allowing me to serve as your President again this year.

In addition, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Diane Dayhoff and Allison Parker for their support and hard work last year.

While the bar has been set high, we have another great board this year. I'd like to welcome our new board members: Aaron Uhde, Neal Wells, and Martin Jarosick. We also had a responsibility switch for our Programs to Beverly Verico from Robert Borchert.

Your board has been hard at work this past summer con-

tinuing to pursue our mission of "Participate, Learn, Lead"

We will have our first fall conference on September 18, 2009 to kick-off of the season. Since all IROs interact with many different corporate functions and are required to be leaders in their own right, we designed the fall conference this in mind. We've invited numerous other financial-based professional groups as well as the corporate secretaries local chapter. I think you'll find this event to be very informative as well as provide for a great networking experience.

We have a calendar full of great programs this season that should provide you with practical information as well as positive networking experiences. These programs were selected largely due to the survey responses we received from all of you based on the member survey conducted in the spring.

I hope to see you soon at our Fall conference and I look forward to another great year.

Thanks!

Jane M. Elliott, President
NIRI Atlanta
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Jane M. Elliott

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Special points of interest:

- NIRI Atlanta received three awards
- Fall Conference—Sept 18
- Upcoming Programs
- Communication in Hard Times
- Individual Leadership Award

MEET THE NEW PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

Beverly Verrico has played an active role within the Atlanta chapter for the last few years and served as Director at Large last year. For 2009-2010, she is serving as our new Programs Director and brings a wealth of experience to her new role.

Beverly is a Vice President of Marketing Lead Generation Programs for The Bank of New York Mellon; Mellon Shareholder Services. She brings nearly 30 years of experience in the corporate shareowner services field and in a variety of functions including: client relationship management, new business sales, communications and marketing.

Beverly has coordinated a number of focused campaigns and industry events which has helped enhance the awareness and capabilities of her employer's reputation in the marketplace. Through her expertise and industry contacts, Beverly continues to contribute to the high quality of NIRI Atlanta programs.

NIRI Atlanta strives to offer a robust program offering that will continue to meet the chapter's mission of "Participate, Learn, Lead and offer something for everyone within the chapter. The program topics are designed to be relevant with current events within the market place and also offer practical information for IROs and other service providers.

Beverly and her committee have a terrific line up for this

year with programs designed to be informative. The line up over the next few months is as follows:

October	All About XBRL
November	Proxy Regulation and Governance Update
December	Making the Most of Non-Deal Road Shows

As always, we encourage participation, new ideas, and feedback. If you or an associate have any comments or questions on NIRI Atlanta's programs, or want to participate in the committee, please contact Beverly at Beverly.verrico@bnymellon.com.



Beverly Verrico, Programs

NIRI ATLANTA'S FIRST FALL CONFERENCE—SEPT 18

Come network with your peers and share ideas and learn some practical information to help further your own mission by coming to NIRI Atlanta's first fall conference on September 18, 2009 from 7:30 am through a buffet lunch.

The program offers something for everyone and begins with a keynote address from Paul Garcia, Chairman & CEO of Global Payments. Mr. Garcia will speak on Leadership in Challenging Times. Mr. Garcia has 30 years of experience in the payments industry and will offer a unique perspective on the topic.

There will also be two very informative panels offered consecutively so you won't miss anything. The first panel of experienced professionals will provide an update on Governance and Disclosure.

The final session of the morning will be a valuation trends panel with industry leading participants.

The morning will be wrapped up by a networking buffet lunch.

The event meets CPE requirements.

Please plan on attending. The event is being held at United Parcel Service, Inc. Founders Auditorium located on 55 Glenlake Parkway, NE; Atlanta, GA 30328.

Please see www.niriatlanta.org for a complete agenda and to register.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION RULES FOR COMMUNICATING IN HARD TIMES: *USING THE BAD NEWS OF HARD TIMES TO GET READY FOR GOOD TIMES*

In good times, corporate sponsors count on being recognized for their good works—their generous donations to help charities, non-profits and the like. This value exchange is part of the rules between donations and marketing—rules the recipients understand. But the rules can change in bad times: In Dallas, a bank that accepted TARP funds wished it's a major donation to a charity to remain anonymous. The risk of its generosity showing up in the news and prompting public outrage was simply too great.

This is simply one manifestation of an understandable reaction to the rising anger at big corporations—and business more generally. Mistrust and cynicism poison the air. And when targets are as big as AIG and various banks, any business can suffer collateral damage. Lots of executives feel like those at the bank: *Why lead with your chin? Stay low.*

But in hard times like these there is an opportunity for businesses to improve their standing with their various publics, including the media, investors, employees—opportunity for rebuilding trust—re-establishing it, strengthening it—whatever a company's situation.

Effective communications that do this can also position a company when good times return.

Paradoxically, today's opportunity exists in bad news—how a business handles bad news. When you're delivering bad news openly, even the cynics are more likely to believe you. And if they get in the habit of believing you through the bad news in bad times, they're more likely to trust you delivering good news in good times.

Here are the rules for handling bad news in hard times—and good:

1. Lay bad news out clearly. Be as open as you can, be clear. Explain how you are adjusting to the bad news, short and longer term. Do this in every aspect of your communications. Yes, legal considerations have to apply. But don't use legitimate legal consideration as excuses for avoiding what can be said, legally and prudently and timely. A local Atlanta health-care company released the announcement of a senior manager's resignation prior to a holiday so that the information was not universally known for five days. A spokesperson said the announcement was within legal requirements. No matter. The appearance of impropriety is all that is needed to convict in the court of public opinion.

2. Avoid hype. Americans are keenly attuned to hype—and in today's atmosphere of cynicism; they're more inclined to find it. They're ready to bolt, to close their minds to the rest of the communication. Even a hint of hype can ruin what might otherwise be an effective communication.

3. Don't make a commercial. Don't turn a media release, a speech, or an opinion column into a commercial. This is a corollary to "Avoid Hype." If you want a commercial or an advertisement, pay for a commercial or advertisement.

4. Deliver substance. Make your case with solid evidence—real numbers; accurate analysis of what they mean, the insights they offer into trends. People are hungry for substance. That assertion goes against much of the conventional wisdom in communications today. But consider Warren Buffett and his annual stockholder's letter. It is dense with numbers and narrative. Loads of gray. No color, no dazzling graphics. Substance trumps all. People want real ideas and insights—not self-serving hype. They want substance: Facts and trends weighed by the considered judgment of experienced, seasoned, savvy business people—business leaders.

5. Have courage. Don't cave in. Don't ruin your would be openness as time nears to release the bad news. Everyone in business has seen this happen. The CEO and other officers are determined to be frank about bad news. Then, as the draft circulates, people will say: "We shouldn't say that," or "we can't say it that way." And, magically, through all the revisions, the bad news begins to look a lot better. There is a cost for playing it safe—it is the cost of continuing mistrust, and cynicism, perhaps latent, but cynicism nevertheless. The media and many employees carry this with them through good times and bad.

6. No "No comment." At best you miss an opportunity to tell your story. As worst, you appear to be guilty. Remember: when you are not telling your story, someone else is. You are dealing with the court of public opinion where the rules of evidence and guilt are not as clear cut as a court of law. Recently, an Atlanta-based Fortune 500 company was excoriated by the press, analysts and shareholders for not inviting its board to the annual meeting that was held in another city. The company refused to comment. The firestorm of controversy raged until the company agreed not to do that again. The reputation was blackened and charred nonetheless.

Follow these rules. Be open; make your case with plain words and straight talk.

The return can be increased trust, and being better positioned when the good times are restored.

Quinn Hudson, an Atlanta NIRI board member for four years, is President of Hudson|Crane Group, a corporate communications agency that frames issues for executives who want to make a difference. For more information, visit www.hudsoncrane.com.

The return of open, straight communication is gaining trust and positioning for better times to come.



PARTICIPATE, LEARN, and LEAD

See our website:
www.niriatlanta.org

Upcoming Events—Dates to Remember:

September 18, 2009	Fall Conference
October 16, 2009	All About XBRL
November 20, 2009	Proxy Regulation Update

Please register on website or email niriatlanta@bellsouth.net

Any ideas for the next Newsletter please contact Jane Elliott at 770-829-8234 or jane.elliott@globalpay.com or Sally Payne at 770-315-3116 or niriatlanta@bellsouth.net.

The Niri Atlanta Board is committed to being a resource to our members and accordingly, we always welcome comments, ideas and suggestions. Please feel free to email any of the Board members or niriatlanta@bellsouth.net.

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2008-2009 INDIVIDUAL CHAPTER LEADERSHIP AWARD GOES TO ALLISON PARKER

I am delighted to announce the recognition of Allison Parker as the recipient of the Niri National 2008-09 Individual Chapter Leadership Award which was presented in Florida in June 2009. There were 23 individuals from 22 different chapters that were recognized for their achievements. As an award winner, Allison was nominated for her outstanding performance this past year. All of this past year's winners exhibited the following characteristics:

- Possesses high integrity
- Instills confidence and enthusiasm
- Acts as educator and motivator
- Demonstrates mutual respect
- Exhibits leadership skills
- Supports through appreciation and encouragement

Allison's past involvement in Niri Atlanta has really exemplified the chapter's mission statement of Participate, Learn, Lead by her successful completion of a total overhaul of Niri Atlanta's web site. Her commitment to this project led to a more user friendly site with expanded information with the intent to offer an added resource to our membership. Her leadership inspired others to participate.

Speaking for all of us here at Niri Atlanta, we appreciated Allison's contributions and while we miss her as part of the Board, we look forward to her ongoing support and involvement in the future!

Congratulations Allison!
 Jane Elliott
 President, Niri Atlanta

"Nothing liberates our greatness like the desire to help, the desire to serve."
 Marianne Williamson, Author/
 Lecturer



Allison Parker