



Attendance grows at the ICR XChange

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By Danielle Drolet

Thirteen years ago, the ICR XChange launched in California with 10 companies presenting and 25 people in the audience.

Last month, the event posted an increase of 15% for presenting companies and 20% for attendance compared to 2010. The conference saw participation from more than 150 public and private companies and 1,200-plus investment community professionals, research analysts, and investment bankers attended. Companies included Guess, Krispy Kreme, Vera Bradley, Domino's, and Vail Resorts.

Tom Ryan, CEO of ICR, a financial communications firm, said he's noticed that the way companies are delivering their information to the investment community is changing. The days when companies would put their annual reports, financials, and product catalogs at the back tables are dwindling.

"What companies are doing now is they're getting up on the podium and running a four-minute video showing their operations and customer testimonials," he says. "At the event itself we may not be tweeting or really involved in the social media aspect, but companies are using video on an exponentially increasing scale to tell their story and to define their corporate brand."

For the fifth year in a row, CNBC broadcasted live from the January conference. Other reporters were in attendance from The Wall Street Journal, Women's Wear Daily, Nation's Restaurant News, Reuters News, The Los Angeles Times and The Orange County Register.

Ryan says the conference idea was born from a Wall Street state of mind.

"Most of the people who work at the firm come from a Wall Street background and sort of the investment bank culture," he says. "Every investment bank runs numerous conferences every year for their clients. And so we didn't have a big PR background and we didn't really know that it was a little out of the ordinary. We just kind of drew on our backgrounds from Wall Street and decided to create a conference where everyone was welcome regardless of the firm. It's a real open forum for people to collaborate, network with each other, and for companies to get their story out there, not only to the press, but to shareholders."

The 14th ICR XChange is set to take place January 10-12, 2012, in Miami Beach, FL.