# THE **CEO** REPORT

2023

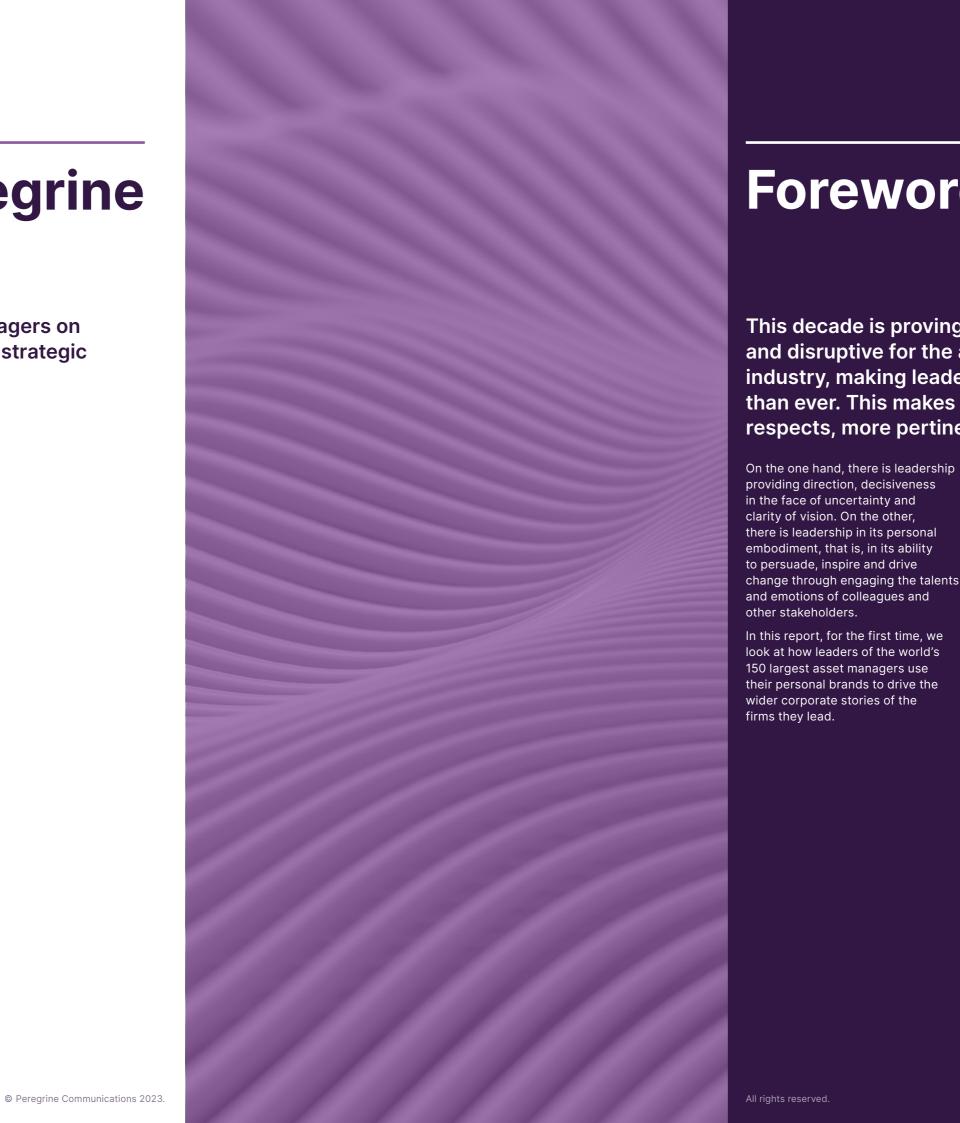
How the CEOs of the world's largest asset managers cultivate their personal brands

# **About Peregrine**

### Peregrine advises asset managers on their brands, positioning and strategic communications.

We have two decades of experience helping firms globally — both long only and alternatives managers shape and tell their stories

Our industry focus is underpinned by our data-led approach to strategy and deep domain expertise. This is coupled with innovative storytelling and a proven ability to bring fresh, creative solutions to marketing and communications challenges.



# Foreword

## This decade is proving transformational and disruptive for the asset management industry, making leadership more pertinent than ever. This makes leadership, in two key respects, more pertinent than ever.

It's my hope that this study will be of use, not only to my fellow communication professionals ("storytellers"), but also senior leadership teams ("storymakers") as they communicate their brand purpose, identity and vision in a landscape that desperately needs true leaders.

#### **Anthony Payne**

**Executive Chairman Peregrine Communications** 

# **Key Findings**

**TOP 5 CEOs** 



Nicolas Moreau	Mary Callahan Erdoes	Robert F. Smith	Luke Sarsfield
HSBC Global Asset Management	J.P.Morgan ASSET MANAGEMENT	<b>₩ VISTA</b>	Goldman Asset Sachs Management

**Alternative Investment Management CEOs** dominate in terms of Brand Awareness making up more than 65% of the 20 most searched for names



())%

**CEOs with the** highest personal **Brand Awareness** are founders



of CEOs in this report have been in post for over 20 years

## **Additional Points:**

- A swathe of CEO changes over the last 12 months saw varying 1. succession strategies. Case studies are included in this report.
- 2. This report also looks at the ways CEOs utilize Social Media, with for communicating during a turbulent year.
- Overall, this report found Alts CEOs tend to have a 3. greater personal brand presence, with Long-Only CEOs having a more enterprise-focused approach to personal marketing communications.

**Key Findings** 





## +3 MONTHS

a focus on new DWS Group CEO, Stefan Hoops, and his strategy

# **Executive Summary**

The Peregrine CEO Report 2023 looks at how leaders in asset management communicate and where they are making the most impact. To do this we have surveyed how CEOs at the world's largest 100 asset management firms and 50 of the leading Alternative Investment managers communicate (see appendix for full selection methodology).

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#### World's largest

Over

Asset management firms

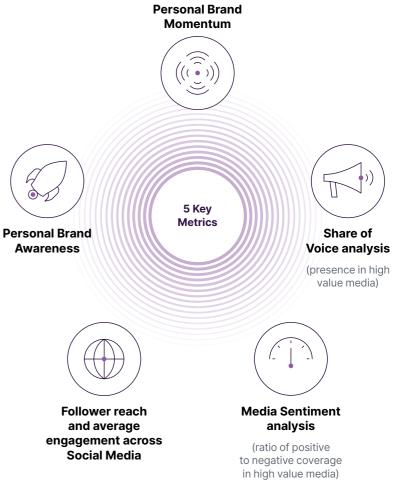


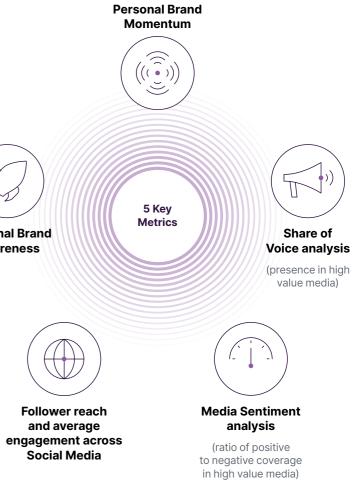
Leading Alternative Investment managers



## These 5 key metrics are:

PEREGRINE'S CEO METRICS





**Executive Summary** 

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# 01 Introduction



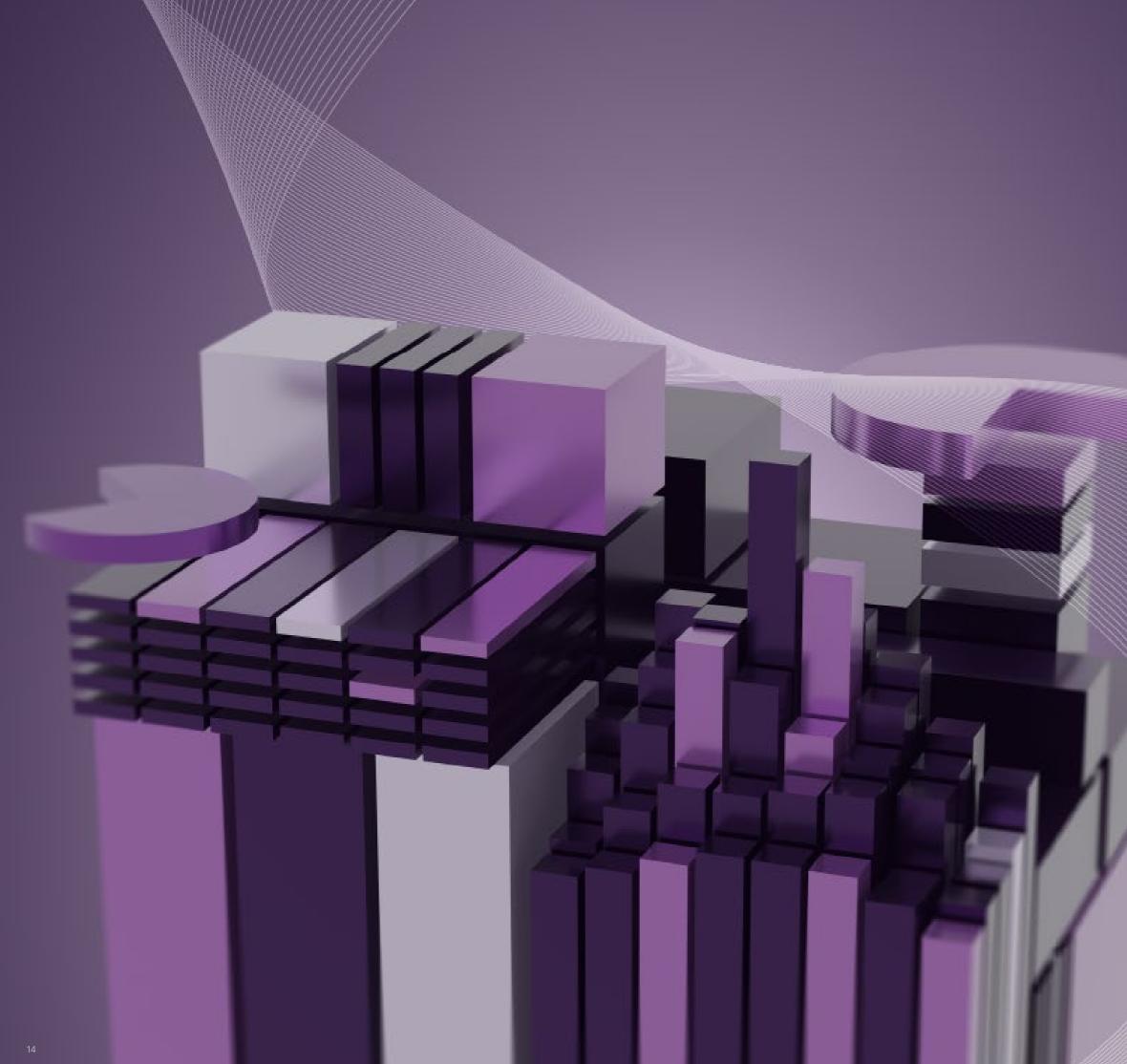
# Introduction

Macro volatility, organizational transformation and succession issues are testing the effectiveness of asset management leaders in unexpected ways.

Leadership and communications skills are increasingly invaluable. In fact, given how macroeconomic and pocket-book considerations impact people's day-to-day lives, it is fair to say that the need for quality leaders in the asset management world has never been greater. A key part of this, in our view, is the ability of leaders to communicate with purpose and transparency.

Owing to this, we have produced the inaugural CEO Report to examine the communication practices of CEOs at the world's largest 100 asset management firms and 50 of the leading alternative Investment managers Our assessment spans personal brand awareness, share of voice and sentiment of media coverage, and social media presence. We also provide several case studies of CEOs whom we feel provide salutary examples of good leadership and superior communication.

Just as there is no one playbook for good leadership, there is no one way of being an effective communicator. The report's findings bear this out very clearly, showing potential benefits and pitfalls of different corporate and personal leadership styles. Yet overriding this is the essential point that fruitful leadership requires an authentic expression of each leader's character and of the firms they lead. Key Attribute: The ability of leaders to communicate with purpose and transparency. Introduction



# 02 Results

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# Results



Many CEOs in financial services shun the limelight, feeling that their personal presence — whether in the media or in other public forums — is little more than a distraction from the wider corporate story.

However, our research shows that whether leaders like it or not, there is real and demonstrable interest in what asset management CEOs do and say. In fact, data in this report demonstrates that many asset management CEOs garner more attention than CEOs at household name firms in other sectors. For instance, both Larry Fink and Ken Griffin have monthly Google search volumes an order of magnitude higher than their counterparts at Exxon, McDonalds or Starbucks.

Only two of the top five most searched CEOs lead the largest asset managers in the world, namely BlackRock and Fidelity Investments. In fact, CEOs of alternative investment (Alts) managers, generally much smaller in size than their long-only peers, dominate in terms of personal Brand Awareness. The top five includes:



CITADEL

Abigail Johnson → ♥ Fidelity

 $\rightarrow \quad \textcircled{}^{\text{David Siegel}} \\ \overrightarrow{\bullet} \quad \textbf{TWO SIGMA} \\ \\ \xrightarrow{\text{Robert F. Smith}} \\ \overrightarrow{\bullet} \quad \overleftarrow{V I S T A}$ 

The fact that every Alts CEO in the top 10 for personal brand awareness is a founder with decades of tenure shows that legacy and track record command attention. These leaders are not only a great focal point for their firm, but are often synonymous with it.

Yet a bigger personal profile brings with it heightened risk. Most of the fastest growing personal brands as measured by Brand Momentum were driven by a high proportion of negative media sentiment, with that relationship growing as Brand Momentum increases. There are however significant exceptions to the rule. These include Luke Sarsfield (Goldman Sachs Asset Management), Nicolas Moreau (HSBC Global Asset Management), Dominique Senequier (Ardian), Peter Brown (Renaissance Technologies) and Joseph Pinto (M&G Investments) who maintained strongly positive Media Sentiment scores despite a rise in their profiles.

### Top 10 CEOs — Brand Awareness

CEO	Firm	CEO Bra
Larry Fink	BlackRock	10
Ken Griffin	Citadel	10
Abigail Johnson	Fidelity Investments	9
David Siegel	Two Sigma Investments	9
Robert F. Smith	Vista Equity Partners	9
Paul Elliott Singer	Elliott Management	9
Mortimer J. Buckley	Vanguard Asset Management	9
Stephen A. Schwarzman	Blackstone	9
Orlando Bravo	Thoma Bravo	9
Seth Klarman	Baupost Group	9

#### Results

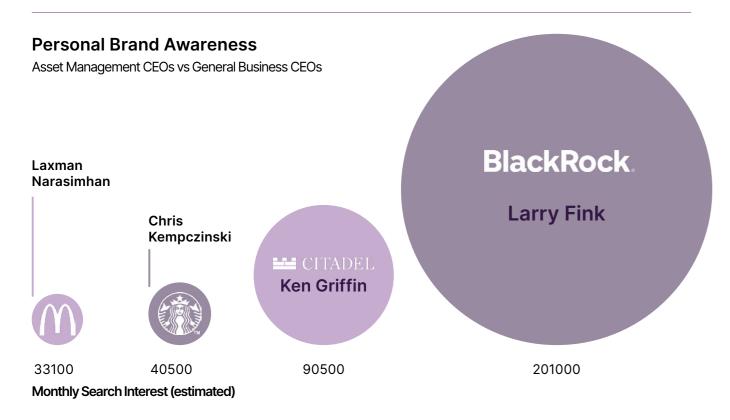




### **CEO** Positioning CEOs Awareness vs Firm Brand Awareness Click here to find out more. Larry Fink Mortimer J. Buckley 8,802,447 Abigail Johnson 7,272,747 3,973,275 BlackRock Vanguard 🟳 Fidelity 165.000 18.100 40.500

Monthly Search Interest (estimated)

This raises an important point about the leadership demands being put on the CEOs of asset managers. The corollary is that CEOs of major investment firms need to be out front and lead as their personal communications' profile is more intrinsically important to the success of their firms' brands than than that of CEOs in other industries.



#### **CASE STUDY**

# Larry Fink: This time it's personal

## Although the universe of asset management firms is not short of stars, no one shines brighter than Larry Fink.

year's study, founded BlackRock in 1988 and has been at the helm ever since. In October 2021, the Financial Times quoted a former senior executive who said, "When he leaves it will be like when Alex Ferguson left Manchester United... It is impossible to overstate how BlackRock's journey is the journey of a single man."

Interest in Fink has reached stratospheric levels: in the first week of 2023 there were an estimated 700,000 searches of his name more than doubling previous weekly volumes. Indeed interest in the man has outstripped interest in the firm - BlackRock's average weekly search interest is barely a third of that of its CEO even though it is the third most searched for asset manager in the world after Fidelity and Vanguard.

This recent spike in interest for Fink is driven in no small part by the ongoing debate into the future of ESG. BlackRock has found itself under fire with calls for Fink to resign over "ESG hypocrisy". And on the other end of the political

## BlackRock

Fink, the highest ranked CEO in this

spectrum, BlackRock has become a poster child for "Woke Capital". It turns out stakeholder capitalism can get messy when there are multiple non-aligned interests.

Certainly, celebrity status isn't without risk. Fink addressed this himself in a Bloomberg interview discussing the firm's ESG challenge. He said:

"We are trying to address the misconceptions. It's hard because it's not business anymore, they're doing it in a personal way. And for the first time in my professional career, attacks are now personal. They're trying to demonize the issues."

Although it is much easier to establish an emotional connection with an individual than it is with a corporate entity, it's also easier to villainize. Fink's extraordinarily high profile highlights the reality of key person risk: when he eventually leaves the business, question marks over the firm's future will have the potential to disrupt its brand narrative.

01/01/2023

Google Search Interest: Larry Fink



The media loves to populate its narrative with heroes and villains, and CEOs in every sector provide fascinating fodder. This is no different for leaders in asset management.

## Over the last year, we have seen



changes in a wide variety of circumstances. Colorful figures like Schwarzman and Griffin are the dramatis personae on a global stage in which transactions, lawsuits, performance, wins, losses, hirings, firings and dramatic turnarounds provide the plot twists. Nowhere is this more apparent than when a leadership switch occurs.

Over the last year, we have seen 14 CEO changes in a wide variety of circumstances. Naïm Abou-Jaoudé (New York Life Investments) and Ryan Hicke (SEI Investments) made a natural progression to the top role. In contrast, Harvey Schwartz joined Carlyle after the failure of the firm's Plan A, while Stefan Hoops was elevated to the top job at DWS Group following an investigation for green washing. Finally, Ray Dalio made his long anticipated departure, passing the reins at Bridgewater Associates to Nir Bar Dea and Mark Bertolini.

The changes at Carlyle, DWS Group and Bridgewater garnered significant media attention. Nevertheless the CEOs with the greatest Share of Voice continued to be the more established leaders — namely, Fink, Griffin and Schwarzman who serve as both focal points and the primary voices for their firms.

Clearly, growing Share of Voice in earned media can be a very valuable lever for building Brand Awareness. In this respect, leadership profiles can deliver substantial impact, although maintaining close control is paramount. We call this "going on controlled offense". This is achieved by negotiating story themes with media, training leaders and other spokespeople in positioning and key messages, along with doing suitability assessments for each specific opportunity.

In many respects, having high Share of Voice and positive media sentiment involves a delicate balancing act. Joining the categories to produce a combined score features an equal number of traditional and Alts managers.

## Top 10 CEOs — Share of Voice & Positive Media Sentiment

CEO	Firm	Share of Voice
Larry Fink	BlackRock	10
Ken Griffin	Citadel	10
Paul Elliott Singer	Elliott Management	9
Stefan Hoops	DWS Group	9
Stephen A. Schwarzman	Blackstone	8
Nicolas Moreau	HSBC Global Asset Management	8
David Hunt	PGIM	8
Stephen Bird	Abrdn	8
Egon Durban	Silver Lake	8
Zhang Lei	Hillhouse Capital	8

#### Results



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## **Social** Media

### Social media has become an invaluable tool for amplifying leadership communications, reaching new audiences and providing insight into a firm's culture.

The importance of culture and investment trends like the "retailization" of Alts means that the value of digital channels is certain to grow.

Our Global 100 report, which assesses the integrated marketing communications practices of the world's largest asset managers, has uncovered several digital leaders who have effectively harnessed the power of Social Media to connect with audiences. In particular, we have observed how such leaders have focused on topics closely related to firm culture. More recently, we have found a significant gap between Alts and long-only manager peers, with the former trailing behind in their utilization of Social Media. Indeed, only two of the top ten CEO users are from Alts firms. Given the potential rewards of retailization

for Alts strategies, Social Media offers a cost effective opportunity to reach both new audiences and potential recruits.

CEOs with the greatest reach use LinkedIn in two main ways. The first is to communicate firm culture by publicizing key hires, promotions and business initiatives. The second way is to communicate personal insight through thought leadership and use LinkedIn to amplify key corporate announcements. CEOs can also build their personal brand by taking a stand on significant issues. A good illustration of this is StateStreet CEO Ron O'Hanley who has focused on stewardship and sustainability, and is chairing the Asset Managers Task Force to lead the transition to net zero.

#### **CASE STUDY**

## **Stefan Hoops:** Connecting in a crisis through Social Media

Stefan Hoops took on the role of **CEO at DWS Group under supremely** challenging circumstances.

With the firm and his predecessor under investigation for greenwashing, Hoops had a responsibility to communicate a measured response both externally to investors and internally to his team.

During his first year as CEO, Hoops used LinkedIn to communicate around key events. He also sought to make clear his focus on clients and DWS' duty of fiduciary care. In one post, Hoops made a personal commitment to transparency in addressing questions, concerns and allegations.

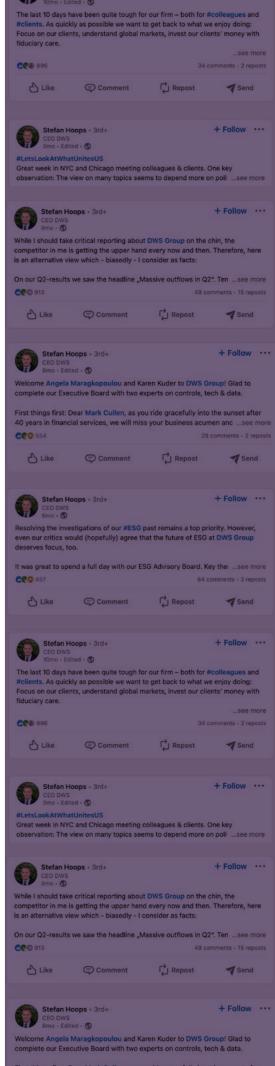
Hoops and his open, focused style resonates well on LinkedIn. One post in response to critical reporting saw him note:

"Yesterday, we announced some exciting changes to our Executive Board, bringing in two rock-star women and adding controls and tech/data expertise. Still, somehow the main headline reduced this to DWS becoming more dependent on Deutsche Bank again."

Such an approach isn't without contention, but Hoops is certainly commanding attention. Occupying 4th place in Peregrine's ranking for Social Media effectiveness is testament to Hoops' impact in terms of attracting followers and engaging them. It will be instructive to see how Hoops builds on this.

#### Results





rst things first: Dear Mark Cullen, as you ride gracefully into the P. C 59

CEO	Firm	Total /50
Larry Fink	BlackRock	10
Stephen A. Schwarzman	Blackstone	10
Mary Callahan Erdoes	J.P. Morgan Asset Management	10
Stefan Hoops	DWS Group	10
Julian Salisbury	Goldman Sachs Asset Management (International)	10
Orlando Bravo	Thoma Bravo	10
Mortimer J. Buckley	Vanguard (Asset Management)	10
Daniel Gamba	Northern Trust Asset Management	9
Ben Way	Macquarie Asset Management	9
Robert F. Smith	Vista Equity Partners	9





CEOs in this report were appointed before 2000



CEOs with the highest personal Brand Awareness are founders



## Leadership tenure in asset management companies remains long but this is changing.

Consider that more than onein-three (37%) of the CEOs in this report was appointed before 2000. This compares with a **five** year average tenure for CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Among top performers, one-in-three (35%) of the 20 CEOs with the highest total marketing communications effectiveness scores are founders with an average tenure of 30 years.

What is perhaps most revealing about the direction of travel is that 51 CEOs in this report have been in their roles for less than three years. It certainly looks like a generational shift away from the leadership icons of asset management to a new group of up and coming stars, even though the trend is more pronounced among long-only firms. Given that 80% of

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# Telling the Leadership **Transition** Story

the CEOs with the highest personal Brand Awareness are founders, it raises interesting questions about how firms should position succession plans. This is particularly vital in firms when the founderleader is the brand.

It is certainly the case that communicating to stakeholders around a well planned succession offers benefits to asset management firms on several levels. Most importantly, it provides an opportunity to celebrate renewal and the evolution of a leader who embodies the firm's ethos. It also provides a good time to reassure key groups and build understanding of changes in the organization's direction.

# **OB** Well Executed Succession





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# **Well Executed Succession**

## Wellington Management offers a good example of a succession plan being well executed.

#### Brendan Swords, the outgoing CEO used the elevation of Jean Hynes to note:

"One of the most enduring lessons of the Wellington partnership is the notion of stewardship, bringing along the next generation of leaders to allow us to better serve clients. I'm excited that Jean Hynes will be my successor. Over the course of her nearly 30 years at the firm, she has demonstrated the vision, optimism, and fortitude to lead Wellington in the years ahead. Her extensive investment and leadership experience align with our mission of delivering investment excellence to our clients."

Another long term leadership transition is ongoing at the world's largest alternative investment manager, Blackstone. Jon Gray was first announced as President in 2018, and is widely believed to be the

heir apparent to founder Stephen Schwarzman. Then, in 2021, Gray used an interview in the Wall Street Journal to signal that the firm would focus more on growth investing. This directional change has recently been embedded further with the new tagline, 'Build with Blackstone'.

Blackstone is an intriguing example of how to introduce a new leadership candidate to eventually replace a revered founder. Although there will undoubtedly be changes and uncertainty once Schwarzman finally steps back from active leadership, there is at least a clear strategic direction for the firm being communicated across key channels. Clearly, replacing Schwarzman, who is among the most searched for CEOs in this year's report, would be a tall order, but should Gray succeed him tomorrow, he would parachute into the top 10 with very strong personal Brand Awareness. (Score of 9/10).

**Best Practice** 



## "

One of the most enduring lessons of the Wellington partnership is the notion of stewardship"

# 04 Crisis Communication

# Crisis Communications

## "

For all of the private equity industry's attempts to tout its prowess at fixing and reshaping companies, many firms have struggled to navigate a smooth transfer of leadership and shake off the hallmarks of their founders. When the narrative doesn't quite go to plan, the onus turns to mitigating downside. Nowhere has this been more apparent over the last year than at the Carlyle Group.

A proposed \$300mn pay deal for CEO Kewsong Lee **saw him exit after just two years** when the firm's co-founders, Bill Conway, David Rubenstein and Daniel D'Aniello refused it. This left Conway to step back in as interim CEO. One **Bloomberg story** commented: "For all of the private equity industry's attempts to tout its prowess at fixing and reshaping companies, many firms have struggled to navigate a smooth transfer of leadership and shake off the hallmarks of their founders". Another Bloomberg headline observed: "Carlyle's CEO drama exposes fault lines between old guard and new".

Eventually, Carlyle settled for Harvey Schwartz, a Goldman Sachs investment banker, as the new CEO. Yet the firm's narrative was weakened further by the departure of several key executives and questions about Schwartz's experience in alternative asset management. While only time will tell if Schwartz leads a renaissance at the firm, the entire episode shows what happens when a transition falters.



# 05 Conclusion



# Conclusion

Asset management has traditionally been very light on collecting data points that offer any real insight or guidance into how the industry and its key players are performing in terms of brand marketing and strategic communications effectiveness.

Our goal in this report is to help CMOs and other C-suite members consider how to use communications effectively, while seeking to understand how a number of leaders have outperformed.

From this we have assembled findings that will help generate communications improvement, although the application of methods and programs will vary according to each asset manager's characteristics. Being dynamic institutions, most investment firms will be working through communications initiatives and improvement programs at any given moment.

Clearly, CEOs are always looking to improve communicative performance. Our research shows they need to prioritize actions in the areas that will deliver the biggest impact on creating impact and value. These areas include:

- 1. Leadership profiling utilize low volume, but high impact profiling to position the firm for the future.
- 2. Harness LinkedIn connect with audiences including clients, prospects, colleagues and other stakeholders such as counterparties and regulators.
- 3. Be crisis prepared periodically refresh messaging and media training for key executives to ensure preparedness and alignment.
- 4. For succession planning / major corporate announcements develop key messages to negotiate story lines and to rehearse with the leader/key spokesperson.

We believe it is vital that each investment firm use a diagnostic analysis to periodically pinpoint the areas where improvement programs will boost Brand Awareness, Share of Voice and Sentiment as well as generate impact in other areas such as Website and Social Media effectiveness. This, in turn, will ensure that the communicative actions of CEOs align with best practice and give their firms the greatest opportunity to be top performers in an increasingly competitive asset management landscape.



Since 2019, we have also provided an online competitor comparison tool allowing CMOs, Heads of Content, Directors of Communications and other marketing leaders to directly compare their firms with peers across each of the 10 metrics used in the report. The popularity of the tool is underscored by the fact that in the last year the tool has been utilized over 1,500 times by managers from across the investment management industry.

Research and data are even more critical, as the industry approaches a planning season that will be shrouded in almost unprecedented uncertainty. It is our hope that the CEO Report along with the forthcoming Global 100 Report will be of real value to managers as they plan how to navigate what looks set to be an increasingly complex and challenging operating environment.

#### **ONLINE COMPETITOR COMPARISON TOOL**

yourself against	
ompanies to view how they ch other across Peregrine's 10 g communications metrics.	
~	
	TOTAL SCORES
Management V	90
tent One International	<sup>2021</sup> Vanguard Asset Management
	34

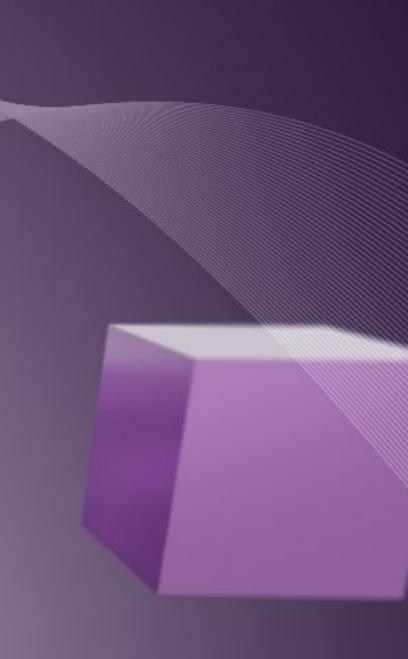
The popularity of this has been such that in the last year the tool has received



uses from managers right across the spectrum with respect to AUM, investment focus and heritage.

Managers will be able to use the tool to compare their performance with last year as well as with their nearest competitors, spotlighting where they have improved and where their competitors may have stolen a march.

# 06 Appendices



## **Methodology**

This report focuses on a research group made up of the CEOs from the largest global asset management firms as ranked by AUM and the leading Alternative Investment Managers in the world.

The firms selected were the CEOs from the top 100 independent brands in IPE's Top 500 Asset Managers survey. Firms that are owned or operated by a parent brand already included in the research group were excluded from the analysis.

In addition, CEOs from the 20 largest private equity and hedge fund managers, as well as the 10 largest Alternative Credit firms in the world, were selected according to AUM. These firms were selected using the following criteria:

- 01: Firms with a heritage in long-only were screened out to only include asset managers whose primary focus or legacy offering is in the alternatives space
- 02: Appearing in IPE's 2021 Top 500 Asset Managers Survey (All)
  - a. Appearing in HFM's Top 100 Hedge Funds 2021 (hedge fund and alternative credit)
  - b. Appearing in Private Equity Internationals PEI 300 (private equity)

The group's CEOs are then scored, ranked and analyzed from a dataset of over 18,000 data points collected between March and April 2023. The CEOs' overall scores are made up of their scores across five distinct IMC categories.



Appendices

To formulate our Brand Awareness score we utilized the average monthly search volume of each CEO. Each CEOs score was then weighted against all the other firms analyzed in the study. CEOs were evaluated against the most natural, frequently used search terms that their users choose to find them.

Brand Momentum as a metric is intended to show how well each CEO is "cutting through" - i.e. increasing the amount of engaged interest they receive over time. While Brand Awareness looks at the absolute volume of Google search, Brand Momentum assesses the change in search volumes and its increase or decrease over the study period in question. These results are then weighted against all the other scores in the "index" to ensure a meaningful benchmark. Safeguards were also put in place to ensure that no firm would achieve a high score for increasing its Google search volumes as a result of negative news-flow, e.g. a major scandal.

Share of Voice ranks CEOs by how much Tier 1 media coverage they achieved relative to their peers in the rest of the industry over the last twelve months. To avoid skewed results from the inclusion of low value and 'clickbait' media coverage, only Tier 1 coverage was measured, taken from a proprietary global Tier 1 investment, business and national media list

Peregrine's Media Sentiment metric assesses the ratio of positive to negative sentiment achieved by each CEO in its media coverage. To ensure robustness of results – given the idiosyncrasies of sentiment analysis tools – multiple sentiment tools were used, and scores aggregated. As with other metrics in this study, each CEOs ratio of positive to negative Media Sentiment was weighed against the rest of the group and scored accordingly.

To tabulate each CEOs Social Media score on LinkedIn, our framework was created to consider individual core aspects of each CEOs performance for reach, engagement, frequency of posting and quality of content. The metric was designed to take into account both CEOs' output as well as their outcomes. The most successful CEOs had engaging, thoughtful and educational posts that were shared regularly to a large, responsive audience.

## Top 20 CEOs — **Total IMC Score**

### Top 20 CEOs — Total IMC Score

	CEO	Firm	Total /50
	Larry Fink	BlackRock	45
	Nicolas Moreau	HSBC Global Asset Management	43
	Robert F. Smith	Vista Equity Partners	41
	Mary Callahan Erdoes	J.P. Morgan Asset Management	40
	Luke Sarsfield	Goldman Sachs Asset Management (International)	39
	Stefan Hoops	DWS Group	38
	Stephen A. Schwarzman	Blackstone	38
	Orlando Bravo	Thoma Bravo	37
	Abigail Johnson	Fidelity Investments	37
	Sandro Pierri	BNP Paribas Asset Management	37
	Marco Morelli	AXA Investment Managers	36
	Julian Salisbury	Goldman Sachs Asset Management (International)	35
	Michael Arougheti	Ares Management	35
	Ben Way	Macquarie Asset Management	35
	Naïm Abou-Jaoudé	New York Life Investments	35
	Jean M. Hynes	Wellington Management	35
	William E. Ford	General Atlantic	34
	Tim Armour	Capital Group	34
	Ken Griffin	Citadel	33
	Francesco De Ferrari	Credit Suisse Asset Management	33

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## **Other Peregrine Reports**

## The ESG Report 2022

How leading asset managers communicate their roles in creating a more sustainable future through ESG and impact investing

## The Alts Report 2022

How the world's 50 leading alternative investment asset managers perform across their integrated marketing communications

## Global 100 Report 2022

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How the world's largest asset managers perform across their integrated marketing communications. Appendices











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