

IR Playbook

# How to conduct impactful scenario plans

Leverage modern scenario planning techniques and detailed forecast data to power your IR team's strategic impact

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**S&P Global**

Market Intelligence





## IR Playbook

**Modern scenario planning  
delivers data-powered  
future gazing for growth in  
an uncertain world**



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## Introduction: Power of IR

Imagine walking into a meeting with a tier-one investor and offering a long-term view into how supply chain disruption might affect your company. Or being able to give your analysts data-backed insights into how your firm and board will manage interest rate changes looking years ahead. Imagine the power that a multi-year view on everything from geopolitical tensions to a miss by a peer could inject into your IR program. That is exactly what modern scenario planning offers: the ability to manage multiple themes across a lens of five, 10 or up to 15 years and, when the landscape shifts, having the solutions that allow you to adjust your planning quickly.

And the benefits are huge – both internally and externally. Scenario planning lets you track the market, your peers, new industry trends, government policy (including tariffs) and a broad number of risk factors that might impact your company's performance and corporate growth strategy. All of this empowers IR teams, enabling them to help shape long-term strategy and bolster their interactions, both internally and externally. Just as importantly, these tools help you find and engage with investors who align with your evolving equity story, as well as sustaining your relationships with existing holders. In this IR Impact Playbook, written in association with [S&P Global Market Intelligence](#), you will:

- Find out how IR teams are using data-driven scenario planning to better shape their messaging, combined with competitive differentiation to compete for capital
- Explore the broad benefits that modern, agile scenario planning offers – from internal communications to sell-side and buy-side management and more
- Learn how to keep these scenarios alive, agile and flexible, evolving with your risks and opportunities
- Access a step-by-step guide to producing the best scenario planning for strategic investor relations
- Discover how to make sure this is a positive exercise – opportunity as well as risk – that elevates the IR role internally and externally.

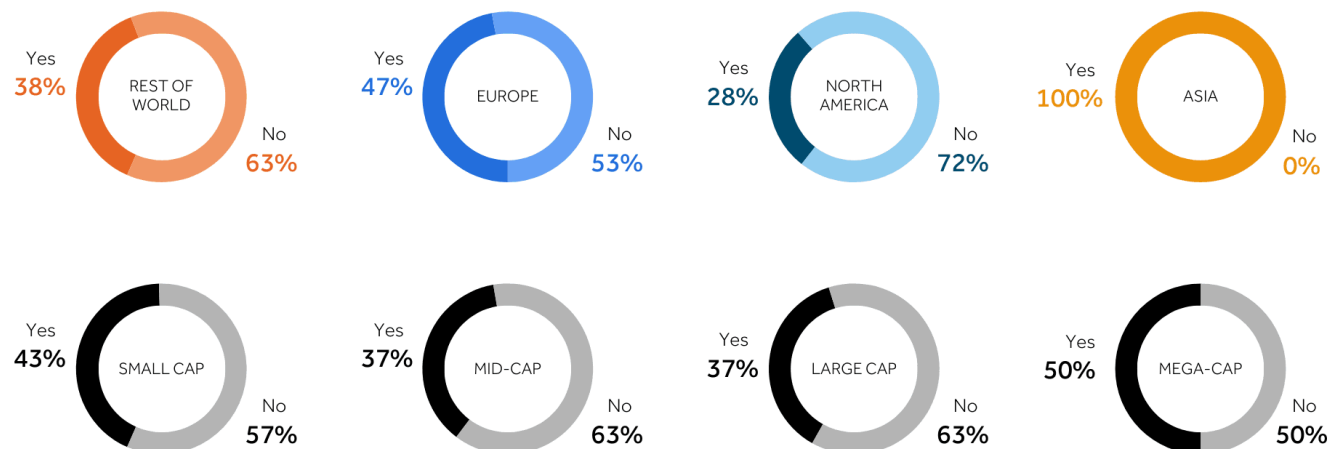
# The evolution of scenario planning

Scenario planning can seem like a long and arduous process – which often means that once the core exercise has been ‘completed’ once, it is never looked at again or adjusted. Your company’s analysis then may be rooted at a particular point in time and any plans you may have to revisit it are pushed to the back of the drawer.

If that sounds familiar, you are missing a huge competitive advantage: modern scenario planning is powered by data and AI solutions that offer rapid updates and flexibility, with a far longer view than was previously possible.

An exclusive IR Impact poll conducted in Summer 2025 shows that, despite the volatility that has become part of regular life for IR professionals around the world, globally, just 39 percent of companies conducted a scenario planning exercise in the last year. And there are some big regional differences, with North American firms and small-cap companies least likely to use scenario planning to help shape their view of future headwinds.

## Have you conducted a scenario planning exercise in the past year?



It is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day and, if we take tariffs as an example, easy to believe that plotting the impact of such unpredictable change is too difficult. There might also be a concern that by modeling risk with poor data, you create more problems than you solve. But the missing ingredient here is high-quality data sources: corporate finance,

broker research and consensus estimates, to name just a few. With the right data – and a reliable data provider that harnesses AI to shape that data into something actionable – scenario planning helps you understand the various impacts on your business and the corresponding considerations for corporate strategy.



## Modeling best-case, worst-case, base-case scenarios with S&P Global Visible Alpha

If we look at the example of conflict breaking out in a key export region – or the prospect of an extreme weather event – a company might consider different options. The Visible Alpha platform's unique granular estimates include regional revenue, input costs, foreign exchange assumptions. It can look at the difference between consensus cost of goods sold inflation versus higher rates under sanctions, with a model for earnings per share impact, and compare this against peers.

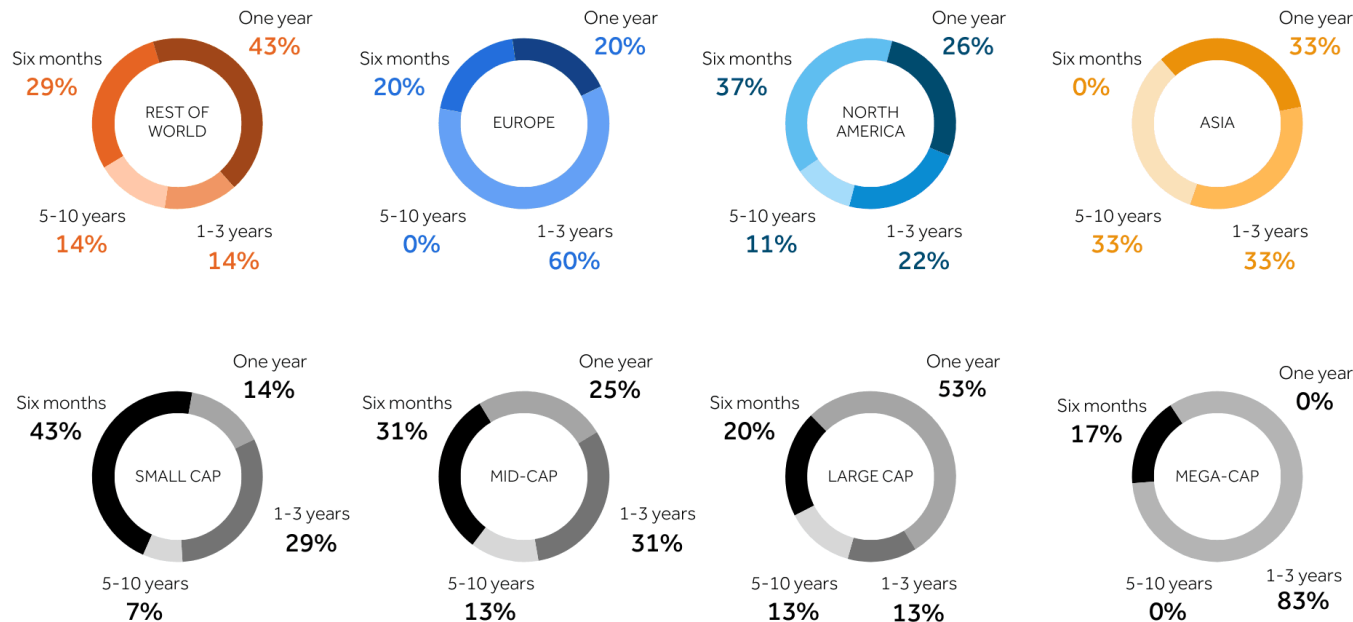
The harnessing of huge volumes of data also means that scenario planning has shifted from a momentary touchpoint of what might happen, into something both long-term and agile that evolves with your business and its opportunities – qualities that are essential in dealing with the challenges thrown up by our 24/7, global markets.

What big data and AI analysis also offer is speed and efficiency: different outcomes can be modelled at speed, allowing IR professionals to update and respond as markets shift. Still, many companies continue to view this exercise as something that must be planned long in advance, with the resulting loss of agility.

All scenario models should be adaptable, with inputs being movable. For example, if you forecast that interest rates will be bumped 0.25 percent, typically that means the cost of capital goes up too, which makes it expensive to finance new projects. You can input that 0.25 percent increase to show how your R&D budget automatically decreased because now loans have gone up. These inputs can also auto-update depending on their relationship to the company and the impact such shifts might have.



## How far in advance do you typically plan for this type of exercise?



The results here show that IR professionals are missing the agility needed to really manage, or perhaps the necessary business intelligence to inform their planning processes.

## Multi-factor planning

The injection of data that has brought scenario planning into the AI world means more than speed or a wide range of strategic considerations. It offers the sort of view that IR needs: one that incorporates the many cogs, challenges and opportunities inherent to any reality.

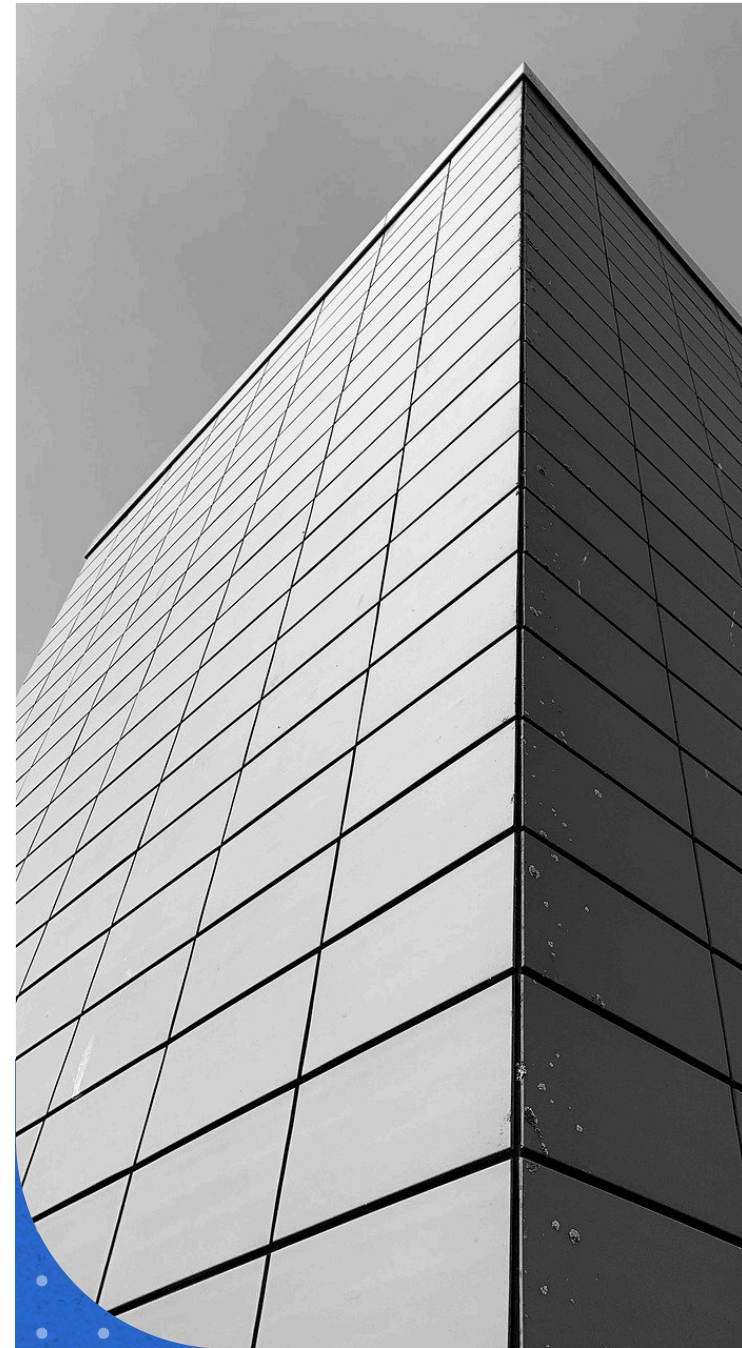
For example, a robust scenario planning exercise pulls in everything from peer analysis to investor targeting, sentiment and sell-side analysis, but also supply chain data or risk analysis pertaining to climate, geopolitics or economic shifts. This allows it to become a tool to refer back to time and again. It also helps to drive that more complete big-picture view: something that can be especially helpful in a time when it is too easy to get caught up in the quarterly, short-term mindset that forces many into a reactionary form of IR analysis.

## Taking the proactive route

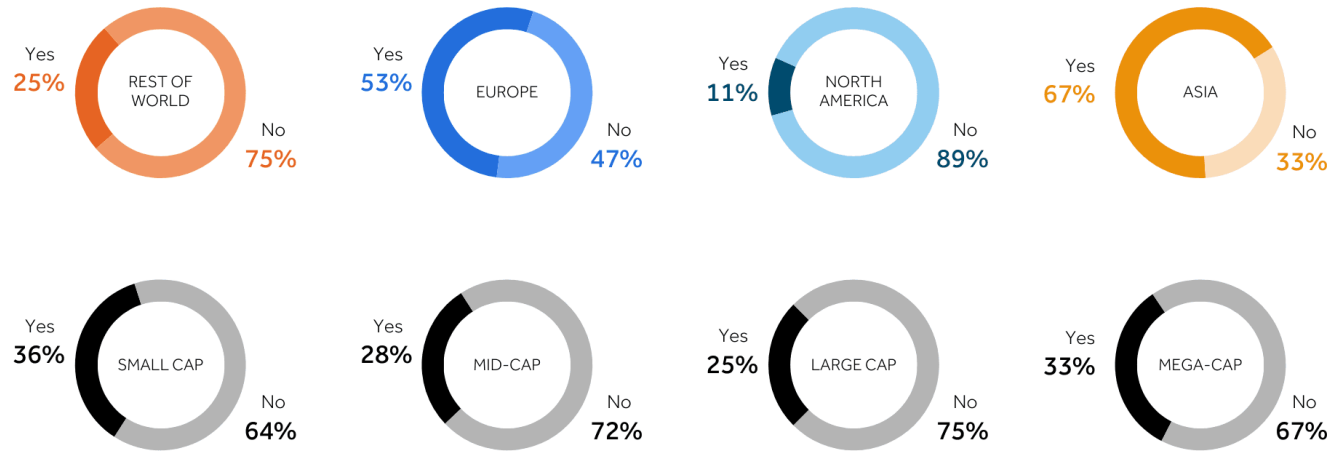
The old-school world of scenario planning was all about anticipating a back foot reaction. How should we respond if an activist appears on the register? How will tension on one of our supply chain routes impact our processes? It was about planning for possible challenges – but failed to take in the opportunities as well. What today's scenario planning allows is a mindset shift that gives confidence to IR and to management.

“ We look at what the immediate impact is and then how it becomes part of the ongoing business, including actions to remediate the impact if warranted. ”

– An IRO who responded to IR Impact's survey



## Have the results of this scenario planning been incorporated into IR strategy?



IR Impact's exclusive poll shows that IROs are failing to take full advantage of their scenario planning exercises. Only among European companies – shaken by Covid, followed by war in Ukraine and in the midst of tariff negotiations with the US at the time of writing – have half of companies incorporated their scenario planning into their IR strategy.

But the possibilities of what you can do with this data are immense and IR teams that are able to proactively game out and shift their messaging or

engagement with investors to meet their market challenges gain a noticeable competitive advantage.

Because you can now model forward-looking scenarios and granular line item estimates for leadership, benchmark your performance against peers who've faced similar disruptions or communicate how you're positioned to respond to different situations, you can use that forward planning to your advantage.

The Visible Alpha platform allows you to compare how peers have handled certain scenarios. If you take the example of a company that was faced with conflict-related shutdown, rerouting of supplies because of disruption in key shipping routes, or some other type of upset – you can look at the assumptions analysts made and how this impacted expectations, with revisions post-event.

By quantifying the financial impact of an event using analyst baselines – for example, if a key factory burns down, you might look at how much of your expected revenue or gross margin is at risk, with data for production volume, segment-level revenue and more – you can craft stronger messages. During earnings calls or investor updates, this analysis allows an IRO to show how they've thought through different scenarios.



# Using data to improve your relationship with the sell side

There is no situation where better data isn't a good thing: quality is more important than quantity when making informed strategic decisions. And scenario planning has a tight relationship to the sell side, allowing IR professionals to share more accurate information that results in better research and sell-side modeling. It also allows companies to better understand consensus.

For example, if you're trying to understand how far off or on your own internal assumptions and guidance are from the Street's view, having an understanding of the full dispersion allows you to start identifying if there are significant outliers in the broker pool – or if there is general disagreement from the Street.

If there *are* outliers, IR professionals can dive into those models and understand what's driving those assumptions. If there is general disagreement, IROs can dig into what KPI, operating metric or segment seems to be throwing things off.

This is also a great example of how automated revisions can shape the longer-term view. Is the Street becoming increasingly bearish on their company, but bullish or status quo on their peers? Or are all companies being treated the same, in which case there is a clear market headwind.

This data-led depth of understanding drives a better relationship with your analysts and allows IR professionals to deliver more sound reports and feedback to management and the board – in turn adding value to the IR program.



## Plugging scenario planning into your targeting toolkit

Scenario planning isn't just about getting a view for the headwinds that your company might face. Increasingly, savvy IR professionals are also using this data in their shareholder targeting. By better understanding how the market has responded to peers or to similar situations that you see coming down the line, you can use these tools to simultaneously help you find and engage with investors that align with your evolving story.

So scenario planning can be a purely internal exercise – and one with real and lasting positives. How you use the data will be very company specific. You might want to use this analysis to help shape your message, to plan for future events and drive strategy or to help with the targeting of new investors. What is certain however, is that in your investor one-on-ones, big shareholders will expect you to have a good understanding of the events likely to impact your sector, your peers and your own company.

*IR Impact spoke to one investor about what he wants from company scenario planning and how that might feed into his own modeling.*

### 'Increased transparency indicates increased value'

When it comes to how investors incorporate scenario planning into our view, it is all about risk. There's usually only one spot for cost, so the buy side or sell side will forecast and this is the base case. Then you go from there. There's a blue-sky scenario, which is about a 30 percent chance and then there's the risk bucket: what could derail all this?

Scenario planning is about asking *What's the alternative to this base case?*

Usually, you'll plug all this risk into your planning – all these different factors go into the risk bucket. Then you really think about how significant the probability is. If it is significant, then it impacts the base forecast.

Let's say, for example, that scenario B has a 40 percent probability and it's negative – then our earnings will probably need to be downgraded to some extent to reflect that probability. So it's a double-edged sword.

Sometimes, if the scenario planning is significant – if the alternative is significant – then we might need to do some homework and adjust. But we analyze – we don't take it wholesale. If we did, we wouldn't need to be fund managers and analysts! So we always have a skeptical mind. That said, we do appreciate companies flagging all this. That increased transparency indicates increased value.

# The scenario planning check list

## But what exactly goes into a scenario plan?

Simply put, it is everything that the modern IR professional manages – from those unlikely events you still have to prepare for (global pandemic anyone?) to the core areas that provide stability within your business, like supply chain management. It is also about events much closer to home – like how an earnings miss from an industry peer might trigger revisions that affect your own company, providing an opportunity for you to communicate why you're stronger – especially since capital will likely move away from them.

Modern scenario planning is something that lives alongside and embedded into your IR strategy. Here's where to start.

☐ **Identify metrics** for scenario planning relevant to your company, choosing from among corporate finance, broker research and consensus estimate sources to best suit your company's strategic aims.

☐ **Plan with data.** Visible Alpha and S&P Capital IQ Pro platforms condense more than 135 bn raw data points a year into actionable intelligence, all made comparable within an industry or among peer companies and including all metrics for easy relative analysis.

☐ **Test scenarios** using Capital IQ Pro, which offers financials, macroeconomic forecasts, transcripts, peer comparisons, sentiment analysis, Excel modeling and templates, an M&A analysis tool, scenario planning tools and research capabilities to pinpoint the most relevant factors.

☐ **Monitor sentiment and recalibrate** using analyst-built models with complete auditability, revision tracking, segment-level KPIs, forward consensus and Excel modeling/templates. Use the Capital IQ Pro document viewer and chatbot, Visible Alpha revisions analysis and Capital IQ Pro ownership data to streamline your processes even further.

☐ **Engage relevant investors.** Use the Visible Alpha platform's analysis of sell-side estimates alongside guidance to identify outliers and run investor screening, giving you a hit-list of perfect targets. The platform's visualizations also help teams present complex financial data in a clear, compelling way to prospects, making for more effective investor presentations, strategic narratives and shareholder communications.

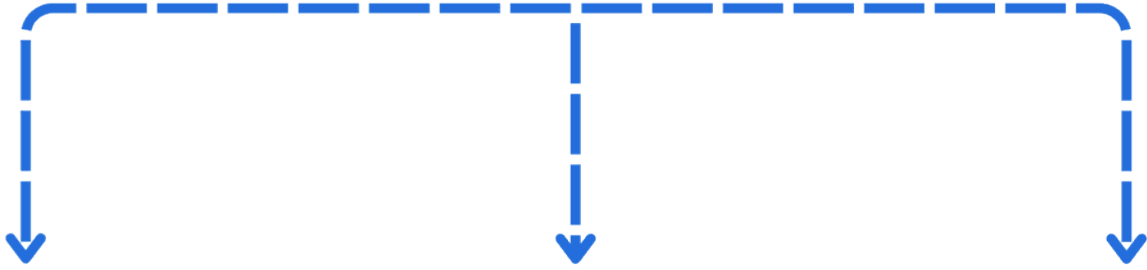
☐ **Secure the right capital for your strategy:** With Capital Access, the IR intelligence and CRM platform, you can effectively identify and engage a premier network of institutional investors at both the firm and fund levels with targeting intelligence to find new investors who align with your company's equity story today and where it is



## This enables IR teams to:

- Plan using current market views and granular analyst expectations
- Model various risk scenarios with accurate assumptions
- Monitor evolving sentiment and ownership dynamics
- Engage the right investors with aligned messaging – and sustain them.

How does all this work in the real world? S&P Global Market Intelligence offers up three different scenarios to show IROs how its suite of tools supports flexible, long-term scenario planning.



Model the impact of new tariffs by combining **Visible Alpha's** revenue by geography with **S&P Capital IQ Pro's** macro updates and peer commentary. Use **Capital Access** to identify investors with high exposure to the impacted region or sector.

Simulate a recessionary downturn using **S&P Capital IQ Pro's** GDP and commodity data, apply **Visible Alpha's** analyst margin assumptions, then filter **Capital Access** for investors historically active in counter-cyclical names.

Following a peer earnings miss, **S&P Global Visible Alpha** alerts you to analyst revisions in your own name. **S&P Capital IQ Pro** and **Capital Access** help you anticipate and react to investor flows and short interest changes.



## Conclusion: Ramping up the value of IR

By having a proactive handle on the headwinds their company or sector might face in the short and longer term, IROs can boost their strategic value and increase their company's competitive advantage by having a proactive handle on the headwinds their company and sector may face both in the short and longer term.

They can provide better insights to the board and management, including in high-value areas such as investor targeting, where the right tools help you find investors that are aligned with your updated company strategy and equity story.

Externally, data-driven scenario modeling helps both the buy and sell side. By offering a deeper view, analysts can write better research and deliver more accurate estimates. At the same time, with Visible Alpha you can identify where analysts are *misaligned* on your messaging – and help them correct that.

The ability to do these things – at speed and with billions of data points backing up your decision making, through tools that are both easily integrated and fully auditable – is hugely powerful to IR professionals and their companies, to management and the board. Providing reliable insights in a volatile world.



Thought leadership

# How a 15-year view can enhance investor relations

Data-driven insights and strategic scenario  
planning





# How scenario planning hit the long term and the data that drives the look ahead

In today's rapidly evolving financial landscape, what would your executive leadership be able to do if you had detailed insights on the financial performance of your business' long term strategic positioning? Balancing short-term reactions to market volatility, quarterly planning and adjustments with the long-term strategic vision is a difficult proposition for even the most seasoned IRO.

However, a 15-year view is a powerful tool that can significantly enhance the effectiveness of IR teams. This playbook explores how this long-term perspective benefits IR professionals and their organizations, dives into the data driving this analysis and sheds light on ways to optimize scenario planning during critical market conditions.

## Understanding the 15-year view

This long-term perspective is critical for IROs as it allows them to address investor concerns about sustainability, growth and risk management. By providing insights into future performance and how that will be achieved, IROs can foster investor confidence and demonstrate a commitment to strategic planning.

For companies, this is no small task especially given the current market and macroeconomic backdrop. This approach encourages a forward-thinking mindset that prioritizes sustainable practices, innovation and adaptability. It means aligning operational strategies, pivoting messaging and strategy, with an eye on matching the markets of the future.



## The data behind the analysis

The foundation of a reliable 15-year view lies in robust data gathering and analysis, powered by a combination of historical performance metrics, market research, economic indicators and industry trends.

Advanced analytics, tools and methodologies are employed to synthesize this information, however with the rapid employment of AI, it is easier than ever to accelerate discovery, simplify workflows and elevate performance with the right tools, creating comprehensive forecasts in the process.

## Data sources to include:

- **Financial statements:** Historical data provides a baseline for future projections.
- **Market research reports:** Insights into industry trends and competitor performance inform strategic planning. Large language model applications with integrated chat features have dramatically decreased the time it takes to glean insights lying within unstructured data.
- **The Street consensus:** Integrating analyst expertise and lean into analysts' thought processes by gathering analyst models and research reports.
- **Economic indicators:** Macroeconomic factors such as GDP growth, interest rates and inflation impact long-term forecasts.
- **Customer insights:** Understanding consumer behavior and preferences helps anticipate market demand and create an efficient supply chain.

## Enhancing scenario planning

With access to granular financials and forward-looking product-level data, IR teams can engage in sophisticated scenario planning. This involves creating multiple potential future scenarios based on varying assumptions and market conditions. The ability to visualize different outcomes enables IROs to better prepare for uncertainties and communicate strategies effectively to investors.

S&P Global Market Intelligence and Visible Alpha play a crucial role in this process by providing a platform that aggregates and analyzes vast amounts of data for informed financial analysis and creating market consensus.

## Our solutions allows IR teams to:

- **Access comprehensive data sets:** IROs can tap into a wealth of information, from fundamentals to forecasts and macroeconomic indicators, to inform their long-term projections and scenario analyses.
- **See what the analyst sees:** Quantify an event's financial impact with analyst baselines and compare how peers have handled certain scenarios.
- **Visualize scenarios:** Modeling best-case or worst-case with advanced visualization tools helps IROs present complex data in an easily digestible format for investors.
- **Craft stronger messaging:** During earnings calls or investor updates, an IRO will want to show how they've thought through different scenarios and how they are facing – not ignoring – risk factors material to their organization.



## Maximizing the value of data

To make the most of the data at their disposal and reduce manual workflows, IROs should consider the following strategies:

- **Integrate data sources:** Combining data from external sources and proprietary data enhances the accuracy and depth of analyses.
- **Stay informed on market trends:** As exhausting as it may be, continuous monitoring of industry developments allows IROs to refine their long-term views and adjust strategies accordingly.
- **Engage with stakeholders:** Regular communication with investors about the data-driven insights fosters transparency and builds trust.
- **Leverage advanced analytics:** Utilizing platforms like Capital IQ Pro and Visible Alpha can streamline data analysis and enhance the overall effectiveness of IR strategies.

## In conclusion

The ability to quickly offer a 15-year view is a game changer for IR professionals. It empowers them to provide valuable stakeholder insights into future performance, enhances scenario planning and builds investor confidence. By leveraging robust data and advanced analytics tools – such as those offered by [S&P Global Market Intelligence](#) – IROs can navigate the complexities of the financial landscape and position their companies for long-term success, despite the fast-paced nature and volatility of today's markets. As the role of IR continues to evolve, embracing a long-term perspective will be essential for fostering sustainable growth and maintaining strong investor relationships.

*Sponsor statement*

# S&P Global Market Intelligence

Powering next-generation investor  
relations

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**S&P Global**  
Market Intelligence

# Powering next-generation investor relations

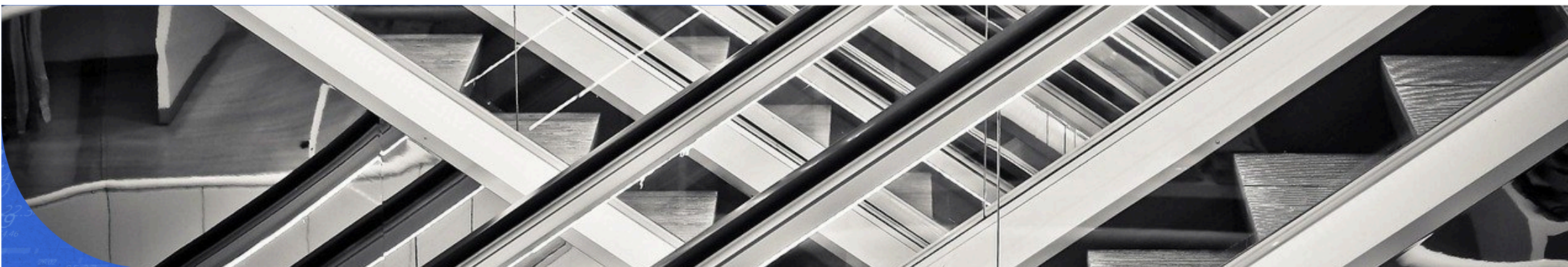
Investor relations officers and corporate strategists need not only a panoramic view of today's financial landscape but also the granular forecasts that shape tomorrow's decisions. The S&P Capital IQ Pro and Visible Alpha integration deliver precisely that combination – melding comprehensive data, real-time analytics and forward-looking consensus models to equip you with unparalleled clarity, agility and confidence.

## Unrivaled market intelligence

With S&P Capital IQ Pro, you gain access to an expansive repository of public and private company financials, deep industry research, and breaking news powered by Dow Jones Newswires – augmented by credit and ESG risk indicators to provide a 360-degree view of every opportunity and challenge. Whether you're benchmarking against peers, scouting M&A targets or monitoring supply-chain exposures, its customizable dashboards and alerts ensure you're always ahead of the curve.

## Granular consensus and forecast modeling

The Visible Alpha platform complements this foundation with sell-side working models and consensus data sourced from over 250 brokers. Drill into over 1 million segment-level forecasts, track real-time estimate revisions and uncover the assumptions behind every projection. Armed with normalized P&L, balance-sheet and cash-flow data, you'll build narratives grounded in transparent, auditable insights – anticipating earnings surprises and steering investor conversations with precision.





## End to end workflow integration

Streamline your analysis and reporting by embedding both solutions directly into Microsoft Office. Refresh live data in Excel, update your presentation decks in PowerPoint and share narrative highlights in Word – all without leaving your workflow. Pre-built templates, dynamic valuation tools and ChartIQ visualizations let you craft persuasive, data-driven stories in minutes, not hours.

## Investor relations and CRM intelligence

With Capital Access, you can target investors with confidence. Leverage industry-leading ownership data paired with real-time insights for improved engagement and impactful reporting. Assess shareholder activity, prioritize opportunities and empower corporate decision making.

## Empowering investor relations

- **Narrative acceleration:** Leverage peer benchmarking, sentiment analysis and real-time estimate alerts to present the clearest, most compelling story to investors.
- **Responsive engagement:** Set up instant notifications for rating changes, trading-volume shifts and analyst revisions – so you can address market signals proactively.
- **Q&A ready:** Use AI-driven transcript analysis and fully auditable consensus models to anticipate tough questions and deliver bulletproof responses.



## Superior competitive benchmarks

Combine S&P Capital IQ Pro's sector-wide comps and transaction databases with Visible Alpha's KPI-driven peer tables to uncover the competitive signals that matter most. From revenue growth and margin analysis to revision momentum and surprise alerts, you'll pinpoint the drivers of outperformance – and the risks that demand attention.

## AI-powered insights and transparent data

Leverage ChatIQ's AI capabilities to parse earnings-call transcripts, filings and news, extracting sentiment scores, key themes and hidden correlations. With every Visible Alpha data point fully traceable back to its sell-side source – and S&P Capital IQ Pro's rigorous data-governance protocols – you gain confidence in your analyses, support regulatory compliance and reinforce stakeholder trust.



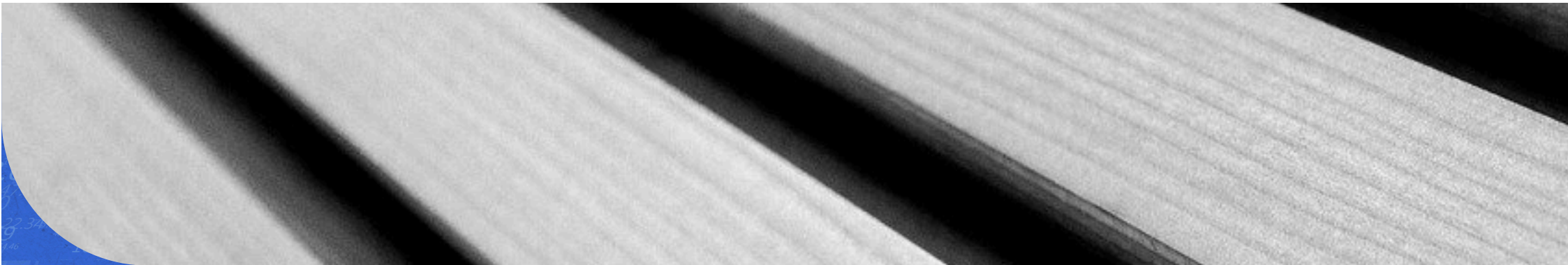
## The S&P Global Essential IR Bundle is your competitive edge

Equip your team with the essential trio of end-to-end IR workflow data solutions – where exhaustive data meets rigorous analysis and crystal clear forecasting.

With Capital Access, S&P Capital IQ Pro and Visible Alpha together at your fingertips, you'll not only respond to market developments but stay steps ahead – crafting proactive strategies, building investor confidence and driving your company's narrative forward.

Discover the transformative power of aligned data and insight – and make every IR decision with conviction.

Learn more at [www.spglobal.com/market-intelligence/en/solutions/issuer-solutions](https://www.spglobal.com/market-intelligence/en/solutions/issuer-solutions).





Thank you for reading

IR Playbook

How IR teams can leverage  
modern scenario planning  
techniques and detailed  
forecast data to power their  
strategic impact

For more actionable best practices and advice, including other IR  
Playbooks, go to: [IR-impact.com](https://www.ir-impact.com)

