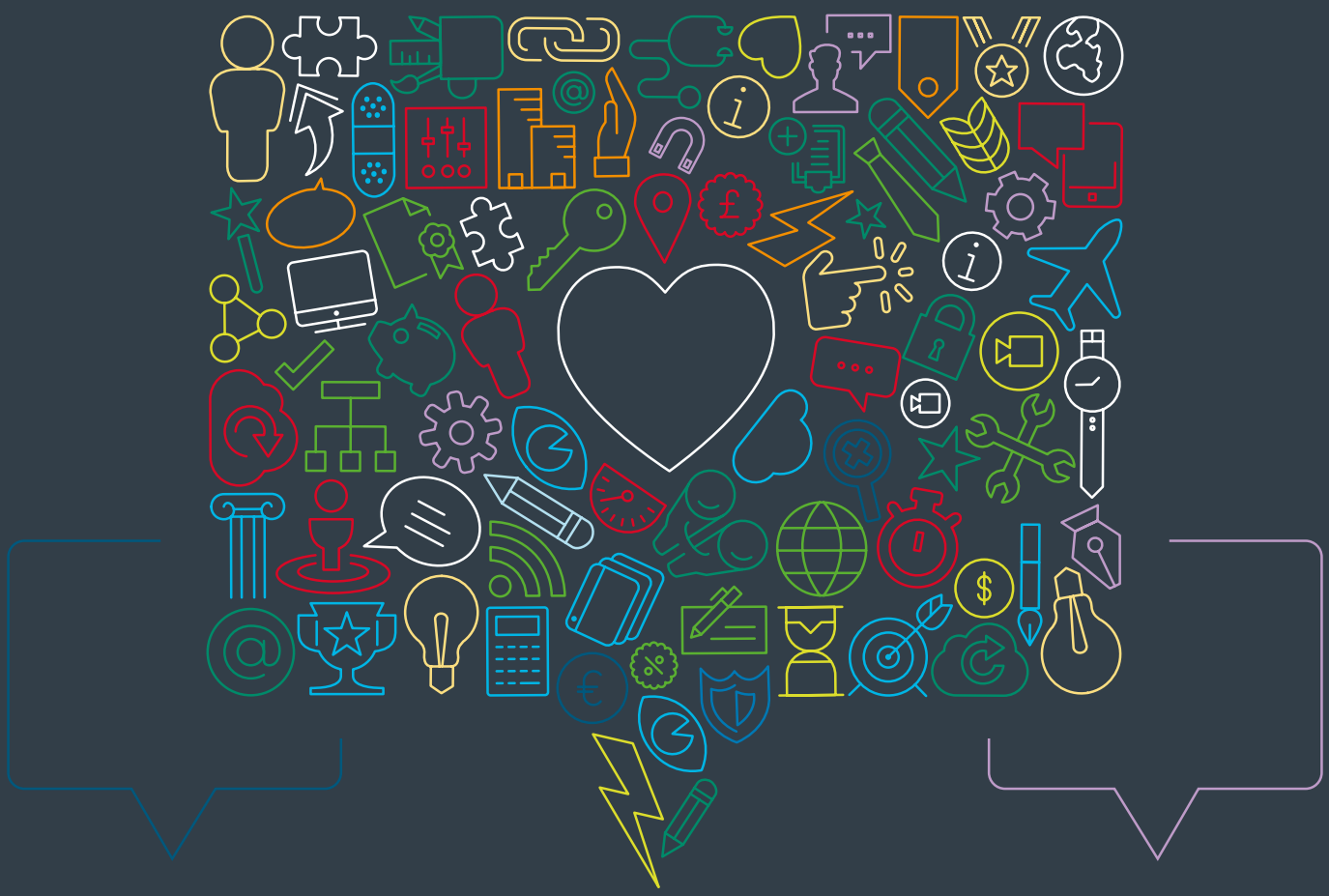
Living Ratings

The brand and digital intelligence of the world's leading **asset managers 2019**



Raising the bar, refining the scores

What factors drove our scoring methodology to evolve this year

The winners and losers in 2019

The Top 100 asset managers rated and ranked in our most in-depth survey to date

Opportunities to lead

How to improve your firm's brand and digital intelligence

living group

Welcome to the latest edition of Living Ratings

Our 2018 analysis of asset managers' digital intelligence revealed many in the Top 100 providing exceptional digital content and engaging functionality for financial advisers and intermediaries (FAIs). A year later, and it is a case of one step forward, two steps back.

Kate Shaw, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer

This year we have modified our criteria, placing more of a focus on the expression of the organizations' brand and values as well as looking for evidence of asset managers keeping pace with the rapidly evolving social digital arena. This shift has altered the ranking of many of last year's leading firms. In short, those firms who rely on talking about numbers have lost out to those who really help the audience to understand what makes them different and valuable partners.

Engaging content like thought leadership has improved but it is surprising to see that many of the basics of effective digital content are still being forgotten – only 12% of managers provide high quality search results – an area that needed greater improvement from 2018. Key content for asset management websites are the fund and strategy pages. Last year 41% of asset managers provided high quality pages, this year the figure has dropped to only 26%.

Here are some key themes from our 2019 Ratings research

Lack of differentiation – the value of values
In a crowded marketplace with similar products it's surprising that so few asset managers are differentiating themselves by stating a brand purpose or expressing brand values. Just 37% of the Top 100 Asset Managers share their values on their sites, down from 48% in 2018. Easily finding the 'Why they matter' to their clients is also difficult – just 38% state their brand positioning on their home page down from 2018's 48%.

Targeted intermediary content – on target but still more to achieve
While the Top 5 ranked companies have invested in creating useful intermediary resources, it is a shame to see that there has been an overall drop in the provision of dedicated intermediary tools – just 31% of companies this year, versus 35% last year.

Building expertise and confidence for this audience via intermediary education also needs further effort – just 16% of asset managers are supporting this key audience in this way.

Thought leadership – opportunities to lead
With an absence of brand purpose or differentiating values, the quality of thought leadership and opinion-based content becomes ever more important. Getting this right is an opportunity to stand out from competitors and to lead an issue. There are great examples of interesting and compelling content being provided but too few offer sharing to social media from these thought leadership pieces – in effect squandering the opportunity for this content to influence.

Hot topics – but some lukewarm content
Asset managers are keenly aware of the growing evidence suggesting that ESG factors offer investors a potential long-term performance advantage. Yet, when it comes to their own company, ESG awareness diminishes. Only 55% of the Top 100 have a clear link to a corporate ESG policy on their sites.

Good to see that 35% of them now provide Diversity content – up from 24% in 2018. But there is room for improvement – we found Diversity content was light and often hidden away in recruitment pages.

New technologies – new ways to engage
As newer advanced technologies are developed, asset managers are slow, perhaps cautious, to adopt them. But the advantages of personalization, for example, warrant consideration as that service looks to increase relevance and engagement. The use of apps remains the same 15% as last year, and the voice activation revolution has yet to hit asset management with only J.P. Morgan Asset Management and Putnam Investments leading the way by making their fund information accessible from Amazon Alexa and Google Home.

Social media – good connectivity
Social media remains a big opportunity for asset managers as too many of them simply draw content from their parent or wider group, offering little targeted messaging to their intermediary audience. We found only 49% of firms have a clear social media strategy. Aligned with that statistic, only 43% provide a high quality Twitter channel and 45% offer a good presence on Facebook.

Blogging – stories well told
Blogging has improved year over year, with many firms moving away from dry content to effective storytelling, the secret to engaging readers for repeat visits. We saw 42% of firms score well on this content criterion, up nicely from last year's 32%.

About Ratings

Now in its 25th edition, Living Ratings benchmarks the brand and digital intelligence of the world's leading financial and professional services firms.

These studies provide our clients with evidence-based insight that continuously enhances their brands and digital presence and gives us unparalleled knowledge of our specialist sectors.

Recent studies include:

The brand and digital intelligence of the world's leading law firms – 2019

The brand and digital intelligence of America's leading wealth managers – 2018

The brand and digital intelligence of the world's leading asset managers – 2018

Bespoke digital diagnostics for asset managers

In addition to our annual Ratings report, we also offer an in-depth diagnostic of your website and social media footprint, analyzing your digital intelligence and comparing your firm against your closest competitors.

Our analysis is the logical first step on the journey to improve your brand and digital intelligence, empowering you with objective evidence and a clear strategy.

The objective of the diagnostic is:

Analysis

To analyze how your site performs against a set of proven benchmarks.

Re-alignment

To re-align your digital strategy to ensure that any future-generated content receives the maximum exposure with your target audience.

Connectivity

To connect your social media strategy with your content strategy.

Purpose

To ensure that your CMS platform is the right fit for your purposes and goals.

Implementation

To enable you to implement enhancements and corrections in line with best practice.

UX

To improve the user experience and information architecture of your website.

Understanding

To understand what is required to create a better digital experience for all your stakeholders – internal and external (and to gain a higher Ratings score in the next review).

About Living Group

At Living we blend our deep sector knowledge, uncompromised thinking and award-winning creativity to help our clients in the financial, professional services and technology sectors create difference through branding expressions that engage, digital experiences that disrupt, and integrated advertising campaigns that drive results.

DIGITAL IMPACT AWARDS Winner

WINNER 2019 transform 10 awards europe

WINNER 2018 transform awards north america

25th Anniversary FCS Portfolio Awards

What defines us

Our specialists' deep understanding of our clients' sectors means we challenge thinking and perception, inspire excitement and ambition, and help to deliver rewarding outcomes. In a world that is always changing, content rich and visually crowded, we empower our clients to communicate their difference and stay ahead.

Find out more at:

www.living-group.com

What we do

Engaging branding

Our creative teams in New York, London and Hong Kong deliver award-winning ideas with proven results, driving your business performance with strategic thinking, brand creation and enhancement and stand-out messaging. We fuse these key elements together to generate highly effective visual and verbal expressions of your firm.

Disruptive digital

Our digital team connects your brand and your audiences. Around the world. Around the clock. We build seamless brand experiences online, using bespoke information architecture, engaging design and cutting-edge technology across multiple devices and platforms.

Integrated campaigns

We can help transform your brand objectives into tangible business benefits – stimulating dialogue, lifting your profile, prompting consideration, and spurring action. We research, plan and execute advertising and social media campaigns worldwide, applying distinctive ideas and creative, backed by relevant analytics to measure your success.

Creating difference for our people and communities

We don't just make a difference for our clients. We also make a difference for the talented people on our teams and the communities where we work. We have an open and collaborative culture that gives our people room to thrive. We encourage passionate, free-thinking ideas that challenge the conventional and celebrate individualism and diversity.

Who, what, when and how we rated and how we classified each firm

Who we rated

In July, August and September 2019 our analysts reviewed the brand and digital intelligence of the world's leading asset managers (source: ©IPE Top 400 Asset Managers published in June 2019). Each firm was rated through the eyes of an intermediary, against nearly 100 criteria covering engagement (functionality and social channels) and evidence (brand and content) across four categories.

How we calculate our scores

Each firm is allocated an overall percentage score. This is calculated by adding the scores for the individually weighted engagement and evidence criteria. We then use the separate engagement and evidence scores to classify each asset manager with one of four definitions of their digital presence – Determined, Energetic, Focused or Lackluster.

Sector averages are based on the full listing of the Top 100 firms. The five firms with the highest scores are also reviewed with expanded case studies.

1 **Website functionality**

2 **Website content**

3 **Social media presence**

4 **Social media content**

Raising the bar. The 2019 criteria

With each iteration of our report, we evolve our scoring methodology to be more demanding. The 2019 Asset Manager Ratings features a detailed analysis of:

Engagement

High quality search

We want it all and we want it now. Asset managers should have quick intuitive search engines that serve up filtered results to help visitors find what they want easily.

IA and UX

Information architecture and user experiences are more important than ever to tell your brand story and present relevant and engaging content.

SEO

Never has search engine optimization (SEO) been so important – it can be the difference between prospective clients finding you – or not! We apply third-party SEO software to scan every website and assess whether best practice has been adopted.

Site speed

No one likes waiting for answers, so what does a slow web server say about your firm? We reward firms with fast sites and speedy search results.

Active social media channels

Firms adopting best practice, using a range of active social media channels and promoting content that is proprietary can expect high scores. We also look positively on firms using the channels for their different audiences.

Evidence

Brand positioning

Asset managers that are clear about who they are, what they do and why it matters to their target audiences on their home pages are rewarded. They do not assume that everyone knows them.

Visual language

Recognition is given to those firms that have a clear and consistent digital brand and use it to help their readers consume data.

Evidence of what you do

In a sector obsessed with facts, we reward asset managers that provide compelling content that help their target audiences understand their skills and specialisms.

ESG

Many firms offer ESG funds and impact investing, but most fail to talk about how they embrace sustainability as a company or talk about what it means to their target audiences. We reward the asset managers who do and make it part of their business strategy.

Specific gender-related content

We reward asset managers that tackle this industry-wide issue head on and provide evidence that they are addressing gender imbalance.

Defining brand and digital intelligence

Establishing a positive brand perception has never been more important. Often a client's first brand experience is a visit to a website, therefore the digital expression of brand intelligence is paramount in building the right kind of connection with a user.

Brand creation and curation

Creating a more influential digital experience requires careful attention to the way a brand behaves, speaks and presents itself visually. Cohesion and consistency are key in achieving this along with a mode of communicating that is distinctive and proprietary to that brand.

Many asset managers have much to do to improve the digital deployment of their brands, particularly around visual identity and brand language. Indifference to making a brand work better often comes from a cynical perspective that rests in the complacency of a steady balance sheet. However, firms must deploy their brands intelligently, effectively and consistently, especially to engage with younger and more digitally savvy target audiences. Clarity and articulation of who you are, what you do and why it matters to your audience form the foundation of creating significant difference for your brand in the financial landscape.

Expressing brand intelligence online can be done in a number of ways. Consistent and coherent brand language is essential and extends from a succinct and meaningful positioning statement that articulates the who, what and why of the brand and influences all subsequent content in the site. Brand values, supported by evidence in the broader content, deliver succinct points of reference to influence brand perception both internally and externally. A clear tone of voice throughout a digital experience serves to set governance to all written content from fund pages, document libraries right through to diversity and ESG pages.

A distinctive visual brand is a powerful tool for asset managers to use in building brand recognition in a busy marketplace. Having an engaging and proprietary visual identity is an effective way to capture and retain user attention. It can inspire more compelling content, such as video and animation, and protect brand consistency in the continued conversation in social media. Effective visual brand design is an essential part of the bigger brand picture that is all too often overlooked or underestimated by asset managers. In a sector that is beset by blue and gray color palettes and arbitrary stock photos of modern city architecture, embracing a visual identity that makes a statement about who you are as a firm can be a huge advantage and pay dividends in user engagement.

Developing digital acumen

Equally important to brand is digital intelligence, and the thoughtful use of your firm's digital footprint will help amplify your brand.

In a sector where facts are essential, the leading firms use their websites to deliver to their target audiences issues-based insights, case studies, tools and well-structured fund and strategy pages, written with a singular client-first tone of voice and available in a variety of media, not just endless screens of text. However, these asset managers are the few among the many, with the vast majority serving up bland cookie cutter and indistinguishable content that fails to engage or inspire.

When it comes to search, the best asset managers serve up enriched and fast results that are filtered and make it easy for their users to find what they're looking for. The worst just provide lists, leaving the user to search again by scrolling through suggested answer after answer. What does this say about their firm?

Website SEO is also one of the pillars of digital wisdom, with our leaders placing great emphasis on ensuring their content is not just tagged and described correctly, but written with search engines in mind – succinct, relevant and timely.

A clear content strategy sits at the heart of digital intelligence – using your website and social media channels, not as a dumping ground for every word created by the firm, but as carefully curated outlets with different content delivered to each targeted audience segment. Our advice? Do less, but do it better. The mantra asset managers should adopt is to fight the excess of clutter and noise.

Investment in brand and digital intelligence empowers firms to take the pole position in a bustling marketplace and opens up a more genuine dialogue with audiences, both incumbent and prospective.

A distinctive visual brand is a powerful tool for asset managers to use in building brand recognition in a crowded marketplace.

Are you determined, focused, energetic or lackluster?

By analyzing the individual engagement and evidence scores, we have categorized each of the leading firms' brand and digital intelligence into four areas.

Asset managers Ratings and rankings

Living Ratings 2019 Ranking	Living Ratings 2018 Ranking	IPE ranking by revenue	Firm name	Score / 840	%	Category
1 ↑	4	8	PIMCO	695	84.76%	
2 ↑	8	23	DWS	690	84.15%	
3 ↑	10	1	BlackRock	670	81.71%	
4 ↓	2	33	Schroder Investment Management	668	81.46%	
5 ↑	11	5	BNY Mellon Investment Management	664	80.98%	
6 ↓	1	6	J.P. Morgan Asset Management	652	79.51%	
7 ↓	3	75	Russell Investments	650	79.27%	
8 ↑	13	26	Legg Mason	631	76.95%	
9 ↑	43	94	Lazard Asset Management	630	76.83%	
10 ↑	20	57	Macquarie Asset Management	624	76.10%	
11 ↑	21	86	Guggenheim Investments	619	75.49%	
12 ↑	31	98	Robeco	618	75.37%	
13 ↑	32	7	Capital Group	615	75.00%	
14 ↑	23	17	Invesco	614	74.88%	
15 ↑	24	28	Aberdeen Standard Investments	613	74.76%	
16 ↑	18	104	Putnam Investments	610	74.39%	
17 ↑	19	4	Fidelity Investments	605	73.78%	
18 ↑	51	52	Aviva Investors	601	73.29%	
19 ↓	7	47	Columbia Threadneedle Investments	590	71.95%	
20 ↑	39	54	Credit Suisse Asset Management	589	71.83%	
21 ↑	75	13	Wellington Management International	555	67.68%	
22 ↓	9	37	AllianceBernstein	554	67.56%	
23 ↑	69	18	Northern Trust Asset Management	553	67.44%	
24 ↓	15	14	T. Rowe Price	545	66.46%	
25 ↓	5	49	MFS Investment Management	543	66.22%	
26 ↑	29	88	Voya Investment Management	539	65.73%	
27 ↓	22	11	Goldman Sachs AM International	535	65.24%	
28 ↑	34	101	Pictet Asset Management	525	64.02%	
29 ↑	41	15	Nuveen	520	63.41%	
30 ↑	60	64	RBC Global Asset Management	510	62.20%	
31 ↑	71	36	Dimensional Fund Advisors	505	61.59%	
32 ↑	46	73	NN Investment Partners	495	60.37%	
33 ↑	37	12	Legal & General Investment Management	494	60.24%	
34 ↑	38	19	AXA Investment Managers	493	60.12%	
35 ↑	80	44	Federated Investors	492	60.00%	
36 ↓	28	63	Janus Henderson Investors	489	59.63%	
36 ↑	56	93	KKR & Co.	489	59.63%	
38 ↓	6	27	Franklin Templeton	488	59.51%	
39 ↓	27	79	BMO Global Asset Management	485	59.15%	
40 ↓	17	85	Baillie Gifford & Co.	483	58.90%	
41 ↑	67	3	State Street Global Advisors	475	57.93%	
42 ↓	40	53	Principal Global Investors	459	55.98%	
43 ↑	64	67	Barings	454	55.37%	
44 ↑	53	43	Morgan Stanley Investment Management	450	54.88%	
45 ↓	25	29	BNP Paribas Asset Management France	449	54.76%	
46 ↑	59	31	Allianz Global Investors	439	53.54%	
47 ↑	52	10	PGIM	425	51.83%	
48 —	N/A	61	Brookfield Asset Management	424	51.71%	
49 ↑	57	92	AQR Capital Management	420	51.22%	
50 ↓	44	95	Eastspring Investments (Singapore)	419	51.10%	

Energetic · Determined · Lackluster · Focused

Living Ratings 2019 Ranking	Living Ratings 2018 Ranking	IPE ranking by revenue	Firm name	Score / 840	%	Category
51 ↑	62	65	SEI	400	48.78%	Focused
52 —	N/A	82	Mercer	399	48.66%	Lackluster
53 ↓	49	9	Amundi	390	47.56%	Focused
54 ↑	78	77	Nordea Asset Management	381	46.46%	Focused
55 ↓	14	2	Vanguard Asset Management	380	46.34%	Lackluster
56 ↑	72	62	Eurizon Asset Management	379	46.22%	Energetic
57 ↓	54	66	Neuberger Berman	375	45.73%	Lackluster
58 ↓	48	51	Eaton Vance	365	44.51%	Lackluster
59 ↓	35	38	Generali Investments	364	44.39%	Lackluster
60 ↓	42	60	Charles Schwab Investment Management	363	44.27%	Lackluster
61 —	N/A	81	Loomis, Sayles & Company	354	43.17%	Lackluster
62 ↓	61	21	Insight Investment	340	41.46%	Lackluster
63 ↑	97	76	La Banque Postale Asset Management	339	41.34%	Lackluster
64 ↓	36	102	Lord, Abbett & Co.	337	41.10%	Lackluster
65 ↓	63	89	Nikko Asset Management Europe	335	40.85%	Lackluster
66 ↓	45	41	Wells Fargo Asset Management	334	40.73%	Lackluster
67 ↓	47	59	Aegon Asset Management	330	40.24%	Lackluster
68 ↓	26	46	HSBC Global Asset Management	329	40.12%	Lackluster
69 ↑	87	80	Swiss Life Asset Managers	320	39.02%	Lackluster
70 ↓	55	97	SEB	319	38.90%	Lackluster
71 —	N/A	48	Western Asset Management Company	315	38.41%	Lackluster
72 —	N/A	68	Ostrum Asset Management	314	38.29%	Lackluster
73 ↓	16	16	Natixis Investment Managers	299	36.46%	Lackluster
74 —	N/A	72	Fidelity International	294	35.85%	Lackluster
75 ↓	58	83	Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec	280	34.15%	Lackluster
76 ↑	79	74	Apollo Global Management	279	34.02%	Lackluster
77 ↓	74	40	Blackstone	270	32.93%	Lackluster
78 ↓	73	22	UBS Asset Management	259	31.59%	Lackluster
79 ↓	76	35	APG Asset Management	258	31.46%	Lackluster
80 —	N/A	50	M&G Prudential*	255	31.10%	Lackluster
81 ↑	88	56	Union Investment	250	30.49%	Lackluster
82 —	N/A	90	Anima	239	29.15%	Lackluster
83 ↑	84	30	MetLife Investment Management	230	28.05%	Lackluster
84 ↑	95	45	Nomura Asset Management	205	25.00%	Lackluster
85 ↓	66	34	New York Life Investments	200	24.39%	Lackluster
86 ↑	92	91	Santander Asset Management	199	24.27%	Lackluster
87 ↓	85	100	Itaú Asset Management	195	23.78%	Lackluster
88 ↓	83	69	DekaBank	185	22.56%	Lackluster
89 ↓	77	78	PGGM	184	22.44%	Lackluster
90 ↓	82	70	MEAG	175	21.34%	Lackluster
91 ↑	99	55	Geode Capital Management	165	20.12%	Lackluster
92 ↓	90	58	Manulife Asset Management	160	19.51%	Lackluster
93 ↓	68	25	Affiliated Managers Group	140	17.07%	Lackluster
94 ↓	89	71	Dodge & Cox	125	15.24%	Lackluster
95 —	N/A	84	BrightSphere Investment Group	120	14.63%	Lackluster
96 ↓	81	32	Mitsubishi UFJ Trust and Banking Corp	115	14.02%	Lackluster
97 ↓	96	20	Sumitomo Mitsui Trust AM (SuMi TRUST)	110	13.41%	Lackluster
98 —	98	42	Asset Management One International	109	13.29%	Lackluster
99 ↓	94	96	The TCW Group	105	12.80%	Lackluster
100 —	100	99	E Fund Management	70	8.54%	Lackluster

Note: PGIM Fixed Income, Mellon, BNY Mellon Cash Investment Strategies and Jennison Associates have all been excluded from our analysis as their parent companies' sites were rated instead. *M&G Prudential demerged on 21 October 2019.

Engagement and evidence: the leaders

Determined asset managers build experiences for their users

Asset managers that take a determined approach to digital engagement have a relentless client focus. Their successful formula combines two key elements:

1

Engagement

Determined asset managers recognize the potential of useful digital functionality backed by a client-focused channel strategy. They can then create appealing and relevant content in a variety of media including graphics, audio, animation and video that captivates, informs and motivates the target audience.

2

Evidence

Determined asset managers promote clear purpose. They offer the user informative brand-driven messaging, relevant subject matter and the kind of insight that shows a deep understanding of client issues and interests. This demonstrates the ability to help clients succeed.

Engagement: our Top 10

	Firm name	Engagement score (%)
1	J.P. Morgan Asset Management	83.61
2	PIMCO	81.93
3	Aberdeen Standard Investments	81.45
4	BlackRock	80.72
5=	BNY Mellon Investment Management	79.28
5=	Credit Suisse Asset Management	79.28
7	DWS	77.11
8	Schroder Investment Management	76.63
9	Federated Investors	73.98
10	Lazard Asset Management	73.49

Evidence: our Top 10

	Firm name	Evidence score (%)
1	Russell Investments	88.24
2=	DWS	87.06
2=	Macquarie Asset Management	87.06
2=	Robeco	87.06
2=	Capital Group	87.06
2=	Aviva Investors	87.06
7=	PIMCO	83.53
7=	Guggenheim Investments	83.53
7=	Invesco	83.53
10	Schroder Investment Management	82.35

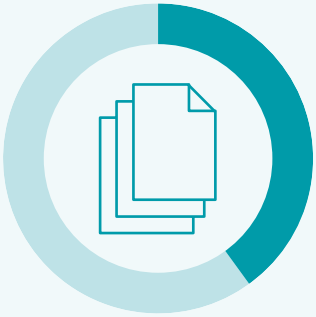
The numbers that define asset managers: engagement

12%

of websites provide high quality search functionality.
2018: N/A

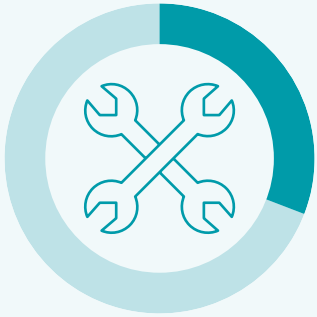
54%

of websites employ user profiling.
2018: 58%



40%

of websites provide related content.
2018: 59%

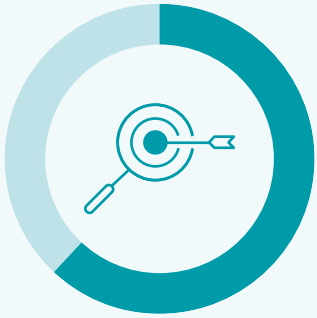


31%

of websites offer intermediary tools.
2018: 35%

2%

of websites offer voice activated search.
2018: N/A

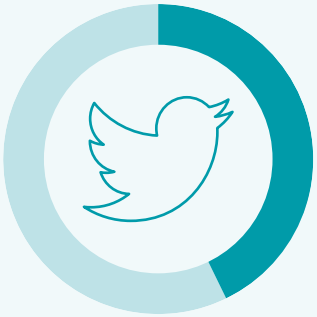


62%

is the average SEO score for websites.
2018: 71%

54%

▼ of websites provide geo-location profiling.
2018: 60%



43%

● of firms have a high quality Twitter channel.
2018: N/A

45%

● of firms manage a high quality LinkedIn channel.
2018: N/A

46%

▼ of firms use Facebook.
2018: 66%

32%

▼ of firms use Instagram.
2018: 40%

15%

▼ of firms offer an intermediary app.
2018: 25%

The numbers that define asset managers: evidence

31%

● of firms provide high quality intermediary content.
2018: N/A

26%

▼ provide high quality fund and strategy content.
2018: 41%

38%

▼ of firms state their brand positioning on their home page. 2018: 48%

37%

▼ share brand values on their websites.
2018: 48%

58%

▲ of firms use a distinctive visual language.
2018: 42%

16%

● provide a high quality intermediary education area.
2018: N/A

49%

▼ of firms provide an intermediary log-in area.
2018: 53%

42%

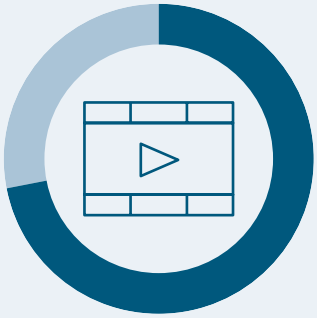
▲ provide effective storytelling in a blog.
2018: 32%

35%

▲ of firms provide corporate diversity content.
2018: 24%

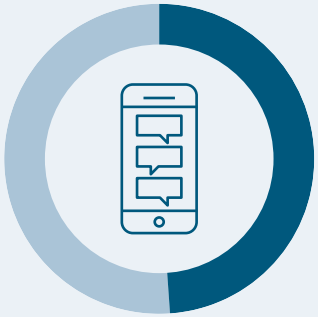
55%

● provide a link to their ESG policy.
2018: N/A



72%

▬ of firms use film content.
2018: 72%

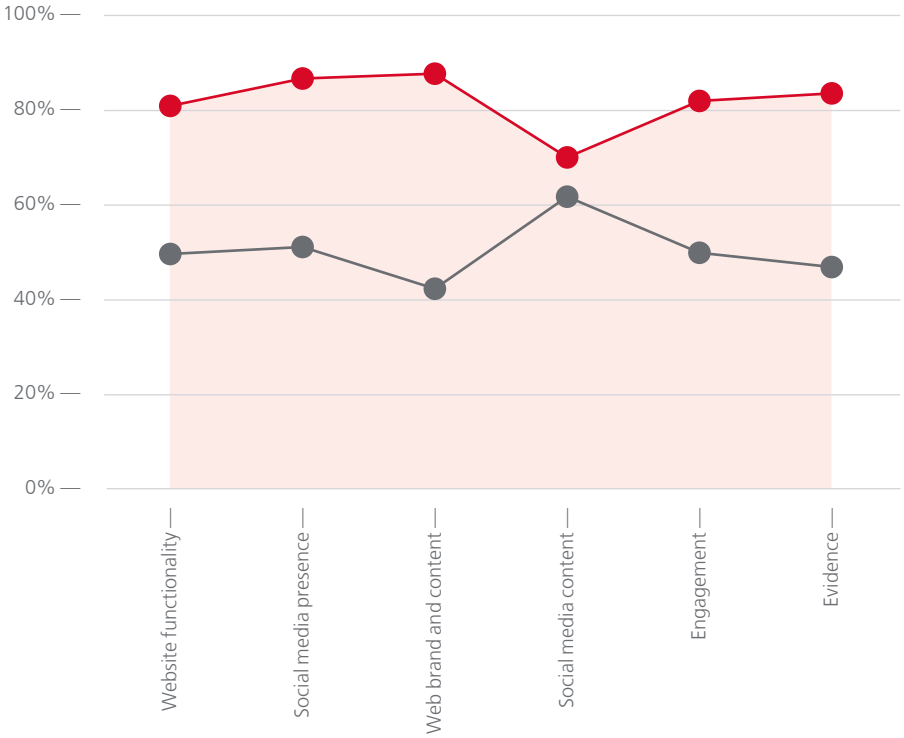


49%

● have a clear social media strategy.
2018: N/A

1 PIMCO

pimco.com/en-us/clients/financial-advisor



PIMCO
Sector average

Classification:

Determined

Key features

- **Excellent and information insights**
- **Rich content delivered via clear navigation**
- **Plethora of dedicated Intermediary resources and tools**
- **Industry-leading advanced search functionality**

PIMCO's web presence is a study in understated elegance with clear, succinct navigation and user profiling.

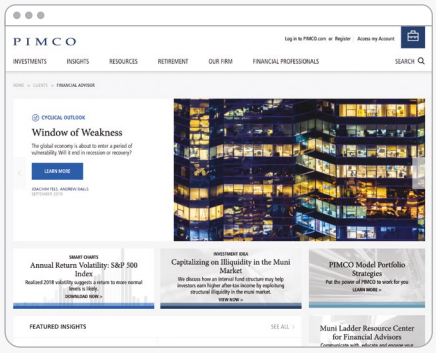
On the landing page, information is readily at hand. Clear and logical dropdowns deliver a huge amount of content slickly. The Resources section contains a huge amount of content: tools and programs, education, video library, webcasts and conference and "Smart Charts" - it's all here.

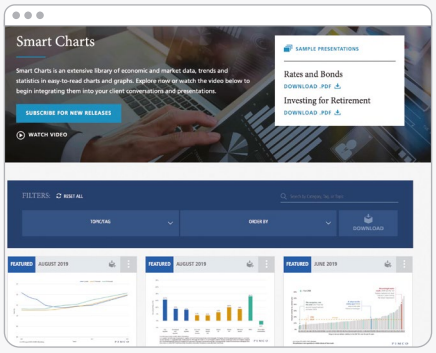
PIMCO also has one of the industry's leading diversity and inclusion sections and gives their "Experts" a profile, showing the very human face of the firm.

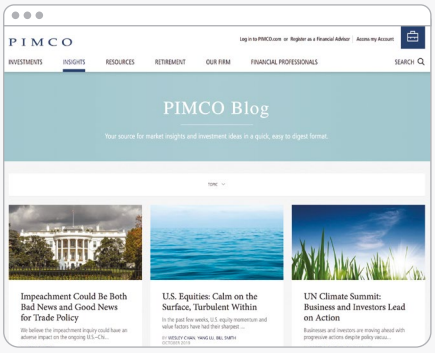
The PIMCO Blog pages are equally strong and deliver excellent proprietary content that is current and well-written. Similar blogs and related content is served alongside. It is also beautifully presented with the best functioning sharing to social media of any of the Top 100.

PIMCO's use of social media platforms is strong with exemplary Twitter and LinkedIn pages demonstrating the same care for excellent content and presentation.

Images © PIMCO







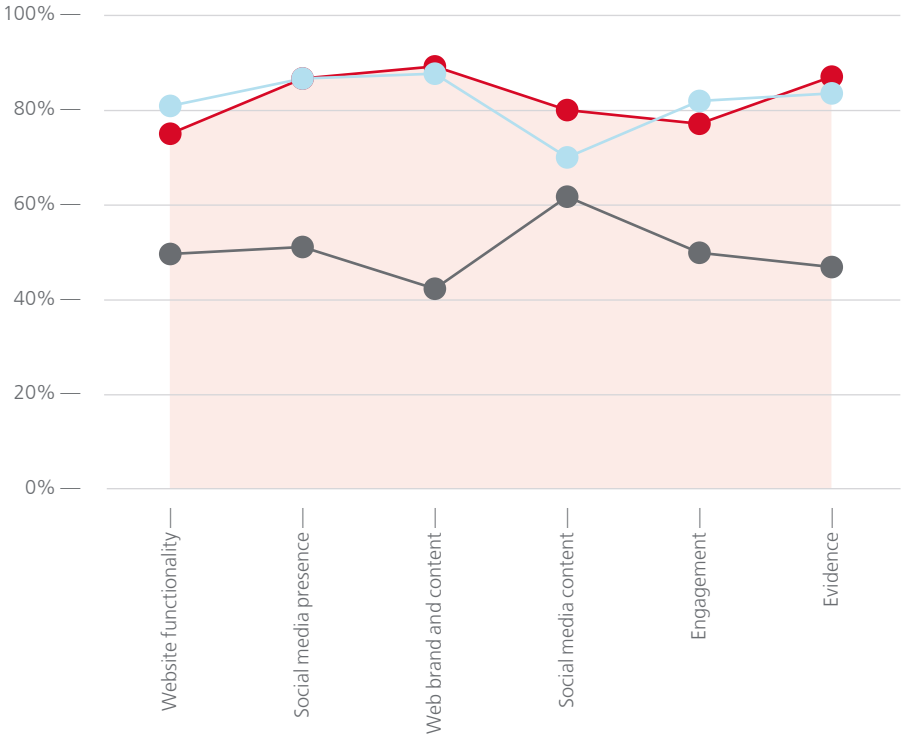
2 DWS

dws.de

- DWS (Deutsche Asset Management)
- Sector average
- Sector leader

Classification:

- Determined



Key features

- **Bold and distinctive brand**
- **Compelling ESG content**
- **People focus with experts profile**
- **Strong insights and thought leadership**

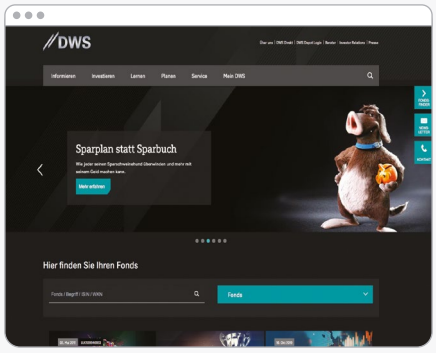
DWS created their highly distinctive digital presence last year, a year later and it still stands out, an exemplar of what a powerful brand can look like and communicate. DWS' site also offers a clear link to some of the most original values of the Top 100 which are evidenced by content throughout their site.

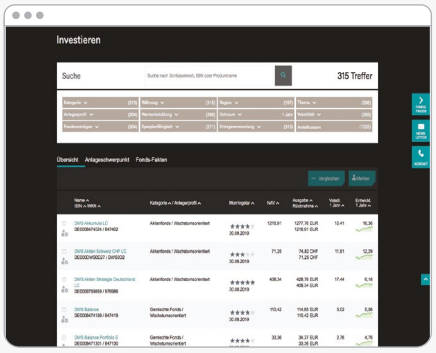
The 'ESG engine' is a dedicated and detailed area that paints a compelling picture of DWS's ESG strategy. DWS Research Institute is their thought leadership hub with a stated focus of 'original ideas – made clear' and does exactly that – bringing compelling thought leadership content to life for all audiences.

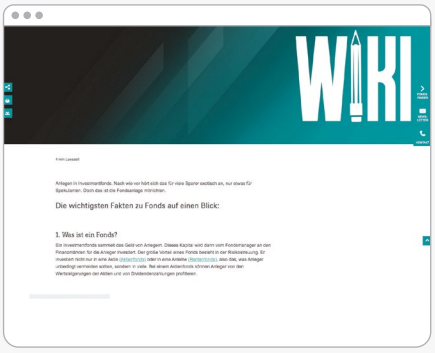
From its prominent 'Newsletter' and 'CIO quarterly update' sign ups, to its extensive media library, there is so much content here that it has created an archive area where older content can be reviewed by date or topic – a logical solution to the issue of insight content piling up and losing relevance.

Social media channels deliver the same convincing insights and content. DWS was kept out of the top spot only by PIMCO's greater focus on specific intermediary content.

Images © DWS

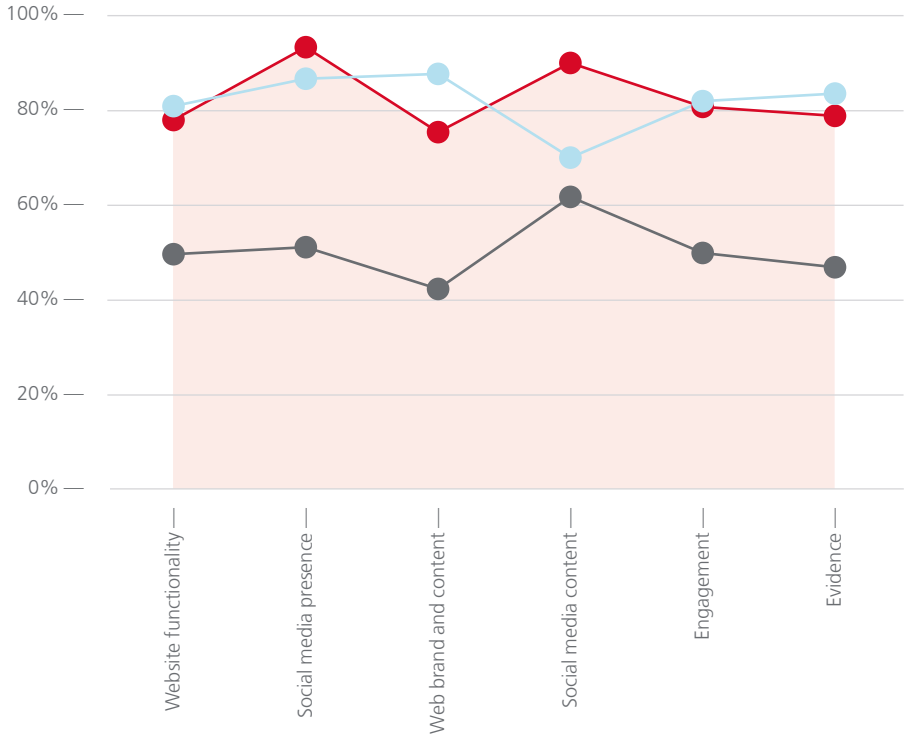






3 BlackRock

blackrock.com/us/financial-professionals



- BlackRock
- Sector average
- Sector leader

Classification:

- Determined

Key features

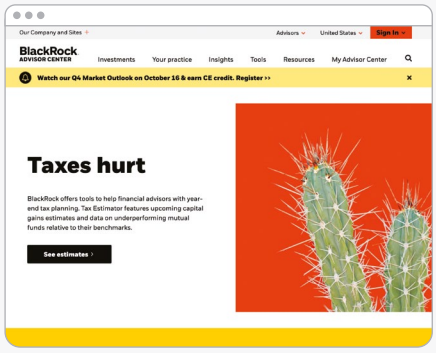
- **Adviser-centric content**
- **Plethora of tools and guides**
- **Clear social media strategy**
- **Distinctive verbal and visual brand**

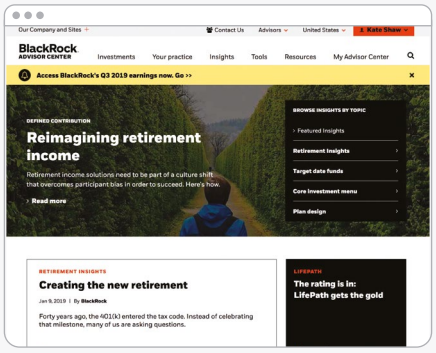
BlackRock presents a brilliantly user-focused website. The content here is all about the viewer and what they need. The language is direct, engaging and compelling. In short, BlackRock takes intermediary focus to another level.

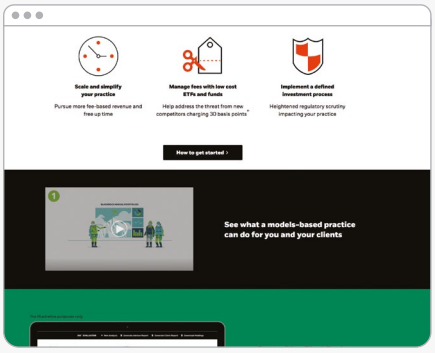
This active intermediary support is demonstrated throughout their digital footprint. From a prominent 'Build your business' section and a useful adviser education area, BlackRock delivers a powerful and distinctive digital experience. There is a plethora of tools, a brilliant App and the whole experience is expressed via a fresh brand look and feel and a logical and rewarding narrative style.

Naturally, this fresh approach is not limited to the website alone, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn carry the same high quality content and presentation. Video, infographics, blogs, and podcasts are deployed across all platforms to deliver both rich insights and rich content. BlackRock's total percentile Ratings score was just 2.4% behind DWS – that tiny margin was all that kept them from the no. 2 spot.

Images © BlackRock







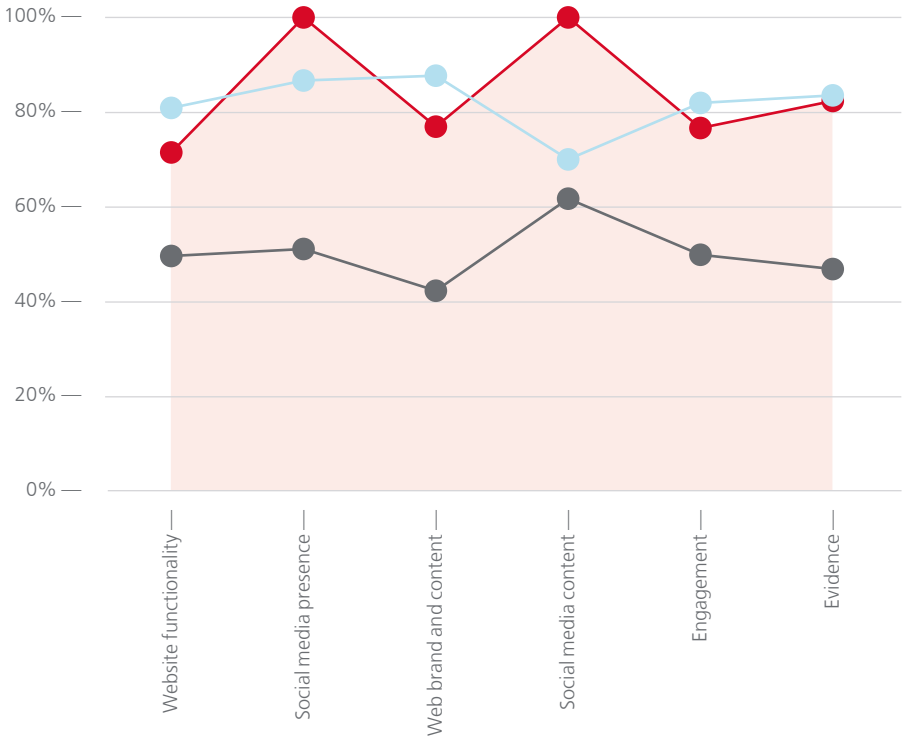
4 Schroders

schroders.com/en/uk/adviser/

- Schroders
- Sector average
- Sector leader

Classification:

- Determined



Key features

- **Excellent social media content**
- **Creative and rich infographics**
- **Strong and numerous insights**
- **Strategies brought to life**

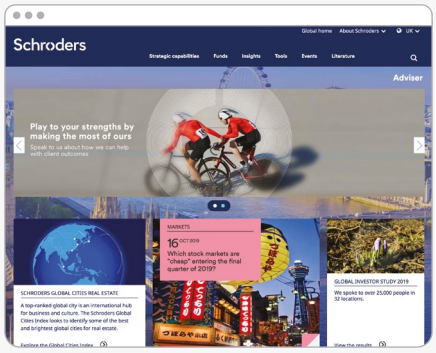
Schroders continues to deliver a consistently effective digital presence. Despite the highest scores of any firm for social media content, they occupy a 4th place in our Ratings research this year. They were kept out of the 3rd place only because their website functionality scores were lower. This rich site was let down by overall site speed and functionality.

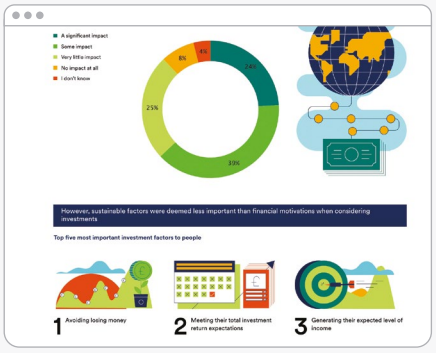
Schroders has a powerful way of explaining its strategies with startlingly direct content. 'The value perspective' is a great example of a dedicated area that effortlessly and informatively lifts the lid off their thinking on exploiting value investing.

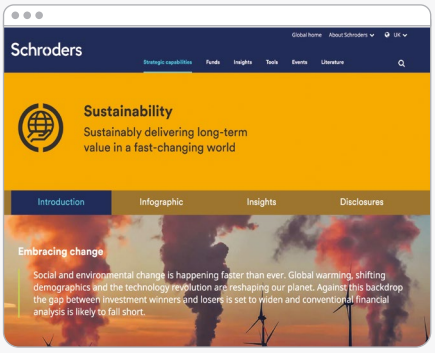
The pared back but logical navigation is intuitive and clear. They continue to avoid the trap fallen into by other competitors of bouncing you to microsites within the main site. The use of icons to identify key areas of the site and infographics to clearly explain global and financial trends is a strong feature on this site. There are many well-executed graphics that introduce deeper content.

The overall result is a confident, rich and informative site supported by the excellent use of social media channels.

Images © Schroders







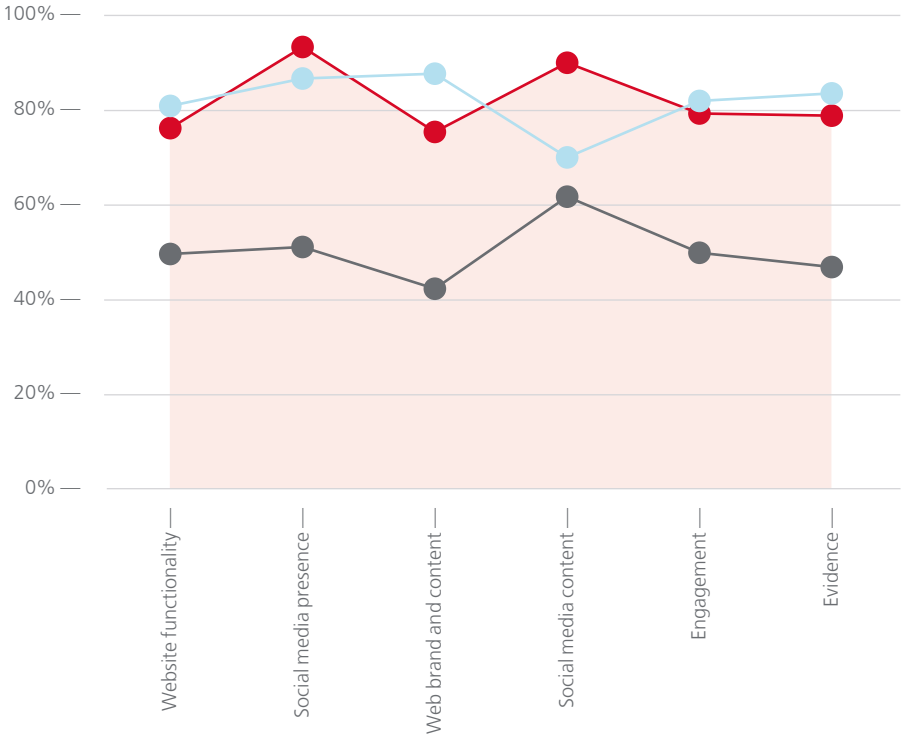
5 BNY Mellon Investment Management

im.bnymellon.com/us/en/intermediary/

- BNY Mellon Investment Management
- Sector average
- Sector leader

Classification:

- Determined



Key features

- **Compelling visual brand and tone of voice**
- **Featured Funds and search on home page**
- **Navigation with highlighted content**
- **Engaging Perspectives, Market Insights and MarketEye blog**

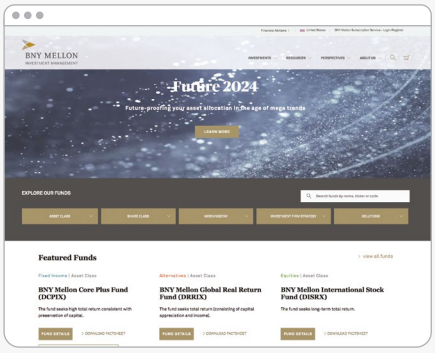
BNY Mellon takes our 5th place this year. They have created a very strong digital presence: rich insights, targeted intermediary content and detailed fund information are delivered along with a brilliantly media-rich brand.

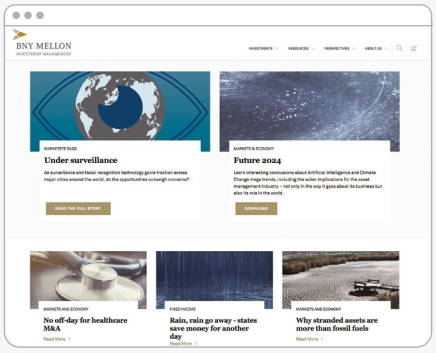
'Perspectives' is their media-rich home of thought leadership and BNY Mellon is one of the few investment managers who have invested in both a distinct and beautifully crafted tone of voice. The content here uses engaging and witty language to draw the reader in.

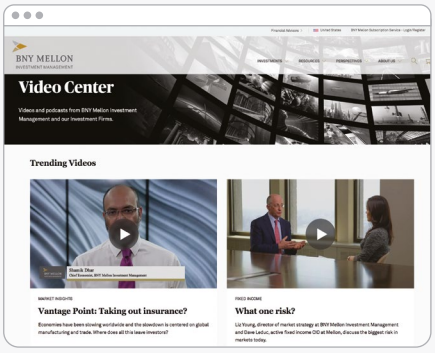
Targeted intermediary content is varied. Their log-in only area called the 'Advisor Institute' supports ongoing educational needs and the 'Subscription service' allows advisers to sign up to receive pitch books and investment reports.

The lack of a crafted Google description was one of the few things that held them back, but BNY Mellon's excellent digital footprint and social media presence meant they were only half a percentage point behind 4th place Schroders.

Images © BNY Mellon







6 ›10

6
J.P. Morgan Asset Management
am.jpmorgan.com/us/en/asset-management/gim/adv/home

Classification:
Determined

Key features
- **Sector leading tools**
- **Dedicated 'Insights' app**
- **Rich thought leadership**
- **Amazon Alexa & Google Home functionality links**

7
Russell Investments
russellinvestments.com/us

Classification:
Determined

Key features
- **Engaging 'overview' pages**
- **Adviser centric content via their 'RISE' hub**
- **Powerful interactive tools**
- **Support via 'Value of an Advisor study'**

8
Legg Mason
leggmason.com

Classification:
Determined

Key features
- **Intermediary support via 'The Advisor Partnership Program'**
- **Complex issues brought to life simply via' Chart of the week'**
- **Compelling ESG content**
- **Clear social media strategy**

9
Lazard Asset Management
lazardassetmanagement.com/us/en_us

Classification:
Determined

Key features
- **Compelling ESG content**
- **Rich document library**
- **Excellent podcasts via 'Lazard Insights'**
- **Adviser log-ins**

10
Macquarie Asset Management
macquarie.com/au/advisers

Classification:
Energetic

Key features
- **Adviser focus and support via 'Smart Practice'**
- **Brilliant strategies page**
- **Readymade intermediary content via 'Articles for your clients'**
- **Relevant content delivered via 'Little Black book'**

Want to know how your firm has scored across each of our key criteria?

Please get in touch to arrange a meeting.

Opportunities to lead

Our Living Ratings results this year show a sector that could work harder to attract visitors with a compelling digital and brand presence. There are opportunities for all: developing an engaging digital experience is not just the preserve of the wealthiest firms – it's not about money spent but the care and focus expended. Here are six big opportunities to make your brand and digital intelligence even better.

1

Invest in your brand

The determined firms in this year's report use their brands to differentiate themselves in a largely homogenized market. They state their brand positioning up front, share their brand values, have a consistent tone of voice and use their visual brand to create compelling online experiences that are clear, concise and unique. Take another look at your brand and ask yourself: does it communicate who you are, what you do, and most importantly, why does it matter to your target audiences?

2

One-to-one or one-to-many?

The leaders in our analysis are delivering personalized content to intermediaries. This is targeted fund data, tools, thought leadership or educational materials that makes their time-poor target audiences' lives easier and demonstrates a strong degree of empathy and understanding. Do you have relevant content that you could personalize and so improve your firm's digital experience?

3

Prove it and present it

In a sector dominated by research and analysis that drives smart investment advice and decisions, there's a surprising lack of facts on many firms' websites. Determined firms tell their target audiences not only about what makes them different from their competitors, but they are transparent about their investment criteria, fund performance, risks and the teams who make the decisions. They also make the content easy-to-find and easy-to-consume by implementing good search functionality. Can you say that your firm does this?

4 Relevant sustainability

The good news is that the majority of firms (55%) in this year's survey have a link to their ESG policy. The bad news is that for many this is just a policy sitting in isolation to the rest of the site, making it feel like lip service for external procurement teams. Our leaders, however, take time to explain and show evidence of how sustainability, the environment and diversity are woven into the fabric of their firms and aligned with their long-term business strategies. What can you do to improve your sustainability and diversity communications so that it's meaningful for existing and potential investors, internally and in the war for talent?

5 Social media strategy

It's 2019, yet still less than half of the firms rated have a clear social media strategy in place. Determined firms use social media strategically, selecting carefully curated content for each channel based on who's following them and so demonstrating a true understanding of their target audiences. These firms also see social media as another opportunity to share their visual identity, creating consistently branded channels and posting proprietary social tiles (images) that are linked to relevant and useful insight on their websites. Take a look at your firm's social media footprint and ask yourself: what can you do to improve your approach and strategy?

6 Get the digital basics right

Overall the asset management sector is still lagging behind other services sectors in getting the basics of a robust digital presence right. There are easy wins here: an engaging Google descriptor tells your story before a client even visits your site. Your website needs to be responsive but also intelligently so: does your site lose critical navigation or information in small screen versions? Pay attention to the little details: site speed, SEO and SSL certificates all play an important part in providing a credible digital footprint. What can you do to make your digital presence the best it can be?

If you would like us to help you answer some of these questions and build brand and digital intelligence for your firm, please get in touch.

New York
Kate Shaw
kate.shaw@living-group.com

London
Greg Hobden
greg.hobden@living-group.com

Hong Kong
Gigi Yung
gigi.yung@living-group.com

Conclusion

Overall the leaders in our Ratings research are investing in a cohesive digital strategy and are clearly focusing on the audience and not just on themselves. But there is more to achieve.

It is reassuring to see that more and more marketers are rethinking the view that positive financial performance negates the need for broader quality communications.

That said, we firmly believe that the crowded marketplace and interchangeability of products make it more important than ever for asset managers to clearly express points of difference via their brand positioning and values. We found the vital 'who they are', 'what they do' and 'why it matters' content either missing or hidden away.

Overall there is a lack of clearly differentiating values. Corporate and Social Responsibility sections or career sites are a popular area to house this content – it's almost as if they are being regarded as 'checklist' items that young hires are interested in, rather than carefully considered business drivers.

Against the void of brand 'sameness', asset managers must rely on other content to pick up the slack. But this is effectively an arms race – it is easier for this type of content to be replicated by others. Thought leadership can be used to define and express what separates one asset manager from another and the best of the asset managers are producing effective thought leadership – delivering content that seamlessly explains the issues while expressing the difference and value they bring. But the worst are publishing dry responses to legislative and global issues.

Any asset manager that fails to express what makes it a valuable partner via its brand expression or thought leadership content has lost the opportunity to engage its target audience.

Strategy and fund pages are important and effective opportunities to build a brand's reputation among intermediaries, but the drop in quality this year is a concern. Conversely, the sector can take pride in its use of social media, with largely excellent content and an increase in effective storytelling.

With asset managers failing in critical brand and digital intelligence areas, the vital intermediary audience is left wanting for basic elements: useful tools, log-ins and sign-ups to dedicated content, education and support structures. The Top 10 in this year's Ratings research have succeeded in all of the above areas and been held to account across a tough set of criteria. Those less highly placed have much still to achieve to convince and compel their target audience to engage with them.

Get in touch

What's your score?

Would you like a more detailed analysis of your firm? Do you believe you could benefit from a new website, relevant content or a more effective social media strategy? If so, we'd love to hear from you.


@livinggroup


lifeatliving


living-group


living_group

1 New York

Kate Shaw
368 Ninth Avenue
9th Floor
New York, NY 10001
t +1 (646) 453 7056
e kate.shaw@living-group.com

2 London

Greg Hobden
The Bower, 6th Floor
207 Old Street
London EC1V 9NR
t +44 (0)20 7739 8899
e greg.hobden@living-group.com

3 Hong Kong

Gigi Yung
Bonham Circus, Studio 04
3rd Floor, 40 Bonham Strand
Sheung Wan, Hong Kong
t +852 2328 7700
e gigi.yung@living-group.com

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