



WHY DYNAMIC ANALYST RELATIONS IS PIVOTAL TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic are accelerating major structural shifts across industries, technologies and audiences. Business leaders are navigating rapidly changing markets, and while this means new opportunities are being created, these opportunities often go hand-in-hand with uncertainty. This is driving increased demand for analyst input, as senior decision-makers surround themselves with the insight they need to stay ahead of the competition.

These dynamics make analyst relations (AR) more important than ever. Technology companies that don't take AR seriously are missing out on influencing the strategies and purchasing decisions of their potential partners and customers. This could be putting them at a significant commercial disadvantage.

This report is based on in-depth interviews with many leading technology analysts. It gives an inside track on how companies are working with analysts and how you can engage with them, including:

- The changing landscape of AR.
- How to get the most out of AR.
- What an AR programme looks like today.

Please drop us a line if you'd like to discuss any of the points in this report or want to find out more about what AR can do for your business.



David Lawrence
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Key Takeaways

- **Effective AR is more important than ever for tech vendors due to increased reliance from tech buyers on analyst advice.**
- **This dependency has come from structural shifts in several industries that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated.**
- **More boutique and independent analysts with niche specialisms mean analyst relations is no longer the exclusive domain of large organisations.**
- **Companies can miss out on the benefits of analyst engagement if they don't prepare in the right way.**

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Across the board, the analysts we spoke to told us they are busier than ever as they help their clients gain the insight they need to make strategic decisions.



Our job is to help our clients navigate complex changes. We're busiest when there's less certainty in markets, that's definitely the case this year.

- Guy Bisson, Research Director, Ampere Analysis

Karsten Weide, Program Vice President, Digital Media and Entertainment at IDC, explained the view of many tech buyers at the moment: "There is a realisation that you have to be on top of things. You cannot afford to be complacent." This feeling is driving companies towards analysts for help.

Such help often comes in the form of consultancy and is in demand from both sides of the buyer/ vendor ecosystem, as Maria Rua Aguiete, Senior Director, Media and Entertainment at Omdia, explained: "We are seeing many more requests for consultancy from tech buyers and vendors. Tech companies want to know what is going to happen as there's so much uncertainty, and the lack of physical events has made sales conversations challenging."

Maria's comment begs the question: if you're a vendor, can you afford not to invest in building better relationships with analysts when they are speaking to your customers every day? Put another way, if your competitors are successfully relaying their critical messages to customers through analysts, can you afford not to?

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Firstly, there was the immediate impact of COVID. Secondly, there was the realisation that there will be long-term changes that are here to stay even when COVID is gone. Will you be in the office or not? Will you travel or not? And there are technological changes that come with that. What is the long-term outlook, both in terms of the buy-side and technology spend?

- Karsten Weide, Program Vice President, Digital Media and Entertainment, IDC



HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INVESTMENT

A common mistake in AR is to treat analysts as one big group. Or, worse still, treat them like journalists. Analysts have market specialisms and will be looking for different kinds of input at different times.

They will primarily be focused on the big picture. They will want to know about your strategy and where you see the industry going in the next five years. They will want to understand your business priorities and your growth plans.

For a specific report, an analyst may be looking for deep-dive input on your technology, product features and specifications. They will need to understand your product roadmap, where your latest innovations sit in the market, and how they compare to competitor solutions.

A successful AR programme should align with what each analyst needs. Guy Bisson explains that one way a tech vendor can achieve this is by having "a range of executives on briefings to cover the different sides of the story. It's useful to be able to ask questions that go beyond what the device or product does and get the information you need from a senior spokesperson, without having to take the conversation offline or arrange a separate follow-up."



From my point of view, the most important thing when a company is communicating with analysts is availability and responsiveness. I'm much less interested in the public announcements than I am in the underlying rationale and discussion that sit behind their decisions. I can't do my job on the basis of just public information because it's available to everyone. I need to get underneath it.

- Tom Morrod, Research Director, Caretta Research

Independent analyst Ben Keen also thinks that technology vendors often focus too much on specific product features rather than explaining how they fit into the broader tech landscape: "Most commonly what is missing is a commercial business dimension. What's the business model? What's the return on investment? Who will buy this product and why? There's generally too much conversation on the latest bells and whistles rather than what the product is going to do for a customer's business."

The most common misconception is expecting some immediate output. Why am I talking to you? Is it going to appear in something tomorrow? They miss that the conversation itself can be valuable. The analyst relations process works to a different timescale and model. That misunderstanding of the process is very common.

- Ben Keen, Independent Analyst

Analyst relationships take time to build and the benefits of engagement come in different shapes and forms. The analyst community is your customers' trusted advisor. Your company and value proposition must be front of mind for analysts when they speak to tech buyers. Analysts can make the difference between closing your deal or ending up with a missed sales opportunity.



WHAT DOES AN AR PROGRAMME LOOK LIKE?

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There's acceptance throughout the industry that the importance of data has suddenly risen. As a result, the role of analysts in being able to interpret data and get actionable insights is even more in demand.

- Guy Bisson, Research Director, Ampere Analysis

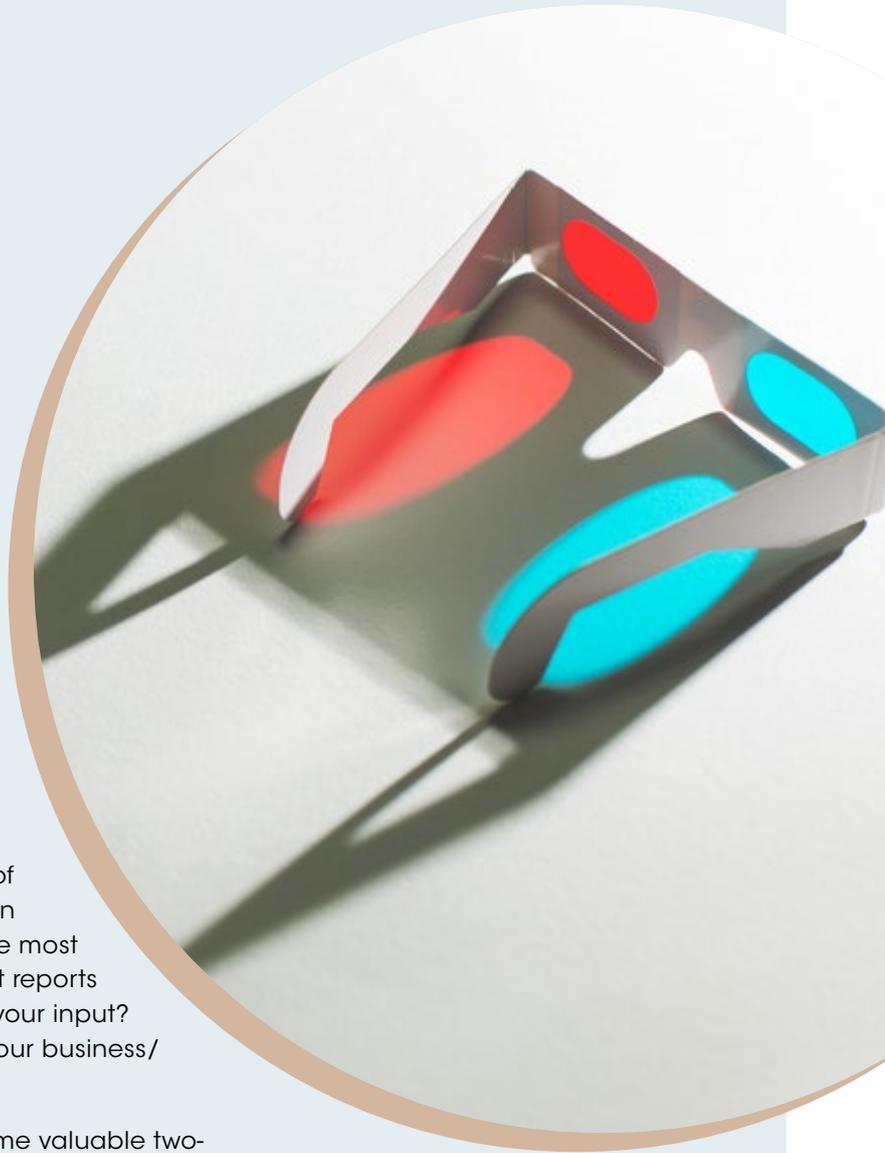
To make AR deliver the input you need, it's essential to be clear on your objectives. No two programmes are the same, but there are three key pillars of activity to consider.

1. EARNED

You need to take the time to find the right analysts that are relevant to your products and your audiences. You then need to create regular opportunities to speak with them and get a good grasp of their view of the market. That way, you can deliver the right information and have the most useful dialogue. Timing matters, too. What reports are they planning? When will they need your input? And when is the best moment to share your business/product updates?

As relationships build, briefings will become valuable two-way conversations. There's a golden opportunity to gain valuable insight into competitor activity and strategy, market opportunities, or test your messages before presenting them to the market.

Generally speaking, the better an analyst understands what you do and how you address challenges in the industry, the more you will get out of them. You can earn valuable third-party endorsements with analysts through their reports, consultancy, or media coverage.



2. PAID

Paid relationships can serve different purposes, depending on your strategic goals and budget. We've identified two main groups:

Marketing-led

- Buying reports that are favourable about your company, for sales purposes.
- Commissioning bespoke reports that give an expert third-party view on the potential usage/ uptake/ value that a particular type of technology might create.
- Partnering with analysts for speaking opportunities or webinars to build your audience and include valuable third-party opinion.

Strategy-led

- Buying selected reports or gaining 24/7 access to key market data.
- Commissioning research to help with strategy (market sizing and product positioning).
- Consultancy with an independent market expert on trends and strategy.

Companies should have a clear idea of what they want out of a piece of work; answering questions internally before they reach out.

- Jonathan Broughton, Managing Director, Workshare Consulting



3. SHARED

Creating targeted engagement with analysts on social platforms is a great way to boost your brand and show that you are a leading voice in your market. As Ben Keen notes: "I actively use LinkedIn as a publishing platform. As an independent, it is my platform. I don't publish my research anywhere else. So that's my outlet and generates quite a lot of interest."

Platform's social influencer programmes enable executives to create powerful engagement strategies. We help clients generate thought-leadership around key trends and identify the right online discussions to be part of.

Being part of discussions with top industry influencers boosts visibility and shows your customers that you are providing solutions for the major challenges and opportunities in the market.

BUILD AN AR PROGRAMME THAT WORKS FOR YOU

There is no one-size-fits-all approach; we create tailor-made AR campaigns. Here are some examples of the services we offer:

Priority analyst engagement:

Select a list of priority analysts relevant to your company and take a strategic approach to building relationships with them. Ensure you speak to them regularly and know what reports they're working on so your company is covered. The list can consist of anywhere from 3-30 analysts, depending on your goals.

Reports monitor:

Monitor the latest analyst reports for up-to-date market insight to support your business. Receive recommendations on which reports are most relevant.

Analyst partnerships:

Creating partnerships with analyst houses to achieve specific business goals. We can identify the right partnerships and manage through to delivery. Activities include setting up special reports and webinars.

Social influencer programme:

Be involved in conversations that add value and build your company's presence. Help identify opportunities to connect priority analysts with your key spokespeople. Engage with the insights they're sharing online to position your company executives as thought leaders and open up business opportunities.

Bespoke market analysis:

Receive monthly/ quarterly reports that are easy to digest and deliver the information you and your team need. Ensure you're up-to-date with:

- Competitor news, including financial, company growth, customer/ partner announcements.
- Industry trends in your product areas.
- The global market: where you should focus your sales efforts.

You can use these services together to form a complete programme or use them in a modular way, depending on budget and resource.





FIND OUT MORE

We'd love to tell you more about our AR work and discuss how it could benefit your business.

Please drop us a line at:

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