

15th EDITION 2020-2021

Webranking by Comprend

Austria's largest listed companies

An eagle-eyed snapshot into how companies are communicating to their stakeholders via their corporate website and digital channels.

The report unveils the latest communications trends, best practice examples and razor-sharp insights for corporations navigating the digital realm today.



BEING TRANSPARENT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT

The foundation for building trust is transparency. The context generated by Covid-19 has tested companies' communication, not only in their ability to react promptly to the crisis and transmit a forward-looking vision, but also in their ability to present reliable, up-to-date information in the present.

The pandemic has put credibility at the heart of corporate communications, with companies being asked to play a larger role in society during these uncertain times.

This demands responsibility and commitment. The commitment to provide transparent and comprehensive information to the market, employees, and consumers, which is necessary to build and maintain trust.

But what does it mean to be transparent?

It means not only publishing the company's data but contextualising it and making it available both to experts and to a wider audience.

Being transparent means communicating through clear language and meeting the needs and expectations of the user, even if this means tackling difficult, uncomfortable, and even critical issues. Finally, it means creating a direct dialogue with the user. "Brand journalism", "story-telling" and "social campaigns" only work if supported by substance.

The role of Webranking

Helping companies to improve the quality of information requested externally and to create a culture of transparency. This is Webranking's role.

In the 15th edition of the Austrian research, greater attention has been given towards accessibility of information, not only with criteria dedicated to the experience of people with disabilities, but also with criteria that assess the ease of access to data by all users, such as texts, videos and images.

Partly explained by these changes in the protocol, the result shows a reduction in the average in Austria, highlighting the gaps that still penalise companies today.

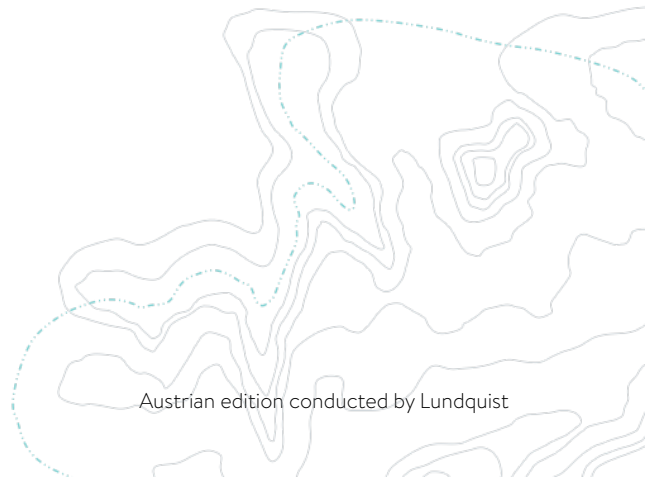
Transparency is only the beginning of a process

Transparency per se is not enough to gain trust but is the necessary step towards a longer journey. It is also important to convey a strategic vision of the company and give substance to the commitments given.

This is why we have created the .trust research, which analyses the concrete way in which a company faces the future and its role. But first, let's look at the performance of the 21 companies with the highest capitalisation in Austria in 2020.

Joakim Lundquist,

*CEO Lundquist
and responsible for Webranking
in Italy, Switzerland and Austria*



HIGHLIGHTS 2020-2021

The role of the Webranking research is to help companies communicate transparently to their stakeholders.

This edition took place in a particular year and the protocol, as always, reflects the major trends and developments taking place in the world of digital corporate communications.

In the face of more demanding evaluation criteria Austrian companies have taken a step back in the ranking, and this year have dropped below above the European average.

15th

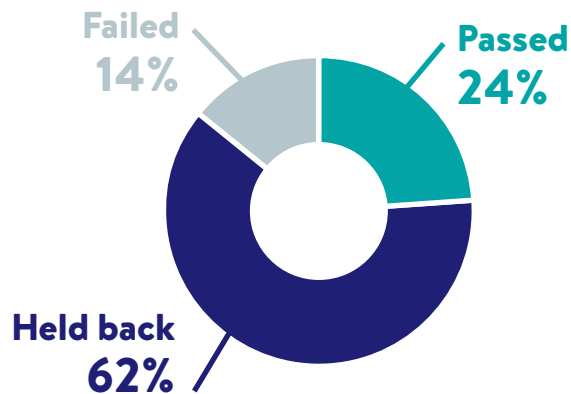
EDITION IN AUSTRIA

21

**COMPANIES EVALUATED
IN AUSTRIA**

Half of the maximum score (50 points out of 100) is considered the threshold at which companies respond adequately to user demand.

The Austrian pass rate has plummeted to around 24% (compared to 43% last year), with three companies (BAWAG Group, Do & Co, and Schoeller Bleckmann) failing the stress test, scoring below 30 points.



NEW ENTRIES

POSITION COMPANY

11	AT&S
13	RHI Magnesita
13	CA Immo
15	S Immo
16	IMMOFINANZ
21	Do & Co

1,285

HOURS OF ANALYSIS

246

**ASSESSMENT POINTS IN THE
PROTOCOL, DIVIDED IN 10
SECTIONS AND 50 CRITERIA**

13

EVALUATORS

ACCESSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A BETTER DIGITAL EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

The demand for listed companies to provide an accessible digital experience to all their stakeholders is rising, thanks also to efforts being made in the EU on a legislative level.

Creating an accessible website means breaking down technological barriers to provide a user experience that benefits all.

This means creating content that can be read by auxiliary technologies for web browsing (meaning that graphs and tables should be presented in HTML, not as copy and pasted images which impede legibility).

Taking this into account, the Webranking protocol this year has been expanded to include additional criteria regarding accessibility, as well as a more stringent approach even on existing criteria.

19%

**PRESENT VIDEO TESTIMONIALS
FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED
HEARING CAPACITIES**



41.7 vs 43

Average score of the Austrian and European cohort in 2020

OPENING UP A GAP OF 1.3 POINTS

-5.2 vs -2.1

Average score decrease of the Austrian and European cohort in 2020 compared to 2019

2020 NEW CRITERIA

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected our daily lives, and continues to do so.

Given the worldwide impact this health crisis has had, this year Webranking wanted to examine how companies are communicating on the crisis on their corporate website.

How Austrian companies have confronted the emergency via their digital channels is examined in a dedicated section in this whitepaper. **Turn to page 6 to find out.**

458

**RESPONSES TO OUR WEBRANKING
SURVEYS FROM ANALYSTS, INVESTORS,
JOURNALISTS AND JOBSEEKERS**

881

**WEBSITES EVALUATED IN AUSTRIA,
EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE
WORLD**

COMMUNICATIONS IN TIMES OF COVID

The context generated by Covid-19, which has been experienced on a global scale, has challenged companies not only on their ability to react quickly to the crisis, but also on their capacity to set a vision for the future of the business.

How have companies chosen to communicate through digital channels in recent months? Webranking gives an overall view of the choices made.

THE IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS AND THE FUTURE OF THE COMPANY

Webranking's research only considered content that companies presented in the main pages of their corporate website, not in press releases – this choice ensured that Covid-19 communications were integrated into the corporate communications ecosystem.

Less than a quarter of companies communicated openly and in an integrated way on the site about how the crisis caused by the pandemic affected their business. Besides, only one Austrian company, Wienerberger, shared infor-

mation on how Covid-19 affects shareholders in terms of dividends compared to 62 in Europe (12% of the sample).

The lack of communication by many Austrian companies reveals significant weaknesses in their crisis communication system.

By seemingly ignoring the crisis on their corporate websites, companies fail to reassure their stakeholders that they are prepared to deal with fast changing contexts.

THE EUROPEAN REACTION

European companies have had a different reaction, a quicker and more transparent one when compared to Austria. Sixty percent of European companies provide information on how Covid-19 has affected the business overall, compared to 24% of Austrian companies.

This willingness to share information about difficulties faced in adversity underline a European advantage towards transparency that goes beyond solely disclosing positive aspects.

Besides, more European companies are prepared to make tough yet highly appreciated forecasts on how the pandemic will affect their future, as 29% share information regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the future of the business, as opposed to 5% in Austria.

Some examples of companies that have differentiated themselves in their crisis communications include **Centrica**, a British energy company, presenting a well implemented response by stakeholder group, including the latest Covid-19 news.

The interactive and complete Covid-19 response page of the Swedish hygiene and health company **Essity** is noteworthy, as it gathers videos, managers' messages, and key news pieces.

Poste Italiane provides multiple levels of information. The Italian state-controlled postal service put together a page to gather the direct responses to the crisis and the impact Covid-19 had on the business, linking actions to its sustainability commitments.

OTHERS TO FOLLOW



INVESTOR RELATIONS

Based on market expectations, the research examines whether companies communicate topics such as their business strategy, future goals, financial information, share price and dividends in a transparent manner. Financial information - which takes into account reporting, investor relations and information on the share - is an important part of the Webranking research.

Forward-looking communications not being made a priority

This year's results confirm a trend that has already been highlighted in previous editions of the research: Austrian corporate communication on financial results continues to be the lowest scoring section (achieving only 10% on average). In addition, forward-looking communications, such as presenting the business strategy, financial targets and so forth, remain a sore point for the majority of Austrian companies

While 67% present their strategy and 41% present their investment story, only 10% communicate their financial results on their website. This can be explained due to the fact that many Austrian companies engage with their stakeholders in a more traditional investor communications, presenting this information in reports (which has one of the highest scoring sections, 53%) which cater primarily to an expert audience.

Not presenting financial details and substantiating information on the website is a missed opportunity, considering that the investor relations section of the corporate website provides companies with the chance to make their pitch and show themselves off in the best light.

COMPANIES THAT PRESENT THEIR STRATEGY

62% vs 77%
IN AUSTRIA IN EUROPE

Context, context, context

It doesn't get much better when it comes to providing the "bigger picture", i.e. the business context from which companies set their strategies, targets and goals.

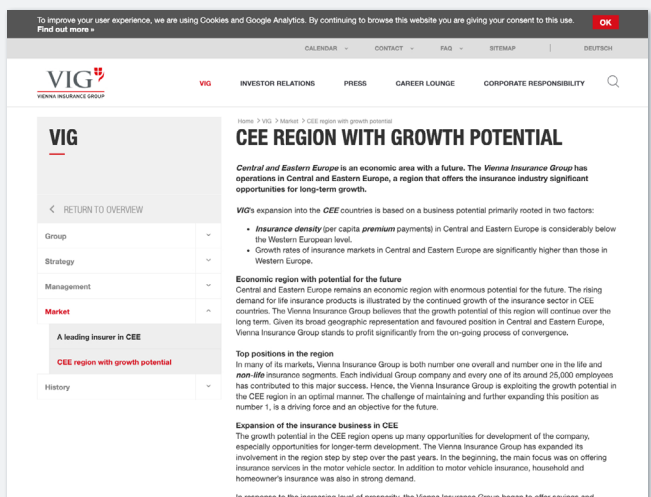
Less than a third of Austrian companies present the local and global trends that affect the company and even fewer present their business outlook, rendered even more important this year due to the Covid-19 crisis, with only three companies providing this information.

Without the presentation of such contextual and grounding elements, any future plans tend to look bare.

UNDER THE LENS: VIENNA INSURANCE GROUP

The international insurance group **Vienna Insurance Group** presents a detailed company story and places its goals within the broader European context.

By doing so, Vienna Insurance Group identifies opportunities in the region and provides its stakeholders with a substantiated strategy.



SUSTAINABILITY

Transparent and integrated sustainability communication: these are the two key elements according to the Webranking research to ensure credibility. Communication that goes beyond reporting by focusing on the relationship with stakeholders and meeting their needs.

Sustainability strategy: going beyond simple reporting

Transparent and engaging communication of one's sustainability commitment is essential when it comes to developing credibility and trust among stakeholders.

To do this well, it is important that companies move beyond technical reporting in favour of a communications approach that starts from the strategy defining clear targets, and ends with a transparent presentation of results. It is encouraging to see that the majority of Austrian companies (86%) present their sustainability strategy on their website.

However, only 57% provide the actions they will take to meet the targets they've set for themselves, proving that despite the high number who report on sustainability, evidence backing up the actual numbers is lacking in many companies.

COMPANIES THAT INTEGRATE THEIR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE BUSINESS STRATEGY

76% vs 60%
IN AUSTRIA IN EUROPE

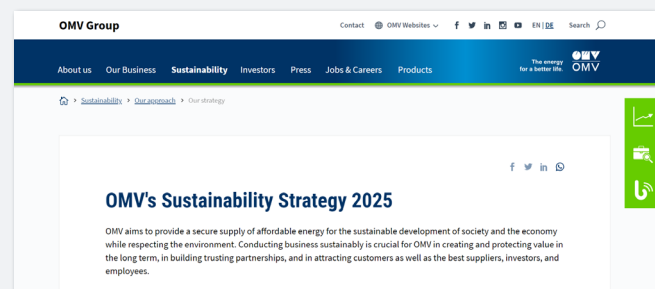
An integrated approach becomes more commonplace

Today, companies are increasingly called upon to actively respond to global sustainability issues, whether it be climate change, inclusion and diversity, or playing their part in enacting positive social change.

A responsible business model, as well as developing products and services that have a positive impact in the context in which the company operates, is an essential prerogative in remaining competitive in the market.

UNDER THE LENS: OMV GROUP

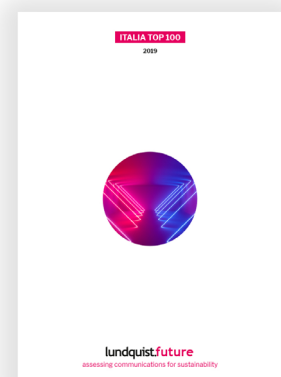
Integrated oil and gas company **OMV Group** is aligned with the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and outlines its 2025 sustainability strategy in great details. The information is broken down into 5 priority areas, under each of which stakeholders can find targets, detailed information, and explanatory videos.



FUTURE CHALLENGES ARE KEY TO CREDIBILITY IN SUSTAINABILITY

Business is called upon to play an active role in building a better future as investors and institutions look to progress towards the Sustainability Development Goals in 2030 and the targets of the Paris climate agreement. Consumers and employees are also stepping up expectations. Being credible today is all about how companies contribute to that future vision through strategic ambition, transparency on progress, integration into business models but also the ability to connect with stakeholders at a human level.

Building on 13 years of research into sustainability communications, we at Lundquist have built this challenging context into .future, an ambitious study into corporate sustainability practices, reporting and communications and a practical guide for companies eager to step up their game.



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

With the Covid-19 crisis, companies are being called upon even more than before to provide information relating to their governance. We look at two of the most important trends coming out of this section: top management visibility as well as risk control and management.

Top management visibility

The global Covid-19 crisis has made visibility of corporate leadership an even more important issue than before. As more and more people work from home, the expectation to hear from top management on key issues has become pivotal not only in providing a business continuity message, but also in ensuring loyalty to the company amongst internal stakeholders.

Unfortunately, connecting to users in Austria across professional social media channels remains low. No Austrian companies present LinkedIn profiles for their board members or top management.

Covid-19 places the spotlight on risk management

The weight of criteria related to risk management and

processes has increased in the research protocol this year due to the importance placed on it by stakeholders as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The data emerging from our research on how Austrian companies are performing on this level are not very encouraging. Only two Austrian companies present information on strategic risks, while regulatory risks are presented only by one Austrian company (OMV Group).

The numbers improve when it comes to risk management processes: 43% of Austrian companies against 29% of European companies.

But one thing is clear: transparency on these aspects is still very low.

ATTRACTING TALENT

Attracting talent is key in remaining competitive and to do so companies need to set themselves apart.

The right kind of information

Today's jobseekers, many of whom are Millennials, expect companies to act like corporate citizens. The disclosure of diversity approaches is one example of this, with 48% of Austrian companies presenting this information.

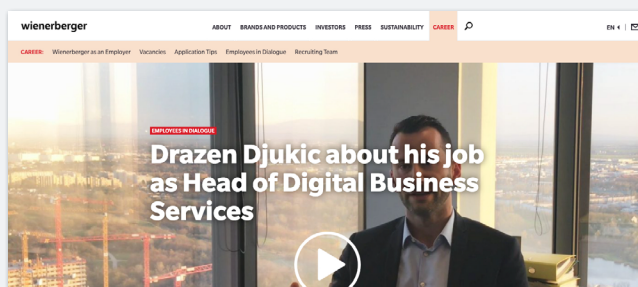
Besides, it is key to provide information about what the company offers jobseekers: compensation and development opportunities. This allows candidates to understand whether a company is in line with current market needs

(or superior to them). Only 29% of Austrian companies present compensation, while 57% present non-monetary benefit systems in place for employees.

Fifty-seven percent of Austrian companies present information about future competence development (compared to 53% in the European group). Going beyond generic statements is important, and companies do so by giving concrete examples of training programs to improve employee skills.

UNDER THE LENS: WIENERBERGER

Austria brick maker **Wienerberger** presents the company for jobseekers through employee testimonials, description of company values, and FAQs. The career section is complete, well presented, and easily accessible. This illustrates the company's ability to invest in talent acquisition and as such, to look towards the future.



SOCIAL MEDIA

This has been an important year for social media. Many companies have consolidated relations with their stakeholders by privileging their social media channels and strengthening dialogue through a much more direct and unfiltered tone.

LinkedIn, the most "corporate" social network

LinkedIn is a digital space that allows companies to provide information, culture, and the story of the company's business on a day-to-day basis.

Sixty-seven percent of the companies analysed periodically update the About section, which acts as company's calling card. When it comes to the ability to convey the

company's culture though, Austrian companies are less vocal. In fact, just over half of the Austrian sample share posts about what it is like to work at the company.

Only 29% present testimonials from employees in their Life tab. This information is crucial for users and jobseekers on LinkedIn to get a sense of the company's culture and values.

WIKIPEDIA

Wikipedia articles are the product of community collaboration but at the same time an important part of a company's digital identity. The 20 year-old free encyclopaedia has maintained its independence and neutrality right from the start.

Wikipedia looks at companies very closely

The 20 year-old free encyclopaedia has always been able to maintain its independence and its neutrality. In the spirit of this neutrality, in fact, companies are not allowed to update articles even though these are part of their digital identity. In order to contribute to the content, companies are required to be completely transparent and accept Wikipedia rules, they otherwise risk being penalised with blocked Wiki accounts and the reputational damage that follows.

Content quality remains below par

In all pages, there is an info box: a summary box contain-

ing essential data to identify the company including logo, sector, or key people. Eighty-one percent of Austrian companies present updated information in this regard.

However, half of the articles do not present sufficient information about the business of the company they refer to.

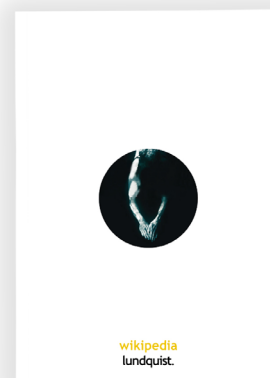
A third of the entries have problems to solve

More than a third of the entries have problems so evident that members of the community are prompted to include alerts in the pages. These are notices that highlight gaps in content, style, or sourcing.

LUNDQUIST WIKIPEDIA OBSERVATORY

Given that Wikipedia articles about companies have become one of the building blocks of their digital corporate identities, they deserve a careful eye. In fact, Wikipedia is always featured in Google's top hits when looking up a company's name, is Austria eighth most visited website, and in the global top-20. The challenge is ensuring the messages remain authentic to companies' identities and communications strategies. But how can this be done when companies are not allowed to interfere directly with the article's content?

We guide companies in navigating the ins-and-outs of Wikipedia. Thanks to a proven method, we have been successfully supporting companies to overcome this challenge for 12 years.



EUROPEAN AND GERMAN COMPARISON

In this year's edition, the Austrian and European performance have both seen a severe setback.

Austrian companies struggle to keep up with European and German counterparts

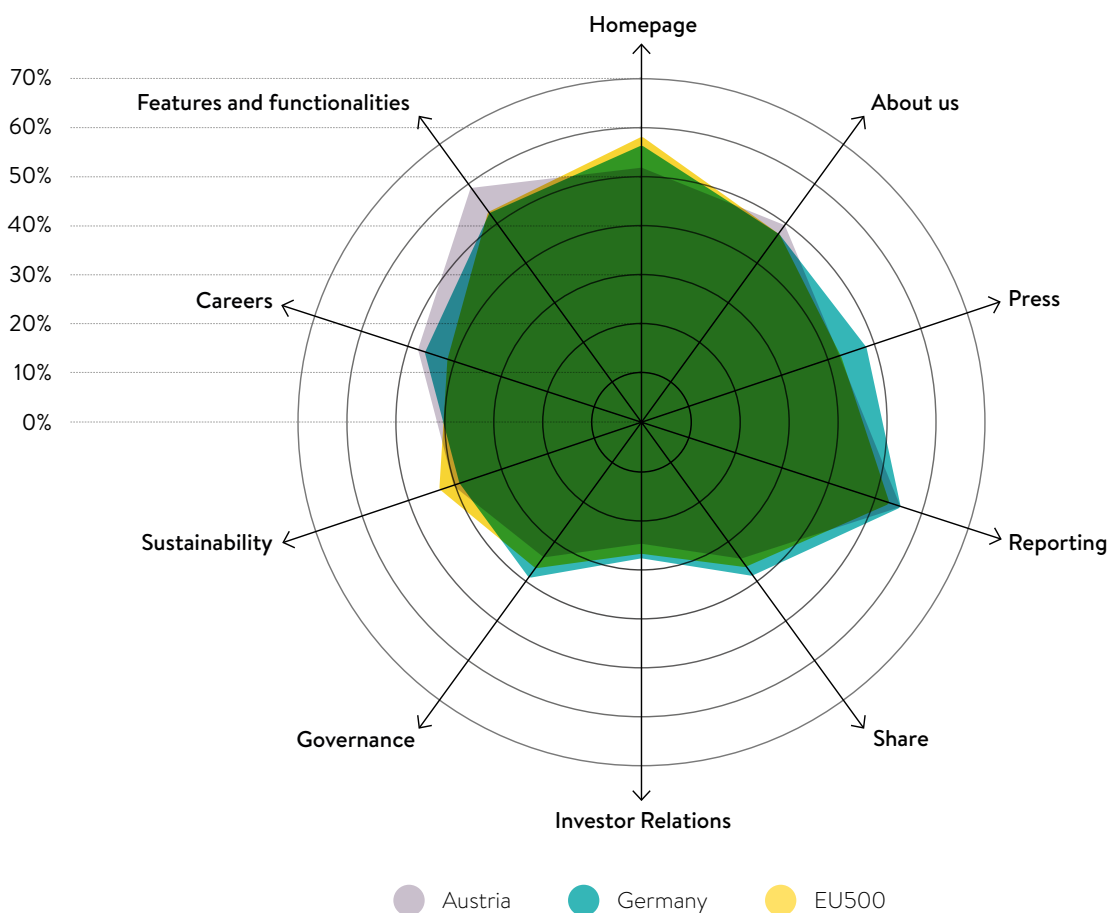
The European Ranking "Webranking Europe 500" includes the 500 largest listed European corporations based on market capitalisation and listed in the EuroStoxx600 index.

Of the 21 Austrian companies evaluated this year, only two were also included in our ranking of Europe's top

500 companies: **Erste Group** and **OMV Group**, due to their market capitalisation.

Erste Group made it into the top 50, while **OMV Group** gained 65th place.

When comparing the Austrian average to the Europe 500 average, the scores are quite similar, with European average slightly outperforming the Austrian companies.



A good comparative case for Austrian companies is their German counterparts, given cultural similarities.

The German average stands higher than the Austrian, at about 44.2 points vs. the Austrian 41.7 points.

This gap reveals a different approach to transparency on their websites, especially regarding information about

corporate governance such as remuneration and investor related details like strategy, where German companies are more open than the Austrian.

However, Austrian companies fare better than their counterparts when it comes to the presentation of the business and the company, as well as features and functionalities.

RANKING AUSTRIA 2020-2021

We have divided companies into different communication classes based on their score, from 0-5 stars. This year no Austrian companies reached the 5 or 4 star mark.

3 STARS



RANK	DIFFERENCE	COMPANY	POINTS
1	▲	Wienerberger	60.4
2	▶	Erste Group*	59.8
3	▼	OMV Group*	57.3
4	▲	Vienna Insurance Group	55.4
5	▲	Voestalpine	51.6

2 STARS



RANK	DIFFERENCE	COMPANY	POINTS
6	▲	Lenzing	48.9
7	▼	Telekom Austria	46.6
8	▲	Verbund	43.2
9	▲	Uniq Insurance Group	43
10	▲	Raffaelsen Bank International	42
11	NEW	AT&S	41.7
12	▲	Andritz	40.5

1 STAR



RANK	DIFFERENCE	COMPANY	POINTS
13	NEW	RHI Magnesita	39.8
14	NEW	CA Immo	38.6
15	NEW	S Immo	36.3
16	NEW	IMMOFINANZ	35.4
17	▲	Oesterreichische Post	34.4
18	▼	Mayr-Melnhof	34.3

NO STAR



RANK	DIFFERENCE	COMPANY	POINTS
19	▲	Schoeller-Bleckmann Oilfield Equipment	26.3
20	▲	BAWAG Group	24.5
21	NEW	Do & Co	15.5

NOTE

The maximum number of points is 100. Results from previous years can be found on comprend.com/webranking

- Companies with this symbol (*) are also included in the Europe 500 list.

How we evaluated the companies

Our sample is made up of 21 companies, listed on the ATX as of June 2020. Company websites were evaluated twice by different rankers throughout July and August, while companies in the Europe 500 top 10 were ranked three times by three different rankers.

HOW WEBRANKING WORKS

A glimpse behind the curtains.

THE WEBRANKING PROCESS



SURVEYS

Surveys are the basis of our research because they help us understand what stakeholders want.

1

Capital Market Survey

1,900+ responses in the last seven years
180+ responses in 2020 of which
64% are analysts and investors
(the remaining are financial journalists)

Career Survey

1,500+ responses in the last seven years
260+ responses in 2020 of which
78% millennials

Web Management Survey

60+ responses in all of Europe

10 sections
100 total score
246 individual criteria

2

PROTOCOL

Every year, the protocol is updated based on the stakeholder survey responses.



EVALUATIONS

To guarantee the quality of evaluations, every website is evaluated twice by two analysts. The best 10 websites are evaluated 3 times each.

3

~900 companies globally

500 of the largest listed companies in Europe

21 Austrian companies

31 countries under the lens

How to find out about the results

Country results are published in all of Europe, and in national and specialized newspapers.

Webranking for companies

Request highlights with a summary of your company's results. It is possible to request an analysis with tailored suggestions as well.

4

RESULTS

In our country-based whitepapers we analyse data and identify trends.



THE ROLE OF WEBRANKING

Webranking research

Since 1997, Webranking has been monitoring corporate and financial communication on the digital channels of major European listed companies, measuring the gap between stakeholders' expectations and companies' responses.

The Austrian edition of Webranking is conducted by Lundquist in collaboration with Comprend. The Webranking report helps to identify your strengths and weaknesses, define solutions to improve your digital presence, learn about trends, and compare you with the best communicators at the international level.

The role of the Webranking research

The Webranking research is a key tool for understanding the degree of transparency of your digital corporate communication enabling you to understand the expectations of stakeholders and to confront each other at the international level. Research is the basis for more strategic work.

The challenge for companies is, in fact, to create a coherent and convincing narrative, telling not only who the company is today but also its role and vision of the future. Our aim is to support companies in this new phase, shi-

fting the focus from simple disclosure to effective communication. For this reason, we have radically renewed our research activities. Our new research activities assess not only the level of transparency ("substance") but also the ability to create an effective and engaging narrative ("distinctiveness and user experience").

Thanks to our knowledge of stakeholders expectations and the strong corporate experience gained over the years, we support companies not only in improving the effectiveness of corporate communication but also in defining communication strategies, reporting them in effective way and creating a dialogue with stakeholders.

comprend 

Comprend, partner of Lundquist, is an international agency specialising in digital corporate communication. It is part of H&H Group. Comprend is based in Stockholm and has an office in London.

For more information: comprend.com

WHO WE ARE



We enable trust in business through original thinking, strategic communications and sustainability consulting.

We are a team of independent-minded, international consultants, trusted to guide companies through the challenges of today's business context.

Our rigorous approach and strong methodological backbone ensure that our work is tailor-made to fit every company's distinct needs. At the core of our work lies our three-phase approach: MEASURE, MANAGE, CHANGE.

Find all our insights on our website: lundquist.it

LUNDQUIST IN NUMBERS



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