



NEWSLETTER

Your weekly IR publication

23 April 2026

WEEKEND READING LIST

- Muscat Stock Exchange CEO on Building a Stronger Capital Market for Oman's Future ([Focus](#))
- Why cultural fusion could make GCC the next great financial hub ([Gulf News](#))
- Three digital economy priorities for Middle Eastern states ([Arab News](#))
- Retail investors from Gulf and beyond target region's stocks ([AGBI](#))

MEIRA UPDATES

MEIRA IR Leaders



The graphic features a dark blue background with a purple rounded rectangle on the right. In the top left corner, the 'meira' logo is displayed. On the left side, there is a portrait of Wassim El Hayek, a man with a beard wearing a suit and tie. To the right of the portrait, the text 'MEIRA IR Leaders' is written in white. Below this, a paragraph describes his experience and roles. At the bottom left, a dark blue box contains his name and title. At the bottom right, the Salik logo is shown.

meira

MEIRA IR Leaders

Wassim El Hayek is a senior executive with 22+ years of experience and currently Head of Investor Relations at Salik, Dubai. He previously held leadership roles at stc Kuwait, including IR, M&A, and CFO positions for key subsidiaries, and has a background in investment and audit. He holds an Executive MBA from AUB and professional certifications in investor relations.

Wassim El Hayek
Head of Investor Relations-Salik

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Salik

How is the role of investor relations evolving in today's market environment?

Investor relations is evolving from a traditional communication function into a strategic pillar within organizations. Today, IR professionals are expected to provide forward-looking insights, support strategic decision-making, and actively shape the company's investment narrative.

With increasing market volatility, growing international investor interest, and heightened focus on ESG considerations, the role now requires a strong combination of financial expertise, economic knowledge, storytelling, and data-driven engagement. IR is no longer reactive, it is proactive, integrated, and closely aligned with corporate strategy and long-term value creation.

A notable shift in today's environment is the significantly stronger support and active involvement from senior management, particularly the CEO and CFO. Unlike in the past, there is now a clear recognition at the top of the organization of the strategic importance of investor relations. This has translated into increased engagement in IR activities, greater alignment in messaging, and a shared commitment to maintaining transparent, consistent, and open communication channels with the investment community.

One initiative that had a meaningful impact on your IR programme

One of the most meaningful initiatives I have led within the investor relations function has been the shift from a traditional, reactive communication model to a proactive, credibility-driven engagement strategy. Rather than focusing solely on disclosure and periodic updates, I positioned IR as a strategic partner to the business, anticipating investor concerns, addressing market narratives ahead of time, and consistently providing clear,

data-backed insights into the company's performance, outlook, and broader economic context.

At Salik, this approach has fundamentally strengthened the quality of our dialogue with both the buy-side and sell-side community. Through disciplined consistency in messaging, transparency in both positive and challenging periods, and a strong alignment between guidance and actual performance, we have built a high level of trust and credibility with analysts and investors. Over time, this has translated into greater confidence in our strategic direction, stronger conviction in our guidance, and a more constructive engagement dynamic, even during periods of market uncertainty.

Ultimately, the impact of this initiative goes beyond communication, it shapes perception. Establishing trust with the investment community has reinforced Salik's reputation as a reliable and transparent issuer, ensuring that our equity story is not only understood, but also believed.

Biggest opportunity for IR professionals in the Middle East

The Middle East is undergoing a significant transformation, with capital markets deepening and regional companies gaining increased global visibility. This creates a unique opportunity for investor relations professionals to position the region as a compelling and credible global investment destination.

Having operated across multiple roles, including investor relations, M&A, and CFO responsibilities, I see IR evolving into a truly strategic function that goes far beyond communication. Today, IR professionals are increasingly "wearing multiple hats," actively contributing to corporate strategy, supporting transaction execution, shaping capital allocation narratives, and ensuring alignment between operational performance and market expectations.

The biggest opportunity lies in bridging the gap between local growth stories and global investor expectations, particularly through enhanced transparency, ESG integration, and consistent, data-driven communication. IR can play a central role in articulating complex strategies, translating them into a clear equity story, and providing confident, forward-looking guidance to the market.

IR professionals in the UAE and the region are uniquely positioned to lead this shift, elevating governance standards, strengthening investor trust, and ultimately reshaping the global perception of the Middle Eastern capital markets.

[Know more about Wassim El Hayek](#)

A message from Reza Eftekhari, MEIRA CEO

A notable feature of recent market activity has been the continued presence of foreign investors across GCC equities. Despite a more complex global backdrop, international investors are not withdrawing from the region. Instead, they are becoming more targeted in their allocations, focusing on markets that offer clarity, accessibility and a compelling long-term story.

[Recent commentary](#) highlights that foreign participation in regional markets remains supported by ongoing reforms, improved market infrastructure and increased inclusion in

global indices. This reflects a broader shift in how the Middle East is perceived, from an opportunistic allocation to a more structural component of global portfolios.

For issuers, this evolution is significant. A more international investor base brings greater depth and liquidity, but also higher expectations. Consistent disclosure, strong governance and effective engagement are essential to maintaining credibility with global stakeholders. In this context, investor relations is not only a communication function, but a strategic enabler of market access.

At the same time, capital flows themselves are evolving. The increasing role of passive investment and index-driven strategies means that ownership dynamics can shift more quickly and sometimes independently of company fundamentals. This places greater importance on IR teams' ability to interpret these movements and provide clarity, both internally and externally.

Encouragingly, engagement across the regional IR community remains strong. This week, we were pleased to host our Oman Chapter Meeting, bringing together professionals for a timely exchange on market developments and practical challenges. These interactions are a reminder of the value of collaboration and shared insight, particularly in a changing environment.

We are also launching our MEIRA IR Leaders campaign, beginning with Wassim El Hayek, to highlight the individuals shaping the profession across the region. By showcasing their perspectives, we aim to further strengthen the profile and impact of investor relations in the Middle East.

Looking ahead, the continued engagement of foreign investors, combined with ongoing market development and a growing pipeline of opportunities, reinforces the region's positive trajectory. The GCC is increasingly seen as a market that offers both growth and accessibility, supported by improving standards and greater connectivity to global capital.

At MEIRA, we remain committed to supporting our members through this evolution, fostering dialogue, sharing best practice and creating opportunities for engagement across the IR community.

In today's environment, attracting capital is only part of the equation. Sustaining investor confidence requires clarity, consistency and trust. That is where IR continues to make a meaningful difference.

EVENTS

Past Event: MEIRA Oman Chapter Meeting



We were pleased to convene our community for the MEIRA Oman Chapter Meeting in Muscat, bringing together investor relations professionals, listed companies, and market stakeholders for a collaborative and insightful session.

Hosted by **Oman Cables Industry**, in partnership with **Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX)**, the discussion centred on key themes including disclosure, transparency, corporate governance, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable long-term value creation.

We extend our sincere thanks to Oman Cables Industry for hosting us at the Global Sustainability Academy, and to MSX for its continued support. We were honoured by the presence of H.E **Haitham Al Salmi**, Chief Executive Officer of MSX. The agenda featured valuable contributions from **Erkan Aydogdu** (Oman Cables Industry), **Aisha Al Balushi** (Omantel), and **Ali Al Lawati** (National Academy for Training & Development).

We thank all speakers and attendees for making the session a success.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MEIRA offers a comprehensive calendar of **professional development courses and webinars** throughout the year.

21
May

CIRO Online Revision Bootcamp

09
Jun

CESG-IR Professional Programme

IR Academy calendar

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