

# Compliance with creativity

*Giving financial brands new life in the age of transparency*

**Winter is coming. Shifts in the burden of financial regulation – towards ever greater competitiveness and openness – are having profound implications for the way you shape your brand and communicate your offering. Gone are the days of ‘dark arts’. Instead, welcome to the era of complete accountability to investors... one where performance is an open book.**

For financial services marketers and compliance teams, this is a live issue that goes far beyond the detail of your printed collateral. The layout, tone, and look-and-feel of all your communications, digital and traditional, will need re-assessment and retuning in a way that underpins brand trust... and resets your brand comms to be crystal clear from the outset. But how can you stop the next wave of regulation from becoming a brand and creativity killer?

## *The transparency revolution*

Let's start with some potted history. Back in 2013, the Retail Distribution Review shook-up the investment advice market in the UK. Promising a new level of transparency, it offered consumers far greater clarity over the cost of financial advice – and what they could expect for their money: all clearly and simply expressed in black and white.

Now MiFID II is on the horizon and, from January, it is set to have an even bigger effect on the industry. MiFID II is a mammoth Europe-wide directive with huge implications for firms providing services based on everything from shares and bonds to derivatives. In response, preparatory work is well underway across the City for a new generation of investor communications. Don't be left behind.

## *Under the regulator's eye*

Regulators are watching. Both the FCA in the UK as well as European regulators are focusing on consumers as never before, ensuring that retail investors have a clear understanding of everything from risks to fees. And as ever, the devil is in the detail. For instance, funds with a benchmark need to show its performance in their 'key investor information document' (KIID), so investors can make the most informed decisions.

Three of the largest UK fund managers have already fallen foul of the European regulator's beady eye for failing to fully disclose fund performance in their documentation. These regulatory clampdowns are likely to be the first of many, so it makes sense to rethink your marketing approach from the outset.

## *Next generation investor comms: putting consumers first*

How should you respond? With a smart approach to brand, creativity and design innovation that makes a virtue of transparency, right across your marketing mix. See it as an opportunity to recast your brand and comms, rather than as a threat or an imposition. And, above all, avoid shoe-horning tomorrow's brave new world into yesterday's design thinking.

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