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From OTC Markets Global Headquarters in New York City, you're listening to Advisor Insights, where we feature professionals helping companies navigate the capital markets and investor engagement landscape. Joining us today is Lucia Domville, founder and CEO of LuRi Group, an investor relations and strategic communications advisory firm. Lucia, welcome.

Lucia Domville

Nice to see you and meet you in person, Charles. I'm honored to be here at OTC headquarters.

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Likewise, likewise. So to start, Lucia, would you just tell us a little bit about your background and and what led you to investor relations?

Lucia Domville

Sure. I have almost like 30 years or nearly 30 years of capital market experience. I started my career as a financial journalist. I came to the US over 32 years ago to go to grad school, which led me to continue to write finance, which is something that I adore and I really like. And I made a switch to Wall Street. So, I became a fixed income analyst and sitting as an analyst it pulled me through investor relations I saw first-hand how companies communication, or the lack of it was driving or shaping how investors and analysts were pricing the risks and the opportunities. From that fixed income position I actually moved to an advisory role doing investor relations and I have built my career in like global agencies, Citigate, Grayling, most recently Weber Shanwick, and the work that I've done across the years has been cross-board their mandates. So, I've done a lot of Latin America and MIA, Europe, Asia and obviously North America. And along the way, I kept on preparing and getting my resume built to become a better advisor. So, I now have like an IRC certification, and I've done some like corporate governance, courses at Wharton, and continue to be, you know, pulled away in the direction of learning and how to translate my learning into better advisory for my clients.

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Wonderful. And that really leads us to LuRi Group, which you recently started. So first, I'd like to get to, you know, what inspired you to start your own firm? And you know, what gap in the market were you looking to address?

Lucia Domville

Yeah, so as I said, like after nearly three decades of like large agencies, I saw a gap. Like there were companies that were especially international, cross-border companies that needed senior-led counseling and not just like execution support. Too often a senior person goes and gets the account and then a junior team delivers it, but I wanted to build a firm that was getting the client the direct senior access that they needed every time. The other gap that I have identified is that cross-border fluency. Many firms understand IR broadly, but they do, but few have the understanding of what it takes to translate Latin America, Middle East, to Europe. equity story into something that the US investors immediately trust and understand. So LuRi Group aims to support and deliver that vision.

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Perfect. And so, if you were talking to you know a CEO or a CFO of a company looking at the US market system for cross-border trading, what are some you know pointers and advice that you would say for them as they look at the US market?

Lucia Domville

Great question. I would tell them first to have like a clear eye assessment of how they are currently perceived. Whether they're building a program, they need to understand what their gaps are or what the perception of the market is. And then what I would also advise that means like to treat to treat their IR strategy as they do their business strategy and that not make it like a side function or delegated entirely to someone else. I would recommend to be consistent and transparency. Some investors forgive bad news, but what they don't forgive easily surprises. So, communicating consistently quarter over quarter or coming across as a solid, a communications platform it's very relevant especially for US investors. So, as you know think about like your communications towards the US as a long-term relationship. And as you know, communication builds conviction and it builds trust, but it takes so time. It doesn't happen automatically. So that consistency, proactiveness, it's what the what I would recommend any CEO who wants to really commit into showing up in the US market.

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Absolutely. And I feel like a lot of companies, you know, may focus more on financial performance within their investor relations strategies. I'm curious to, you know, how important is the broader corporate narrative in terms of building investor confidence?

Lucia Domville

Great point. I think financial performance gets you into the room. But narrative is what keeps sending investors engaged, patient, and willing to you know hold through any volatility of a stock. The numbers alone do not explain what the company is performing or what will do. Investors want to understand more about like the business strategy, what the management is thinking, and the market opportunities that are behind those numbers. A strong narrative helps you as a buffer during a rough quarter because investors understand what the story behind is, and they're just likely to not overact to a single missed quarter or a single bad number. So definitely narrative is compelling and it's a must have rather than just like the financials.

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And I don't know if there were there any previous experiences that you you had that kind of shaped the way that you go into these relationships and when you speak with CEOs and IR teams?

Lucia Domville

Sure. I would say that you know, having worked as a journalist for a few years that brought like or sparks my curiosity to understand and see the world like wider and more deep than usual added to the fact that I was also an analyst. So that analyst lens also puts my thinking into what is company differentiating or what are the company's differentiator from a different side and understanding that as a whole strategy, like how am I going to put my story together? So, the area agency experience has given that discipline and the process and like a repeatable methodology on how to approach investigations. Obviously that experience at the agency has been super nurturing because I have had the opportunity to touch so many sectors and so many companies in terms of market capitalizations and even more so in geographies that have helped me build like a deeper or wider experience to be able to support. And as I was saying before, I like to treat my partnerships with, or my relationship with clients as long-term partnerships. And it's not just a transaction. It's like the part of the engagement is to walk with them through the end and make sure that they're reaching the success or achieving the corporate goals that we had outlined since the beginning.

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Perfect. And then I guess, you know, as we look ahead and kind of think about your relationships with these firms, what are some, you know, mistakes that you see companies make a lot that you would advise against or just general thinkings and practices that would be helpful?

Lucia Domville

Great. So, I think one of the biggest mistakes is treating IR as our reactive strategy. a communication thing only when required or rather than building a proactive, intentional and sustained program. The other big problem I see is inconsistency in the messages across the materials. Sometimes the investor deck is not as up to date as what the earnings call that happened yesterday was or the press release. And that slight differences in the story can create like a vacuum or a or a you know, or a big question mark in the investors' minds. Under-investing on their shareholder base, just looking to pick up new investors rather than continue to cultivate and nurture your existing shareholders and directly talk to them. Then the biggest one, I think, like assuming that because you are listed or trading, you get the access, but that doesn't get you the visibility. Companies still need to go out there and earn the investor attention and continue to cultivate those relationships.

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Absolutely. And then I think, you know, if we were trying to put away the business side as well for you, know, what are some lessons, I guess, you know, you've learned from personally in your advising and management career that you would like to guide onto, you know, maybe not just ah IR or an issuers listening to us, but, you know, general professionals that as they take into their careers, what are some advice and guidance that you would add for them?

Lucia Domville

I would say like for me, actually, it's listen, learn, and commit and be, you know, diligent in whatever you choose. Say I think like, you know, that vision of like, or of like knowing where you want to go, it takes a while to build, but if you pay attention to its the experiences and your surroundings, it actually allows you to build some of that vision. So, to the issuers, it's, you know, think about why are you doing this exercise? Why are you going out into the market? Understand how the market perceives you. Build your program around how they perceive you. Treat your IR strategy as a business strategy and commit, you know? For people that are doing IR or would want to aspire to do IR, I think IR is... a fascinating topic because as I was saying, and I sustained, it is a strategic view about communications and finance so it's a nice intersection between finance and storytelling and having the possibility of learning and combining those two skills is very rewarding especially because you do it with a purpose you're trying to help you know a company achieve specific corporate call.

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So, Lucia, outside of the IR communication side for companies, is there anything else that you do to help companies establish their brands in the US market?

Lucia Domville

Yeah, you know, that's quite relevant, especially for international companies that are not established in the US and that there's no brand reputation. I think the narrative, having the narrative is fantastic, but the getting or building the awareness, it's also super relevant. I've worked with companies over the years in how to position their brands in the US so that whenever they are like, you know, requesting and a meeting with an investor, the investor can go on Google and find something about the company that resonates and build with them. So, over the years, I've done these top leadership programs for like CEOs, which not only helps them, but helps the company reputation building some education. So we partnered with different media, financial media, you know, the Bloomberg's, the Reuters, and even if they're seeking to do more of like the retail engagement with other partners like Benzinga or Yahoo Finance or whatever so that we can put certain content that doesn't that it's relevant for people to learn about the stories that they're actually thinking. So, it's interesting because some of these companies and I'm thinking about like two specific thing that cases. One was an alternative payment net that had no real brand because it was operating on the back of a website, but they needed to build that awareness so that they could actually get new financial partners or eventually list and raise capital, right? So by you know carefully you know putting out there like the CEO in front of like financial journalists, by creating a cadence of content in which she was explaining what alternative payments were, why they were relevant, why they were launching it in and this specific company was doing it through all the region in Latin America and they were actually using cash because cash is a commodity in there in in the rest of the world, not more less so in the international or the US and more advanced economies. So, we partner, as I said, with Bloomberg and Reuters and did like a masterclass on what alternative payment methods were. And then we created like a whole program of like, you know, talking about their partnerships, how they were building to kind of also give a dimension to what the company really stands for. So, it's not only, again, talking about the narrative, it's not only what you're saying, how you differentiate, but then like those tangible assets that you're seeing, ah, they partner with Nike or they partner with Aeropark or they partner with different assets. So then when you go in front of the investors, they understand the dimension of the company. So I think like that financial component and and the education and the you know, the intent to to deliver a bigger narrative or position, it's worthwhile when you're talking of coming to the US, especially for brands that have no recognition nor awareness in the US market.

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And I know we're running towards time, but I have a few more questions for you. The first one is, you know, we we're here at the OTC Market Center. And obviously, throughout our markets, we trade 1000s of international companies. I was curious if there are any you know, sectors or any kind of special companies you had in mind that you were looking to work with, or that you have experience with that you would like to let the people know?

Lucia Domville

Sure, I have always been fascinating by the work of international. I mean, me being foreign based born and having had most of my life now in the US has gave me that ability to understand that cultural fluency, but also like a I'm a trailing world person, so I can be sitting in a room with a US journalist and a Brazilian CEO and help them just not communicate on the wording, but the intent that is behind that narrative. So, I think it's fascinating. The US is obviously the largest capital market in the world. There's money here that would allow many companies to grow whether it's like acquisitions and my needs just like have enough of the funds to get the start, the startup up the ground or continue. I had the fortune to be working with like energy companies, renewables, mining, which is a lot of where capital has or is needed to continue with like the explorations and the programs. I've done a lot of financials in many different ways, like Fintechs and financial services and banks. And I've done even, you know, Aviation, really well retail, obviously, it's one that it's easy to ping or talk about. And cement and construction or building. I've done a lot of like alternative investment, like REITs that are you know typically because of how the REIT is structured, you need to continue to raise capital to continue to grow if you want to build your portfolio. So, I've done those a lot, real estate. so a little bit of everything, but I'm very I'm agnostic about the industries because I've touched a lot of them and my approach to working with companies is to dive in deeply into their business model and really understand and be able to help them tell their own unique story. So, that's like my commitment towards those and if we put together that international cross-border concept, I also bring that into the table, helping or help them translate their stories into what the U.S. investors and the markets need to know and learn from their companies.

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I certainly think you know here at OTC, we have a phrase, list local trade global, and you know you really are the emphasis of it with such an international background, but also well knowledgeable about the US capital market system. And I think certainly yeah the intersection for that for you and ourselves is ah well acquainted and really nice.

Lucia Domville

Yeah, no, definitely. I truly believe that like the local trade the global trade and the local home base and being able to bridge that gap and make feel like a company can trade and obviously there some issues that you need to address and be you know considering like when you're talking to the market because there's different regulatory systems there are different risks there's different corporate governance necessities or whatever but as long as you're very attuned to those necessities and you can translate them and build them and be able to communicate them in the US side you're like flying into a different market and getting, you know, across somewhere else and getting the ability to build whatever it is your but in your business that you're building. So very excited about, like, continue to work in that space. I truly I truly believe that that's a great, you know, business direction that OTC Market has taken and as you continue to increase the number of foreign listed companies in the OTC market, it will be you know more relevant for those investors out there that are not currently knocking at your doors to understand that but you're the vehicle to make them come and facilitate their entrance into the US market. So, congrats on that commitment.

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Likewise. And I guess as we wrap this up, I have one final question as we look ahead. What opportunities and you know what are you excited about for LuRi Group this year and for your clients going forward?

Lucia Domville

Well, I think as you from the OTC market perspective are seeing that appetite from international corporates to dive into the US market. It is the largest capital markets in the world and that brings that ability to get the resources that they need. My desire is to continue partnering with international issuers, but North Americans alike. I'm not just thinking of international, but to help them, you know, get the traction that they need in their business. In their visibility amongst investors and be successful in telling their stories and be accurate about what they want. So, I'm very interested in, you know, continue to help navigate that US capital a market need and helping them building their IR strategy and being successful at reaching. So, I will continue to help companies from Latin America and North America tell their stories and look and unlock that um market value potential that they all have when they tell a good story that investors want to hear and want to bet on.

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Well, we certainly share those sentiments and we'll be working with you to make it happen. And we're excited to have you as a partner with us on our premium provider directory.

Lucia Domville

I'm very excited to be part of this journey as well.

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Wonderful. Well, we'll leave it there for now. But if you need to contact Lucia, she's available in our premium provider directory. And Lucia, is there any contact information that can...

Lucia Domville

Sure. I mean, it's been a pleasure and I look forward to strengthening U.S. investors' presence. And if you want to connect with me, like, you know, through the website or my...Email is lucia.domville@lurigroup.com

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Perfect. Thank you.

Lucia Domville

Wonderful. Thank you.