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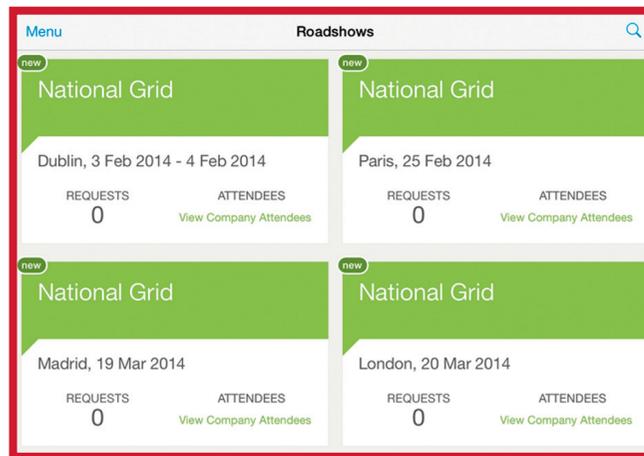
Garnet Roach gets engaged with the latest corporate access proposal

Michael Hufton, founder of *ingage*, first spoke to *IR Magazine* in January when he launched the online platform designed to offer cheaper, fairer corporate access. Here he explains more about the technical side of the service.

Ingage offers a two-fold benefit: on the face of it, the platform is focused on improving corporate access, both from a regulatory standpoint and also because Hufton, who admits to having had an ‘interest in this regulatory area for a long time’ says the current system is ‘suboptimal’.

Hufton is trying to change the current business model by charging both institutions *and* corporates for access to the online platform – something he says is necessary to make access to the C-suite fair and transparent. So as an added sweetener, he and his 10-strong team have built in a host of extra benefits and services to boost the platform’s appeal.

‘What [*ingage*] does is introduce a completely new way of doing [corporate access], making as much use of modern technology and automation as we can to make the process more efficient,’ says Hufton. ‘One of the things we’re building in is the ability for investors to simply press a button to say, *I’m interested in this stock, I’m looking at it, I’d like to have a meeting*, whether there’s a roadshow organized or not. We’ll be able to feed that through to the



The aim of *ingage* is to offer a cheaper and fairer corporate access system – and the likes of Nestlé, National Grid, Tullow Oil and Fidelity have already signed up to the new platform

firm and say, *Here are 10 or 20 institutions interested in meeting you – you might want to plan an event.* You can then plan your event much more efficiently in response to proper demand.’ This system could also be used to fill any unplanned gaps in a roadshow, he adds.

As well as different interfaces for different types of clients, the ability to host roadshow webcasts and an auto sign-up option for companies you’re interested in, Hufton has tried to improve many day-to-day tasks. ‘We’ve built a lot of functionality into the platform that makes life easier and much more efficient for both corporates and investors,’ he says.

One example is the private, user-maintained profiles accessible via the platform. ‘Each user or company maintains its own profile with information about itself and its individuals,’ Hufton explains. ‘If it’s a fund manager, what sort of funds is he/she running? What is

the investment strategy? What assets does he/she have? We’ve also built in some complicated, real value-added notes, such as when you last met and all the notes from your previous meetings.’ Users can also ‘filter their universe’, as Hufton puts it: this is something that would especially benefit fund managers at big houses, allowing them to receive notes only on selected companies.

Feedback so far reveals that a key part of *ingage*’s appeal is the security and encryption that’s built in using Microsoft’s Windows Azure cloud. ‘Everything sent between the devices and the cloud and everything in the app is fully encrypted,’ Hufton explains.

While he doesn’t claim *ingage* will replace the likes of BoardPad or Ipreo, Hufton does say ‘we could replace a lot of parts of a lot of things – and we could save some companies much more than we would cost them.’ ■■