

# Benchmarking the Modern Private Equity Website



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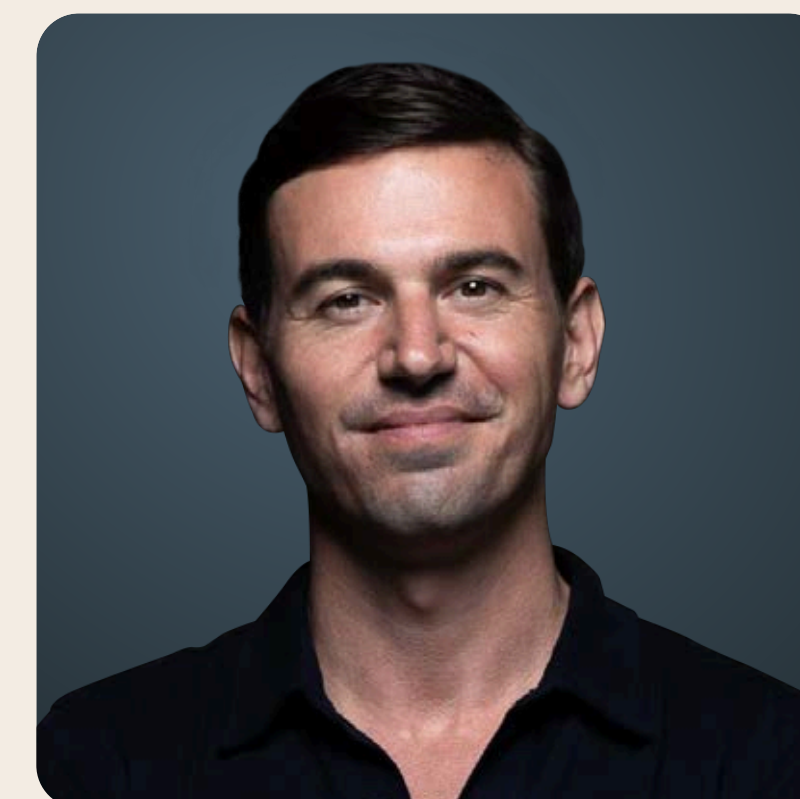
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# I. Opening Letter

From the Founder.



Welcome to Darien Group Marketing Report which we intend to be the first in an annual series of industry surveys on private equity branding.



Charlie Ittner  
President and Founder,  
Darien Group

We make websites for private equity firms. We've been doing so for nearly a decade.

Over the past couple of years, an increasing number of clients have asked me, "What are other people doing?" i.e., What are the industry best practices that we are not implementing but should?

Until now, I've answered those questions largely anecdotally, drawing from a large sample size of observations but using my (imperfect) memory to assemble my best attempt to answer their question.

Today, we pivot in a more empirical direction. What are 'other people' doing with their branding and communications programs?

Given the amount of information that has transitioned from the private / LP-only realm to the public over the last five years, I believe we can start to answer that question with greater authority.

In this report, we canvass the industry's branding using publicly available information and data to determine best practices and what works today.

We're using 213 firms from the PEI Top 300 list as a starting point, but I hope this document is valuable, regardless of your role and location within investment management.

We've always believed that even the smallest, newest, and youngest fund managers can learn much from observing how larger, more established firms invest in their brands.

The Darien Group team and I wish you happy reading and happy branding.

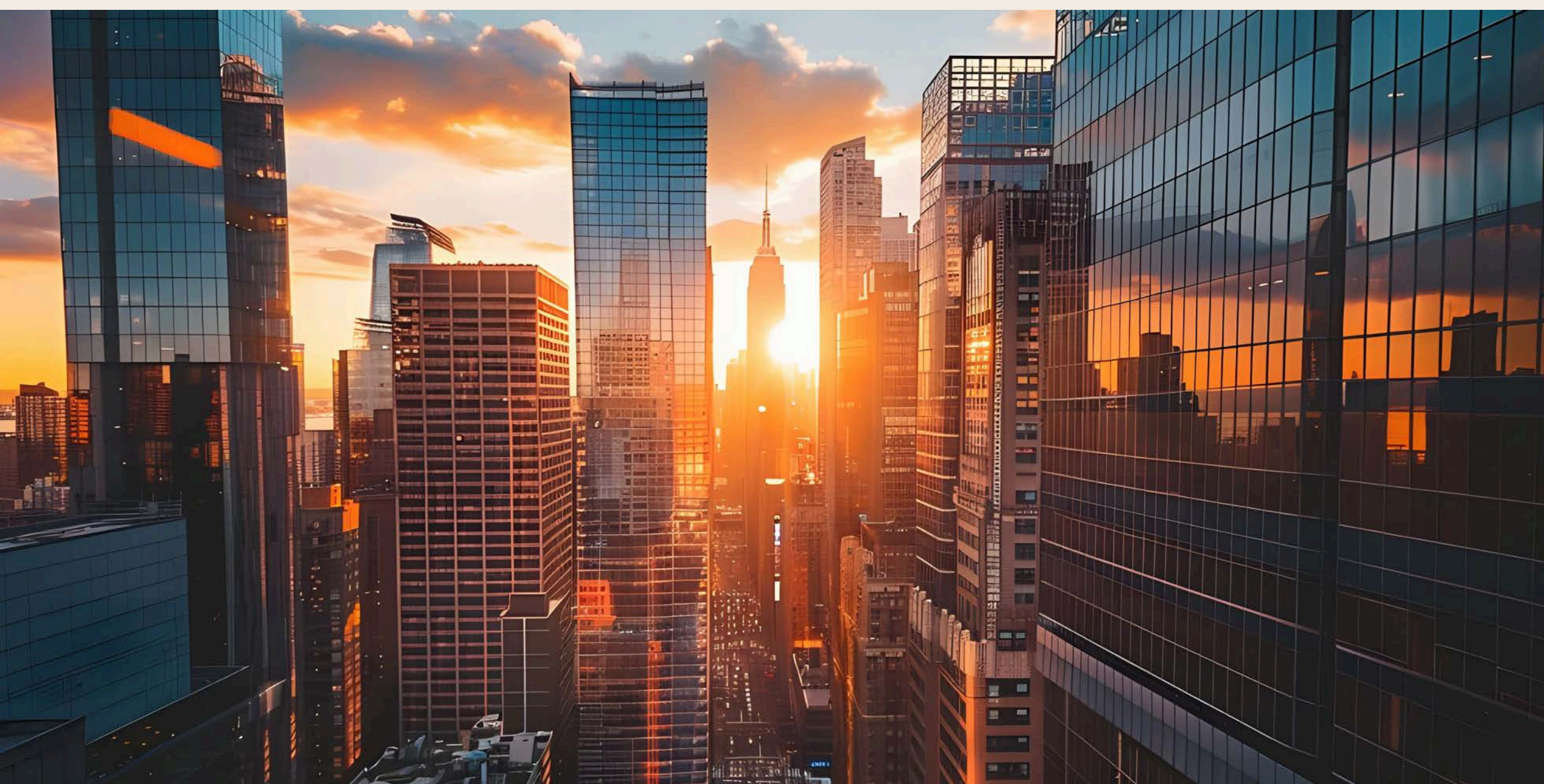


## II. Executive Summary



The best-performing private equity firms don't just invest well — they present well.

As an agency fully dedicated to the private equity space, we set out to quantify what makes a firm's website truly effective — and to showcase how the top GPs are approaching their digital presence.



A firm's website isn't always the first thing someone sees, but it's often the first thing they look up. LPs, bankers, founders, and potential talent all visit for different reasons — but they all come looking for the same thing: a clear sense of who you are and why you matter.

The goal isn't to call anyone out. It's to offer a useful benchmark for firms looking to sharpen their digital presence, backed by data rather than opinion.

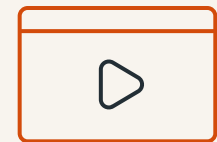
Some patterns were consistent and predictable — firms that showcase people and performance tend to see stronger engagement. Others were more surprising, like how few firms are using video despite its clear positive impact. What's evident is that there's no single formula, but the firms investing in thoughtful, well-executed digital experiences are standing out.

Our goal was to take a closer look at what those firms are doing — and what others can learn from it.



# Key Findings

Core insights from our analysis of top private equity websites.



## Video is underutilized but powerful

Only 17.8% of firms use homepage video, yet those that do see 46.6% longer visit durations and a 6.3% lower bounce rate.

46.6%

longer visit durations

6.3%

lower bounce rate



## Performance metrics boost engagement

Firms that display AUM, portfolio size, or KPIs see an 18% drop in bounce rate and 24% more pages visited.

18%

drop in bounce rate

24%

more visited pages



## People-focused imagery drives behavior

These sites yield the highest engagement, averaging 3.31 pages per visit.

3.31

pages per visit



## Abstract is the most popular image motif

Used by 22.2% of firms — more than any other category.

22.2 %

use abstract images



## Mobile performance lags behind desktop

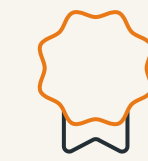
Despite a strong average desktop score of 83.0, mobile lags at 55.2.

83.0

average desktop score

55.2

average mobile score



## ESG visibility is inconsistent

Only 41.3% of firms feature ESG in their top navigation, and 33.3% offer downloadable ESG materials.

41.3%

use ESG in navigation

33.3%

offer downloads



# III. Methodology

## Data Set and Sample Selection.



For this study, 213 firms from the 2024 PEI Top 300 list, representing prominent private equity industry players, were selected as our data set. The PEI list ranks firms according to the amount of capital they have raised over the previous five years.

This list allows us to establish a reliable digital branding and communications benchmark.

To maintain clarity, we have excluded firms that belong to much larger institutions, like banks and insurance companies. Their websites typically draw high traffic due to diverse product offerings and audiences beyond investment management.

Additionally, venture capital (VC) firms like Andreessen Horowitz were not included due to their high public profiles, which drive site traffic and visitor behavior that is not comparable to the majority of investment managers.

Firms based in the Asia-Pacific region were also excluded, as websites in countries like China have distinct digital and user engagement norms, making direct comparisons less meaningful.

Finally, we focused on firms with dedicated private equity sites, excluding non-pure-play private equity managers like Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan, to provide a more precise analysis of industry-specific branding tactics.





# Analytical Tools



Our analysis utilized several key tools to capture insights on website performance and engagement:



**SEMRush** was used to gather metrics related to traffic and engagement, providing a snapshot of annual visits, unique visits, and overall user behavior on each website.



PageSpeed Insights

**Google PageSpeed Insights**, supplemented with insights from our SEO partner, OuterBox, helped assess website performance metrics, including load times and user experience factors. This data is crucial in evaluating how well these sites are optimized for both desktop and mobile users.

## Data Collection Period

**Our analysis was conducted over a 60-day period and draws on performance and engagement data spanning the previous twelve months.**

By analyzing data across a full 12-month window, we've minimized the impact of seasonal variation and established a more stable foundation for year-round benchmarking.



# Analysis Parameters



We focused on specific metrics to assess and compare digital branding effectiveness across the selected firms:



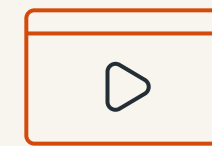
## Annual Visits vs. Annual Unique Visits

To gauge reach and revisit rates, indicating overall site appeal.



## Average Pages per Visit

To measure user engagement and content depth on each site.



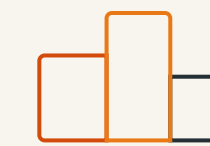
## Video Content Type and Placement

To observe trends in multimedia usage and strategic content positioning.



## Imagery Trends and Visitor Behavior

To evaluate aesthetic choices and their strategic influence on user interaction.



## Geographic Comparison of Performance Metrics

To analyze differences in visitor engagement across regions.



# Key Terms and Definitions

Core concepts and metrics used throughout this report.



## Bounce Rate

The percentage of visitors who leave the website after viewing only one page. A lower bounce rate suggests the site is engaging and encourages users to explore more content.



## Average Visit Duration

The average amount of time a visitor spends on the website during a session. Higher durations indicate stronger engagement and content relevance.



## Primary Image Motif

The dominant visual theme or type of imagery featured across a firm's website - especially on the homepage. It helps shape first impressions and communicates tone, style, and brand personality.



## Google Speed Score

A performance metric from Google PageSpeed Insights that scores how fast a website loads (0–100). The report includes both mobile and desktop scores, which can significantly affect user experience.



## UX/UI

Short for User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI). UX refers to how easy and intuitive it is for users to navigate and interact with a website. UI focuses on the visual layout and interactive elements like buttons, menus, and page structure. Together, UX/UI shape how visitors experience the site and influence how effectively the brand communicates.



## Top Navigation

The primary menu bar typically located at the top of a website. It provides direct links to key pages such as "About," "Team," "Strategy," or "Portfolio." A clear, well-organized top navigation helps users find information quickly and improves overall site usability.



## Annual and Unique Visits

"Annual visits" refers to the total number of visits a website receives in a year, including repeat visitors. "Unique visits" refers to the number of distinct individuals who visited the site during that period. Together, they help gauge both overall visibility and audience size.



## Stock Photography

Professionally produced images licensed for public or commercial use - often used in place of original photography. Common on private equity websites, stock photos can include generic business settings, cityscapes, or lifestyle scenes.



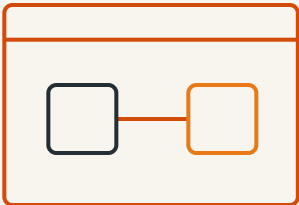
# IV. Who’s Visiting PE Websites



Private equity websites must serve a broad range of audiences – each with different motivations and expectations.

## Key Audiences

Founders / Management Teams	Gauging cultural fit, credibility, and value-creation approach; forming early impressions pre-process
Intermediaries	Confirming investment mandate, sector focus, and positioning
Portfolio Company Executives	Understanding operating philosophy and brand strength; validating partner reputation
LPs	Validating messaging and transparency during the diligence process
Talent	Exploring firm culture, diversity, and leadership continuity



Effective sites balance these needs, guiding each user to the right information without clutter or confusion.

# V. Homepage Video Content

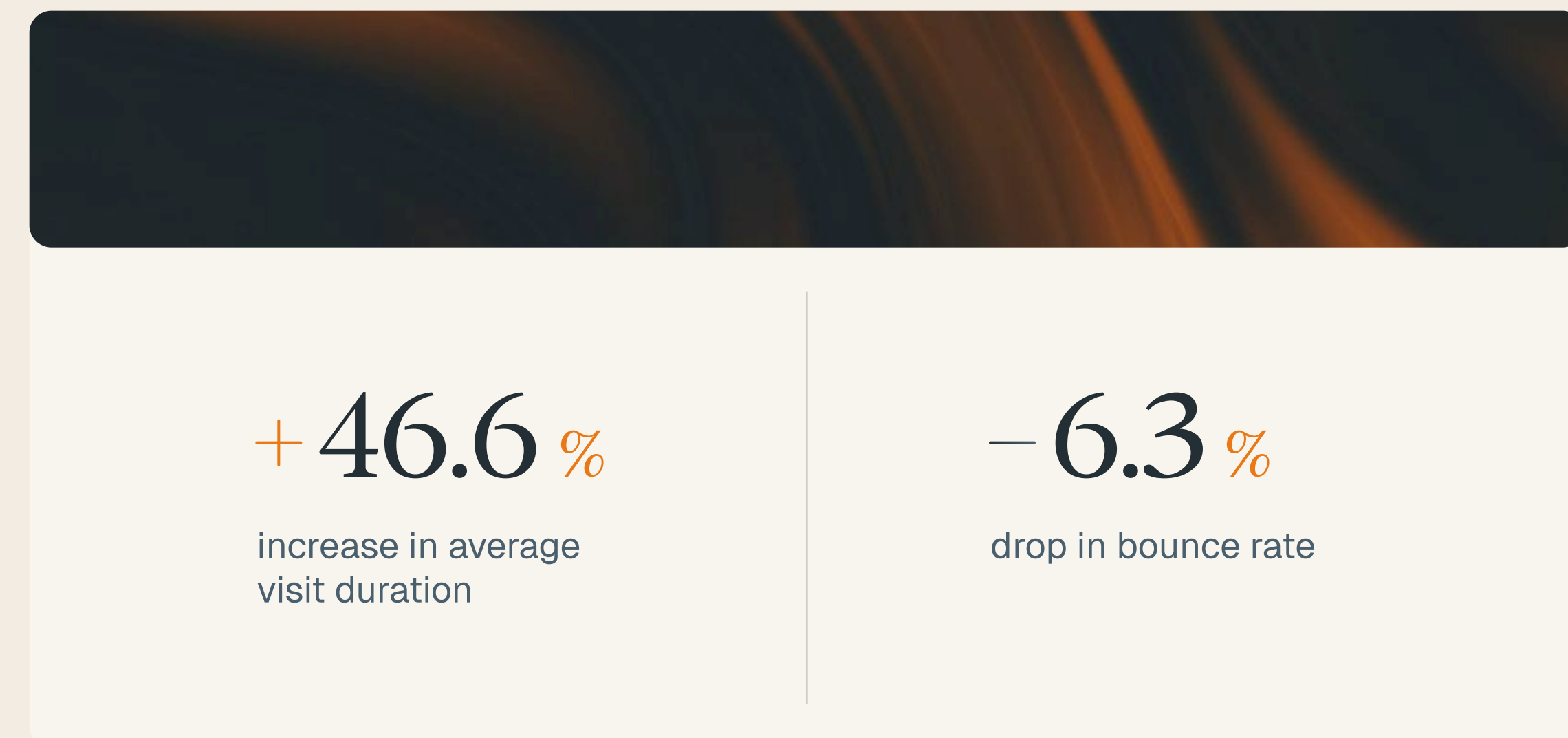
A faster path to understanding your edge.



Homepage video is becoming an increasingly common feature — and the results are compelling. As more firms incorporate video into their homepage strategy, the data underscores its effectiveness. Sites with homepage video experience a **46.6% increase in average visit duration** and a **6.3% reduction in bounce rate**.

For time-constrained LPs, founders, and intermediaries, a concise, well-executed video offers an efficient and engaging way to understand a firm's value proposition — ultimately encouraging deeper exploration of the site.

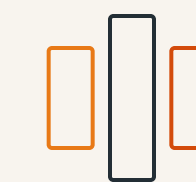
## How Video Content Impacts Site Performance



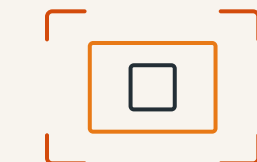
## Why Video Content Works



Captures attention early in the site experience



Establishes professionalism through tone and pacing



Reduces reliance on copy to communicate firm identity



# Best Practices

## Keep it concise

Aim for 60–90 seconds to accommodate time-sensitive audiences.

## Prioritize placement

Feature the video prominently near the top of the homepage to ensure visibility without requiring additional navigation.

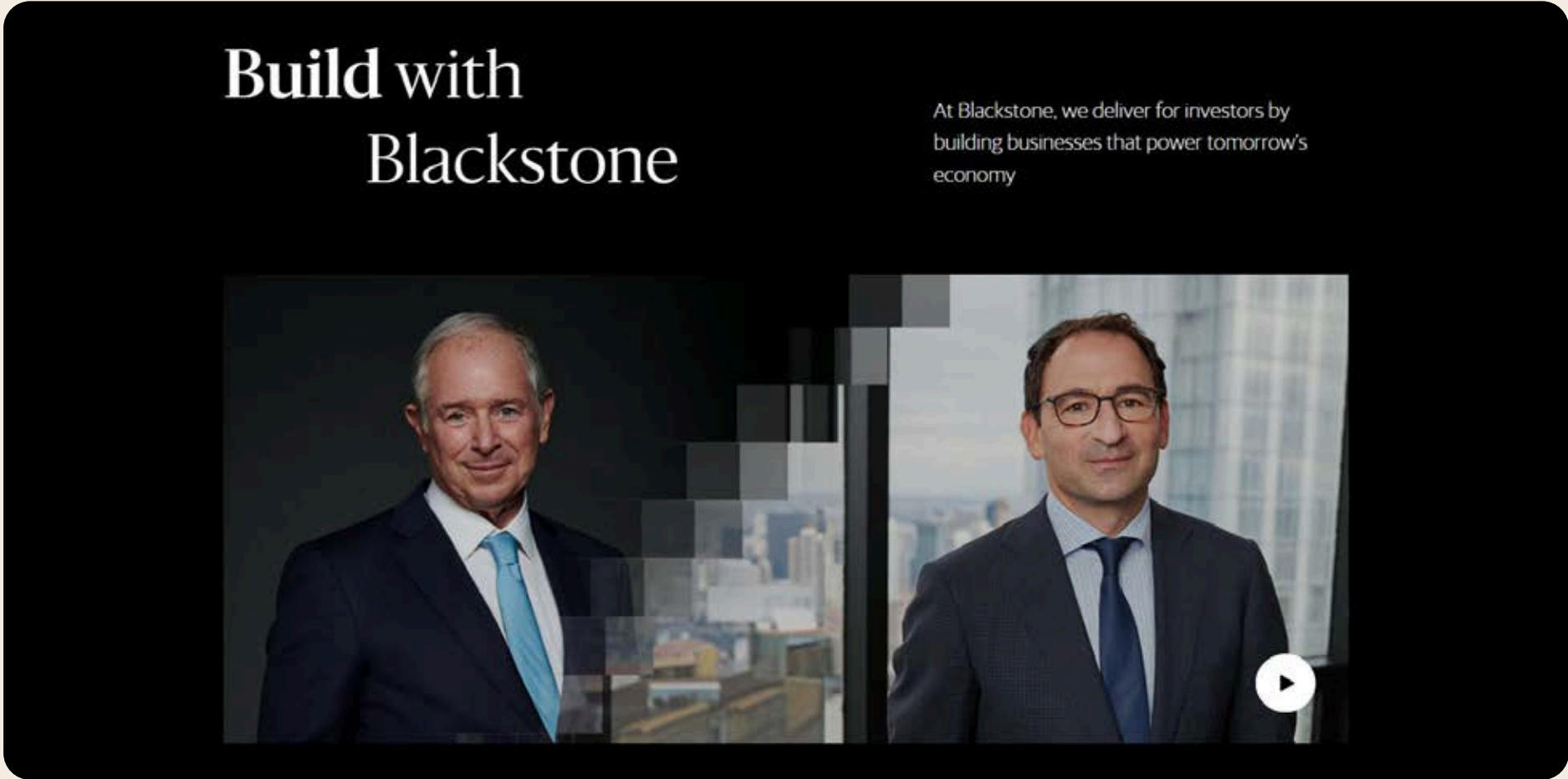
## Focus on authenticity

Use original footage, team commentary, or firm-specific visuals rather than relying solely on generic B-roll or stock content.

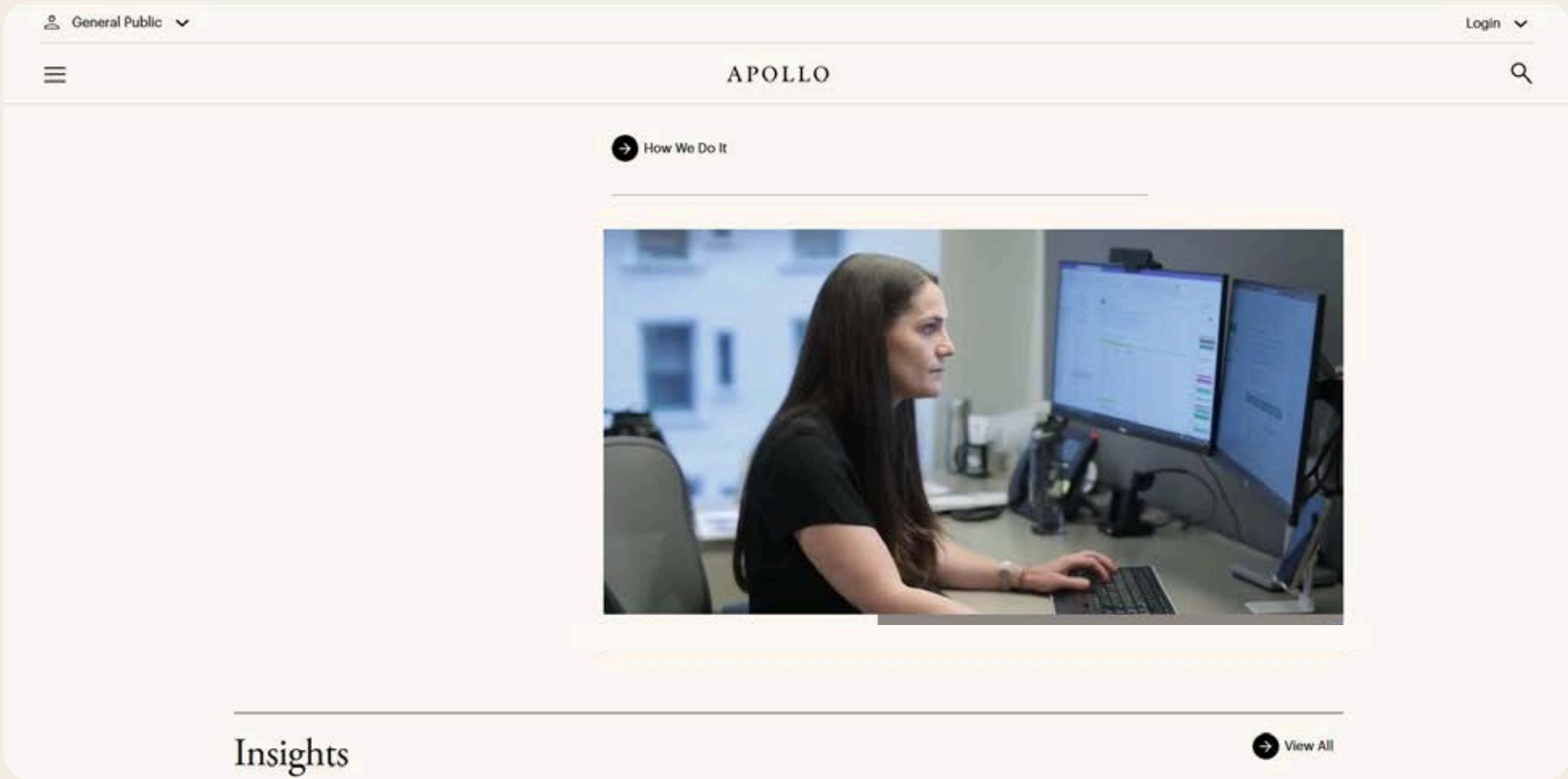
# Firm Examples



Blackstone



Apollo



# VI. Mobile vs. Desktop Performance

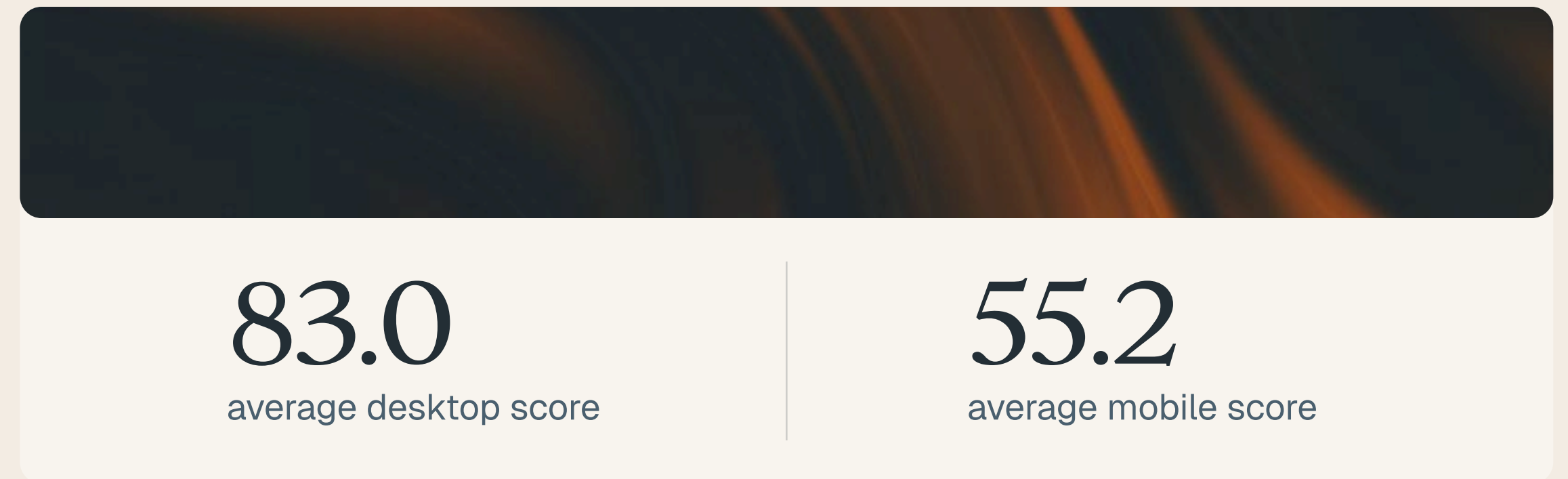


While most private equity websites perform well on desktop, mobile optimization continues to fall short. In an industry where many stakeholders — especially LPs, bankers, and founders — are reviewing content between meetings or on the go, that gap matters.

Across the dataset, the **average desktop performance score** was a strong **83.0**, reflecting solid optimization for traditional screens. However, the **average mobile performance score** lagged behind at just **55.2** — a significant drop that can negatively affect user experience, bounce rates, and search visibility.

This underperformance is often due to design-heavy elements like background video, oversized imagery, and interactive features that aren't compressed or adapted for mobile. In short: sites that look beautiful on desktop may frustrate or lose users on mobile — where first impressions are made in seconds.

## Device Performance Comparison



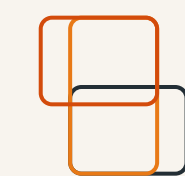
## The Impact of Mobile and Desktop Performance



LPs, advisors, and partners often access materials on mobile devices



Google ranks slower mobile sites lower in search results



A frustrating mobile experience can signal a lack of polish or attention to detail



# Mobile Site Score Snapshot

Even the top firms have room to optimize.



## Top 10 AUM Firm Mobile Scores

Blackstone	66
KKR	35
EQT	35
CVC Capital Partners	28
TPG	47
The Carlyle Group	67
Thoma Bravo	56
Advent International	32
Warburg Pincus	48
Hg	61

## Top 10 Mobile Scores Overall

GI Partners	98
Centerbridge Partners	97
Verdane	92
G Squared	91
Norvestor	91
Parthenon Capital Partners	90
The Jordan Company	89
Silver Lake	84
Stone Point Capital	83
Arctos Partners	83



# Best Practices

Design for speed. Refine for impact.



**Prioritize mobile UX early in the design process** — not as an afterthought

**Compress images and video** to maintain brand quality without sacrificing speed

**Test across devices** to ensure intuitive scrolling, legible text, and click-friendly buttons

## DG Perspective:

While mobile speed is important, design elements like motion, video, and rich visuals often play a critical role in how a firm is perceived.

A slower load time is sometimes the tradeoff for a more elevated, differentiated experience.

The goal isn't a perfect score — it's the right balance between brand impact and usability.

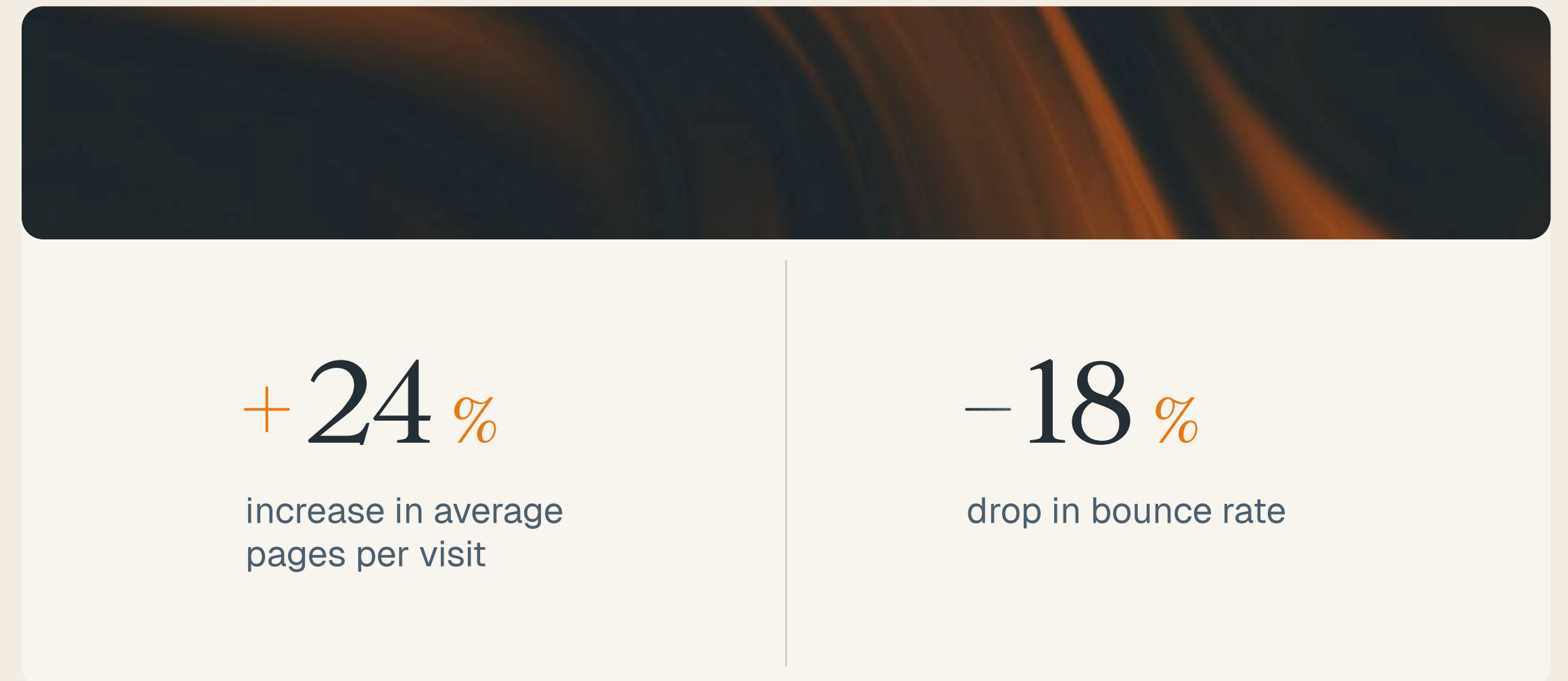
## VII. Key Numbers



Performance metrics remain one of the most powerful tools for building credibility on a private equity website. Firms that showcase data such as AUM, fund size, or portfolio breadth send a clear signal to LPs, founders, and intermediaries: “We have a track record — and we’re not afraid to show it.” These numbers not only demonstrate transparency but also set the tone for trust.

The results speak for themselves. Sites that display performance metrics experience an **18% reduction in bounce rate** and a **24% increase in pages per visit**. Yet despite this proven impact, only **52.1%** of firms in our study highlight key metrics in a visible, front-facing location.

### How Key Numbers Impact Website Performance



For investors, these stats reinforce legitimacy. For management teams and potential hires, they indicate scale, specialization, and long-term momentum. Displayed effectively, they turn a firm’s success into a compelling entry point for deeper engagement.



# Best Practices for Key Numbers

# Why Key Numbers Work



## Be strategic

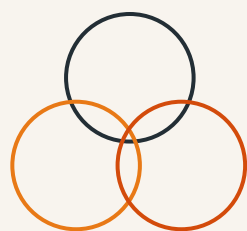
Highlight 2–4 high-impact stats — AUM, portfolio size, or years of experience are common examples.

## Make it visual

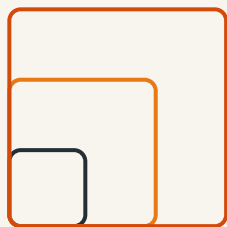
Use a dedicated module or callout rather than burying stats in long paragraphs.

## Prioritize visibility

Position metrics on the homepage or early in the user journey to maximize engagement.



Establishes credibility through transparency



Reinforces firm scale, strategy, and focus



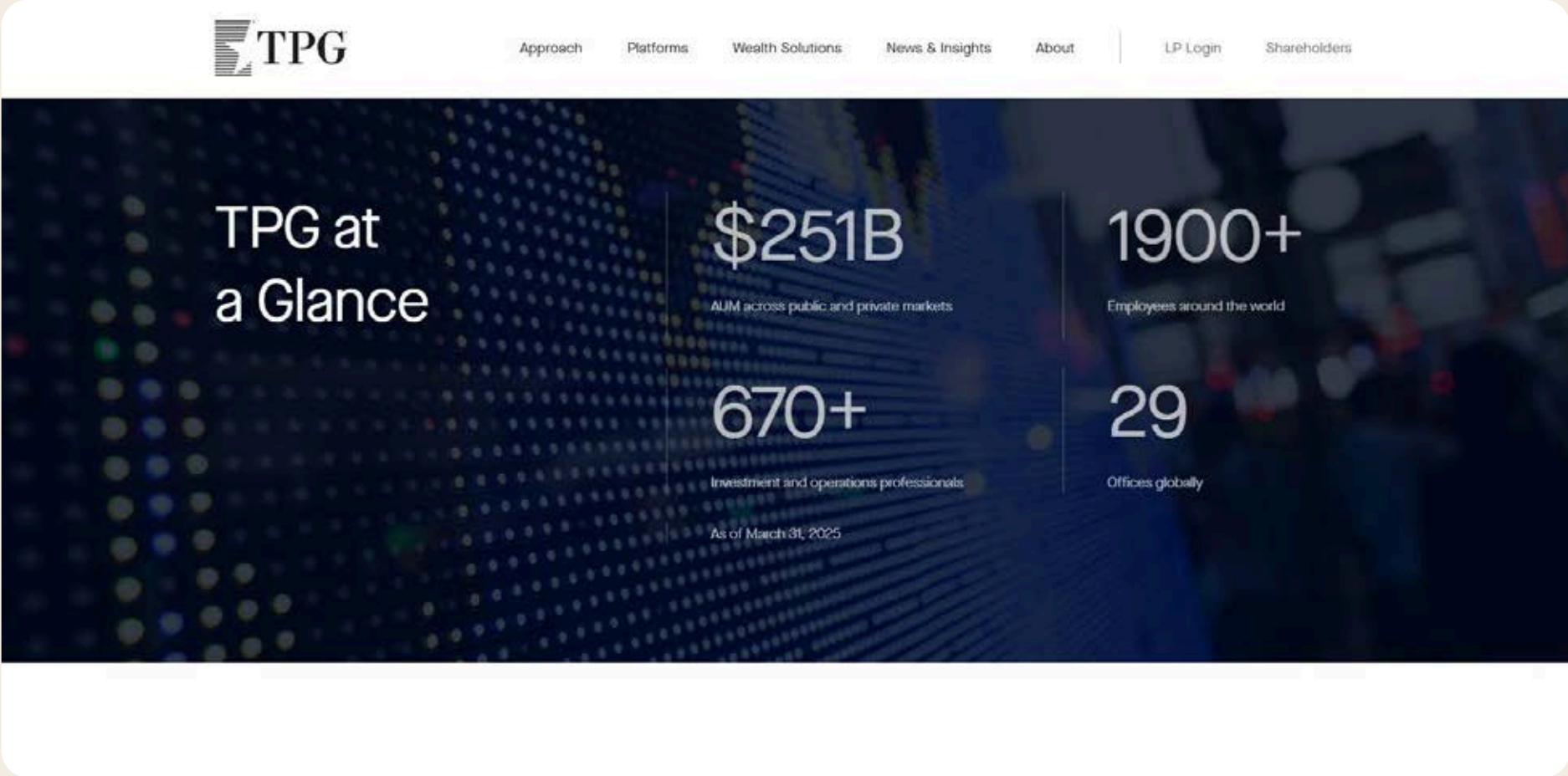
Accelerates decision-making for LPs and founders



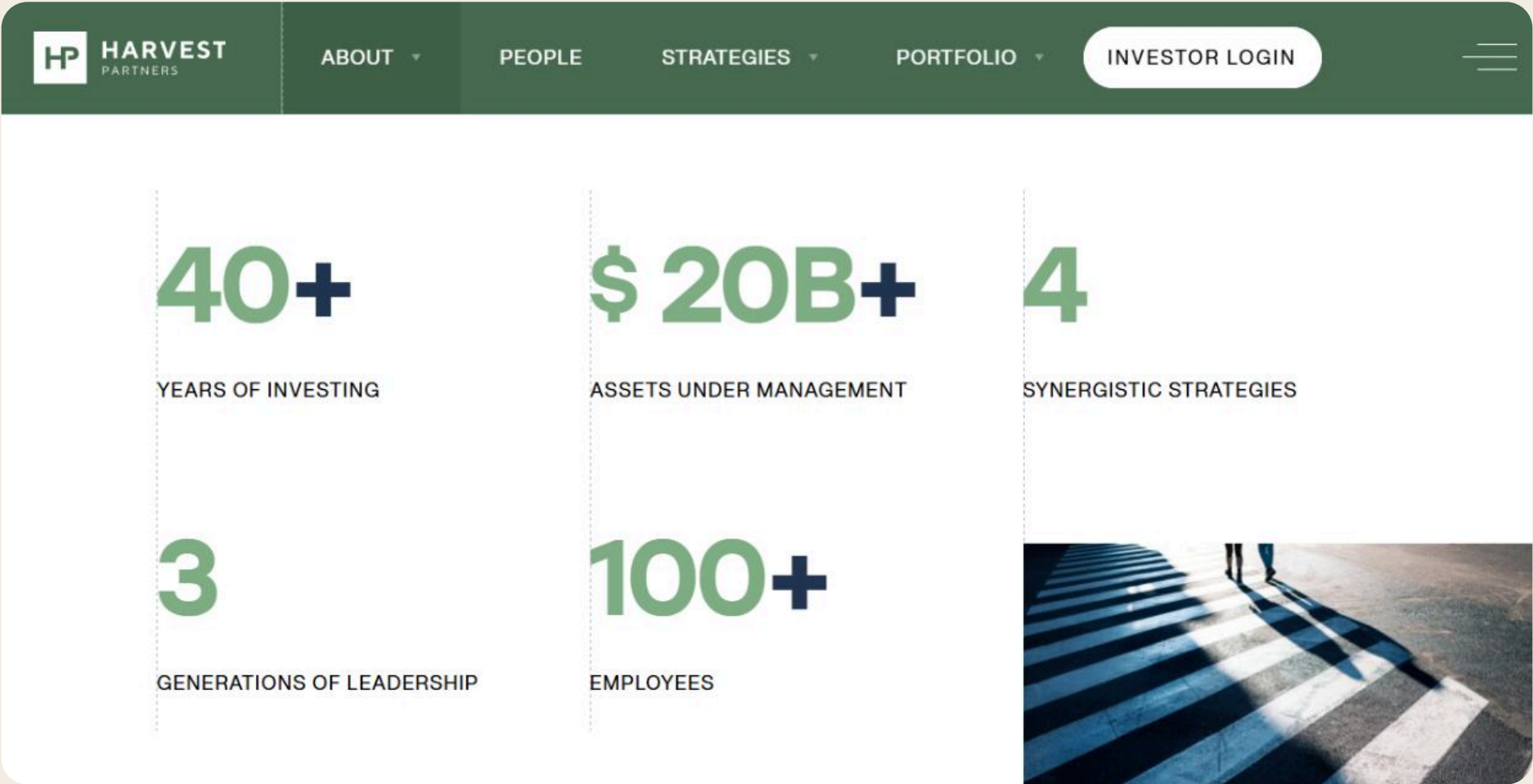
# Firm Examples



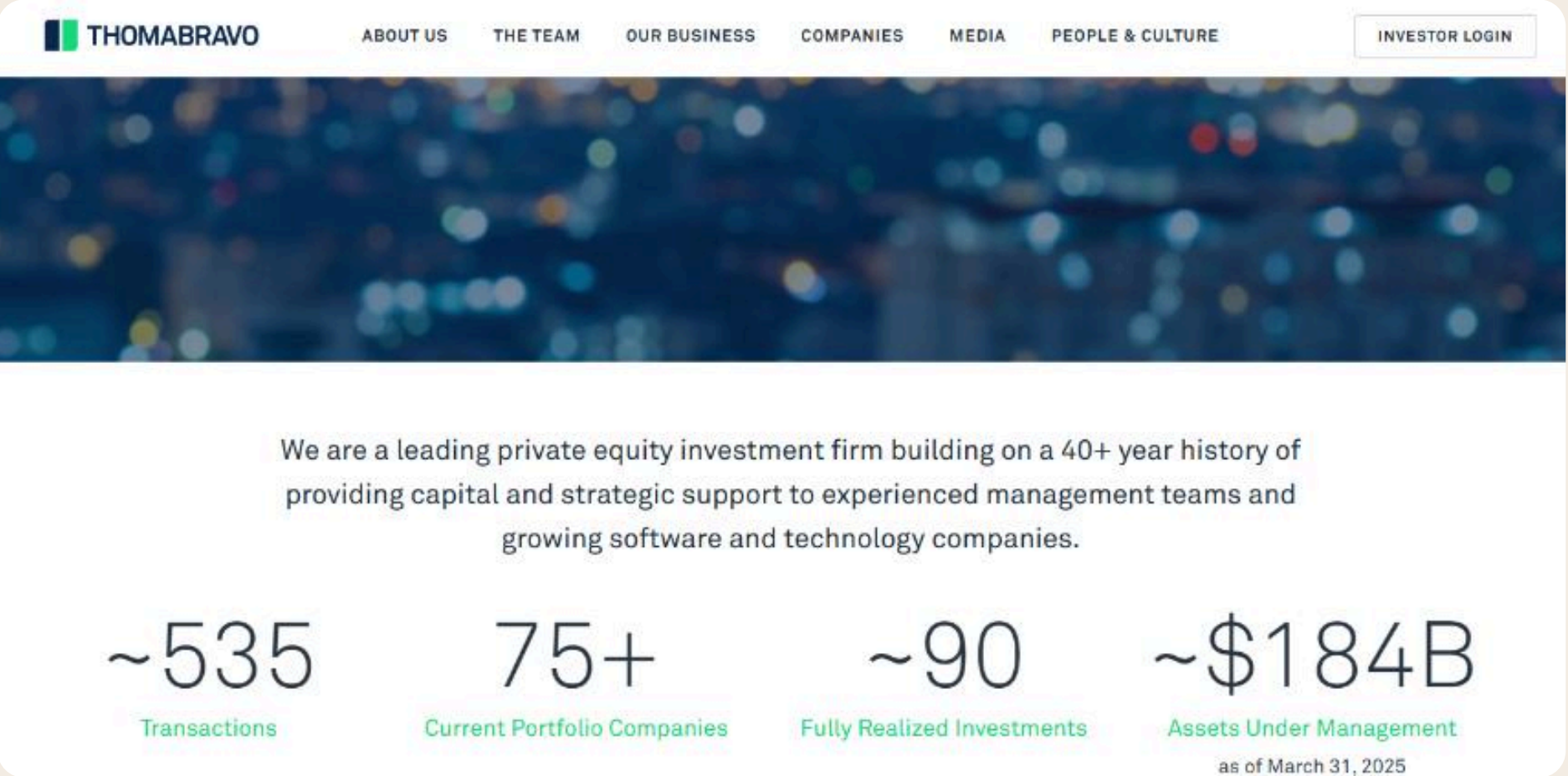
TPG



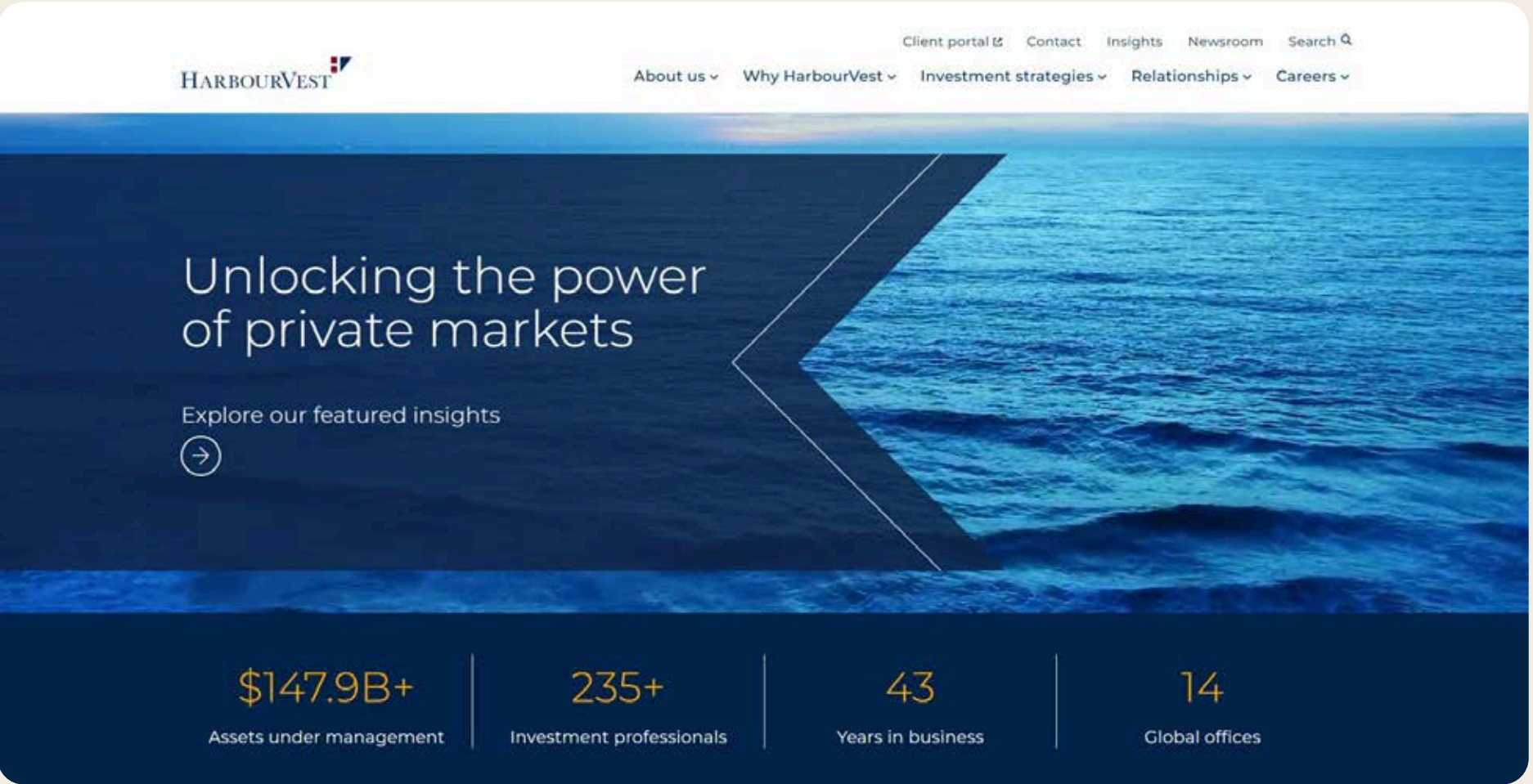
Harvest Partners



Thoma Bravo



HarbourVest





# VIII. People First: Why Human-Centered Imagery Design Drives Deeper Engagement

The imagery on a private equity website plays a pivotal role in establishing trust and clarity — often before a single line of copy is read. In an industry built on relationships, firms that visually highlight their team and culture tend to see stronger user engagement across all audiences.

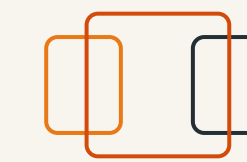
In our analysis, websites featuring **people- and office-focused imagery** delivered the highest engagement, averaging **3.31 pages per visit**. This style consistently outperformed others in encouraging users to click deeper into the site, especially among LPs, founders, and potential hires seeking signals of transparency, accessibility, and team depth.

Whether it's a candid photo of your investment professionals, a glimpse into your office culture, or an authentic team moment, real images help humanize the brand and make the firm more approachable — without compromising professionalism.

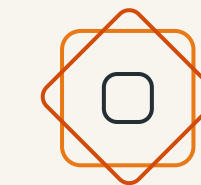
## Why Human-Centered Imagery Works



Puts people at the center of the brand story



Builds trust through authenticity and accessibility



Encourages deeper exploration from founder- and talent-driven audiences

# Best Human-Centered Imagery Practices

## Use original photography

Showcase your team in your actual environment - not stock substitutes.

## Focus on quality and tone

Choose visuals that reflect your firm’s positioning, from buttoned-up institutional to collaborative and founder-friendly.

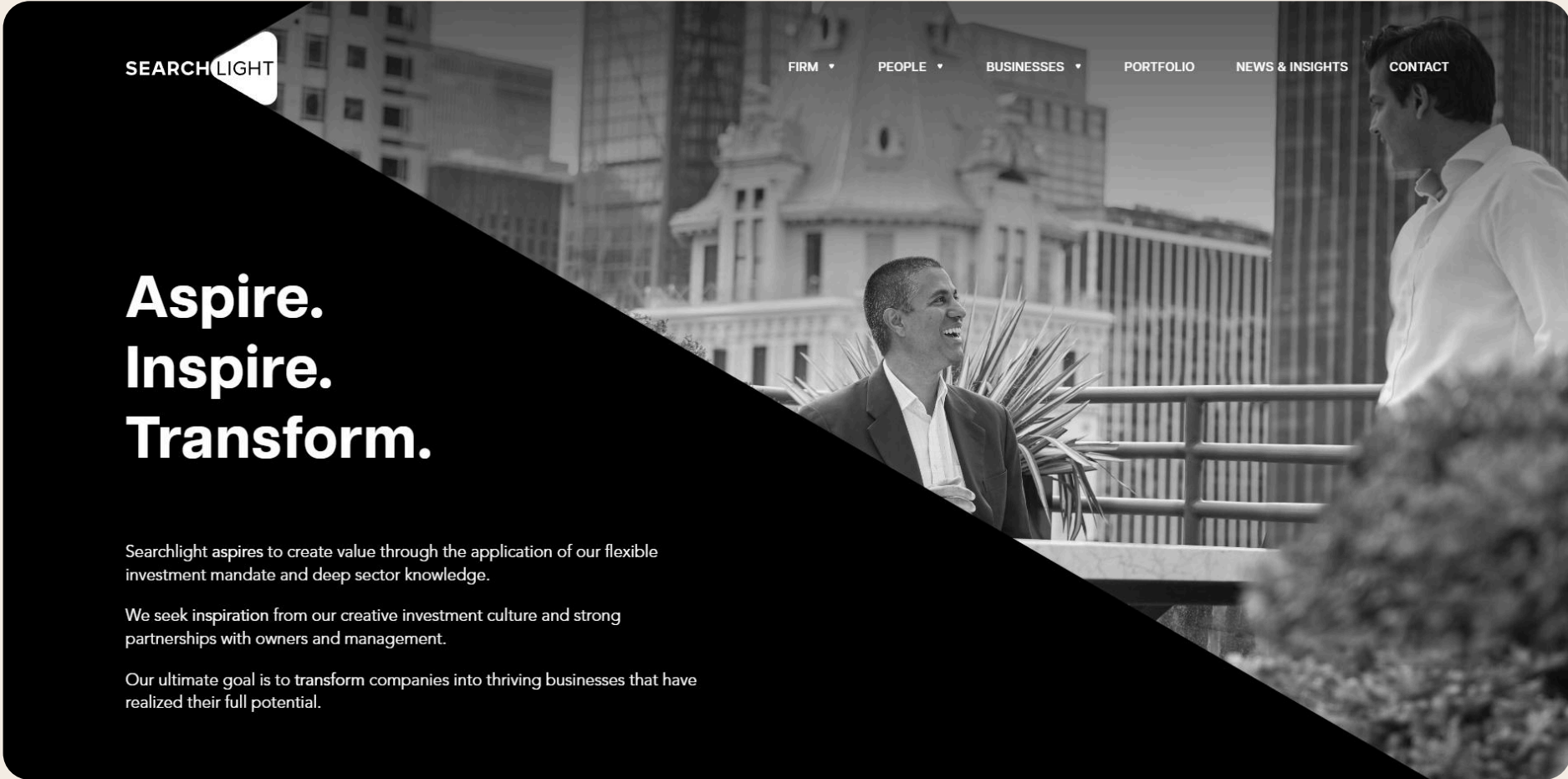
## Let visuals support the message

Pair with messaging that reinforces your differentiation and firm values.

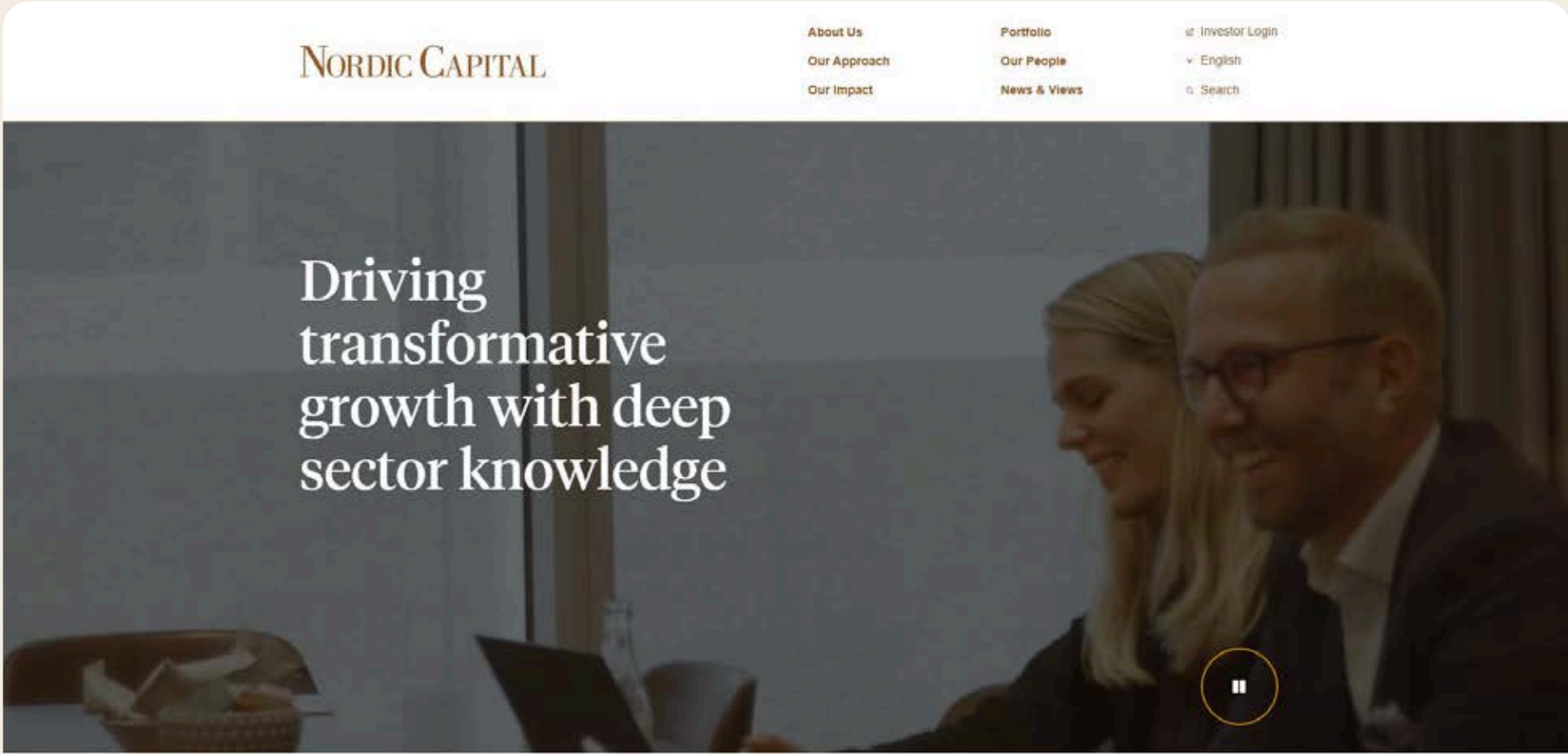
# Firm Examples



Searchlight Capital



Nordic Capital





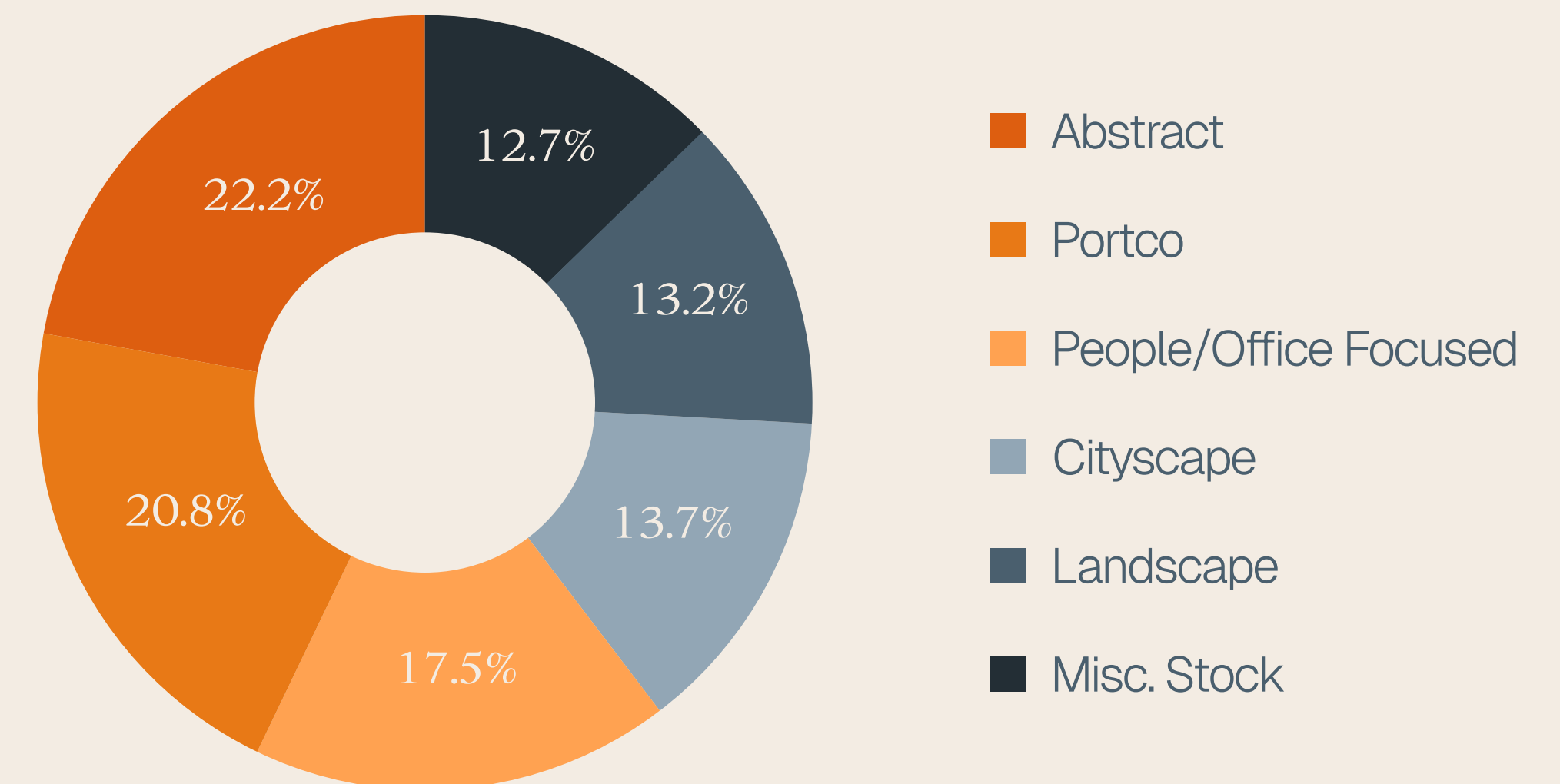
# IX. The Strategic Shift Toward Abstract Design in Private Equity Branding

While people-focused imagery delivered the strongest user engagement, **abstract design emerged as the most popular visual style**, used by **22.2% of firms** in our study. This preference reflects a growing shift in the industry toward design systems that feel refined, intentional, and brand-forward.

Abstract visuals offer firms greater creative flexibility. They convey sophistication, innovation, and clarity without relying on literal imagery — making them especially effective for firms whose strategies or offerings are harder to visualize. For example, while it's easy to source compelling photography for sectors like industrials or real estate, it's far more challenging to visually represent software or platform businesses. Abstract design helps bridge that gap. It simplifies complexity, aligns cross-sector messaging, and creates a cohesive digital identity across multi-strategy platforms, large teams, or global footprints.

It's no surprise that some of the industry's largest and most well-established firms are turning to abstract elements — color fields, geometric overlays, gradients, and motion graphics — to create elevated digital identities.

Primary Image Motif Usage (%)



# Why Abstract Is Emerging as the Industry Favorite

A design language built for complexity, scale, and story-first positioning.



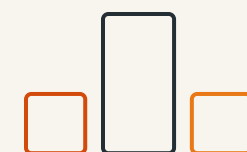
Feels modern, confident,  
and design-forward



Avoids generic visual  
tropes and overused  
stock imagery



Allows for seamless  
adaptation across platforms  
and languages



Helps firms stand apart in a  
space where many sites still  
feel templated

## DG Perspective:

Engagement is only one part of the equation. In private equity, perception, polish, and clarity carry weight. Abstract design, when paired with thoughtful messaging and intuitive UX, can be a powerful tool for differentiation – especially for firms positioning themselves as institutional, global, or future-facing.



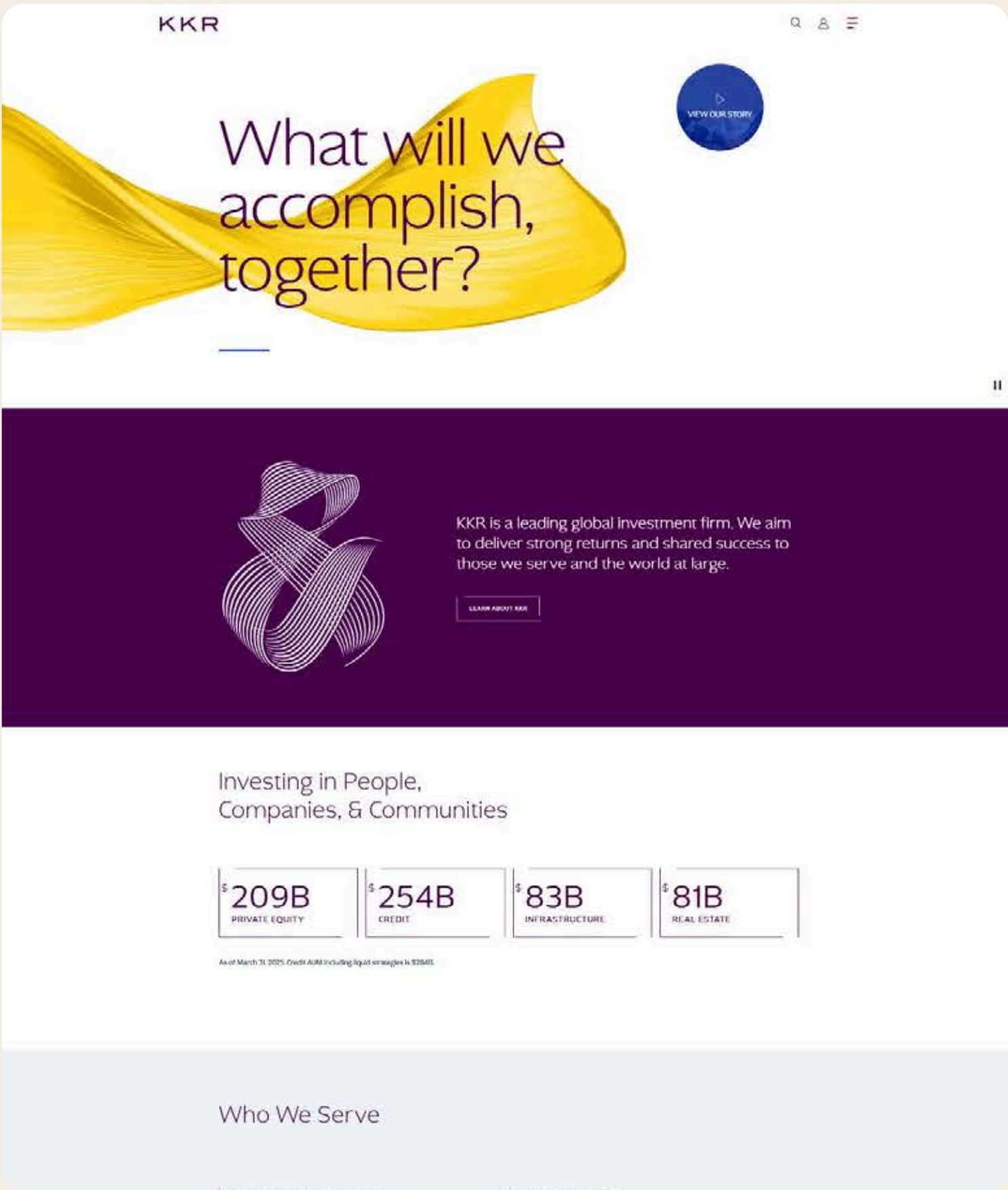
# Firm Examples



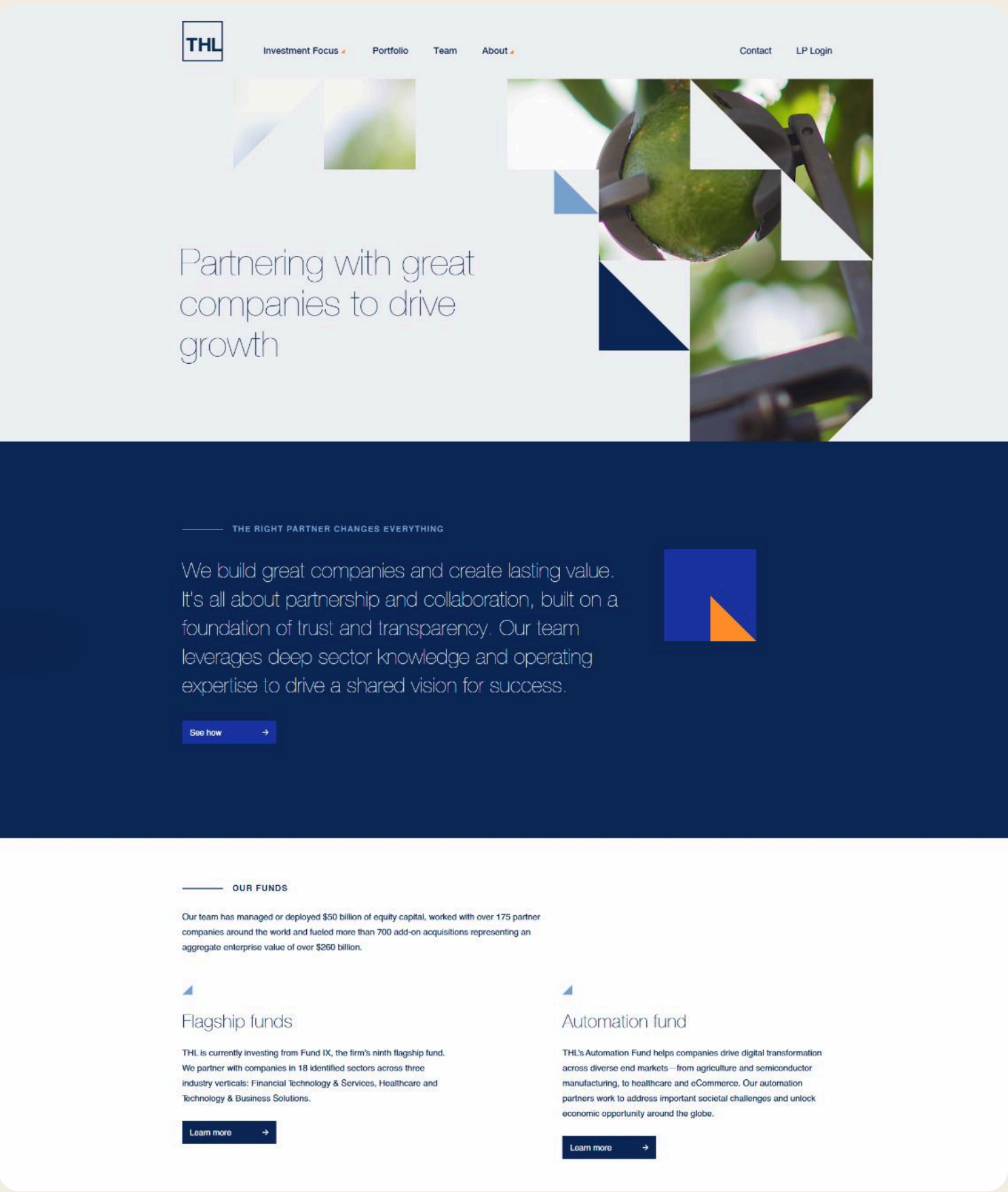
Harvest Partners



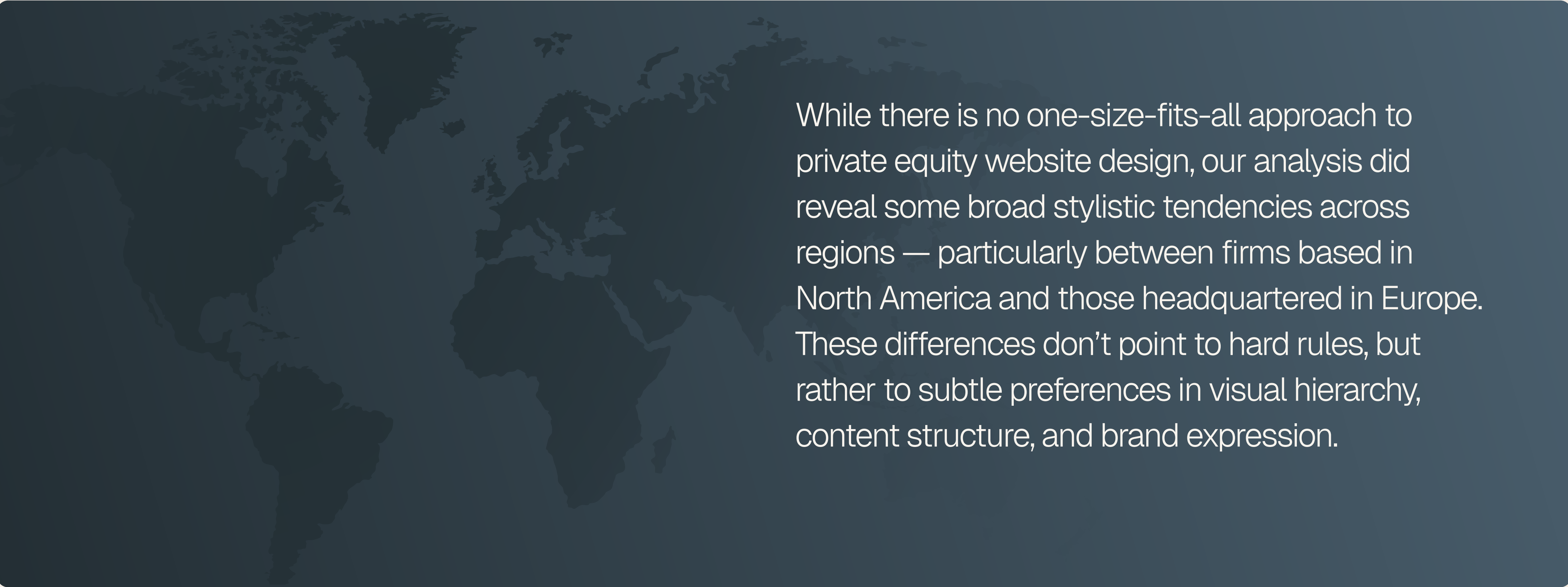
KKR



THL

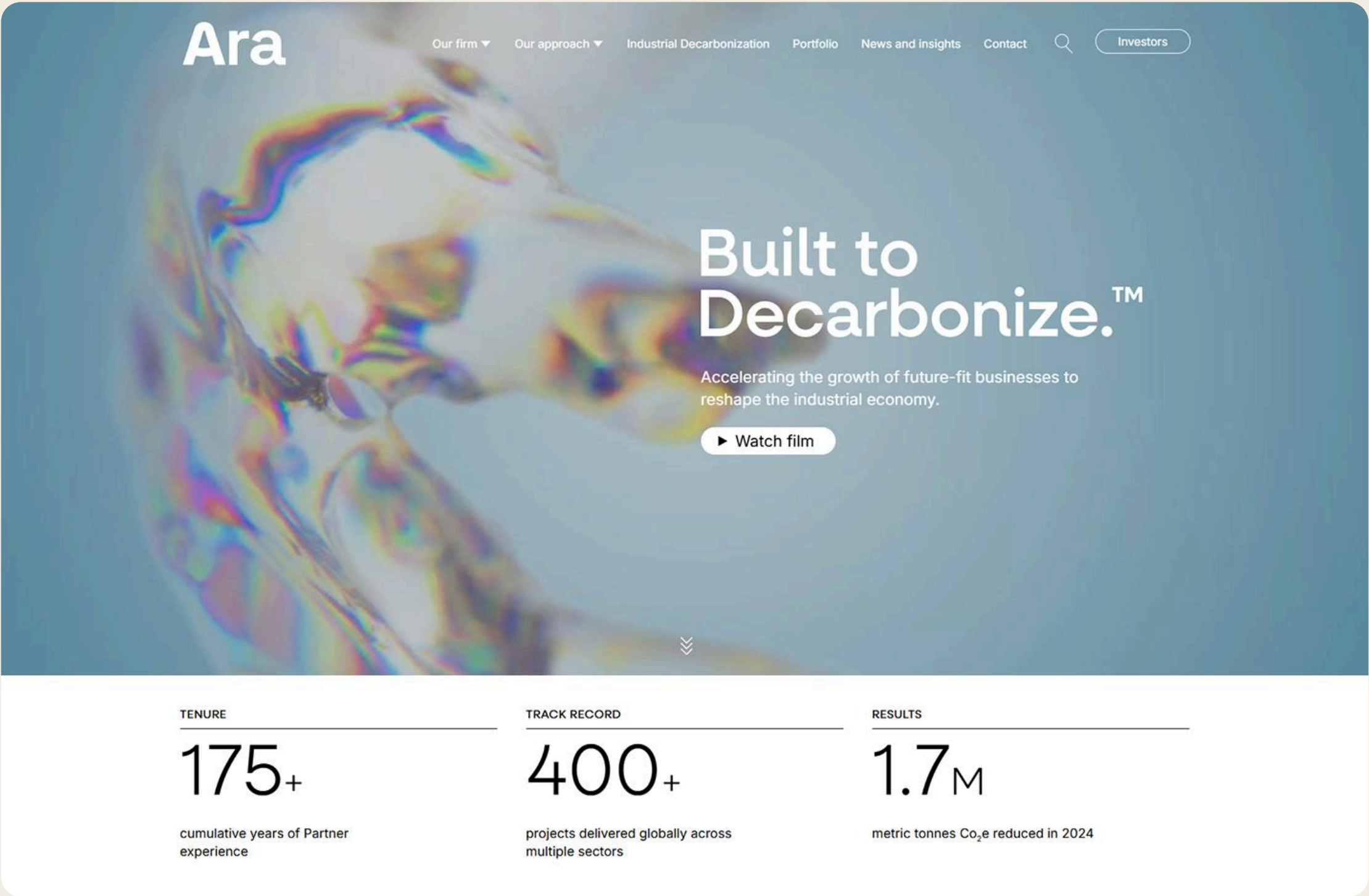


# X. Style by Region: What We Observed Across North America and Europe




While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to private equity website design, our analysis did reveal some broad stylistic tendencies across regions — particularly between firms based in North America and those headquartered in Europe. These differences don't point to hard rules, but rather to subtle preferences in visual hierarchy, content structure, and brand expression.






While people-focused imagery delivered the strongest user engagement, **abstract design emerged as the most popular visual style**, used by **22.2% of firms** in our study. This preference reflects a growing shift in the industry toward design systems that feel refined, intentional, and brand-forward.


Common traits




High-impact  
visuals



Front-loaded  
KPIs



Motion  
elements

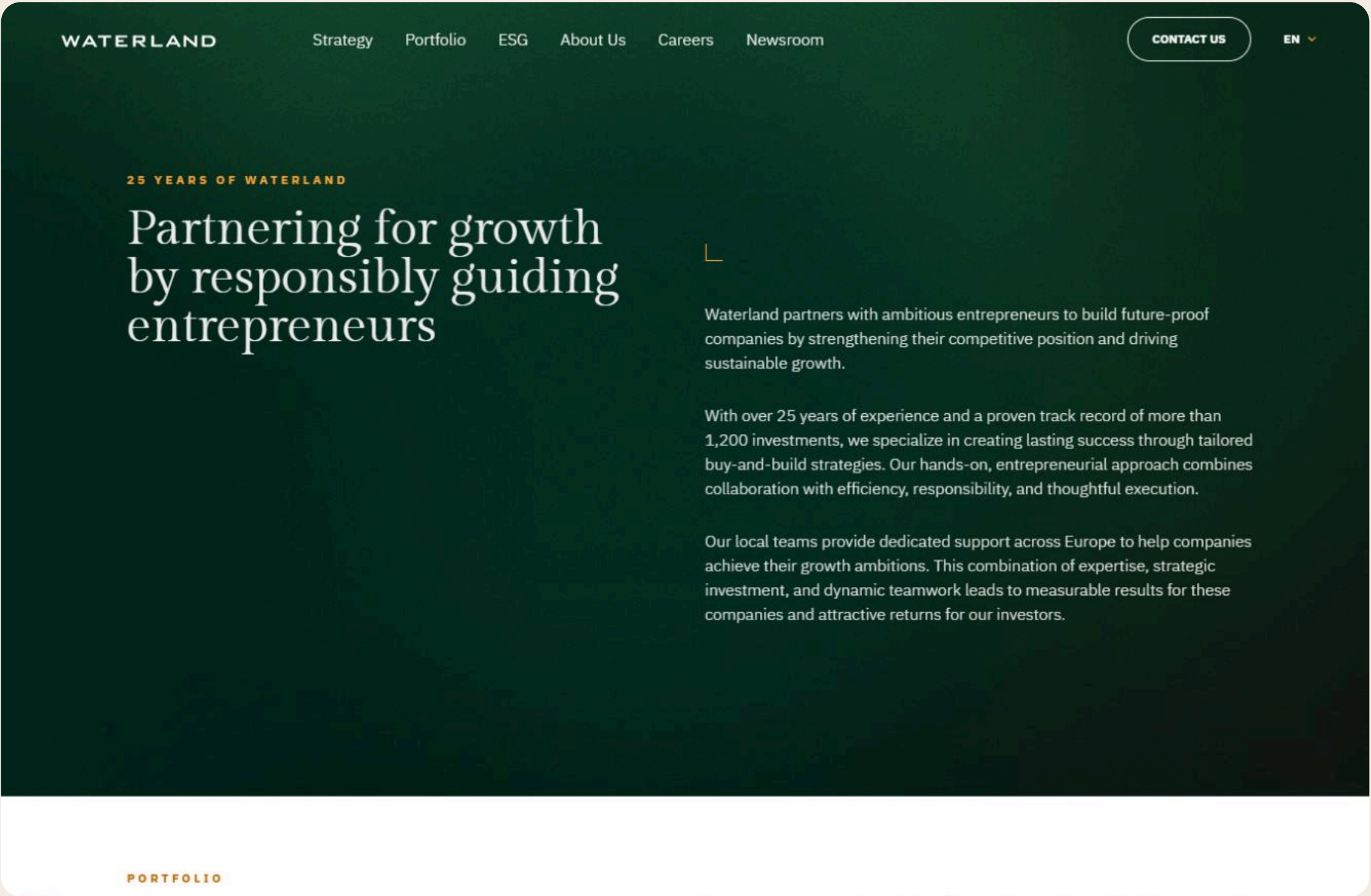


Average pages per visit:

2.32

**Our Take:**

The stylistic choices we observed across North American sites suggest a focus on immediacy—**communicating value propositions quickly and confidently**. There’s an emphasis on making an impression within a short window, which may reflect how firms are thinking about attention spans and digital brand presence.



European firms tend to embrace **a more minimalist and values-driven design language**. Sites are often more reserved in tone, with spacious layouts, simpler navigation, and elevated emphasis on ESG. While the visual approach is subtler, the result is typically longer site journeys and deeper exploration.

Common traits




Clean design



ESG visibility



Simplified architecture



Average pages per visit:

2.9

**Our Take:**

European sites, by contrast, seem to lean into **a slower, more exploratory pace**. The design language often invites users to take their time, indicating a possible **prioritization of depth, narrative, and long-term brand building** over instant impact.

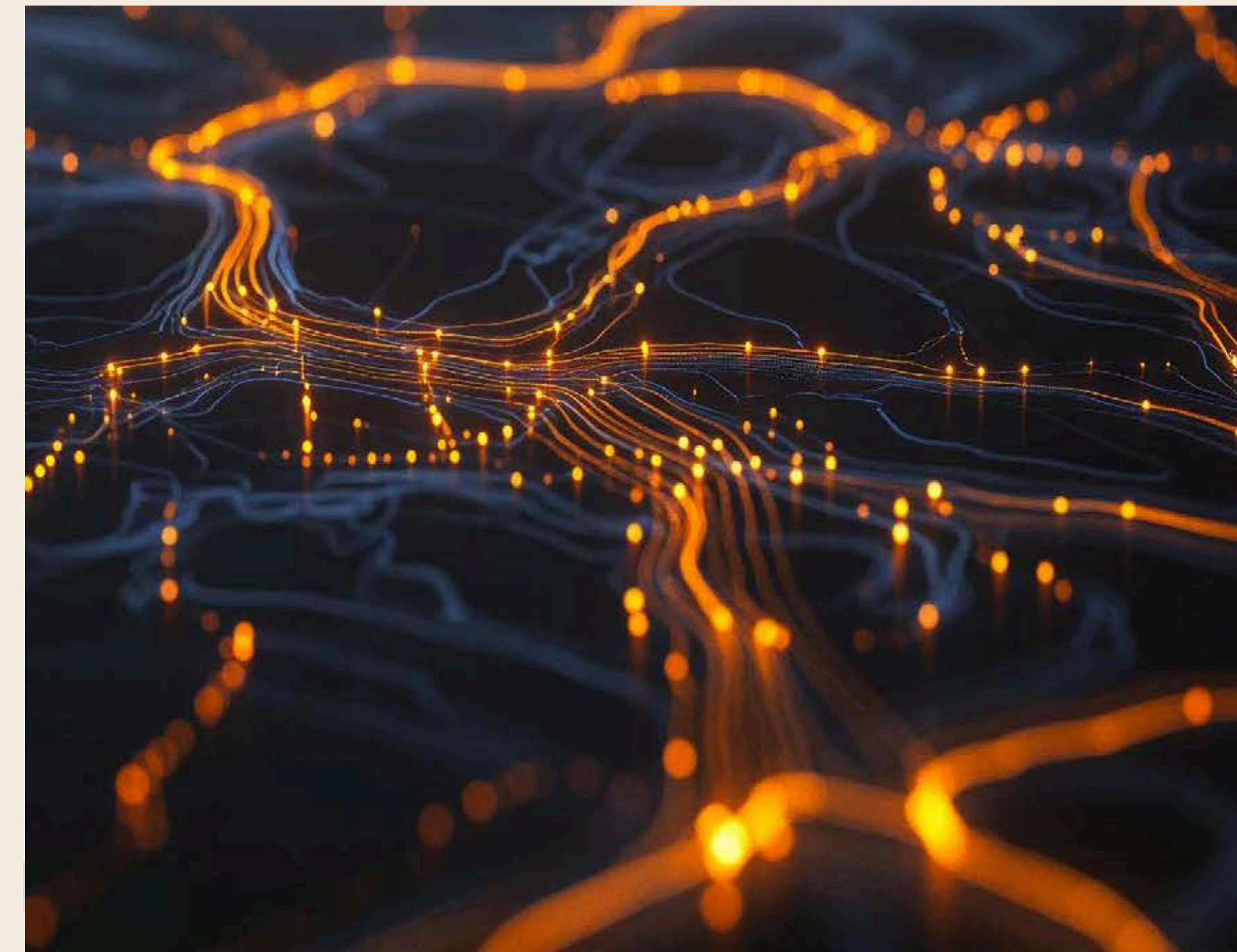


# XI. A Moving Target: ESG Expectations Vary, But Visibility Still Matters

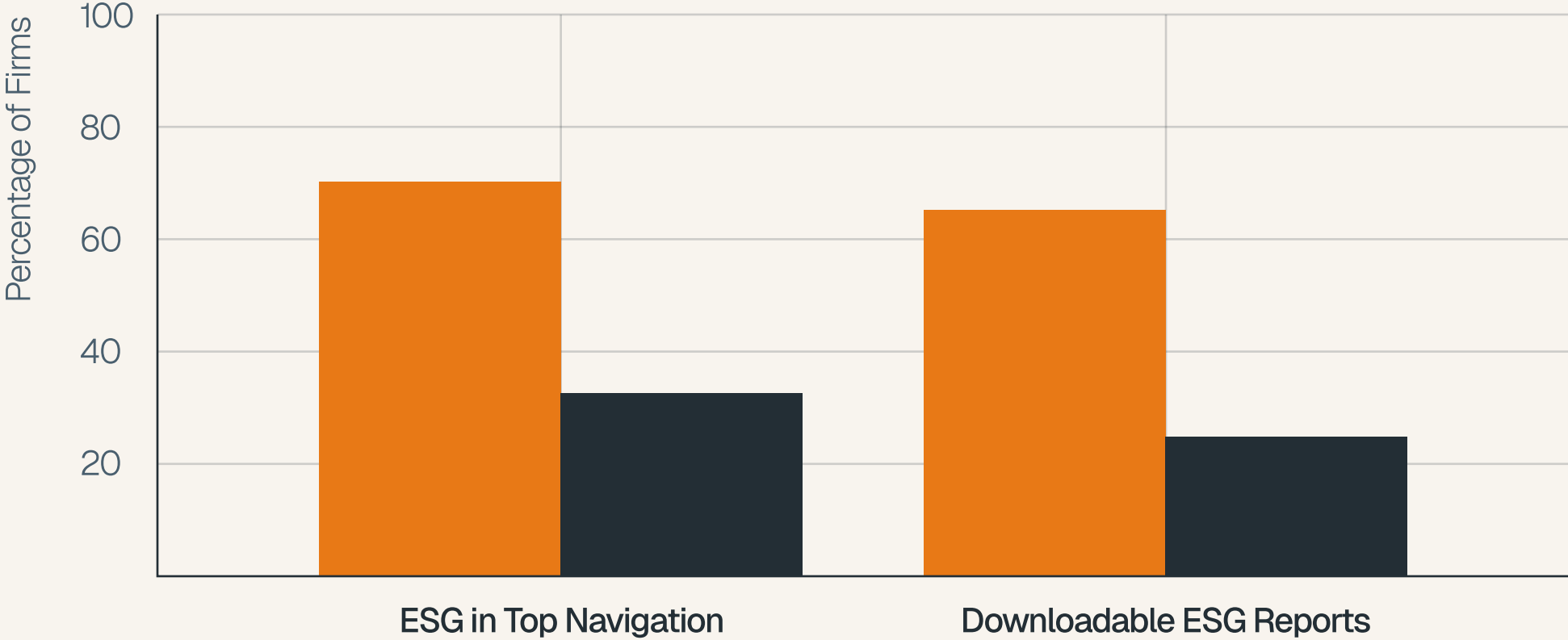
ESG has become an increasingly visible part of how private equity firms present themselves — but how it’s communicated varies widely based on geography, regulatory norms, and investor expectations.

In Europe, ESG is a strategic and regulatory imperative. The EU’s Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) has prompted firms to be explicit about how they manage sustainability risks and demonstrate long-term accountability. As a result, **70.8% of European firms** in our study include ESG or sustainability in their primary navigation, and **64.6%** offer downloadable ESG reports or impact updates.

By contrast, North American firms approach ESG with more caution. While many U.S.-based firms recognize its importance — especially for institutional LPs — the topic remains politically charged in certain regions. As such, ESG may appear under broader themes like “responsibility,” “governance,” or “long-term value creation.” In our data, only **32.7% of North American firms** included ESG in top navigation, and just **24.2%** provided downloadable ESG reports.



# ESG Visibility: Europe vs North America



Still, engagement remains strong in both regions, with **Europe averaging 2.9 pages per visit** and **North America slightly higher at 3.0**. This suggests that ESG visibility — when done thoughtfully — can support rather than hinder performance.

Europe North America

## Inclusion Across NA and EU

ESG in top navigation

41.3 %  
of firms

Downloadable ESG reports or PDFs

33.3 %  
of firms



# Best Practices

## Contextualize for your audience

Tailor ESG messaging based on your LP base and geographic footprint.

## Ensure visibility

Whether it’s a top-nav tab or a clearly labeled report, ESG content should be easy to find.

## Demonstrate substance

Back claims with data, case studies, or frameworks — even if they’re early-stage.

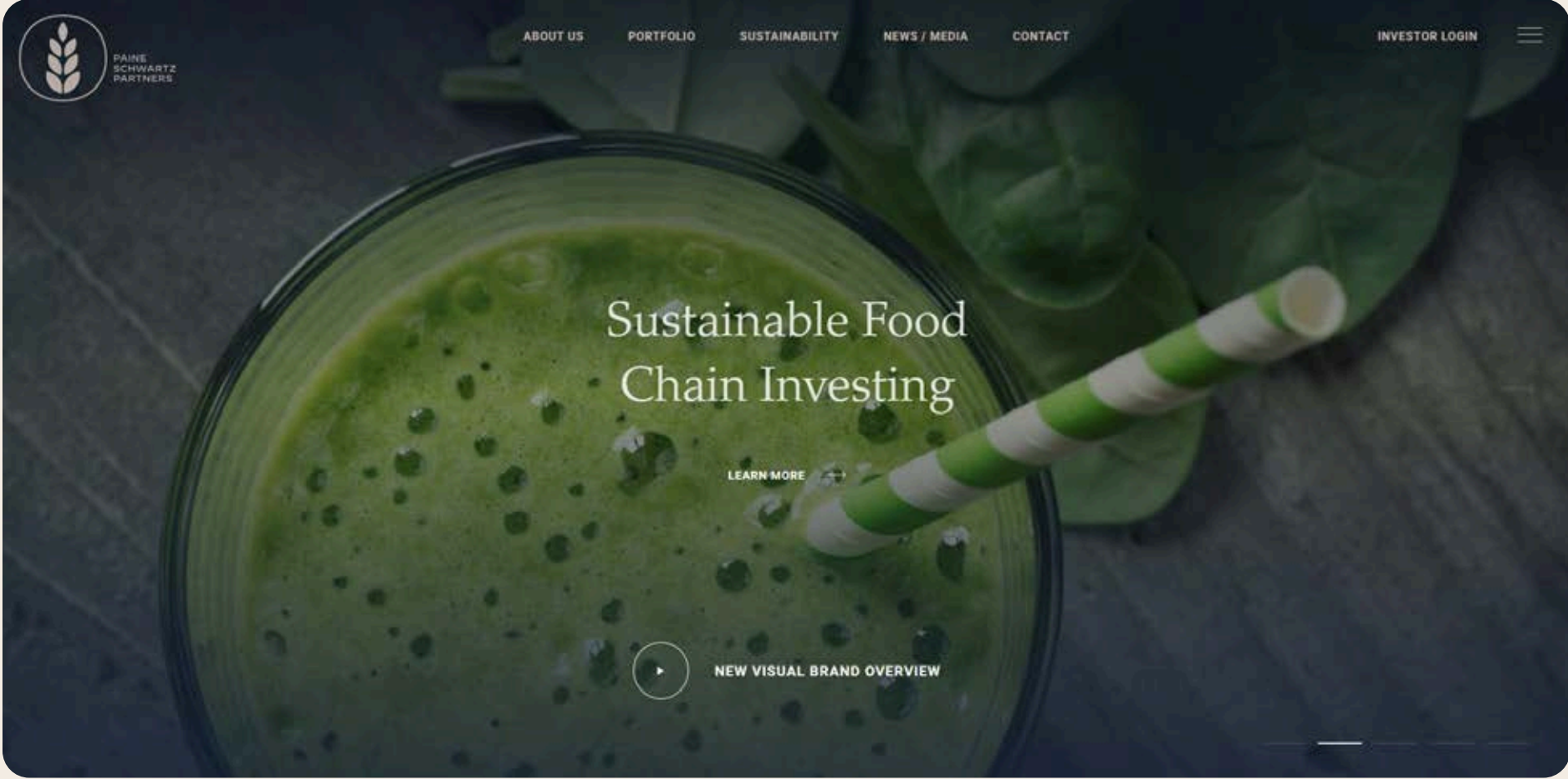
# Firm Examples



Generation Investment Management (EU)



Paine Schwartz Partners





# XII. Final Thoughts

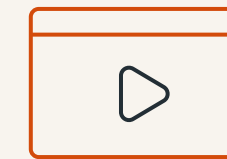
Digital presence is no longer optional—it's strategic.



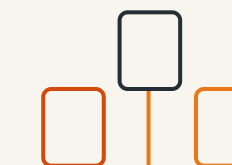
For years, private equity firms could rely on reputation, relationships, and performance alone. But in today's increasingly transparent and design-conscious environment, **your website is a reflection of your firm's identity — and a key touchpoint for LPs, founders, advisors, and talent alike.**

But beyond metrics and design patterns, what this report really highlights is that **there is no single formula.** The most effective websites are the ones that reflect the priorities, positioning, and audience of the firm behind them. That's where design becomes strategic — and where a firm's digital presence becomes a competitive advantage.

## Website Decisions that Strengthen Digital Strategy



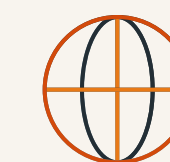
A homepage video can increase engagement



Clear metrics can reduce bounce



Imagery can shape perception before a single line is read



Design norms differ across geographies, but each approach can be effective when aligned with a firm's audience and brand strategy



## Our Perspective

The most effective private equity websites don't just inform — they persuade.

At Darien Group, we specialize in helping private equity firms articulate who they are — visually, verbally, and digitally. We've spent nearly a decade working with GPs across strategies, geographies, and fund vintages. And while the tactics may vary, one thing never changes: the best websites aren't built for everyone. They're built for the people that matter most to your business.

If your website isn't doing that yet, now is the time to make it work harder.

Contact Darien Group today to discuss how we  
can help your firm stand out.

[dariengroup.com](https://dariengroup.com)

[inquiries@dariengroup.com](mailto:inquiries@dariengroup.com)