



Celebrating 150 Years of Bringing People Together

Bacardi, Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Internal Communications —Business (Fewer Than 10,000 Employees)

February 4, 2012 marked the 150th anniversary of Bacardi, the world's largest privately held spirits company. The anniversary campaign became the first company-wide activation involving all 6,000 employees. To educate employees and generate excitement, more than 200 assets were created over an 18-month period. A one-stop shop for anniversary information was created on the intranet and it soon became the most popular space driving intranet growth by 120%. All offices big and small hosted an anniversary celebration and assets developed centrally resulted in US\$1M in production cost savings and consistent messaging and look.

Internal communications includes programs targeted specifically to special publics directly allied with an organization, such as employees, members, affiliated dealers and franchisees.

Full Text: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Bacardi celebrated its 150th anniversary on February 4, 2012. The milestone presented an opportunity to engage employees in the company's rich history. The successful execution of the 150th anniversary became a global priority and was the first company-wide activation involving all regions, functions, and reaching all 6,000 employees. Objectives for internal communications were to create brand ambassadors; educate employees on rich heritage; create assets for local market use; instill pride and generate excitement; and establish a one-stop shop for all anniversary information.

RESEARCH

In summer 2011, Global Corporate Communications worked with local markets to better grasp anniversary communications needs. The team identified a lack of consistent information and understanding about company heritage. It also identified decentralized sources of information. An audit of existing training and education materials unveiled limited historic facts which limited the ability to teach employees about the 150-year history and the important role the company played within the spirits industry. Primary research via a global survey and focus groups regarding perceptions of the year-old intranet, ONE Bacardi, revealed an opportunity to better leverage this tool. While 85 percent of respondents of the survey viewed the intranet as "both a business resource and a way to connect with employees," only 42 percent indicated using the site to support daily business activities.

The team also worked closely with The Bacardi Archive to conduct secondary research of company history. This research identified compelling stories, available images and graphics, and helped verify historic facts that could be used to tell our unique story. A database of 150 facts was developed to serve as the foundation for materials created by countries and by the brand team.

PLANNING

Planning began in April 2011 and internal communications objectives were set: create passionate brand ambassadors; educate employees about the company's rich heritage; create anniversary assets for local activation; instill pride and generate excitement; and establish a one-stop shop for all anniversary information across countries and functions. Success would be achieved through participation in anniversary events by all offices, best in class results in the employee survey section related to engagement levels, increased use of the ONE Bacardi intranet by 10 percent, and delivery of assets that could be repurposed regardless of country or language.

With no regional or in-country internal communications, it was important to create the right support team. A global network of anniversary contacts was created in the summer of 2011 with members ranging from a variety of functions and covered all offices spanning nearly 80 markets. By the time the anniversary rolled around, more than 20 preview meetings (via audio, web conferencing, webcast or in person) were hosted to motivate teams, review available assets, and encourage local activations of programs. In total, more than 4,700 participants joined one of the preview sessions to learn the multifaceted rollout plan that would continue over a 16-month period, through the end of 2012.

A strategy was devised to engage employees in a clear, corporate story presented via events, timelines, videos, imagery, key messages, contests, infographics, and more. It was important to use a variety of tools and assets in order to reach the diverse employee population comprised of primarily 2,000 in offices, 2,000 in production facilities and 2,000 in the field within sales roles. A final step in planning was the development of an online archive, available 24/7, with access to heritage images, videos and graphics pre-approved by legal and corporate communications for both internal and external use.

EXECUTION

In September 2011, the internal celebrations officially started – marking 150 days until the 150th anniversary. Global Corporate Communications launched the Anniversary Hub, a group on the ONE Bacardi intranet, open to all employees. The Anniversary Hub merged all relevant anniversary-related activities, materials and information in a central place. It was the most efficient way to cascade information to all employees as it broke down silos and increased transparency. The social media platform of the intranet allowed for discussion, file sharing, and uploading of content. Local teams activated the internal kick off with onsite celebrations using materials provided by Global Corporate Communications and adding touches tailored to their markets. Over the next months, Global Corporate Communications developed more than 200 assets— all available via the Anniversary Hub and available for both internal and external use. Many markets used the assets in employee trainings, media events, and programs with bartenders and other key audiences. A clear, corporate story was crafted and assets such as timelines, videos, imagery, key messages, contests, infographics helped tell the story. From September 2011 through March 2012, weekly content ranged from videos featuring long-standing employees (25+ years) representing a combined 1,000 years of service, executives narrating some of the Company's most iconic stories, an "Ask the Archivist" series where employees could submit questions to the Company archivist, highlights from local activations, to contests centered on the information posted on the Anniversary Hub. Within just five months, more than 2,000 documents and videos were posted on the HUB.

The culmination of activities took place in February with local employee and consumer celebrations – all which leveraged the assets developed. While February was the most active month for anniversary programs, new content was delivered throughout 2012, in collaboration with the Public Relations team. Internal campaigns and contests reflected monthly PR programs. The hash tag #Bacardi150 was promoted among employees and brand teams to help drive trending via Twitter. Among the PR activities was the announcement that Bacardi Rum exceeded 500 awards transforming the accolade of "world's most awarded rum" to

“world’s most awarded SPIRIT”. No other brand has won more awards than Bacardi rum for quality, taste and innovation – this provided another reason to celebrate.

In December 2012, the final anniversary event took place with the symbolic installation of the Bacardi Time Capsule at the Global Headquarters in Bermuda and led by Facundo L. Bacardi, Chairman and great great-grandson of the company’s founder. The capsule contains more than 100 items submitted by employees from all regions and will be reopened in 2062 to mark the 200th anniversary.

EVALUATION

Coordinating and successfully executing a global priority of this scale was a first and received resounding accolades from employees. The anniversary set a new benchmark for global employee activations, delivered record-breaking participation, and exceeded objectives. Results included:

- **Creation of 200+ anniversary assets** to share our story consistently—availability resulted in local market **production savings valued at more than US\$1M.**
- **All locations hosted an employee party and 90% posted photos/videos** – the highest global engagement for one program and the highest contribution to online intranet content ever.
- **Within six months, 60% of the company visited the Anniversary Hub and by Jan. 2013, the Hub exceeded 140k views**—four times more than the previously most visited space. The Hub was so successful that it became the **model for the Martini brand** (also owned by Bacardi Limited) which set up a similar site to support its own 150th anniversary in 2013.
- **One month before the anniversary, ONE Bacardi usage rose by more than 120%—exceeding its target of a 10% annual increase.** Anniversary communications helped change behavior as employees began adopting the global intranet as a business resource and everyday work tool. For the first-time ever, more than half the company was on ONE Bacardi - a significant feat considering only one third of employees are in offices, in front of computers. Year-over-year comparisons were impressive—showing a 187% increase in March (2011 vs. 2012) alone.
- Results of the first-ever global **Employee Engagement Survey resulted in 92% participation with overall engagement of 3.76** (4 considered “Best in Class”). Favorable results indicated pride and employee passion drummed up by the anniversary. “I feel proud to work for Bacardi” was 85% favorable, five points higher than high-performing companies (The HAY Group, 2011).
- **Partnered with External Communications** to promote media activities and create Company ambassadors by encouraging promotion of external activities and content via email signatures, customer communications, special events and social media.
- **Partnered with Human Resources to update onboarding and recruitment materials** to showcase consistent heritage stories and train new hires on company history as soon as they join.
- **Online archive reached 3,800+ registered users, and more than 8,800 downloads of assets. Martini is now leveraging the site** by uploading assets to support its own anniversary program.