



The Better Than Cash Alliance - Shifting the World from Cash to Electronic Payments

FleishmanHillard and Better Than Cash Alliance (Alliance Members: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Citi, Ford Foundation, Omidyar Network, UNCDF, USAID, Visa Inc.), Jan 1,2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Public Service — Partnerships (Funded jointly by businesses and other organizations including nonprofit and government)
< BR>In September 2012, a group of world-renowned foundations, international organizations and companies formed the Better Than Cash Alliance to help accelerate the shift from cash to electronic payments. Fleishman-Hillard was selected to create an identity for the Alliance, and support it with a website, launch event and PR activities.

The Alliance—through its launch event timed with the Clinton Global Initiative and U.N. General Assembly—and its website, outreach and social media, has generated more than 54 million total media impressions in addition to reaching 2 million Twitter followers. The Alliance has also gained 12 committing countries and organizations dedicated to transitioning to electronic payments.

Public service includes programs that advance public understanding of societal issues, problems or concerns. The partnerships subcategory is intended for public service programs that are funded jointly by businesses and other organizations, including nonprofit or government.

Full Text: **CHALLENGE**

Throughout the world, and especially in developing nations, a growing concern has emerged over the inefficient—and fundamentally dangerous—use of cash-based transactions that restrict some 2.5 billion adults and their nations' economies from realizing the benefits of electronic payments.

In September 2012, a group of world-renowned foundations, international organizations and companies formed an alliance to help accelerate the shift from cash to electronic payments. Fleishman-Hillard (FH) partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Citi, Ford Foundation, Omidyar Network, U.N. Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), U.S. Agency for International Development, and Visa Inc., to launch the Better Than Cash Alliance and raise awareness of electronic payments' role in financial inclusion, security and transparency, and in opening new markets across the developing world.

But we first had to gain the attention of our core audiences, and then present a host of compelling messages that would turn entire nations to electronic payments. So we began with research, and discovered a wealth of information describing how a transition from cash to electronic payments affects areas important to governments: financial inclusion for their citizens, effective aid distribution, transparency, payroll and government benefits, and security for shopkeepers and others who currently transport cash, which is susceptible to theft.

FH would need to work closely with the founders of the Alliance to compile success stories from around the world and conduct interviews with key influencers to bring case studies to life and showcase the value of the transition. A website would carry the Alliance message around the

world, starting conversations and fostering goodwill.

In short, the FH role must produce messaging, activities and communications that presented a clear, accessible and inclusive call to action that would resonate with the Alliance's many audiences.

Our objectives were diverse, but critical to rapidly positioning the Better Than Cash Alliance in its leadership role in the space. Objectives included introducing the Alliance and its mission to key influencers in the private, public and development sectors; engaging key audiences about the benefits of electronic payments in an interactive manner; initiating a momentum drive for new donors and pledge organizations; and securing widespread recognition of the Alliance, creating brand recognition and positioning the Alliance as a thought leader in this important endeavor through media placements and events.

SOLUTION

Our initial effort was to establish a solid working relationship with Alliance partners. We proposed a regular meeting with the seven founding members to ensure transparency and alignment on our goals, approach and progress. FH would develop the brand, design the logo, suggest colors, typeface and images, then produce messaging and all materials, including a video. The website would be designed, developed and populated with content by FH. We would work closely with the members on publicity and outreach, training key spokespeople and handling PR and social media, as well as conducting briefings.

Working collaboratively with UNCDF and other Alliance partners, FH organized a launch event timed with the Clinton Global Initiative and U.N. General Assembly with high-level speakers, including Carolina Trivelli, Peruvian minister for Development and Social Inclusion; HRH Princess Máxima of the Netherlands, the UN Secretary-General's special advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development; Dr. Geoffrey Mwau, Kenyan economic secretary for the Ministry of Finance; and other equally prominent speakers. The event attracted more than 250 high-profile guests. Following the launch, FH organized and staffed a standing-room only breakfast roundtable at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, featuring the Prime Minister of Peru.

RESULTS

FH's media outreach earned placements in top-tier publications including an editorial in *The New York Times* linking directly to the Better Than Cash Alliance website. Placements in *The Examiner*, Huffington Post, *Agence France-Presse*, *China Daily* and other outlets generated more than 54 million total impressions and led to Twitter conversations reaching more than 2 million followers.

Since its launch in September 2012, the Alliance has gained 12 committing countries and organizations dedicated to transitioning to electronic payments, a transition that will streamline government disbursements while bringing more stability to entire populations that are just now learning the benefits of full financial inclusion.