



Union Pacific's 150th Anniversary - Celebrating 150 Years of Building America

Union Pacific, Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award of Excellence Winner — Reputation Management / Brand Management — Business Companies With Sales Over \$10 Billion.

Union Pacific's Corporate Communications team developed a massive, multi-pronged 150th Anniversary campaign in 2012 titled, "Celebrating 150 Years of Building America." The campaign communicated Union Pacific's special role in America's history over the past 150 years, as well as its position as a progressive, innovative railroad with a clear plan for supporting the nation's future. The company's message was shared through several vehicles including UP150.com (an Anniversary Web site), partnerships and public events, internal initiatives, media relations strategies, and social media and other nontraditional tactics. These efforts reached more than 500 million people, some across the globe, with UP's message.

Reputation management / brand management includes campaigns are designed to enhance, promote or improve the reputation of an organization with its publics or key elements of its publics, either proactively or in response to an issue, event or market occurrence.

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RESEARCH

Union Pacific's Corporate Communications team began researching five years ago ideas for the railroad's 150th Anniversary in 2012. The team examined how similar large companies including Mutual of Omaha, IBM and UPS celebrated milestones via Web-based searches and industry reports, identifying campaign tactics, goals and a communications strategy. The team also researched unique traits of Union Pacific (UP) and the railroad industry it could capitalize on throughout the year, in addition to collecting historical information on 30-plus cities with deep connections to the railroad, building an understanding of each location's needs for specific celebrations.

The team knew from prior research that its "Building America" brand, developed 10 years ago to focus on UP's unique role in America's history, effectively engaged much of the target audience, including employees and communities along the railroad's 23-state system. UP was founded in 1862 when Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act, making it possible to connect the country east to west. These patriotic roots differentiate UP from other railroads and transportation companies. This brand created a role employees and communities along UP's track identify with and in which they take pride. As a result, the team established a positioning line expanding on it – "Celebrating 150 Years of Building America." This positioning line formed

the base upon which the campaign plan was built.

PLANNING

The team developed a plan for the 150th Anniversary campaign, using many tactics to differentiate UP from industry peers and other American companies, highlighting its role as a fundamental part of the nation's history and future.

Specific, measurable campaign objectives include:

- Attain at least 2 million page views on UP150.com;
- Draw at least 5,000 new likes on UP's Facebook page;
- Engage at least 2,000 new Twitter followers;
- Connect with every single one of UP's 45,000 employees;
- Expose 1 million-plus people to UP's anniversary message at public events planned in strategically chosen locations across UP's system;
- Place more than 2,000 news stories about UP's anniversary in publications nationwide and specifically along the railroad's 23-state system; and
- Secure media coverage in at least 10 national outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Fortune* magazine and *Bloomberg TV*.

With these objectives in mind, the team established a strategy that targeted not only employees and communities along its lines, but also investors, customers, elected officials and the general public. The multi-pronged campaign, built around the positioning line, "Celebrating 150 Years of Building America," communicated UP's 150th Anniversary message via several vehicles, including UP150.com (a dedicated Anniversary Web site), partnerships and public events, internal initiatives, media relations, and social media and other nontraditional tactics.

EXECUTION

The following key tactics were used to communicate UP's 150th Anniversary message:

UP150.com. The team created UP150.COM, an interactive corporate site dedicated to sharing information and interacting with visitors on topics related to the 150th Anniversary. Highlights include:

- **Timeline** (<http://up150.com/time>), an interactive timeline that tells UP's 150-year history. The team also released the timeline as an e-book – one of corporate America's first – that can be downloaded for free on iTunes, and mobilized it for the railroad's traveling museum rail car;
- **Great Big Rollin' Railroad** (<http://up150.com/gbrr>), an online video contest, Web campaign and live event. The online contest invited the public to make a Great Big Rollin' Railroad videos for a \$15,000 grand prize. Finalists were flown to Omaha, Neb., for an *American Idol* - style event at UP Center; and
- **Stories** (<http://up150.com/stories>), a living archive of UP memories submitted by the public and employees.

Partnerships and Public Events. UP shared its story with the public via several community partnerships, displays and events, including: an exhibit at the UP Museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa, that allowed visitors to experience the building of the first transcontinental railroad; a vintage baggage car, "The Promontory," which was outfitted as a traveling museum exhibit; special screenings of Cecil B. DeMille's 1939 film, "Union Pacific," in Omaha, Neb.; an exhibit displaying pieces of the original Pacific Railway Act at Omaha's Durham Museum; exhibit at Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum featuring Andrew Russell prints; commemorative teacher kits; and signature 150th Anniversary memorabilia collection. Additionally, UP participated in more than 130 public events including the Olympic Swim Trials, College World Series, and parades and festivals in communities with railroad connections.

Internal Initiatives. UP celebrated its 150th Anniversary celebration via several internal initiatives, including special events, print and Web communications and nontraditional tactics. Events included Family Day celebrations, held in all major off-site locations offering employees' families train rides, 150-themed desserts, an opportunity to be photographed against a 150-themed backdrop, 150-themed hard hat stickers, coloring books, etc. Other special events included live Web streams of employees ringing the NYSE closing bell July 2, finale of the Great Big Rollin' Railroad contest and a large mural chronicling UP's history. Anniversary communications for employees were distributed via several channels including system newsletters, UP150.com and the company's bi-monthly print publication, *InsideTrack*. Nontraditional tactics included a "Generations" project that honored employees with a family railroad tradition, and commemorative coins, lapel pins and calendars for employees.

Media Relations Strategies. The team developed a media relations strategy and online tool kit to communicate its message via national media, trade publications and regional media in key geographic locations. The stories pitched to print, broadcast and interactive media sought to spread UP's anniversary message in various ways, from company and employee profiles to coverage of special events.

Social Media and other Nontraditional Tactics. The team organized a yearlong Facebook and Twitter promotion and developed a popular UP trivia Facebook app to build momentum for Anniversary opportunities and celebrations. Other non-traditional tactics included paid advertising and media blitz, "Train Town USA" proclamations for nearly 100 communities with a special relationship to UP, light pole banners and branded UP license plates for Nebraska residents.

EVALUATION

The success of the tactics used to communicate UP's 150th Anniversary message was measured via several vehicles depending on the tactic used, including page views, event attendance and media placements.

Results for UP150.com included: More than 2 million page views on UP150.com; more than 3,600 visitor comments on UP150.com; more than 419,000 views of Great Big Rollin' Railroad video entries; and more than 140 stories shared to UP150.com's Stories section.

Results for partnerships and public events, and internal initiatives included: Exposing nearly 2 million people to UP's anniversary message at more than 130 public events; attendance of more than 40,000 employees and their families at Family Day events; and hundreds of positive Web comments and appreciative emails from employees and people in communities where events were held.

Results for Media Relations Strategies included: More than 3,000 news stories about UP's anniversary, with a combined reach of nearly 500 million people; a company profile on the front of the *New York Times* Business section; a CNBC interview with UP CEO Jack Koraleski; a video news release that triggered nearly 100 TV news stories, reaching an estimated 45 million people; and a company profile in *Fortune* magazine.

Results for Social Media and Other Nontraditional tactics included: More than 5,000 new likes on UP's Facebook page (a 23% increase); more than 2,300 new Twitter followers (a 58% increase); and 25,529 hits on UP150.com the day UP's national advertising campaign launched (a 900 percent increase over average daily traffic).

The evaluation results proved the team was successful in attaining its objectives established in the planning process.

Product #: 6BE-1302C02