



R³ (Research Request Response) Report

On

Corporate Anniversary Events

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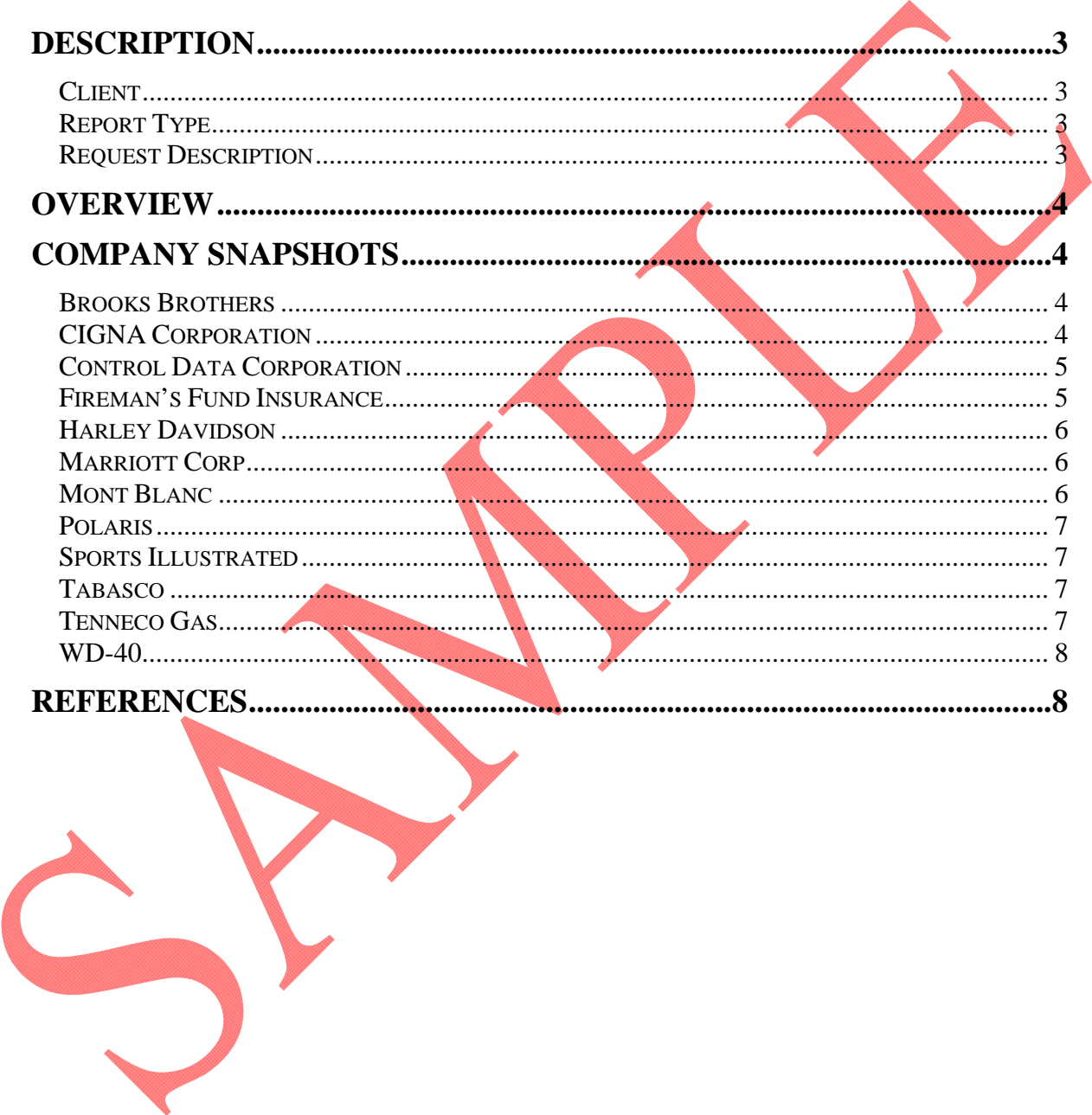
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DESCRIPTION

Client

Confidential

Report Type

Current Awareness Research Report

Request Description

You have asked us to provide an overview of unique ways in which companies celebrate milestone anniversaries.

SAMPLE

OVERVIEW

Generally speaking, companies devise anniversary campaigns for one or more of the following reasons:

- To let the business and non-business communities know that the corporation is alive and well.
- To encourage employee and customer loyalty.
- To confirm and reinforce the company's brand.
- To publicize its role as a corporate and community citizen.
- To attract new customers.

Not surprisingly, there are as many possibilities for corporate celebrations as there are for weddings, birthdays and retirements. A number of companies, however, have chosen unique ways to acknowledge to their employees, stakeholders and communities when they plan and produce anniversary events. This paper will look at a cross-section of businesses and their strategies for milestone anniversary celebrations.

COMPANY SNAPSHOTS

Brooks Brothers

After 175 years in business, this clothier wanted to change its stodgy image. Delving into its history as a leading American fashion house, event organizers found that its notable clients included Clark Gable who purchased Brooks Brothers suits, Fred Astaire who wore its belts and ties, Rudolph Valentino its hats – even Katherine Hepburn purchased men's trousers from Brooks Brothers. Plus, the mayor of New York saw to it that Charles Lindberg wore a Brooks Brothers suit in his homecoming parade. These personalities were hardly stuffy and boring.

As a result of this research, a campaign to celebrate its 175th Anniversary included a new marketing strategy, an American Heritage advertorial and a video news release to showcase Brooks Brothers with revitalized "spirit of an American Fashion Innovator." ¹

CIGNA Corporation

CIGNA celebrated its 200th Anniversary in 1992. CIGNA is an insurance and financial services holding company whose oldest member company is the Insurance Company of North America (INA), and INA was created in the Pennsylvania State house less than 20 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed. It was on this historical perspective that CIGNA chose to base its Bicentennial.

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Fortunately, CIGNA had an extensive archives department which was critical in the development of the following collateral :

- A permanent exhibit of historical art and artifacts and an elaborate tradeshow display designed by CIGNA's marketing department.
- A video presentation used extensively by the operating companies, particularly by field agents, for marketing and public relations.
- A prize-winning advertisement for the Property Casualty Division, which ran in the Wall Street Journal, Business Week and other widely circulated periodicals: "For 200 Years, It's been One Disaster After Another".
- A short, beautifully illustrated historical booklet entitled *CIGNA, 200 Years of Results*, as well as various articles in Company newsletters and speeches

The centerpiece of the celebration, however, was a two-day public festival held on Philadelphia's Independence Mall. Billed as a birthday party for CIGNA employees, the entire city was invited. Activities included a juried craft fair, 18th century craft demonstrations, parades and food stands which raised over \$80,000 in donations to a fund for the preservation of Independence Hall.²

Control Data Corporation

As part of its 50th Anniversary, computer giant Control Data Corporation hosted a day-long event that featured 4 seminars chronicling how Control Data's products and management philosophy revolutionized and still shape technology today. Along with seminars, there was an exhibit of computer artifacts. The celebration was held at the Minneapolis Convention Center and was free and open to the public. For an additional cost of \$50.00, participants could enjoy a dinner with speaker and receive a commemorative DVD of the event.³

Fireman's Fund Insurance

When Fireman's Fund was planning its 125th Celebration, its goals were twofold: thank employees for their patience and loyalty during recent difficult times and assure them of the company's stability. With these in mind, consultants found that the company had undergone two previous setbacks: the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, and the Chicago Fire of 1871. With memorabilia and stories of the company's survival and growth, the following projects were developed:

- A film showing how Fireman's Fund survived – and thrived during earlier, difficult events;
- A road-show exhibiting artifacts of the past.
- A living history with the voices of current and retired employees sharing their concerns, hopes and experiences with Fireman's Fund;
- A hardcover book echoing the strengths of the film and traveling exhibit.

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- A media campaign garnering kudos for the company by highlighting contributions made by employees.

As a result of this multi-faceted campaign, Fireman's Fund won the Gold Quill award from the International Association of Business Communicators.¹

Harley Davidson

Suffice it to say that for its 2002 100th Anniversary Celebration, Harley Davidson went "hog wild." With its Open Road Tour, Harley Davidson hosted a series of incredible weekend festivals traveling to 10 cities worldwide celebrating motorcycles, music, and history. The Tour concluded with a 3-day Birthday Party in Milwaukee, its company headquarters. Specifically, venues offered:

- A live music with acts such as Bob Dylan, Tim McGraw, Hootie and the Blowfish, Allison Krause and Billy Idol to name a few.
- A multi-media display illustrating the Company's history along with bikes and artifacts from its archives.
- Daily shows featuring motorcycle stunt riders and drill teams.
- A theatre seating 2,000 with a movie looking at the Harley's role in cinema.
- A children's pavilion where kids could ride on Fisher-Price Harley-Davidson motorcycle toys.
- A biker fashion show and Culture Exhibit where visitors could try on new and vintage clothes.
- A Story Booth where participants could share their Harley experiences.

The Open Road Tour offered everything and anything Harley Davidson. To get a feel for the magnitude of the event, [click here](#).⁴

Marriott Corp

Last year, Marriott took its 80th Anniversary celebration outside the company to help those less fortunate. While CEO Bill Marriott worked at the non-profit DC Central Kitchen, 150,000 Marriott employees world-wide gave their time to the "Spirit to Serve" day. A fitting way, not only to share the Anniversary event among employees, but to emphasize the fact that Marriott's corporate culture is built on the ethic of service. Activities included cleaning-up Atlanta's largest city park, building homes for Habitat for Humanity in Thailand, and a walk-a-thon for hungry children in Dubai. To see the YouTube video of CEO Bill Marriott at the DC Central kitchen, [click here](#).⁵

Mont Blanc

For a totally over-the-top experience, one should consider the Centennial Celebration of Mont Blanc, maker of luxury accessories. Over 1,500 guests were invited to the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH) in Geneva, Switzerland. The event took place at

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a replica of the summit of Mont Blanc. Guests also attended a champagne reception aboard an original Airbus.⁶

Polaris

In June of 1999, the small town of Roseau, Minnesota grew to seven-times its normal size when it hosted the 45th Anniversary of Polaris, the company that created the snowmobile for fun. Thousands of owners, employees, dealers and vendors celebrated in the town where Polaris got its start. What made the event unique, however, was the fact that many attendees used Polaris vehicles to get to the celebration. A number of Canadians traveled 1,500 miles on Polaris snowmobiles adapted for pavement driving, while another group made their 900-mile trip on the Ranger off-road utility vehicle. Others participated by joining a cross-state motorcycle tour from Minneapolis on Victory bikes.⁷

Sports Illustrated

Sport Illustrated celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a year-long multi-media campaign focusing on the grassroots of American sports. This grassroots theme became an integrated look at the ways in which sports reinforces America's sense of community. SI produced special magazine issues profiling particular sports unique to each of the 50 states.

Mirroring the state-by-state segments, the Sports Illustrated 50th Anniversary Tour visited many of the sites featured in the magazine. In addition to the Tour, Toyota also sponsored Toyota Field; an enclosed theater showcasing the greatest sports moments of the past 50 years. Best Buy also participated with exhibits of the latest consumer technology. In additions, SI.com provided interactive editorial features reflecting events taking place throughout the year.⁸

Tabasco

For its 125th Anniversary advertising campaign, Tabasco's ad agency helped design a collection of cookbooks, posters and catalogs capitalizing on the universally recognized red and green label, virtually unchanged in the 125 years of shifting culture and art. In addition, a series of anniversary art prints were created with the iconic Tabasco bottle representing the style 6 important art movements over the last 125 years: Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism, Actionism and Neo-Objectivism.¹

Tenneco Gas

Tenneco Gas wanted to focus on its employees when it planned activities for its 50th Anniversary. It chose to create a road show to be taken to all of its locations around the country.

Connecting all of the activities was a functional nine-foot-high scrapbook. An actor dressed in 1940's Tenneco work clothes opened and closed the scrapbook and spoke with employees and visitors who viewed the exhibit. After viewing the display, participants at each location

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took a quiz based on the presentation. A winner was chosen at each site and received \$2,500.00 in company stock.¹

WD-40

For its Golden Anniversary, WD-40 chose a couple of promotions to engage its fans (yes, it actually has a Fan Club) and customers. For starters, it produced a commemorative can with an instant-win game piece qualifying the buyer to win a Dodge truck. Secondly, WD-40 sponsored an online poll, called the "Great State Debate" which decided the best uses of the lubricant in each of the 50 states. For each vote cast, the Company donated 50 cents to the nonprofit organization, Rebuilding Together.⁹

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