

Company jubilees – the ideal opportunity for PR and marketing measures!

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Company jubilees provide the perfect opportunity to intensify contacts, both with the known public and the unknown public. Initially, jubilees usually conjure up thoughts of a celebration and awards to deserving staff. This prime PR and marketing event is too elaborate to waste on just a celebration. It needs a vision, a guiding principle to highlight traditions and present a future-oriented corporate culture.

Keywords: Company jubilees, marketing opportunities, essentials of a jubilee, detailed planning

Celebrations with a purpose

Just like a person's birthday, the celebration of round figure jubilees in companies and institutions has become a regular tradition. The way in which these jubilees are celebrated has undergone a striking change during the past few years, which can be best described as a change from "smug self-indulgence to an effective self-portrayal".

Each company jubilee offers ideal opportunities to familiarize the public and, in particular, selected target groups with the company. Generally speaking, the region in which the company is located and the local press take immediate notice of a jubilee. In the case of companies operating on a national or international basis, awareness is even more intense and broader-based.

To be a success, a company jubilee must, firstly, have a specific and imaginative company concept. Secondly, its preparation and implementation require precise timing.

Which jubilees should be celebrated?

There is an order of importance for jubilees which should not be overlooked if the target public is to be addressed in the best possible way in each case. Since each jubilee addresses various target groups at the same time, its content is significant. For example:

The 10-year jubilee:

This birthday is the "least important" of all the jubilees. A brief retrospective is all that is necessary. The local, regional and trade press are invited. An invitation to local authority representatives to drop in for drinks is usual. Many companies take this opportunity to introduce themselves for the first time in the form of a brochure. Celebrations for a 20-year jubilee usually follow similar lines to the 10-year jubilee. If a company is doing well financially, there is greater scope for measures that correspond to the company's own self-confidence.

The 25-year jubilee:

This jubilee is the first "real" one and celebrations are mostly greater in scope. As a rule, the basic pattern is as follows: formal celebration, then a lavish staff celebration. In addition, a gift is presented on this festive occasion - for example, in the form of a work of art or a prize for outstanding achievement to a teaching establishment or institute of higher education.

The 50-year jubilee:

The 50-year jubilee is more comprehensive and festive in scope. Generally speaking, preparations start 2 - 3 years prior to the event. Under favourable conditions, the founder(s) is/are still active in the business and the formal celebration is often dedicated to a retrospective. This is the best method of thanking the founders and honouring their achievements. 50-year jubilees also permit an insight into how the balance of power between old and young is maintained within a company.

A 50-year jubilee is frequently an occasion to take a serious look at corporate identity and, in particular, its visual expression, its corporate design. Letterheads and printed matter of all kinds are revised, new brochures printed and additional information material prepared.

The 100-year jubilee:

The classic! The famous milestone in company history which cannot be overlooked. In terms of theme, the 100-year jubilee is "set in a broader context" - at the very least at sector level, or even on a national or an international scale.

The 125-, 150- or 175-year jubilees:

Once again, these are jubilees to be celebrated on a major scale. The scope of festivities depends on various criteria, such as finances, mood at management level, etc.

For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that, for PR purposes, **personal anniversaries** (e.g. the 75th birthday of the President of the Board in a family concern) are worth exploiting, as are celebrations in larger **departments** in an energetic company (e.g. "25 years of Quality Control") or **subsidiaries** (e.g. 10-year celebration of a branch in French-speaking Switzerland).

Possible aims of jubilee celebrations

A company jubilee offers

- An opportunity for internal orientation
 - retrospective look
 - analysis of a company's actual position
 - future prospects, revision of strategy

In addition, celebratory events offer an opportunity to

- **Offer thanks to everyone**
 - staff, both at home and abroad
 - customers
 - suppliers
 - investors

Jubilees are not just occasions for happy celebrations. Nowadays, jubilees are being seized as a welcome tool for marketing and PR image-making purposes:

- **Ideal opportunity for marketing and PR**

Jubilees furnish companies with an image and reaffirm (or correct!) the extent to which they are known among their relevant target groups, particularly important partners in the world of finance, purchasing and marketing.

Jubilees should also initiate new campaigns. In this way, they are valuable

- Catalysts for new campaigns
 - to launch new products
 - to inaugurate new buildings and/or installations
 - to form new companies, etc.

"Essentials" of a jubilee

A company jubilee cannot fail to be a success if the following essential factors are taken into consideration:

- staff celebration
- formal celebration with guest speaker
- jubilee press conference
- an "Open Day"
- a Customers' / Suppliers' Day
- accompanying publications

Staff are decidedly the focal point of any jubilee events. A lavish **staff celebration** as a jubilee event will hold long-lasting memories. Whether this is a nostalgic boat trip, a party in a circus tent or in a specially-decorated factory workshop, the important thing is to involve staff at various management levels right from the very start (both in preparations and implementation).

The "major **festive event**" takes many guises. In most cases, it has a long-lasting motivating effect within the company. The event can be held in a leading hotel or on the company's own premises. It can be a classic banquet or a symposium. The important fact is that it clarifies the company's position in its political and business environment. It is a discreet way of showing who you are! Even if this only happens every fifty years or so! A great deal of importance must be ascribed to the speakers, since "great orators" are few and far between. Two criteria are vital for the "greatness" of a speaker - his position and his oratorical powers. A major personality who speaks at a company's jubilee celebrations is the jewel in the crown for any celebration.

The selection of a "large and meaningful gift" causes fewer headaches than the choice of a guest speaker! Local authorities and towns are always pleased to receive a pre-arranged **jubilee gift**. In addition, there is a long list of charitable institutions that are grateful for a donation destined for a particular purpose. If gifts fail to create the desired effect, this is due to the conditions involved when making the selection. The donor often selects a gift which only corresponds to his own interests and not those of the recipient. It is frequently the case that jubilee gifts end up in museums and on street corners and nobody knows how they originated.

A **jubilee press conference** is usually linked with the formal celebrations and requires particularly careful preparation where content is concerned.

Events such as an "**Open Day**" or a "**Customers'/Suppliers' Day**" demand large-scale, detailed planning, preferably by one's own staff. It is always worth the effort, since this type of jubilee activity creates a particularly long-term effect.

Temporary PR events during the jubilee year are not sufficient! To ensure that the jubilee message really does get through to target groups, additional measures and information are needed. The achievements of a company as a manufacturer and employer with economic importance for the region and the market cannot be conclusively honoured either by factory tours or formal ceremonies. **For this purpose, longer-term, supplementary PR measures are required, such as video, slide shows or written information in the form of brochures, jubilee publications, etc.**

Success is only achieved through detailed planning!

The countdown has started! - This leads us straight into the comprehensive preparatory work for a company jubilee. It is wise to make an early start with preparations. Internal preparations for the celebrations require careful project management, a practical organization chart and clear authorities (including budget) for the realization of the individual assignments.

Planning must start on schedule - never trust anyone who spreads jovial optimism by saying: "We've still got two years' time!". At this stage, the countdown is already running at full speed. Put another way, what are your chances of finding, one year before the celebration, for example in Lucerne, Interlaken or Montreux, a room to seat 500 people, the necessary ships for a special lake trip and sufficient coaches for transport there and back? The last-mentioned could be easy, but the rest soon takes on the character of Russian roulette. What is more: do not put too much faith in planning. Whether a circus tent is erected in time for the main ceremony or whether your jubilee flags flutter in weatherproof condition from the facade of head office or all your trucks sport a clean jubilee emblem, this mostly depends on the numerous "willing spirits" in the background. Then there is the entire infrastructure to think about - from the jubilee sticker to hassle-free parking. Do not simply put your trust in clever project designers - remember the "rank and file". They have probably never heard the buzzword "logistics", but they are the ones who still do most of the legwork.

A company that sets great store by long-term information policies and PR will take the utmost pains with details resp. the detailed planning of each individual PR event.

Jubilees are time-consuming!

Jubilees are a time-consuming form of communication. Perfect organization demands a high level of personal involvement and - as already mentioned - long-term preparation. PR events are of major importance for polishing the company's image. No other means can address their target public so precisely, over such a lengthy period and with such an after-effect as jubilee events. The benefits are obvious:

Benefits of jubilees:

- The jubilee message can be communicated precisely almost without dispersion losses.
- The jubilee message is generally well received since it addresses people who are prepared to accept it.
- There are good opportunities for direct control of the success of jubilee activities.

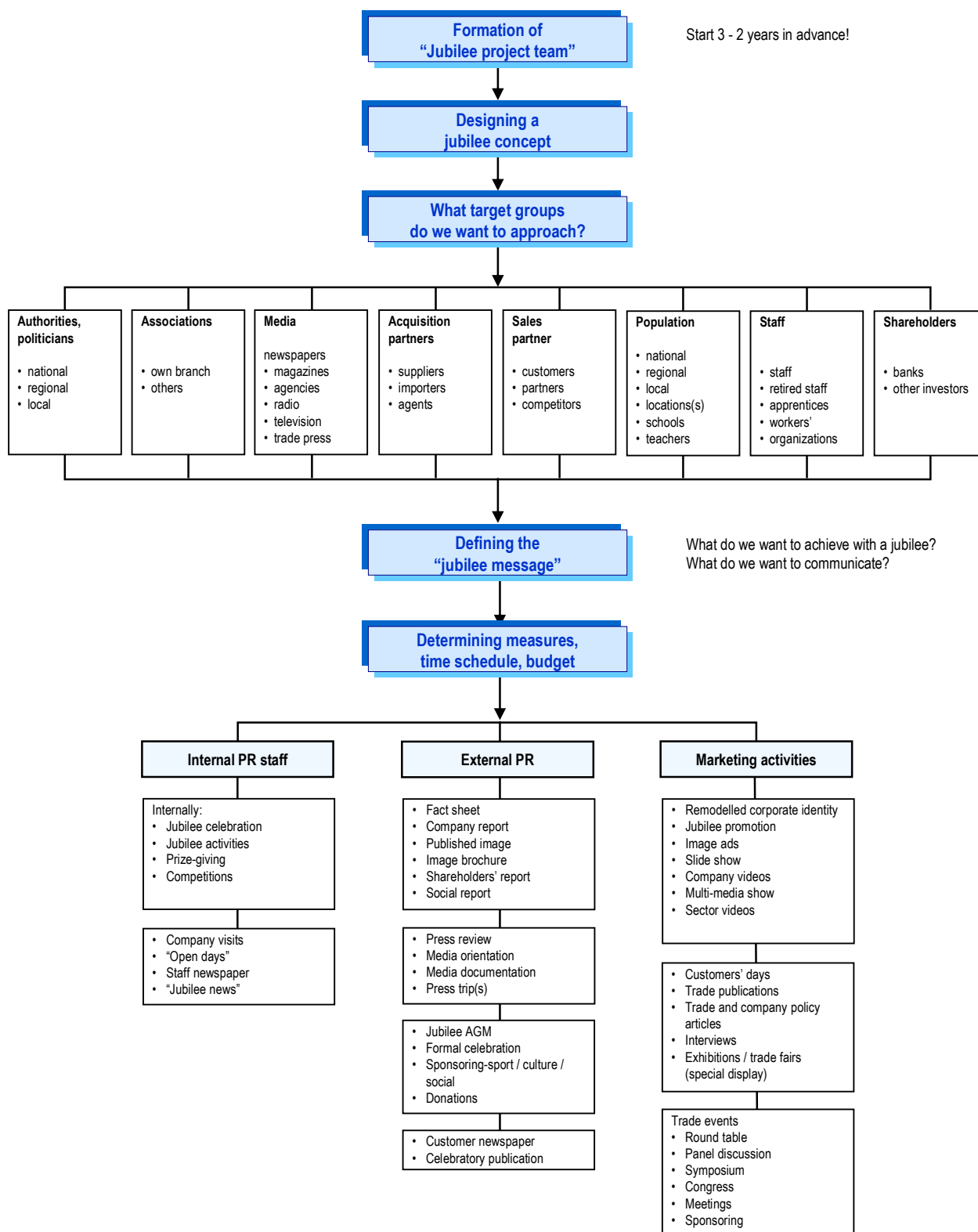
Where costs are concerned, care should be taken with each jubilee event to see that costs do not soar out of all proportion. Communicating the message is of prime importance as well as personal contact. Goodwill is created less by expensive gifts or gourmet dinners. On the other hand, good organization, natural hospitality, appropriate refreshments and comprehensive attention to detail are highly appreciated.

Warning: Don't forget the "follow-up"!

If the jubilee is a roaring success - and this is no rarity! - company management is often so fed up with the long-term extra involvement that they restrict marketing communication to a minimum during the follow-up period to the activities. A happy medium must be aimed at. New relations formed during the jubilee with one's own staff, suppliers, customers, authorities and the press must be promoted and strengthened. Otherwise the goodwill bonus earned by the jubilee will soon be lost.

A timely and well-prepared jubilee provides a magnificent opportunity to better define the company's self-image, to more soundly anchor its position in business and society and give it an unmistakable appearance. This, in turn, forms the basis for a longer-term position of trust with the media and the public. If a company jubilee is oriented towards target groups and the media, there will be no worries about how well-known the company is. The opportunity has been seized to be well-remembered for a long time to come.

Checklist The successful implementation of a company jubilee



Details on individual jubilee events

"Staff party"

Activity:

Target:

- As a thank you
- Promoting motivation and identification with the company

Points worth noting:

- Involve staff at all levels early in the preparations.
- Encourage ideas to be put forward.
- Design the party to be the highlight of the year-long jubilee.
- Include spouses.

"Formal jubilee celebration"

Activity:

Target:

- Invite authorities, associations, investors, key suppliers, key customers.
- Increase popularity and cement important relationships.
- Promote acceptance in local region (possibly even throughout Switzerland).

Points worth noting:

- Determine an outline theme at an early stage.
- Prompt announcement with invitations to speakers, representatives of authorities and guests of honour (1 year in advance).
- Compose documentation on the company celebrating its jubilee.
- Presentation of jubilee gift.

"Customer / supplier day"

Activity:

Target:

- Cement personal contacts.
- Demonstration of company achievements in-house.
- Improve acquisition marketing, supplier care.
- Improving contacts in the marketing sectors, care of sales partner!

Points worth noting:

- Individual group tours are more meaningful, the more heterogeneous the company's product range is.
- Offer the opportunity for an exchange of experience.
- The deputies of contact persons are important.
- Give-away gifts.
- Distribution of company documentation.

"Open Day"

Activity:

Target:

- Increase general level of awareness.
- Put down roots in the area.
- Intensive personal marketing,

Points worth noting:

- "Smarten up" building and installations.
- Place advertisements in regional press.
- Regional press conference on the day before.
- Special inserts in local media publications.
- Precise tour route through factory, info stands.
- Courtesy service from the station.
- First aid post, children's playroom.
- Demonstrations and various attractions (competitions, music, shows, balloon starts, etc.).
- Marquee and simple refreshments.
- Print documentation ("The company at a glance", easy-to-read maps of the tour routes through the factory premises).
- Information boards (orientation within the company, where toilets can be found, etc.)
- Viewing rooms for video, slide show, etc.
- Prepare speakers for demonstrations.
- Give small gifts to visitors.
- Set up a stall to sell company stickers, blousons, T shirts, scarves, lighters, pens or other corporate design articles.
- Invite former staff.
- Invite school classes (future apprentices).
- It is important that members of corporate management are present throughout the entire day.

Celebratory jubilee publication

Activity:

Target:

- Comprehensive presentation of the achievements and the economic importance of the celebrating company.
- Use the publications as a central jubilee gift.
- Create a work of lasting value (effective beyond the jubilee activities).
- Medium for contact with as many target groups as possible.

Points worth noting:

- Put together project management and project team at an early stage (2 - 3 years beforehand).
- Project team composed of:
 - ° Coordinator / project manager
 - ° Company representative with power of decision
 - ° Texter
 - ° Photographer
 - ° Graphic designer
- Clear order and schedule for project management.
- The less the celebrating companies focus on themselves in the publication, the greater the success (suggest visions instead of self-congratulatory phrases...)

Additional jubilee activities

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jubilee advertising campaign (image polishing) - Company brochure - Company background - Slide show - Video film - Jubilee newsletter - Jubilee business report - Jubilee press conference - Meeting with the press to start the year - Special day for the trade press - Special exhibitions at locations with high traffic throughput (such as museums, shopping centres, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsoring of cultural activities (concerts, exhibitions, etc.) - Exhibition of historic products - Jubilee emblem and sticker - Jubilee postmark as advertising, flags - Self-liquidators |
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