



THE HARTFORD

BICENTENNIAL PLAN



SITUATION

As The Hartford Insurance Company approached its bicentennial in 2010, there were few, if any, reasons for the iconic company to celebrate. Hit especially hard by the economic crisis and ensuing recession, the people at The Hartford had no time to think about celebrating 200 years in business — all focus was on the business and overcoming some of the most challenging obstacles in the company's illustrious history.

After the worst of the crisis had passed, it was clear that The Hartford had to recognize its bicentennial. The rare milestone that relatively few American companies have achieved could serve as an important rallying cry and platform for communicating The Hartford's heritage of resilience, stability and character. Just months before the bicentennial year began, The Hartford turned to The History Factory to develop and implement an appropriate program for a time like no other. Further complicating the already aggressive schedule were the restrictions of a company that had received TARP money, the launch of a new brand and a leadership transition that took place just weeks after we were engaged.

SOLUTION

We first facilitated a process with various stakeholders and company leaders to assess core objectives and success criteria for the bicentennial. Employee engagement to boost morale and intermediary engagement to strengthen relationships with independent agents were key focus areas. At the same time, we knew from experience that there was not enough time to deliver a program on a linear schedule. Parallel tracks would be necessary so that while the bicentennial concept was in development, content was being created at the same time.

Within weeks a bicentennial plan outlining the strategy and program was created, shortly followed by a Story Palette, which provided The Hartford's marketing, advertising and communications teams a resource for historical content in their bicentennial-related creative work.

We also developed an arsenal of bicentennial communications tactics, which included exhibits and publications for agent sales meetings, environmental graphics for offices across the company and a series of mini-documentaries used for the media push and other communications efforts.

RESULTS

The Hartford's anniversary program was an important part of the company's turnaround in 2010. The bicentennial internal communications program achieved higher rates of employee participation than any prior initiative. The bicentennial theme and supporting stories reinforcing key strategic messages were integrated across executive, investor relations and media relations. Success for the program was not only defined by its impact, but also by how it was implemented. In mere months, The History Factory developed and delivered a cost-effective program that could have taken more than a year to produce.