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How to Get the Biggest Bang from Your Company's Anniversary

BY KIM KELLEY, FRBMA

Do you have that nagging feeling that something big is happening this year and you should do *something* to promote it? If your business is approaching an anniversary, well, it's time to plan a party! But before you jump up to order balloons and champagne, consider the many creative ways you can leverage your company's celebration.

It doesn't matter whether your business has been established for five, 15, or 50 years or beyond, the anniversary of the day you opened your doors or began providing a professional service can be a powerful marketing tool. Your celebration is the perfect way to demonstrate longevity and an opportunity to reinforce brand loyalty. Not only will this strengthen relationships with current customers, it will also boost the morale of employees.

Pulling together a celebration worthy of your company's milestones, however, requires putting a myriad of details into place. Look beyond thinking of your celebration as a single evening affair. Instead, use the anniversary to attract positive attention to your company's strengths and services resulting in creating a sense of confidence and credibility surrounding your business. Don't panic! You don't have to come up with everything on your own. Many companies hire a marketing firm to assist with the planning, budgeting, and implementation.

Here are some tips and ideas to get you headed in the right direction:

Plan ahead

Avoid the mad dash and start planning early. Dig into company archives to find historical photos and stories. Work with shareholders and long-term employees to capture memories that can be used to create a company video or other memorabilia that may take time to design, produce, or print. Alternatively, you could stage an art contest where employees can create a winning concept for a t-shirt that they can wear leading up to and during the celebratory period on casual Fridays.

Get your creative assets in order

An anniversary is a great excuse to think about the relevancy of your brand. If your logo and website are feeling outdated, you can stir up some hype with a refreshed look and some new swag.

Create an anniversary version of your logo to boast that your company is one with a proud history. Design this version so that it clearly states how long your company has been in business. Put it on all your celebration collateral, your website, and in email signatures.


Share your story and milestones

Gather the photos, stories, and memories you collected earlier in the planning phase and put them to work for you. Create an anniversary page on your website. Lead visitors through your company's years in business with an interactive timeline, or a video, and showcase milestones and how the journey has been meaningful—maybe with how things have changed over the years or things you've learned along the way.

Next, pitch the media on why your company matters to your community. Invite them to your business or event to capture a piece of the excitement. Consider planning employee events where they volunteer to give back through a special day of service, or your organization gives a \$10,000 donation to a foundation in honor of 10 years in business. Compelling and newsworthy stories such as these should attract your local reporters.

Now, get out on social media and share it. Your followers will enjoy getting to know the personal side of your business. Organize a contest with fun giveaways to thank them for their loyalty over the years. Develop a series of posts numbered for the years or decades to share memories and photos and to drive traffic back to the anniversary page on your website.

Celebrate

Make the most of the anniversary by celebrating all year. Treat your staff to monthly lunches, sponsor local events, have an open house, provide company logo-wear to your employees, but above all, have fun and celebrate! Your company is among a select group of succeeding enterprises. 



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