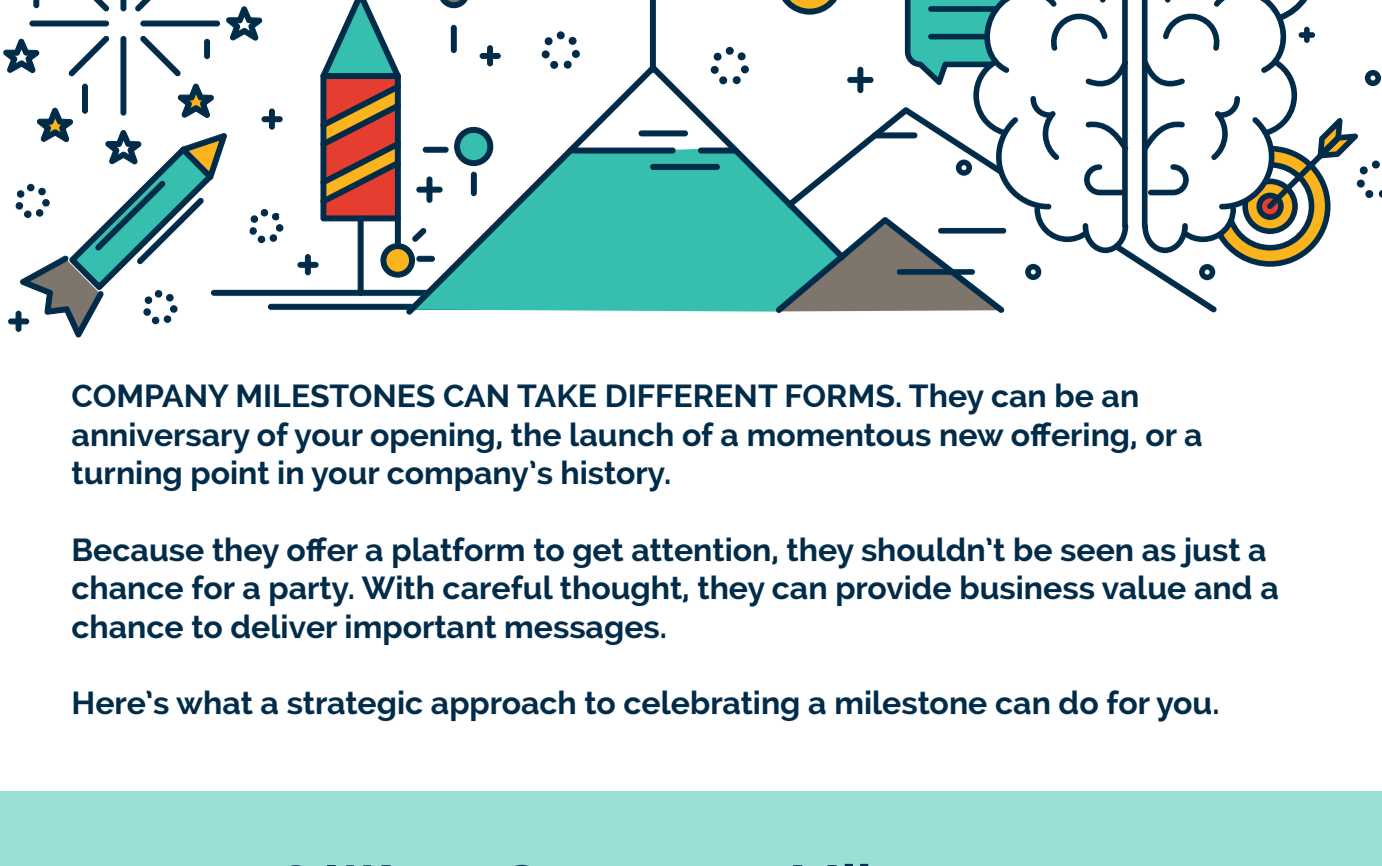


HOW TO MAKE YOUR COMPANY MILESTONES & ANNIVERSARIES A SMART BUSINESS STRATEGY

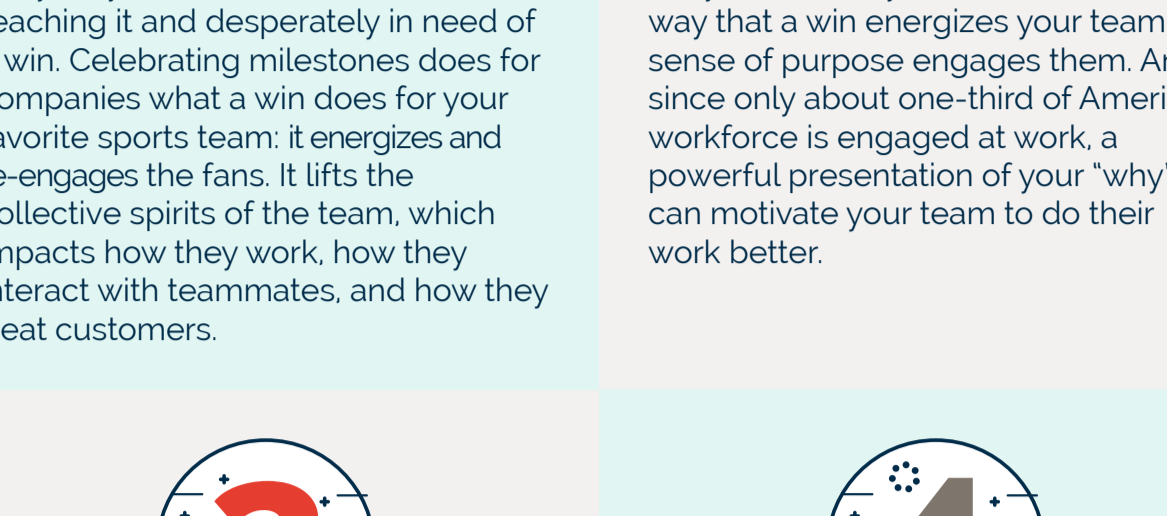


COMPANY MILESTONES CAN TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS. They can be an anniversary of your opening, the launch of a momentous new offering, or a turning point in your company's history.

Because they offer a platform to get attention, they shouldn't be seen as just a chance for a party. With careful thought, they can provide business value and a chance to deliver important messages.

Here's what a strategic approach to celebrating a milestone can do for you.

8 Ways Company Milestones Can Build Your Business



1

ENERGIZE YOUR TEAM

Your people have likely been working hard to get you to this milestone. They may have been laser-focused on reaching it and desperately in need of a win. Celebrating milestones does for companies what a win does for your favorite sports team: it energizes and re-engages the fans. It lifts the collective spirits of the team, which impacts how they work, how they interact with teammates, and how they treat customers.

2

REVISIT YOUR "WHY"

A close relative of celebrating the win is the chance to shine the light on the "why" that fuels your work. In the same way that a win energizes your team, a sense of purpose engages them. And since only about one-third of America's workforce is engaged at work, a powerful presentation of your "why" can motivate your team to do their work better.

3

CREATE MOMENTUM

A milestone signals success, which has a halo effect. It's easy to conclude that if your company has been successful up to this point, then success must be in your future, as well. Celebrated with this in mind, a milestone can become fuel for future wins.

4

RECOGNIZE EFFORT

Recognition is vital to engagement. Celebrating a milestone is a perfect time to harness the power of recognition that creates stronger ties with the people you count on—employees, donors, volunteers, and customers.

5

CAST A VISION

An event like this provides a platform for casting your vision for the future. Besides celebrating success, you now have the eyes on you and can deliver strategic messages that will inspire support.

6

GET NOTICED

Significant milestones make news and get your story in front of more people than you might normally reach. Capitalizing on this gives you another opportunity to get media attention and to be seen and heard.

7

REINFORCE YOUR CULTURE

The ideas that got you to this point are important. Reinforcing them at a time like this gives people more reasons to connect with your company, as they find resonance with your values and mission. Those who know your story will have a chance to re-enter it; those who don't, can experience it for the first time.

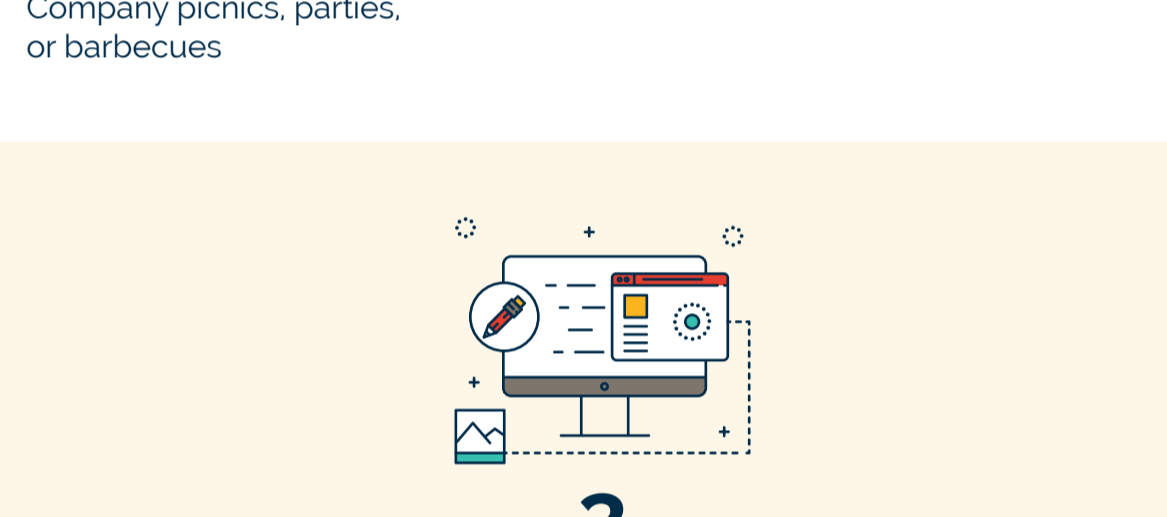
8

YOUR CONTRIBUTION MESSAGE

Most of your marketing campaigns are focused on a product or service, and don't leave room for the contribution message. Milestones are the perfect place to unpack how you're giving and supporting your community or industry.

There's no rule about which milestones you should celebrate. Whenever you have a story to tell, however, a milestone gives your message immediacy—which makes it more likely to get traction.

10 Ways To Deliver Your Milestone Message



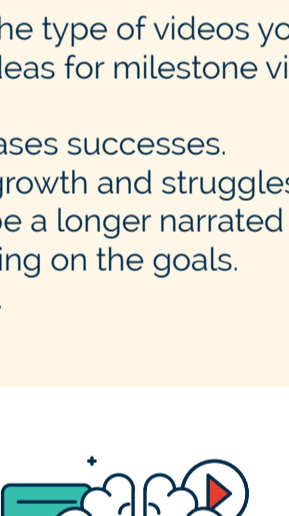
The most important reason to invest in celebrating a company anniversary or other milestone is to use it as a platform to tell your story and energize your supporters. Here are some ways you can tell your story.



1 USE YOUR OWN SPACES TO TELL YOUR STORY

Why shouldn't every person who enters your facility be met by your story? Since there are no media buying fees, this is an affordable option that reaches both your external and internal audience. Consider:

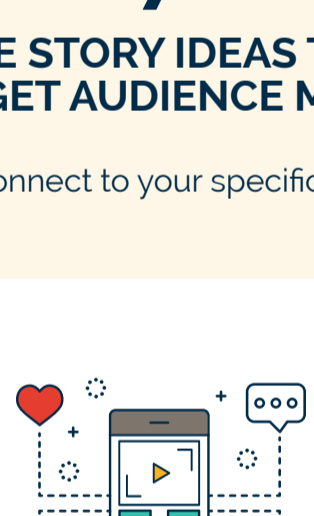
- Elevator or stair wraps
- Internal building banner
- External building banner or wrap
- Window signage
- Screen savers
- Digital displays
- Portable pop-up banners
- Banners on your campus streets and walkways



2 CREATE NEW EVENTS AND USE EXISTING EVENTS TO TELL YOUR STORY

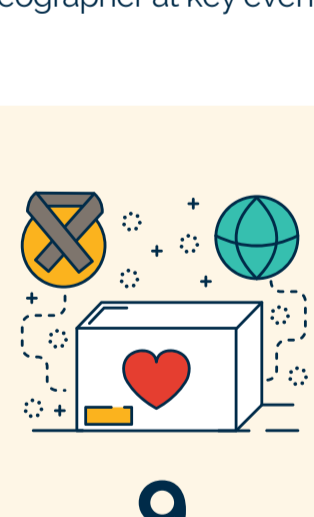
You already have standing events internally—so why not bring your story into them? Show your video, bring your pop-up banners, and share printed material at your:

- Fund-raising gala
- Employee forums
- Company picnics, parties, or barbecues
- Community events
- Team meetings



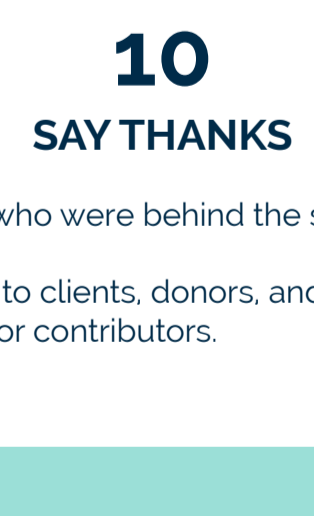
3 CREATE A DIGITAL LANDING PAGE

Dedicate a web page to your milestone messages, complete with time lines, video, and content about your successes. This can be on your existing website or a freestanding digital landing page that links to your website—and should be where you point all digital traffic to so you can track your traffic analytics.



4 FOR MAJOR MILESTONES, CREATE A DIGITAL OR PRINT HISTORY BROCHURE OR BOOK

Sharing your history isn't about dates, but about showing how your company has faced and overcome challenges and built successes. Revisiting these reveals how your mission and values have driven your organization in the past, and offers wisdom for the future.



5 CREATE A VIDEO STRATEGY

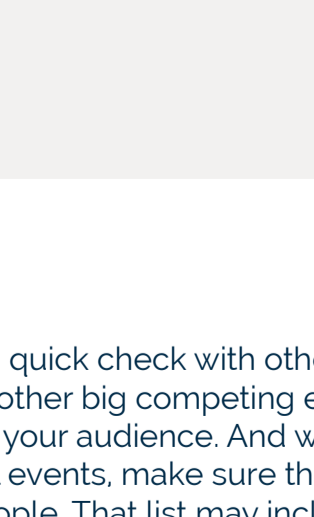
A video strategy should include the type of videos you want, and how you plan to distribute them. Here are a few ideas for milestone videos:

- Celebration video that showcases successes.
- History video that shows the growth and struggles of the organization that have led to this moment. This can be a longer narrated or interview-driven video, or a short motion graphic, depending on the goals.
- Interviews with historic voices.



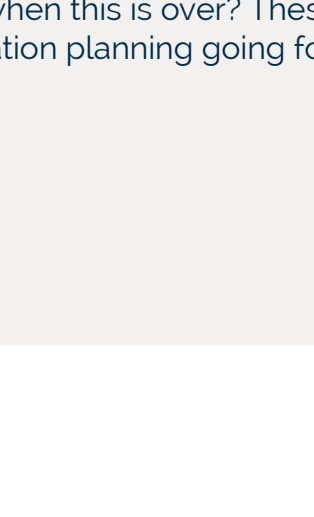
6 CREATE SOME VERSATILE COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- Create an anniversary icon that uses on social media and promo materials.
- Create a business card that says "Thanks for being part of our story" and can be used to drive traffic to your landing page.



7 PROVIDE STORY IDEAS TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE MEDIA

- Look for fresh angles that connect to your specific audience.



8 CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN THAT ENGAGES YOUR AUDIENCE

- Create a calendar of posts that unpack your key messages.
- Use shortened clips from your videos and other communication content as social media posts.
- Have a photographer and videographer at key events to create social media content.

9 GIVE BACK

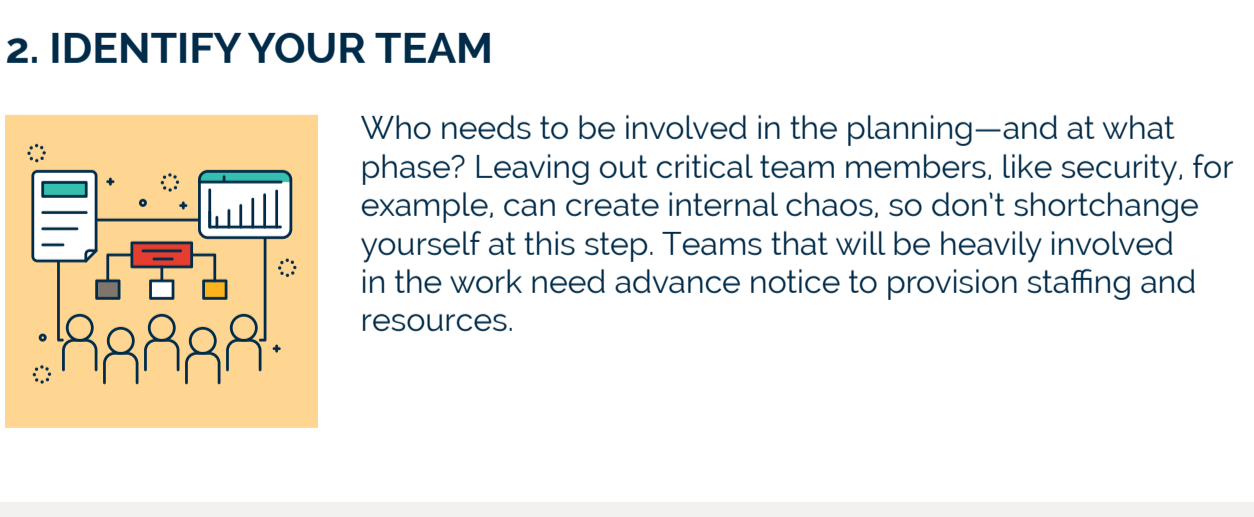
- Adopt a local cause for a year.
- Sponsor a charity.
- Sponsor a community event that reflects your values.

10 SAY THANKS

Find ways to thank the people who were behind the success, like:

- Writing personal note cards to clients, donors, and key employees.
- Giving exclusive gifts to major contributors.
- Honor key people at events.

5 Things To Do Before You Start Planning



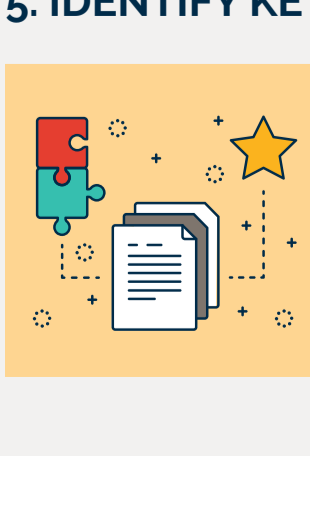
Once you've decided to celebrate your milestone or anniversary, here are the first things you'll want to do.

1. IDENTIFY THE BUSINESS GOAL YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE



You don't need another event to plan, another communication plan to make, unless it is going to advance your strategy or align with your values. So be clear on this from the start, and make sure you have buy-in from all of the key players who will be needed to make this successful.

2. IDENTIFY YOUR TEAM



Who needs to be involved in the planning—and at what phase? Leaving out critical team members, like security, for example, can create internal chaos, so don't shortchange yourself at this step. Teams that will be heavily involved in the work need advance notice to provision staffing and resources.

3. CREATE A PLAN, BUDGET, AND TIMELINE



Sometimes your administrative team will tell you to propose a budget, or sometimes they will give you a budget in advance. If you're proposing a budget, linking it to a compelling business strategy and desired outcomes can help you obtain funding.

4. SECURE KEY DATES

Make a quick check with other calendars to be sure there isn't another big competing event happening that would impact your audience. And whether you'll have one or several events, make sure the dates get on the calendars of key people. That list may include leaders, board members, donors, volunteers, venues, caterers, and speakers.

5. IDENTIFY KEY MESSAGES

What are the top two or three ideas you want everyone to know when this is over? These will inform all of your communication planning going forward.

SUMMARY

For a substantial anniversary, like 100 years, a major corporation may spend one or two years planning, while a smaller business might spend a few months. Whatever you decide, make it a celebration that infuses fun, wisdom, and gratitude into your organization.