

11-29-75

Reaching a round-numbered birthday -- tenth, twentieth, fiftieth, or whichever -- was formerly unusual enough for merely an announcement to have significant and favorable impact for an organization. However, with even centennials becoming more frequent, it's now necessary to use imagination and put real effort into an anniversary celebration in order to produce a worthwhile effect. This means, too, that the activity must be truly newsworthy if it is to reach the attention of the general public through the media. One birthday celebration which lived up to those standards is that of R. J. Reynolds Industries, Inc. (RJR), Winston-Salem, NC, which celebrated its 100th in 1975.

(From a one-product -- plug tobacco -- maker founded in 1875, it had grown into an international, five-industry -- tobacco, foods, petroleum, freight transportation, and packaging -- organization with nearly \$5,000,000,000 in annual sales, one third of them outside the U.S.A. in 140 other countries, 33,000 employees similarly dispersed, and 121,000 stockholders.

A major celebration seemed appropriate and top management called upon Ronald Sustana, Director of Corporate PR, to develop and carry out a year-long program. With the aid of Peter O. Allen, Manager of Corporate Communications, and their staff of ten, eight principal features and/or activities were developed. These involved or reached all of RJR's publics, the major one, of course, being people in general because of the wide distribution of the company's consumer goods.

First step was creation of a centennial symbol and commemorative coin, designs for the two sides of the latter being used in the centers of the zeroes of the "100" that formed the outline of the symbol. This was in RJR's "corporate" blue; the designs in gold. (The coins were of bronze.) One zero contained the head and shoulders of founder Richard Joshua Reynolds with his first plant, known as the "Little Red Factory," in the background; the other carried a picture of

the globe surmounted by the RJR logo and surrounded by depictions of the main areas of the company's business.

The symbol was used throughout the anniversary year: on all stationery, company phone books, special publications, etc.; as  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-long decals on the windows of employees' cars; and as a huge backdrop (of wood) at the annual meeting of the stockholders.

The commemorative coins were struck in two sizes: one approximately that of a silver dollar and the other, three inches in diameter for use as a paperweight. The 40,000 of the former were given to RJR employees (in person, if possible, by their supervisors) and mailed to the more than 4,000 retirees throughout the world. The paperweights, of which there were about 3,000, were presented to important customers, plant-community leaders, and other VIPs.

Paralleling development of the symbol and coins was preparation of a corporate history. This was the result of a joint effort by RJR's PR staff and Jeffrey Moriber, Vice President of Graphic Services of Hill and Knowlton, NYC, then RJR PR Counsel. The 32-page-long publication is 9x12 inches in size and devotes 70% of its space to about 100 illustrations, mostly color photographs. It is bound in paper and hard-cover editions (5,000 copies of the latter). Both the paperback and wrap-around for the hard-cover edition have the same cover design, which includes a montage of color photos of current-day RJR operations.

The text, in the words of one reviewer, while carrying "its share of" the customary "ego message," is a "readable and interesting account" of how the company evolved and includes "some great advertising flashbacks."

Initial distribution was to both employees and stockholders as a companion piece to the 1974 Annual Report, mailed in March 1975. Other copies, with a tab-on or letter signed by an appropriate RJR officer (e.g., Chairman Collin Stokes), were mailed to such groups as