

ASSA RECOGNITION AWARD 2016

PROJECT PROPONENT:

Pag-IBIG Fund (Home Development Mutual Fund) - Philippines

CATEGORY:

Strategic Communication Recognition Award

Organisations that have pushed the boundaries when it comes to their communications strategy in order to ensure they truly engage with their members using various communication channels.

1. NAME OF PROJECT:

I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG (I Do, I Do! Pag-IBIG Day)

2. OBJECTIVE AND NATURE OF THE PROJECT

“I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” is a non-traditional marketing strategy to promote Pag-IBIG Fund among its current and prospective members, showing them that Pag-IBIG Fund is a government agency that goes beyond providing housing finance and supports the building of happy families through legalisation of union of couples. For five years, from 2012 to 2016, Pag-IBIG Fund has owned February 14 as “Araw ng Pag-IBIG” (Pag-IBIG Day, day of love) as it sponsored mass weddings of couples, with at least one person in each couple being a Pag-IBIG member, in civil ceremonies held nationwide.

The project has the following **general objectives**:

- a. Use the project to own February 14 as “Araw ng Pag-IBIG” and to help communicate the importance of Pag-IBIG Fund membership and benefits by maximising the traditional tri-media of television, radio, and print, as well as the new media such as Facebook.
- b. Use the project to generate couple-participants and new members
- c. Use the project to strengthen Pag-IBIG Fund’s linkage and cooperation with partners from local government units (LGUs)

Here are its **specific objectives**:

- a. To provide a non-traditional marketing strategy that will further reinforce the image of Pag-IBIG Fund as an institution that “takes care” of the needs of its members
- b. To add further value to Pag-IBIG Fund membership and develop sense of loyalty among its members through the provision of other incentives and “feel good” activities like sponsorship of weddings
- c. To conduct a membership information dissemination, generation, and collection campaign
- d. To establish February 14 as Pag-IBIG Day (Araw ng Pag-IBIG), similar to the celebration of Labor Day by the Department of Labor and Employment
- e. To benefit members who cannot afford to hold decent wedding ceremonies
- f. To promote membership among the workers from the informal sector and other working groups
- g. To complement the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of Pag-IBIG Fund

Background

The implementation of Republic Act No. 9679, or the “Home Development Mutual Fund Law of 2009” starting January 1, 2010 called for ways to promote Pag-IBIG Fund membership among Filipino workers who are mandated by the law to register with Pag-IBIG. Pag-IBIG membership covers all Filipino workers earning at least P1,000 or USD21 (exchange rate at USD1 to P47.17) monthly, formally or informally employed, and located in the country or overseas. The challenge is to communicate Pag-IBIG Fund’s universal membership to all covered Filipino workers, from Batanes in the north to Jolo in the south, from the Philippines to the rest of the world where Filipino workers earn a living. The bigger challenge is to get them to register their membership, regularly remit their monthly membership savings, and eventually avail of the other programs of Pag-IBIG Fund for its members.

Starting in February 2012, and every February in the next four years, Pag-IBIG Fund experimented on an out-of-the-box marketing strategy of promoting Pag-IBIG membership by holding mass weddings in 118 locations nationwide participated in by 16,065 couples and gaining almost 14,000 new members for Pag-IBIG Fund.

To entice unmarried Pag-IBIG Fund members to participate in the annual event, the agency announced that participating couples will be entitled to the following: reception which includes meals, venue, music, and entertainment; symbolic gifts or wedding rings; give-aways; and eligibility to win raffle prizes. The Raffle Draw had a house & lot package listed among Pag-IBIG Fund’s acquired assets as the top prize each year. Kabuhayan (livelihood) Packages were also awarded yearly starting in 2013 to one couple from each of the five general areas in the Philippines: National Capital Region, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Minor prizes in the form of household appliances and other items were also given.

The annual “I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” successfully communicated to Filipino workers the importance of signing for Pag-IBIG membership. The project showed that Pag-IBIG Fund does not only provide housing finance but also looks into the welfare of its members by making sure that they are legally married. Legal union enables married Pag-IBIG members to enjoy the benefits of their spouses, including joint homeownership and death claims. More couples participated in more locations, and more new members registered with Pag-IBIG Fund. More new members for Pag-IBIG Fund equate to a bigger membership base to which the government agency will provide its twin mandates of savings mechanism and housing finance, and from which to source its funds, through collections of membership savings and loan amortisations.

Audience

“I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” primarily targeted Pag-IBIG Fund members and non-members who would want to legalise their union, specifically those who do not have enough financial means to do so. The five stagings of the “I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” from 2012 to 2016 have shown that there were thousands of members who wanted to be legally married to their partners. The number of members from the informal sector, who comprise most of the target participants given their low income, has grown through the years due to Pag-IBIG’s intensive membership campaign targeting associations of kasambahays, transport workers, market vendors, and other low-wage earners. Since Pag-IBIG Fund membership is for all Filipino

workers, the participants could be from anywhere in the Philippines. Overseas Filipino workers were also encouraged to join, although they had to come home for the ceremony.

The project also targeted to reach the Filipino workers worldwide who are earning at least P1,000 (USD21) a month. These workers are mandated by R.A. No. 9679 to register with Pag-IBIG Fund as members. Even if they did not directly participate in the project, they became aware of the importance of Pag-IBIG Fund membership, increasing the probability that they will register as Pag-IBIG Fund members. Even people younger or older than the working age range became part of the secondary audience exposed to mass media, since a Pag-IBIG Fund advertisement on its “I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” project has been shown in national television during each staging, radio interviews have been given, and stories on the project have been printed in newspapers of national circulation. The audience also included local government leaders since Pag-IBIG Fund partnered with several local government units (LGUs) in the holding of the project. The LGUs are among Pag-IBIG’s key partners in its provident and housing programs.

3. WHY IT SHOULD BE RECOGNISED

Pag-IBIG Fund’s “I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” held every February from 2012 to 2016 successfully showed that Pag-IBIG cares. It was a non-traditional marketing strategy that successfully promoted Pag-IBIG Fund among its current and prospective members and communicated to Filipino workers the importance of Pag-IBIG Fund membership by gaining media mileage and partnerships with local government units (LGUs). It was a venue for Pag-IBIG Fund to show that it is not only a savings institution and a provider of housing finance, but also a staunch supporter in the building of happy families through the formal union of couples. In addition to generating new members, the activity also served as an opportunity to inform the participants of the advantages that they can derive from Pag-IBIG Fund as a married couple.

Awards Received

The project has been previously recognised by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Philippines at the ***Philippine Quill Awards*** in 2013. For it, Pag-IBIG Fund became the first recipient of the Philippine Quill for a Government Communication Program.

In 2014, the project also placed Pag-IBIG Fund in the ***Pinoy Book of Records*** as having the “most number of couples in a nationwide mass wedding.” That year, 4,375 couples got married in 27 venues all over the Philippines.

Media Mileage

Pag-IBIG Fund saved millions of pesos worth of media mileage when the tri-media of television, radio, and print featured its “I Do, I Do! Araw ng Pag-IBIG” before, during, and after the event staged every February from 2012 to 2016.

The project gained free television mileage through the showing of the television coverage of the event in programs of the Philippines’ top three stations, ABS-CBN, GMA7, and TV5. Paid placements further yielded additional television mileage.

It gained free radio mileage through interviews given at several radio stations, including DZRB, DWIZ, DZAR, and DZRH. Free print mileage were also gained in several major broadsheets (including Manila Bulletin, Manila Standard, Manila Times, Malaya) and tabloids (including Bandera, Tempo, People's Journal, Remate, Balita).

Online awareness of Pag-IBIG Fund and the project was established through posting of project updates on the Pag-IBIG Fund website, www.pagibigfund.gov.ph, and Facebook page, Facebook/Pag-IBIG Fund (HDMF) and event videos on YouTube/Pag-IBIG Fund Official Channel.

Generated participants and new members, strengthened partnerships

From 2012 to 2016, Pag-IBIG Fund was able to wed 16,065 couples in 118 venues nationwide, and generated almost 14,000 new members. The annual event strengthened Pag-IBIG Fund's linkage and cooperation with local government units and regional offices of the Department of Tourism, since the venues were at some of the country's top tourist attractions and chief cities and municipalities.