

#PRAwards highlight: How Sun Life Malaysia improved both consumer and brand health

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Sun Life Malaysia (SLM) has always branded itself as not just an insurance company, but also a company that helps Malaysians live healthier lives physically and mentally. With its slew of corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns, it is no wonder the brand won the bronze award for "Best CSR Communication" at *Marketing* and *A+M's PR Awards 2020*.

With the aim of advocating the importance of leading a healthier and sustainable lifestyle, SLM launched a year-long programme in 2019 to get Malaysians to live healthier lives. The multi-pronged marketing and engagement approach consisted of a huge range of activities targeted at different aspects of individuals' health, as well as supported the underprivileged in the country. Here's a look at how SLM got Malaysians moving and the judges grooving.

Challenge

With the evolution of technology, healthy living has taken a backseat in terms of importance due to the busy schedules and poor eating habits of Malaysians. The challenge of eating proper meals and exercising regularly have caused most to neglect their health, which then affects quality of life and leads to serious conditions like stroke, heart attack, cancer, and also psychological conditions like depression and sleep difficulties.

Malaysia has created headlines as Asia's fattest country with almost half of the population overweight or obese. Based on the World Health Organisation classification, the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults (18 years and above) were 30% and 17.7% respectively in 2015, compared to 16.6% and 4.4% respectively in 1996.

As one of the leading insurance companies in Malaysia, SLM placed a key purpose on helping people achieve lifetime financial security and live healthier lives – financially, physically, and mentally.

Strategy

With this aim in mind, SLM looked to conceptualise an outreach campaign to advocate the importance of leading a healthier and sustainable lifestyle with a multi-pronged marketing and engagement approach directed towards general Malaysians aged 18 to 40, including the underprivileged community. At the same time, SLM was seeking to raise its brand awareness and build brand affinity amongst Malaysians that are concerned about their health and well-being.

Hence, a series of health-related engagement activations was required to effectively reach out to the target audience, connect with them in a meaningful manner, and create awareness on all fronts as a means to inculcate the passion and impart knowledge of health lifestyle living. The ultimate aim would be for Malaysians to proactively embrace an active and healthy lifestyle for a brighter life. The programme ran from January 2019 and ran until November 2019.

As part of SLM's plan to effectively reach out to its target of Malaysians and the underprivileged communities, SLM embarked on a year-long engagement drive spanning across multiple platforms to drive home its business purpose of helping Malaysians achieve lifetime financial security and live healthier lives while enjoying better quality of life.

Through the "Live Healthier Lives" (LHL) programme, targeted community outreach engagements and programmes covering health and sustainability efforts were created to positively benefit Malaysians for the long haul while at the same time, seed brand affinity. The activities were largely on-ground and experiential in nature to present more opportunities for the target audience to engage with SLM and better understand the healthy lifestyle choices they can make.

SLM also collaborated with various health and wellness providers such as Walnut Wellness, Health Lane Family Pharmacy, AMPM Pharmacy, Tigas Pharmacy and Roche Diagnostics, as well as non-profit and non-governmental charity organisations (Diabetes Malaysia and HOPE worldwide Malaysia) that brought together expertise, credibility and technical know-how to successfully execute the various initiatives. These organisations were chosen based on their expanded branch network across the country, which helped to increase SLM's brand affinity across a spectrum of audiences.

SLM also engaged closely with the media to amplify these activities and to inspire other health conscious Malaysians to consider the brand. The year-long programme consisted of various educational and experiential sub-programmes and activities such as:

- Brighter Health Screening Programme: a nationwide free blood glucose screening initiative for 10,000 Malaysians.
- #JarofDreams programme: educational programmes focusing on community outreach programmes targeted specifically to underprivileged communities
- Bi-monthly health sessions and community activities to bring people to work out together while providing them with health awareness information for a more sustainable lifestyle
- Brighter Lives Roadshows, which saw the placement of sustainability bicycles to promote sustainable living
- Sun Life Malaysia Resolution Run: an annual run based on the theme of New Year's Resolutions to educate, engage and empower Malaysians to make healthier lifestyle choices through running
- Educational programmes and social experiments through SLM's #LiveHealthierLives initiative to educate parents and children on making better lifestyle choices to overcome obesity and fight diabetes

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Execution

The programme's on-ground activities attracted different groups, ranging from the underprivileged community to general Malaysians, coming together to live healthier lives physically, financially, and mentally.

Brighter Health Screening Programme

Prior to the roll out of this programme, SLM together with its regional office Sun Life Financial Asia, reported a key finding from its "Diabetes In Asia – Empowering Communities to Lead Healthier Lives" survey, which indicated that only 27% of Malaysians had been screened for diabetes. SLM communicates these findings effectively by organising several in-depth one-on-one interviews with key media outlets such as *The Star*, *Utusan Malaysia*, and *China Press*.

To address that major concern, SLM also partnered with health and wellness providers to rollout the Brighter Health Screening Programme, a nationwide free blood glucose screening initiative for 10,000 Malaysians. The programme identified potential undiagnosed diabetes among Malaysians and educated them on proper diabetes management, while building brand awareness.



#JarofDreams

The #JarofDreams programme focused on community outreach programmes targeted specifically to underprivileged communities. Together with HOPE worldwide Malaysia, the six-month programme looked to encourage and incentivise 250 underprivileged children, youths and single mothers to proactively participate in structured health-related programmes covering physical activities and education awareness.

To motivate and reward the participants, there is a physical jar at the start of the programme for them to collect their tokens. At the end of the six-month period, the top 10 participants with the highest number of tokens received a monetary reimbursement of 10 months' worth of electricity bills.

Brighter Lives Roadshows

Health activities were conducted in high-traffic shopping centres across five editions of SLM's Brighter Lives Roadshows, where health information were shared to the general public. Besides workout sessions, free health tests such as blood sugar test, BMI test, and cholesterol tests, were also provided to the shoppers.

Workout Series

Taking into consideration the increasing popularity of community workout, SLM organised a series of four workout sessions at fitness centres to bring Malaysians together and educate them on health awareness while getting fitter together.



Sustainability Bicycles

In championing a healthier and more sustainable living, SLM partnered with social enterprise Biji-Biji Initiative on an interactive feature in showcasing the collective power Malaysians have to impact the environment through the sustainability bicycles. Created to generate electricity by pedal strokes, the sustainability bicycles were placed at SLM's on-ground events to allow the public to play an active role in generating electricity for a healthier earth, as well as to support the underprivileged.



#AHealthierEarth

All of SLM's health and corporate responsibility as well as its outreach initiatives culminated at the #AHealthierEarth event that was organised in November 2019. The highlight was the culmination of the Sustainability Bicycles initiative which saw SLM's brand ambassador, Hairul Azreen, amongst others, participating in the final stretch. Collectively, Hairul and more than 7,000 Malaysians (throughout the year) pedalled to generate 2,500 watt-hour of electricity. This set a new record for "Most Green Energy Generated with Sustainability Bicycle" in the Malaysia Book of Records. The energy generated was converted into monetary value amounting to RM2,750 and donated to HOPE worldwide Malaysia, a charity organisation that focuses on helping the urban poor community, to help alleviate its center's electricity expenses.

Resolution Run

The Sun Life Malaysia Resolution Run served to shine a light on the importance of leading healthier lives to Malaysians in overcoming diabetes and other overall urban health issues. This was exemplified through several creative engagements during the run such as obstacles challenges, and runners ringing in their resolution with a bell as they ran through a three-door arch. Each door represented resolutions of physical, financial and mental health to depict the participants' pledge towards their resolution.

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Social Experiments

In line with SLM's purpose to help people live healthier lives, two short videos were created to find out if Malaysians are aware about the impact their lifestyle choices have towards their children, and how those choices might lead to higher possibility of diabetes. The interactive videos were based on social experiments conducted at its Brighter Lives Roadshow to highlight the message of making better lifestyle choices to safeguard both parents and children's future health today.





Wheelchair Donation

In conjunction with International Charity Day 2019, SLM donated 10 wheelchairs to Persatuan Kesejahteraan Rakyat Malaysia in support of its national level Bantuan Kerusi Roda Rakyat Malaysia programme. This was to help to ease the burdens of the underprivileged and the needy so that they can lead brighter lives.

Results

The year-long LHL programme was very successful on multiple fronts. For the on-ground engagements, SLM successfully reached out to a wide spectrum of Malaysians include the underprivileged group and benefited approximately 22,435 people. This has helped to increase its brand awareness and propel SLM as a leading corporate entity that is committed to empowering Malaysians to live healthier lives physically, mentally, and financially.

Meanwhile, from a PR and media perspective, the quantity of activities and diversity of the initiatives combined with the pull-factors (relevant issues like health, diabetes, celebrity ambassadors, trusted partner organisations, record setting achievements, and strong media relations) helped to significantly drive media coverage. In total, the LHL programme generated 95 media coverage amounting to over RM2 million in PR Value, amplifying its reach and intensifying brand affinity. This was simultaneously supported by social media postings throughout the year.

The programme was also effective in driving brand awareness and product consideration, helping to contribute to the company's growth of 30% year-on-year. In addition, the publicity enabled SLM to garner accolades within the industry with awards and earning "Superbrands" status. This holistic, diverse and impactful health and community-focused LHL programme successfully drove brand awareness and affinity and is deserving of recognition in this category.