



IDF & SANOFI

CREATING A UNIQUE, INTERNATIONAL EVENT IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE REGION

THE SYNOPSIS

In December of 2011, the International Diabetes Federation would host a weeklong conference at the World Diabetes Congress in the United Arab Emirates. This event, with nearly 19,000 attendees from 170 nations, would be the largest of its kind; an attendance the UAE had never before experienced. Sanofi Diabetes, having recently assumed a primary sponsorship role of the event, had a real opportunity to mark its impression in the region but were grasping to design a strategic plan and to execute. As a result, the mission was to create a unique, one-of-a-kind experience through the IDF's 5K Run/Walk event during the weeklong conference.

WHAT WAS THE SITUATION?

The world's metabolic state of health, currently victim to one of the most silent and deadly of epidemics, has been growing at an alarming rate in regions across the globe. In most recent years, the MENA region has seen the sharpest increase in metabolic diseases, with a primary shift in the prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes.

As a result, Sanofi Diabetes, a Paris-based research and pharmaceutical manufacturer, saw a great responsibility to establish and build a connection with this region; one that could set the stage for a long-term public health relationship to help fight the epidemic.

In April, 2011, Sanofi Diabetes assumed the primary sponsorship role for a segment of the World Diabetes Congress with the International Diabetes Federation, whose own presence in the Gulf states continued growing to help to establish a strong fight in both educating and treating those with the disease.

Together, in partnership, both organizations hoped to build a strong footprint that would connect with the region's most influential caregivers and help to improve longer-term patient health outcomes.

TRACS was given the goal of helping them get there.

“Everyone who ran or walked today made a difference to their own lives as well as the lives of people who live with diabetes, and we here at Sanofi are extremely glad that we could be a part of the IDF 5K.”

SANOFI DIABETES 

George Morcos, General Manager
Sanofi Gulf Countries

THE CHALLENGES

There were three primary challenges:

First - How would Sanofi build a strategic platform that would help position the business in this region intelligently, while aligning with its long-term goals and initiatives globally?

Second - How would TRACS design and manage an event that was truly one-of-a-kind in a region that was known to have been challenging, both in government and process - in only 7 months leading up to the event?

Third - How would TRACS navigate sensitive cultural / language barriers without having an operational team in place in Dubai to help meet challenges on the ground?

The IDF understood the challenges were big and that Sanofi needed a partner who knew exactly how to guide them and create something remarkable. Having worked with the IDF before on global events, TRACS was humbled to have been introduced to the discussion to help.



THE APPROACH

TRACS took a seat at the table immediately and as a first objective, needed to assess the situation clearly and understand the dynamic of those who were involved in the discussion. Sanofi's interest in the region was clear and the discussion was at the Executive level, which was exactly where it needed to be.

EDUCATING THE PLAYERS

TRACS needed to quickly educate executive teams from Sanofi, their agency partners and regional offices of the process through which this event would be meticulously planned in the months ahead. Through a series of global meetings, TRACS was able to shift a level of uncertainty to a more educated expectation for the process leading up to the event, helping to align parties around a clear purpose and to confirm all resources available.

“We firmly believe that engaging the community in activities such as the IDF 5K walkathon is a way to reach out to families and educate them about the importance of physical activity in preventing as well as managing diabetes.”



His Excellency Qadhi Saeed Al Murooshid,
Director-General Dubai Health Authority

BUILDING A STRATEGY

As a part of the education process, TRACS' unique approach with calculated questioning helped dig deep into the core strategic objectives for Sanofi and how they could better design a more meaningful experience for all in attendance. It was important to understand what their long-term goals were, so that a intelligent and unique event could be executed; one that had lasting value for Sanofi.

LOCATION SCOUTING

The World Diabetes Congress was being held at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre (DICEC). As a major, growing metropolis in the Gulf, with real estate and civic construction booming across the city, finding that perfect venue was crucial. TRACS visited the city on multiple occasions to



better know its personality, its geography and its challenges to truly find the best and most memorable place to host the event.

Zabeel Park was that place. Located in the heart of the city and only 1km from the DICEC event space, Zabeel park is a 117 acre space with sweeping vistas and immaculate grounds. With sporting, amusement parks, gardens and activities for all types - this was the place that was truly one-of-a-kind.

And never before had an event like this taken place there. This was the venue.





NAVIGATING LOCAL POLITICS:

With a location in mind - part of the challenge that lay ahead was to understand how things worked in a different culture with opposing rules, regulations and procedures. Having a deep knowledge of different global dynamics and having built many different relationships throughout its 31 year history – TRACS was keenly aware of the Royal Family protocol and how challenging the process could be. Especially since this event was so special and that one had never taken place at this venue before.

Throughout the course of the entire 7 months leading up to the event, TRACS visited Dubai three times, each visit spent laboriously convening with members of the Royal Family, the Dubai Parks & Horticultural Group, the Dubai Health Authority, agency partners and vendors, all striving to gain the necessary permits and licenses.

Each meeting and communication unearthing more obstacles than resolution, the teams found these challenges were met with

progress when best approached with tenacity, confidence and experience.

With two-weeks remaining until the event - persistence paid off and TRACS was granted access with all necessary permits and licenses.

PLANNING THE EVENT

While pushing forward with the permitting process – the planning teams forged ahead designing and planning the event itself. For TRACS, our long-standing goal is to better connect a brand with an event and its participants, a connection that happens much more than by placing a logo on a start banner.

Creating a flawless experience for clients and participants, together, is an imperative that contributes to creating a more memorable experience.

With attention to detail and a strong strategic vision in place, planning and design led to the creation of the most memorable of experiences that was authentic to the sport. From branded





materials, medals, and warm-up routines to pre- and post-event ceremonies, the event participants would feel every part of the Sanofi brand in a way that was real and tangible.

This planning process also dug into areas that may have gone unnoticed by many seasonal climate, environment, public transportation accessibility, observed holidays at the time, cultural dietary restrictions and even importing regulations - all areas of detail that were crucial in creating that one-of-a-kind, seamless event.

“The Middle East has one of the highest rates of obesity and diabetes in the world. The IDF 5K Run/Walk serves as a platform to raise awareness and promote the importance of increased physical activity which is key in the management and prevention of diabetes.”



**International
Diabetes
Federation**

Luc Hendrickx, IDF Director of
Congresses & Governance

MANAGING THE EVENT

TRACS has always believed that the best experiences can happen when we expect the unexpected. Being one step ahead of the game allowed the TRACS team to quickly adapt the event's proceedings when the Royal Family announced their attendance the day before the event, or the late inclusion of a skydiving team's entrance to commence the morning's race.





THE RESULTS

TRACS dedication and commitment to each step resulted in an incredible event. The environment and cultural differences presented many challenges, but through proper preparation, due diligence and adaptability, the IDF 5k Run/Walk was a great success. Much to the delight of the Royal Family, we were able to build one of our most memorable and aesthetically pleasing events in the beautiful Zabeel Park. Through creating an impressive event that increased brand awareness, TRACS completed the goal of helping Sanofi and the IDF develop enduring relationships with the region for years to come.

- 3,594 Registrants
- 170 Countries Represented
- 1,600 Participants

