

Our History

participant^o
MEDIA

2004

January

Jeff Skoll forms Participant Productions to create entertainment that inspires and accelerates social change, based on his belief that a good story well told can truly make a difference in how you see the world.

2005

July

Participant's 1st documentary, Murderball, is released; goes on to receive Academy Award® nomination for Best Documentary. Teams with MTV to hold series of college screenings to raise consciousness about disabled athletes and raise funds for organizations, such as Paralympics.

October

Good Night, and Good Luck released; receives 6 Academy Award® nominations, including Best Picture, Best Director (George Clooney) and Best Actor (David Strathairn). This risky period piece in black and white helps to solidify Participant's place in the industry with filmmakers and press as a committed producer of socially relevant films.

November

North Country released; garners 2 Academy Award® nominations, including Best Actress (Charlize Theron) and Best Supporting Actress (Frances McDormand). Social Action campaign activates thousands who voice their support for the Violence Against Women Act, which is successfully reauthorized and signed into law in January 2006.

December

Syriana released; receives 2 Academy Award® nominations, winning the Oscar® for Best Supporting Actor (George Clooney). Social Action campaign designed to help Americans reduce their dependence on oil.

2006

January

Participant's debut slate of films, Murderball, Good Night, and Good Luck, North Country and Syriana, receives a total of 11 Academy Award® nominations.

May

An Inconvenient Truth released, following premieres at Sundance and Cannes Film Festivals; film becomes 1 of the highest grossing documentaries of all time and wins Academy Awards® for Best Documentary and Best Song.

Because of the film and the advocacy efforts it inspires, the issue of global warming reaches a worldwide audience of more than a billion people. Before the film is released, polls suggested that less than 30% of Americans believed global warming was a real issue. After the film's release 87% of Americans say it is an issue of concern.

Official website climatecrisis.net provides individuals with a menu of personal actions they can take to change their energy-consuming behavior as well as credible information about the issue.

Dozens of major corporations, from Hewlett-Packard to BMW, and environmental, faith and justice non-profits form a coalition to work together in an unprecedented fashion to help promote the film and the action.

More than 15 climate change bills are introduced in Congress, with the historic Markey-Waxman Bill passing the House in June, 2009. Five countries--England, Scotland, Czech Republic, New Zealand, and Germany--and the Canadian province of British Columbia incorporate the film into their secondary school curriculum.

September

Jim Berk joins Participant as CEO to take the promising start-up to the next level, expanding the company's reach and brand identity beyond motion pictures into other forms of entertainment, enhancing Social Action and Advocacy capabilities and overseeing all media investments and acquisitions. Berk expands Participant's Social Action and Digital divisions and recruits teams for television production and publishing.

2007

April

Participant Media became the largest individual equity investor in the newly-formed Summit Entertainment.

December

The Kite Runner released; goes on to receive Oscar® nomination for Best Score. Participant's Social Action associates include Afghanistan Relief Organization, the International Rescue Committee, Amnesty International, Relief International, One Laptop Per Child and others to support literacy by rebuilding libraries, training teachers and providing computers for the war-torn nation.

Charlie Wilson's War released; receives Oscar® nomination for Best Supporting Actor (Philip Seymour Hoffman). Participant teams with the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) to promote initiatives for education, mental and health benefits for veterans, culminating with over 300 DVD house parties across the country featuring a conference call with the real Charlie Wilson, portrayed in the film by Tom Hanks.

2008

January

Company becomes Participant Media and rearticulates mission: Participant creates entertainment that inspires and compels social change.

April

The Visitor released, following premieres at Toronto and Sundance Film Festivals; Richard Jenkins receives an Academy Award® nomination for Best Actor. Through the Social Action campaign, 250 lawyers to date have received training on proper defense of detained illegal immigrants at bond hearings through a unique collaboration between Participant and the legal firm of O'Melveny and Myers.

May

Participant launches the Social Action website TakePart to form communities of engaged people who are active and interested in creating a world of peace and sustainability and to amplify the impact of its films and illuminate the work of non-profit organizations.

September

Participant establishes a \$250 million film financing fund with Imagenation Abu Dhabi that allows the company to expand and increase its output through guaranteed financing for a slate of films.

October

Participant enters into publishing with a 4-book deal with PublicAffairs Books, a like-minded company whose mission is to publish "books that matter."

December

Participant announces an equity investment in Me to We, a Toronto-based social enterprise promoting a socially responsible, globally-focused approach to living for young people who want to help change the world through their daily choices.

2009

January

Participant enters into a non-exclusive worldwide distribution agreement with Summit Entertainment.

April

The Soloist released. Social Action Campaign focuses on humanizing homelessness and mental illness and includes grassroots efforts to collect food and clothing. Among the initiatives are "Orchestras Feeding America," a unique food drive program teaming Participant with Feeding America and League of American Orchestras for a nationwide food drive involving over 250 symphonies and orchestras from all 50 states; "Feed the Need," in which nearly 24,000 teenagers raise 1.2 million pounds of food; and "Teens for Jeans," which collects over 200,000 pairs of jeans for homeless teens.

June

Food, Inc. released following premieres at Toronto and Berlin Film Festivals; goes on to receive Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature and wins 2 Emmy Awards for its broadcast on PBS's "P.O.V." 1 of the year's highest-grossing documentaries, it galvanizes public attention to inadequacies in the current food system in the U.S. and their connection to serious health issues such as diabetes and obesity.

The film attracts marketing alliances with such corporations as Stonyfield, Chipotle, Whole Foods and Kaiser Permanente Foundation. More than 230,000 people sign Food, Inc petition that's delivered to Congress in support of the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, which is passed in December 2010. The Ingredients for Change Campaign, a year-long initiative consisting of a series of community engagement screenings and events in under-served areas throughout the country, is implemented in association with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Active Voice, and raises awareness of the lack of access to nutritional foods and disproportionately high rates of obesity and other diet-related health problems in these areas.

Participant's first publishing effort, the companion book, Food, Inc. How Industrial Food Is Making Us Sicker, Fatter, and Poorer —And What You Can Do About It, released; goes on to become a New York Times Best-Seller, with 10 reprints. 1 of Participant's most dynamic ongoing legacy campaigns, Food, Inc. was the subject of a nationwide survey conducted by The Lear Center of the Annenberg School of Communications and Journalism in which over 15,000 people responded. 76% said that after seeing the film, they could be "part of a social movement to reform agribusiness." 81% of respondents said "this film has changed my life."

August

The Cove is released; goes on to win Oscar® for Best Documentary Feature. A massive Facebook community, with more than 1 million members, coalesces around the film and collectively pressures the Japanese government to halt the slaughter of dolphins in Taiji. It is suspended temporarily, but the campaign to stop it permanently continues.

2010

January

Participant premieres 4 documentaries at the Sundance Film Festival—Casino Jack and the United States of Money; Cane Toads: The Conquest; Countdown to Zero and Waiting for "Superman"—and, with Entertainment Weekly, hosts a panel featuring the film's directors, Alex Gibney, Mark Lewis, Lucy Walker and Davis Guggenheim.

February

Participant's digital arm, TakePart, teams with American Express to host their pioneering consumer-driven corporate social responsibility effort, Members Project. This program encourages the public to support the diverse causes they care about by providing tools and resources designed to empower them in getting involved.

The Craziest released and represents Participant's expansion into new genres, such as horror/sci-fi. Through multiple websites, screenings and advocacy events, social network sites and blogs, the Social Action campaign explores the film's themes of chemical insecurity and disregard of precautionary citizen safety measures and their intersection with the real-life issues of securing chemical plants across America. Social Action website drives people to send letters to their Senators in support of the Chemical Facilities Antiterrorism Act.

June

Participant moves its offices to 331 Foothill Road, a brand new building and the 1st in Beverly Hills, California to carry a "Gold" certification from the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

July

Countdown to Zero released. Grassroots campaign focuses on states whose senators were crucial to the ratification of the New START Treaty. Through a series of high-profile events and screenings, including the Cannes Film Festival and United Nations, celebrity PSAs featuring musical artists such as Maroon 5 and Weezer, alliances with groups in target states, a viral video produced to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Hiroshima which garnered 400K views, and a text mobilization effort, the campaign rallies support for the treaty. The New START Treaty is ultimately ratified by the Senate in December 2010, but the efforts to mobilize people around the world to demand an end to nuclear weapons continues.

August

Participant Foundation is formed to support programs that amplify the work of Participant Media.

September

Waiting for "Superman" released, attracting media attention unprecedented for a documentary. The film goes on to become the year's most talked-about documentary, catapulting the issue of education to the forefront of the public debate with a Social Action campaign that teams Participant with a coalition of more than 300 non-profit and corporate alliances and foundations, eventually reaching over 30 million people.

More than 2.8 million students are supported through classroom donations from members of the Waiting for "Superman" online community through DonorsChoose.org. Film is screened at the White House, Department of Education and 15 state capitals.

Social Action website provides extensive resources to help people take action to improve our schools, including original videos, a debate tool, 30 local city pages and a letter writing campaign used to send more than 50,000 letters and petition signatures supporting innovation and high standards in our public schools to national, state and local policymakers.

Local off-line activities include a Town Hall program engaging citizens in dynamic discussion on education reform and serves as a critical catalyst for mobilizing citizen activists in education issues in their city and inspiring action at the local level. Held in 15 cities across the nation, each event allows policymakers, opinion leaders, educators, faith leaders, parents and students to have constructive conversations on education reform.

Participant joins with T-Bone Burnett to present Speaking Clock Revue live concerts in New York City and Boston inspired by Waiting for "Superman" to benefit music and arts education programs in public schools. Over 5000 House Parties take place around the film's DVD release.

Within 3 weeks of its publication, Participant's companion book from PublicAffairs Books is #1 on The New York Times list of best-sellers.

With more than 182,000 Facebook fans and 12,000 Twitter followers, Participant's legacy campaign for Waiting for "Superman" is still growing.

November

Fair Game released. Building on Social Action campaign for Countdown to Zero, which featured Valerie Plame Wilson, Participant teams with the White House Project to organize Women for Nuclear Security Summit, where more than 200 women from across the nation receive advocacy training to organize in their communities in support of reduction of nuclear arms and the ratification of the New START treaty (which took place in December 2010).

2011

January

Participant makes 1st film acquisitions at Sundance Film Festival, acquiring North American rights to PAGE ONE: Inside The New York Times (with Magnolia Pictures) and its 1st foreign-language film, Circumstance.

July

PAGE ONE: Inside The New York Times released. The Social Action campaign, "Consider The Source," focuses on the importance of original reporting in the digital age, and is accompanied by a companion book from Public Affairs that is edited by NPR's David Folkenflik.

August

The Help released, giving Participant its 1st number 1 box office hit, and remaining at the top for 25 days straight, the longest streak in 12 years. Film goes on to become one of the year's biggest success movie success stories, receiving 4 Academy Award® nominations including Best Picture, with Octavia Spencer winning the Oscar® for Best Supporting Actress. It also serves to rekindle the public debate about civil rights and race relations that's been dormant for decades. Social Action campaign focuses on the power of storytelling to bridge racial, cultural and socio-economic differences, with 3 online storytelling competitions and, in association with The Moth, off-line storytelling workshops and live events featuring high school students in 3 cities. Also, Participant teamed with the National Domestic Workers Alliance to use the film as an opportunity to raise awareness of domestic workers' rights in the U.S. today.

September

Contagion released, making it Participant's 2nd #1 box office hit with the top 2 films at the box office (with The Help #2). Social Action campaign for Contagion is an online celebration of the work of those modern day heroes known as epidemiologists — "real life virus hunters" who risk their lives to save our lives, and offers information for those interested in learning more about pandemics as well as practical tips from experts about what we can do to prepare and protect ourselves. Through a viral video viewed by over 200,000 people and an informational hub visited by over 2 million people, the campaign prompted a large number of op-ed and off-entertainment stories about the threat of pandemics and helped drive the House of Representatives to pass legislation to increase funding for medical responses to these widespread diseases.

October

TakePart is one of the content creators selected for new lineup of YouTube channels, with impact-focused TakePart TV, showcasing the people who are making change happen around the world, scheduled to launch in July 2012. Participant Music's 1st CD released by Shout Factory: Speaking Clock Revue concert recording.

November

TakePart enters into an agreement to be a flagship producer of original co-branded content for new MSN "Causes" Channel to debut in March 2012.

2012

January

Lionsgate acquires Summit Entertainment and inherits Participant's non-exclusive distribution agreement. Participant's documentary Finding North, which focuses on the issue of hunger through the lens of 3 different American families struggling with food insecurity and features Academy Award® winner Jeff Bridges, Top Chef's Tom Colicchio and music by T Bone Burnett & The Civil Wars, premieres at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Participant and AFFRM (African-American Film Festival Releasing Movement) jointly acquire U.S. theatrical rights to Ava DuVernay's sensitive drama Middle of Nowhere, for which DuVernay wins Best Director award at 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

February

The British comedy-drama The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel released in the UK, where it's embraced by audiences and critics alike, with other successful international openings later in the Spring, followed by North America in May 2012. With Social Action campaign associates Road Scholar and Encore.org, "The Marigold Ideas for Good Contest" encourages individuals over 50 to submit an innovative idea that will help improve their community with \$5K grants towards their project. The most exceptional ideas are also rewarded with an educational adventure to one of 10 cities around the world.

Participant announces its financial investment in its 1st foreign-language film production No, directed by Pablo Larrain and starring Gael Garcia Bernal. The film is based on the true story of the ingenious advertising campaign that was responsible for ending oppressive military dictator Augusto Pinochet's 15 year reign in Chile. Following its triumphant bow at the Cannes Film Festival Director's Fortnight in May, No is acquired by Sony Pictures Classics for distribution in North America.

April

Evan Shapiro named President of Participant Television, where he will be responsible for the conception, development, and production of original television programming that will follow the company's model of commercial and socially relevant entertainment.

Participant acquires an equity stake in Cineflix Media, Inc. a leading television production and distribution company; The companies will partner in the conception, development, and production of original television programming. the water debate, learn about local water issues, and petition their government officials.

May

Last Call at the Oasis, a documentary focusing on the global water crisis, released in selected cities to uniformly positive reviews. Participant teams with more than 30 NGO partners representing over 11 million people. including NRDC, water.org, Sierra Club and Food and Water Watch, for the "Know Your Water" campaign. Its primary initiative is the "Community Water Bill of Rights," a 1st-of-its-kind national digital petition for consumers in the US, and eventually around the world, to lend their voice to the water debate, learn about local water issues, and petition their government officials.

June

Participant acquires North American rights to director Diego Luna's Chavez, starring Michael Pena as famed labor organizer Cesar E. Chavez, focusing on his fearless determination in organizing the largest non-violent protest in U.S. history to accomplish his ultimate goal of obtaining basic human rights for over 50,000 farm workers in California.