

* TRIBE

Insight Paper:

INTEGRATION STRATEGIES

Retaining employees of
acquired companies



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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

Tribe's perspective



TRIBE'S PERSPECTIVE

We have the benefit of an outsider's view, so we notice things that those inside the company may not. But we've also seen behind the curtain in over 100 companies, so we bring a high level of familiarity with common issues. Tribe has worked in internal communications for over 20 years, starting in 2002 with Porsche and UPS.

Since 2009, we've focused our practice exclusively on the employee audience. Over the years, we've worked with some of the world's largest companies and most well-known brands, from Amazon to Cargill and Levi's to Coke.

Whatever your internal communications challenge, we've probably seen it before. What's different about every engagement Tribe takes on, and what makes the work so interesting to us, is the culture of each client. In the practice area of integration communications, we've partnered with clients in technology, gaming, beauty and beverages, among others.

This insight booklet shares some of the learning we've gained over our decades of experience. We hope it offers you an idea or two, or maybe a new way of approaching your roll-up or integration communications.

We've worked with some of the world's largest companies and most well-known brands, from Amazon to Cargill and Levi's to Coke.

Section 2

UNITING THREE BRANDS

Three spin-offs under one new parent company

Orveon

BUXOM

LAURA MERCIER
PARIS | NEW YORK

bareMinerals

● BACKGROUND

Orveon was a new company established to house three brands being spun off from Shiseido: Laura Mercier, BUXOM and bareMinerals. Employees were scattered from New York to Europe to Asia, and were predisposed to identify with their brands, not the parent company.

Orveon leadership envisioned a purpose-driven culture that would be a significant departure from the more formal and hierarchical one of Shiseido. They leaned into a startup mentality, and their vision of changing the future of beauty by becoming the sustainable face care expert. They established unique values, like Stark Honesty, and encouraged employees to take part in building this new culture.

THE CHALLENGE: Unite global employees

Our goal was to capture the imagination of employees currently entrenched in three well-known beauty brands, inspiring them with the excitement of being part of this new company and culture.

Employees identified with whichever of the cosmetics brands they worked for. Making them care about a parent company, especially one they'd never heard of, was a tall order.

GLOBAL EVENT

Announcing the new brand

Tribe's first assignment was to create an exciting live-streamed event in New York where the name of the new company and its branding would be introduced, along with the new leadership, the vision, values and culture. Much of the planning and preliminary execution had to be done before the name, branding and other elements were finalized.



EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

Articulating what’s different about working here

Orveon offers a unique employee experience that is expressed in their EVP. This culture is for people who care about making the world a better place, who can be comfortable with a company that’s a work in progress and encourages boldness, and who are excited by the career opportunities of a startup environment.



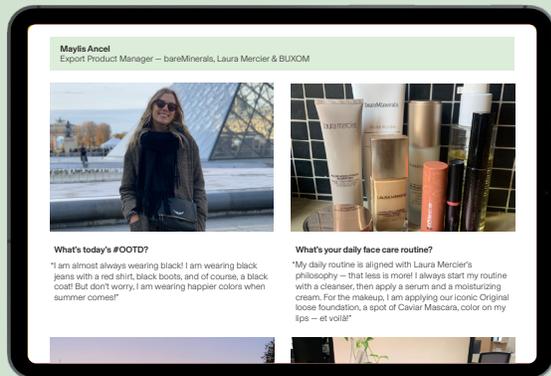
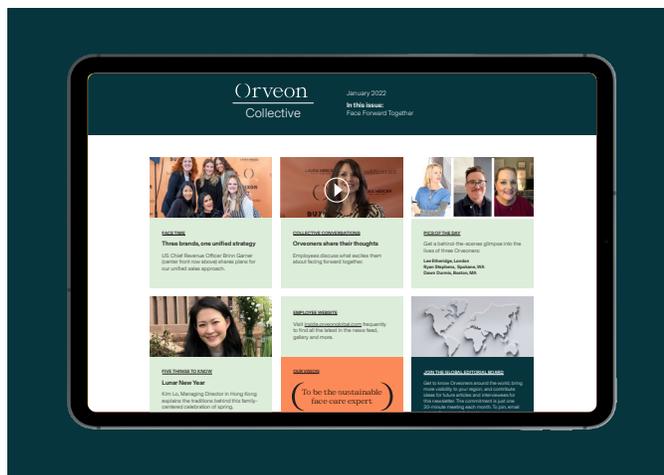
STEAL THIS INSIGHT:

An employee value proposition that feels generic (or like AI wrote it) is not the goal. Speak to what’s authentic about the organization. You’re trying to capture the elements of the company that attract those employees who thrive there.

DIGITAL CONTENT STREAM

Reinforcing the culture with concrete examples

The Collective began as a monthly digital publication that showcased leaders and employees test-driving the vision and values as they engaged in the challenges and rewards of launching this new company. We shot remote video with employees around the world sharing their perspectives on one of the values or another cultural topic. Eventually, we moved away from releasing all the content at once on a monthly basis to posting one feature every week or so on the intranet.



STEAL THIS INSIGHT:

Form an employee editorial board with members in each country or location and use them to source interviewees for videos and articles. They've got a sight line into their locations that corporate doesn't. This also helps prevent global communications from becoming US-centric.

Section 3

ACQUIRING A GLOBAL PRESENCE

Integrating three new offices in India

ensono®

● BACKGROUND

Ensono is a managed service provider offering IT support for mainframe and cloud. Tribe has been working with this technology brand since they spun off from Acxiom IT in 2015 with about 800 employees and three offices, in Chicago, Arkansas and Poland. They have since grown through several acquisitions to 3,500 employees on five continents.

To expand their global presence and to better support clients across all time zones, they purchased Wipro's hosted data centers in India. Wipro is a leading employer in India, while Ensono was a complete unknown to employees of these data centers.

We wanted to engage them quickly, during the limbo period before the deal was done, when they might be looking for new jobs.

THE CHALLENGE: Retain Wipro employees

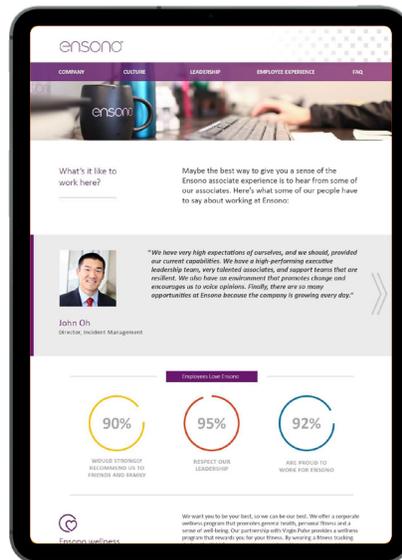
At the time of this acquisition, Ensono had no visibility in India. There was also a talent shortage in India, making it even more important to retain legacy Wipro employees. Our challenge was to introduce Ensono as an employer of choice — to people who had never heard of Ensono.

**The Wipro purchase
nearly doubled the size
of Ensono's operations.**

INTEGRATION SITE

Introducing Ensono to Wipro employees

This password-protected site was made available to Wipro data center employees months before the deal was finalized — and well before they needed to decide whether to convey as Ensono employees. The site answered questions about how the integration would unfold but also introduced the Ensono culture, vision and values. To humanize leadership, we had them post answers to a personal quiz. We also included current employees' comments on what it's like to work at Ensono. After the deal was completed, Ensono leadership went to India to visit all three offices. Employees seemed to have a good understanding of the company already. They diverted one Q&A into a plank contest instead — challenging the CEO to hold a plank longer than any employee. (He lost.)



STEAL THIS INSIGHT:

Don't stop at the logical reasons why the new company will be good for conveying employees. Work to create human connections as well, between them and the leadership team, as well as with current employees.

Section 4

10 TAKEAWAYS

Parting thoughts from Tribe's experience

1

Start communicating early.

As soon as the potential deal is mentioned in the press, employees will be talking about it. If you're not telling them what's going on, the company's point of view won't be part of that conversation.

2

Let them hear it from the CEO.

In Tribe's research with employees of large companies, 64 percent of survey respondents said they preferred to hear about mergers, acquisitions, layoffs and other major changes from top corporate management.

3

Equip your managers for follow-up questions.

Employees will naturally turn to their direct supervisors for more clarity on the CEO's announcement. Provide them with communication toolkits to help keep the messaging consistent across the organization. For larger changes, you also might consider meeting with managers beforehand for some communications training.

4

It's okay if you can't tell employees everything.

There may be business reasons you need to hold back on what you share. Just communicate what you can — and let employees know that you'll be able to tell them more as the process unfolds.

5

Give them a place to go for information.

It could be a page on your intranet or a password-protected site outside the firewall. It might even be just a Teams channel. Update with new information as available.

6

Provide a two-way channel for questions.

Give employees a way to ask questions and establish a process for leadership to respond quickly. Some questions can be anticipated and responses agreed upon ahead of time, but you'll also need a system for answers to unexpected questions — with a reasonable response time.

7

Give employees a place to vent.

If the merger, sale or acquisition is likely to overwhelm employees or be unpopular, you might offer an anonymous survey or poll composed of one question, such as, "How are you feeling about this?" In addition to letting employees share their voices, it also can help leadership identify key employee concerns to address.

8

Be open about the bad news.

In our research with employees of large companies, we heard impassioned pleas for direct and honest communication — particularly when it comes to negative news.

9

Give them the business reasons for the bad news.

Be clear about the results the company is hoping to achieve with this merger, sale or acquisition. Let employees know the desired outcome.

10

Tie it back to the vision.

Help employees see how this merger, sale or acquisition supports leadership's vision for success and the company's ability to make a positive impact on the world.

Below is a sampling of responses from Tribe's research with employees of large companies:

"Being in the loop really helped me understand the direction and vision."

"I want to know how it will affect me."

"I would like to know what led to this decision, what the pros and cons of it are."

"Don't be secretive. Rumors fly before you even think about saying anything."

"Stop putting a spin on everything."

"Be honest about the worst."

Section 5

WHY TRIBE?

When considering support from an agency

If you're considering agency support, either for an isolated project or over the long term, we hope you'll consider Tribe.



We're a tiny global agency that's worked with some of the largest and most well-known brands in the world.



Our practice is entirely focused on internal communications. If it's a communications challenge related to the employee audience, we've probably seen it before.



Our size makes us agile and responsive, so we can respond quickly and work comfortably on tight deadlines.



We're familiar with employee audiences in an expansive range of industries including manufacturing, technology, healthcare, retail, hospitality, construction, finance and energy.

Section 6

REFERENCES

What our clients say

We're happy to connect you with Tribe clients whose communications challenges or industries match yours, but in the meantime, here are a few comments from client partners.



"We've never had a better agency experience. Tribe has been a true pleasure to work with."

Justin Downs

Group Vice President, Operations, Wabtec Corporation



"Working with Tribe was like flipping a light switch for us — suddenly, our mission, vision and values weren't just words on a wall, they became something our teams could actually see themselves in. They have a knack for pulling the DNA out of a company and turning it into something meaningful and actionable. The process was thoughtful, collaborative and, honestly, a lot of fun. I'd work with them again in a heartbeat."

Lauralee Heckman

Director of Communications, The Lane Construction Corporation



"Tribe has been super easy to work with. They've been a great thought partner, and great at execution, which is clearly important as well. I feel Tribe is a part of Orveon. They know us better than any other organization that's not internal."

Robert Rigby-Hall,

Chief People Officer, Orveon



"Tribe's creativity in developing a comprehensive, yearlong, multimedia campaign was instrumental in bringing our vision to life. The collaboration was seamless, and your ability to customize our content and involve our employees made the messaging feel authentic and impactful. It was a pleasure working with such a smart, responsive and talented group of people."

Jeremy Smith

VP and Global Information Security Officer, Avery Dennison



"Tribe has been an integral part of building our culture. Their plethora of expertise and knowledge makes working with them so easy. Tribe really gets it and produces great ideas and results."

Paula Lamoureux

Global Internal Communications Manager, Ensono



"Tribe has been a trusted and valuable partner to us over the past several years on multiple tough-to-tackle projects. They have always taken the time to truly understand our corporate culture and our brand so that the solutions they provide are authentic to us."

Chrissy Hughes

Senior Brand Manager, Holder Construction



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