



INDUSTRY SEMICONDUCTOR



This case study represents one of the many acquisitions Spansion did during Tanis Communications executives' tenure while serving as VP of Communications at Spansion. This case study won a Finalist Award by IPRA (International Public Relations Association), submitted by Michele Landry, formerly VP of Corporate Communications at Spansion.

Spansion: Building a Bridge Between Corporate and Global Employees through Brand Alignment

The Opportunity:

When Spansion, a \$1.5 billion semiconductor company set out to transition beyond flash memory to embedded systems, the company acquired two divisions of Fujitsu: its microcontroller and analog divisions.

Convincing employees the combination was good for them was one of the most challenging tasks as part of the closing activities.

Spansion acquired ~1,000 employees from Fujitsu Semiconductor's Microcontroller and Analog Division after three years exiting bankruptcy. The company had to engage and motivate new employees from a different culture. Following the first few months of the acquisition, the former Fujitsu employees were hesitant to use the Spansion brand. They tried to create a separate name by using the legal entity.

After Spansion's corporate communications team worked with employees to align and use one brand- Spansion, they slowly adopted. The employee communications program was implemented worldwide but with a focus on the new Japanese employees.

Soliciting Employee Input Was Critical

A series of executive informal roundtables were held following the acquisition to obtain input from employees. Key takeaways revealed from the research were:

- 1) need for more translated documents
- 2) frequent visits from executives from Sunnyvale California
- 3) frequent communications on company progress and objectives

In addition, an annual employee survey was issued to determine employee's understanding about the company vision and strategy post the acquisition.

Planning

The communications objectives were to inform, motivate and empower the new employees. Working closely with the Fujitsu communications leads during the integration planning process, the Spansion communications team developed a plan that considered the current values, brand and processes of Fujitsu, and adopted a best-of-breed brand and communications strategy for employees to become brand ambassadors.

At the same time, the corporate communications team met with the CEO and the rest of the executive team to solicit input. The positioning and plan was finalized after this input and rolled out to employees worldwide.

Both companies shared a commitment to customer service, quality and product innovation, which became central to the revised positioning.

The first step was to educate employees on the Spansion brand, values and show the similarities of the two companies, clearly articulating the refreshed brand. A presentation was delivered the first days following the acquisition, followed by a series of communications programs to keep the new employees informed and engaged.

Execution

The programs implemented included the following:

- 1) a leadership conference that outlined the vision, objectives and brand promise of the new company to all directors and VPs
- 2) internal blogs from executives
- 3) employee spotlight series in word and video formats that profiled employees, including the new employees to introduce employees to each other
- 4) a welcome newsletter to all new employees
- 5) a new publication, called "The Bridge," which was translated into Japanese to provide information in print version for employees in manufacturing sites
- 6) a Spansion video shared with all employees
- 7) a re-designed intranet "The Bridge" to provide articles, blogs, important information for employees
- 8) regular executive visits to the new sites
- 9) values and brand promise attached to employees badges
- 10) weekly email from the CEO highlighting articles from the intranet and blogs for employees to review, including recommended social posts for all Spansion employees to share in order to help promote the new Spansion brand.

Results

While it took employees about six to eight months to adapt to the new company and culture, during 2014, new employees who joined the company from the Fujitsu acquisition began advocating to keep the Spansion brand alive with customers, following the subsequent merger with Cypress.

Employee survey results in 2014 improved by 90 points over 2013, demonstrating employees understand the vision and strategy of the company and saw value in the communications channels.

Spansion's LinkedIn page had over 6,000 followers at the time of the closing of the acquisition of the Fujitsu divisions. The engagement on LinkedIn posts continued to increase due to employees sharing or liking the posts.

Through consistent and frequent communications, the new employees embraced the brand with many of the Japanese employees becoming brand ambassadors.

For More Information

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