

Unifying Acquisition Messaging for Investors and Employees

Situation Analysis: A gold-standard global data communications provider, LHA's client was contemplating a transformative acquisition of another public company's discontinued unit that would significantly increase the caliber and scope of one of its divisions, boosting it from third to first in size and enhancing the company's overall competitiveness. While the target unit's employees had long been expecting to be acquired, the client anticipated its own employees would understandably view the transaction as being disruptive. Moreover, it was clear that investors would seek information on integration synergies that, if disclosed, could exacerbate the situation and potentially jeopardize integration success.

LHA's Solution: Collaborating with a large acquisition team with deep reach into both organizations, LHA married investor relations and corporate communications to help the client control deal messaging for all audiences. LHA developed a unified master set of robust key messages that emphasized the acquisition's benefits: enhancement of the client's competitive profile; immediate and material accretion; future sources of growth for the combined company; and long-term R&D advantages. LHA then developed a set of scheduled communications that directed all high-level corporate and investor communications and coordinated with the team's other employee events,. These included:

- A memo to department heads with "cascading" messages preparing them for discussions with their direct reports on announcement day;
- A CEO video script to be distributed to the acquired unit on announcement day;
- All investor disclosures, including press releases, conference call scripts and slides, and extensive investment community Q&A;
- Two extensive sets of FAQs for existing and acquired employees and customers that covered questions ranging from management's time and focus to integration plans, benefits and how to field questions from reporters;
- In-office talking points for the CEO and senior managers; and
- C-level talking points and extensive Q&A training for media inquiries

Results: Drawing on the strength of the deal's merits and in-depth information about employee sensitivities provided by the acquisition team, LHA created persuasive, powerful communications that unified the concerns of all constituencies touched by the acquisition, including customers, current and new sell-side analysts, investors, employees, and suppliers. This preparation and tool set put management in an affirmative, confident position that accurately anticipated and addressed all audiences' information needs, resulting in rapid education and their support of the transaction. As the message set was properly tailored for each and all audiences, customers and investors felt fully informed from the moment of announcement, employees felt valued, and all were prepared to quickly focus on the deal's positive attributes and the immediate task of integration.