# Rebranding best practices during times of mergers and acquisitions

Linkedin

During this time of increased merger, acquisition, and divestiture activity, it's important for the companies involved to establish clear brand management guidelines. M&A activity is of interest to three unique groups: stakeholders, employees, and customers, as well as larger communities of investors and regulators. They're all asking the same questions: What does the future of this company look like, and what does it mean for me? This guide will help companies navigate M&A activity through brand management efforts that help to improve the corporate reputation of all those affected by the changes.[1]

## Brands involved in M&A activities that clearly define the new organization's value proposition captured 2x the revenue synergies.[1]

[1]McKinsey & Company, Integrating marketing and brand in M&A: The way to superior growth

# Align business and brand strategy.

What can brands do to ensure success post merger or acquisition? One of the first things they may want to do is rebrand. But before you can rebrand, the first and most critical step is to find the connective tissue between two companies and communicate the value proposition that the new combined company brings. The question many will ask is: Why would two companies that are successful on their own bring greater opportunity and value to their clients as a single entity? Brand management helps answer that question by exposing the thread that links the two companies—not only by what they do, but why they do it—and can help inform the new company's point of difference in the market.[2]

# What matters to investors.

M&A activities mean change, and investors generally don't like change. So, soon after an announcement or deal, brands need to convey confidence and positivity. Things are changing, but for the better. In particular, investors will be looking at three things.

1. Clearly and consistently communicated company values and long-term goals via brand presence
2. Customer and employee trust and engagement
3. Differentiated proposition and brand experience

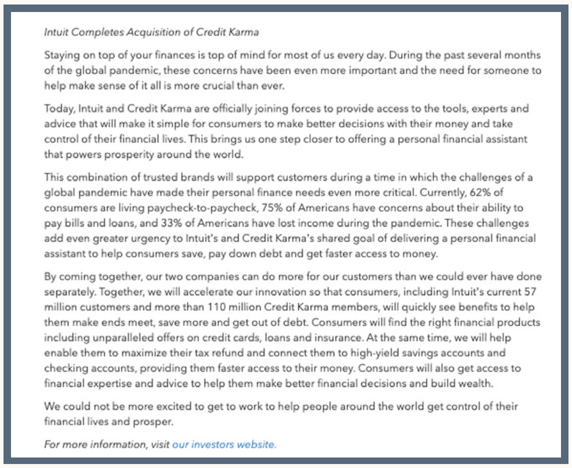
[2] HBR, Don't Make This Common M&A Mistake, 2020

# How M&A activity plays out on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn is deeply trusted by its investor audience, meaning companies often use the platform to manage their brand efforts around M&A activity. There are a variety of ways in which these efforts play out on the platform, but there are some universal truths.

## Make a strong announcement.

When Intuit completed its acquisition of Credit Karma, they issued this eloquent statement to customers, spelling out their "why" and the "so what."



*Intuit Completes Acquisition of Credit Karma*

Staying on top of your finances is top of mind for most of us every day. During the past several months of the global pandemic, these concerns have been even more important and the need for someone to help make sense of it all is more crucial than ever.

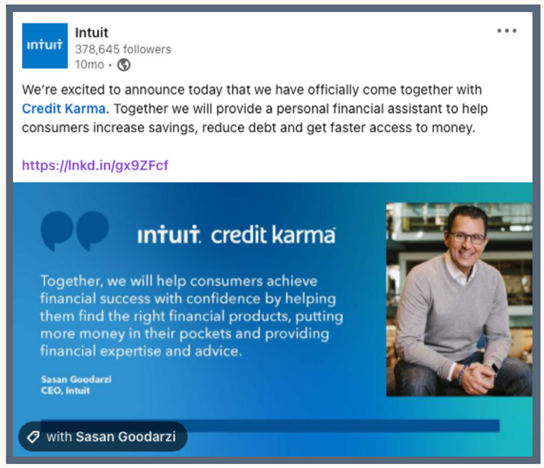
Today, Intuit and Credit Karma are officially joining forces to provide access to the tools, experts and advice that will make it simple for consumers to make better decisions with their money and take control of their financial lives. This brings us one step closer to offering a personal financial assistant that powers prosperity around the world.

This combination of trusted brands will support customers during a time in which the challenges of a global pandemic have made their personal finance needs even more critical. Currently, 62% of consumers are living paycheck-to-paycheck, 75% of Americans have concerns about their ability to pay bills and loans, and 33% of Americans have lost income during the pandemic. These challenges add even greater urgency to Intuit's and Credit Karma's shared goal of delivering a personal financial assistant to help consumers save, pay down debt and get faster access to money.

By coming together, our two companies can do more for our customers than we could ever have done separately. Together, we will accelerate our innovation so that consumers, including Intuit's current 57 million customers and more than 110 million Credit Karma members, will quickly see benefits to help them make ends meet, save more and get out of debt. Consumers will find the right financial products including unparalleled offers on credit cards, loans and insurance. At the same time, we will help enable them to maximize their tax refund and connect them to high-yield savings accounts and checking accounts, providing them faster access to their money. Consumers will also get access to financial expertise and advice to help them make better financial decisions and build wealth.

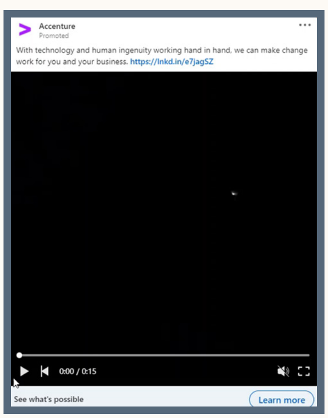
We could not be more excited to get to work to help people around the world get control of their financial lives and prosper.

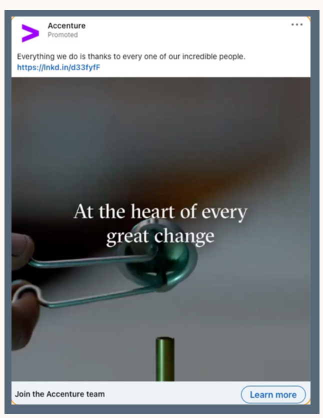
*For more information, visit our investors website.*

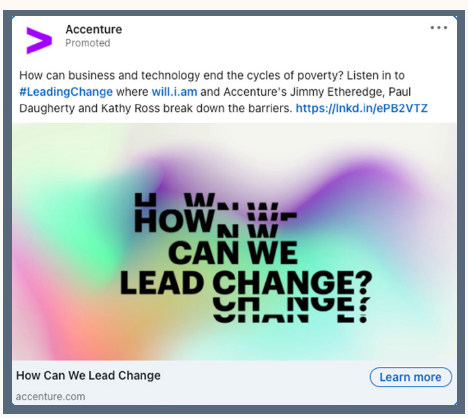



## Take a unified approach to your corporate brand.

Accenture has taken this approach through its dozens of acquisitions in the last few years. Their new brand campaign is built around the unifying thought of "let there be change." The campaign speaks to the company's brand DNA and is brought to life seamlessly across all aspects of its brand.

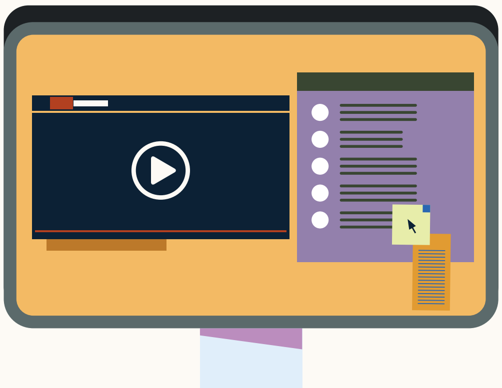


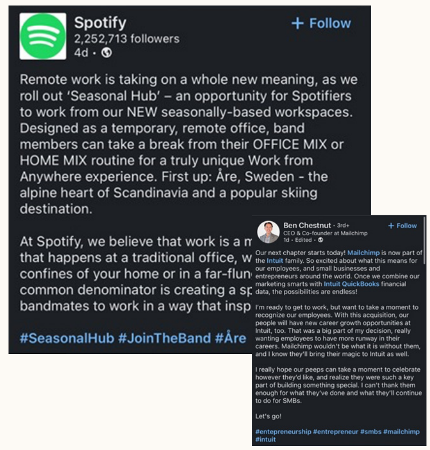
## Diversify your content formats.

To effectively reach your diverse buyers, invest in audio, video, written blog posts, infographics, and interactive experiences to resonate with all your audiences.



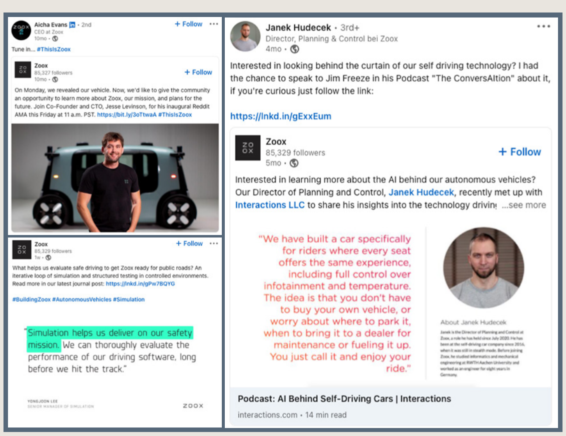
## Focus on your employer brand.

Take a moment to recognize your employees and share new policies.



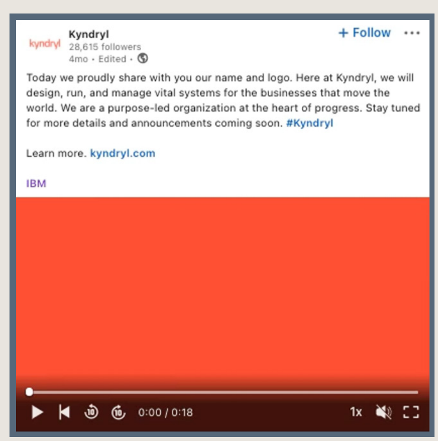

## Double down on executive communications.

Jesse Levinson, CTO/co-founder of Zoox, led an "Ask Me Anything" virtual town hall about the company's future after their acquisition by Amazon. As a brand, Zoox invested in thought leadership for its subject matter experts to showcase the company's innovations and commitment to rider safety for its suite of autonomous vehicles.




## Be consistent.

If there's a change to the acquired company's visual identity, aim for brand distinction and consistency across all platforms.



# Get your marketing operations in order.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to a brand refresh in the case of M&A, a new company launch, or a divestiture. It's highly individual and dependent on many factors. That said, there are some best practices around communications post merger. The key to success is bringing your teams together to make major brand decisions.

**Establish a streamlined operational model.** Organize a social center of excellence that meets regularly to review progress, brainstorm new content ideas, and share plans across each channel for better efficiency and message consistency.

**Create internal brand guidelines.** Document the visual, editorial, and brand mission guidelines so all marketers and creators have a North Star.

**Test and learn.** Your content strategy and approach to collaboration should continuously evolve based on what you learn.

## Elements of a successful operating model

### Center of excellence

Assemble your team leads into a center of excellence to provide resources, training, and strategy to all marketing leads to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and provide standardization.

### Effective communication

After the COE is established, audit your processes. How often should you meet? How should information on performance and content plans be disseminated?

### Tools to collaborate

At minimum, you'll need:

- A centralized repository for all assets across channels
- A centralized content calendar
- Project management tools
- Measurement tools

### Shared measurement framework

All leads should be aligned on specific KPIs for each stage of the funnel and for each channel, and be able to report back regularly on progress.

# Time
# +
# Effort
# +
# Expertise

# = Success

It takes time and effort to manage brands through M&A activity, and LinkedIn plays a key part in those successful brand management efforts. Visit LinkedIn's brand management page to better understand how to use our platform to support your organization's brand management.