



Communicating through a Strategic Acquisition and Ongoing Pandemic

Omnitracs is a transportation technology leader, providing a complete fleet intelligence software platform to the largest for-hire and private fleets in the transportation and distribution industries.

Twenty twenty was a significant year for Omnitracs: Not only did employees navigate the ongoing pandemic, but Omnitracs was in discussions to acquire SmartDrive, a video-based safety and transportation firm. The acquisition, which closed in October, has enabled Omnitracs to create an end-to-end platform that optimizes driver safety, productivity, and workflow, as well as customer routing, dispatch, and compliance.

Fortunately, Omnitracs was ready to communicate with its expanded workforce of 2,400 employees, who work across North America, Latin America, Asia, and Europe. **Elizabeth Zamora**, Senior Culture and Communications Partner at Omnitracs, relaunched Omnitracs' weekly email newsletter, *Compass Connect*, in May 2020 to utilize EmailOpen's platform. *Compass Connect* has helped keep employees engaged as they worked remotely during the pandemic and also provided a valuable forum for communicating the organization's evolving strategic direction while also honoring its dedication and commitment to global teams.

Replacing Outlook Emails with a Standardized Internal Communications Tool

Elizabeth joined Omnitracs in 2019 to expand the organization's internal communications department and create new processes and programs. She quickly discovered that the company lacked a viable email marketing tool soon after the intranet launched. "The intranet we inherited looked like something from the 1990s," said Elizabeth. "It was very clunky, totally outdated, and didn't keep our employees up-to-date on company announcements. Once the new intranet launched, the organization was hungry for a



change in how we communicated to employees. Thus, we created a weekly email newsletter."

Omnitracs was sending out several announcements via email to bridge the gap between quarterly town hall meetings. "Our employees shared feedback that they were getting too many emails and couldn't keep up," says Elizabeth. In addition, the Outlook email templates used for organization announcements and the first version of the *Compass Connect* newsletter were challenging to format and weren't trackable. This left the team with the inability to measure which topics employees were most interested in learning about and use this information to refine the content mix.

A year after relaunching the company's intranet on Microsoft SharePoint, Elizabeth was ready to relaunch *Compass Connect*. Since she'd used EmailOpen with a previous employer, she knew the tool was a natural fit for Omnitracs' needs. A SaaS-based internal communications and email marketing tool, EmailOpen is easy to learn and use, enabling small teams at Omnitracs to scale their time and talent effectively.

Elizabeth and EmailOpen worked together to create a new brand for *Compass Connect*, reflecting the company's color scheme. Elizabeth uses a template that often pairs two stories and their images horizontally at the top of each newsletter, enabling employees to skim news quickly. This was a huge improvement over the previous Outlook email format, which provided a vertical list of stories and wasn't visually engaging. "If employees only see the top half of the newsletter, we want to make sure they see the most important items," Elizabeth says.

Creating One Culture with Strong Internal Communications

As the pandemic grew in severity and scope, Elizabeth used *Compass Connect* to reinforce key messages and resources. While Omnitracs posts COVID-19 news and assets on its intranet, *Compass Connect* helped increase employee awareness by highlighting new developments and resources weekly with banners and sidebar graphics. Employees were able to quickly scan updates and click through to access new intranet resources, including

best practices, articles, and FAQs on such topics as staying safe and healthy, COVID-19 testing, vaccine distribution, and plans for returning to the office.

In addition, when former SmartDrive employees joined the company in the fall of 2020 through the acquisition, *Compass Connect* enabled these employees to become acquainted with Omnitrac's plans and policies and more rapidly assimilate into its culture.

During the integration phase, Omnitrac's leveraged *Compass Connect* to share a welcome message from the CEO; provide updates on new developments, including technology migrations; and share insights into "driving a smarter future together" with the newly joined Omnitrac's-SmartDrive team. Omnitrac's also leveraged new branding for the acquisition to create visual awareness of integration updates on both the newsletter and intranet. As with COVID-19, the newsletter helped drive employee awareness and usage of intranet resources.

Tapping a Wealth of User-Generated Content for Submissions

Elizabeth sources news stories for the weekly newsletter from content published on the intranet. "While the communications team writes and posts content on the intranet, we empower and train staff from other departments to develop their own stories. That helps a lot with submissions," she says. As a result, Elizabeth and her team member **Brianna Wilson**, Associate Culture and Communications Partner, serve as editors and newsletter developers rather than writers, reducing the time and effort required to produce newsletters.

Using Tags and Color to Organize Content Types in Every Newsletter

Elizabeth has also tagged and color-coded news to bring consistency into how her team communicates. "India and Mexico news stories have colored tags, making them easy to find. We also use colored sidebars, which really pop. Sometimes when we talk to employees, we say, 'Look for the red box for reminders and deadlines,' which makes it easier for them to find the information that we need," says Elizabeth.

Compass Connect features organization-wide announcements first, followed by individual business units and wellness information. It also provides links to resources, such as lunch and learn recordings, and upcoming events, such as holidays in different countries. "We are exploring adding an EmailOpen feature that generates a calendar invite of company-wide events to keep our employees engaged with our culture," Elizabeth states. "This would make it easier to ensure we are being inclusive and have high attendance at events."

Designing Newsletters with Message Content Builder

While Elizabeth initially developed *Compass Connect* on EmailOpen herself, she has since handed it off to Brianna. "The hardest thing wasn't training my replacement on EmailOpen because the solution is so easy to use. It was actually communicating how we prioritize different news types to make sure the most important content is always featured first," says Elizabeth.

"We like that Message Content Builder is so intuitive and simple. You just copy and paste your stories inside it. It also has a built-in image editing function, which sizes images and keeps them consistent across all the stories. It makes the newsletter look good, and you don't have to export images to Photoshop for cropping," says Elizabeth.

Considering Which Other EmailOpen Features to Implement

Elizabeth has been able to achieve open rates in the high 30s and 40s and is considering implementing some additional features to optimize readership. *Compass Connect* is whitelisted, ensuring that all emails reach every employee every time by approving each account's unique IP address.

EmailOpen can also work with IT organizations to ensure images download automatically, which would help report higher and more accurate metrics on open-rates since open-rates are based on image download. However, this feature would work when employees use the company network to read the newsletter, not working remotely, says Elizabeth.



EmailOpen also offers dynamic content, enabling companies to show or hide content, depending on whether it's relevant to users. "We do share content that's specific to a certain country, such as Mexico or India," states Elizabeth. "At this point, we're sharing the news with everyone but also weighing whether it makes sense to segment that content in the future. That may become more relevant as our company grows and gets larger."

Elizabeth is also considering adding new email campaigns to EmailOpen, such as templates for executive emails and anniversaries, promotions, and new hires. Omnitrac's could tap EmailOpen to send triggered emails, thanking employees for their service while also encouraging them to post reviews on Glassdoor. EmailOpen could then provide aggregated metrics about the success of these campaigns.

"As a leader in the transportation industry, our internal communication needs to reflect our latest thinking and global position. EmailOpen has helped us become more professional in the way we communicate. Our employees love receiving the newsletter each week on Friday and have given us great feedback, both on the new format and the content they receive," concludes Elizabeth.