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Communications

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Employer brand

Top-9 Tech Employer Brand with 0 budget

The company already had some recognition among .NET and mobile developers but struggled to hire other Tech roles. It also had 0 employer branding budget.

We suggested changing the approach from personal to community-based. We focused on providing instruments, frameworks, and support for everyone willing to share their expertise, not just the company's superstar ambassadors. Instead of covering just two professions (.NET and mobile) with the content, we tried to talk with audiences from all 12 technology areas presented in the company.


 **Result:** Organic reach grew x2,2 year to year; 30% of the employees were engaged in Employer Brand activities; 17 Telegram channels started by teammates; 10 out of 12 professions were covered with regular content by the end of the year; 6 new ambassadors famous in their fields; top-9 Tech Employer Brand at the end of the year.

Implementation period: 1 year.

Employer's brand strategy + hiring a manager

For 6 years, the company deliberated on whether to start work on the tech employer brand and how to do it but did not initiate the process.

We conducted all the necessary internal and external research and proposed an employer branding strategy in just one month. The CEO approved the plan at the presentation meeting and hired an employer branding manager for implementation. We also helped hire the right person for the job.

 **Result:** 40 in-depth employee interviews, competitors analysis, developed EVP and Persona, general employer branding strategy.


Implementation period: 6 months (including 2 months for vacancy queuing).

Internal communications

Antiburnout project

Burnout was a non-existent term in the eyes of the CEO. Meanwhile, more and more people were leaving the company because of it.

After in-depth research with team leaders and employees, we proposed a communication strategy and improvements in C&B and identified the root cause of burnout: role overlap.


 **Result:** turnover % caused by burnout. We made it 0. C-Lvl, the HR team, and employees re-established trust. Psychologic support was included in company benefits. More than 100 people were hired to address the issue of role overlap.

Implementation period: 6 months.

Engagement people in internal comms x5 in 2 months

People didn't engage in internal communications; there was no way to know if they even saw them.

After analysis, we created a list of hypotheses in the HADI framework, tested them, and supported the implementation of a few minor improvements.


 **Result:** x5 average engagement rate in all internal communications. People started reading corporate updates, and one of the initiatives (a meeting-free day) was later rolled out across the organization.

Implementation period: 2 months.

"We thought we would lose 50% of staff, but we lost only 1 employee"

At the beginning of the global crisis provoked by events at the start of 2022, when people were already nervous and unsure of their future with the company, the company's CEO announced publicly that it might face salary cuts.

We conducted a series of Q&As with C&B and the finance team, weekly updates on the company's finances, and special meetings for the most important internal target audience: Tech people.


 **Result:** We helped the company save staff in crises, and only 1 employee was lost. The company had one of the lowest layoff ratings in the industry.

Implementation period: 3 months.

Renew internal communication strategy from 300 to 1500 people

A successful business department becomes the heart of integrating four departments (including technical teams) and needs an effective intercom for 1500 people instead of the /300 they used to have. These are people from 10+ countries. Department leaders have many problems with culture, language, and professional mismatch.

We planned a new internal communication strategy and supported them from the very beginning until everyone understood the changes. We also developed a brand-new recognition program for the newly built department.

 **Result:** New internal communications strategy for 1500 in 2 months.

Implementation period: 2 months.

Culture

Leadership culture

- [Implementation of co-active leadership model + launch leaders community](#)
- [PO began to propose ideas + launch the PO community proactively](#)

Company culture

- [Preserving the company's culture at the time of scaling](#)
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Leadership culture

Implementation of co-active leadership model + launch leaders community

Tech leaders and PO were not ready to take responsibility, sell ideas, and come up with problems, not suggestions. We found out that the root of the problem is that they do not understand what management expects of them, what criteria leadership skills have within the company, and where they need to grow. They also lack an environment for learning and case sharing.

We formulated a change plan for the company's management (description of the skillset and the "leadership" skill, training in regular 1:1). We launched a course on implementing a co-active leadership model for PO and tech leaders, which resulted in a community with regular case analysis.

 **Result:** a self-organized community of leaders. 80% of the participants rated the course as practical, and the company's leaders noted positive changes in the work of tech leaders and POs.

Implementation period: 3 months.

PO began to propose ideas + launch the PO community proactively

The company has a culture in which, on the one hand, product owners do not participate in business development, and on the other hand, they cannot create products because they conflict with the development team. As a result, the development team takes longer to develop products; features are poorly prioritized, significantly affecting product quality and customer satisfaction.

After a series of in-depth interviews, we found several key difficulties. Product owners do not know how to correctly describe tasks and create roadmaps with priorities, so the development team is constantly drowning in tasks. Product owners do not have regular communications with the CPO and each other, so they are not transparent about what is happening in the company.

To solve this problem comprehensively, we have created regular product party meetings with the CPO to discuss any issues of interest, teach product development practices, share knowledge, and quickly communicate with the CPO.



Result: Product owners began to take responsibility and participate in business development. They resolved conflicts with the development teams and learned to prioritize and use roadmaps. A community has emerged, and as a result, there is a constant exchange of knowledge.

During the three months of the community's work, competence matrices were created for analysts, tech writers, and POs, and several process questions were sorted out (for example, how to describe tasks for the team).

Implementation period: 1 month.

Company culture

Preserving the company's culture at the time of scaling

The company grew more than 60% from 150 to 250 in just a few months, and employees from the first 150 were openly concerned about a possible shift in company culture.

We created a methodology and conducted over 30 in-depth interviews with newbies and veterans about expectations and reality within the company and how the culture feels right now—polished the results by asking opinion leaders with critics' positioning towards the company. I knew the culture was kept intact, but an employee's profile had shifted slightly.



Result: In clue-free questions, 60% of respondents said that a company's most important quality is still Transparency, its fundamental value. 78% of new employees rated aligning their expectations with the reality of working at the company at 8 out of 10 or higher.

We also gathered fresh qualitative data. For example, we gained insight into reasons for choosing us as an employer: we have become popular among candidates leaving enterprises. This allowed us to attract candidates further by showcasing our agile processes in our employer branding content.

Implementation period: 2 months.

Onboarding is a crucial tool for protecting a company's culture during a scaling

The company has had a lousy scaling experience in the past. Product development slowed after the team grew by 50% in a year.

After diving into the details, we saw that the problem occurs at the onboarding stage: newcomers are poorly immersed in the company's culture and introduced to someone other than the team. They are not actively immersed in the domain and architecture of the service, which leads to errors in feature implementation. Any hiring mistake becomes a disaster since leaders do not know how to fire at the probation stage.

To solve the problem, we built an onboarding with transparent steps, roles, and artifacts, making people's work easier. They described onboarding and included the necessary lectures on the company's culture and processes. We also monitored the workload in the teams, and if there was overheating, we offered not to hire yet but to adapt existing newcomers.



Result: The built-up onboarding could easily survive the growth from 100 to 200 people. Satisfaction with onboarding newcomers was 8 out of 10. The number of unwanted layoffs has decreased.

As a result, onboarding itself was transferred to the teams' responsibility, and they wanted it themselves. (!)

Implementation period: 6 months.

Productivity

Company productivity growth

- [Implementation of the OKR framework for 700 people](#)
- [How to become faster and not lose product' quality by changing the structure](#)

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Team productivity growth

- [Improving the productivity of the product development team](#)
- [Strategic session to restart the team](#)


Company productivity growth

Implementation of the OKR framework for 700 people

The company had 6 large units, each planning its goals independently. At the same time, the company worked on the overall strategy set by the CEO. Because of this isolation, there were problems with implementing the plan. A few years before our arrival, the company began implementing the OKR framework to solve them. In reality, it didn't work. People perceived OKR more as bureaucracy and accountability. And this vicious cycle had to be broken.

We conducted research and found that implementing the framework has 2 fundamental problems. People do not know how to set goals, and leaders do not understand the purpose of this tool.

To solve it, we conducted several trainings, introduced the practice of OKR Review to synchronize all Tech and Product teams, built a plan for setting goals, and synchronized all large units so that the goals were about one thing.

 **Result:** OKR has started working. The team and leaders' satisfaction with the planning increased from 3 to 4. The first OKR Review was rated 4 out of 5.

Implementation period: 4 months + 6 months for process refinement.


How to become faster and not lose product' quality by changing the structure

Business stakeholders in the company regularly reported their dissatisfaction with the speed of development and the fact that teams are taking on features a very long time after the proposal. At the same time, the development team was simultaneously faced with the task of scaling the technology platform to new markets.

The CTO decided that a structural change — the division of development teams and products into global and market ones — could solve this problem. After the implementation, there was even more confusion.

After several meetings with the service station, we realized the change was implemented poorly. Therefore, we formulated and implemented a plan to implement changes:

- described new structural units, roles, and the intersection of areas of responsibility together with CTO and team leaders;
- formulated metrics by which we assessed how successful the implementation is;
- formed a committee that regularly collected and resolved controversial cases between the teams.

 **Result:** In six months, stakeholders' satisfaction increased from 3 to 4.5 out of 5. We have solved most of the controversial cases between the teams. Several more critical problems were identified and successfully solved. For example, because of these changes, a large support load fell on the market teams, and it was necessary to return it to the support team.

Implementation period: 1 year.


Team productivity growth

Improving the productivity of the product development team

The product had low productivity compared to other teams in the company.

After a series of interviews, it became clear that the critical problem is 3 product owners who disagree. As a result, the team does not know who to go to with questions, prioritization does not work well, and there is no account.

To solve it, we held several meetings with product managers and the CPO, after which one product owner became a project manager in a key product, the second began to work as a mentor, and the third remained the militant product manager of the current product.


 **Result:** The speed and quality of development have increased.

Implementation period: 1 month.

Strategic session to restart the team

After the merger of 2 teams into 1 leader, the manager was a problem: many questions were flying to him, and the previous team structure and division of responsibility no longer worked for the new team.

We organized an offline strategic session to discuss the following questions: "What are we about as a team? What are our strengths?" "What goals and challenges are we facing? How do we influence the company (it was important to inspire here that everything is not just like that)?" and "How do we reassemble our interaction processes so as not to overload?"

 **Result:** The team and the manager formulated inspiring goals and sorted out each person's areas of responsibility.

Implementation period: 1 month (including 2 days of session).

Workshops

- [How to become everyone's favorite team, negotiate quickly, and get what you want](#)

- [What is a User Story and how to work with it](#)
- [How to live, not survive, if you are a leader](#)

▼ Workshops

How to become everyone's favorite team, negotiate quickly, and get what you want

by *Veronika Ilyina*

It's tough to become noticeable as a team member with your fabulous projects in a big corporation with an entire team of such teams. One way to deal with this (besides performance) is to build an internal brand of the team in the eyes of your peers and stakeholders.

In the workshop, I share generously illustrated theory with real-life examples and guide the workshop participants through the complete cycle of internal brand creation, from defining goals, target audience, and competitors for attention to content plans and results analysis as a process.

Implementation period: 1 week in general, 1 month if we need to adjust the workshop to specific requests.

Duration: 2 hours.

People: more than 5.

Price: €200 per person for individuals, €300 per person for company.

Other: The workshop was initially created and conducted for YaTalks Serbia in 2023, with 30+ happy attendees from platform and product teams with many new ideas for improving their brands.

What is a User Story and how to work with it

by *Yana Khodartsevich*

If the product team does not know how to decompose or manage priorities in a big feature, then this workshop can help. Decomposition always helps with predictability and risk management. The user story also sets extraordinary goals that inspire the team.

This is a workshop for the team based on a natural feature case. We learn to break it down into stories, define a story, and determine the MVP and other goals. We can create large features quickly and accurately in about one month and immediately put them to work.

Implementation period: 1 week.

Duration: 2,5 hours.

People: 10-12 humans.

Price: €200 per person for individuals, €300 per person for company.

How to live, not survive, if you are a leader

by *Yana Khodartsevich*

Leaders have many responsibilities, a heavy workload, and different tasks. Your work results will be negatively affected if you do not maintain your energy level. Leaders who burn out don't do their jobs well, don't support the team, and can't look at the problems and tasks that arise from different sides.

At the workshop, we help leaders see what is taking away their energy and what tools can be used to start supporting it. There are at least 1-2 tools/practices that leaders take with them after training.

Implementation period: 1 week.

Duration: 2 hours.

People: 10-12 humans.

Price: €200 per person for individuals, €300 per person for company.

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