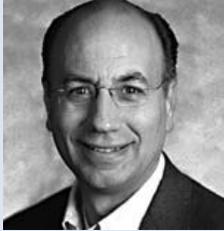


# 6 strategies for making an acquisition painless for all

By Dan Mocerì



You've closed your first acquisition—what comes next? How do you ensure it lives up to expectations?

After successfully onboarding more than 30 acquisitions over the past six years, we have identified six important elements for executing acquisitions as smoothly and successfully as possible, and with strong results in the long-term.

**1. Recognize that all acquisitions are unique.** No two companies are identical. Each has a unique culture that was shaped over time, with varying levels of colleague expertise and different processes. Some integration tasks can be standardized, but many will have to be custom-fitted, based on the requirements of the acquired company.

**2. An acquisition isn't just a financial transaction.** It's the beginning of a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship. The quickest way to ensure your acquisition becomes one of the statistics is to frame it as merely a financial transaction. Keep in mind that this is someone's company. They, and many others, have spent a lifetime building the company to be successful. The quickest way to destroy value in the company is to reduce it to dollars and cents, and then just make changes for the sake of change.

**3. Plan, plan, plan.** An acquisition brings with it an array of talented new colleagues and the customer base that they serve, and it's important to be prepared for leveraging the former and servicing the latter. The planning should focus on how you can together increase sales volume and quality of service, as well as what is needed from back office support for the combined business.

**4. Day One is critical.** Secure your most important new asset: colleagues.

Put yourself in the shoes of a colleague who finds out the company for which they work has been acquired. Think about the kind of questions you'd have when you hear the news: What does this mean for my job? My paycheck? My family? Day One is the first impression you make on them, and they need reassurance more than anything else.

They need to hear a united message from leadership of both companies, preferably the CEO or president. It is also important to ensure they understand their paycheck will still be there on time and that small details, such as new business cards, are in place.

**5. Provide ongoing support.** Day One is the start of the relationship, but supporting the new business must be a constant priority from that point forward. Human Resources is a vital part of the transition and should assist in getting insight into what is most important to the new colleagues. Onboarding paperwork, uninterrupted paychecks and benefit continuities are all common elements that concern acquired colleagues.

**6. Integrate the things that make most sense.** Just because you acquired the company doesn't mean you have to change everything on Day One. Remember you are buying this company because they are successful, and you want to build on that success, not destroy it. Consider if it makes sense to introduce change slowly, as the combined companies ramp up growth and are able to leverage the strengths of both organizations.

Integrating an acquisition is as much an art as it is a science. Build on strengths and shore up areas that are not as solid.

---

*Dan Moceris is the executive chairman and co-founder of systems integration company Convergent Technologies, which designs, installs and services electronic security, fire alarm and life safety systems.*