

Zipline

CASE STUDY

How a quickly growing shoe brand leverages Zipline to engage associates and advance their mission of sustainability

After launching a brand new line of sustainable and functional footwear, this certified B corporation is growing its selection of eco-friendly products almost as quickly as it is expanding globally. The digital-native brand is committed to social innovation and is revolutionizing the footwear industry by finding new and creative ways to reduce their carbon footprint. Not only are they taking steps to make better products in a better way, but they are also doing it worldwide, with dozens of brick-and-mortar stores opening across multiple countries around the globe in just a few short years.

Once the brand set their sights on sustainability, they needed to ensure the company was ready to scale. And that's where Zipline came in.

The Selection Process

Prior to opening their first brick-and-mortar store in San Francisco, this direct-to-consumer footwear startup had an extremely successful e-commerce footprint, operating online and in pop-up shops in local markets across the globe. But even before the brand opened a single store, they were already considering Zipline as a solution for store comms. The company's Global Retail Operations Senior Manager recalls "a year before we signed, we had open conversations with [Melissa Wong, Co-founder, and CEO of Zipline] because I knew that retail communication was going to be a central piece of our long term strategy."

In 2019, the brand leaders hired a manager of Global Retail Communications and Engagement to develop a comms strategy. As a retail veteran, the new manager was already familiar with Zipline's game-changing technology. "When they told me they were already considering Zipline, I was really excited. That was the tool we needed," he says. "We had a shot to build a really awesome foundation for our comms program, we had a tool lined up, and a comms process was born."

The fact that the brand had a very small brick-and-mortar footprint at the time was hardly a deterrent. "When we had the funds to sign the dotted line, we knew Zipline was a tool we would grow into," says the Global Retail Operations Senior Manager.

The Rollout

The brand was set to launch Zipline in April 2020. And then, in March of 2020, Covid-19 shut down stores nationwide. When faced with the decision of whether to maintain the status quo and avoid rocking the boat in times of uncertainty or to implement a new tool in the midst of lockdown, "the choice was easy."

"We didn't know what Covid had in store, but we knew there was going to be a lot of communication to our teams. We knew there was going to be a lot of change. We knew we were going to be dealing with the health and safety of our team. And we knew that Zipline was going to be the tool to put all of our information in one place for teams to access and take action."

The brand decided to launch Zipline while stores were still closed. The team didn't waste any time setting up store communications to keep everyone informed. The Global Retail Comms & Engagement manager made sure that communications went out every Tuesday, creating stability for teams in the field: "Zipline provided some sort of continuity when everything else was up in the air." When stores reopened and staff returned to work months later, the brand used Zipline to re-engage employees. "One thing that it did really well was give everybody a sense of safety," says one Store Manager. "[the Store Ops team] worked really hard to make sure that when our employees came back, they felt safe."

Features That Transform Operations

Operationally, Zipline's features have been instrumental when ensuring store execution, visibility, and agility.

The communication team found great value in Zipline's Task & Messages functionality. Prior to Zipline, communication was limited to email and a static intranet, which gave leaders zero visibility into readership or execution. Similarly, store teams were often overwhelmed by the amount of information thrown at them and had to spend valuable time sifting through "nice to know" information in order to find the "need to do" tasks. By bringing communication together into a one-stop-shop and surfacing tasks as needed, Zipline provided the peace of mind the brand knew it needed. "Being able to provide action items that we could track was game-changing," says the brand's Global Retail Comms & Engagement manager.

The Resource Library has also been a critical tool for the retail brand. Prior to Zipline, evergreen resources and employee reference guides were scattered across folders in Google Drive - difficult to find and even harder to maintain. When new health and safety mandates rolled out, it was more important than ever to ensure that teams could pull up correct information in a timely manner. "We created a COVID hub, and all of our SOPs, all of our training materials, we took them out of Google Drive and put them into [Zipline] so our teams truly had a one-stop-shop."

The brand also leverages Zipline's audit tool, Assessments, to ensure their growing fleet of stores adheres to the same top-notch standards for visual displays, cleanliness, and more. "It's the first time we've put a structure together for what the expectations are for each of our stores, consistently, across the globe."

"Zipline really is a one-stop-shop for all of our SOPs, all of our information, and all of our marketing initiatives. It keeps everyone in our flock informed up to the minute," says a Store Manager. "I don't work for Zipline, but I do believe Zipline works for me. We all like to think of ourselves as CEOs of our own stores. Zipline is the best executive assistant you can have."

Making Retail Comms Fun

Who says communication has to be boring? When the brand was able to safely reopen stores, "that's when the fun happened." As an on-trend retailer popular among Gen Z and Millennial shoppers, it was important to the brand that their internal communication felt as fresh and fun as their external marketing. Fortunately, their stores' communications were able to truly come to life through Zipline's features.

Today, the sustainable shoe brand uses Zipline to turn their global network of store associates into a community of brand advocates through pun-filled, engaging video communication. (And they have a lot of fun doing it!)

"We lean heavily on video for education and engagement," says the Global Retail Comms & Engagement manager. Between team interviews, behind-the-scenes sneak peeks, and messages from the founders, each video program has a unique purpose to unite the entire fleet behind the mission and the message of the brand. Zipline's slick user interface and easy publishing capabilities makes serving up fresh, fun content easy. Video content is easily searchable, automatically resized to account for store bandwidth levels, and available on mobile devices - so every employee has a window into the brand right in the palm of their hand.

Successfully Scaling Sustainability

At Zipline, we believe that when organizations send meaningful communications in the right way, frontline workers can truly understand what their brand stands for and how their work contributes to greater company goals. This, in turn, drives higher employee engagement and company agility. For a mission-based company like this shoe retailer, it's even more important that store associates understand what the organization stands for - and feel like a part of those greater company goals.

"Sustainability is something that we really, really believe in. It's something that we live and breathe and we have to do what we can to make sure that every one of [our associates] feels the same way that we do."

With Zipline as the company's one-stop-shop for communications, every employee worldwide is now kept up-to-date on the company's latest sustainability achievements - whether that's manufacturing entirely plant-based footwear, rolling out carbon footprint product labels, or becoming a fully carbon-neutral business. Associates are fully knowledgeable about the brand's mission, and not only feel more prepared to talk to customers but also feel confident that the work they do is in pursuit of a higher good.



Since implementing Zipline, this sustainable shoe brand has:

- Increased associate engagement around company initiatives, announcements, and events
- Supported several successful product launches by ensuring associates have the resources and training they need to represent the brand in the best way possible
- Leveraged the platform to share a network of engaging, fun, and thoughtful video content that connects employees across the globe
- Continuously ensured consistency in brand standards throughout stores worldwide
- Maintained positive employee morale so that frontline workers can provide top tier customer experiences
- Created a centralized dashboard with SOPs, training documentation, and visibility into important tasks.

About Zipline

Zipline is the leading provider of execution solutions for brands with field locations, driving better business agility, sales execution, and employee engagement. Zipline helps brands coordinate communications with the field in a way that streamlines operations and ensures accountability, ultimately improving sales and the customer and staff experience. Brands that use Zipline experience a 130% increase in sales execution and millions of dollars in labor savings annually. The company has a Net Promoter Score of 78, and CBInsights ranked Zipline as one of the 100 most promising B2B retail tech companies in the world. Zipline is Great Place to Work-Certified for its employee engagement, culture, and healthy work-life balance, and was named to the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing private companies. Today, more than 60 brands like Rite Aid, Sephora, Gap Inc., and AEO Inc. depend on Zipline to align and empower their field teams worldwide.