

TRIBEWANTED IDEA

On January 14, 2006, Ben Keene received an email that changed his life. It was from his friend Mark James. The subject line read: "A **TRIBE** IS WANTED." Keene and James, both 26, had wanted to create an Internet start-up.¹ Here was James's new idea: We will create an online community and call it a tribe. We will make decisions about rules through discussions and online **voting**. Then we will do something that no one has ever done—our **virtual** tribe will become a real one. We will travel to a **remote** island and form a partnership with a local tribe. We will build an **environmentally** friendly community and share it with the world.

James got this idea from social networking websites. He noticed that people spent a lot of time on these sites, but they spent most of their time posting messages and sharing music. In James's view, these sites could be used for so much more.

THE ISLAND

Keene liked the idea, and he and James named their website Tribewanted.com. Then they began looking for an island for their tribe. Around the same time, Tui Mali—the chief of a tribe in Fiji—wanted to find someone to develop his small island called Vorovoro. Although the main islands of Fiji were becoming very modern, Vorovoro was not. A few people on Vorovoro had cell phones or worked on one of the main islands, but most lived in very small, simple homes with no electricity or running water.

Tui Mali **advertised** his island on the Internet, and a few weeks later, Keene and James contacted him. They agreed to pay \$53,000 for a three-year lease² of the island and \$26,500 in donations³ to the community. They also promised jobs for the local tribe members. "We are all excited about Tribewanted," Tui Mali told a local newspaper reporter. "It will provide us with

work for the next three years." Tui Mali was happy to have the money, but he also trusted that Keene and James would respect his culture.

THE NEW TRIBE

The Internet tribe attracted people quickly. In a few months, it had 920 members from 25 countries. In September of 2006, Keene and 13 of his tribe members, aged 17 to 59, traveled to the island for the first time. James, meanwhile, stayed at home to manage the website. When Keene's group arrived, the local tribe and Tui Mali were there to greet them.

For several weeks after the newcomers arrived, they worked with the local tribe members. They built buildings, planted crops behind the village, set up clean sources of energy such as solar power, and ate fresh fish from the ocean. As the new and old tribes worked together, they became friends. Eventually, they became one tribe.

Tribewanted brought together groups of people from very different cultures—both on the island and online. Keene and Tui Mali believe the new tribal connections will help Vorovoro develop in a positive way. They hope the island will become more modern without losing its traditional culture.

THE TRIBE KEEPS GROWING

Today, Tribewanted continues to use social networking as a **tool** to connect in a real environment. Anyone can go to the website to join the online tribe, donate money, or plan a visit. Since Vorovoro, Keene and James have created other tribes in Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, Bali, and Italy. They hope to create more communities around the world, bringing people and cultures together in a **global** Internet tribe.

¹An Internet start-up is a newly created online business.

²A lease is a contract allowing the use of a building or piece of land.

³Donations are sums of money or items that someone gives to an organization.

UNDERSTANDING THE READING

A The statement in **bold** below is an introductory sentence for a brief summary of the reading passage. Complete the summary by choosing three sentences (a–e) that best express the main ideas of the reading passage.

Ben Keene and Mark James created Tribewanted.com, a virtual community that became a real community.

- a. They contacted Tui Mali, the leader of a tribe in Fiji who wanted to modernize his island.
- b. Members of the website traveled to the island to help develop it, forming new tribal connections with the local community.
- c. James did not go to the island; he had to stay at home to manage the website.
- d. Each month, one member of Tribewanted was elected co-chief of the island and served alongside Tui Mali.
- e. Keene and James have created new tribes in other places around the world and hope to form a global Internet community.

IDENTIFYING DETAILS

B Find details in the reading passage to complete each sentence. The sentences are in random order.

1. James and Keene found a small island for their tribe called _____.
2. In September _____, Keene went to the island with 13 other people.
3. James and Keene paid Tui Mali _____ to lease the island for three years.
4. James and Keene named their website _____.
5. Mark James sent a(n) _____ to his friend Ben Keene about starting a tribe.
6. James and Keene started tribes in other places like _____ in Indonesia.
7. The newcomers worked with the _____ people to develop the island. In the end, both groups became one tribe.

SEQUENCING

C Complete the timeline using the sentences in exercise B (1–7).

