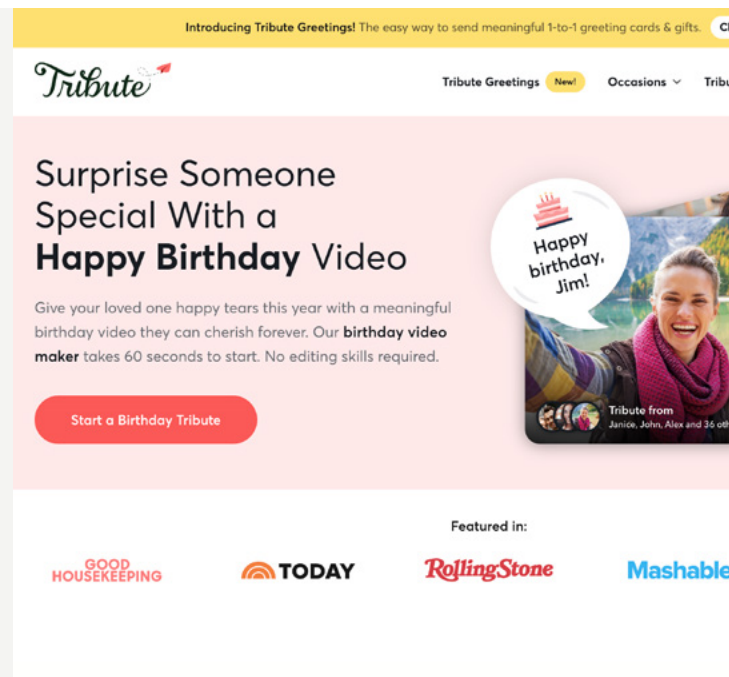# Backblaze

Tribute

From PoC to Success: Scaling a Video Montage App With Backblaze

1M+

Minutes of
Video Submitted
Annually

Situation

When its popularity surged during the pandemic, Tribute, a cloud video platform, suddenly started burning through their AWS credits. They needed an affordable cloud storage solution that would integrate with their existing tech stack and be able to handle the full cycle of their front-loaded bandwidth needs and later focus on long-term storage.

$15K

Saved per Month

Solution

Tribute immediately recognized that Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage was orders of magnitude less expensive than the alternatives. Direct integration with bunny.net and easy communication with Tribute's other service partners meant that in addition to slashing storage costs, Tribute was able to go from testing a proof of concept (PoC) to live and in production in under two weeks without having to rebuild any internal infrastructure.

<2

Weeks From PoC
to Production

Result

Backblaze B2 has already paid off for Tribute; saving tens of thousands of dollars each month in long-term storage and egress costs has allowed the team to more effectively scale. And instead of having to constantly build and rebuild new infrastructure solutions, Tribute's engineering efforts are now fully focused on developing the core product and growing the company.

Introducing Tribute Greetings! The easy way to send meaningful 1-to-1 greeting cards
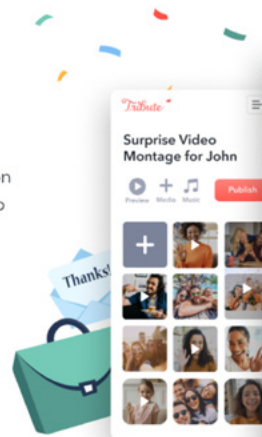
Tribute Greetings New! | Occasions

Employee Engagement & Recognition Videos

Now it's easy to build a positive work culture of appreciation and recognition all year long with personalized group video greetings.

Enterprise Solutions   ▶ See Example

Trusted by the best:

shopify   Cleveland Clinic   Medtronic   THE UNIVE MD A Canc Making Ca

Tribute makes it easy for people to create video montages celebrating their loved ones. Since its founding in 2013, the company has gifted over five million videos in more than 90 countries. After years of steady progress, they saw a 20x growth spike in 2020. Today, gratitude and human connection remain Tribute's guiding principles; across an expanding product line of video montages, digital greetings, and gift cards, their favorite KPI (key performance indicator) is ToJ (tears of joy).

All images provided by Tribute and Adobe Stock Photo.

How a Video Montage Company Inspires Tears of Joy With Better Cloud Storage

Have you ever received a gift that deeply touched your heart? Tribute aims to make such heartwarming gifting a regular occurrence by simplifying and enhancing the process of creating video montages featuring your loved ones singing your praises. When Co-Founder Andrew Horn first had the idea for Tribute, he had just received a video montage for his birthday from his then-girlfriend. It was the most meaningful gift he had ever received, but she later shared how miserable it was to put the video together—endless cat herding of distant relatives and flaky friends, file sharing issues, and unnecessarily complicated editing software all created friction and frustration.

"We built Tribute as a way to give really meaningful messages as gifts," says Rory Petty, Tribute Co-Founder and CTO. "It just so happens that video is a really impactful way to do that." Today, people send Tributes for major milestones like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, graduations, and funerals. The company has also introduced two new offerings: Tribute Greetings—short-form digital greeting cards with countless design and gift card options—and Employee Tributes for organizations looking to recognize and retain top talent.

As an early stage startup, Tribute saw an encouraging pattern of steady organic growth during its first few years. At the time they were using a combination of hosting through Heroku, in-house transcode services, and Amazon S3 storage on the backend subsidized by free startup credits from AWS. But when the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic sent the world into isolation, people needed a new way to mark those life events. Tribute's steady average of between 10,000-50,000 recorded minutes of video each month skyrocketed to 10 and then 20 times that.

Now we do on the order of millions if not tens of millions of recorded video minutes a year," says Petty. "That's not taking into account all the different transcoded and high-resolution versions." By 2021,

Tribute had burned through their AWS credits; it became clear that they were ready to scale from a technical perspective, but not a cost perspective.

Getting Customers Choked up Without Choking Off Company Growth

Like a lot of startups, Tribute spent its early years sprinting toward product-market fit without thinking about how much it would cost to host videos in perpetuity. But as their growth spiked and they started optimizing for profit margin and cost of goods sold (COGS), the team started to realize that Amazon S3 wasn't going to be a good long-term fit.

"That's when we came across Backblaze. It was an order of magnitude cheaper than AWS and a lot of similar options, and it was a really good peanut-butter-and-jelly fit with bunny.net," Petty says. Tribute was already relying on a series of partner services, and bunny.net's CDN service was critical for the content delivery piece of the puzzle. Because of bunny.net's partnership with Backblaze, Tribute was able to keep storage costs low and avoid egress costs completely.

In addition to Tribute's sudden growth, the company's usage model was also a concern. The start of the Tribute customer journey is bandwidth-heavy—people watch Tributes over and over as soon as they're published—but after that initial peak, those long-term costs are quickly dominated by storage, not bandwidth. Originally they had considered requiring customers to download their videos if storage became cost prohibitive down the road, but that was less than ideal considering so much of Tribute's growth pattern was based on staying top-of-mind for consumers as they shared existing video links.

"The decision became clear when we realized we could have videos in hot storage that wasn't going to break the bank," Petty says. "It has been a great fit that lets us have a more predictable cost of goods sold and really lets us scale our storage long-term."

> " **Backblaze has been a great fit that lets us have a more predictable cost of goods sold and really lets us scale our storage long-term.**
>
> **Rory Petty,** CTO and Co-Founder, Tribute

The #1 solution for employee engagement and recognition videos

Tribute makes it easy to create professional-quality videos that build culture. Elevate your employee happiness, improve retention and ensure that everyone on your team feels appreciated.
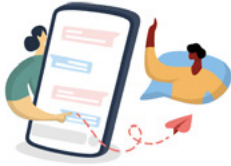
A Turn-key solution

Start a Tribute in 60-seconds. Employees can submit from any device. No signup or app download required.

The most meaningful messages

Our custom prompts make it easier for employees to share heartfelt messages that leave a lasting impact.

24/7 customer support

Customer support from real, genuinely helpful professionals. Concierge video editors available to compile the montage for you.

> **From a cost of goods sold perspective, AWS pricing wasn't a great fit. From an engineering perspective, we didn't want a net-new platform. So the fact that we got both with Backblaze—a drop-in API replacement with a much better cost structure—it was just a no-brainer.**

Rory Petty, CTO and Co-Founder, Tribute

Who Knew Migration Could Be So Moving— Migration Complete In Under Two Weeks

Backblaze's S3 Compatible API made Tribute's migration completely painless. "Other than plugging Backblaze into some of the partner services we use, there were no substantial changes to our architecture," Petty says. "That was honestly one of the biggest reasons we picked it. It just made a ton of sense and it was super simple." The team at Tribute also appreciated the help they received from the Backblaze sales engineering team throughout the setup and migration process.

The day after he started building a proof of concept, Petty went to his engineering team with the PoC 90% complete. After some QA, Tribute was set up with a whole new system in under two weeks. From start to finish, the process of creating a Tribute now spans three key workflows:

- **Ingestion pipeline**: How does raw video footage come into Tribute?
- **Processing pipeline**: How are videos polished on the back-end?
- **Export pipeline**: How is the final composition rendered and delivered?

When users upload videos, Tribute uses Transloadit's open source file uploader, Uppy.io, to create the security signatures and tokens they need for client-side signing. Then Transloadit runs custom scripts to create transcodes and resolutions that are stored directly to Tribute's Backblaze B2 buckets. bunny.net acts as a pull-through CDN to accelerate video delivery for customers.
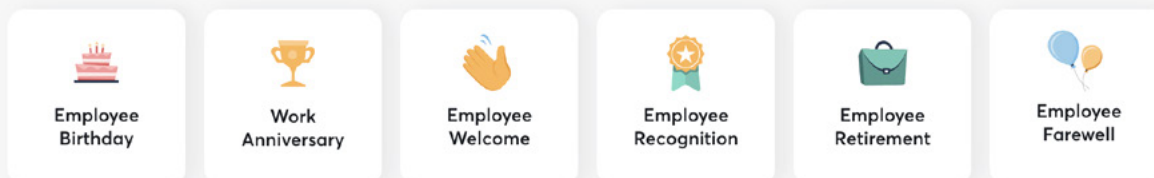
The customer never leaves the web browser, so there's no app installation or sign up required. The recording experience is as simple as it gets, and the editing experience includes basics like trims, rotations, decorative frames, and title slides. "Our video processing pipeline is serverless, so we spin up an instance, take all the videos, transition effects, music, and photos, composite it all together into one large montage video, and then we serve that final product through B2 Cloud Storage and bunny.net," says Petty.

Because Backblaze integrates seamlessly with all the ingest systems Tribute was already using, they didn't have to reinvent their entire architecture to complete their migration and get all the cost benefits they were hoping for. "From a COGS perspective, AWS pricing wasn't a great fit," Petty explains. "From an engineering perspective, we didn't want a net-new platform. So the fact that we got both with Backblaze—a drop-in API replacement with a much better cost structure—it was just a no brainer."
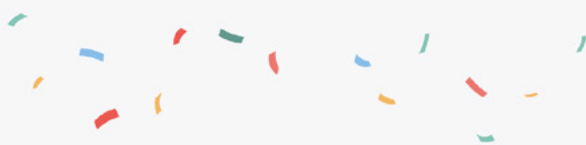
Celebrate your employees or workplace events with Tributes for every occasion!
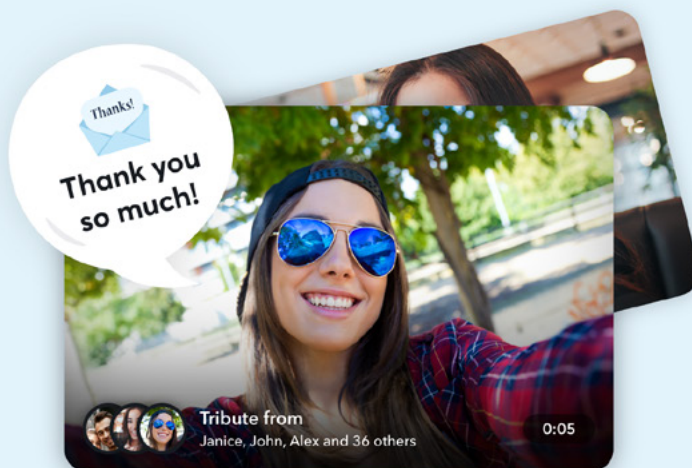
Create and give employee Tributes for any special workplace occasion!

| Employee Birthday | Work Anniversary | Employee Welcome | Employee Recognition | Employee Retirement | Employee Farewell |

+ 30 more occasions

Honor a Wonderful Human With a **Thank You** Video

Thank someone for the joy they bring to your life. A **thank you video** Tribute is special to share and easy to make. 60 seconds to start. No editing skills required.

Start a Thank You Tribute

Thank you so much!

Tribute from
Janice, John, Alex and 36 others

0:05

Featured in:

Rolling Stone   **GOOD HOUSEKEEPING**   martha stewart   ❤ INDEPENDENT   **SELF**

❝

Backblaze has been a game changer for us in terms of maintainable long-term storage costs.

Rory Petty, CTO and Co-Founder, Tribute

Focusing On What Really Matters—Product Growth Instead of Pinching Pennies

As Tribute continues to expand with new consumer products and B2B subscription verticals, they're ingesting and producing more video than ever before. The cost savings they were hoping to realize bore fruit almost immediately: "It's literally orders of magnitude," Petty says. "We went from multiple tens of thousands of dollars a month in storage and egress costs to thousands. Backblaze has been a game changer for us in terms of maintainable long-term storage costs, and then how we can scale our infrastructure costs versus our pricing," Petty says.

With Backblaze in place, Tribute is embodying their mantra that life is short and the time is now.

For Tribute customers, that means expressing love and gratitude today instead of tomorrow. For Petty and the Tribute team, it means refocusing their engineering efforts on building the core product instead of fiddling with infrastructure. Backblaze bought Tribute time, bending the cost curve enough that they can invest in new features and continue growing and scaling the company. "We already had a lot of those changes in our roadmap, but now we can execute on them quickly instead of spending our time trying to find extra coins in the couch," says Petty.

bunny.net

With a focus in content delivery, bunny.net operates its own Edge Storage platform with performance and global replication in mind. By integrating bunny.net for CDN services and Backblaze B2 Cloud Storage, the partnership essentially eliminates traffic fees and storage egress costs for customers.

About Backblaze

The Backblaze B2 Storage Cloud is purpose-built for ease. It offers always-hot, S3 compatible object storage that supports your workflows via third-party software integrations, APIs, CLI, and web UI. And it's priced for easy affordability at rates a fraction of other cloud providers. Businesses in more than 175 countries use the platform to host content, build and run applications, manage media, back up and archive data, and protect and recover from ransomware.

backblaze.com