

Chapter 17

Engaging Alumni in Branding, Admissions, and Recruitment

Ankit Bansal

S. P. Jain School of Global Management, India

ABSTRACT

With the ever-evolving nature of education, the functioning of a b-school and an alma mater's role in it has witnessed considerable change. B-schools today go beyond once in a while alumni get-togethers to include alumni in important decision making. The chapter examines various avenues through which a b-school leverages its alumni network specifically in its branding, admissions, and student placement efforts. Using alumni reaps benefits for the students and the schools in terms of a better connection with the school as well as the external environment. Continued association with the school has also proved to be an added advantage to an alumnus and his profile.

INTRODUCTION

We have all experienced that feeling when a friend, family member or somebody from the neighbourhood wishes to take admission to a new college. Most of us have been in the same situation ourselves when choosing between two or more institutions becomes increasingly perplex. No matter how hard we try to list down the pros and cons, taking into account major factors like placements, faculty and culture, amongst others, the dilemma just doesn't cease to exist. However, the choice becomes much easier as soon as you get in touch with alumni of the organisation.

With multiple sources of information now available for students to know more about various institutes, it has become simpler for colleges to reach out to students. According to research, one of the most notable trends in higher education branding and marketing is that institutions are far more attuned to these functions than in previous years. Amongst the most important tools available for social and online marketing is an effective and intuitive website, which should be considered the “ultimate brand statement” for an institution. Despite increased digital activity, a recent survey found that the most successful marketing strategies for universities are nevertheless events-based and involve direct interaction with potential students by someone associated with the college.

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It is critical for your establishment to choose how it characterises a graduate and to record this to keep away from any disarray. The exemplary definition of alumnus is a graduate or previous understudy of an explicit school, school or college. Diverse establishments build up their very own meanings of what “former student” implies. Some confine the term to graduates, others broaden the definition to incorporate every single previous understudy (even the individuals who neglected to complete), resigned staff and different partners.

Keeping a positive association with your alumni implies that the messages they share about your establishment will likewise be current as well as encouraging.

If the connection between alumni and your establishment slows down when they leave grounds, their insight into your accomplishments will be dated and so will the message they impart to others, notwithstanding the accomplishments the college or university might have made in the interim.

Keeping correspondence channels open with alumni implies you can keep them informed of your activities and make them a factor not only in your organisation’s past, but also an important aspect of its future.

Proactive alumni relations are mutually beneficial to both sides. Bolstering alumni engagement through use of social media channels, special access to campus grounds and offices and arranged advantages with outside providers, will ensure staunch, steadfast support from the alumni network. Your help may enable your alumni to make progress in their professional lives, in turn impacting your foundation as they start giving back.

This holds true especially if you think about a B-schools. It becomes very important to get guidance from someone who has been to the institute since, in this era of competition, we all know how much the name of the organisation matters when it comes to a successful career. B-Schools are some of the toughest institutes to get admitted into and one needs to make a considered, informed decision in choosing the right school. To ease the process of selecting the best institute for aspirants, a lot of B-Schools have now formed Alumni associations. Alumni can help colleges in processes like branding, admissions, and recruitment while colleges enable their alumni to expand their professional network by communicating with a wider platform, sharing and discussing ideas leading to potentially game-changing new opportunities.

ALUMNI IN BRANDING

Alumni are the brand-envoys of the foundation they graduated from. We have seen numerous colleges highlighting remarkable alumni, juxtaposing individual achievement with the proud history of the institution itself. Organisations have acknowledged how a solid and a positive association with their alumni can profit them socially, scholastically and professionally.

As referenced before, alumni groups are quite active these days, especially on the informal channels of social media which allows for constant exchange of views irrespective of geographical distances. Foundations should bridle this web-based social networking nearness of their alumni for exercises that are helpful for current and prospective students, the school, the board and the alumni themselves. According to an examination led by The Ambix group on a gathering of Alumni Relations Managers at advanced education foundations and capability granting bodies over the UK, the objectives of alumni executives differed by institution. The graphic below shows the diverse goals that institutes have when it comes to alumni.

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