



Building the Business Case for Your Alumni Platform

Part 3: Maximizing ROI, Program Costs, and Creating an Action Plan

An actionable guide to spark leadership excitement, secure investment, and build an alumni program that sets your organization apart





Part 3: Maximizing ROI, Program Costs, and Creating an Action Plan

Goals of this section:

- ✓ Define what to measure and how to communicate ROI across talent, brand, and business outcomes
- ✓ Break down typical alumni program costs and show where investment drives the most value
- ✓ Provide a clear, practical action plan to move from insight to execution and stakeholder buy-in

The following pages will provide the steps to achieve these goals.

How to Maximize ROI

↙ ↘
*A corporate alumni program doesn't just have one avenue for showcasing a return on investment. The majority of programs will be focusing on **business development, talent acquisition, or brand advocacy.***

However, some programs may seek to showcase an engaged & active community, how alumni give back to society, or keep track of all the incredible places alumni move on to.

Regardless of focus, make the case for current and projected activity, results, and overall impact to the brand.

Three ROI Drivers: Business Impact, Community Health, and Storytelling



Business Objectives

- Set primary goals and build your programming, events, and content around them
- Measure, iterate, and expand as the program matures



Community Health

- A vibrant, active community is the foundation everything else is built on.
- Are alumni active & engaged (i.e., signing up, logging in, engaging with content etc.)



Storytelling

- Bring senior leaders into strategy early, their buy-in amplifies program impact
- Report both hard metrics and qualitative wins to leadership on a regular cadence

Hard ROI: Measurable Business Objectives

83% rank as a top priority*

Business Development

Up to 40% of new business could come from alumni by tracking alumni-assisted sales.

70% rank as a top priority*

Talent Acquisition

Avg F500 company could save \$12M/year on rehires by tracking boomerangs & referrals.

62% rank as a top priority*

Brand Advocacy

Alumni are up to 40% or more influential than regular clients by tracking NPS and brand mentions (on average 8x per year).

Soft ROI: Outcomes That Shape Culture & Competitive Advantage

Brand Advocacy & Loyalty

Alumni speak with authentic credibility no marketing can replicate, whether as customers, partners, or industry voices.

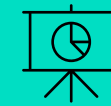
Workforce Flexibility

Alumni re-engage fast for project or interim roles, with no culture ramp-up and minimal onboarding.

Job Satisfaction & Morale

Valuing alumni boosts pride, engagement, and retention among current staff.


What Does ROI Actually Look Like?



*The most successful programs are clear from the beginning what their primary objectives are, and they set everything up to deliver results. **The programming, offerings, benefits, and processes are setup to maximize impact.***

For example, if talent acquisition is the primary goal, the program should offer job related content, a robust job board, webinars and events focused on professional development, a career center with resources and articles, and encourage networking. The program then tracks boomerangs and referrals to measure success.

Understand & Monitor Community Health

 Having an active, vibrant, and engaged audience is foundational to any successful corporate alumni program. In Part 1, *How to Demonstrate Strategic Value*, we discussed the four motivations for why an alumni participates in an alumni program (**career, social, mission driven, and pragmatism**). Creating engaging content and events that encourage alumni to return is what encourages alumni to stay connected.

A strong program establishes clear ways to track interest and engagement, creating a foundation for achieving broader business goals. **The more engaged an alumni is on the platform and in your program, the more likely these results are to be higher.**

Leading Indicators of Program Health

Engagement Metrics

Job Board Activity

Profile Completion

Content Views

Profile Updates

Event RSVPs & Attendance

Logins

Active vs. Inactive Alumni

Registrations

Business Impact Metrics

Boomerang Rehires

Business Referrals

Candidate Referrals

Glassdoor Reviews

Net Promoter Score

Alumni in Strategic Roles

Why it matters: Engagement metrics are your leading indicators of community health. Business impact metrics are what you take to leadership to prove ROI.



Become a Powerful Storyteller



*Programs are more than just numbers. **96% of alumni program managers share results with organization leadership & the executive team**, and more than 50% of managers do this on a quarterly and/or yearly basis.*

Start by creating a framework that showcases all major areas of the program that will be tracked and include qualitative and quantitative successes expected in each area.

Review the community, infrastructure, and reach both for the past year performance, and projections for the upcoming year.

Calculating ROI using the PeoplePath Model

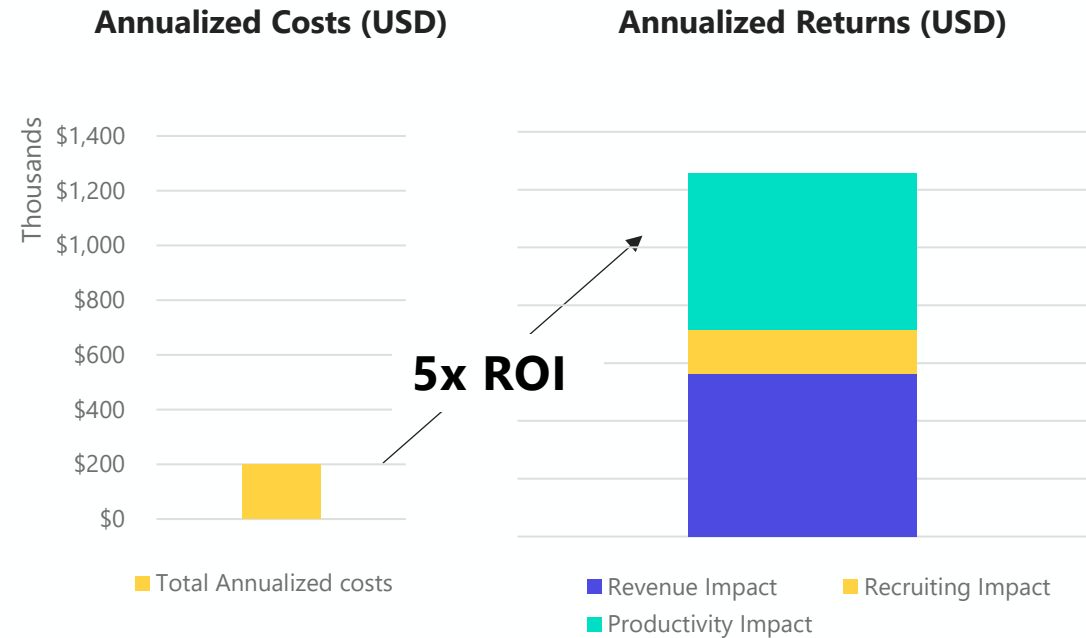


Using our experience, benchmarking, and research, we estimate that a sample program like the one outlined in Part 2 (for an organization of 10,000 employees) can generate approximately **5x the investment required to launch and sustain it.**

This is modelled on a **5-year investment horizon** with returns reflecting annualized Year 5 figures, and includes the cost of a full-time alumni program manager, all software set-up and subscription costs, and event budget.

It's worth noting that soft ROI such as employer brand, morale and workforce flexibility is excluded from this model, meaning the **true return is likely even higher.** We can also build a customized projection based on your organization's own figures.

Alumni Programs Deliver Outsized Returns on Investment



Revenue Impact

- Assumes \$100 additional contribution margin per registered alum based on brand loyalty and referrals, using a conservative cross-industry estimate.
- Range varies significantly by sector. In some industries alumni generate \$50K+ in annual revenue per alum.

Recruiting Cost Impact

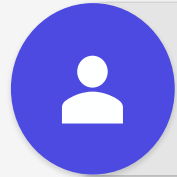
- Assumes increasing the share of rehires by 4%.
- \$2,500 saved per rehire (agency & sourcing efficiency).

Productivity Impact

- Rehires provide an additional ~25 productive workdays based on faster ramp-up rates, and a lower rate of highly expensive early terminations (within 3 months).
- \$4,500 productivity gain per rehire.

Key Cost Areas

Benchmark Insights



Human Capital

Staff dedicated to managing the program

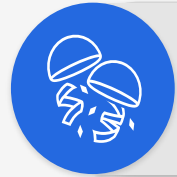
- New programs succeed with **at least a part-time** alumni manager.



Technology

Multi-year contract ACV plus integrations plus maintenance fees

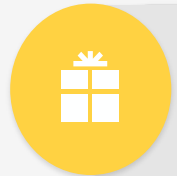
- **68%** of firms use a dedicated platform provided by a third party.



Alumni Events

Event planning, logistics, and hospitality costs

- **86%** and **74%** of programs offer in-person and virtual events, respectively.




Perks & Partnerships

Discounts, memberships, or cross-promotions with partners.

- **41%** of companies offer forms of exclusive perks and discounts.

Projected Costs

 *Costs vary by program age and size. Programs can be started with very few resources and close to no budget, however, as a program scales, budget for staff, technology, and events should be considered.*

In our 2025 research:

- *The average alumni program budget was **\$172,512** (excluding technology and FTE costs).*
- *Budgets ranged widely: programs under \$100K averaged \$42K, while those over \$300K averaged \$467K.*
- *Budgets do correlate to program age, with programs less than 3 years old starting with less than \$100,000 and growing over time as the program size grows.*

Outlining a Multi-Year Plan



Here is an example 3-year plan, adapted from our client Seyfarth Shaw's alumni program strategy.

Originally shared in PeoplePath's "How to Successfully Launch a Corporate Alumni Program" [guide](#) and [webinar](#), it offers a real-life illustration of how a program can be structured and evolve over time, helping you better visualise what a phased, scalable approach can look like in practice.

Year 1

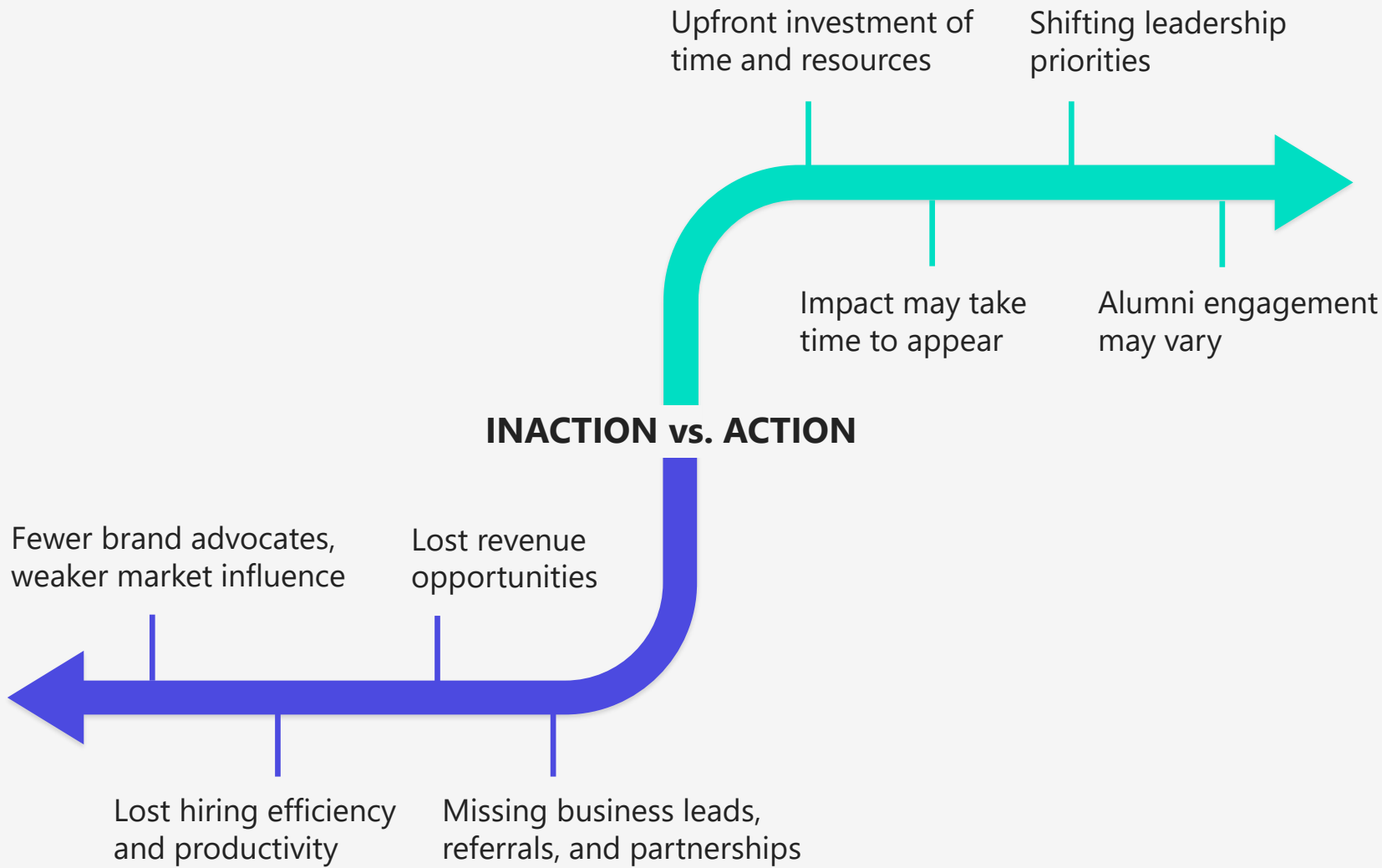
- **Growth:**
Build the alumni database
- **Process:**
Recruitment, Onboarding, Experience, Offboarding
- **Launch:**
Alumni Network Platform
- **Content:**
Create engaging pieces around human interest, firm news, and educational events
- **Marketing:**
Promote internally/externally to get registrations

Year 2

- **User Engagement:**
Communications and Events
- **Leverage Resources:**
Alumni Platform - Provide Resource and Value for Clients
- **Benchmark:**
Measure Business Driver Success
- **Engagement:**
Feel connected to the firm and alumni program

Year 3

- **Enhance:**
Inter-Department Collaboration
- **Develop:**
Strategic Career Development Program
Alumni Advisory Board
- **Create:**
Secondment Program. Track Secondments and develop metrics
- **Retired Partners:**
Greater emphasis



The Risk of Inaction vs. Action



Inaction carries the risk of missed opportunities across engagement, revenue, and talent mobility.

While launching a corporate alumni platform may feel like a strategic leap, the greater risk often lies in delay.

Choosing the right strategic partner helps reduce complexity, align stakeholders, and turn uncertainty into a structured path toward measurable growth.

Implementation Phases



Communicate the resource commitment clearly to leadership, covering both the duration of implementation and where stakeholder involvement is heaviest. Implementation runs 4–6 months across three phases.

A Customer Success Manager (CMS) coordinates the process end-to-end, aligning stakeholders, managing handoffs, and keeping the project on track. Some phases require heavier involvement from your team; others are largely handled by PeoplePath.

Pre-Kickoff

Internal Alignment

Confirm executive sponsorship, identify your Alumni Manager, and align on KPIs and content strategy before the first session.

Phase 1 6-8 weeks

Project Definition

Define platform settings and specifications, based on your objectives. Requires involvement from marketing, HR, legal, and IT.

Phase 2 8-12 weeks

Implementation

Platform is configured and internally tested. Your team plays a lighter role here, the CSM leads the bulk of the work.

Phase 3 8-12 weeks

Train, Test & Launch

Alumni Manager and IT lead user acceptance testing. Administrator training delivered by the CSM before go-live.

Executive Summary

Briefly state the problem, possible solutions, expected benefits, and supporting research.

Business Strategy & Goals

Explain if a mindset shift is needed. Show long-term value and the wider impact on the business.

Project Outline / Benefits

Outline the project, the problem it solves, the urgency, and which parts of the business it affects.

Timeline & Plan

Provide a clear timeline, key milestones, needed resources, and KPIs. Including a 3 year plan proves how investment and growth can impact results.

Risks

Identify risks of doing the project and risks of not doing it.

ROI / Financial Impact

Beyond just costs, highlight expected savings, revenue, or measurable benefits to make the economic case stronger.

Concluding Summary

The summary reinforces what decision makers should remember. It should achieve the following:

- Reinforces the main argument – Restates why the project or investment is necessary.
- Highlights key benefits and value – Summarizes expected ROI, strategic advantages, and outcomes.
- Addresses risks and mitigation – Briefly acknowledges challenges and how they will be managed.
- Calls for action or decision – Clearly states what approval, resources, or next steps are needed.

Create a One Sentence Strategy:

"Our alumni program exists to [verb] [audience] so that we can [business outcome]."

Create an Action Plan



It's time to put everything you have together! Here's a sample outline of everything to include as you build your business case.

The strongest plans cover the overall objective, clearly highlight the projected benefits, cover any risks that might be involved, detail financial requirements, and have a clear call to action with recommendations.

Thank you for downloading **Part 3 of our guide: Maximizing ROI, Program Costs, and Creating an Action Plan**

If you haven't already downloaded Part 1: How to Demonstrate Strategic Value or Part 2: Utilizing Technology please click the links.

As you continue building your case, PeoplePath can support you with real-world examples, benchmarks, and expert guidance.

If you'd like support as you move forward, please don't hesitate to reach out, we'd love to help you strengthen your case!



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