

Conenza Alumni Program BENCHMARKING REPORT

2018



5th Annual

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Executive Summary

ENGAGE EMPLOYEES FOR LIFE

The importance of employees to a company does not diminish when their status changes from “current” to “former.” While they no longer directly contribute to day-to-day operations, their impact on the overall strategy of the company continues as brand ambassadors, business partners, employee referral sources and the return of talented alumni as rehires. For the past five years, the Conenza Alumni Program Benchmarking Survey has measured the growing importance of Alumni Programs to companies as a way to engage former employees.

The concept of the “employee experience” is evolving. According to Bersin, a division of Deloitte Consulting LLP focused on human resources insights, the employment lifecycle goes beyond the time an employee is on the payroll. Instead, a company’s touchpoints with an employee extend from recruiting and onboarding, through performance management all the way through the life of the employee, even after he or she leaves the company.¹

Now in its fifth year, the **2018 Conenza Alumni Program Benchmarking Report** reveals a growing trend toward the acceptance of Alumni Programs as a long-term strategic initiative to engage employees for life.

KEY FINDINGS

- The **Legal sector leads in the adoption of Alumni Programs**—35% of the 2018 respondents—with the recognition that the programs create a competitive advantage.
- Outside of the Legal sector, organizations of **all sizes continue to implement Alumni Programs**, but the sweet spot is companies with 5,000 to 25,000 employees.
- Newer programs still outnumber more established ones, but a **flattening of the trendlines** has started to appear.
- During the exit process, **almost 70% of organizations incorporate information** about the Alumni Program to educate departing employees.
- Nearly 60% of companies include **current employees** in their Alumni Programs, embracing the concept of the employee experience that extends from onboarding to alumni status.
- Brand advocacy and business development extend their leads as the **top two business drivers** for Alumni Programs.
- Keeping alumni profile data current emerges as the **top challenge for 2018**.
- There is overwhelming agreement on what constitutes **“must have” alumni data**; specifically email address, location, current title, and current company.
- More companies use third-party vendors to help gather and analyze data; however little progress has been made on the **quality of the data**.
- More Alumni Programs **measure ROI** than prior years with member engagement and member growth still leading the way as the top metrics.
- If granted unlimited resources, the vast majority of respondents would choose to add one or more **additional alumni team members**, especially a data analyst.

¹ <https://blog.bersin.com/deconstructing-employee-experience/>

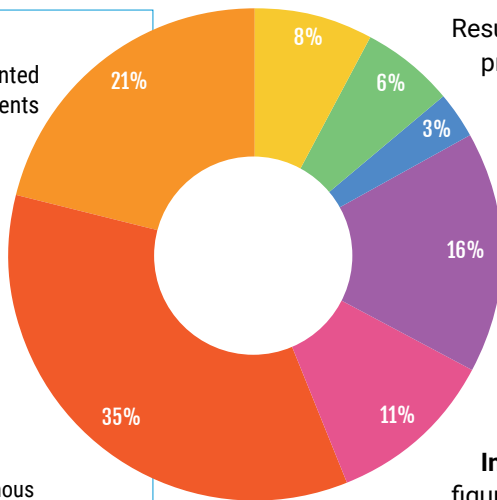
Survey Demographics and Participation

For the fifth year in a row, Conenza invited organizations with Alumni Programs to complete our benchmarking survey between July and October of 2018. The survey included 29 questions in four categories:



Figure 1. Industries represented by survey respondents

- Legal
- Consulting
- Financial Services
- Technology
- Accounting
- Non-Profit
- Other/Anonymous

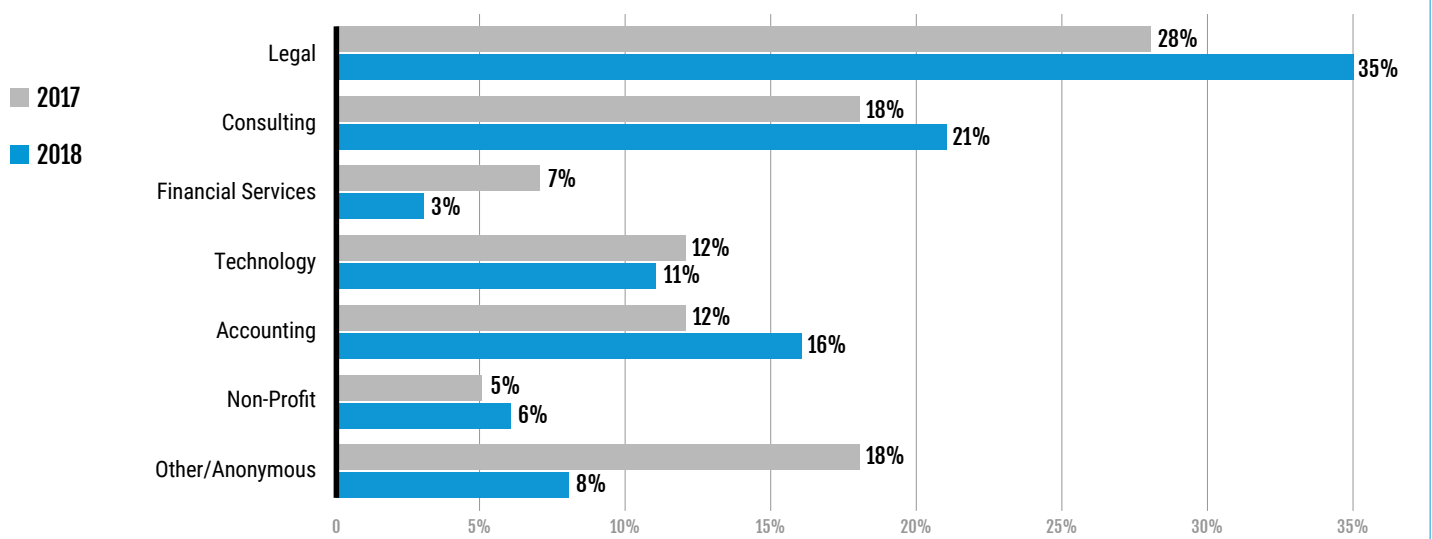


Results of the survey are based on responses from 65 industry professionals, a seven percent increase when compared to last year's survey. Respondents represent a mix of perspectives from clients and non-clients from across the globe in a broad spectrum of industry sectors and company sizes.

Geography: Respondents represent Alumni Programs based in North America, the European Union and Asia Pacific. The percentage of Alumni Programs with a global reach in 2018 is 61%, one percent higher than in the 2017 survey. Similar to 2017, most non-global programs focus on North America or the country in which their operations are headquartered.

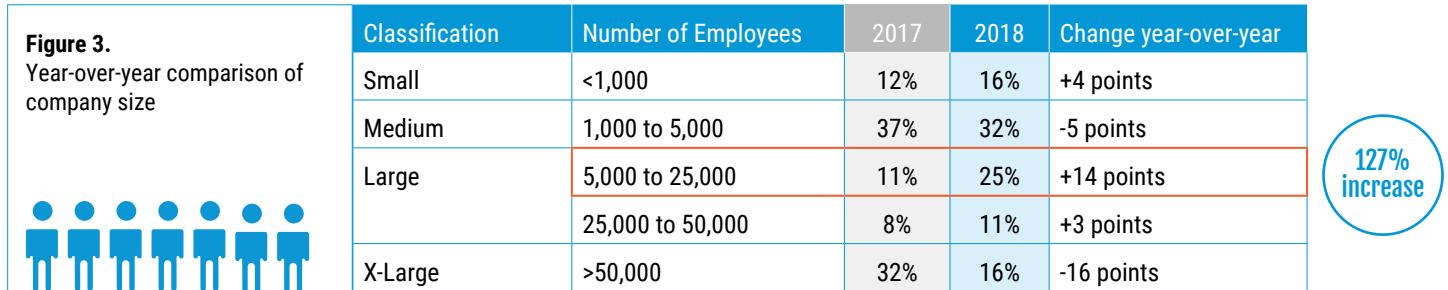
Industries: Respondents hail from seven industry categories, see figure 1. The Professional Services group, which Conenza characterizes as the combination of the Legal, Consulting and Accounting categories, represents 59% of respondents, up 6% from 2017, see figure 2.

Figure 2. Comparison of industry participation, 2017 vs. 2018



The Other/Anonymous category includes organizations identifying as: Healthcare, Marketing, Logistics and Energy. This category is much smaller in 2018 because the specific survey question about industry affiliation was altered to better reflect organizations that have historically contributed to the survey since its introduction in 2013.

Company Size: Survey respondents represent organizations from less than 1,000 to more than 50,000 employees. Organizations that have between 5,000 to 25,000 employees continue to see the most growth in Alumni Programs, see figure 3.



Companies of all sizes are finding value in Alumni Programs as a means to engage the full spectrum of alumni, including retirees, with a customized outreach that fits the company's needs as well as the alumni's motivations. Based on independent research in collaboration with Cornell University, we have determined that alumni's motivation for joining an Alumni Program fall into four primary categories or motivation profiles:

1. Career-minded
2. Pragmatic
3. Socially-driven
4. Altruistic

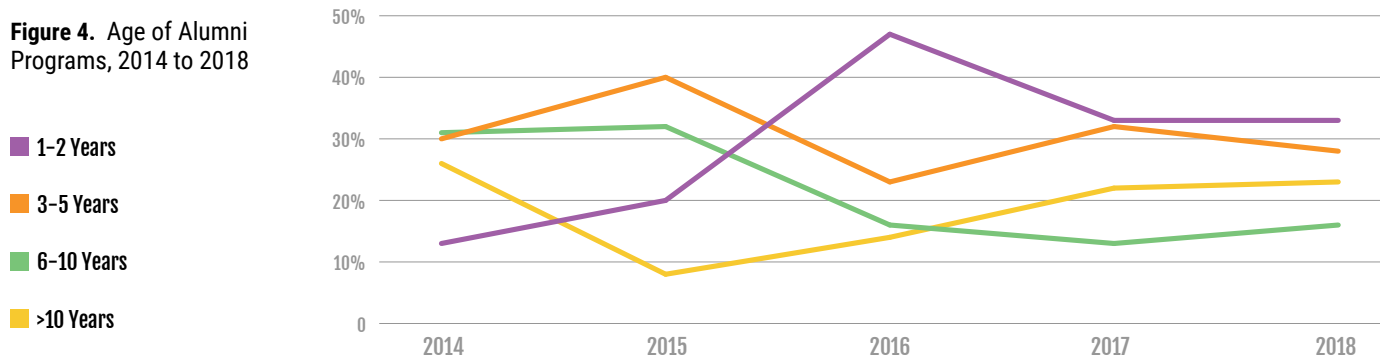
Regardless of sector or size, directors should position their programs as a way for alumni to stay connected to their companies and receive benefits specifically crafted for them.

As companies begin to realize value from engaging former employees, Alumni Programs are increasingly a "must-have" rather than a "nice to have."

Alumni Programs Grow in Maturity, Size and Reach

As Alumni Programs established a few years ago mature, we see a flattening and convergence of the trendlines across all four age groups, see figure 4. The result is a more balanced representation of responses from new and more mature Alumni Programs, therefore the 2018 survey data should have applicability for programs at any stage in their development.

Figure 4. Age of Alumni Programs, 2014 to 2018



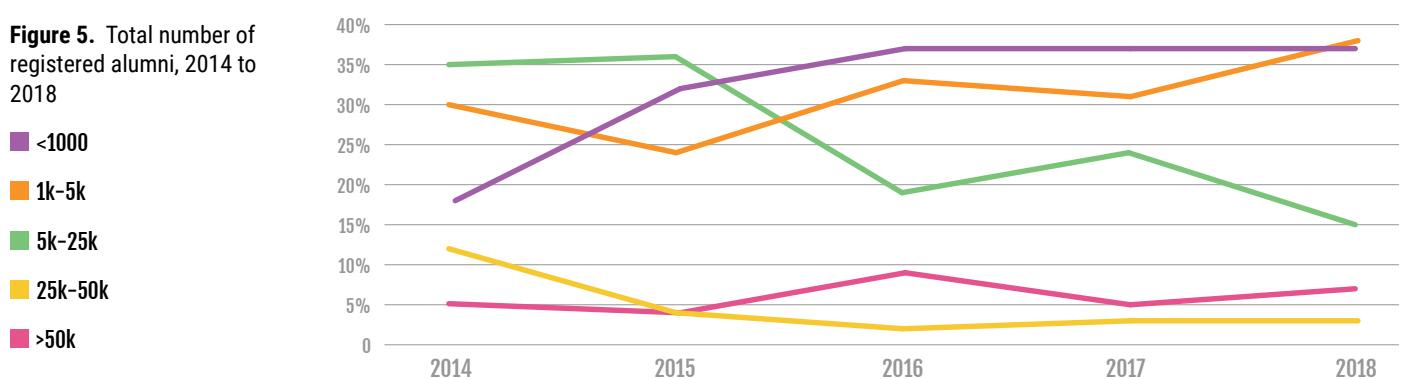
AGE OF ALUMNI PROGRAMS

In 2018, the number of Alumni Programs established for six years or more increased to 39% from 35% in 2017. This is an indication that Alumni Programs are establishing a foothold as effective long-term strategic initiatives to engage employees for life. Newer Alumni Programs remain the largest percentage of respondents at 33%.

SIZE OF ALUMNI PROGRAMS

As the number of new Alumni Programs increases, we also see movement in the number of programs with 1,000 to 5,000 registered alumni. This category grew to 38% of respondents, up from 31% of respondents in 2017, and surpassed the number of programs with 1,000 or less registered alumni, see figure 5. Metcalfe's law generally says the community value of a network grows as the square of the number of its users increases. Therefore, the value of the alumni network increases as the member count grows. Reaching 1,000 registered alumni or more is a critical milestone for any Alumni Program in terms of creating value for the sponsoring company and the members of the network. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents are still below this bar.

Figure 5. Total number of registered alumni, 2014 to 2018



Even though almost 40% of the respondents represent mature alumni programs, 75% of programs have less than 5,000 registered alumni. Explanations for this anomaly include:

- Law firms, the largest industry sector of respondents at 35%, are typically within the 1,000-5,000 alumni range
- Some of the large companies offer retiree-only programs which represents a much smaller data set of the possible overall alumni population
- The Alumni Program doesn't have sufficient resources to grow and sustain the community

The first two bullet points are valid rationale. The third bullet point is more troubling, but is supported by many of the comments in response to the survey. Alumni Directors and the vendors that support them must do more to prove the value of an Alumni Program to the leadership of the organization. The ability to do this starts with gathering the right data.



STRATEGIES TO BUILD THE ALUMNI DATA SET

Many organizations launch their Alumni Program with partial or almost no data about their alumni. We have seen companies' Alumni Programs grow steadily through the use of targeted LinkedIn campaigns, personalized messaging, and by utilizing corporate social media channels to promote the existence of the program. Alumni referral campaigns with incentives can also be helpful.

Companies should watch for notable changes with key alumni they are trying to recruit (promotion, new position) and send them a personal congratulatory email inviting them to join, either through LinkedIn or to their emails if they have valid addresses.

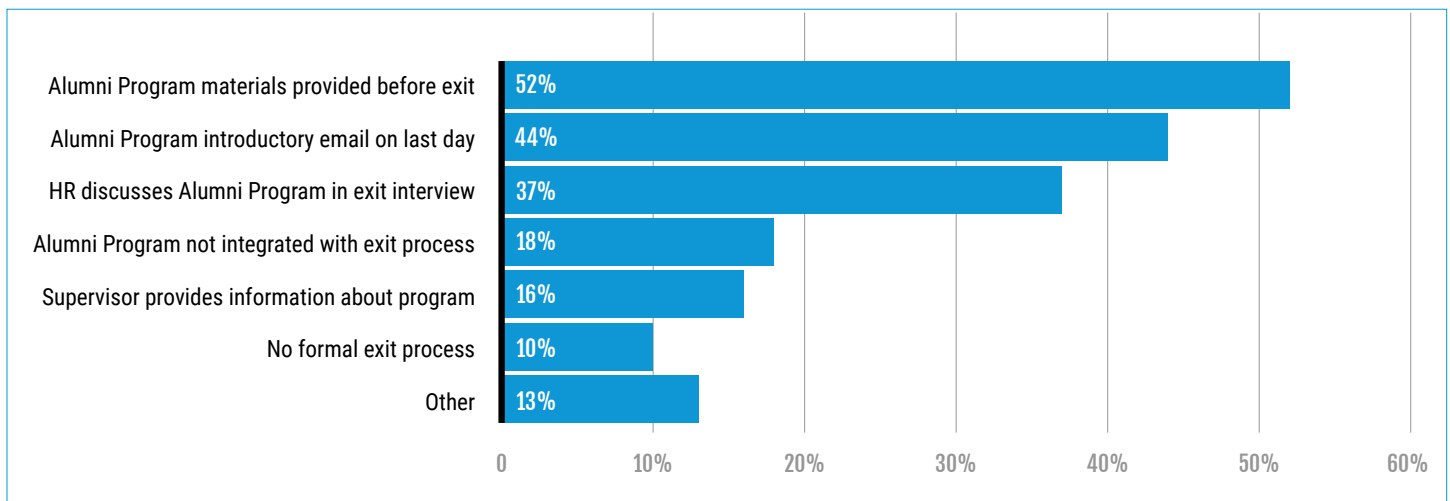
Although growing a network from scratch can be challenging, it provides an excellent opportunity to strategize and curate what information companies want to collect from their alumni through registration and custom fields. Aside from key fields like email address, location and current employment information, consider collecting data that might be useful for targeting and tracking business drivers. For example, if business development and talent acquisition are a priority, asking alumni if they are hiring or looking for a job could make sense as part of the initial data collection.

SCOPE OF ALUMNI PROGRAMS

At most companies, departing employees typically go through a formal exit process. An Alumni Program best practice integrates the introduction and registration of new alumni into the program during the exit process.

In 2018, we sought to learn more about how organizations capture contact information from employees during the exit process and the impact of the undertaking on the growth and overall health of Alumni Programs, see figure 6.

Figure 6. Integration of Alumni Program introduction in the exit process



The most popular approach at 52% is to provide materials about the Alumni Program to departing employees. Forty-four percent of respondents also indicated they send a follow-up email encouraging recently departed employees to sign-up for the Alumni Program.

Some organizations go as far as to encourage their alumni to register for the Alumni Program before they've left the company; they will not be approved into the community until after their last day, but the initial step of data collection is already underway.



MAKE THE MOST OF GOODBYE

Maximize the exit process by:

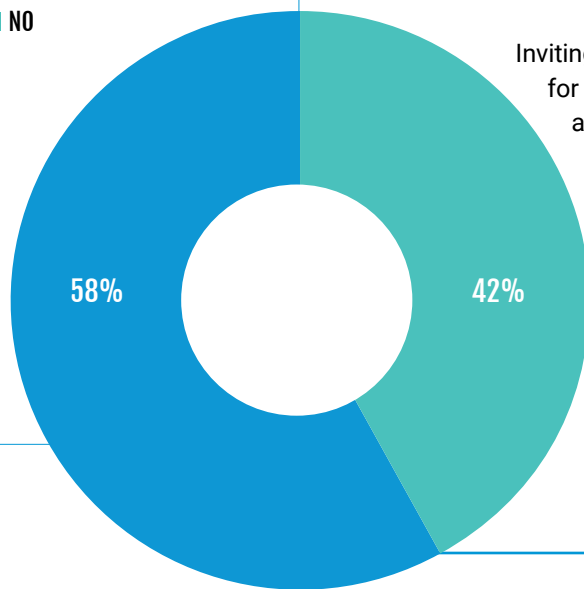
- Capturing contact info from all departing employees and collecting it in a central depository (even if the company does not currently have an Alumni Program or is about to launch one)
- Create some way to tag regrettable losses so they can be offered job opportunities in the future
- Have an Alumni Manager meet with departing employees to informally induct them into the program
- Send personal emails from division heads welcoming former employees to the Alumni Program

EXTENDING ALUMNI PROGRAMS TO CURRENT EMPLOYEES

Figure 7. Include current employees in addition to admins in Alumni Program

■ YES

■ NO



While the exit process is a great way to engage alumni as they leave, it should not be the first time employees learn about the Alumni Program. To increase awareness of Alumni Programs, many companies invite current employees to participate. In 2018, 58% of respondents indicate they invite employees in the program, up slightly from 2017, see figure 7.

Inviting current employees into the Alumni Program has advantages, especially for organizations that run employee referral campaigns to recruit more alumni into the program. The inclusion of current employees ensures they understand the value and benefits of the program, are familiar with the resources, and from a company perspective, provides the chance to convert them to alumni when they're leaving without the need for re-registration.

Over time as more companies embrace the strategy of engaging employees for life, we expect that Alumni Programs will be replaced by corporate talent programs that address the needs of individuals at every stage of their experience.

THE TIME IS NOW



Ensuring current employees are familiar with the value and benefits of the Alumni Program can have lasting value. Most importantly, it sends the message that the company cares about them while they are there and after they leave. This simple statement can have a profound impact on corporate culture. Additionally, it eases the transition to the program when they exit the company, making

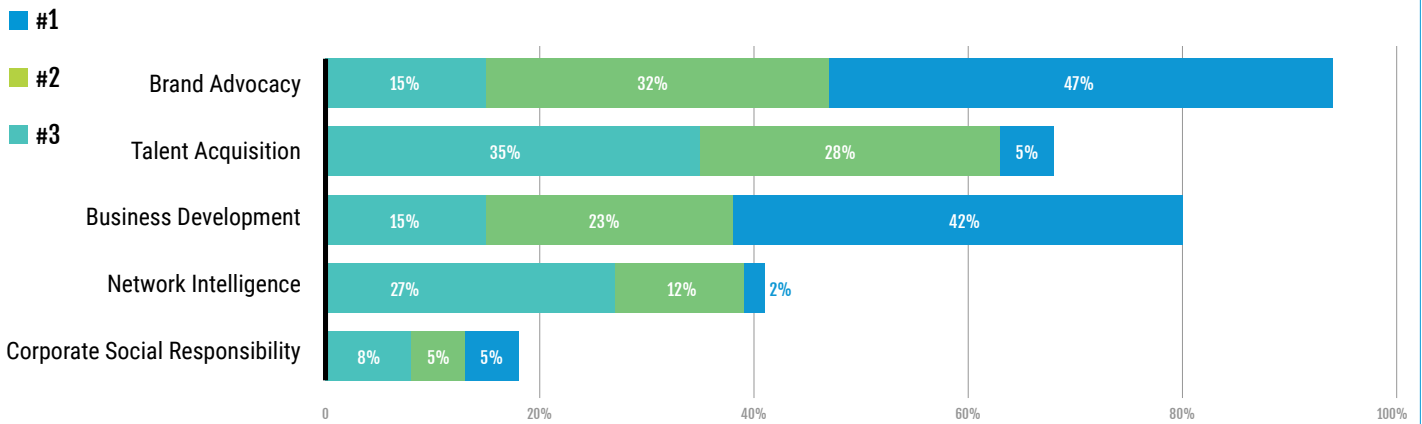
sure they are already aware of the benefits and value of the program.

Some companies invite their Alumni Director to greet new employees as part of the onboarding process to welcome them to the Alumni Program and educate them about its benefits for them now and in the future.

Driving Results with Alumni Programs

Managers of Alumni Programs, no matter how long the network has been in place, know they must demonstrate the value of their programs and alignment to the overall goals of their companies.

Figure 8. Rankings of the top three business drivers for Alumni Programs



BRAND ADVOCACY

Companies care about brand advocacy more than ever before. It continues to rank as the most important business driver for Alumni Programs, with the number of respondents listing it as #1 increasing from 36% in 2017 to 47% in 2018, see figure 8. This year, 94% of respondents ranked it in their top three business drivers, compared to 86% in 2017.



ACKNOWLEDGING INFLUENCERS



Social media channels such as Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are powerful outlets for alumni to exert influence as brand advocates. Alumni Programs are a proven way to:

- Identify brand promoters amongst alumni
- Improve brand perceptions for alumni who may have had an indifferent or even negative experience



TAPPING ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Alumni Programs at law firms and consulting companies often focus on building connections with former employees to develop business opportunities as current or potential clients.

We have also seen increased interest in correlating business development opportunities or revenue with alumni data. As data becomes less siloed through the emergence of cloud-based solutions, such as data lakes, we think this trend will continue.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, business development ranked as the most important business driver for Alumni Programs amongst 42% of respondents. Eighty percent of respondents ranked it in their top three, consistent with 2017 at 79%.

The Legal sector disproportionately impacted this result. Law firms account for 35% of respondents, but 69% ranked business development as the most important driver. Excluding the Legal sector, 19% ranked business development highest and 67% placed it among the top three ranking business drivers.



ADDING VALUE WITH CSR

Alumni Directors should invite alumni to participate with employees in their companies' CSR initiatives. It showcases the company's involvement in community projects to a wider, engaged audience, building brand advocacy and goodwill. They can also augment the CSR focus of their programs by identifying key alumni who work at non-profit organizations. Networking with that segment of their alumni network is a great way to find people to host or organize volunteer events.

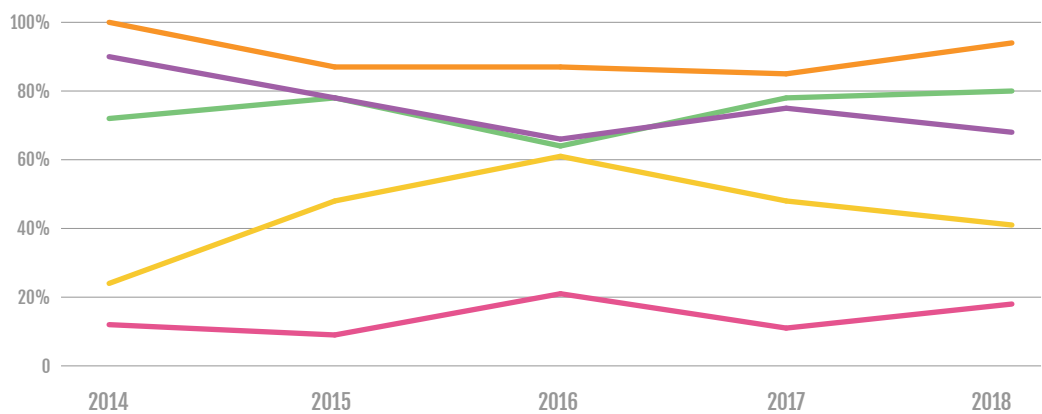
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a driver for Alumni Programs grew from 12% in 2017 to 18% in 2018, an overall increase of 33%. We expect this trend to continue over time as more companies see how enlisting alumni in CSR initiatives benefits the identified non-profit organization, the company and the alumni. Many alumni, particularly Millennials, want to see their former company not only doing well in a business sense, but also doing good in the world. Organizations that make an effort to build up CSR initiatives build brand advocates at the same time.

While there has been movement from year to year, the relative trendlines among the key business drivers for Alumni Programs remain fairly consistent over the five years Conenza has conducted the benchmarking survey. Brand advocacy, business development and talent acquisition remain the top three business drivers respectively by a wide margin, see figure 9.

Figure 9. Aggregate Ranking of Business Drivers – Five Year Trend

- Talent Acquisition
- Brand Advocacy
- Business Development
- Network Intelligence
- Corporate Social Responsibility



Investing in People and Budget for Alumni Programs

While the number of Alumni Programs continues to increase, companies are still reluctant to invest in the appropriate level of human resources and budget allocations.



PEOPLE POWER

When a company does not have active management for the Alumni Program, it generally stems from one of three factors. The Alumni Program is:

1. Not yet launched
2. In transition
3. Struggling to build a business case

Alumni Programs are most successful when someone can devote at least half of his or her time to the strategy and execution. It is also important to consider who the right person is for this role—ideally the Alumni Manager is a natural connector and community manager, and has a deep understanding in the value of alumni.

Tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) and/or return on investment (ROI) for the Alumni Program can also provide the leverage needed to garner support for additional program resources.

ALUMNI PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

In 2018, the number of Alumni Programs without active management increased from 7% to 13%. But, at the other end of the spectrum we also saw an increase in the programs with five or more full time equivalents (FTEs) tasked with managing Alumni Programs from 5% to 8%. Similar to past years, in 2018 the largest percentage of respondents (59%) had one or less FTE to manage the program, see figure 10.

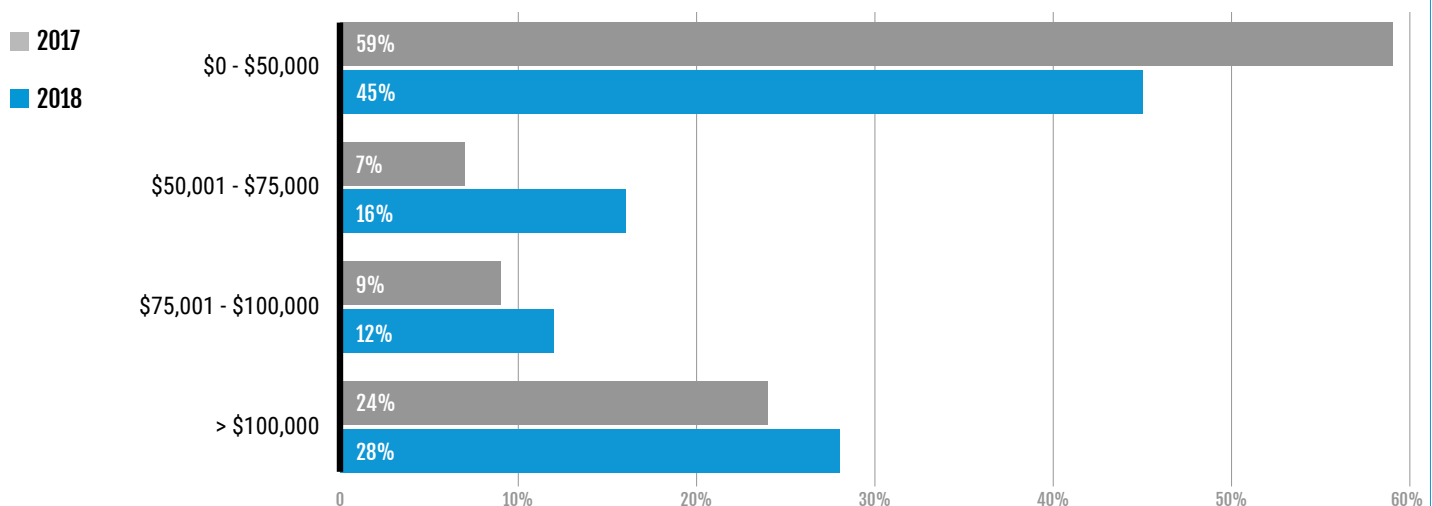
Figure 10. Current size of team (FTEs) managing Alumni Programs, 2016-2018

Classification	2016	2017	2018
> 5 FTEs	2%	5%	8%
3 to 5 FTEs	10%	11%	8%
2 FTEs	10%	16%	13%
1 or less FTE	66%	61%	59%
No FTE	12%	7%	13%

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

The number of respondents indicating they have incremental budgets of more than \$50,000 jumped 14 points from 41% in 2017 to 55% in 2018, a 34% increase. Each of the three categories with incremental budget of more than \$50,000 showed a 17% or higher increase, see figure 11.

Figure 11. Incremental budgets for Alumni Programs (excluding FTEs), 2017 vs. 2018



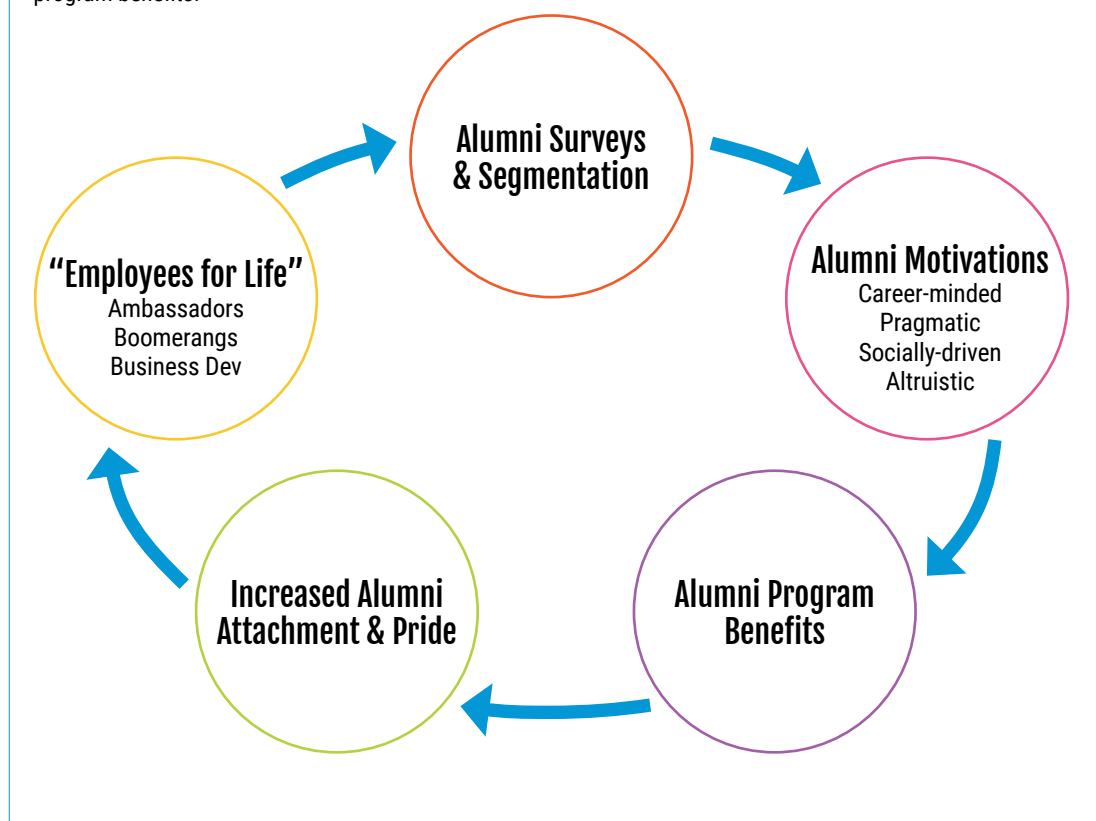
The data reflects the increase in the number of mature programs represented in the survey. It is a positive trend likely attributable to a better understanding by organizations that they need to make financial commitments to see results from Alumni Programs. However, budget investments must be paired with active community management to produce results.

GIVE MORE, GET MORE



As Alumni Programs grow over time, Alumni Directors should survey alumni to understand their motivations and then offer programs and benefits that reinforce these motivations, see figure 12. The result will be increased alumni attachment and pride in the organization, with a corresponding willingness to advocate on behalf of the organization.

Figure 12. The lifecycle of Alumni Programs seeks to continuously assess and match alumni needs with program benefits.



Getting the Most Out of Data

To demonstrate how Alumni Program KPIs are met and the overall ROI to the organization, Alumni Directors must have a repository for relevant, quality data about their alumni and defined ways to measure engagement and success.

First, it is important to differentiate between Alumni Data and Engagement Data for Alumni Programs.

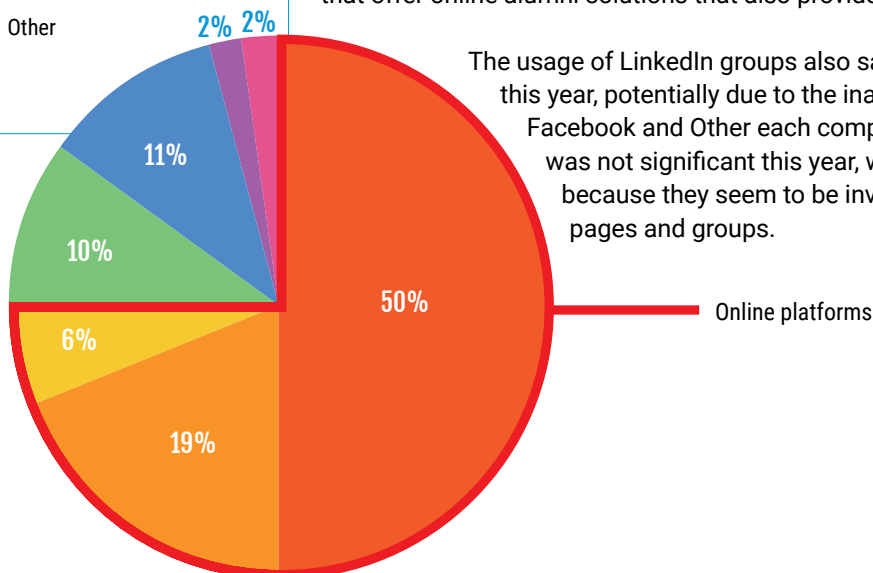
- **Alumni Data** is data provided by alumni about themselves through registration or in their profiles such as contact info, work history, education, etc.
- **Engagement Data** is data from alumni engaging with specific offerings of the program such as page views, events, job postings, polls, etc.

Both sets of data are equally important to managing a successful Alumni Program because both contribute to tracking and demonstrating ROI, ensuring that the program provides value to the organization and alumni, and making the case for investing in additional resources to support the program internally. A good online platform should help gather and analyze both sets of data.

There is also increasing interest in the combination of other corporate data and third-party data with the Alumni Program data to provide new insights. Generally, this will have to be done in a data warehouse or data lake.

Figure 13. Usage of online platforms for Alumni Programs

- Third Party Vendor
- Developed in-house
- CRM solution
- Official LinkedIn group
- No online platform
- Facebook page/ Facebook at Work
- Other



ALUMNI PROGRAM ONLINE PLATFORMS

Respondents reported increased usage of online platforms to help gather and analyze data about alumni, with use of these software tools growing from 68% in 2017 to 75% in 2018, see figure 13.

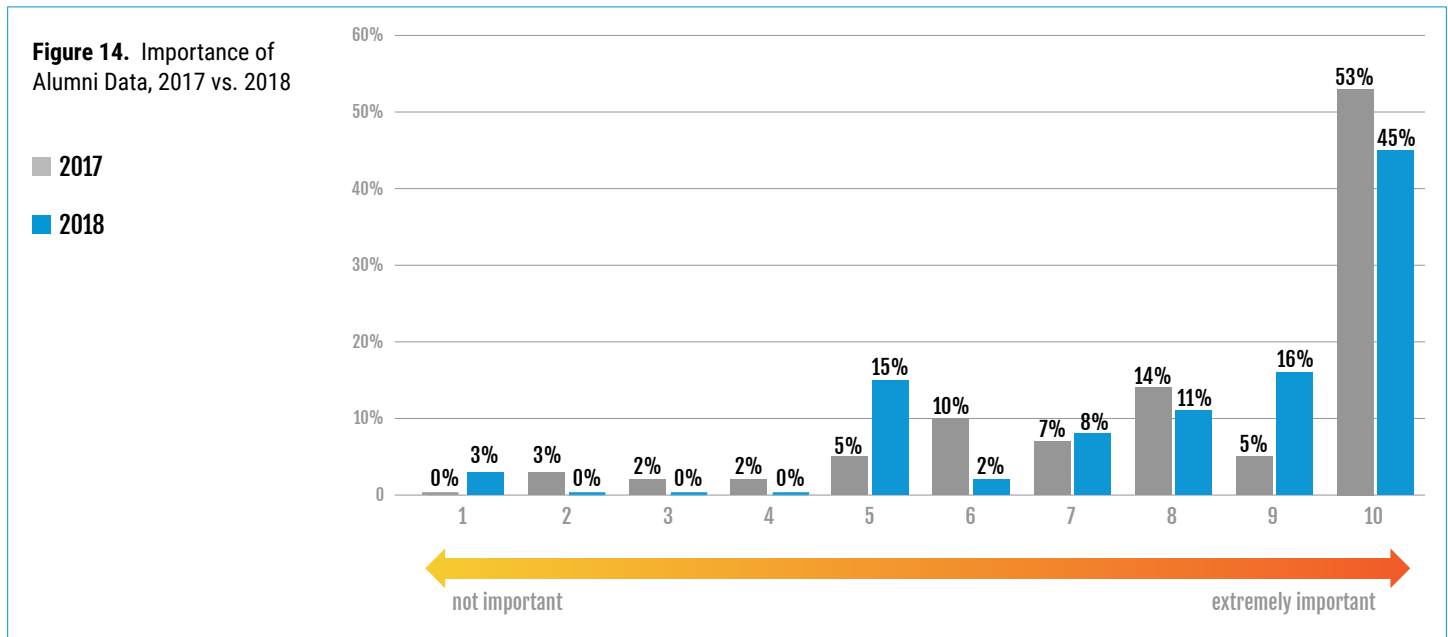
We saw the largest increase in the use of third-party platforms up 8 points from 42% in 2017 to 50% in 2018, a 19% increase. Customer relationship management (CRM) solutions decreased from 8% in 2017 to 6% in 2018, while in-house platforms stayed relatively flat.

The increase in the use of third-party platforms likely reflects the growing number of vendors that offer online alumni solutions that also provide more value at lower costs to their clients.

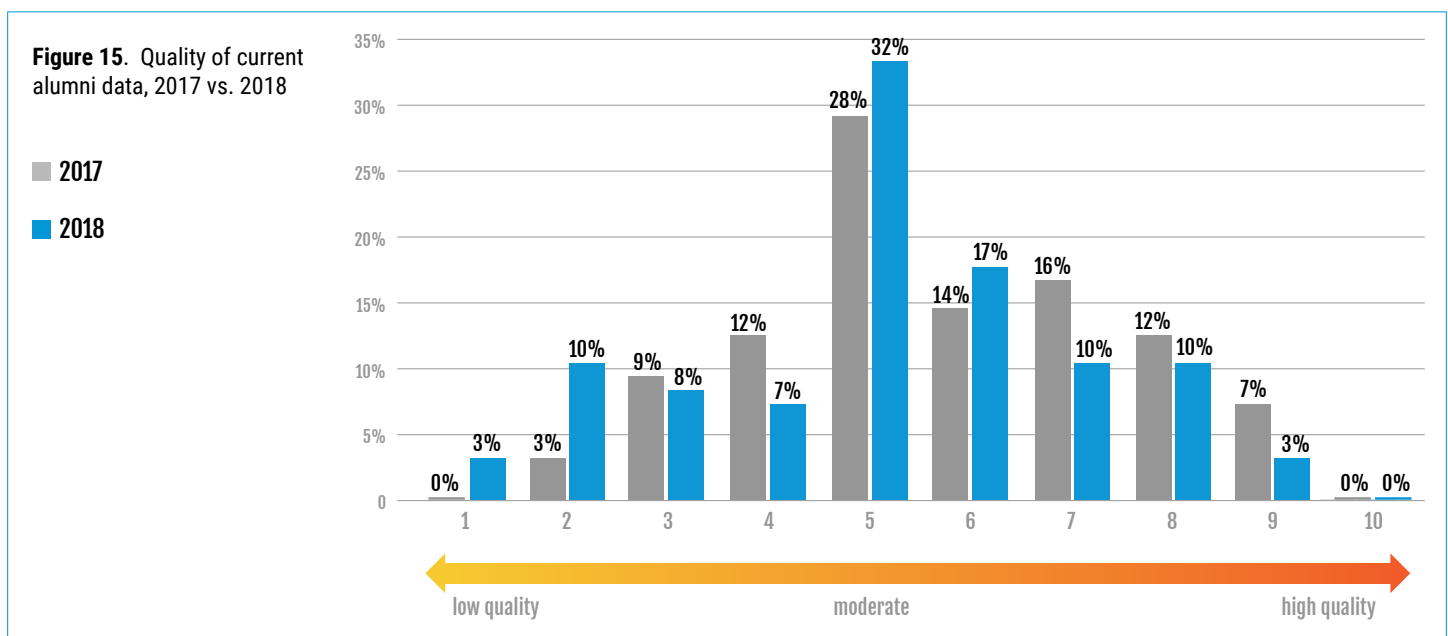
The usage of LinkedIn groups also saw a sizeable drop from 15% in 2017 to 10% this year, potentially due to the inability to leverage alumni data from LinkedIn. Facebook and Other each comprised 2% of the respondents. While Facebook was not significant this year, we think it bears watching in the future because they seem to be investing in the utility and value of Facebook pages and groups.

ALUMNI DATA

As in 2017, 72% of respondents rated the importance of alumni data as very important or higher (scoring 8 to 10), although less rated it as extremely important, see figure 14.



We continue to see a disparity in the value versus quality of data for Alumni Programs. Sixty percent of respondents rank the quality of their alumni data as moderate or lower (scoring 5 or less), see figure 15.





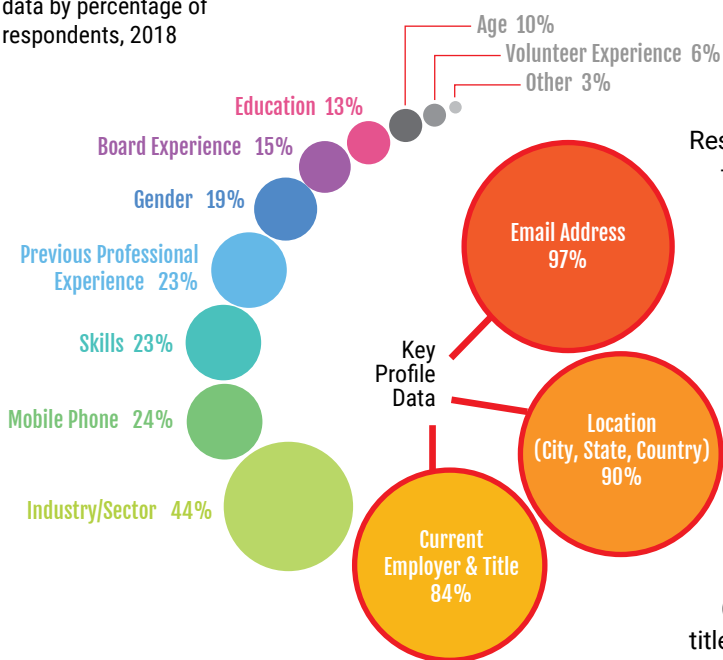
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF DATA

Focusing on collecting and updating alumni data through a variety of means is crucial for the success of every Alumni Program. Options to improve the quality of alumni data include:

- Offering “update your profile” contests or campaigns one or twice a year
- Asking for data updates in newsletters, social media and online announcements
- Target alumni with communication when they update their LinkedIn profiles

Make it clear to alumni what the benefits are to them of keeping their data up-to-date, including invitations to events in their region, access to relevant content and networking opportunities.

Figure 16. Rankings of “must-have” alumni data by percentage of respondents, 2018



Respondents were fairly consistent compared to 2017 about the types of alumni data they classify as “must have,” see figure 16.

Email addresses are still the most important alumni data point at 97%, versus 98% in 2017. Current employer & title and location continue to round out the top three “must-haves.”

All other types of alumni data scored much lower on the “must have” scale but this does not necessarily mean the data is less important to some organizations.

The responses are in line with our view that Alumni Program Directors should focus on keeping key profile data up-to-date (email address, location – city, state/province, country, current title and current company) for all alumni. Other data elements may be critical to specific organizations, but these fields are essential to support the business drivers of Alumni Programs.

In 2018, 60% asked alumni to update profile data on a regular basis (27% every 6 months and an additional 33% do it once a year) vs. 52% in 2017.



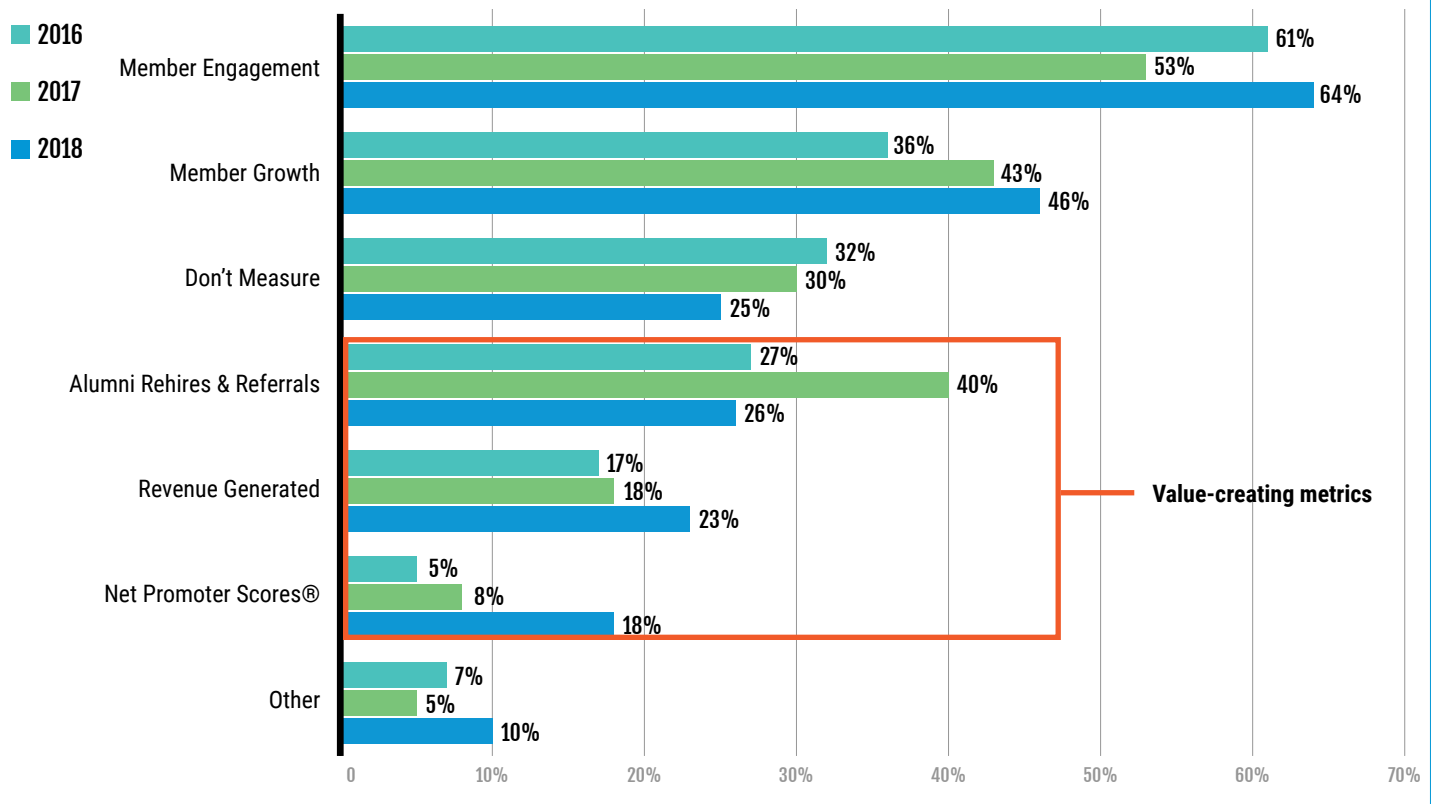
ASK AND RECEIVE

As Alumni Programs mature (especially those over three years old), it is more important to continually maintain up-to-date alumni data. Encourage alumni to actively update profile data through email campaigns, contests and targeted communications.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS METRICS

The process of measuring ROI for Alumni Programs has taken on more importance in 2018. The number that do not engage in ROI measurement dropped to 25% this year and has been on a steady decline since 2016, suggesting more programs understand the need to demonstrate value to leadership to secure resources and budget, see figure 17.

Figure 17. Methods for quantifying Alumni Program ROI (2016 – 2018)



As in past years, Member Engagement and Member Growth remain the two top methods used by respondents to quantify the ROI of their programs in 2018, with 64% and 46% respectively. Similar to 2017, the usage of most value-creating metrics used to quantify ROI increased this year, namely:

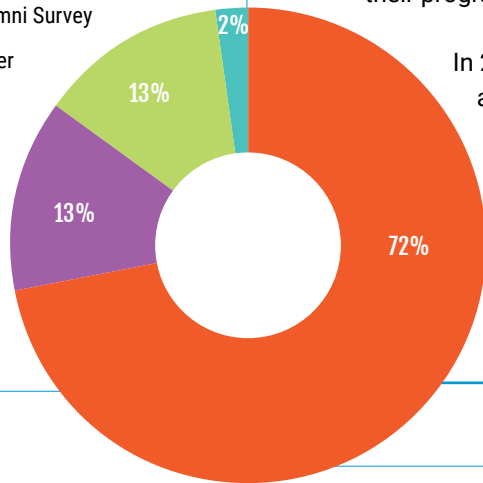
- A 125% increase in the number of programs that use Net Promoter Score® (NPS) to quantify ROI from 8% in 2017 to 18% in 2018. This indicates a growing preference to measure brand advocacy of alumni with the usage of a metric that is widely understood and simple to use.
- Measuring revenue generated by alumni is also up this year from last year, at 23% in 2018 compared to 18% in 2017.

However, there was a notable exception: alumni referrals and rehires dropped back to roughly where it was in 2016 at 26%, after climbing to 40% of respondents last year, an overall decrease of 35%. We've seen this metric to be very important to organizations who specifically focus on this aspect in their Alumni Program, but not every program commits to tracking rehires and referrals well.

MEASURING BRAND ADVOCACY OF ALUMNI

Figure 18.
Measuring brand advocacy

- Don't Measure
- Net Promoter Score®
- Alumni Survey
- Other



Brand advocacy is the number one business driver respondents identified for their Alumni Programs, see figure 18. Measuring brand advocacy continues to be a positive trend among Alumni Programs of all sizes and ages, likely as a way to use data analytics to build support for their programs and identify areas for improvement.

In 2016 and 2017, 79% of respondents said they did not measure brand advocacy. In 2018, that number dropped to 72%, an indication that Alumni Programs are more focused on tracking and improving brand advocacy amongst their alumni members.

Net Promoter Score® (NPS) and alumni surveys continue to be the primary methods used to measure brand advocacy. NPS® increased 100% in usage to 13% in 2018. Both NPS® and alumni surveys provide valuable data, especially when used on a recurring basis.

AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR



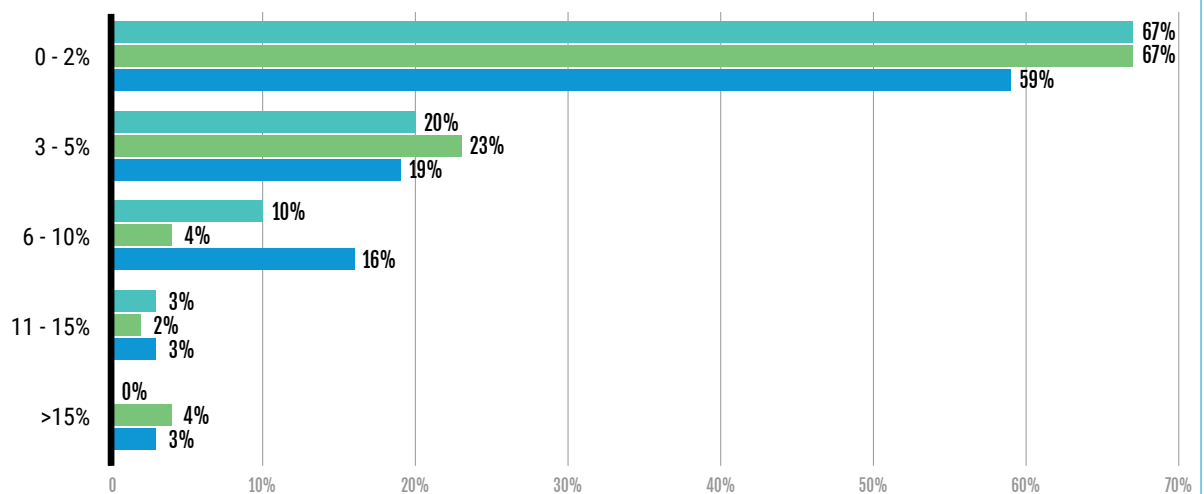
At a minimum, NPS® and/or an alumni survey should be used annually to track progress on key metrics, measure alumni sentiment and to gather valuable feedback.

NEW HIRES FROM ALUMNI REHIRES & REFERRALS

The number of programs that generated 6-10% of their new hires from alumni rehires and referrals grew to 16% this year compared to 4% in 2017, increasing almost 400%, see figure 19.

Figure 19. New hires from alumni rehires and referrals, 2016 to 2018

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018



There was a corresponding decrease in the number of programs that had only 0-2% of new hires come from rehires and referrals, dropping to 59% in 2018 compared to 67% in 2017. Notably, a few programs (6%) recruited 11% or more of their new hires from alumni.

The results provide anecdotal evidence that more Alumni Programs are strategically devoting resources to alumni rehire and referral campaigns. The shift makes sense since the average tenure of Millennials, the largest component of the workforce, is only 2.8 years.

SMART HIRES



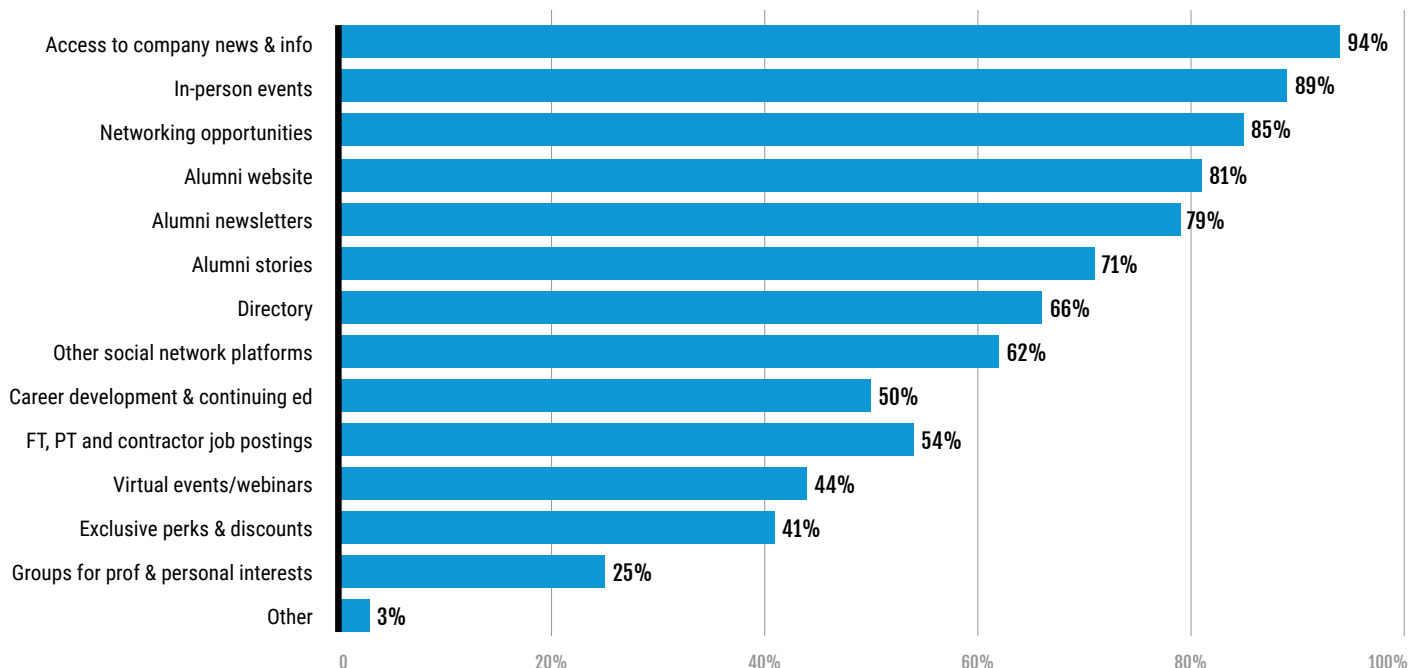
Tracking alumni rehires and referrals is a great way to show the value of the Alumni Program, especially since more than two-thirds of respondents identified talent acquisition as one of their top three business drivers. When talent acquisition is a key business driver, Alumni Programs should strive to achieve 6% or more of their companies' new hires from boomerangs or alumni referrals. Alumni are the second-best source of qualified candidates, after employees.

Benefits for Alumni

Alumni Programs provide an array of benefits for their companies. So, what's in it for the alumni?

In 2018, respondents were fairly consistent with past years in outlining the benefits offered to alumni, see figure 20.

Figure 20. Benefits offered to alumni, 2018



This year we broke Alumni News into two categories: newsletters and stories. Both rank high as a benefit offered at 79% and 71% respectively. Alumni website is also a new addition in 2018 with 81% respondents indicating this is a benefit their programs' offer.

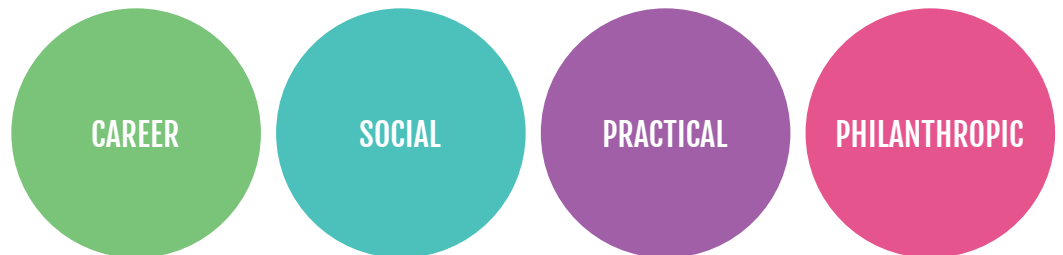
Similarly, we broke Events into two categories: virtual events/webinars and in-person events. In-person events are more popular with 89% of respondents indicating it is part of their Alumni Program.

Alumni directory was a new addition to alumni benefits in 2018, with 66% of respondents identifying it as a benefit. An alumni directory is an important component of networking. But, since 85% of Alumni Programs provide networking opportunities and only 66% provide a directory, roughly 20% of the programs are missing an opportunity to increase networking opportunities for their alumni.



CORNELL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

In partnership with Cornell University, Conenza conducted research in 2018 about the primary motivations for alumni to join an Alumni Program:

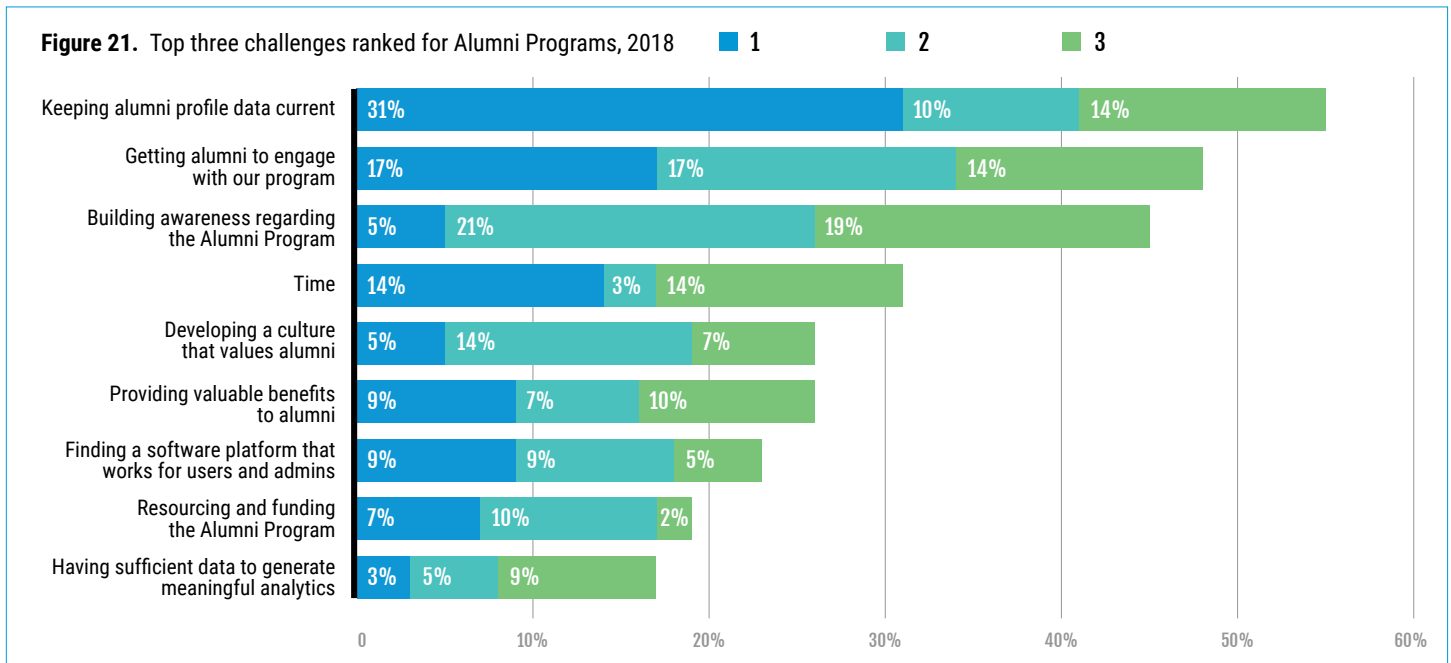


Alumni managers should make sure they understand their alumni's motivations and develop supportive program benefits.

Main Challenges for Alumni Programs

For the first time since our benchmarking survey began five years ago, keeping alumni profile data current emerged as the top challenge for Alumni Programs, see figure 21. Thirty-one percent of respondents listed it as their number one concern, and 55% placed it in their top three challenges. The results overtake alumni engagement of which 48% placed it in their top three challenges and only 14% listed it as their number one challenge.

This result signifies the importance of accurate alumni data in meeting program goals and the difficulty of gathering up-to-date alumni data.



After keeping alumni profile data current and alumni engagement, building awareness for the Alumni Program came in a close third with 45% ranking it as one of their top three challenges. A lack of accurate alumni data directly impacts an Alumni Program's ability to build alumni engagement and program awareness.

Almost one-third of Alumni Directors identified time as one of their top three challenges, in-line with survey results that 72% of Alumni Programs have one or fewer FTE employees assigned to manage it.

INCREASING AWARENESS



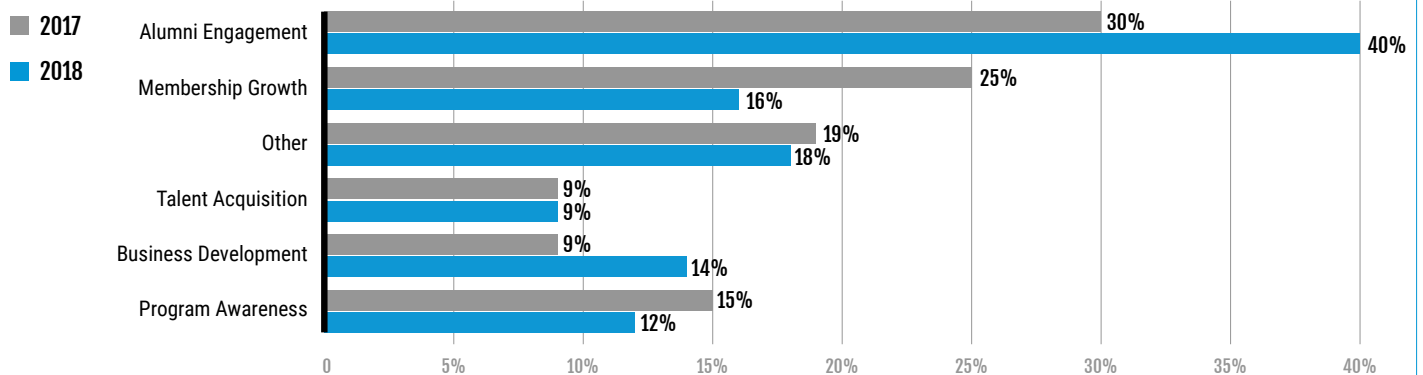
Best practices to increase awareness of Alumni Programs include:

- Ensuring the program has executive sponsorship
- Inviting employees into the alumni network
- Building the concept of the Alumni Program into company culture from the first day of employment
- Including a link to the Alumni Program prominently on the corporate website
- Using existing social media accounts to promote the Alumni Program and its benefits

Alumni Program Goals for 2019

The maturation of Alumni Programs means shifting priorities from when we launched the benchmarking survey in 2014. For the first time, alumni engagement ranked as the most important Alumni Program goal for the following year, increasing from 30% in 2017 to 40% in 2018, see figure 22. Membership growth slipped as a goal from 25% in 2017 to 16% in 2018.

Figure 22. Alumni Program priorities for 2019



This change reflects the logical strategic progression for Alumni Programs during the initial three to five years to move from growth to engagement to sustainability.

Another notable change for Alumni Program priorities for next year includes a greater focus on business development.

The Other category included a range of responses such as the search for the perfect Alumni Program platform or technology, or concerns about defining goals for an Alumni Program in development.

A number of responses focused on ROI measurement. This is a trend we hope will continue as more Alumni Programs seek ways to justify more resources and funding.

STRETCH GOALS



We asked a new question in 2018: If you had unlimited resources, what change(s) would you make to your Alumni Program? The overwhelming request was for additional alumni team resources with a data analyst or steward specifically mentioned multiple times. After hiring additional FTEs to support the Alumni Program, more events (in-person and virtual) and an alumni management platform or one of its specific features were the most frequent wishes.

Other responses included:

- Building out chapters around the world
- Integrating alumni database with existing databases
- Growing membership or global expansion
- Increased engagement opportunities
- Improving quality of data
- Extending more company benefits to alumni
- Offering career coaching and more career support for alumni

Conclusion

The fifth annual **Conenza Alumni Program Benchmarking Report** reveals Alumni Programs are growing in maturity and recognition. Organizations are beginning to understand the value of Alumni Programs as a way to extend their relationships with employees by engaging them for life. Companies with Alumni Programs look to their alumni networks as a strategic initiative to:

- Cultivate business development and partnership opportunities
- Get qualified referrals for open positions
- Rehire former talented colleagues
- Develop brand ambassadors who continue to support their former employers' product and service offerings enthusiastically

To demonstrate the value and return on investment enabled by Alumni Programs, the ability to collect, maintain and analyze key data about Alumni Programs grows more important. Organizations must carefully craft key performance indicators, design outreach activities that are of value to alumni, and track achievement of goals. Both quantitative and qualitative metrics about alumni's impact on business initiatives must be reported regularly to executive management.

In 2018, we see that Alumni Program Managers are hungry for more resources to engage alumni and measure results. With access to better tools to manage data collection and analysis, we predict that organizations will more fully embrace the concept of the employment lifecycle. With a better understanding of how Alumni Programs produce long-term business value, companies are more likely to invest in the employee experience appropriately.



For more information about this report or to provide feedback for future reports, please contact Conenza at info@conenza.com.