

2022 Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report



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2022 Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report



The Great Resignation Is the Great Reshuffle

The term “Great Resignation,” which expected 1 in 4 people to change their jobs, took off like a rocket just as we released our 2021 Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report. An analysis by Pew Research Center found that in the U.S., 53% of people ended up changing jobs in 2021, doubling early estimates. And at the time of this writing, expectations for job changers in 2022 are still high, as a PwC study of 52,000 workers in 44 countries reveals that 1 in 5 people will change jobs this year. This includes a portion of people (20%) who regret changing jobs in the last two years, says a poll of 2,000 workers by The Harris Poll. This indicates that the Great Resignation can be more accurately called the Great Reshuffle. The numbers in the U.S. are higher than the rest of the world, but talent movement is impacting industries all around the globe. In line with broader trends of people changing jobs, we found an increase in boomerang hires also took place this year.

In light of these trends, the value of having a corporate alumni program that focuses on building lifelong relationships with current and former employees has never been more compelling.

The results presented in the following pages show not only a growth in the number of programs since the start of the pandemic but also growth in program staff, an increase in alumni member engagement, and increased sophistication of reporting day-to-day community health and broader business objectives.

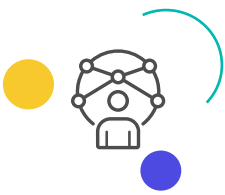
Perhaps one of the more enlightening aspects of our report this year is the integration of corporate alumni programs across the employee lifecycle. Corporate alumni programs have become an essential, strategic element. We find that they are shifting away from being additive programs offered by organizations to becoming critical strategic assets within human resources and marketing. Nearly half of all programs are infusing alumni stories, metrics, and anecdotes into recruitment and onboarding materials to attract candidates as well as build relationships with employees and improve their experiences.

The data shows that as corporations continue to invest in talent (including former employees) and integrating alumni programs into the business, broader business goals will be achieved – with measurable results. These programs and their initiatives create value for both the organization and the participant, especially as we continue to experience a tight labor market in transition.

Key Findings

1. There has been significant interest and growth in corporate alumni programs since the pandemic began – 24% of alumni programs are less than 2 years old, whereas 28% are more than 10 years old.
2. Nearly half of organizations include and promote corporate alumni programs in recruitment and onboarding, and more than half of programs invite employees to participate in the alumni network.
3. Organizations continue to invest in their teams. A quarter of alumni programs now have three or more staff members managing a program.
4. 57% of organizations make career transition or outplacement support available to employees before they leave the organization.
5. In most organizations, 8% of new hires are coming back as boomerang employees compared to 5% in 2021. Some organizations are seeing upward of 15%–20% of boomerangs in their new hires.
6. Larger alumni programs (more than 5,000 members) engage alumni more frequently with 70% of programs sending communications on a weekly or monthly basis. In contrast, smaller programs tend to communicate less frequently.





Improvements to Connecting the Employee Lifecycle

Organizations are increasingly viewing the alumni experience as part of the overall employment lifecycle and are strengthening the key touchpoints. In this year's data, we find that organizations are introducing the alumni program to potential and current employees earlier in their tenures.

Business integration areas

Alumni program promoted during recruitment	48%
Alumni program promoted during onboarding	52%
Employees invited to join alumni program offerings	60%

While this shows progress, we encourage more organizations to promote the alumni program at all stages of the employment lifecycle to increase adoption and promote a continuing lifelong connection to the company.

Offering Career Transition Support

As job hopping becomes more common in the labor market, it's important to think about not only how to support employees entering the organization but also how to support employees *exiting* the organization.

Many organizations are reimagining the "offboarding" process: 57% of respondents make career transition or outplacement support available to employees *before* they leave the organization. An additional 13% of respondents reported they aren't currently doing this but plan to in the near future.

Regarding types of offboarding support, we find these are common benefits provided to departing employees:

Types of career transition support offered

Career counseling with the goal of finding a new job or career path	40%
Resume and cover letter support	31%
Interview training	19%
Job search administrative support	17%
Re-skilling training (training new skills to help find a new job)	5%
Online networking training	5%

Given the fast-paced employee movement in most companies, we anticipate more organizations will offer offboarding support to departing employees over the next few years.

Updating the Exit Process

Perhaps motivated by the large waves of employee departures during the Great Resignation, most organizations now have a formal exit process in place and have made improvements in each of these categories in comparison to the data we collected one year ago. While 83% of companies were implementing a formal exit interview or survey in 2021, we find that 90% of organizations now do this.

Exit process offerings

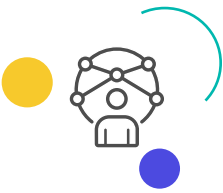
Formal exit interview or exit survey	90%
Information about the alumni program provided before exit	66%
An email encouraging alumni to join the network after their last day	66%
A supervisor meets with the exiting employee	38%
A departing gift from the company	26%
Resources for employees to send off the exiting employee	26%

More Boomerang Employees

Like 2021, this year's respondents are open to boomerang employees, or employees who leave and eventually return to work at the organization – 84% agreed or strongly agreed that their organization supported boomerang hires. Notably, we found an increase in the amount of boomerang employees returning since last year. In 2021, about 5% of new hires were boomerang employees. In 2022, 8% of new hires are coming back as boomerangs. There are some examples of companies seeing numbers as high as 15%–20%.

When asked about the advantages boomerang employees provide to the organization over external hires, alumni managers overwhelmingly (90%) listed faster onboarding as a primary value, and 76% felt boomerangs had stronger performance once on the job.





Alumni Program Overview

For this year's Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report, we took a closer look at differences in alumni program resources – full-time equivalents (FTEs) and budget – across different organizations. Our data suggests that the age of the alumni program and the size of the organization's workforce are important factors that influence the number of resources available to an alumni program.

FTE breakdown	
No one is currently assigned	9%
0.5 FTE or fewer	14%
1 FTE	33%
2 FTEs	19%
3 to 5 FTEs	12%
More than 5 FTEs	12%

Impact of Organization Size on Team Size, Budget, and Longevity

Impact on Team Size

A majority of programs (65%) had between 1 and 5 FTEs assigned to the program. However, we found that the age of the alumni program and size of the organization were particularly important at both ends of the spectrum.

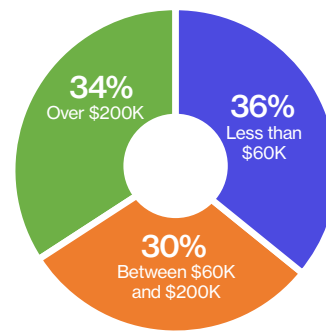
For alumni programs that had **fewer than 1 FTE**, 90% were less than 10 years old. In contrast, a majority of alumni programs (86%) that had **more than 5 FTEs** were older than 10 years.

For alumni programs that had **fewer than 1 FTE**, 92% had less than 10,000 employees. In contrast, ALL alumni programs that had **more than 5 FTEs** had more than 10,000 employees. This suggests that as a company's employee size grows, it may similarly expect a larger alumni base and dedicate more resources to managing the corporate alumni program.

Smaller organizations may choose to start with fewer staff members for a smaller group of alumni; however, over time, this will need to be periodically reviewed in order for the program to be successful.

24%
of the alumni programs were established within the past two years, and 28% have been in operation for more than 10 years

Alumni budget



Impact on Alumni Program Budget

Regarding total budget allocated to the alumni program, more established programs seem to get larger budgets. Of the alumni programs with budgets over \$200,000, 73% have been in existence for more than five years.

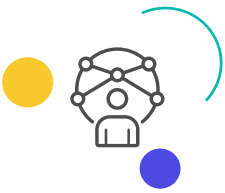
We also found that the organization's overall size impacts the alumni program budget. For alumni programs that have a budget less than \$200,000, 79% had an employee base of fewer than 10,000.

Again, smaller organizations may choose to start with a smaller budget, but as the program grows, more resources are required for successful growth, engagement, and results.

Average company size (employee base) = **48,835**

Average registered alumni = **11,428**

24%
of programs have three or more staff members running the program (nearly double the number from 2021)



Alumni Program Characteristics

Offerings

In this year's data, we find that 83% of our respondents offer an organizationally sponsored central technology platform for alumni – 59% of respondents leverage a third-party alumni provider, such as PeoplePath.

In addition to the alumni platform, the most commonly offered alumni benefits include:

	Benefit	Percentage
	Access to company news & information	90%
	Alumni stories	88%
	Networking opportunities	86%
	In-person events	81%
	Alumni newsletters	81%
	Virtual events/webinars	81%

Alumni Communications

Outgoing Communications

Like our findings in 2021, most alumni programs are communicating with alumni on a quarterly (31%) or monthly (36%) basis.

However, we find that the number of registered alumni influences the frequency of communications. For alumni programs that have more than 5,000 registered alumni, 70% of alumni programs reach out weekly or monthly. For alumni programs that have fewer than 5,000 registered alumni, only 36% reach out weekly or monthly.

Seeking Feedback

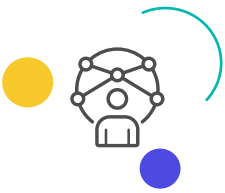
We also find that similar to 2021, only about half of alumni programs are seeking feedback from alumni. However, like outgoing communications, surveying alumni seems to be influenced by the size of the registered alumni base. When the alumni network has fewer than 5,000 registered alumni, 57% do not survey; but when there are more than 5,000 registered alumni, only 35% do not survey.

We encourage all programs, regardless of size, to institute a formal survey to alumni members that is run annually or biannually. Preparing a survey before launch to gather insight on what alumni want from their network can save time and energy, and measuring alumni actions over time will produce measurable ROI year over year to define the success of the program.

Alumni Program Metrics Tracking

Most alumni programs track the total number of registered alumni, number of new registered alumni, alumni platform logins, and opened emails for alumni communications on a monthly or quarterly basis. It was most common for these items to be tracked on a **monthly** basis.

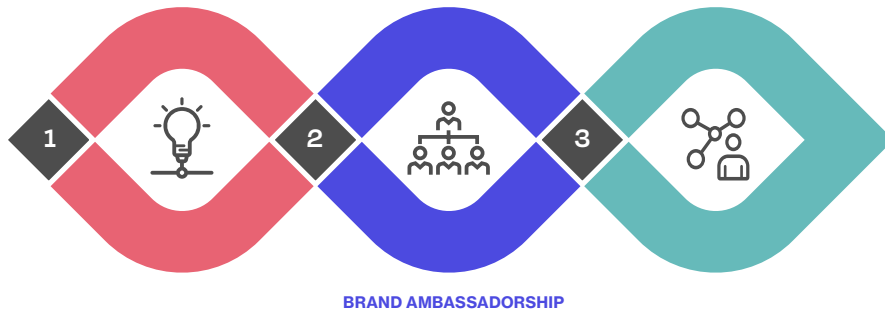
It was less likely for program managers to track employee login or alumni profile updates as less than half of managers do this on a regular basis. These metrics are used for day-to-day community health and alumni engagement, which support broader business goals.



Return on Investment

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

SUPPORTING TALENT ACQUISITION STRATEGIES



BRAND AMBASSADORSHIP

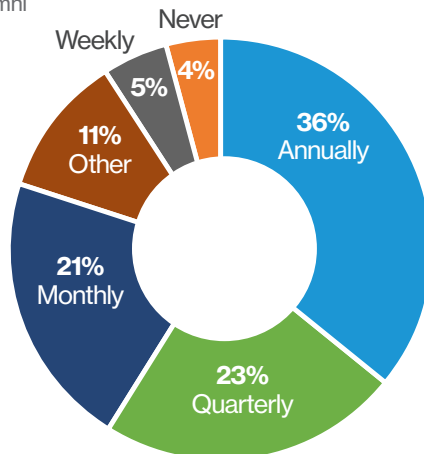
Similar to past years, managers list the top three drivers of the alumni program as:

1. Business development and business-to-business relationships
2. Brand ambassadorship
3. Supporting talent acquisition strategies

While these are the overall drivers of alumni programs, a closer look at the data shows that priorities shift based on where the alumni program manager is situated in the organization.

When the alumni program manager is in the human resources or talent management function, the top goal of the corporate alumni program is more likely to be talent management support.

However, if the alumni program manager is in a business development or marketing function, the top goal of the corporate alumni program is more likely to be business development and supporting business-to-business relationships.



Measuring Returns on Alumni Programs

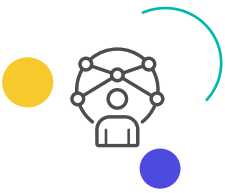
While talent management is ranked as the third priority, alumni managers are most likely to measure talent-related outcomes. According to our survey, 61% of managers track boomerang hires and 46% track referrals from alumni for new employees (both increasing from last year).

While business development is usually listed as the highest priority, less than half of alumni programs (47%) track alumni-assisted sales. Brand ambassador indicators are measured even less. Only 30% of alumni programs track Net Promoter Score and Glassdoor scores; however, these did increase from last year, suggesting it may be becoming more important.

In one year, we saw slight increases in the number of programs tracking these broader business goals, which could be a result of having more staff available or more integration into the business. However, many managers report that they only collect these outcomes once per year. As programs grow, it may be helpful for alumni managers to track this more frequently.

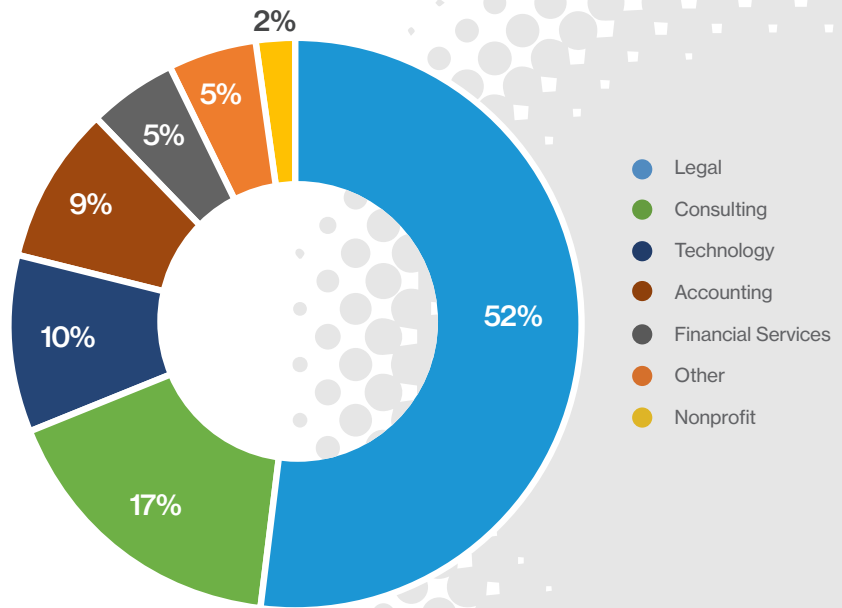
Communicating Alumni Program Outcomes with Leadership

Notably 96% of alumni program managers are sharing updates about the program with their organization's leadership or executive team. This occurs at varying levels of frequency however.



Respondent Information

We are grateful to the corporate alumni managers who responded to our annual benchmarking survey. Our ability to report progress on corporate alumni programs each year is dependent on their participation. This year, we received 72 responses from alumni managers and representatives of 58 unique organizations. Participants are in organizations that have been in operation for an average of 89 years and represent various industries.



Conclusion

There has been an extreme focus on human resources and talent management over the course of the last few years because of significant changes in public health and economics. As the world grapples with the tectonic shifts in shortened employee tenure, increased remote work opportunities, re-skilling and upskilling needs, and more, businesses are beginning to turn their focus to strengthening the employee experience and are reviewing the entire employee lifecycle – including their relationship with former employees. As the data we collected shows, corporate alumni programs are being utilized more strategically in recruitment, onboarding, and offboarding, and more resources are being given to these initiatives.

The talent marketplace is being reshaped before our eyes by several forces including changing demographics, a global pandemic, and new technologies, requiring organizations to redefine the employee experience, modernize engagement techniques, and utilize data analytics in deeper and more meaningful ways, which allow them to maintain lifelong relationships even as people depart and navigate their career journeys in new ways.

