

2024 Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report

10th
Edition!

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2024 Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report



A Retrospective on 10 Years of Corporate Alumni Benchmarking

We didn't begin collecting data for the first Corporate Alumni Benchmarking Report until 2014. What started as a simple fact-finding mission to get an idea of common program characteristics, benefits, goals, and challenges has evolved into the industry's most insightful and authentic data-driven resource today.

Along the way, we partnered with researchers at the ILR School at Cornell University and then the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia to ensure the highest quality results without bias. This partnership has also enabled us to do deeper analysis. We've added new insights on layoffs, offboarding, boomerangs, engagement, and more to aid companies in their decision-making process and expectation setting. Companies considering alumni programs use this to start off on the right foot. Companies with established programs use this to compare and benchmark their progress and create goals.

The transformation of work in the past decade has been driven by many factors including the growth of the gig economy, shorter employee tenures, higher rates of turnover, the COVID-19 pandemic followed by the "great resignation," rising inflation, and the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. Movement of talent is at an all-time high, and the importance of continuing to build strong relationships with former employees has never been stronger.

This year, with a record-breaking number of responses, we look back on how far we've come in 10 years and what has changed (or stayed the same) for 2024. Most notably, companies are strategically integrating their former employees into their talent management and employee lifecycle planning, as well as in organizational goals such as talent acquisition and business development. We've also seen companies understand that former employees need a home base through an online platform (such as PeoplePath) and that it's increasingly harder to use free tools or build a homegrown solution due to the complexity of what's needed to support high-performing alumni.

We encourage you to read through the following pages and ask questions. We invite you to look back at the last decade, and we're excited to help you think about where the next decade might take us.

Key Findings

1. Ten years of data tracking has shown an increase in the number of corporate alumni programs. This year, we had a record-breaking 78 responses from 67 unique organizations. Some notable changes in 10 years are:
 - a. 98% of alumni programs have a full-time employee managing them compared to 88% in 2014.
 - b. 60% of programs now have a budget of more than \$100,000 compared to zero in 2014.
 - c. Only 3% of companies build their own platform today compared to 32% in 2014.
2. 76% of programs are global in nature, with only 3% being regional and 21% being country specific.
3. 76% of organizations now offer some form of career transition or outplacement support to either all exiting employees or employees affected by layoff. The largest jump was in job search support, which went from 57% in 2023 to 65% in 2024 – this was nearly unheard of 5 years ago.
4. 72% of programs host between one and 10 events per year, which is a significant increase from 2023's 50%.
5. 18% of companies can attribute over \$50 million in sales to alumni support.
6. Boomerang hires remain steady at 8% on average.



Ten Years of Corporate Alumni Program Benchmarking

Much like corporate alumni programs that have improved, become more strategic, and narrowed their focus to achieve the best results, so too have we in our years of benchmarking reporting. Not every statistic from our surveys has 10 years' worth of information, but we were able to see some interesting trends over the past decade that may inform where we'll be headed in the decade to come regarding program characteristics.

It's also notable to point out that some of the larger, more established programs are asking more analytical questions and tracking more information than some of the newer or smaller programs. It's our hope that as more programs begin tracking and measuring what's important to them, we'll be able to report more extensively on trends in program results.

Increased Respondent Information

It's clear that corporate alumni programs have grown considerably in the last decade. In addition to the number of programs we now see, the number of respondents of our benchmarking report increased 200% from 2014 to 2024. While part of this may be greater awareness of the report, the growth primarily represents the rising prominence of alumni programs across industries.

Based on our data, the largest increase in alumni programs comes from the legal industry, which has more than doubled in 10 years. We suspect that with a strong presence in professional organizations like the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) supporting the topic of alumni, law firms specifically see the value when comparing themselves to their peers – which is something other industries lack. However, as alumni programs become more of a must-have, we anticipate increased penetration of other sectors beyond professional services in the future.

200%
increase in report
respondents in 10 years

Only **3%**
of programs choose
to build their own platform
(down from 32% in 2014)

Consistent Size and Age of Corporate Alumni Programs

We generally find that most alumni programs have less than 5,000 registered members, with little change in 10 years. New alumni programs start every year, which keeps the distribution of alumni program size consistent. In the last 3 years of surveys, we find that 18%–25% of all programs are less than 2 years old.

While established alumni programs continue to grow as former employees leave each year, we expect programs with less than 5,000 registered alumni to remain dominant as companies launch new alumni programs and the industry continues to grow.

49%
of teams have 2 FTEs or
more in 2024 (compared
to 21% in 2015)





Ten Years of Corporate Alumni Program Benchmarking (cont.)

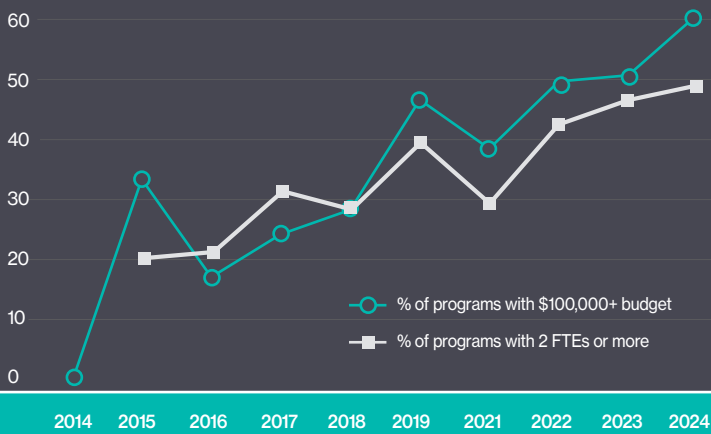
Increased Resources for Corporate Alumni Programs

Successful alumni programs require dedicated time, oversight, and resources. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of assigning someone to manage the alumni program full time, which might be one of the biggest takeaways of the last decade. Almost all organizations – 98% – now have someone dedicated to managing the alumni program, compared to 88% 10 years ago.

We've also seen a significant increase in team size through the years. While only 21% of organizations had a team of two or more full-time equivalent (FTE) employees managing the program in 2015, nearly half (49%) reported the same in 2024.

We do believe that to start a program, one FTE (or even .5 FTE) suffices. Team growth typically comes along with program growth and maturity.

In addition to increased team sizes, we also noticed growth in the financial resources dedicated to alumni programs over time. While none of the respondents had a budget of \$100,000 or more in 2014, by 2024, 60% of respondents had a budget of at least \$100,000.



More Reliance on Tools for Program Management

In 2024, we saw a peak of 71% of all respondents utilizing an online platform (such as PeoplePath) to manage their corporate alumni program.

Most years, we inquired about the utilization of an official LinkedIn group to manage the program. While that fluctuated from year to year, about 20% of programs officially use LinkedIn Groups (this doesn't

account for the grassroots efforts of alumni who start unofficial groups themselves). We believe that utilizing both a technology platform and a LinkedIn group creates a comprehensive, well-rounded strategy for outreach and community building.

Perhaps the biggest learning from the last decade is the significant decrease in companies building their own solution – from 32% in 2014 to 3% in 2024. As the number of technology requirements has increased and the innovation curve has steepened, companies have decided to conserve internal resources. As the alumni industry has grown, so has the need to provide alumni with a robust set of features and for companies to have access to strong data management and security, system integrations, and analytical tools.

Interestingly, the number of companies that don't utilize any online platform has stayed consistently low throughout the years. We interpret this as an effort to save on costs and pilot programs before deciding to strategically invest in a technology solution.

Required Program Offerings

With very little change, the types of benefits and features offered by corporate alumni programs have remained strong and consistent. This speaks to alumni motivations for joining these networks: access to information and news, connection to other alumni, and opportunities for networking, jobs, and more. Although they're standard in most alumni programs today, alumni stories and newsletters have seen the most growth over the past 10 years.

Benefit	Average Over 10 Years
Access to company news and information	91%
In-person events	86%
Alumni stories	86%
Networking opportunities	85%
Alumni newsletters	83%
Alumni website	83%
Special events	80%



Corporate Alumni Program Management as a Part of the Talent Management and Employee Lifecycle

Utilizing the Alumni Program in Recruitment and Onboarding

To optimize the value of alumni programs, many organizations are introducing the program at the very start of the employee lifecycle, during the recruitment process. This year, we found that 37% of respondents introduce the alumni program during recruitment, while another 27% are planning to build it into the process. Organizations can do this by highlighting the alumni network in job postings, recruitment materials, or directly on the company website.

Many of our respondents (55%) are also promoting the alumni program during onboarding to new employees, and an additional 29% plan to do so in the future. Adding the alumni program to recruitment and onboarding sends a strong signal that the employee is and always will be important, strengthening corporate culture. Additionally, it's an opportunity for employees to utilize the program to help achieve day-to-day responsibilities, e.g., recruiting talent or generating new business, and not be surprised by this program when they do choose to leave the organization.

Continuing the trend of the last 2 years, boomerang hires make up about 8% of all new hires. However, the number of boomerangs varies considerably across organizations. Legal and financial services organizations have below-average rates of rehires, while accounting, consulting, and technology organizations tend to have above-average rates. This could be due to the nature of alumni programs at professional service firms, where business development is generally prioritized over talent acquisition as part of the strategy.

28,350
Average
company size
(employee base)

76%
of respondents now
offer at least one type of
outplacement or career
transition support

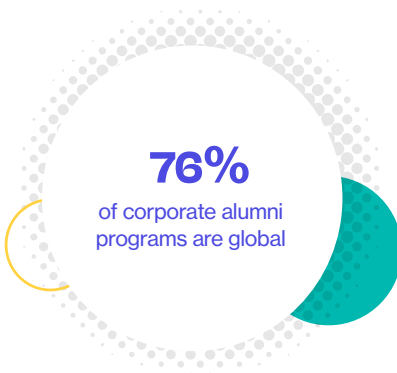
12,236
Average
registered alumni

Significantly More Career Transition Support

We continue to see more organizations supporting employees as they leave. This year, 76% of organizations reported offering some form of career transition or outplacement support to either all exiting employees or employees affected by layoff.

Although these types of career transition support were uncommon even 5 years ago, many organizations today are now helping departing employees advance their career paths. This year, we saw the largest jump in job search support, which went from 57% in 2023 to 65% in 2024.

As a result of the dynamic changes happening in the workforce, we predicted in 2022 that we would see an increase in career transition support in the coming years, which has been proven true. This year, we predict that reskilling training is likely to become a more prominent topic in future years as organizations adapt to AI and continue to restructure their workforce.



Types of Career Transition Support Offered		Percentage
	Career counseling with the goal of finding a new job or career path	65%
	Job search support	65%
	Resume and cover letter support	53%
	Interview training	46%
	Online networking training	37%
	Reskilling training (training new skills to help find a new job)	27%



Corporate Alumni Program Management as a Part of the Talent Management and Employee Lifecycle (cont.)

Building Stronger Connections to the Alumni Program

A large part of building a successful alumni program is making a lasting impression on departing employees and removing barriers at exit. Many organizations are improving efforts toward making the transition from employee to alumni as smooth as possible. We find there are several common tools that organizations use to welcome departing employees into the alumni network.

Exit Process Offerings	Percentage
Provide materials that include information about the alumni program before they leave the organization	73%
Send an email encouraging alumni to join the network after their last day	67%
Encourage a supervisor or other leader to meet with an exiting employee	52%
Provide a departing gift from the company to alumni	22%
Provide resources for employees to send off the exiting employee	13%

Program Challenges

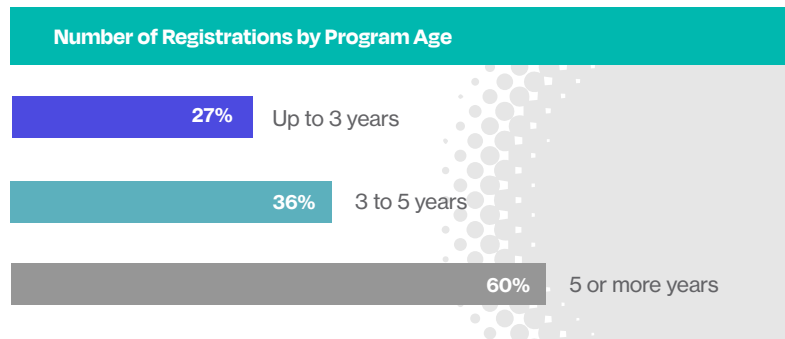
Although there is increasing recognition of the value alumni programs can add to organizations, managing these programs is not always easy. We asked alumni managers what they consider to be the most important challenges in managing their program in 2024. Unsurprisingly, the top three challenges are consistent across all online communities and networks. Interestingly, they are almost the same as they were 10 years ago. When we asked this question in 2014, the top three challenges were 1) community growth, 2) alumni engagement, and 3) creating an alumni-value culture internally in the organization.

This year, most respondents named alumni engagement as a key challenge for their alumni program. Building the alumni-value culture internally and obtaining quality alumni data were the next most common challenges of managing an alumni program.

Challenge	Percentage
Alumni engagement	54%
Creating an alumni-value culture internally in the organization	43%
Amount and quality of current alumni data	41%

Registrations Grow Over Time

The average alumni program membership as a percentage of registered alumni versus the total alumni population increases with the number of years programs have been established. Programs that are early stage (less than 3 years old) have a little over a quarter of their total population registered, but those that have been around for over 5 years see 60% of their total alumni as active members. This indicates that program age plays a part in program success as it takes time to launch, communicate, conduct outreach, market the program inside and outside of the organization, improve offerings, and engage former employees.





Alumni Engagement Statistics

With engagement listed as the number one challenge of a program, we again asked for data surrounding activity this year. These measures are important for gauging what's working well or what could be improved, and they can help demonstrate the value of the alumni program to your company's leadership team. Day-to-day activity also tends to increase overall business driver results.

Consistent with prior years, not all respondents were able to report their metrics for these initiatives this year, and we encourage programs to work on improving their data and analytics tracking going forward to help with program adoption and to gain resources.



Platform Logins

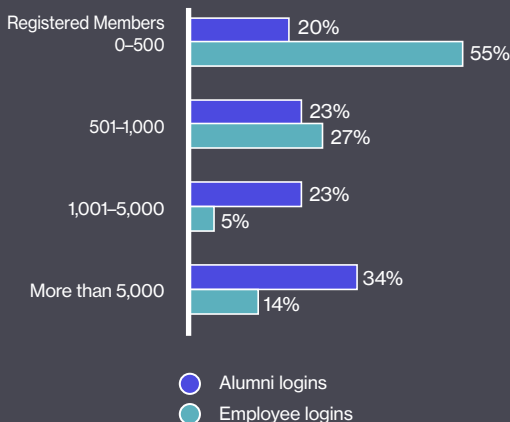
- Alumni platforms offer a centralized way for alumni to stay connected to their former employer and colleagues. When alumni log in to the platform, they can update information about themselves in their profile, read company news, connect with former colleagues, look for jobs, find career development resources, or access exclusive perks.
- Of this year's respondents, 71% have an online platform (such as PeoplePath) to manage their program. For those with a platform, 16% do not track alumni logins, 31% do not track employee logins, and only 16% do not include employees in their programs. More programs have decided to include current employees over the years.
- For those with a platform and that do actively monitor, they see a consistent level of engagement of members accessing and utilizing the platform features throughout the year. This year's data showed a significant increase across all sizes of registered members in both alumni and employees accessing their platforms, demonstrating interest in and the use of this resource.

Newsletter Statistics

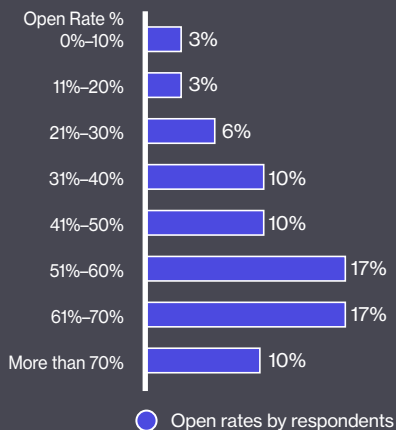
- Consistent with last year, most managers track how many alumni open the newsletter (76%) and how many click through the materials (67%).
- Similarly to last year, we found that 54% of programs that send newsletters receive an open rate of more than 40%, and 29% of programs see a click-through rate of 11%–50%. This suggests that content emailed to alumni is not only highly viewed but also of significant interest and will lead to logins in the platform or company website traffic.

Platform Logins and Newsletter Statistics

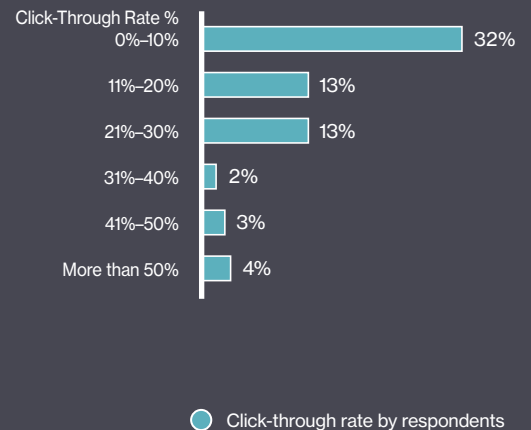
Registered Member Logins



Newsletter Open Rate



Newsletter Click-Through Rate





Alumni Engagement Statistics (cont.)

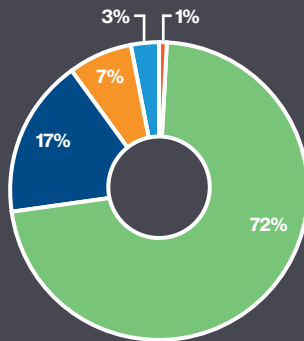
In-person and virtual events are often rated as the most valuable offering to alumni. Consequently, year after year, we see events as one of the most common benefits across alumni programs. In fact, 98% of our respondents offered at least one in-person or virtual event to their alumni base. Events not only help the organization stay connected with alumni but also help alumni connect with each other.



Annual Event Statistics

Frequency of Events

We find a wide variety in the number of events offered by different alumni programs. Most programs (72%) hosted between one and 10 this past year (a big increase from last year's 50%). Approximately 10% of companies held more than 20 events in the past year. It's important to note that most of the companies that held more than 20 events also had alumni budgets over \$250,000 and are global in nature.

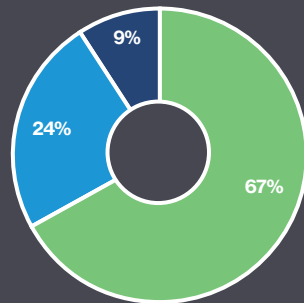


Number of Events

- Programs that hold no events per year
- Programs that hold 1-10 events per year
- Programs that hold 11-20 events per year
- Programs that hold 21-50 events per year
- Programs that hold more than 50 events per year

Attendance Tracking

Tracking alumni attendance allows programs to measure growth and interest in providing this service and form a future event strategy. It also enables programs to identify which of their members are the most engaged and what they're interested in. In 2024, we saw a significant improvement in the number of programs tracking this metric. How many alumni attend these events?



Attendance at Events

- Programs that don't track attendance at these events
- Programs that have less than 1,000 alumni attend events each year
- Programs that have more than 1,000 alumni attend events each year



Return on Investment

Measuring Returns on Alumni Programs

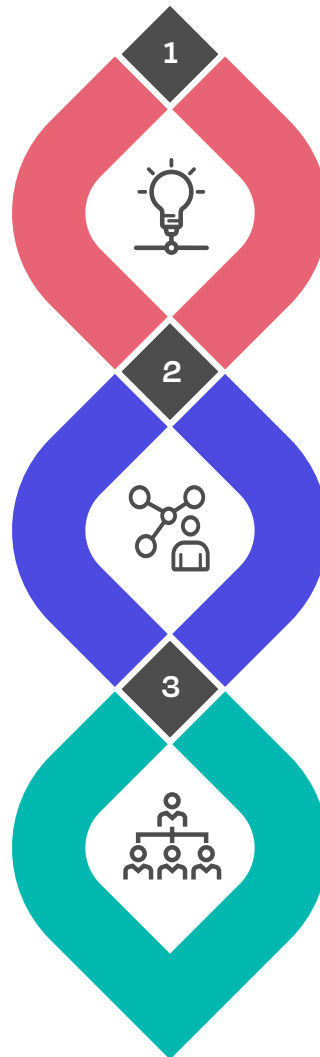
From the beginning, we've found that the top three business drivers of alumni programs are business development, talent acquisition, and brand awareness. We continue to encourage alumni managers to measure how their alumni program supports these goals, as more than half of programs currently do not track this data. For 2024, we're able to share some additional context for the top business drivers.

1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- 35% of respondents track alumni-assisted sales (this is most common among consulting firms [71%] and law firms [44%]).
- 18% of companies can attribute over \$50 million in sales to alumni support.
- All programs tracking alumni-assisted sales have at least one full-time employee managing the alumni program.

2. TALENT ACQUISITION

- About 76% of respondents track boomerang hire rates, but only 26% tracked alumni referrals.
- The average for boomerang hires is 8%.
- Rewards for alumni referrals generally come in either a cash gift to the alum or a donation in the alum's name.



3. BRAND ADVOCACY

- **Net Promoter Score® (NPS):**
 - Only 25% of respondents were tracking some form of NPS.
 - An NPS can capture the likelihood that alumni will recommend the company's products or services, the company as a place to work, or the company's alumni program.
 - Consulting firms were most likely to track NPS (75%), while it was least likely in financial services companies.
- **Glassdoor Reviews/Scores**
 - It's even less likely for companies to monitor Glassdoor scores. Only 13% of companies were monitoring Glassdoor scores, and it was most common for accounting companies.
 - Organizations that track Glassdoor scores most commonly collect this data quarterly.

Industry	Track NPS	Track Glassdoor
Consulting	75%	29%
Nonprofit	67%	0%
Accounting	50%	33%
Other	50%	0%
Technology	20%	25%
Legal	5%	9%
Financial services	0%	0%

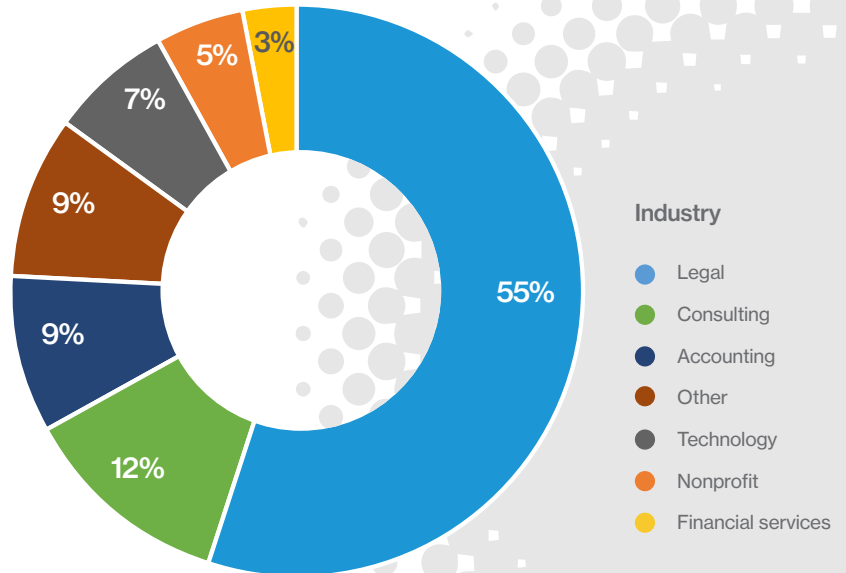


Respondent Information

We partnered with Dr. Rebecca Paluch from the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia to develop this annual benchmarking report.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the corporate alumni managers who participated in our survey. Their involvement makes possible our yearly report on corporate alumni programs.

This year, we received the largest number of responses yet, totaling 78 from alumni managers and representatives across 67 unique organizations.



Looking Ahead

In the nearly 30 years since the emergence of corporate alumni programs, we've seen the strongest growth in the last 5 years due to the changing nature of the workforce. Looking forward, we predict the following:

- The growth trend from the past several years will continue in the future, specifically from a variety of industries beyond professional services.
- The average worker will have access to multiple alumni networks as people move around more freely from company to company and more companies sponsor formal alumni programs, creating challenges and opportunities for the companies offering the programs and the vendors providing the technology solutions.
- Program management will become increasingly more strategic as organizations prioritize alumni programs and encourage a stronger focus on results through data and analytics.
- As alumni programs become more strategically important, companies will need to do a better job aligning the alumni team with other relevant business teams, i.e., marketing, sales, talent acquisition, etc.

- With increased acceleration in the transformation of the needs and skills required of the workforce, continuing education and reskilling will be essential offerings in alumni programs.
- Machine learning and AI will play an important role in the evolution of corporate alumni programs through increased personalization, content generation, and data insights.

We're excited about what the future has to offer and the opportunity to continue to partner with organizations to build, grow, and sustain alumni programs with impact.

