

PeoplePath Whitepaper:

How to Successfully Launch a Corporate Alumni Program



Table of Contents

Introduction

- Welcome to the PeoplePath Launch Guide
- PeoplePath Research Supports the Alumni Program Business Case
- Identify Key Stakeholders in Your Organization
- Embark on Your Journey to Launch Your Program

Step 1: Plan

- Answer These Key Questions to Start
- Offer Benefits to Alumni to Achieve Business Goals
- Build a Business Case
- Where to Manage Your Alumni Program
- Why a LinkedIn Group is not Enough
- Evaluate Software Vendors Based on Key Criteria

Step 2: Prepare

- Understand the Alumni Motivations Behind Joining
- Establish Key Responsibility & Staff Set-Up
- Define the Program Offerings
- Collect Existing Alumni Data
- Integrate the Program in your Talent Lifecycle
- PeoplePath Timeline Leading to Your Launch

Step 3: Launch

- Create Seamless Offboarding and Registration Processes
- Create a Communication Strategy to Announce the Program
- Sample Monthly Content Plan

Step 4: Excel

- Measuring the Success of your Program
- Setting Yourself up for Continued Success
- Use Automation to Your Advantage
- Summary and Contact Info

Further Reading

- Candid Advice from PeoplePath Clients
- Purpose-driven Integrations
- Resources to Support Your Journey
- PeoplePath Alumni Fully Branded Platform Features

Introduction

- Welcome to the PeoplePath Launch Guide
- PeoplePath Research Supports the Alumni Program Business Case
- Identify Key Stakeholders Within Your Organization
- Embark on Your Journey to Launch Your Program



Welcome to the PeoplePath Launch Guide

Our guide serves as a framework for planning, preparing, and structuring a formal corporate alumni program, regardless of whether you're starting from scratch or updating an existing program.

Each alumni program is unique and designed with the specific goals and needs of the organization and their alumni in mind. No matter the initial size of a program, it can scale and evolve into a thriving network, and create tremendous long-term value.

The PeoplePath philosophy is "lifelong relationships are the foundation of mutual success" which speaks not only to the benefits shared between your organization and alumni, but to our dedication and commitment as your strategic partner for long-term success.

Your PeoplePath Team



Tony Audino
Founder & Co-CEO



Charlotte Sault
Director of Strategic Engagement



Jenn Pedde
Vice President of Customer Advocacy



Stephan Herrlich
Founder & Co-CEO



Friedemann Holland
VP Global Marketing |
Head of Sustainability



Karen Brusso
Sales & Marketing
Manager

PeoplePath Research Supports the Alumni Program

Business Case

In 2018 we conducted the first of its kind joint [research report with Cornell University](#) to investigate the motivations behind former employees joining a corporate alumni program. These motivations often tie into broader organizational objectives, providing a strong business case for an alumni program. Benefits offered through a program should be **tailored to the unique needs of alumni** and **support desired business outcomes** for the organization.

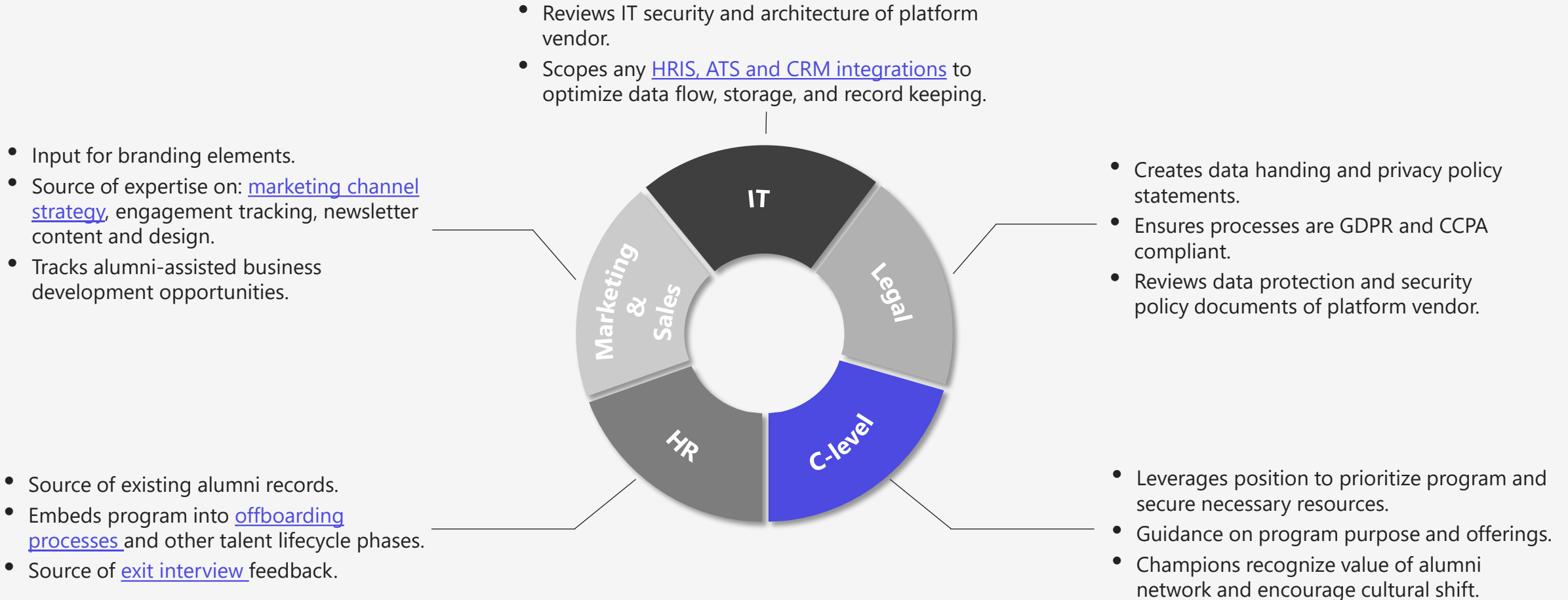
The report found that from the alumni's perspective, they need to feel like they are getting value out of the benefits to validate their participation. The report findings supported the notion that **greater alumni involvement in a corporate alumni program was consistently associated with increasing returns to the organization**. As alumni use more of the program's offerings, they are more likely to provide recommendations that are beneficial for the organization and the corporate alumni program.

We continue this research annually to consistently review program size, budgets, communications, engagement, and ROI and in the last few years have found a **significant growth in programs and their results**. [Read our most recent report here](#).

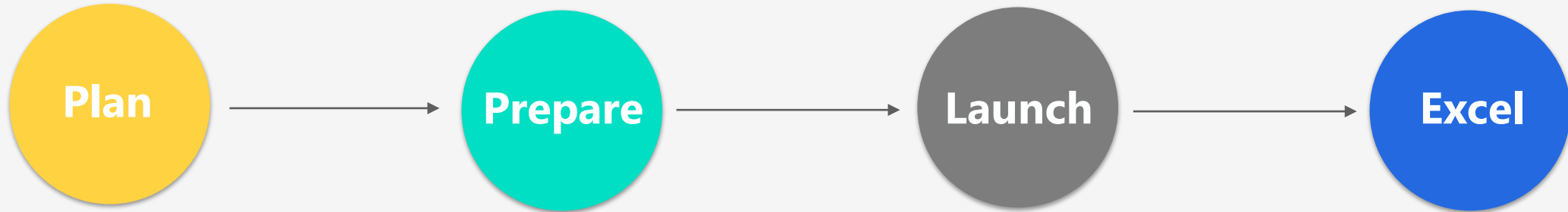


Identify Key Stakeholders in Your Organization

These departments will be active in pre- and post-launch phases.



Embark on Your Journey to **Launch Your Program**



- Identify **C-level champions** to secure leadership buy-in.
- Consult with leadership to define the **program's purpose**.
- Gather **key stakeholders** in a cross-departmental team.
- Determine **budget**.
- **Select an [alumni management platform vendor](#)**.

- Discuss [technical requirements](#) with IT and secure resources.
- Create an **alumni directory** from existing records.
- **Survey your alumni** to discover their needs.
- **Finalize offerings** according to budget and mutual benefit.
- **Communicate** internally and externally to create buzz.

- Plan an optional **soft launch** to resolve kinks.
- Create a seamless **registration process**.
- [Share engaging content](#), and hold regular **events**.
- **Leverage technology** to automate routine tasks.
- Measure initial launch metrics to **track success**.

- **Harness reporting capabilities** of the platform to inform your strategy.
- **Adjust the offerings** based on changing needs & performance metrics.
- Identify **alumni champions** and leverage their influence.

Step 1: Plan

- Answer These Key Questions to Start
- Offer Benefits to Alumni to Achieve Business Goals
- Build a Business Case
- Where to Manage Your Alumni Program
- Why a LinkedIn Group is not Enough
- Evaluate Software Vendors Based on Key Criteria



Answer These **Key Questions to Start**

What is the Program's Purpose?

The key purpose of the program will become clearer as you **align with leadership**. It should align with **organizational objectives & reflect core values and culture**.

Consider which common business drivers you want to prioritize:

- Talent acquisition/referrals
- Business Development
- Brand Ambassadorship

What type of network fits your organization? Strictly transactional, community-focused or a combination of both?

Who are the Target Groups?

[Identifying who should be a part of your organization](#) sets the program up for success. Examples include:

- **Current Employees:**
 - Senior Executives/Partners
 - Staff type (i.e. lawyers, consultants, etc.)
 - Interns
 - All or None
- **Former Employees:**
 - The above list
 - Retirees
 - VIPs
 - Geographic Locations

How Much Dedicated Staff is Needed?

For **smaller, less mature programs**, PeoplePath recommends a **full-time equivalent (FTE)** towards the initiative. This will change as your alumni base grows.

According to our latest benchmarking report, **a majority of programs (65%) had between 1 and 5 FTEs assigned to the program**. This number depends on the maturity of the alumni program and size of the organization.

Where Will the Program "Live"?

Based on your program's purpose, determine where it makes sense to house the program. Is your primary goal talent acquisition? Then perhaps HR makes sense. Will it be business development? Then perhaps marketing makes sense. Is it a combination?

Consider operations as a central location. This is where the program manager would report to.



Explore more key topics

[READ MORE](#)

Offer Benefits to Alumni to Achieve Business Goals

COMPANY BENEFITS

Alumni as Clients

Drive revenue: up to 80% of leavers stay in a company's ecosystem

Alumni as Rehires

Source talent: A F500 client is rehiring 10K alums, saving \$12M a year

Alumni as Brand Ambassadors

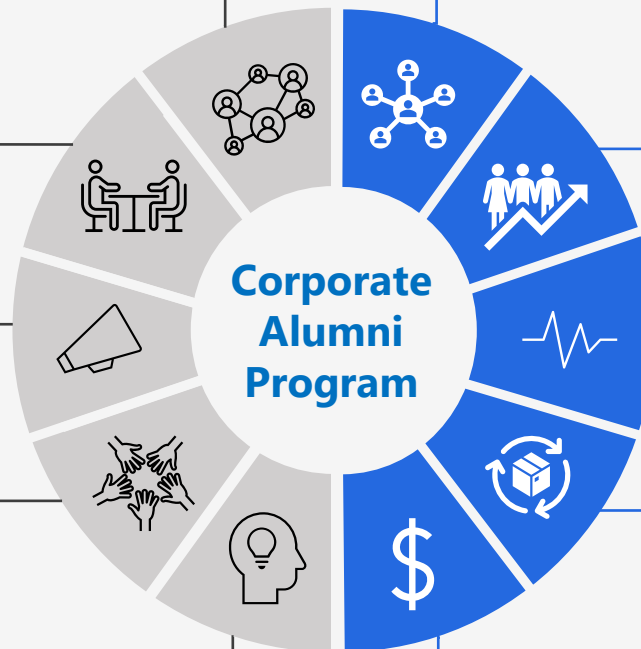
Create strong advocates: alumni are 40% or more influential than regular clients

Alumni as Volunteers

Maximize your impact: involve alumni in CSR & volunteer projects to create a bigger impact

Alumni as New Idea Generators

Increase product innovation: alumni can help to reduce time to market and generate new ideas



ALUMNI BENEFITS

Networking & Social

Opportunities to network with colleagues & leadership through events & groups

Professional Development

Boomerang & career-building opportunities offered via job boards, webinars & courses

Connection to Company's Mission

Staying informed of company news, insights & CSR projects

Latest Product & Services News

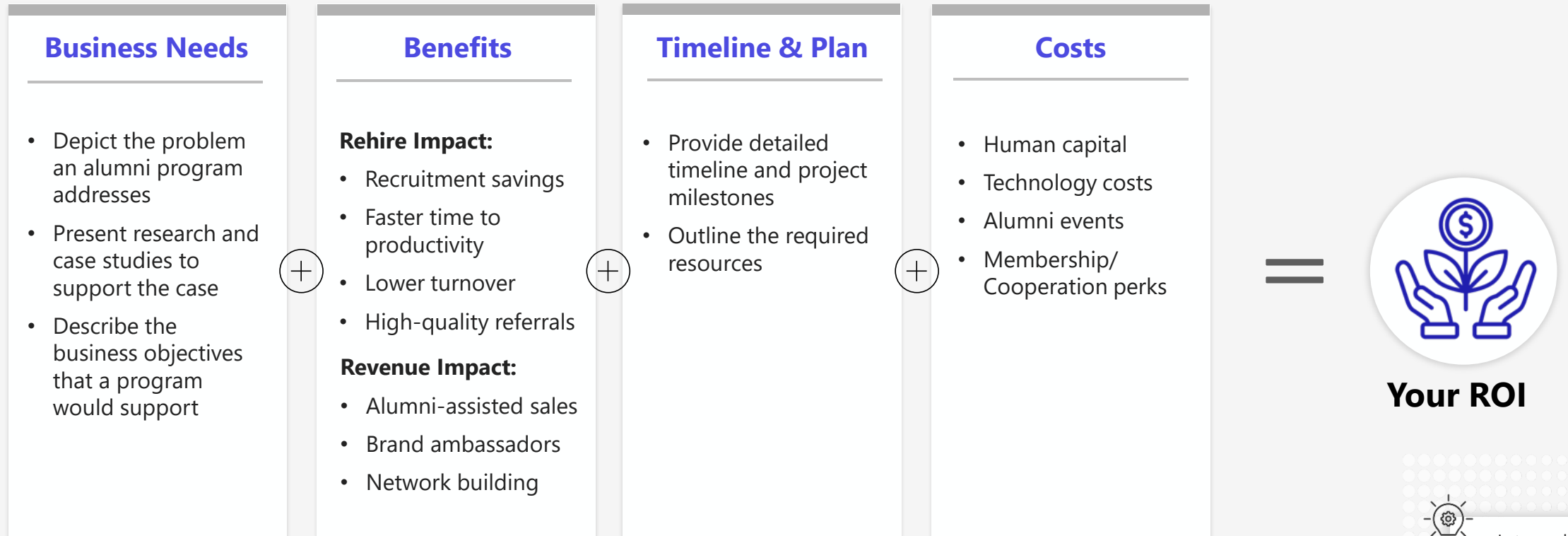
Keeping in the know for product & service innovations & possible trialing

Discounts & Perks

Exclusive promotions, discounts & benefits offered within the community

Build a Business Case

Highlight the business objectives that an alumni program supports and clearly demonstrate that benefits outweigh costs.

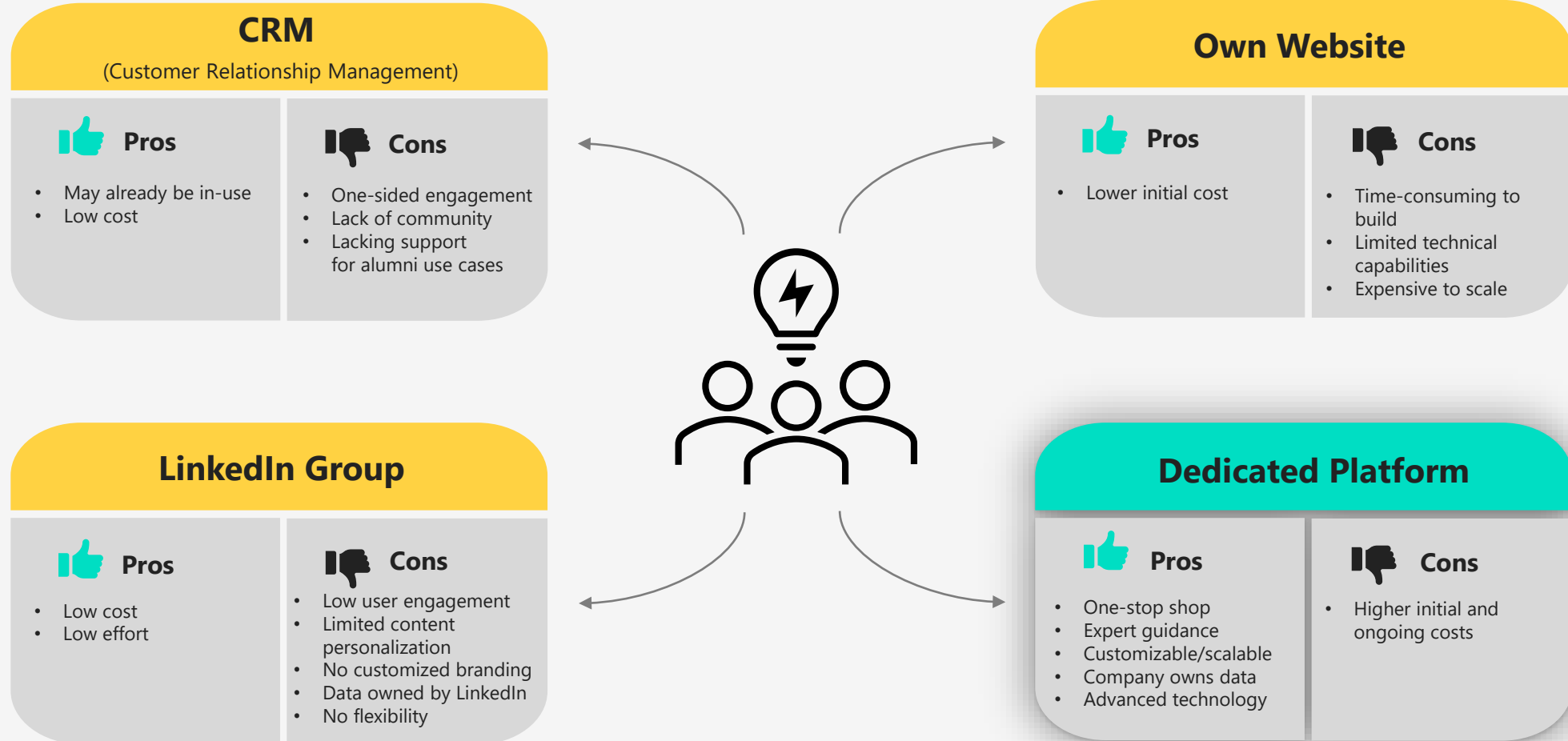


Let us calculate your program ROI

[CONTACT US](#)

Where to Manage Your Alumni Program

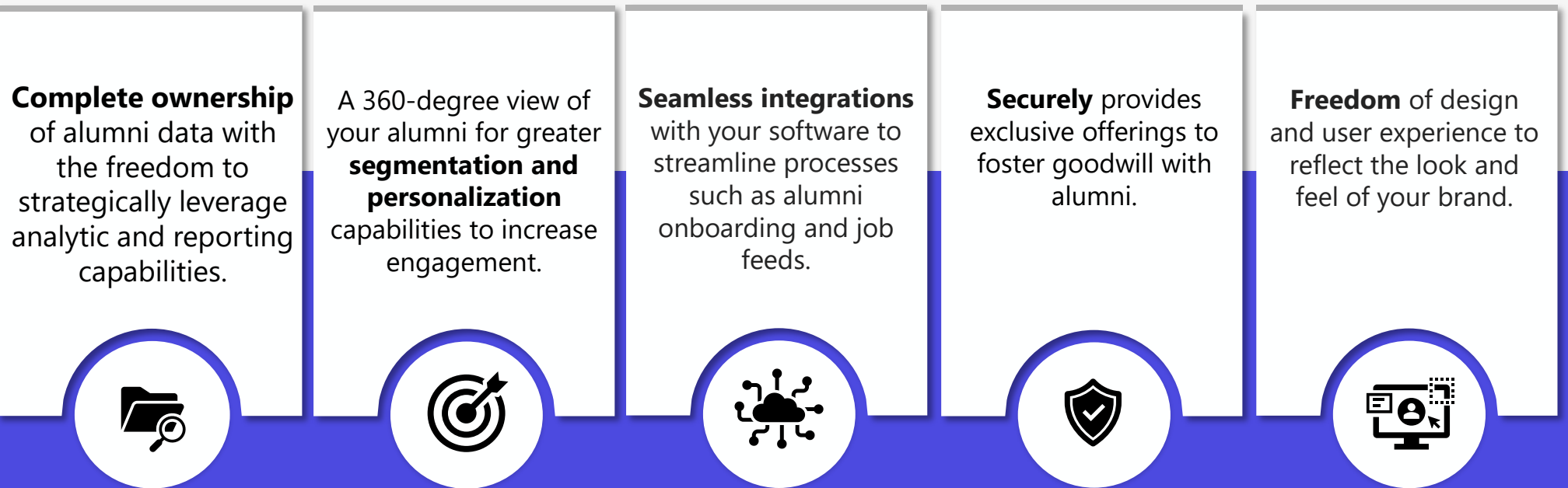
70% of corporate alumni programs are managed through a third-party platform (such as PeoplePath), and a dedicated platform offers the most flexibility and customizability



Why a LinkedIn Group is **Not Enough**

LinkedIn is great for general communication, but to deliver on business objectives 80% of organizations run programs on a dedicated corporate alumni platform.

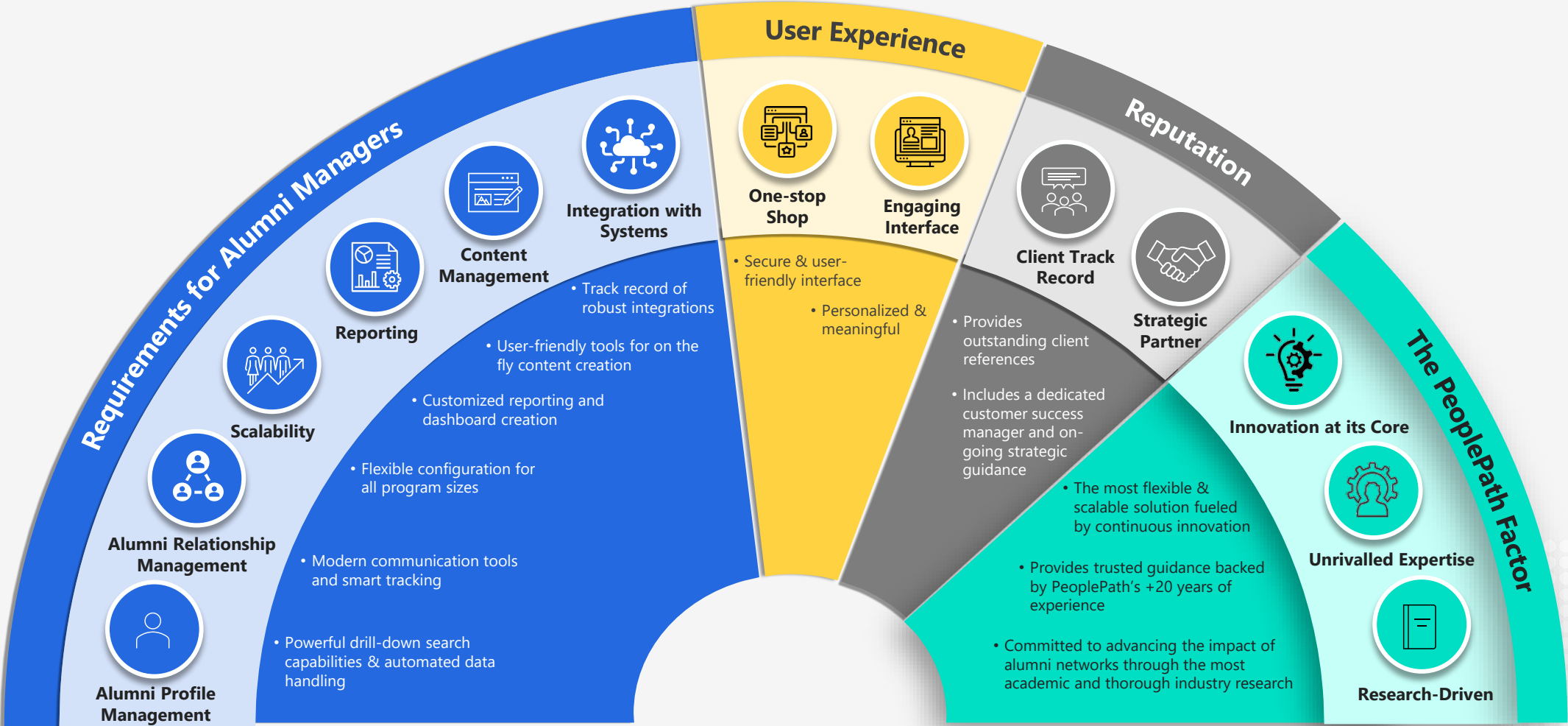
Advantages of PeoplePath vs. LinkedIn:



More on key advantages

[READ MORE](#)

Evaluate Software Vendors Based on **Key Criteria**



More on vendor assessment

[READ MORE](#)

Step 2: Prepare

- Understand the Alumni Motivations Behind Joining
- Establish Key Responsibility & Staff Set-Up
- Define the Program Offerings
- Collect Existing Alumni Data
- Integrate the Program in Your Talent Lifecycle
- PeoplePath Sample Timeline Leading to Your Launch



Understand the Alumni Motivations Behind Joining

Based on research in collaboration with Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor, these pillars represent alumni primary motivation for joining a program and the features that speak to those motivations.



Cornell University



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Social-Driven

Interested in staying connected to colleagues & leadership and getting involved in events or group management.

- ✓ Events
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Contributing



Career Focused

Looking to advance their career through relevant job or professional/ personal development opportunities.

- ✓ Jobs
- ✓ Webinars
- ✓ Development



Mission-Driven

Tightly tied to the company's purpose & values and are keen to stay informed on the happenings and people.

- ✓ News & Updates
- ✓ CSR Projects
- ✓ Insights



Product-Focused

Keen to stay in the loop on the latest products & services and interested in testing of new innovations.

- ✓ Product Trials
- ✓ Products & Services
- ✓ News and Updates



Pragmatic

Motivated by promotions, discounts, and other benefits offered within the community.

- ✓ Promotions
- ✓ Discounts
- ✓ Perks

Establish Key Responsibility & Staff **Set-Up**

The most successful alumni programs are those in which clearly defined roles are established. Defining management roles will contribute greatly to the success of your alumni program.

Executive Sponsor

- Sees the value of an alumni network and openly expresses interest in having it succeed.
- Promotes the network inside and outside of the organization.



Alumni Manager

- Responsible for driving alumni engagement through interesting content.
- The face and key contact for alumni, readily available to assist with questions and daily operations.
- Dedicated full-time employees (FTE) will range from one for small organizations up to five or more for larger ones.

Define the Program Offerings

Survey your alumni to determine the benefits they are seeking

Example Offerings



Career Development

- Mentorship programs
- Job referral program
- Resource groups
- Career counselling
- Job Board



Social & Networking

- Volunteering
- Alumni directory
- Monthly/Quarterly newsletter
- Networking events
- Alumni spotlights/interviews



Value-added perks

- Organized sports teams
- Outplacement services
- Memberships or discounts with partners
- Speaker series or webinars

Criteria to Consider

- Do the offerings **reflect the vision of the program?** For example, a community focus places emphasis on volunteering, mentorship, spotlights vs. a transactional feel.
- Will the offerings **be inclusive to all demographics and reflect social norms** of the organization?
- Do the offerings **fulfil both alumni needs and support organizational goals?**



More on Surveys

[READ MORE](#)

Request our survey template

[CONTACT US](#)

Collect Existing Alumni Data

Before engaging with your alumni community, it's important to begin with clean, organized data. Alumni contact information may be scattered among different sources.



HR Database

Personal email addresses gathered during the offboarding process.



Departmental Lists

Managers still in contact with former high-potential employees.



Existing Communities

Existing grassroots alumni communities on social networking sites.



Internet Search

Landing page set up for alumni to register themselves.



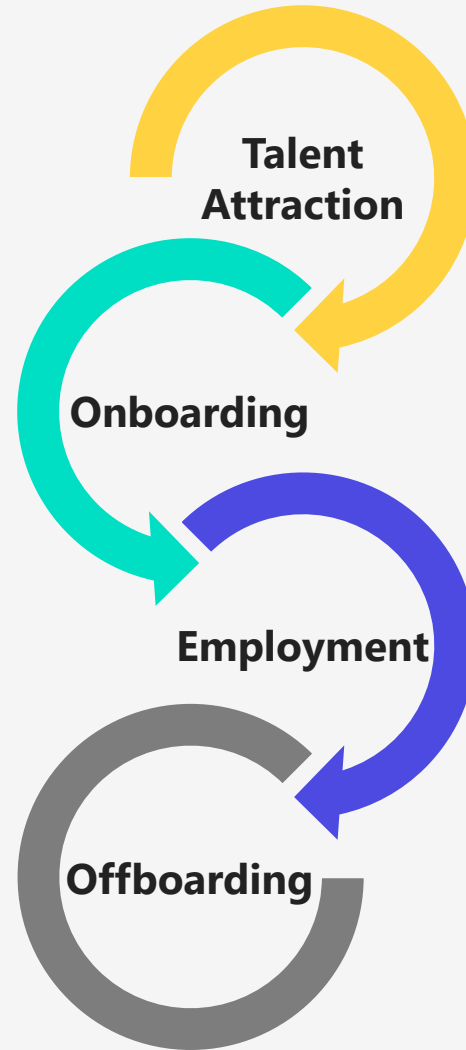
Alumni Referral Program

Referral program for current employees.

Integrate the Program in Your **Talent Lifecycle**

- **Create a one-pager** to inform new employees about the program.
- **Partner with HR** to create awareness.
- **Early program promotion** leads to greater chances of joining.

- **Develop an exit packet of information:** Thank You Note, Checklist, Welcome to Alumni Program, etc.
- Capture data and feedback via the **exit survey & interview.**
- Coordinate with HR to send reminders and **obtain consent to send communications prior to departure.**



- Demonstrate a culture that **supports the individual journey of an employee.**
- Promote your alumni program as part of the company **employee value proposition.**
- **Publish notable alumni stories**, highlighting how the organization shaped their career journey.

- Consider **including employees** in the program.
- **Continue promoting** the program throughout an employee's tenure.

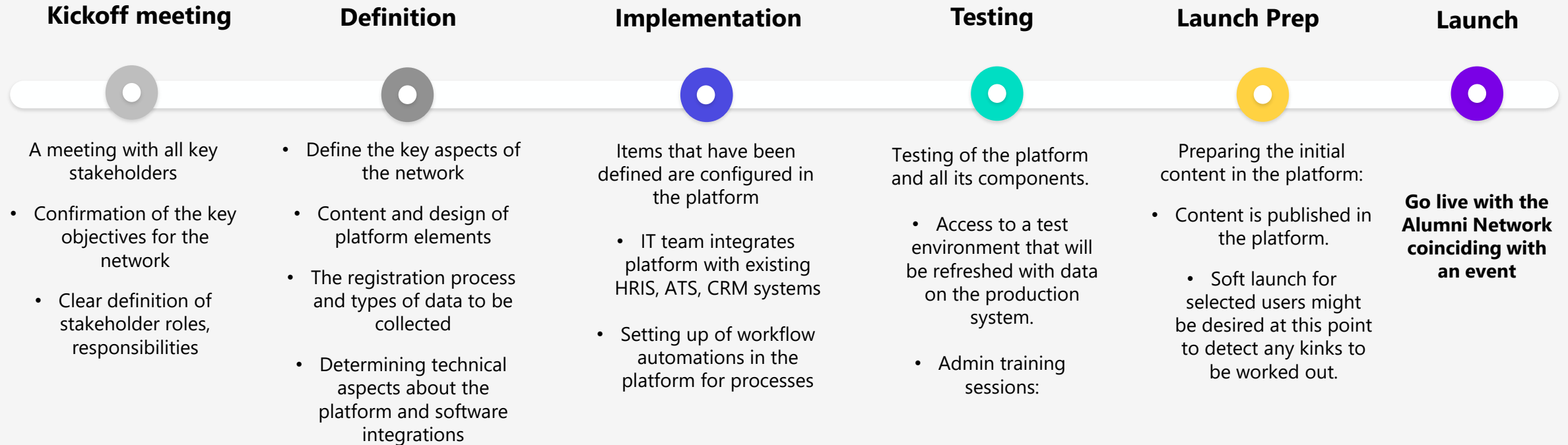


More on elevating the employee lifecycle

[READ MORE](#)

PeoplePath Sample Timeline **Leading to the Launch**

The launch process can last anywhere from 4-6 months.



Step 3: Launch

- Create Seamless Offboarding and Registration Processes
- Create a Communication Strategy to Announce the Program
- Sample Monthly Content Plan



Create Seamless Offboarding and Registration Processes

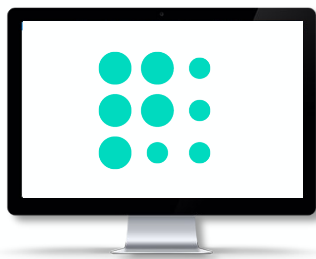
Having a well-structured offboarding process and welcome campaign maximizes conversion.

Offboarding

The final days at an organization leaves a lasting impression. A thoughtfully planned [offboarding](#) and final [exit interview](#) signals that their feedback is valuable and increases the chances of conversion.

Smart integrations can be set up with your HRIS to streamline tedious processes that support a [seamless onboarding into the alumni program](#). Prior to departure employees can be flagged as a leaver and receive **automated communications** about the program and requests for consent to contact via a personal email address. In some cases, after registration, **profile information can be pre-populated** in the platform.

PeoplePath Platform

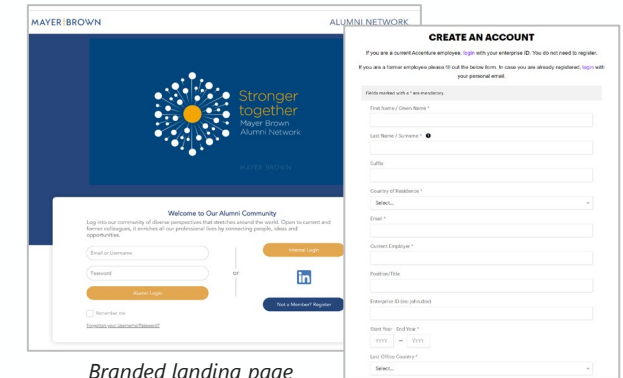


Third-party Software



Registration

A **landing page** will be set up to register and collect initial data that will be **manually or automatically cross-checked** against existing records to allow admittance into the platform.



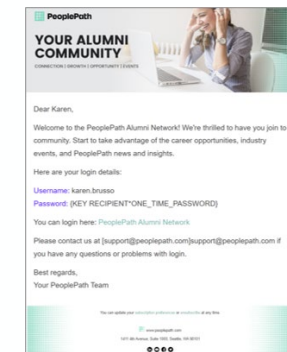
Branded landing page

Customized registration form

Welcome Campaign

Following registration, a **welcome email** is sent out, containing a few highlights awaiting the alumni. The email may include a **pre-populated username and password** or **Single Sign-On** instructions.

Reminders for the alum to complete certain steps e.g., complete their profile or accept privacy, terms and conditions can be sent out at a specific cadence.



Branded welcome email

Create a Communication Strategy to **Announce the Program**

Develop strong internal and external communication plan to nurture support and build excitement.

Internal

- Create a **one-pager** to announce and promote the program, highlighting its value proposition.
- Announce the program with a message from the **CEO or executive-level alumni champion**.
- **Celebrate rehires** and their return via social media or internal newsletters.



Launch Communication

External

- **Communicate the purpose and vision** of the program via multiple channels (website, social media etc.).
- **Share landing page links** and information on how to sign up.
- **Share sneak peeks** into any upcoming events or resources to build excitement.

Sample Monthly Content Plan

Plan content and event cycles to create touch points with alumni to keep them systematically engaged.

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Engaging Platform Content	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
National Alumni Event												●
Local Alumni Events	●			●			●			●		
Online Events		●		●		●		●		●		
Alumni Newsletter			●			●			●			●
Login & Profile Update Reminder						●						●

- Job postings, firm or industry news, alumni spotlights (best practice: tease platform content via social media)
- Best practice: coincide a launch with an in-person event, if in budget
- Informal gatherings, happy hours or CSR initiative
- Webinar or speaker-series
- Automated campaigns with rewards (draw to win a prize) for updating profile



More on content strategy

[READ MORE](#)

Step 4: Excel

- Measuring the Success of Your Program
- Setting Yourself up for Continued Success
- Use Automation to Your Advantage
- Summary and Contact Info

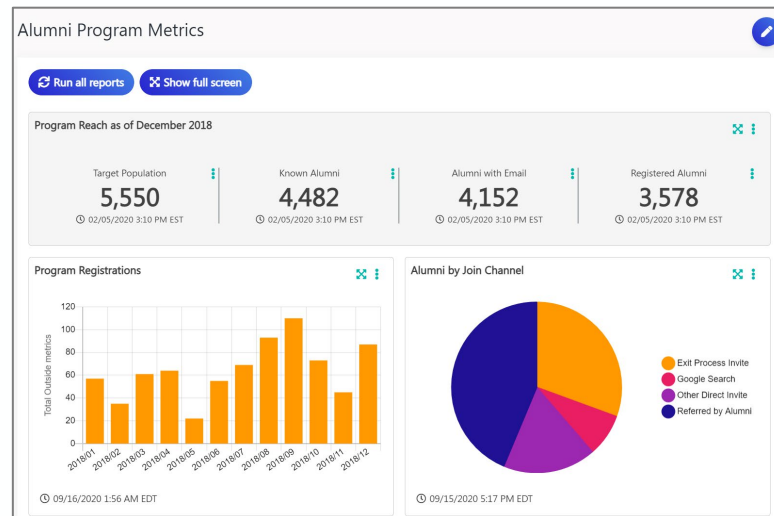


Measuring the Success of Your Program

Track community engagement and analyze results.

Metrics Immediately Following Launch

Platform Engagement	Number of welcome emails opened
	Number of registrations
	Number of alumni logged-in, accepted terms of privacy and updated profile
	Avg. profile completeness



Example launch metrics dashboard created in the PeoplePath platform

Program Metrics

Direct Business Outcomes	Alumni Assisted sales
	Alumni rehires
	Alumni referrals leading to new hires
	Net Promoter Score (NPS)
Communications	Newsletter click-through rate
	Email open and click-through rate
	Social media engagement (likes, shares, comments)
	Data requests from internal sources
Platform Engagement	Avg. Number new alumni a month
	Avg. Number logins per user per year
	Avg. Profile data age
	Avg. Content views prew month
	Avg. Page impressions per month
	Avg. Content types per month
	Jobs created/viewed
	Successful job referrals
	% active/inactive users
	% profile completion
% of activated users with event registrations	
Event attendance rate	

Setting Yourself up for Continued Success

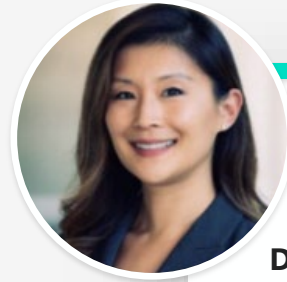
Evaluate the program performance KPIs on a regular basis and adapt your program to changing needs.

Track Performance and Present to Leadership

- Determine which events, content and offerings are getting the most views, engagement, shares, likes, attendance and **adjust the strategy accordingly**.
- **Present program KPIs regularly** to senior management.
- Executive-level support ripples throughout the company and justifies future resources.

Let the data speak to the successful outcomes of the program by tracking key KPIs for leadership:

- X amount of new business from alumni brokered deals.
- X amount of boomerangs this year with X% talent acquisition savings.
- X amount of boomerangs in leadership positions from strategically relevant clients or partners.



Advice from an Industry Expert

Dr. Rebecca Paluch, Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Resources at UBC Sauder School of Business, whom we partner with for our [annual benchmarking report](#), encourages **diligent survey and well-structured exit interview analysis**. You can discover what type of relationship that alumni expect and under what circumstances that a regrettable loss may return. She recommends to:

- **Evaluate feedback and community health metrics** at a regular cadence (annually, quarterly etc.)
- **Adapt the offerings to ever-evolving needs** based on engagement rates and alumni feedback.

Dr. Paluch also strongly encourages monitoring your alumni to **identify champions**. These are a **huge strategic assets** for insights into sub-communities and they act as a ground soldiers to keep engagement high.

She also recommends looking for **grassroot micro-communities** that might have affinities tying closely into the company mission. They may end up being powerful contributors. There may be untapped sources all around you to support program engagement!

Use Automation to Your Advantage

Consider using admin tools keep things personalized and free-up time to focus on strategic management

- Notifications (and push notifications on the **PeoplePath mobile app**) alerting new interactions with content or new messages.
- **Automatic nudges** for those who haven't logged-in for some time.



Engagement

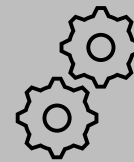
Activate and increase alumni engagement

- **Scheduled campaigns** to incentivize regular profile updates.
- **Configured alerts** when changes in profile data occur, e.g., alum is promoted to C-level position.



Profile Data

Keep on top of data maintenance



Administrative Tasks

Automate tedious processes with workflows

- **Workflows** can perform tasks that are action- or time-based.
- **Communications and processes** involving registration, welcome and onboarding, events, reminders **managed automatically.**

Summary and **Contact Info**

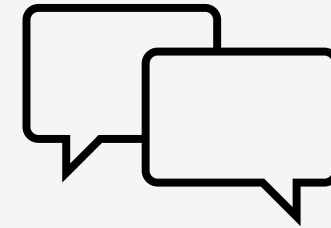
Thank you for downloading our Guide!

We hope this document has provided you with valuable insights into how to successfully launch or update an alumni network.

PeoplePath can guide you throughout your launch process by sharing client best practices, holding workshops, and providing unparalleled support from our team to set you up for long-term success.

If you'd like to read more about everything alumni program-related please refer to our **Further Reading** section for helpful webinars, whitepapers, and blog posts.

If you've been considering launching or updating an alumni program, feel free to [reach out](#) – we'd love to connect!



[CONNECT WITH US](#)

Further Reading

- Candid Advice from PeoplePath Clients
- Purpose-driven Integrations
- Resources to Support Your Journey
- PeoplePath Alumni Fully Branded Platform Features



Candid Advice from PeoplePath Clients

“

Alumni interviews were well read – people want to know what others are up to. **Curiosity drives members back to the platform** and encourages them to create their own story with the alumni story tool in the platform. Special video interviews or spotlights posted at a regular cadence is a great way to **flatter targeted alumni**.

Incentivize users to review and update profile regularly with tactics like entering into a draw to win a prize. Emphasize in your messaging that **only updated data will help them reap the benefits of tailored offers**.

Internal buy-in is key to a smoother roll-out. Plan solid internal communications to create awareness and **locate potential internal ambassadors** of the program. **Focus on these champions** – they will be your ground soldiers.

Be nimble – find out quickly what works and what doesn't. One must always be learning what the alums want and **pivot accordingly**.

Build relationships with the social media experts to learn best practices.

Involve IT early to understand tech infrastructure.

Success may not mean a daily log-in, but if a **member logs in 3-4 times** a year, that is a win.

Post boomerang returns on social media. Coordinate with marketing to celebrate their return to maximize effect on employer branding.

Allowing alumni to share jobs at their firms may make sense for business development purposes and for **strategically placing alums at clients or partners**. Contact info for the alum is shared directly in our posts, offering to make a personal introduction to the hiring manager and **encourages connection between members**.

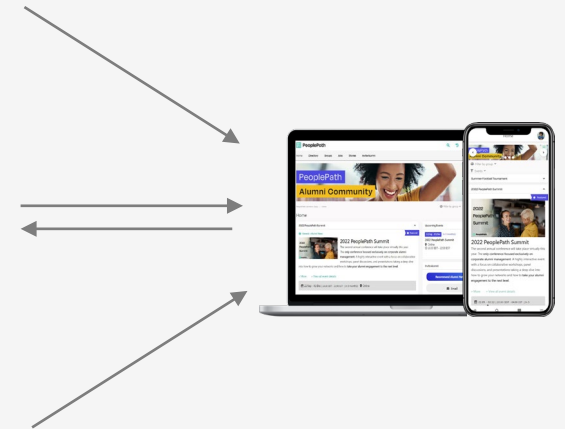
”

PeoplePath's Purpose-Driven Integrations

Available integrations to streamline key processes

	<u>Software</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Data Flow</u>
HRIS		Transfers and auto-populates user data from HRIS in your platform prior to departure	Simplifies the registration process	One-way
CRM		Synchronizes contact and professional data between your CRM and your platform	Improves alumni tracking to drive business development	Two-way Option
ATS		Automatically feeds and updates job postings into your platform job board	Eliminates manual job board management	One-way
Social Media		Social sign-on	Easier ability for users to login	N/A

+ Many more



More on integrations

[READ MORE](#)

PeoplePath Resources to Support Your Journey

How To...

[...get the most out of events](#)

[...segment a community](#)

[...write a job description for an alumni manager](#)

[...set effective goals for the program](#)

[...build an alumni network that delivers quickly](#)

[...build the best corporate network](#)

[...choose an alumni management software vendor](#)

[...create and engaging newsletter](#)

[...find more value in an alumni program](#)

[...offboard exiting employees and onboard new alumni](#)

Engagement & Content Strategy

[Common community building barriers](#)

[Engagement tips](#)

[Additional engagement tips](#)

[Engaging alumni through events](#)

[Engaging through CSR initiatives](#)

[Content strategy](#)

[Social media planning](#)

Offboarding

[Elevating offboarding](#)

[Get the most out of exit surveys](#)

Webinars

[Client Insights and Best Practices](#)

[How to find more value in an alumni program](#)

[The Great Resignation is the Great Reshuffle](#)

Research & Whitepapers

[2021 Benchmarking Report](#)

[2022 Benchmarking Report](#)

[Measuring the value of alumni programs](#)

[Cornell Research Report](#)

Launch Topics

[An Overview of Corporate Alumni Management](#)

[Including employees in a program](#)

[Mistakes to avoid when building a program](#)

[Why a LinkedIn group is not enough](#)

[Why you have to prove ROI to senior management](#)

[The 5 essential „Ps“ of launching a program](#)

[7 Common questions around integrations](#)

[Who to Include in Your Community](#)

PeoplePath Alumni Fully Branded Platform Features

