

The Power of Placement: The Endorsement of Alumni

Presented by
Dr. Susan F. Schulz



Susan F. Schulz & Associates, Inc.
Career School Developers

Private Career Schools are Facing Many Challenges

- The value of training and issue of gainful employment
- Debts students graduate with
- Does starting salary cover student loans?
- Can/do grads get employment in the jobs trained for?
- Placement Statistics

How Can Exceptional Career Services and Alumni Associations Head off these Problems?

- Great placement stats enhance credibility and show success especially in a challenging economy
- High placement rates and alumni loyalty show career schools produce outcomes of value
- Effective Placement strategies and strong Alumni Associations increase enrollment, retention, and placement – resulting in great stats, credibility, success

Placement/Career Services Today

- Services range from job boards and “contact us” to required assignments.
- Employer relationship building and custom training
- Online job sources like monster.com, indeed
- Industry Information

Unique Career Services

- Required career services courses, projects
- Specialized career training – Life Cycle
- Required externships
- Partnership with employers – community outreach
- Collaboration with Admissions and Education departments
- Serve the freelancer and self-employed

Obstacles to Successful Placement

- Challenges as a result of current economy – how real are they? How can they be overcome?
- Challenges as a result of problems students bring
- Hard to stay in touch with grads
- Challenge to get job placement stats

Impact of Career Services on Admissions, Retention, Placement

- Measure the power of placement and alumni on three key areas of success and quality of school –
 1. Admissions
 2. Retention
 3. Placement
- Always think R. O. I.

Getting Creative with Career Services

- Set up Career Services as a “profit center” and use the admissions marketing approach
- Use school website: show your school focuses on placement.
- Promote career services and alumni staff contact information. Get the phones ringing.
- Require completion of career service assignments. More

More Lessons Learned

- Ensure career services staff are skilled
- Make grads and alumni visible
- Use placement results to increase public relations
- Allow employers to log into school website and post job openings

Alumni Associations

A New Look and Value

- Opportunity to create a new look in Career School Alumni Associations
- Alumni Associations prove that the career school is of such value that grads want to stay affiliated

Getting Started

- Overcome barriers
- Determine the driving force- Who or what is behind it?
- Outline job qualifications for director
- Determine where the Alumni Association fits on the school organization chart

More Start-up Activities

- Set up Advisory Board
- Create dedicated Alumni Association website
- Get buy-in from campus constituency
- Create a success model
- Start on one campus and launch to others

Websites

- Keep it simple
- Focus on Alumni success stories
- List services
- List events
- Use for Alumni to request transcripts
- Include contact information and quick and easy ways to reach Alumni staff

What do Alumni Associations Offer

- Membership
- Benefits
- Events and networking
- Social media connections
- Career and job information
- Lifelong career and placement services
- Services for dislocated alumni

More Offerings

- Newsletters and publications
- National job boards
- Lifetime placement
- Free audit of classes
- Specialized professional and technology classes
- Employer presentations
- Use of any campus

More Offerings

- Offer Alumni benefits to employers of grads
- Induct the Mayor
- Scholarships
- Reinvent yourself workshops

Benefits of Alumni

- Huge numbers and worldwide presence
- Provide worldwide audience for online programs and other opportunities
- Available to speak to high school guidance counselors, parents, and workforce boards

What Alumni Associations Want

- Rarely money
- Referrals and reenrollment
- School and program development
- Help with retention
- Introductions to hiring decision-makers and employers
- More...

What Alumni Associations Want

- Buy in
- Relationship
- Communication
- Participation in Alumni Ambassador Program
- Stories. If you had a great school experience then this is the way you can give back
- Share your success

Nitty Gritty

- Budget
- Expenditures used for...
- Relationships with other school departments
- Websites
- Student Information Management Systems
- Launching the program at other campuses

Metrics

What to measure

- Retention
- Job openings
- Job placement
- Hiring decision makers
- Referrals and enrollment
- Student success

Lessons Learned from Alumni Associations

- Automatic membership
 - Issue IDs. Sponsor branded school affiliate credit cards
 - Set up alumni organizations by industry, by city
 - Create alumni boards, elect a president, appoint staff: Formalize with mission statement
 - Develop public relations opportunities
 - List alumni services and offerings on school website
- more

More Lessons Learned

- Offer specialized career services to alumni
- Offer specialized career services to the self-employed and freelancers
- Set up Staffing Division and offer talents of alumni as mid- and upper-level employees
- Allow grads to use services at the campus nearest to them
- Alumni Associations say grads view your school as worth committing to

Alumni Ideas Borrowed from Traditional Colleges

- Develop public relations opportunities
- Structure with officers, staff, alumni groups by major, career, ethnic group, for women only
- Offer services like course audits, library access, continuing education, travel, job databases
- Set up an Alumni Center – a lounge as a start

The Big Event

- Plan a major event
- Decide which Alumni to invite
- Where to hold the event
- Consider decorations and gifts
- Invite faculty and staff

A Word About Externships

- Aim for 100% placement from externships.
- How?
- Choose the right sites: develop criteria
- Create expectations
- Train students to be experts so they will be placed
- Offer alumni externships to beef up skills and resumes of those unemployed

The Freelance Graduate

- Service grads who choose to work on their own or set up their own businesses.
- It's a growing group of interest to regulatory bodies.

Career Services for the Freelancer

- How to set up your own business packages including bookkeeping, marketing, customer service.
- Tips from successful freelance grads
- Letters of reference from school
- Enlist assistance from SCORE and SBA
- Ask what freelancers need in order to be successful and offer it to them

Proof of Self Employment

- Office lease
- Business collateral like cards, brochures, website
- List of clients
- Questionnaire and survey responses

Resources to Build Career Services and Alumni Associations

- CRMS and information management systems
- Take a marketing/admissions approach to career services and alumni
- Employee verification
- Increase back links from local companies to your website
- Ask your vendors for discounts for grads

The Power of Placement

The Alumni Endorsement

- Head off challenges facing career schools
- Enhance reputation of career schools and colleges
- Meet the challenges of job placement
- Position grads for a global economy

Thank you
susan@susanfschulz.com
561 483 9554



Susan F. Schulz & Associates, Inc.
Career School Developers