The Power of Placement: The Endorsement of Alumni

Presented by
Dr. Susan F. Schulz
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