

2019 RESULTS

6TH ANNUAL
Alumni Program Benchmarking Report

Engage Talent for Life

Since Conenza fielded the sixth annual Conenza Alumni Program Benchmarking Survey at the end of 2019, the world has changed in many ways. The global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic altered how the world does business.

Employees whose jobs could be done remotely were sent home to work. Many organizations were forced to furlough staff or downsize in response to dramatic shifts in business operations. Corporate Alumni Program managers quickly pivoted to adapt their alumni outreach programs to meet the needs of the new normal.

Some things have not changed. The 2019 Conenza Alumni Program Benchmarking Survey reveals that the implementation of Corporate Alumni Programs continues to gain steam as a long-term strategic initiative to engage talent for life. The survey results highlight how organizations tap into their networks of alumni to nurture brand ambassadors, business partners, job candidate referral sources and the return of talented alumni as rehires.

New This Year

Conenza introduced new questions in the survey based on evolving market forces.



DO YOU ASK ALUMNI TO RATE YOUR COMPANY ON GLASSDOOR?

15% - YES

On average, alumni account for 39% of postings on a company's Glassdoor page. Proactively seeking input from your alumni can help raise the company's overall rating. Not asking is a missed opportunity.



DO YOU PROMOTE YOUR CORPORATE ALUMNI PROGRAM WITH NEW EMPLOYEES?

36% - YES

Promoting your Corporate Alumni Program during onboarding communicates to employees that your company values them now and in the future. It can also be a way for new employees to network with alumni to build connections for new business and professional development.



KEY FINDINGS

1. Organizations are investing more resources in Corporate Alumni Programs in three key budget areas: personnel, program activities and online platforms.
2. The top three business drivers for Corporate Alumni Programs continue to be brand advocacy, business development and talent acquisition.
3. The measurement of brand advocacy amongst alumni continues to increase as an important success metric for Corporate Alumni Programs.
4. The vast majority of respondents view alumni data as very important, but more than half think the quality of data to which they have access is poor or mediocre.
5. The top three challenges for respondents are: 1) keeping alumni profile data current, 2) alumni engagement with the program and sufficient data to generate meaningful analytics, and 3) building awareness for the program.

2019

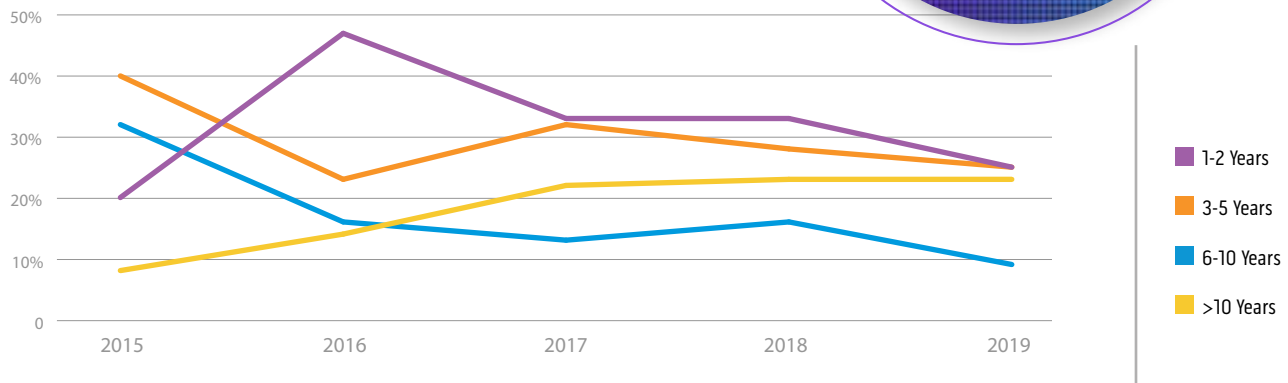


CORPORATE ALUMNI PROGRAMS GROW AND MATURE

Since the Conenza benchmarking survey first launched six years ago, Corporate Alumni Programs have matured and newer initiatives are finding their footholds. As a result, the age of Corporate Alumni Programs in 2019's survey are more balanced in the length of time they have been in operation in comparison to earlier surveys.



FIGURE 1.
Age of Alumni Programs, 2015 to 2019



THE SUPER SEVEN ALUMNI BENEFITS

Through our research with Cornell University, we learned that alumni have four primary motivations for joining alumni programs: 1) mission-driven, 2) career-minded, 3) pragmatic, and 4) social-focused. Considering the benefits to alumni that deliver on the expectations created by these motivations leads to the creation of a successful Corporate Alumni Programs. The top seven benefits provided by Corporate Alumni Programs and the percentage of programs offering them include:

-  1. Alumni stories 89%
-  2. Alumni network website 87%
-  3. Company news 87%
-  4. In-person & virtual events 85%
-  5. Networking opportunities 83%
-  6. Jobs & career development 83%
-  7. Alumni newsletters 80%

Source: The Business Case for Corporate Alumni Programs: Alumni Motivations and Organizational Returns



GROWING INVESTMENTS IN PEOPLE AND BUDGET

As the benefits of Corporate Alumni Programs take root over time, many respondents indicate their organizations are investing more resources.

Corporate Alumni Program Management

In 2019, the number of Corporate Alumni Programs with two or more full-time equivalents (FTEs) increased from 29% in 2018 to 40% in 2019. The number of programs without active management fell from 13% in 2018 to 7% in 2019. These results indicate a shift in priorities that is driving the need for staff devoted to the development of strategy and execution of alumni engagement activities.

FIGURE 2

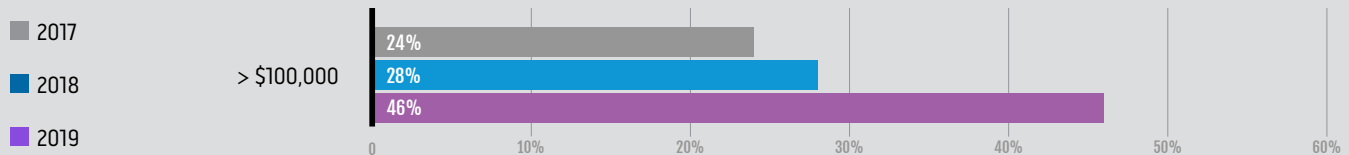
Current size of the team (FTEs) managing Alumni Programs, 2016-2019

CLASSIFICATION	2016	2017	2018	2019
> 5 FTEs	2%	5%	8%	5%
3 to 5 FTEs	10%	11%	8%	14%
2 FTEs	10%	16%	13%	21%
1 or less FTE	66%	61%	59%	52%
No FTE	12%	7%	13%	7%

Budget Allocations

FIGURE 3

Percentage of corporate alumni program budgets that are greater than \$100,000.



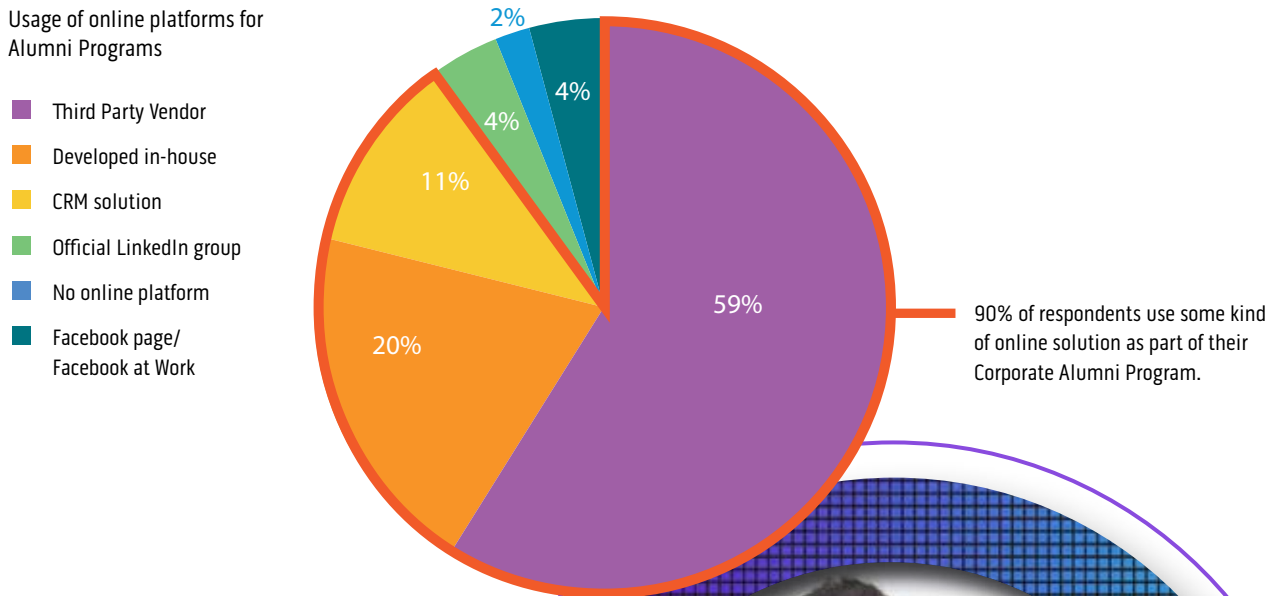
Investments in Corporate Alumni Programs are growing. In 2019, 46% of survey respondents reported a budget of more than \$100,000 to support their programs compared to 28% in 2018. Almost 30% of 2019 respondents said their organizations allocate more than \$150,000 for the Corporate Alumni Programs.



Online Platforms

The use of an online platform developed and hosted by a third party increased from 50% in 2018 to 59% in 2019. This increase is likely influenced by the growing maturity of Corporate Alumni Programs that want to simplify how they present meaningful content to members and manage alumni data.

FIGURE 4
Usage of online platforms for Alumni Programs



Source: The Business Case for Corporate Alumni Programs: Alumni Motivations and Organizational Returns



DRIVING BUSINESS RESULTS

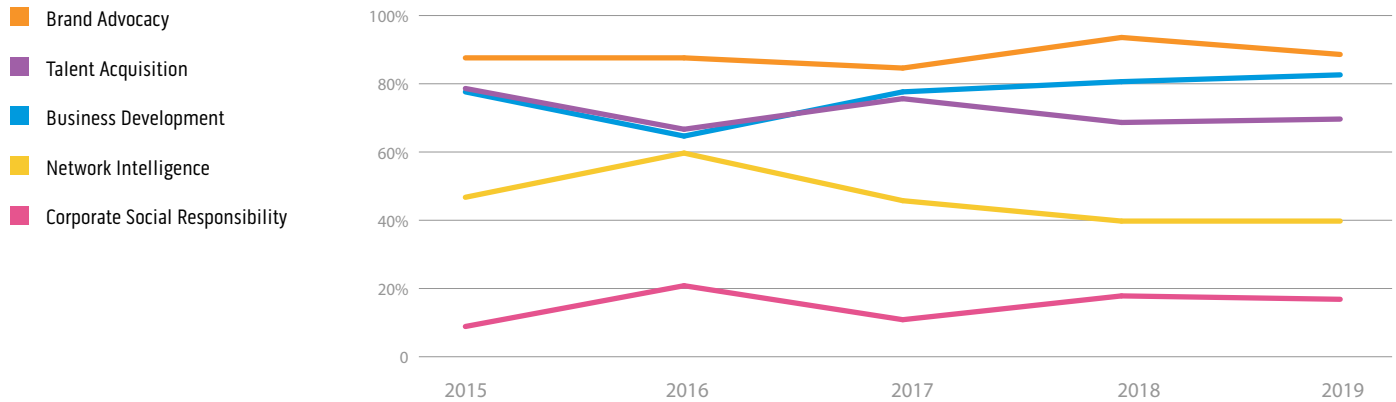
Demonstrating how Corporate Alumni Programs positively impact their organizations continues to be a priority for Corporate Alumni Program managers. Once again, brand advocacy, business development and talent acquisition remain the top three business drivers for Corporate Alumni Programs.

The global lockdowns necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in layoffs and furloughs at many organizations leading to record unemployment. Some of these organizations have initiated or are exploring Corporate Alumni Programs to soften the blow to the people impacted by the layoffs. When the economy rebounds, these organizations will be able to quickly rehire some of these same people through the Corporate Alumni Program. We expect talent acquisition to increase as a business driver in the 2021 and 2022 benchmarking surveys.



FIGURE 5

Aggregate Ranking of Business Drivers – Five-Year Trend



Brand Advocacy

The measurement of brand advocacy amongst alumni continues to gain momentum as a key performance indicator. The number of respondents that use alumni surveys to evaluate brand advocacy increased from 13% in 2018 to 24% in 2019. The use of Net Promoter Scores (NPS) remained the same at 15%, resulting in a decrease in those who do not measure brand advocacy from 72% in 2018 to 62% in 2019.

Business Development

In 2019, business development ranked as the most important business driver for Corporate Alumni Programs amongst 44% of respondents. Eighty-three percent of respondents ranked it in their top three, slightly higher than 2018 at 80%.

Talent Acquisition

The importance of talent acquisition as a business driver for Corporate Alumni Programs remained fairly steady at 70% of respondents, versus 68% in 2018.





GETTING THE MOST OUT OF DATA

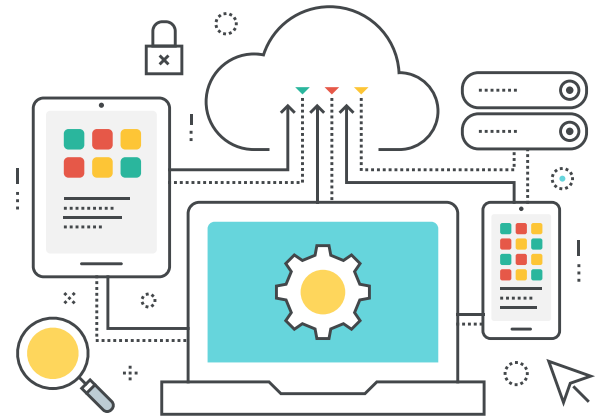
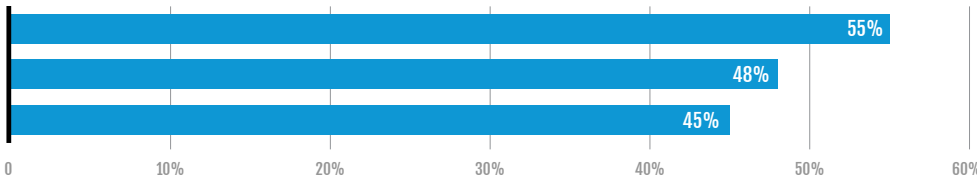
At 85%, the vast majority of respondents understand that alumni data is crucial to the successful management of alumni relations programs. Yet, almost 60% indicated they believe the quality of the data to which they have access is poor to mediocre.

MAIN CHALLENGES FOR CORPORATE ALUMNI PROGRAM

In line with 2018, the top challenges identified by respondents who manage Corporate Alumni Programs remained the same. In 2019, Corporate Alumni Program managers were most concerned about:

1. Keeping alumni profile data current (55%)
2. Getting alumni to engage with the program (48%)
3. Awareness of the alumni program (45%)

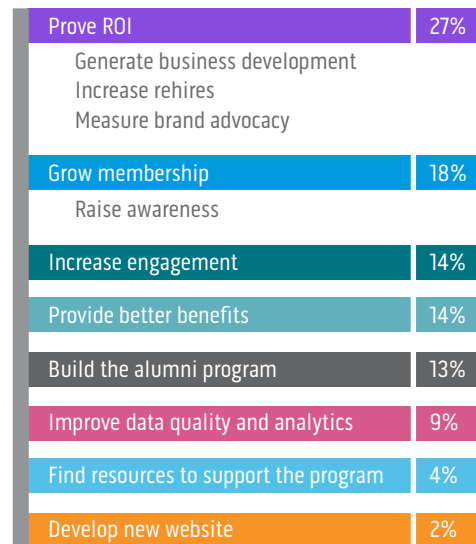
FIGURE 6
Alumni data quality vs. importance



ALUMNI PROGRAM GOALS AND DREAMS FOR 2020

When Corporate Alumni Program managers were asked about their goals for the next year, proving the program’s ROI was the overwhelming favorite, with 27% listing this among their key goals. Interestingly, when asked to imagine that they had unlimited resources (“to dream”) and what change(s), they would make to the Corporate Alumni Program, increasing their team size was the top response from over 20% of respondents. However, only four percent listed this as a 2020 goal. The other frequent “dream” was providing career resources. The remaining “dreams” more closely corresponded to the 2020 goals listed in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7
Corporate Alumni Program priorities for 2020





SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS AND PARTICIPATION

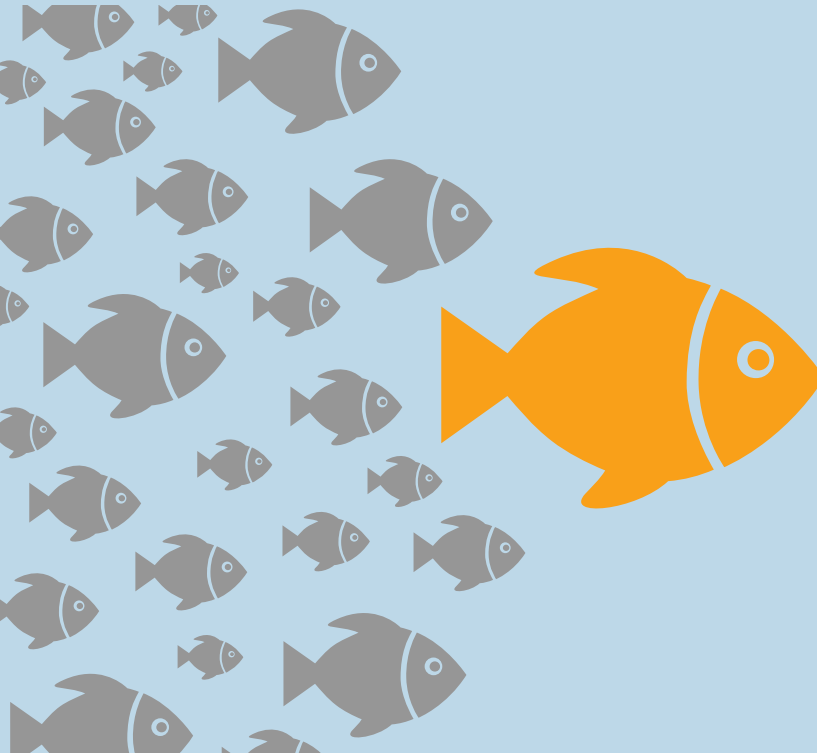
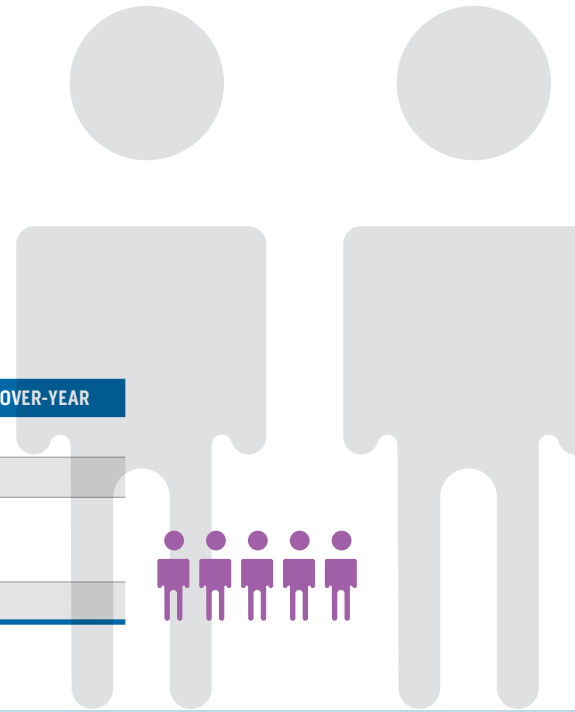
For the sixth year in a row, Conenza invited organizations with Corporate Alumni Programs to complete our benchmarking survey in late 2019. The survey included 30 questions in four categories:

1. Information about the organization and its Alumni Program
2. Successes and challenges in the past 12 months
3. The importance of data and measuring return on investment (ROI)
4. Goals for the upcoming year

The results of the survey are based on responses from 57 industry professionals. Respondents represent a mix of perspectives from clients and non-clients from across the globe in a broad spectrum of industry sectors and company sizes.

Figure 8. Alumni Program priorities for 2020

CLASSIFICATION	COMPANY SIZE	2018	2019	CHANGE YEAR-OVER-YEAR
Small	<1000	16%	11%	-5 points
Medium	1,000 to 5,000	32%	39%	+ 7 points
Large	5,000 to 25,000	25%	18%	-7 points
	25,000 to 50,000	11%	9%	-2 points
X-Large	>50,000	16%	25%	+9 points

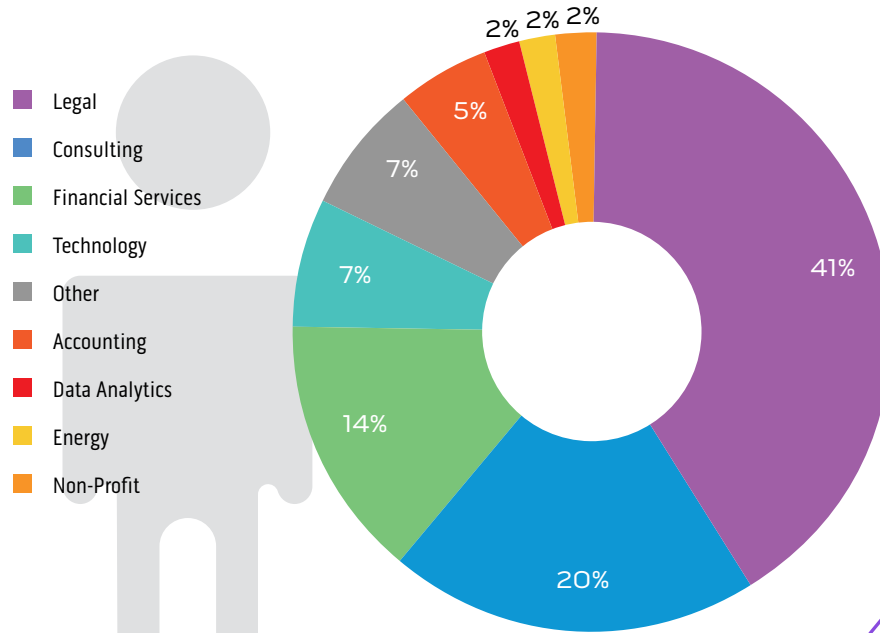


Especially during these challenging times, maintaining positive relationships with alumni through Corporate Alumni Programs fosters mutual benefits — now and in the future.



INDUSTRIES REPRESENTED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Figure 9
Industries represented by survey respondents



CONCLUSION

The sixth annual Conenza Alumni Program Benchmarking Report reveals that Corporate Alumni Programs are continuing to grow in maturity and recognition. Organizations are beginning to make larger investments in these strategic initiatives. However, lack of sufficient people resources to manage these programs remains an inhibitor to increasing the benefits for the alumni and the organizations.

When Corporate Alumni Program managers can demonstrate to leadership the ROI of their alumni initiatives, budget and resource requests are more likely to be granted. With more resources, the managers are better positioned to take on new challenges and opportunities, such as designing more benefits and ways to engage alumni, measure program results, keep alumni data current and build awareness for their programs.

For more information about this report or to provide feedback for future reports, please contact Conenza at info@conenza.com.