

The Employer's Guide to:

Implementing a Brilliant Company Branding Campaign on Campus



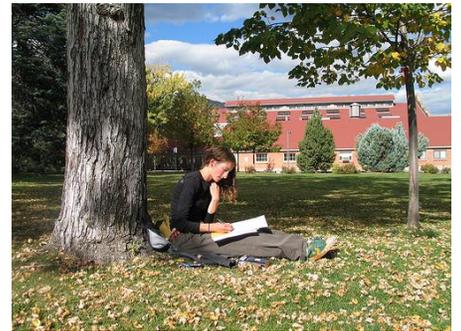
CAREER CENTER
COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

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I. KEYS TO BUILDING A SUBSTANTIAL REPUTATION ON CAMPUS

The primary reason that companies keep up a strong branding campaign, even in the most arduous of economic times are:

- Smart employers know that to obtain the best, you have to project the image of being the best at what you do.
- Just as companies select their list of schools to recruit from, college students and graduates are also selecting their top list of companies in which to work for. This does not necessarily mean the biggest companies, but it is the organizations that are presenting the right message to that college student. And yes, this should continue even when you are not hiring.
- Organizations that want to promote a solid presence on campuses should do so, especially during challenging economic times. This does not mean expensive activities, but actions that promote clear communication to staff, faculty, and students, which is the key to branding a strong image. Later, when the company is hiring again, this solid image and great communication will greatly enhance the employer's ability to acquire the best talent for their current and/or future recruiting needs. Students will feel more secure with the company's position.



The components of a brilliant collegiate branding program:

- Distinguishes your company as an employer of choice to the graduates.
- Combines a consistent branding message with innovative ideas and programs.
- Establishes set goals and benchmarks.
- Follows a timeline, but is flexible enough to grow and change with variable factors.
- Incorporates methodology for evaluating the impact of the campus activities on your organizational goals.

II. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A UNIQUE, EFFECTUAL CAMPUS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

A. Defining Short-Term and Long-Term Goals.



To be successful at campus branding, companies must look at both the short and long term goals. To only respond to immediate hiring needs is more costly, more time consuming, and may have a less than desired result. To determine your long-term goals, gather information from the company's stakeholders on the projected growth over the next 3-5 years. What areas of expertise would be needed in a favorable growth market? Are these fields that might be in higher demand? This information will help when selecting your list of core universities. These are schools that will be crucial in the research part of the plan.

Next, look at the short term goals. Are you just looking at keeping your name strong on campus to assist with future hiring needs? Or, is your company in immediate need of interns and/or new grad hires? If so, do the immediate hiring needs match those of the long term recruitment goals? If not, start a secondary list of schools.

Finally, use these goals as benchmarks in your campus marketing timeline. These benchmarks can help the recruiting team to keep focused and motivated, even in slower hiring cycles. These goals will also be the foundation to start your branding verbiage on the right foot. For example, which message do you want students to have and pass on to other students if you are currently not hiring, no matter what the economic status:

- Statement 1. "XYZ Company is not hiring at this time."
- Statement 2. "Although XYZ Company has all positions currently filled with great people, we project that over the next several years we will be increasing the number of engineers on staff by 30%. We would love for you to find out more about our company, so you will consider us for your next internship by _____." (the blank can be filled in by any upcoming events, presentations, activities, etc.)

Both statements are truthful, but the second leaves the student with a reason to look for your company in the future, without giving a time commitment. It supply's them with a positive reason for why you are not hiring (alleviating rumors), and gives them knowledge that they can pass on to other students when asked about your company.

B. Research

After defining your goal and message, but before developing your branding strategy; conduct research and ask the following questions asked:

- Who are the contacts for each department or organization at the universities on your list?
- What are the types of employer involvement are students looking for at these schools...what do they want from you?
- Which activities and recruiting events are currently available at each campus?
- What are the timeframes for these activities...can any of these be held within the same trip?
- What other activities might the school suggest or allow (outside the box)?
- Are there any additional activities that are crucial to the success of your event?
- What is the communication structure of each campus? How will your event be promoted?
- Who in your organization is qualified and/or trained to deliver this message; who will need additional training?

C. Developing a Strategy.

- This should contain an organized, well thought-out goal.
- Decide which events and activities fit with your goal to deliver a consistent organizational message; and one that communicates your branding image effectively to potential recruits.
- Create an annual timeline or calendar for activities. Remember, many dates are booked six months in advance, so you will want to plan ahead. Make sure campuses have a copy of this.

WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT??

In a survey of CSM students and graduates, the question was asked, "What events or activities would you like to see employers participate in?"

The responses were:

- Career Day attendance.
- Hold information sessions with more interactive activities and discussions.
- Demonstrations: talk about the technical / scientific breakthroughs that the company has made.
- Speak at student organization meetings.
- Project sponsorships (Senior Design, EPICS, E-Days, etc.), with availability of an expert for project questions.
- Industry talks in the classroom.
- Host networking seminars and dinners.
- Job shadowing.
- Invite students to off-campus activities such as technical tours or company barbeques.
- Internships and Co-Ops.
- Help with practice interviews or present on job searches / professional development.
- Sponsor student organization events.
- Partner with student clubs or organizations on external community projects / volunteering events.
- Challenges from companies or competitions between companies using student groups (either sponsoring and/or participating).

III. IMPLEMENTING THE CAMPUS BRANDING CAMPAIGN

A. Career Fairs: Are You Really Taking Advantage of All Opportunities

- **The Audience.** College career fairs can be filled with students, new grads, and alumni. But they are also filled with other working professionals from your industry, professionals that can normally be categorized into different groups. These groups are not only a recruiting consideration when participating in a career fair, but can also present other opportunities for your company. The questions to consider prior to attendance are: 1) who are you recruiting, 2) who are you selling to, and 3) what message are you sending to which groups?
 - Potential employees - The beauty of college career fairs is that they are normally filled with a variety of candidates: 1) students for internships, 2) graduates for full-time postings, 3) graduate students for research opportunities, and 4) alumni for experienced positions.
 - Current and potential customers, vendors, and competitors – Many exhibitors view these events as only marketing opportunities to attract new employees. What they may forget is that other exhibitors can belong to the secondary groups that are important to the overall branding of your company. A large percentage of individuals who are at the booths are not just from Human Resources, but can be Department Heads, Engineers, Division Directors, and yes...even Company Presidents. Always ask the university Career Center to view a copy of the event program guide prior to your attendance so that you can best plan your Career Day strategy.
 - Other attendees can include faculty, college staff, and student organization representatives. Is your team prepared to answer questions from these groups?
- **The Recruiters.** Career fairs can be very busy days. Lasting impressions can be made in 30 seconds or less. Are your recruiters being trained in the right message? Do they have all the information they need to make a great impression? Do they know what information is advertised about the company before the event? Train, inform and evaluate your recruiters.

OOPS... DID I MISS AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY?



What if you are not recruiting for younger students? Should you just turn them away and hope they come to see you after they have formed a relationship with your competitors? The answer is NO. Even if you don't offer internships for younger students, you are passing up an opportunity to engage them early in their academic career. See Section III C-F for ideas on activities in which to engage this important group of students, before it's too late.

- **Resume Collection.** Some companies can collect resumes, others cannot. No matter your situation, the information on a resume can be a huge asset for an inexpensive college relations program. These names and email addresses enable you to personally thank the candidates for stopping by your booth at Career Day; allow you to send a personalized invitation to your information session; or give you the opportunity to inform the attendees of other on-campus events that you will be hosting/sponsoring. If you cannot collect resumes for hiring...use other methods to gather this information, such as a drawing or contest. **Remember, most colleges will have policies regarding the use of these names, be sure to check their recruiting guide.*
- **Staging.** Each company has its own brand of staging. Some have huge booth displays, some have very simple materials. In considering your booth at Career Day, there are several important factors to remember:
 - Your company logo and name should be prominent (this can be easily lost in an abundance of graphics, or absent from the beginning).
 - The majors you are looking for should be highly visible.
 - Make the space inviting. All booths come with a table...push this to the back. Create an open area for students to walk into.
 - Are you missing candidates by long lines at the booth? Consider an in-booth resume drop or a display advertising an upcoming on-campus event.
 - **Can't Make it to Career Day???** Consider an event resume drop, encouraging students to attend those future events (info sessions, workshops, field trips, etc.).

B. Interviews & Information Sessions

- **Advantages to On-Campus vs. Off-Campus.** When scheduling information sessions or on-campus interviews, the question can arise, “Is it better to have this on the campus or off the campus?” Although there are some advantages to having these events off campus, the advantages to having the events on-campus from a marketing perspective are far greater. On-campus interviews and information sessions allow the company to:
 - Advertise with displays outside the event area and gain walk-by traffic.
 - Promote the event through the campus’s online database system or event website.
 - Have higher attendance because there is no student travel on class days.
 - Schedule more than one campus activity in one event
 - Increase faculty attendance.



- **Preparing for the Event**

- Stage the campus with materials, signs and displays (both outside & inside the room).
- As with all campus events, make sure that your recruiters are promoting the right message. Train, inform and evaluate your recruiters.

- **Other Considerations**

- Ask campuses which times are best and if there are any competitors scheduled the same day.
- Lunches – eating or meeting? Have a faculty luncheon if there is time.
- Don't cancel interviews...this sends a very bad message. However, if there is no other choice, do it the right way. Work with your Career Center on alternatives (phone interviews, new dates, etc.) if you have to cancel interviews.

C. Professional Job Searching Seminars

Colleges are always looking for companies to present to students on a topic that relate either to job searching techniques, tips for success on the job site, or tools for professional success after graduation. Unlike information sessions, lunch and learns, or classroom presentations, the job search seminars are the perfect way for recruiters and Human Resources to interact with students, while gaining low or no cost exposure on campus.

By no means does this activity replace the other types of presentations, but it can certainly enhance all your recruiting efforts. If this activity does not make sense because of a geographical limitation, ask the college about tips that can be posted on boards, in professional development materials, or on websites.

D. Classroom Speakers

As listed in the aforementioned survey results, students love to learn about the technical and scientific breakthroughs that are made in their program's industry. It is also an important part of their academic experience to be informed of the projects first hand by company experts. Having the technical professionals make these types of presentations in classrooms is a desirable situation for the faculty and students, and a great venue at which to continue your company's branding initiative.

Remember though, ultimately classrooms are for learning, not recruiting. The company's name is mentioned and perhaps a small amount of time allowed for promotion of available opportunities. However, this does not mean that the technical presentations won't have a valuable impact on your branding initiative. If the students think the projects are interesting and well presented, they will want to learn more about becoming part of your company's team. Finally, as stated with Career Fairs, you never know when you are selling your services or product to a future client.

E. Lunch and Learns

Lunch and learn events are normally held at the professional student association meetings. The topics can be a combination of technical topics, professional development, tips for success in school, and company information. These types of presentations, as well as event arrangements, are discussed and decided upon between the company and the student association liaison. Normally the college Career Center can provide the employer with a list of student associations.

F. Projects

Companies have a fantastic opportunity to partner with schools and student organizations on real-world projects. Students gain insight into challenges that companies face, while gaining valuable project and team experience. Companies gain fresh insight on current or old projects and a long-term

RECRUITER'S TIP

Find out from the Career Center Staff or the Faculty if team project or design courses are part of the curriculum. If so, these activities will open up great discussion questions during the student's interview. Examples: What role did the student play on the project team? Were there any challenges within the team dynamics and how was this overcome?



campus branding activity involving students and faculty (a semester versus one or two days). Each campus usually has a variety of projects that companies can become involved with. These can be through design classes, field sessions, project classes, campus competitions, etc.

Each college offers different types of project based upon the degrees it offers. However, the multiple long-term benefits of this type of activity are worth the exploration.

Don't have a company-related project that could be used or that would meet the class requirements? Find out if the current design classes have a project, such as the concrete canoes, that needs sponsorship instead.

G. Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a great opportunity for younger students to visit your company on a school break. These can last anywhere from a half day to two weeks. The non-paid student can actually shadow a designated technical person in their field of study, learning about the company, as well as the positions.

In addition, this can be combined with a current summer internship program. Most companies already have their summer interns give a presentation on their projects at the end of the employment term. Invite the job shadow (or a group of shadows) to the company intern presentation. Have a company speaker, food and make an event of the day. This type of event will make a big impact on the students. Costs can be incorporated into the existing intern program.

H. Competitions & Contests

In addition to projects, many college campuses have student associations that hold competitions and contests. These are normally associated with an annual campus event such as E-Days. Company involvement in these fun team-based activities can range from monetary support for the building supplies, to the company's employees actually helping the student team to compete.

Some employers challenge student organizations to compete against each other for participation on company activities. These are great activities if a company wants to beta test a new recruiting approach before it is rolled out. For example, the company might award a luncheon or a sponsorship check to the student organization with the most participation in the testing.

I. Technical Tours

If your company has innovative technology that employees work on at sites close to college campus, consider hosting a technical tour for college students and graduates. These can be great informal or formal events. Companies have served refreshments or held barbecues. Presentations by technical experts are given. *Note: transportation may be an issue for students. However, buses or vans can be easily obtained. Recruiters should consider this factor when researching the feasibility of this event.*

J. Company Community or Volunteer Events

We are in a world today that is filled with social and environmentally aware college students and employees. Are there community volunteer events currently at your company? Have you considered collaborating with a student organization on these events? Have you thought about inviting students during school breaks to join you in these activities? These activities are a great initiative that will: 1) help you to strengthen the bond between prospective employees and your company, 2) promote a positive company image to the student populations, 3) allow you to see how these students interact with your current employees, and 4) makes for a great public interest story.

In addition, if you are not promoting the social and environmental programs that your company is involved with, you are missing an important characteristic for your company's campus brand. College students today want to make a difference. If they find that their positive impact on the world can be carried out through their employer, this just might make the difference between them accepting an offer with your company or your competitor.

K. College Job Database

All colleges these days have online job databases that students use for their job search. It is extremely advantageous for employers to utilize these systems (even if the student has to apply online on the company website). It is also important to review and update the information in these databases on a regular basis. Students use these systems to find job opportunities, as well as in their first step of company research.

L. Website Opportunities

University Career Centers are looking for the 24/7 approach to the professional development and servicing of students. Websites are being used in new and innovative ways with Podcasts, relevant materials, employer spotlights, and event recaps. Check with your core schools to determine if they offer this branding service to employers.



M. Electronic Social Networking Sites, Blogs, and Other New Media Strategies

LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, virtual career fairs, video conferencing ... electronic social networking sites and college recruiting have become imbedded throughout every aspect of the recruitment process. As the number of professional and social networking sites grow, recruiters will need to be concerned with:

- Deciding which sites offer the most benefits in presenting your company message.
- Integrating these tools into your college recruiting process...what purpose do they serve in your branding program.
- Continuously reviewing and revising the sites so they are effective and timely.
- Incorporating personalization into this marketing process.
- Linking your sites to those of the college (fan of the site, invites, etc.).

N. Other Activities

In addition to the branding activities mentioned above, companies can also offer scholarships, fellowships, and research opportunities to students.

O. Campus Visits / Site Visits

College staff visits to employer sites are an important component of your plan. This allows the college relations representative and the recruiter to gain information about each other, and work on a customized strategy. Initiating the campus branding campaign should also include an employer's visit to the campus. These can be arranged through the Career Center or the Campus Foundation. Some of the departments that your team should considered meeting with are:

- **Career Center**
- **Faculty**
- **Student Organizations**
- **Alumni Offices**
- **Foundation or Offices for University Institutional Advancement**
- **Student Activities Office**

- **Campus Media**

IV. EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

- A.** The metrics methodology of how you measure the program's success is going to depend on your stated goal and which activities were implemented. However, the recap should demonstrate the value of the campus to the company's management. Investigate practical and successful ways to communicate the tangible and intangible benefits and value that this campaign is bringing to the company.