

Campus Recruiting Is a War Won *ONE* Student at a Time
A strategic recruitment and marketing roadmap for campus recruiting

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Master of Arts in Professional Communication

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Abstract

College recruiting is a war for talent. The millennial generation is not as “bought in” to the corporate career ladder as their Gen X siblings or Baby Boomer parents. Employed Millennials want to escape the supposed shackles of Corporate America. This presents a problem for in-house corporate recruiting teams and hiring managers looking for new college talent. The same tactics and messaging aren’t working the same way.

Within the current marketplace competition companies should approach recruiting in a systemic and strategic way to maximize results. For my project I will reexamine the current state of corporate college recruiting programs and create a strategic recruitment and marketing plan that allow other companies to compete with the in today’s competitive market to attract and retain the modern day millennial.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to my husband Kit for believing in me and pushing me to finish. It's been a challenge but he supported me 100% when I couldn't figure out how or when I was going to get this done.

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Introduction

When I started my Masters in Professional Communications my end goal was to do a project rather than a thesis. I wanted to develop a tangible product or strategy that I could use in my professional life. I wanted what I was doing in the classroom to enhance my skillset. But more than just from a knowledge perspective, I wanted something I could use again and again.

For my project I have developed a strategic recruitment and marketing plan for a corporate campus recruiting team. This project can be a template for various companies (large or small) who are looking at talent acquisition on a college campus.

I have spent my career working in college recruiting on the academic side and specifically worked with high school students and getting them admitted to college. I have since transitioned to corporate recruiting and now work with college seniors and graduate students in getting them their first corporate job after college/graduate school.

College recruiting is a war for talent. The millennial generation is not as “bought in” to the corporate career ladder as their Gen X siblings or Baby Boomer parents. “Over 40% of employed Millennials want to escape the supposed shackles of Corporate America” (Henderson, 2014, p.1). In an article written by Lauren Martin (a millennial herself) she argues:

We're not going to work for companies we don't respect. We're not going to wake up every morning dreading the 9-to-5. But we're not going to sit back and sulk either. We're going to innovate. We're going to change the game. (Martin, 2015, para 4).

Millenials have more information at their fingertips to learn more about companies and opportunities. They are more entrepreneurial; likely as a result of coming of age in a declining

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economy and watching their parents/siblings lose homes, jobs, etc. They are not interested in being a “company man [woman]” and their decisions aren’t always based on compensation and titles. They want a variety of projects, more responsibility, more flexibility, immediate feedback, and a culture that aligns with their personal philosophies.

This presents a problem for in-house corporate recruiting teams and hiring managers. Students today expect constant engagement and interaction from companies and they won’t wait around for the company to get back to them. Candidates expect to be courted by companies and many recruiters and hiring managers at large companies aren’t used to this. It’s not uncommon to hear a hiring manager of a large corporation say, “Well...we are XX Company. They should want to work for us. Why should I do all this EXTRA stuff?” A competitive market place now gives students options and the landscape to recruit them successfully has changed. Millennials aren’t accepting of the same work place/recruiting patters that worked for their parents.

While recruiting talent from college campuses presents the challenges discussed above for companies, it also presents a financial challenge. Undergraduate hires tend to be less expensive than MBA hires but not by much. In a 2012 NACE Salary Benchmarking Study, the average cost per hire for entry-level hires was \$5,134, (“Cost Per Hire” 2013) however, it can range widely. Consulting and financial firms often spend thousands of dollars to recruit talent. One financial firm estimated that [the] firm spends \$50,000 per recruit (Yang 2014, para 10). If companies are going to invest that kind of money (as well as time and staff commitments) it would make sense to have a strategic approach to recruiting those students.

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I have set out to reexamine the current state of corporate college recruiting programs and create a strategic recruitment and marketing plan that allow other companies to compete in today's marketing to attract the modern day millennial.

I didn't necessarily plan to be a recruiter but fell into about seven year ago. After spending 5 years in college undergraduate recruiting, I moved to Fort Worth, Texas where I was picked up by a Fortune 500 company on a corporate college recruiting team. I have stayed in recruiting because of my love for the frenetic nature of it. It's never slow or dull. It's about building and developing relationships, persuasion, messaging, marketing, events, and closing candidates. It's always changing and with new technology and social media platforms companies and recruiters have to get more and more creative to reach and attract candidates. But more than anything it is about developing and executing strategically.

Literature Review

The literature studied cover four categories: corporate college recruiting programs, corporate campus recruiting strategy and tactics, Elaboration Likelihood Method of persuasion, and marketing messaging and candidate personas. For this project, I will be auditing traditional college recruitment and messaging strategy to understand where there has been success and conversion but also what the pain points are. Through my literature review, I will highlight best practices in recruitment strategy as well as an understanding of persuasive messaging tactics and theory. From the current literature on recruitment and messaging coupled with an audit of past activities I will be able to develop a recruitment and marketing plan that can be utilized by other corporate recruiters

Background/history of college recruiting: Why spend time and money to recruit

College students UG's and MBA's?

Companies of all sizes put a lot of time and effort into identifying and finding the right talent. Having an advanced degree or niche skillset, like an MBA, puts candidates in even higher demand. Why? Because in the end, hiring the right people is important and has to be done right the first time.

I think what the current economy is showing us is that the MBA degree is alive and well. Whatever new industry is hot, there seems to be a key role for MBA's in shaping the industry and helping companies to compete successfully within the industry. Examples of this are real estate in the mid-eighties, consulting and investment banking in the eighties through present, and now the dot-com [and tech] world.Industry have found ways to utilize the skills and capabilities offered by MBAs, and MBAs were instrumental in helping these industries move forward.

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- *Dr. Karen Dowd, of Brecker & Merryman, an Empower Group Company and expert on MBA recruiting trends (Taguchi, 2002, p. 2)*

There are many avenues to find and bring talent into organizations. With the introduction of LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Monster, and Career Builder, employers have greater access to a large pool of available talent. College recruiting programs have dedicated more staff and allocated more money to recruiting because of the student talent that is available on college campuses. Not just MBA's however, undergraduate hires are highly sought after as well as for a variety of reasons. They cost less from a salary and benefits perspective, they are comfortable with technology and social media, they have innovative ideas, they ask "why?" Those are mostly short-term wins but from a long-term perspective undergraduate hires are essential to filling long-term leadership roles.

It is difficult to hire first-level managers externally because no matter how strong their management skills, they are unfamiliar with the team and the corporate culture.

Consistently hiring entry-level college hires allows you to promote the best into supervisory and management positions within five years. Without this college hire strata of employees, it will be much more difficult to fill these critical management positions. (Sullivan, 2015, para 33).

Undergraduate hires are long-term assets that provide return on investment (ROI) over a 30 to 40 year career. They can offer a competitive advantage over a company's direct competition and they will more than likely have a global perspective (Sullivan 2015, para 32 & 35).

College recruiting offers companies a wealthy market place for talent. At one school a company can attract several candidates into many different roles.

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“Anyone at Procter & Gamble will tell you that [undergraduate] campus recruiting is the lifeblood of the company. Nearly 100% of P&G’s fresh talent comes from its campus-recruiting program. P&G realized many years ago that sourcing top talent from the world’s best colleges ensures that P&G can recruit a large number of highly skilled candidates while avoiding the high costs of search firm fees and excessive salaries. Moreover, these recent graduate hires are groomed and promoted from within, enabling P&G to lead the way in employee retention and realize a significant return on its investments in recruiting” (Flato, 2015, para 10).

For MBA’s the ROI is a little bit different. They are more expensive to recruit and retain, but the skillset they bring to an organization is highly sought after. “MBAs bring hard skills like financial know-how,” says Catherine Gill, director of the Non-profit Finance Fund in New England (The Case for MBA’s, 2008, para 5). “They also bring a really sharp understanding of teams and how to access resources that aren't always obvious. The MBA degree is incredibly broad and teaches people how to approach problems from different angles.” (The Case for MBA’s, 2008, para 5).

There are compelling reasons to bring MBA’s from top business schools to a company through a leadership program. MBA’s provide “analytical horsepower and new energy for certain area, such as strategy, finance, marketing, and operations” (Taguchi, 2002, p. 3). A senior officer at a Fortune 500 company made the statement “we recruit MBA’s to develop the next generation of leaders. We expect more from you and give you more responsibility. MBA’s should raise their hands and ask for more” (MBA Lunch and Learn, 2016).

The idea of a college recruiting program circles back to the skill set and type of talent that is available on these campuses and the access companies have to them. “The MBAs on our staff

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help round out our core competencies. Some staff bring a deep understanding of philanthropy to our work, while others possess research design expertise. [The MBAs on staff] complement that institutional knowledge with razor-sharp quantitative and analytical skills as well as performance assessment experience (The Case for MBA's, 2008, para 9)" says Kevin Bolduc, vice president of assessment tools at the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), a nonprofit that provides management and governance tools to define, assess, and improve foundation performance.

College recruiting programs take a lot of planning and resource commitment (i.e., money) from a wide range of lines of business mostly because of the competition to attract and convert the candidates. "In general, the in-house MBA cost per hire could range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and is trending up" (Taguchi, 2002, p. 7). Multiply that by 10-20 full time MBA's and another 10 MBA summer interns and the dollars add up fast.

Undergraduate hires tend to be less expensive but not by much. In a 2012 NACE Salary Benchmarking Study, the average cost per hire for entry-level hires was \$5,134, ("Cost Per Hire" 2013) however, it can range widely. Consulting and financial firms often spend thousands of dollars to recruit talent. One financial firm estimated that [the] firm spends \$50,000 per recruit (Yang, 2014, para 10).

That alone is reason enough to insure that every school selected, every candidate targeted, every communication sent, every website that is specialized, every event that is paid for have a strategic angle. If a lot of money is spent and candidates aren't saying yes, recruiting is in the spotlight and not for the right reasons.

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Campus Recruiting Strategy And Tactics

“Campus recruiting is a war won ONE student at a time. “ -- Jack Beighley, Deloitte Consulting

MBA students in the class of 2016 at Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern in Chicago were exposed to 400+ companies, most Fortune 500 and 100. The top consulting firms (McKinsey, BCG, Bain, and Deloitte) investment banks (Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase) and tech firms (Google, Amazon, Tesla) wined and dined students (Kellogg Employment Report, 2016). At Yale, 250 “unique employers” hired full-time candidates out of 267 students that made up the class (Yale Employment Report, 2016).

Companies of this caliber don't just show up for at the annual career fair or mine alumni for employee referrals. They develop and execute strategic recruitment plans complete with executive presence, dedicated campus recruiting teams, targeted events and messaging, and “nearly a million dollars per year for social events” on some campuses (Rivera, 2015, para 27). They host extensive recruiting events all focused on developing relationships with candidates and pre-screening their top picks for interviews. “If you don't spend time up front on pre-recruitment...you will receive disappointing interest in your company and interview sign-ups” (Taguchi, 2002, p. 42). “Even the sexiest, most popular companies have to work at building visibility for themselves and generating interest...among the competition” (Taguchi, 2002, p. 42).

In *Hiring the Best and the Brightest* (2002), which is considered *the* roadmap and base line for MBA recruiting tactics, Taguchi maps out a four part process with each phase requiring specific tactics, however, this outline could be easily adapted to *any* campus-recruiting program – MBA or undergraduate.

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1. Upfront Prep. Understanding internal needs, researching schools, developing candidate personas, identifying and cultivating key on-campus relationships, scheduling events, and formulating a communication strategy.
2. Pre-Recruitment. Building visibility, learn and understand what your hiring managers are looking for, what potential candidates are wanting, host focused events, target candidates.
3. Interviews. Prepare, train, evaluate, and follow up.
4. Offers. Make great offers and spread the wealth.

Upfront Prep. In companies of all sizes hiring can become fragmented. Getting early buy-in and resource commitment from hiring managers and senior leadership can alleviate duplication of resources, conflicting brand messages, and competing offers at a campus. Early buy-in can also help in the cultivation of key relationships for development on campuses. “The successful college recruiting program looks at the long haul, not just short-term results, and is built on strong relationships” (Collins, n.d, para 1). Robin Erickson, Ph.D., and vice president of talent acquisition research for Bersin by Deloitte reiterate this. “...effective campus recruiting program[s]...require[s] a strong relationship with the... universities involved”(Gulati, 2015, para 3).

Jeff Kudisch, Ph.D., and managing director of the University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith Office of Career Services “pointed out the need to have a consistent campus presence wherein a company invests and builds awareness, even if it does not currently have any openings to fill. Just as filling the talent acquisition pipeline with experienced hires is a continuous effort, effective campus recruiting programs recognize the value of community involvement and employer branding in landing top recruits either for immediate or future hire” (Gulati, 2015, para

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5). Recruiting isn't transactional and companies that treat it as such can often feel the repercussions of it once a relationship has gone south or been left to languish too long.

At this point it's important to begin to develop a company's messaging strategy and deciding what you want to say to your candidates, what you want them to hear, and how you want to say it. It also requires developing a company's ideal candidate persona. Before you can craft a persuasive message, companies need to understand who they are talking to and who they are looking to find. Questions to ask that will help shape your message: who is our audience? What will resonate with them? (Taguchi, 2002, p. 35) Will they be "hearing" what you are saying? What are their tipping points; what will sway them? In the next section, I will delve in deeper to this and the theory that help brands more effectively shape their messaging for their ideal candidate.

Pre-Recruitment. Some companies believe they can skip pre-recruitment and cut to the chase of interviews and then dash to make offers (Taguchi, 2002, p. 41) misunderstanding that consumer brand and employer value propositions are not the same thing. Being visible and accessible creates interest from students. Taking engaging staff to campus, even if you are hiring only a few candidates can raise a company's "stock" in the recruitment process. Big consulting firms, investment banks, and tech companies have dedicated campus teams for each school and often make multiple visits at year. "They then fly revenue-generating employees all over the country to attend social events and interview students every year" (Rivera, 2015, para 4). Some companies will even go as far as dedicating a "team captain" usually a consultant who has been removed from client facing work to "physically sit on campus (often in a student lounge or cafeteria) for several months making him or herself available to students to answer questions about the firm and conduct practice interviews on demand" (Rivera, 2015, para 26). If students

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are used to this kind of exposure, a one-time stock company info session won't even get you a room full of students looking for free food.

Events must be focused and catered to students. Multiple touch points are required. Engagement that is about the student (not the company) is incorporated, like resume reviews and professional development sessions, case prep, and industry trend sessions.

An examination in recruitment at Goldman Sachs sets the bar for personalized and targeted engagement. In an effort to reach out to more students and expand their brand, the company hosted a "study break" shortly before on-campus recruiting kicked off for the co-hort. Students were able to interact in an informal environment and employees were able to have early interactions with potential candidates (Taguchi, 2002, p. 49). They also hosted industry panels with gender focused clubs and dinners for LGBT students. They turned their employer session into their own TEDTalk by bringing in their prized economist Abby Joseph Choen (Taguchi, 2002, p. 49).

Interviews. Interviewing is considered the most important part of the recruitment process. It's the make or break point for the candidate; an opportunity for them to showcase their value proposition to the company. Up to this point, campus recruitment programs have invested a lot of time and effort into the pre-recruitment activities to hone in on whom they want to interview so those who are invited to interview should already have established contacts. The interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to interview the company as well. Most interviewees today will end up with multiple offers from a variety of companies and will have the luxury of being able to decide where they want to go to work. "...It's so important to choose wisely the people you will represent you" (Hiring the best and the brightest, p. 51) during the interviews.

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Companies that employ a campus recruiting team can have greater success. Leveraging alumni, senior business managers, and an executive with ties to a specific school will help (Taguchi, 2002, p. 54) in developing the brand and relationships by engaging the same people in the interview and the pre-recruitment process (Taguchi, 2002. p. 54). Interviewers have a public relations role that applies both to qualified and unqualified candidates. It's important to keep in mind that just as the company is evaluating a candidate, he or she is assessing the organization. In fact, to most applicants the interviewer is the organization so your actions – positive or negative – will affect the candidate's attitude towards your organization (“Guide to Interviewing”, 2014, p.5).

Campus interviewers need to be trained in who and what they are looking for, how to facilitate an interview, and how to interact with candidates. They also need to be trained that even during the interview, they are still recruiting and need to present themselves and the company as an entity the student is interested in working for (“Guide to Interviewing”, 2014, p. 3-5).

Finally, utilize the golden rule of follow up. “Although investment banks and consulting firms call candidates the same night as on-campus interviews, for most companies, it is OK to call within a few days...if you are going to be longer than that, at least let the candidates know (Taguchi, 2002, p. 64).

Offers. Very important tactics in any recruitment strategy is the offer and close. Up to this point, the candidate has been pitching to your company. Once an offer is out, the tables are turned and it's up to the company to now pitch to the potential hire. Representatives of a

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company think that once the offer is out, they are done. Research indicates that this is far from the case and in fact this is when most of the real recruiting work begins.

“Success versus losing out on these.... candidates depends a lot on how you handle communicating” their offer (or rejection) (Taguchi, 2002, p. 85). “Warmth, being straight up, and caring about the candidates...will make the difference for you” (Taguchi, 2002, p. 85).

Dr. John Sullivan, a respected HR professional and regularly contributes to ERE Media, the go-to information and conference source for human resources, talent acquisition, and recruiting professionals, argues “College students these days have lot of options and you need to have a superior strategy if you are going to beat your competitors” (2015). When he comes to closing candidates and getting them to say yes, he offers the following advice.

1. WOW your candidates. This is essential to locking in a candidates in the era of “free agents
2. Get your CEO (or other notable leadership) to call and welcome them to the team
3. Offer to interview/hire their best friend or spouse
4. Constantly communicate with our offeree before and after they accept. Make sure they are connecting with alumni, soon-to-be peers, and leaders

Consider hosting “sell weekends [that] are designed to make those students to whom you’ve made offers feel really special and give them the chance to see them up close. Examples of companies that have wooed their prized offerees include courtside tickets to sold-out sporting events...dinners at 5 star restaurants, and all-expense paid weekends at the top-tier hotels in the cities they’ll work” (Taguchi, 2002, p. 86).

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These elements are foundational to developing and executing on a strategic recruitment strategy for college recruiting programs. Many people are involved in recruiting and a lot is required to be done in a short period of time.

Communication: What You Want Them To Hear And Who You Want To Hear It

Elaboration Likelihood Method. Companies that recruit well are also savvy marketers. They know what they have to offer and they clearly communicate it to students (Taguchi, 2002, p. 107). Recruiting involves a great deal of persuasion in the narrative you create when it comes to careers and professional trajectory. Persuasion used in conjunction with strategy can propel a campus-recruiting program.

Before a company can begin to develop the recruiting messages and narrative, it's important to understand how the company's audience will process those messages. Start with an understanding of how people process recruitment and marketing messages then you can begin to develop those. There are several theories that can help develop and shape employer messaging, including Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM herein).

“ELM examined the way that recipients receive and digest messages and stimuli and the effects it has on attitudes and decisions (e.g., Celsi & Olson, 1998; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984; Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983).”

This theory is appropriate because “theories from marketing research may be particularly effective for explaining the effects of recruitment because marketing advertisements, like recruitment advertisements, are intended to communicate information to influence the perceptions and actions of individuals (Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005, p. 320). ELM from marketing research provides insight into how the recruitment advertisements with detailed information may lead to positive recruitment outcomes (Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005, p. 322).

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ELM is a theory of message persuasion. The ELM claims that there are two paths to persuasion: the central path and the peripheral path (Chadwick, para. 1). The central route to persuasion is most appropriately used when the receiver of the messages is motivated to think about the messages (elaboration) and has the capacity to think about the messages. In this instance the receiver has the capacity to elaborate on the persuasive nature of the argument, they are able to listen carefully, and they can think intently about the argument and the logic behind the message. The central route of persuasion is likely to inspire long lasting attitudinal changes and opinions (O’Keefe, 2016).

The peripheral route to persuasion is most appropriately used when the receiver is employing low levels of elaboration (or thinking). They are either disinterested in the argument, have low motivation to engage in the argument, and/or have little context of the persuasive argument. When persuasion is received through the peripheral route it commonly comes through simplistic cues or surface characteristics. The receiver may have been influenced by the attractiveness of the moderator, through familiar association of the argument, or the credibility of the expert. The peripheral route to persuasion is likely to inspire only short term or temporary changes (O’Keefe, 2016).

If the receiver is motivated and able to elaborate on the message and if there are compelling arguments to use, then the central route to persuasion should be used. If the receiver is unlikely to elaborate on the message, or if the available arguments are weak, then the peripheral route to persuasion should be used (Chadwick, para. 3).

In the Effects of Recruitment Message Specificity on Applicant Attraction to an Organization, the researchers conclude that “recruitment messages that provide explicitly or

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detailed information produce more favorable reactions than do non-specific or general messages” (Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005, p. 322).

For college students who are going through recruitment to start their careers, job prospects and offers are not decisions that are taken lightly and will likely require a great deal of central route processing. Students will likely talk with family and friends, connect with current employees, and research companies online and in person when on campus. It is important then to have messaging that is specific (as recommended by the research done by Roberson, Collins, and Oreg) about the company, culture, job duties, career paths, and compensation in order to attract and convert candidates to your organization.

Candidate Personas and Recruitment Marketing. In order to determine the recruitment message that allow for central route processing, companies need to have an idea of the candidate they will be messaging to. Developing a candidate persona for a company’s recruiting program and help tailor messages to create greater engagements. “Marketers have been doing it for years: creating composite profiles of consumer personalities and preferences to clearly outline the most effective messages and channels for reaching specific customer segments” (Mauer, 2016, para 2). “A candidate persona is a fictional representation of your ideal hire for a specific role. It is based on as much real data as possible, along with educated guesses about experience, goals, motivations, and concerns” (Puri, 2015, para 5).

A candidate persona “is built from attributes and behaviors held in common by top performers in the role, recruiters can more easily find candidates like [them] and craft tailored recruitment campaigns to attract and engage them” (Mauer, 2016, para 22). “The greatest

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benefit of utilizing personas is this: if you know your audience, the likelihood of ...producing content that will engage it increases exponentially. (Buyukataman, 2016, para 10).

With a candidate persona(s) in hand and an understanding of how the information will be processed using ELM, the next question is what do we say and how do we say it in a compelling way? In current white papers done by recruitment marketing industry leaders several key components for creating compelling recruitment messaging are laid out that companies should follow.

First, companies should have a clear Employer Value Proposition laid out and one that gives candidates a reason to want to work for them (Branding for Better Hires, 2017, slide 9). This is the core reason companies give candidates to entice them to work for them. It provides the “what do you do? What do you offer? What are your benefits and features?” (Taguchi, 2002, p. 107). It includes answering the following questions:

1. What makes your organization a great place to work?
2. Why do your high performers enjoy staying at your company?
3. What are the benefits of your work environment?
4. How does your company provide its employees with a sense of purpose?

Based on additional research on providing candidates with job specificity (Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005, p. 326) it's important to “provide explicit or detailed...information...than general or vague information”. This is especially important when highlighting not just the employer value proposition, but also specifics relating to jobs that candidates will apply for.

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Second, it needs to be authentic (Branding for Better Hires, 2017, slide 9). “Your [company message] should reflect what’s special about your company – not your closest competitor or the most popular industry giant” (Branding for Better Hires, 2017, slide10). There must be a clear differentiation on what makes your company special and appealing. It should be clear what sets you apart not just as a company, but as an employer of choice as well.

Third, transparency is important. Don’t craft messages that are not congruent with what your company offers, even if your competitors do. Candidates want to know the truth and being honest about that builds credibility. Don’t peddle a message of flexibility on work locations (like your competitors do) if that actually isn’t part of the company culture (Branding for better hires, 2017, slide11).

Finally, the message or brand is clearly defined. As mentioned in earlier research, candidates want specificity and need it to process messaging centrally (Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005, p. 326). Clearly defining what your company offers, what the culture is really like, what the job specs are, what the career path looks like need to be clearly defined to attract top talent. Having a vague or general message can detract and candidates may self-select out because they just don’t understand (Branding for better hires, 2017, slide12).

When crafting a message for strategic recruitment efforts, the above research outlines the components needed and with an understanding of ELM, companies can develop a narrative that is specific to their candidates that will allow for central route elaboration.

Content and Communication Plans

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Once a company message or messages are determined, it's important to outline what a company's content and communication plan will be during a candidate's lifecycle. Candidates at different stages will need different messages delivered in different formats.

The recruitment industry white paper *Candidate Messaging by Journey Stage* (2017) identifies the stages in a candidate's life cycle as follows:

1. Awareness: "Who is this company anyway?" This stage requires advertising your company and opportunities to potential hires
2. Consideration: "How can I learn more about this organization?" This stage is when candidates start researching to learn more about an organization, its culture, and potential fit
3. Interest: "What actions can I take to show that I am interested?" This stage is when candidates are attending events to actively engage and/or are networking with current employees.
4. Application: "When and where to I apply?" This is the when the formal engagement process begins.
5. Selection: "Am I right for you? Are you right for me?" The stage is a two-way street to determine if the candidate and employer are a match
6. Hire: "I made the right decision, right?" This stage is about reassuring the candidate that they made the right decision.

Creating content that targets potential candidates consistently creates an engagement with the company via central route of persuasion and is likely to inspire longer lasting attitudinal changes and opinions. Planning content for each stage allows for strategic engagement that will

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help drive the message to the audience. Later I will provide a template for types of content for each stage in the lifecycle. Using the right type of messaging (central or peripheral) can influence the type of message presented. For example, if a company is crafting early messages to attract interest from candidates, content that doesn't require a high level of engagement initially may pique a candidate's interest to learn more, i.e., a flashy video showcasing company culture or an infographic highlighting company perks can work. On the flip side during the "hired" life-cycle companies that present content with messages that require more engagement from the candidate could lead to stronger conversions and retention.

Understanding and utilizing ELM will help a company create a stronger and more effective recruitment and marketing strategy. The remainder of this project will be taking all the research and theory and creating a strategic recruitment and marketing template which can be used to develop a campus recruiting plan for corporate recruiting.

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Rational/Method

The reasoning behind this research is to create a template/best practice guide to use for organizations looking to set up a college recruiting program or to freshen up college recruiting programs that have become stagnant. This led to detailed research on campus recruiting tactics, marketing, and messaging tactics in order to understand the current literature and trends

This project is essentially taking all the available literature and best practices to create an outline for strategic recruitment. In other words, the researcher has audited the literature and best practices to identify the key components and creating a roadmap for other corporations/companies to use and has presented below.

Results/Discussions

Outline/Shell For A Campus Recruiting Program

The following is a template/outline of for a campus recruiting program that can be adapted for use in various organizations. This template is based on best practices in recruitment strategy and employer messaging used in the recruitment process.

Campus Recruiting Strategy outline

Before any strategy is developed and executed, it's important to understand and have clear expectations as to what the strategy is to accomplish. Asking the following questions can allow you and your stakeholders to formulate an objective for recruiting that will drive the strategy:

1. Why do we need to have a campus-recruiting program?
2. What is the campus-recruiting program trying to achieve?
3. What are the long-term and short-term goals of the campus-recruiting program?

Below is an example of this process in action.

1. We need a campus-recruiting program so we can tap into new talent that will provide innovation and drive strategy for our organization. With the amount of talent available at one time, coordinating a recruiting program will be more efficient and effective way to recruit college talent.
2. Build a brand on campus and hire top talent that we can develop into leaders of our company.
3. Long-term: develop relationships and a brand on campus that will generate interest and future applicants that can become our leadership pipeline. Short-term: provide applicants that can fill our immediate entry-level positions.

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Objective of the Corporate Leadership Pipeline: The hire the next generation of leaders for XYZ Co. to insure proper succession planning for executive leadership.

In order to meet that broad objective, the following strategy has been developed:

XYZ Co. Leadership Pipeline Recruiting Strategy 2017-2018:

1. Identify participating lines of business and insure alignment on hiring needs
2. Develop the ideal candidate persona
3. Identify EVP and campus specific messaging
4. Create content and communication plans for each of the candidates lifecycle
5. Strategically identify core campuses for OCR and deepen relationships with core schools
6. Build out campus recruiting teams with alumni and identify campus champions/business POC's on each campus
7. Focus on building intern pipeline
8. Identify and focus on targeted populations i.e., women and minority
9. Insure compensation and benefits are competitive (done in conjunction with our compensation department)
10. Determine on-campus interview process and training
11. Develop conversion/sell events/tactics/campaigns

Within each of these bullet points, there are several tactics and templates that can be utilized to execute on the campus recruiting strategy.

Identify participating lines of business and insure alignment on hiring needs.

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Having a clear understanding of the lines of business that will participate and hire from the campus-recruiting program will give you a better sense of the resource commitment. It will also drive how many campuses you recruit on, how many you just go a posting for, and what events you will attend.

The simplest way to identify resource needs is to meet with managers and identify their needs early on. Set up a hiring strategy meeting to discuss short term and long term hiring goals. This may take some early planning on the recruiter's part, but will pay off in the end. It's best to make sure they have the headcount ready, even a year in advance so beginning conversations early can lead to more buy-in. Questions to ask include:

1. How many are you planning to hire in the next 6/12/18 months?
2. What roles do you need to fill?
3. What specific skill sets/experience are you looking for? Are their skill-set gaps that need to be filled?
4. Is your organization planning any expansion in the next 6/12/18 months?
5. Are you planning to hiring interns?
6. What has your interview process been like in the past?

This process should be a conversation rather than an email/form to be filled out. Relationship development is important to recruiting so having that face-to-face time early on and creating the dialogue is mutually beneficial. However, a template from can help guide the conversation. Below is an example of one that could be used to direct the conversation:

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XYZ Co Campus Recruiting Planning Meeting

Hiring Manager/Department Contact: _____

Organization: _____

Forecasted Hires for 2017-2018: _____

Position Descriptions: _____

Describe your organizations structure, teams, and any plans for expansion?
--

What teams will hire through campus?	What specific roles will be filled through campus?
--------------------------------------	--

What skill sets (gaps) does your organization need?	What are must have skills/criteria?
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What leadership skills are needed?	Describe how you'd weigh culture, leadership, and technical skills for potential hires
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Describe your screening/interview process?
--

Who will be involved in the campus hiring process?	Describe your candidate selection process
--	---

Shared understanding

Action Items for HM and Recruiter

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After you have determined what groups will be part of the on-campus recruiting program work to get them together and develop the various personas needed for campus recruiting. By doing this, you will often identify different groups that are looking for very similar candidates or have alignment in technical skills. By having these candidate personas, it allows for a shared recruitment process with some groups overlapping.

When developing personas “start with the outcome—the expected business impact of a new role—and then work backwards. From this perspective, you’ll develop an understanding of the skills and experiences that are necessary to deliver that impact” (Puri, 2015, para 10). Candidate personas are living stories/candidates and will change every year so it’s best to review on a regular basis to insure they are accurate. Below is a template that can be used to work backward and develop your first candidate persona.

Table 1.

The Candidate Profile.

WHO WE NEED TO ATTRACT		
 <p>CANIDATE PERSONA NAME: [Sales Strategy Guru – Kacey]</p>	<p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>Status [JR/SR/Grad Student]</p> <p>Education [BS/MA/MBA]</p> <p>Degree [Finance, Marketing, Liberal Arts]</p> <p>Location [Southwest, California, urban/suburban] [Will they relocate]</p> <p>Traits [curious, socially involved, solution focused]</p>	<p>EXPERIENCE</p> <p>College work experience [P/T, F/T, related to course work, only to pay tuition i.e., restaurant]</p> <p>Extra-curricular involvement [clubs, Greek, research]</p> <p>Clubs [Transportation, Hospitality, etc.]</p> <p>Leadership [roles, projects]</p> <p>Projects [data focused thesis, heavy research on behaviors, etc.]</p>
WHAT DO THEY CARE ABOUT?		

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 <p>CANIDATE PERSONA NAME: [Sales Strategy Guru – Kacey]</p>	<p>GOALS</p> <p>Professional [work in data/strategy/multinational]</p> <p>Personal [if applicable]</p> <p>Passions [volunteer ops, giving back]</p> <p>What objections would they have about our company/role? [too big, too small, tactical, no career pathing, outdated]</p>	<p>MOTIVATIONS</p> <p>What/who influences them? [TBD]</p> <p>What are they looking to find at your company? What would motivate them to come to work for us? [career path, meaningful strategy work, exposure to leadership, data focused projects, mentoring, travel perks]</p>
HOW TO ATTRACT THEM?		
 <p>CANIDATE PERSONA NAME: [Sales Strategy Guru – Kacey]</p>	<p>BEHAVIOR (how do they find out about us?)</p> <p>Websites/Social [glassdoor, social media accounts]</p> <p>On-campus [career fair, class lectures, club lectures]</p> <p>Networks [trusted alumni or faculty referrals]</p>	<p>WHAT WE OFFER THEM?</p> <p>Business impact? [work on projects that have measured revenue growth OR work on accounts that have measured revenue growth]</p> <p>Growth opportunities? [build out new sales organization in LATAM]</p> <p>New skills? [data analysis, consumer behavior economics]</p>

Identify EVP and campus specific messaging. Organizations today are developing employer-branding teams to tackle the employer value proposition (EVP) question. Usually housed within talent acquisition, these teams are working to develop their EVP's. "At its most basic, an EVP represents everything of value that an employer provides to its employees—pay, benefits, training, career development opportunities and so on—and it is then 'marketed' to the workforce" (Sammer, 2015, para 1). The EVP becomes the narrative you use on campus.

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Before a campus recruiter decides where to go and what events to attend, having a narrative to present to your audience is critical. What will you say in your presentation? What makes you different? These are questions that drive your messaging on campus.

When developing (or refining) the EVP there are some basic questions that will help you identify the EVP (Branding for Better Hires, 2017, slide 9):

1. What makes your organization a great place to work?
2. Why do your high performers stay at the company?
3. What are the benefits of your work environment?
4. How does your company provide its employees with a sense of purpose at work?
5. What is your company's overall mission or vision?
6. What do our employees value most?

Send out surveys, hold focus groups, meet with senior stakeholders, and even former employees to get their responses. After you've determined what your employees and leadership value most, you can draft an EVP making sure that it aligns with company objectives, it differentiates you from your competitors, it's a realistic portrayal of what it's like to work at your company, and it appeals to your audience (Page, para 5-9).

Once you've identified, tested, and verified alignment it's time to get it out to your audience on campus and this may require a little bit more fine tuning as it will require you to determine what of the entire EVP is most important and impactful for entry level college grads? What parts of the EVP should you message specifically? That will become your campus specific message and will be what you build your marketing content and collateral around. Taking it one

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step further you can create a campus EVP campaign and derive your content and communication plans from that. For example: XYZ – Encourage disruption

Create content and communication plans for each stage of the candidate’s recruitment.

Creating content requires the campus team deciding what they want to say, where they want to say it, and who they want to say it. It also requires teams to decide how specific pieces of content or messages will be processed by the audience (central or peripherally). For campus recruiting, the following pieces would make up the “base” content package to get our company’s message out.

1. Video

- Video is critical to any content. It’s an opportunity to “show, not tell” people about your company. It’s shareable. It’s innovative. And it can show of a lot of different sides of a company. But it has to be good. In today’s landscape, everyone is competing for attention in your feed. The best video content is direct, short, current, and has several different perspectives. You can share it in an introductory email, blast it through YouTube, imbed it in your presentation.

2. Company View book

- This is your “leave-behind”. It is all the foundational information on your company, you campus program, roles, and culture. This piece will be provided at company events and should be available on your company’s recruiting site as well.

3. Company presentation – video, graphics, pictures

- The official pitch for our company to use on campus. Rather than stick to the boring “history, culture, career path, application/interview process” highlight your

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EVP, why your industry/company is disrupting the industry, and what value you provide to the students. This is really the change to stand out among the competition. Craft a story that candidates can see themselves in and leave them wanting more.

4. Job description

- This is an opportunity to “create your story” of what the role will be. This should not be only a list of basic qualifications or responsibilities. Include vivid language about your company’s culture, how you are disrupting the industry, appeal to the candidate’s ideals and philosophies. Caution – be imaginative but don’t lie.

5. 1-Pagers

- These are topic specific pieces that should be utilizing to supplement and “keep warm” candidates through the process. Content of this type is beneficial if it provides some external value to the candidate. For example, creating a “5 tips to navigate fall recruiting from XYZ Co.” can be sent to students when they start fall semester or can be included in program specific orientation materials. Other examples include:

- i. Industry FAQ/Current trends newsletter
- ii. Resume guides
- iii. Interview Prep
- iv. Alumni Profile

6. Social Media Content

- Companies that produce new and relevant content to your audience will get repeat customers. Create a SM presence that provides insight into your company. Start

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with industry blog posts, feature your employees and what they are doing, ways your company gives back to the community. Be funny, relevant, current, and timely.

7. Campus specific career pages. These pages are where you can house your content where students can easily to go find information. Pages should include the following

- EVP for campus recruiting
- E-Viewbook & Videos
- Links to all SM and content
- Campus recruiting team
- Campus visit calendar
- FAQ on industry

Once the basic content message and pieces are developed you need to determine when they will disseminate to your audiences by crafting communication plans for each stage in the candidates lifecycle. Below is communication plan template to utilize.

Table 2.

Communication Plans For Each Stage In The Candidates Life Cycle.

STAGE	CANDIDATE QUESTIONS	CONTENT IDEAS	KEY MESSAGES	TIMING
AWARENESS	Who are you as a company? What do you provide? What makes you different in the market?	Infographic with industry trends Company specific news stories Best practices, tips, to maximize recruiting events Industry FAQ	Tell who your company is and what you provide Industry hot topics/current issues.	Send 2 weeks prior to company presentation
CONSIDERATION	Who works for your company? What type of work do you do? What are your company values?	Employee videos Info graphic with industry trends	Introduce employees to candidates Introduce leadership Showcase company values	Send 2 weeks prior to application deadlines OR Send 2 weeks prior to campus

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				visit
INTEREST	What does a career look like? What is the tenure of current employees? What projects would I work on?	Career ladders Ted Talk by employees Employee videos Tours of facilities Open House events	Job specific information Company culture through Q&A video's	Send out after any on-campus visit or official company event
APPLICATION	How do I apply? What is the recruitment process like? What are the perks?	Dedicated resource pages with details and links. Personalized emails to candidates with info Best practices for company interviews Interview Prep Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study guide on interviews • Industry news • Things to consider • Putting your best self forward 	Concise application messages Expectation setting Benefits and perks of company	Prior to application deadline.
SELECTION	Who do I interview with? What is the interview process like?	Direct call recruiter for details Contact with SR leader	Detailed info on interviews	Send immediately after candidate has been selected to interview
HIRE	Who is my manager? When do I start? What is the salary package?	Offer letter Phone call from hiring manager Phone call from SR leader Link to new hire specific page FAQ's for new hires Company newsletter	Personalized landing page for new hires? Welcome to XX video Welcome Box from assigned mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company branded gift (s) 	Send immediately upon offer and acceptance

(SOURCE -- Candidate Messaging by Journey, 2017, page 2).

Strategically identify core campuses for OCR and deepen relationships with core schools. When it comes to which campuses to recruit on it may be tempting to stick with the schools your execs or top leadership attended. However, with the time and resources being devoted, it's a much better (and justifiable) return on investment if you can back up your core schools selection with data.

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“Most college recruiting professionals say they build their target school list around majors available, quality of programs, experience recruiting at the school, and school location. This requires research and careful tracking, so you can see which schools are working best for your organization “ (Collins, 2017, para 3).

In addition to majors, recruiting history, and location, it’s beneficial to look at data on recent hires and their recent progression, geographic points, and compensation averages. If you are looking at adding a school where alum may not be performing well, you might reconsider including it. If you are choosing schools where students tend to relocate to your region for work post-graduation, you could gain traction. Finally, if you are selecting schools where the compensation averages are far higher than you can offer, you may look to another option.

One note of caution, it is always important as well (no matter how political) to keep in mind where executive leadership attended school and take a close look at the data on each especially if it’s a school that is up for review due to poor results. It is always good to have the data to support your decision. Below is a template/form that can be used to help in identifying core schools:

XYZ Co Campus Recruiting School Selection Criteria/Recap

Name of School

--	--	--	--

Recruiting Year

--

Class Size (SR)

--

Class Size (JR)

--

Apps received (FT)

--

No. of interviews (FT)

--

Offers extended (FT)

--

Offers accepted (FT)

--

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Apps received (IN)

No. of interviews (IN)

Offers extended (IN)

Offers accepted (IN)

Top programs:

Top 3 metro areas for employment:

Alumni and progression

Once you have data on a variety of schools narrow down the list of core schools (where you will do on-campus recruiting) to 5-6. This will provide a good talent pool but will not overwhelm your resources and will offer a good sampling. You may opt to select another 4-5 schools to “post” and test before adding them to your list of core schools.

Build out campus recruiting teams with alumni and identify campus champions/business POC’s on each campus. For new (or any schools) it’s important to build out your campus recruiting teams. These will be the people that will attend events, meet and talk with students, make interview recommendations, screen resumes, help with interviews, and most important, they will help convert those offers to accept. Alumni are the best bet, if you have a

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few in your organization. If you are limited on alumni, seek out “reps have the most influence on how students view your organization. Send well-trained professionals who are equipped to answer questions, address concerns, represent your brand, and sell your organization” (Collins, 2017, para 5).

Start with your alumni. Identify alumni who have SR roles within the organization that are interested in growing the organization. Supplement with young or recent hires that may still have a pulse on campus. Designate a “campus champion” or someone who will serve as the alumni representative during campus initiatives. Also, designate a “business point of contact”. This is typically someone (not necessarily an alum) who will serve as the business partner during recruiting.

Once you have your campus recruiting team built out, take the time to train them on campus messaging, candidate personas, and roles/expectations. Make sure they are prepared when heading to campus. Arming people with information and details insures they are positive and persuasive representatives of the organization. Below is template/form for outlining roles/responsibilities of your campus recruiting team and specifically your campus champion.

XYZ Co. Campus Champions 2017-2018

Scope. To represent a designated campus within your business unit while acting as the liaison between College Recruiting and your organization.

Champion Profile. Campus Champions are top performers within their field; they exemplify our values. They hold strong connections to their alma mater and are actively involved with all aspects of recruiting. They are dedicated to finding top talent for the organization. They are strong influencers. They excel at communication and building relationships.

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Role & Responsibilities. In conjunction with College Recruiting, you are a key player in the recruitment and selection on your campus. You will participate in various recruiting events both on and off campus, including but not limited to: career fairs, info sessions, mixers, office hours, networking events, alumni events, HDQ events, school treks, etc. We will also ask for your involvement with persuading and closing offered candidates. Alumni have a strong impact on candidate decisions so while we encourage your transparency with candidates; we also rely on your ability to sell XYZ Co. effectively.

You will be responsible for selecting and developing your campus team. The Campus Alumni team will be pivotal in finding new avenues and events to connect with prospective candidates; whether that is connecting with a new club, contacting a professor for in-class presentations, or hosting an event on campus. We need you to help us increase our employer brand awareness on campuses. Some specifics below:

Corporate Presentations

- Attend on campus presentation with 3-4 members of your campus alumni team. Ensure that there are members from all business units (i.e., Sales, HR, Finance).
- Prep the PPT deck w/ campus specific dates for resume drops and on-campus interviews
- Coordinate with CMC to ensure marketing and advertising visibility of Executive attendance
- Take ample swag to presentation
- Submit event re-cap form within 3 days of presentation with your feedback and list of candidates that should be watched through the process

Office Hours/Atrium Hours

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- Host/atrium hours at least 2X in the fall and spring. Preferably 1-2 weeks before presentations and 1-2 weeks before interviews.

Mixers/Happy Hours prior to OCI's

- Host a pre-interview happy hour off campus. College Recruiting will cover the cost (within approved budget) for apps/cocktails.
- Find, reserve, plan, and market the event. College Recruiting will be able to assist.

Club Events

- In conjunction with College Recruiting, source engagement opportunities with industry, diversity, or geographic alignment student clubs.
- Plan at least one event with each club for fall and spring.

Focus on building intern pipeline. Recruit once, hire twice. Building your intern program as part of your long-term campus recruiting strategy will pay dividends. They can create a strong buzz when they return to campus; they are more likely to accept a full time job offer. Ann Hargraves, former Director of National Recruiting for Liberty Mutual, in her conference session at the Vanderbilt Human Capital Conference in May 2016 said of her organization, there is an “86% retention rate for interns after five years and 60% after fifteen years” (Hargraves, 2016). Speaking at the same conference, Emily Anderson, Director of the CMC at Owen Graduate School of Management, estimated that of the class of 2017, early 55% on interns have an offer from their internship employer for fulltime when they return for their second year and 34% have already accepted their offer, essentially limited the full time recruiting class. (Anderson, 2016).

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Work with hiring groups to develop meaningful internship projects that can give interns a sample of the work they will be doing when they accept their full-time offer. Champion the value of “trying out” candidates before you lock them in full-time. Seek out juniors or first year graduate students who fit your candidate persona and include them in all pre-recruitment activities.

However, before you go out and recruit and interview interns, having the internship infrastructure in place. This includes working with HR and business partners to formulate a program that includes the following (which have been paraphrased from NACE’s *Building a Premier Internship Program: A Practical Guide for Employers*):

1. Impactful work/projects. Interns aren’t here to just get coffee. Leverage their skill set and creativity by giving them substantive projects.
2. Assign a department mentor, someone who is a senior member of the team.
3. Include interns in on staff meetings, brainstorming sessions, executive presentations, etc. Treat them as if they are a full time employee and give them access to the same information, people, and projects.
4. Provide weekly/bi-weekly project feedback sessions. Provide any course correction if needed and recognize their contributions.
5. Make time for them to network with other interns, recent hires, and alumni from their schools.
6. Have a thorough mid-internship and post internship interview with the HM and intern to provide feedback.
7. TRAIN and COACH your hiring manager in managing their intern.

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8. Make offers for full-time employment either on their last day or within 1-2 weeks of leaving work. The sooner the offer, the sooner they accept.

Identify and focus on targeted populations i.e., women and minority. Many organizations have diversity recruiting requirements but struggle with attracting and recruiting students. When targeting specific populations always include a senior business leader from said population to aid in recruiting. Let them be the face of your organization with the students.

Partner with Association of Women in Business or other affinity student groups (such as black or Hispanic student associations). Seek out their leadership and participate in their club events or conferences. Seek feedback on what student's perceptions or feelings your organizations are. Below is an example of clubs to start partnering with:

- Association of Women in Business
- Black Business Student Association
- ALFA (Association of Latino Professionals for America)
- Society of Women Engineers (SWE)
- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
- Forte Foundation
- Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT)

Insure compensation and benefits are competitive (done in conjunction with our compensation department). In order to do this, organizations need to have some data points on what their competitors are offering for what roles. The first place to start is by coordinating with your compensation department to conduct research. Together, you can research recent employer reports to find averages, research the Department of Labor statistics on salary/compensation,

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conduct “fact finding” calls with CMC’s, and ask your recent hires (chances are they had multiple offers and likely from your competitors too). Benchmark other employers in your cities as well to understand what they are offering.

Ultimately, your compensation department will set the range, but recruiting should be providing current data points to aid in determining the offer package.

Once a package is determined, it’s best to have a unified and set offer if multiple groups are recruiting at the same campus. Candidate’s talk and offering different packages and lead to negative perceptions or declines by candidates who feel “slighted”. Work with your hiring groups to maintain initial unity/consistency. Below is a sample of metrics/data that can be used to help develop an offer package.

Table 3.

Compensation Data from MBA programs.

Schools	Mean (AVE) Salary Rotational Programs (2016)	Median Salary Rotational Programs(2016)	Median SB Rotational Programs(2016)	% of class working in this function (2016)
School A	\$111,370.00	\$117,000.00	\$25,500.00	9.0%
School B	\$103,056.00	not reported	not reported	5.0%
School C	\$95,824.00	not reported	\$11,933.00	not reported
School D	\$113,619.00	\$120,000.00	\$20,000.00	6.5%
School E	\$123,444.00	\$120,000.00	\$25,000.00	1.9%
School F	not reported	105,000.00	20,000.00	7.00%
School G	\$96,587.00	\$95,750.00	\$21,500.00	0.2%
School H	\$118,000.00	not reported	\$30,300.00	not reported
School I	not reported	\$110,000.00	not reported	15.0%
School J	\$77,967.00	not reported	\$22,200.00	not reported
School K	\$108,095.00	not reported	not reported	6.0%
School L	\$110,643.00	\$110,000.00		16.0%
School M	\$116,367.00	\$117,000.00	not reported	12.1%
School N	\$122,920.00	\$120,000.00	\$25,000.00	8.3%
School Average	\$108,157.67	\$112,750.00	\$22,381.44	7.9%

Determine on-campus interview process and training. When it's time to interview the candidates you've spent several months cultivating through on-campus recruiting or through targeting messaging a transparent and quick interview process is imperative. Your company isn't the only company vying for these candidates so make your process impressive.

1. Work with our hiring groups early to clearly identify the interview process you want to follow and **STICK TO IT**. Determine if you will do all of your interviewing at campus or at your headquarters. How many interviews will you need to do with each candidate? Who will the candidate interview with? Once you have your process in place, be transparent with recruits as to who they will interview with, how the interview will run, and when/where the interviews will take place.
2. Before you begin to the interview process, set aside some time to train your interviewers on how to facilitate the interview. Educate them on what they can and can't ask candidates, provide best practices for making a candidate comfortable, and provide tools/resources that will empower them to ask thoughtful questions or follow up questions to extract additional information for students.
3. Work with hiring managers to develop strategic question sets to be used in each interview for consistency. It's helpful to identify what competencies/skill sets needed and develop questions for each. Along with the question sets, work with hiring managers to develop responses guides to aid in candidate selection.
4. Finally, determine the interview/offer timeline to communicate with candidates who interview with your company. Interviewers should clearly articulate the timeline at the

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end of the interview. Also, the campus team should communicate regularly with the candidate during post offer discussions.

Develop conversion/sell events/tactics/campaigns. Once offers have been extended executing on the conversion and sell campaigns is critical to candidate conversion. Making the offer is just the beginning. Developing and executing on targeted messaging and tactics will insure conversion. In the messaging it is important to:

1. Reiterate the EVP and catering it to what the candidate is looking for
2. Address any conflicting issues the candidate may have
3. Showcase your team and the work the candidate will be doing

Below is a template that can be customized.

XYZ Co. Candidate Conversion Campaign

Table 4.

Candidate Conversion Campaign and Timeline.

Within ONE week of offer	Touchpoints Prior to Offer Acceptance	Touchpoints Post-Offer Acceptance
Hiring Department to assign department mentor to reach out to welcome intern to department		
Recruiter to reach out to answer any answer any HR related questions (benefits, relocation, etc.)	Recruiter to send internal newsletter to candidates prior to and after acceptance.	
Congratulations Letter from Officer of hiring department is sent to all candidates w/ company branded gift	Hiring Manager and/or department mentor to connect w/ candidate regularly to address department issues.	Recruiter to set up group chat/SM discussion to introduce other accepts to each other.
MD of hiring department to	High level discussion with	Housing hunting trip. Dinner

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call intern candidate to welcome them the team	hiring manager regarding specific work assignments/projects	w/ department analyst
	Sell Weekend – Fri/Sat to visit office and dinner with team.	Recruiter to coordinate onboarding with candidates
		Hiring Manager to check in with candidate on regularly basis to discuss start date.

Conclusion

This project has been incredibly helpful from a business position. Often times campus recruitment programs are based on in-house anecdotal evidence of what has worked in the past and what hasn't. School selection and tactics can often come down to executive sponsorship. It's also been helpful to craft a picture of what a best in class recruitment and marketing strategy should feel look and feel like.

When I have talked with other professional and corporate recruiters the conversation always is centered on "what is working for you?" and "how do you harness your business groups and leadership to be more predictive and strategic?" Doing this research to understand what elements make up a best in class program has allowed the research team to adapt it specifically for their recruitment program without having to reinvent the wheel.

From a marketing and persuasion perspective, understanding the ELM theory and its relevance in recruitment messaging will encourage recruiters, marketers, and business leaders to rethink what they are saying and presenting on campus. It's a war on talent at the college and particularly the MBA level and crafting a message that appeals to their audience and differentiates their company, while time consuming and difficult to do, can ultimately lead to a targeted and strategic recruitment efforts.

Creating this project (from the research, pivoting on content, and development of the strategic recruitment and messaging shell) has been difficult but ultimately invaluable. From a professional standpoint, this has given me "subject matter expert" credibility. The next step (which is already done) is to adjust this for my current employer to use for their campus recruiting effort.

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