

Segmenting is Everything

How to Reach Out to Your Alumni Constituency Groups

Alumni relations or development officers will agree that to reach out to their alumni communities, segmenting is everything.

But how can you reach out *most effectively* to your alumni constituency groups? How can you achieve over 80 percent email collection? How can you achieve download rates of over 15 percent on a newsletter? How can you encourage over 30 percent of alumni to re-connect *before* a reunion? How can you better leverage your alumni volunteers to improve giving?

Alums Online has developed online platforms to help you target specific alumni constituency groups and engage them more effectively – these include Alumni Class Web Sites, Online Reunion Books, Alumni Club Web Sites, and an Alumni Fund Intranet for Fund reps and class agents.

Alumni Class Web Sites

Our Alumni Class Web Sites provide an online forum for members of alumni classes or affinity groups to find classmates, post newsletters and photos, organize mini-reunions, hold online discussions and much more. They include an easy-to-use administrative interface for class officers to manage these activities.

With my Dartmouth class of 1984, for example, when we post a class newsletter online, within one week, over 15 percent of classmates will have downloaded it off the web site.

Last summer my class organized mini-reunions in ten cities across the world, from London to New York City to Los Angeles, using the class web site for classmates to find out about and sign up for the events. My class also used the web site's email broadcast system to send targeted emails to classmates in specific states or countries to promote each mini-reunion.

By using our online payment module through PayPal or Verisign, your class dues collection will increase and your class treasurers can more easily manage the collection process, even sending automated emails to request payment from those who have not yet paid. And whenever a classmate makes an online payment, we're able to check that the person's contact details are current, and if not, to offer that person the opportunity to update their information.

When you attract a classmate to a class web site, this is also an opportunity to capture a new email address. Using the lost email section, which lists names of classmates for whom email addresses are not known, the Dartmouth class of 1982, for example, has been able to increase their email collection to over 80 percent.

An Alumni Class Web Site can also be a powerful tool to draw traffic to your university web site. You can post a news stream on the home page of the

Contents

[Alumni Class Web Sites](#)

[Online Reunion Books](#)

[Alumni Club Web Sites](#)

[Alumni Fund Intranet](#)

class web site, which is updated automatically and linked back to the alumni news section of your university web site.

See: www.AlumsOnline.com/ClassSites.html

Online Reunion Books

Four months before my Dartmouth class' 20th-year reunion, we prepared an Online Reunion Book where classmates could post profiles, catch up and register for the reunion.

Over sixty classmates participated, representing a third of those who attended the reunion and also including some who could not attend.

For these classmates, the Online Reunion Book took the reunion experience to a new level. Classmates reconnected *before* returning to campus, even sharing perspectives in writing that might not come out over a reunion weekend that is packed with activities.

One classmate wrote from Thailand, "On a hot day in the tropics, how I miss skiing on fresh snow across the golf course or hiking on a cool summer day in the White Mountains." Classmate profiles also offer their fair share of humor. One classmate wrote, "My wife and I met through Dartmouth fundraising, so I would have to say that Dartmouth has continued to arrange for my needs. Now, I would like to see what it can do about my mortgage."

In promoting the Online Reunion Book, you also promote the reunion itself, drawing registrations through an online sign up and payment section. Consider an email for the reunion chair to send two weeks before a reunion to classmates who have neither registered nor declined to attend:

*Five years, two weeks and a day.
That's an awfully long time to wait for the 25th.
The 20th reunion. Register now.*

When my class launched its reunion book, one classmate, a New York investment banker, responded, "I have rearranged my schedule and will be at our reunion on Friday night." He's now signed up to be the reunion giving chair for our 25th.

See: www.AlumsOnline.com/OnlineReunionBooks.html

Alumni Club Web Sites

Our Alumni Club Web Sites provide an online forum to strengthen your alumni clubs or chapters. Alumni can register as new members, organize events, participate in career networking, and much more. There is also an easy-to-use administrative interface for club officers to manage these activities.

New members are issued a secure login and password that enables them to search the club's member directory and participate in career networking, where they can sign up to be a career mentor or contact club members who already volunteered as career mentors. Through career networking, club members can also post and consult job offerings online.

Other functions are similar to the Alumni Class Web Sites. Club members

can make dues payments online, and the club treasurer can send automated emails to request payment from those who have not yet paid. Club members can also organize events with online sign up, and they can volunteer for club activities like alumni interviewing.

You can also draw traffic to your university web site through an automated news stream on the home page of your Alumni Club Web Sites.

Through our Alumni Club Web Sites, you can take your alumni clubs or chapters to new levels of activity by putting the right tools in the hands of your club officers.

See: www.AlumsOnline.com/ClubSites.html

Alumni Fund Intranet

Our Alumni Fund Intranet will strengthen your solicitation process and provide Fund reps and class agents with secure, online access to their Fund assignments.

One key to success to a strong alumni giving program is to get the solicitation assignments right. This is a "micro-segmentation," where you select who should make the all-important pitch to specific alumni. Our Alumni Fund Intranet includes a module where your class agents indicate which classmates they are most inclined to solicit, providing them with the facility to identify classmates with whom they shared common student activities or to search by geography or last name. You can then make the class agent assignments based on this critical information.

Using the Alumni Fund Intranet, you can set solicitation assignments and pledge targets online or upload them directly from your system. Fund reps and class agents have secure online access to contact details and pledge targets for their solicitation assignments, and they submit pledge amounts and payment details to your Fund office through a highly-secure, online interface.

The Alumni Fund Intranet is very easy to use, with six formats of printable reports that we can tailor to your specific needs.

By putting your class agents online, you'll take your solicitation process to a new level and succeed in surpassing your fund-raising goals.

See: www.AlumsOnline.com/Fundnet.html

Geoffrey Berlin
Founder and CEO
Alums Online Inc.
geoff@alumsonline.com