

gravity

2025 Report

State of Alumni
Engagement



3 Introduction

4 Executive summary

5-13 Key findings

5 Top challenges engagement teams are facing

6-7 Strategies & tactics, ranked

Deep dive: What alumni really want

8-10 Is technology shepherding a new era of engagement?

11-13 Success, defined: How engagement teams show impact

14 Methodology

15 Next steps

16 About Gravyty

2025 Report

State of Alumni Engagement



Introduction

For alumni engagement teams today, reaching and nurturing alumni relationships in new and impactful ways can be challenging. Shifts in alumni preferences, the rebound of in-person events, and an emergence of engagement technologies and AI have required teams to test, pivot, and refine their approaches.

To better understand this dynamic landscape, we gathered insights from alumni engagement professionals. Our goal was to explore how teams are reaching alumni, what strategies are proving successful, and how they measure success in their efforts. The findings we've uncovered highlight the innovative ways institutions are adapting, leveraging digital channels to meet alumni where they are, and building impactful, lasting connections.

This report outlines our findings from surveying more than **200 alumni engagement professionals** from higher education and K-12 institutions around the world, demonstrating the clear value of strong bonds between alumni and their institutions.

Executive summary

To get an accurate view of alumni engagement programs today, we asked teams how they measure success, what tactics and channels they use to engage alumni, critical challenges they're facing, and more.

We used the responses to paint a clearer picture of how teams are effectively reaching alumni – and where they hope to improve – in 2025.



Lack of resources is the biggest challenge alumni engagement teams are facing today.

While teams have similar or increased goals over previous years, they are strapped for resources. Team sizes are small (76% are 6 or less people), and budgets are flat.



Collaboration with fundraising teams happens, but less often than needed.

Just over half of respondents say they collaborate closely with fundraising/ advancement teams, yet number of donors is the third most important measure of success.



Alumni engagement success is an enigma.

Almost half of respondents use alumni satisfaction as a key performance indicator. However, it's the top ranked KPI that teams say they lack. Less than a quarter of respondents say they consistently know and understand the value of their alumni engagement program.



Technology is an area of uncertainty.

A whopping 77% of alumni engagement teams say they are not planning to adopt any new technology, but just 7% feel they are meeting the expectations of alumni. Additionally, teams are exploring AI for tasks like content creation but are hesitant to implement it formally.



Events still reign supreme as a top engagement tactic, yet alumni are less enthusiastic.

More than half (54%) of engagement professionals say they plan to increase the number of alumni events, and event attendance and registration are the top two KPIs used to measure success. Alumni, however, rank events lower on the list of valuable alumni services, below career support, and communications.






Teams are missing the mark on career services.

Respondents rank job and internship placements as the least important metric of success. However, alumni themselves rank career services and networking as the top two most valued alumni services.

KEY FINDINGS

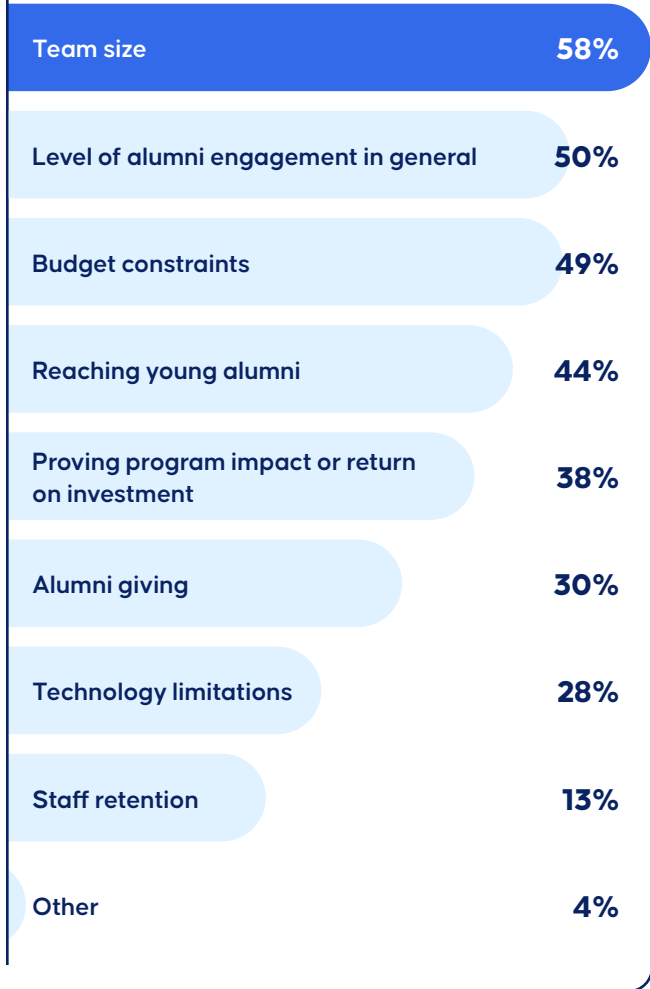
Top challenges engagement teams are facing

When it comes to headcount and resources, teams are facing strains. Team size is the top challenge, followed closely by budget constraints.

-  Less than a third (30.3%) of teams have a budget that exceeds \$100k.
-  The majority of teams (76%) are composed of six or less people, and most commonly include three or fewer people per team (55%).
-  Half of respondents expect their team size to stay the same next year. Luckily, less than 2% expect their teams to shrink.

Despite challenges in team size and budgets, 53% of respondents say they are continuing with all planned engagement activities.

What are the biggest challenges you face today in doing your job effectively?



KEY FINDINGS

Strategies & tactics, ranked

On-campus events rank as the most effective engagement activity (88%), followed by in-person meetings (80%) and a virtual alumni platform (78%).



What are the primary alumni engagement activities your institution uses and how would you rank their effectiveness?

Activity	Not used at all	Not effective	Effective
On-campus events	10%	2%	88%
In-person meetings	13%	7%	80%
Virtual alumni platform	10%	12%	78%
Reunions	18%	6%	76%
Regional events	22%	6%	73%
Fundraising	23%	11%	67%
Flash mentoring	19%	17%	64%
Volunteering	21%	16%	63%
Virtual events	29%	12%	59%
Structured mentoring programs	39%	13%	48%
Job & internship resources	39%	13%	48%
Continuing education	47%	16%	38%

Flash mentoring – or brief, informal mentoring connections – are virtually equally rated as either not effective or not used at all by institutions. Almost half of teams (47%) don't include continuing education as an alumni service.

Invite to alumni community/network	80%
Invite alumni to attend live events	66%
Provide career support/services	52%
Offer alumni mentorship resources	35%
Ask alumni to become active volunteers	27%
Provide opportunities to financially support/give back	23%
Conduct surveys to better understand how to engage with alumni	14%
Other	2%

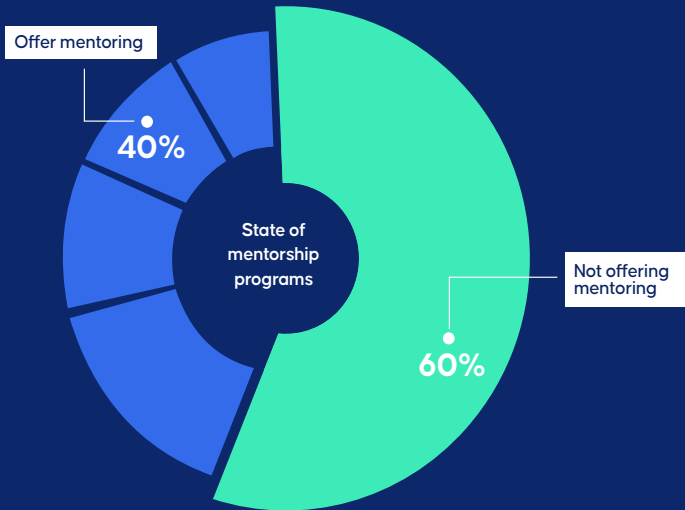


Engaging young graduates

To future-proof their alumni engagement program, institutions are focused on engaging recent graduates. Their most used strategies to do this? Invite new grads to their alumni network (80.1%), invite them to live events (66%) and offer career support (52%).

What alumni really want

Alumni engagement teams are working hard to build and nurture their communities. But are they engaging them in ways that resonate with alumni themselves? In Gravyty's recent [Alumni Trends Survey](#), we asked nearly 600 alumni what they value in their institution's alumni program. The results between the alumni survey and this one paint a nuanced picture of what's working for engagement – as told from both sides.



Mentorship: A missed opportunity

Nearly 60% of engagement teams aren't running formal mentoring programs at all, yet mentorship is a driving force in engagement. 48% of alumni say they've been a mentor, and 36% a mentee. Additionally, networking or peer mentoring is the top most valuable alumni programs across all generations surveyed – Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X.

Alumni seek career growth opportunities

Job and internship placements are the least important metric in measuring success according to alumni engagement teams. Yet for alumni themselves, career support/services and networking are the most important factors for what they seek in their alumni program.

What key performance indicators (KPIs) are currently using?

Career support	80%	Internal alumni engagement score	29%
Event registrations	73%	ROI	19%
Number of users registered in your community platform	57%	Number of job placements	11%
Number of donors	51%	Number of internship placements	8%
Active users on your community platform	50%		
Alumni satisfaction or qualitative feedback	49%		
Total dollar amount of donations	47%		
CASE Alumni Engagement Metrics	32%		
Internal alumni engagement score	32%		



KEY FINDINGS

Is technology shepherding a new era of engagement?

From the emergence of AI to a transition to digital-first engagement channels, teams are adapting to this new era of technology-powered engagement.



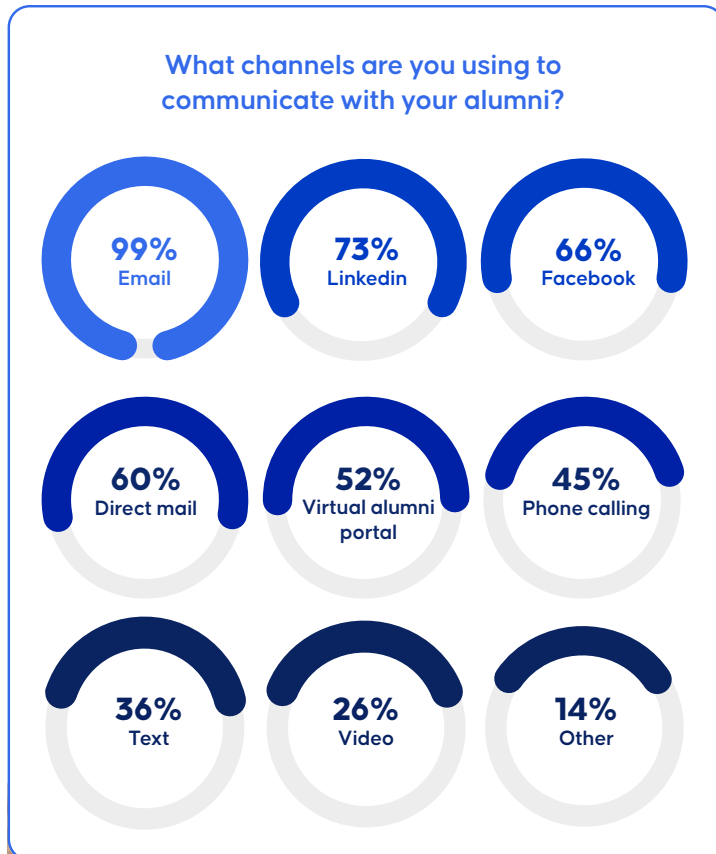
- Email is the top ranked channel used by alumni engagement teams in terms of usage and satisfaction, with 57% saying they are very satisfied with it. CRM systems, virtual alumni community platforms, and surveys follow email as the highest rated technologies.
- While just 7.1% of engagement teams feel as though they are meeting the expectations of their alumni, the vast majority (77.3%) are not planning to adopt any new technology.

What channels are you using to engage alumni?

Channel	Not used at all	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Email	2%	6%	35%	57%
CRM	19%	11%	34%	36%
Alumni community portal	36%	7%	43%	36%
Surveys	20%	7%	39%	34%
Event platform & ticketing	24%	9%	34%	33%
Digital fundraising	40%	5%	25%	29%
Job boards	26%	12%	39%	23%
Texting	55%	3%	21%	22%
Mentoring software	42%	8%	34%	17%
Video messaging	55%	6%	23%	17%
Volunteer management	52%	9%	25%	14%

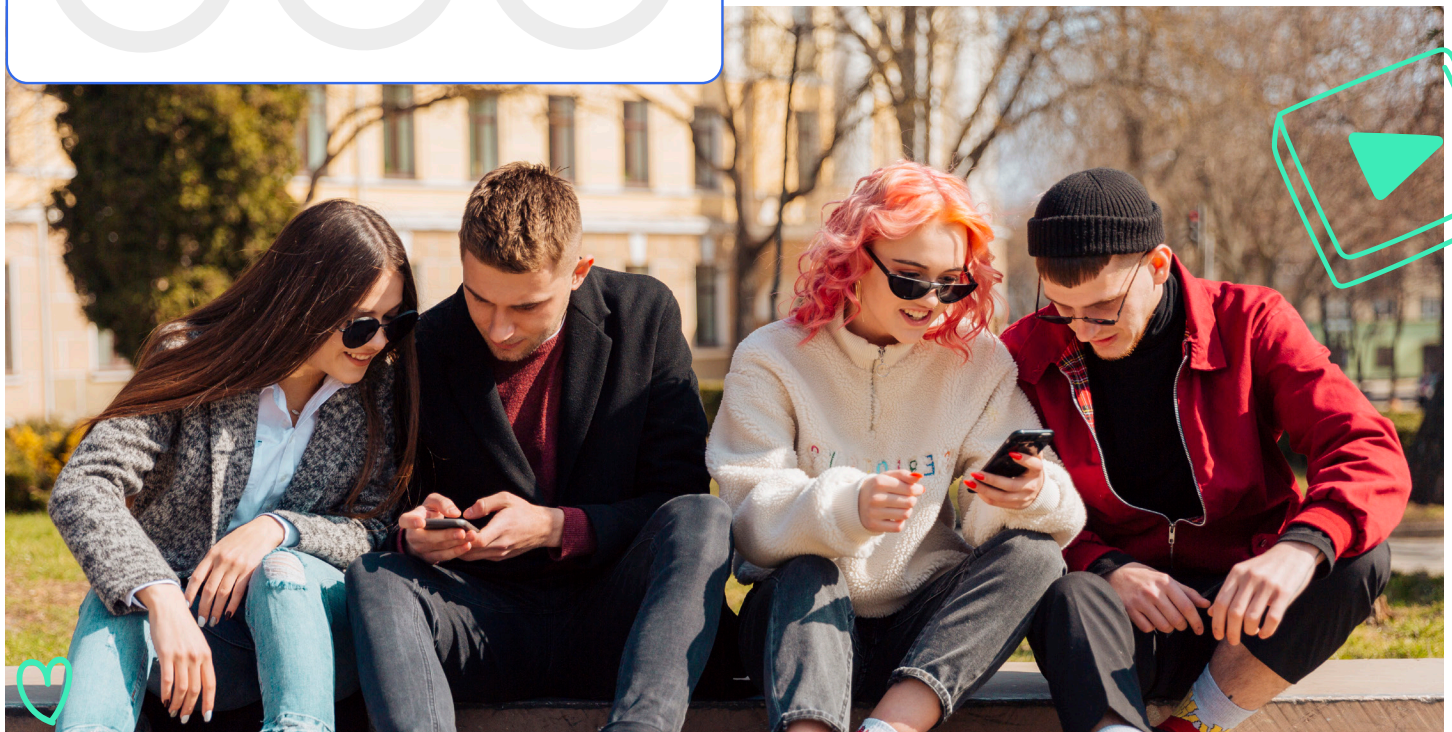
Teams are taking a digital-first approach to engagement, but still lagging behind alumni's expectations

While institutions are primarily hitting the mark with channels (almost all are using email to communicate with alumni), some are still relying on less-preferred traditional channels like direct mail (60%) and phone calls (44.5%). Emerging channels like video and texting offer teams a chance to better meet alumni expectations – and influence giving – by engaging with them through these modern communication methods.



Just 36% of teams are using texting as a communication channel, yet over a third of alumni who have donated to their alma mater were prompted to give from a text.

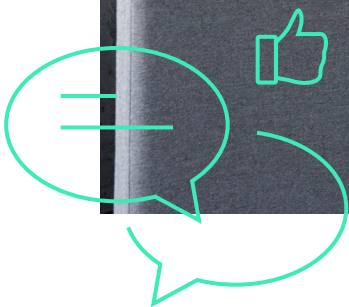
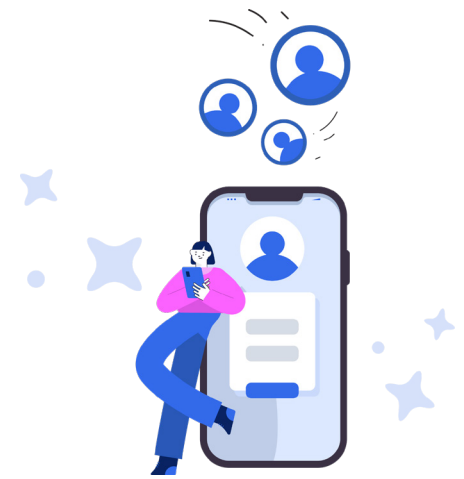
Luckily though, texting as an alumni engagement channel is on the rise. While 57% teams aren't planning on adding any communication channels next year, the top most-planned channel to be used next year of the remaining 42.7% is texting.



Tapping into AI

When it comes to AI, almost half of respondents (47%) aren't using it at all within their job functions. Of the percentage that is tapping into AI, most (39%) are using it for content creation. Just 7.6% are using it to focus their engagement efforts on the right constituents.

How are you currently using AI within the alumni relations/engagement team?



KEY FINDINGS

Success, defined: How engagement teams show impact

Teams are generally sure in their ability to measure success of an alumni engagement program. However, they aren't confident they have the whole picture – less than a quarter (23%) say they consistently know and understand the value of their alumni engagement program.

Successful events are an indicator of holistic program success

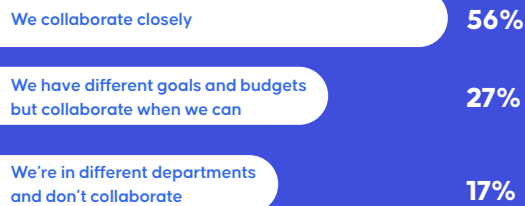
When it comes to key performance indicators, those tied to success of an events strategy such as attendance and registrations are the top two most commonly used metrics to demonstrate value.



The fundraising factor

Number of donors is a metric used by more than half (50.4%) of engagement teams and it's ranked as the third most important KPI to measure success. However, just 56% of respondents say the alumni engagement team closely collaborates with the advancement/fundraising teams.

What best describes how the alumni relations team currently partners with advancement/fundraising teams?

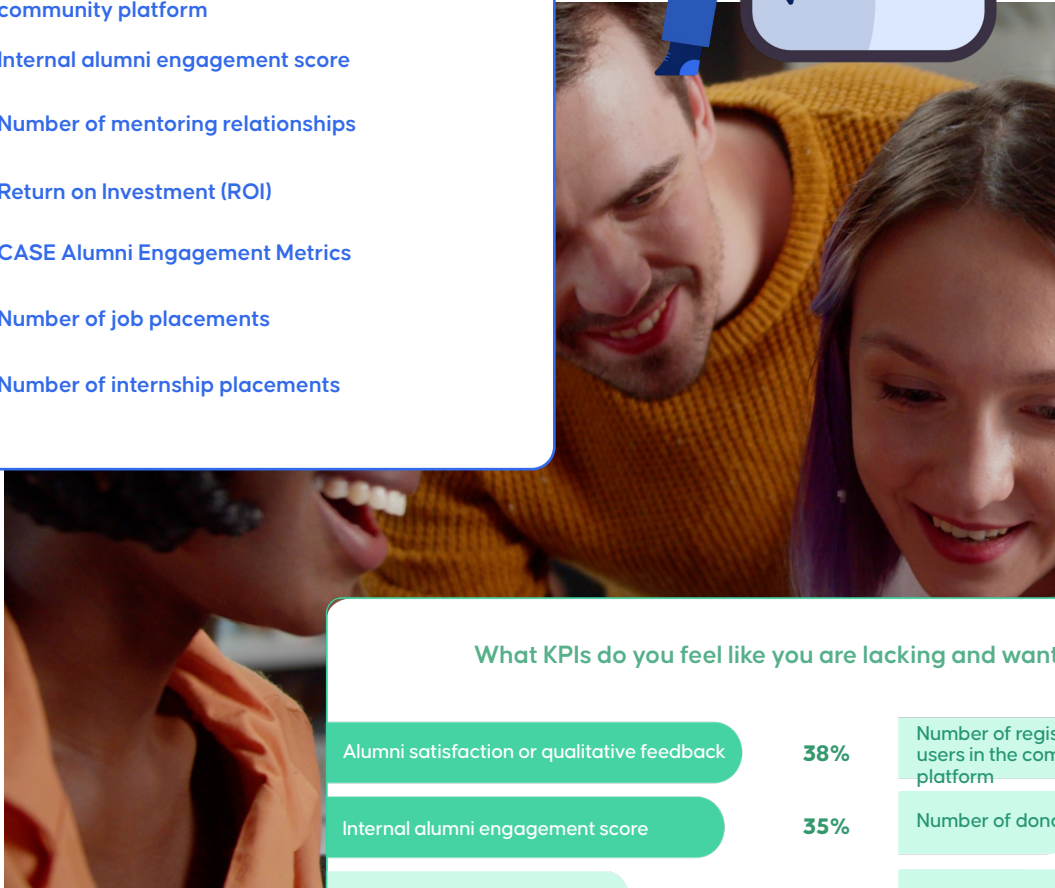


What key performance indicators (KPIs) are you currently using?

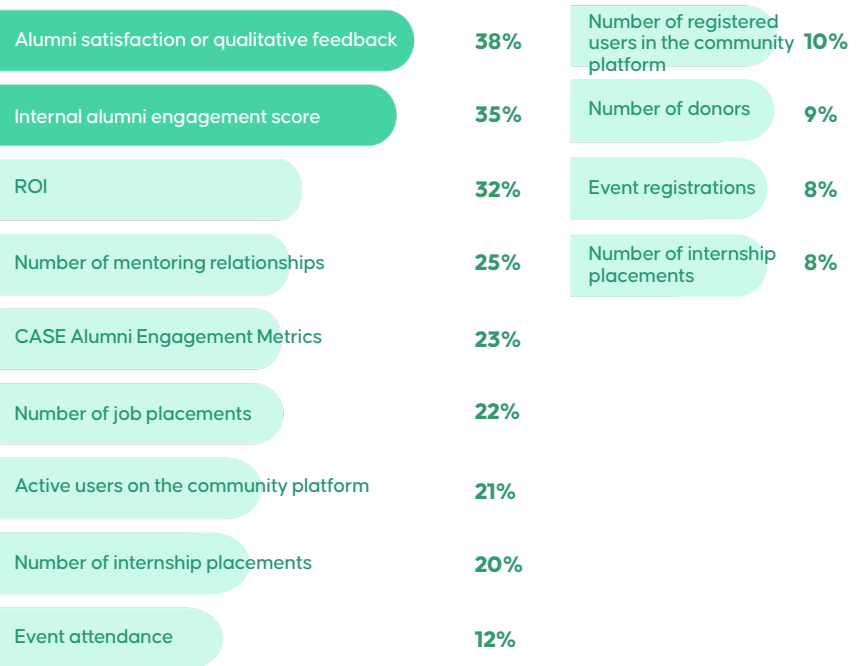


In order of importance, rank the key performance indicators you use to measure success for your entire engagement program

- #1 Event attendance
- #2 Event registrations
- #3 Number of donors
- #4 Active users on community platform
- #5 Total dollar amount of donations
- #6 Number of users registered in your community platform
- #7 Internal alumni engagement score
- #8 Number of mentoring relationships
- #9 Return on Investment (ROI)
- #10 CASE Alumni Engagement Metrics
- #11 Number of job placements
- #12 Number of internship placements



What KPIs do you feel like you are lacking and want?



Alumni satisfaction isn't clearly defined

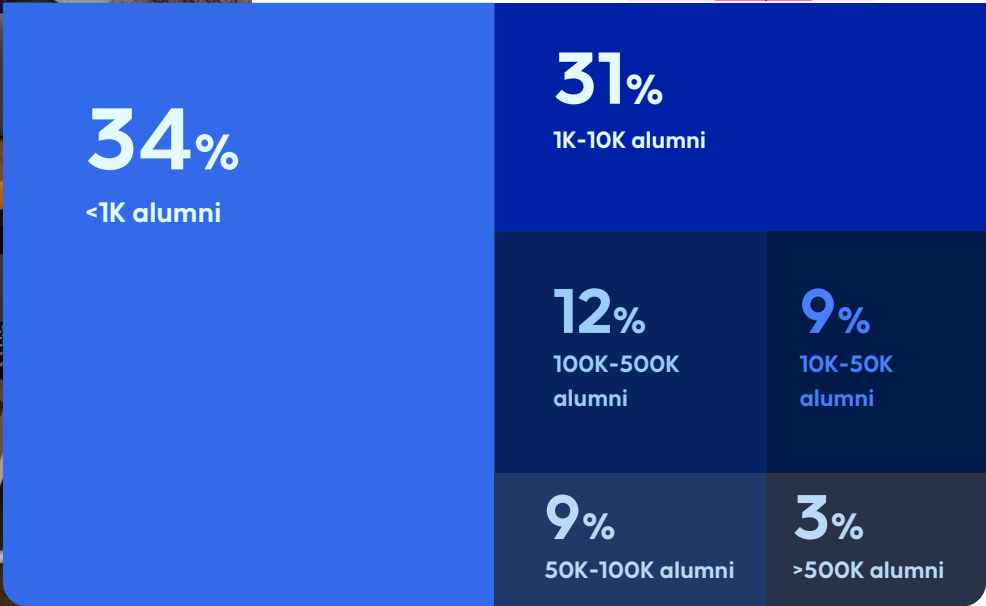
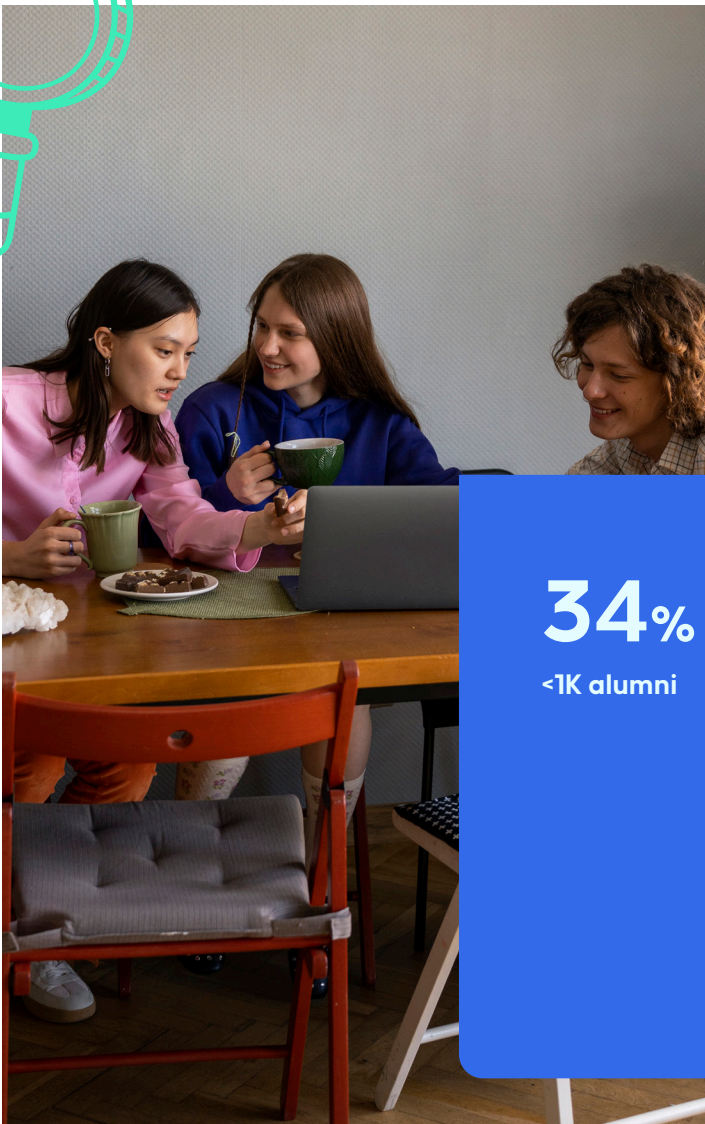
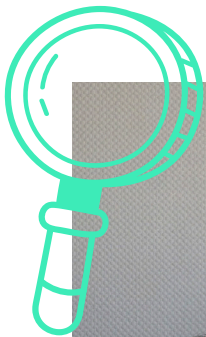
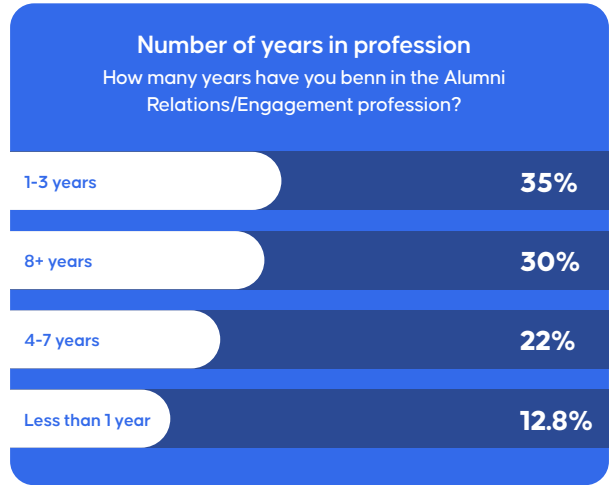
Teams see the value of alumni satisfaction, with 49% using these scores as a measure of program success. However, it is also the most frequently cited KPI that teams feel they lack.

Most teams (46%) fall in the middle of the road when it comes to how well they feel they are meeting expectations of alumni.



Methodology

This report represents the findings from over 200 respondents who represent alumni relations professionals at higher education and private K-12 institutions around the world. Questions covered topics including alumni programming and services, alumni communication channels and tactics, technology usage, and more. The average number of contactable alumni specified by survey respondents is ~64,000.



Next steps

The insights gleaned from this survey paint a clearer picture of alumni engagement today. As alumni engagement departments seek to navigate this new landscape, this data can provide a better understanding of how peer institutions are reaching alumni today, channels driving engagement growth, and areas of opportunity to better serve alumni.



Test emerging channels like texting and video to reach alumni more effectively.

While virtually all teams are finding success with email as an outreach tool, alumni today expect organizations to meet them where they are – on their phones. Video and text messaging can be impactful additions to an alumni outreach strategy.

Build out formal mentoring programs to foster deeper engagement.

Many engagement teams today are still not offering formal mentoring as part of their alumni program, yet it's the most valued alumni service, as ranked by alumni themselves. Use a digital alumni platform that offers built-in mentoring capabilities to streamline and scale program growth.

Take a closer look at your tech stack.

With just a small portion of teams saying they are meeting alumni expectations, and yet a vast majority not planning to implement new technology next year, it's imperative that teams examine their current tech stack to identify gaps and opportunities to better reach and engage alumni.

Prioritize career services & networking offerings.

Most engagement teams aren't using job and internship-related metrics as a key measure of program success. However, alumni themselves rank career services as one of the top services of value from their alma mater. Teams should consider a renewed focus on these programs.



About Gravyty

Gravyty is an all-in-one alumni & donor engagement platform that empowers institutions to build thriving communities and fundraise more effectively. Gravyty's alumni community platform enables alumni relations and career services teams to engage their alumni and constituents anytime, anywhere.

Gravyty empowers schools to build a thriving, supportive network to fuel their missions with features like automated mentoring, job and internship board, custom newsletters, dedicated affinity groups, and built-in video messaging. And it's proven — more than 2,000 leading colleges and universities around the world trust Graduway from Gravyty to power their alumni networks of more than 34 million members combined. Learn more at gravyty.com.

Learn more at gravyty.com