

When you leave a firm,  
does it have to leave you?

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EY

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working world

## How EY reconnected with its alumni network to drive growth

EY is a global enterprise of 200,000 employees, but with a global alumni footprint of over 800,000 people that have moved from EY to other businesses. Activating this powerful network on LinkedIn can make a major contribution to building EY's brand and contributing to exponential growth.

For EY to achieve its ambitious vision of being a US\$50 billion firm by 2020, the wide-ranging network of former employees, many of whom go on to hold positions of influence in major businesses, have a critical role to play. These key relationships with alumni are both important in building the brand and of course, are a hugely valuable asset in delivering growth.

EY recognizes that the most important aspect in working with alumni is to really rebuild the emotional connections with the people and teams they worked with in the past. In LinkedIn, EY found a platform to identify them with confidence - and appeal on both a rational and emotional level.

**EY Alumni** Mark Weinberger, EY's Global Chairman & CEO reflects on lessons he's learned in the process of leaving and returning to EY numerous times. <https://goo.gl/OgcEvM>



**Mark Weinberger: Why I Left EY Three Times — But Joined Four**

goo.gl - For many people, voluntarily leaving a job can be awkward, uncomfortable or downright unpleasant. But it almost never should be. It's possible, and also important, to make the transition between jobs a positive experience.

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Sujith S Pillai, Vinayachandran Nair, PMP +8

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### The Challenge:

- Activate EY's network on LinkedIn of 500,000 alumni and employees to increase its reach significantly and drive exponential growth
- Target alumni across the US, Canada and Europe
- Increase awareness of the EY Alumni Network and the benefits it offers former employees
- Drive registrations to the EY Alumni Network
- Reactivate an emotional connection with EY

### The solution:

- LinkedIn Group federation targeting to identify influential alumni ready for a rejuvenated relationship with EY
- Sponsored Updates to build the emotional connection
- Sponsored InMail to provide a direct call to action

### Why LinkedIn?

- Targeting capability to identify official and unofficial members of EY's alumni groups and those with the strongest appetite for re-engaging
- Appropriate professional context for EY to reach out to former employees, with 70% of current employees already connected to alumni
- The platform that alumni already use to engage with one another through discussion groups

### Results:

- Eight hundred and thirty-three registrations for the EY Alumni Network in just six days
- Open rate of 53% and click-through rate of 67%
- Huge engagement levels among existing employees exceeding industry and EY benchmarks

## The alumni network's platform of choice

LinkedIn offered a range of important advantages when it came to activating EY alumni. As the world's largest professional network, it provided a natural environment for reaching out to former employees, without the risk of appearing to spam them for short-term gain. Many alumni themselves are already using LinkedIn to connect with their fellows through EY-related discussion groups, and LinkedIn's analysis showed that 70% of current employees had at least one former employee among their LinkedIn connections. Group federation targeting helped to focus EY's efforts on well-connected former employees who were predisposed to respond, and could influence other alumni to do the same.

## Balancing emotional connection with a clear call to action

EY knew that the most important outcome in building its alumni network would be to reactivate the personal and emotional relationship to the business. "We needed to remember that at the heart of these relationships are the people we were friends with, played sport and socialized with, and who trusted each other absolutely," says Elena Hickey Saroli.

The business used a combination of Sponsored Updates and Sponsored InMail to build an emotional connection before following up with a direct call to action. The Sponsored Updates helped to build an emotional connection, while Sponsored InMail provided a very appropriate channel for prompting alumni to re-establish the relationship. This layered strategy produced spectacular results, including open and click-through rates well above benchmarks – and 833 registrations to the network in the first six days.

*"Our vision for the future of EY has a major role for the alumni network. We believe that you are an alumnus from the moment you join the company, not the moment you leave. We treat our ongoing relationship with our people as an immensely important asset for our business strategy. And LinkedIn has proven a fantastic platform for bringing that to life."*



Elena Hickey Saroli  
Global Alumni Leader  
EY

