

AQUENT
GYMNASIUM

Training talent for new opportunities: Aquent Gymnasium

At LinkedIn, our vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. That's why we were inspired to hear about staffing firm Aquent's efforts to bridge the skills gap through Aquent Gymnasium, a free massively open online course (or MOOC) created with the goal of training talent in key skills needed in today's economy.

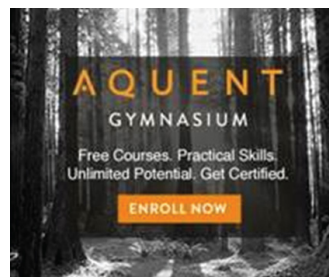
Aquent focuses on placing digital designers, developers, and marketers. With the rapid pace of technical change in these fields, Aquent's leadership regularly heard from clients that it was becoming more and more difficult to find talent with the necessary skills. They recognized in this an opportunity to bridge this skills gap by training marketing and creative professionals – and shortly thereafter, Gymnasium was born.

The Aquent team worked with subject matter experts and industry leaders to build materials for intensive, online courses focused on the skills identified by clients as necessary but largely missing from the available talent pool – for example, responsive web design, UX fundamentals and jQuery.

After an internal soft launch to candidates in Aquent's own database drew a positive response and proved the value of the program, the team needed a way to target individuals outside of their own networks to get the word out about Gymnasium. They turned to LinkedIn as a primary channel for paid media to market Gymnasium more broadly.

"Our strategy is to continue nurturing existing relationships with contacts in our database, but also to grow this user base," noted Nidhi Modi, Director of Digital Marketing. "LinkedIn's ability to target specific interest groups made it an obvious choice to promote the courses to a broader audience in order to find new candidates to enroll."

Aquent's ads on LinkedIn allowed them to target highly specific audiences with relevant messaging, at a lower cost per lead than other marketing channels. "Because of the demand created with the help of LinkedIn," Modi said, "we evolved from running just one course at a time to running three concurrently. We plan to launch ten more courses this year, and LinkedIn will be part of our strategy to get the word out to talent."



Examples of Aquent's ads on LinkedIn

All in all, Gymnasium has been a huge success for the Aquent team, for their clients, and for the talent they place. Modi said, "At the completion of the Gymnasium course, the student is asked if they want Aquent to represent them in their job search. It's the beginning of a relationship with new potential placements that have the skills our clients are looking for." And in addition, "the courses have helped position Aquent as educators, thought leaders and partners who understand the role talent plays in our clients' businesses. It's been a great impact on our brand."

For more information about Aquent Gymnasium, visit:
gymnasium.aquent.com.