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A company that uses, say, Twitter and Facebook to connect with students on a human level and shares meaningful stories would have gone a long way towards attracting and retaining right talent.
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Hey there,

Every hiring manager dreams of spotting the right talent early and snatching them away before the competitors have even had a chance. In this race to the finish line, though, organizations often forget that they’re making the same mistake that marketers in crowded markets often make: failing to distinguish themselves. Every recruitment drive follows standard practices to screen and hire students, with surprisingly little focus on how to attract the best.

While this may have worked earlier, changing business conditions as well as employee aspirations have made campus recruitment a completely different ball-game in the present. Today, organizations need not just skilled employees, but people who can take on leadership roles. For identifying such talent, companies need to look beyond traditional methods.

The way forward is to innovate your hiring process, which might also involve a significant investment into how you project yourself to potential employees. You also need to experiment with new ways of hiring, and see what delivers the best results. This e-book presents five best practices and examples of campus hiring that you can benefit from.
1. Begin Early
The Power of Campus Connect Programs

Ever heard someone say, “Well begun is half done”? While the dictum is jaded enough to make people cringe every time it’s used, it has stood the test of time. For campus hiring, the way to begin early is to start interacting with campuses well before the hiring season.

Take Infosys, for example, which is amongst the paramount IT recruiters in India. When the company realized in 2011 that it was going to face severe talent crunch soon, it decided that the only way to get employable graduates was to turn them into employable ones!

Thus was born the company’s flagship Campus Connect program, which now boasts of deep affinity with academia and helps Infosys groom and acquire the suitable talent.

An overkill for talent acquisition? Not if you look at the astronomical benefits that accrue over time and propel brands forward. It’s not for nothing that Infosys is among the top IT companies in India, today.
2. Use Online Storytelling to Attract Talent

Imagine yourself in the shoes of a graduate for a moment. The professional world is a mystery to you, and all the companies that visit your campus present themselves as the best places to work at. How do you really know which one is genuine, when you hardly understand what you want yourself?

Now let’s switch sides. You want this talented and promising graduate in your company, but how do you tell him what you have to offer? Presentations and motivational videos are a good try, but they are far too limited as a medium of expression.

Instead, focus on making the human side of your organization stand out.

One way to do that is to leverage social media by building a strong online presence.

The graduates want to be convinced that you’re a great company before they join you. You can do that by gradually building an online personality that provides a human face to your organization. Building an online personality involves:

- Sharing real-life (video) testimonials from employees. But make sure you involve everyone from the bottom to top, and not only senior management.

- Offering case studies that show how young, unsure graduates were able to grow in confidence and skill by undergoing training at your company.

- Showcasing how the company has evolved. Showing the struggles and failures along with your successes will increase trust and help students relate with you more.

- Having a dedicated social engagement program, like Deloitte has (see the details below).
Case Study
Deloitte Campus Connection Program

Deloitte has made great strides in distinguishing their online presence. The company has a dedicated Twitter feed run by its employees (@DeloitteCampus) which aims to connect with campus students and shows them how much the company values its human resources. Here’s a screenshot from its Twitter feed:

The most important thing to remember here is that online presence is the result of months of vigilance and hard work. You might want to hire a consultant to work out a personalized strategy for your organization.
3. Pre-Placement
Sell Dreams, Not Statistics

The pre-placement presentation delivered by most companies follows more or less a standard format. It usually includes recruitment managers introducing their respective businesses, their activities at present, followed by a list noteworthy achievements, case studies, clients and so on, as several speakers change place on the podium. After a bevy of data-heavy charts, the presentation closes with a stock motivational video.

If the above sounds too close to home for you, it may be time to take a second look at your approach as well, before you’re dismissed off as yet another boring company. The best way to evaluate the effectiveness of your approach is to step back, and look at things from a student’s perspective. All the companies that arrive on campus have comparable, but time-worn programs, spokespersons dressed alike, similar statistics and success stories, and all try their best to convince students that they’re the best in what they do.

In all this egotistical muscle-flexing, the focus of the recruitment drive is often ignored: the student.

So what do students want?

Most students don’t demand much; an assured offer for a job, with the commitment of a salary. But if you’re looking for outstanding talent, you need to understand that these students, more than anything else, want to excel at what they do. So why not try a different pitch the next time?

Instead of selling stories of your excellence, try selling them dreams.
If you are not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you’ve launched too late.

- Reid Hoffman

Here’s how you can do it during the pre-placement presentation:

- Describe what a typical day at work is like. The more detailed you can get here, the better.

- Talk about the good and the bad points of the role for which you are hiring. For instance, if the role requires frequent client calls from a different time zone (which will mean late-night shifts), let them know upfront. After all, you want only those who are a good fit for the job.

- Paint the vision of their future. Help them envision their careers with your company, in five, ten, fifteen years from now. What can they aspire to? A high-paying career? Leading the waves of change in the industry? Or becoming a renowned expert? Once you have presented a dream, follow it up with real-life examples of people who were once newcomers but today are hailed as experts.

Remember, the key to getting the attention of talented potential hires is to make an emotional case; once you’ve won their hearts, the rest is easy.
4. From Resumes to Assessments

Resumes tell a lot about the candidate, but they can’t convey the whole story. Same goes for interviews, which can guide you in the right direction but won’t be able to quantify your gut feeling. Say hello to assessments, the scientific way to measure the effectiveness of candidates, whether it be knowledge domain or behavioral skills. Using assessments, you can verify the skills advertised in candidate resumes, as well as figure out their unknown strengths and weaknesses. This will help you perform a statistical analysis on the candidates and identify potential leaders early.

However, for maximum impact, assessments should be online.

Why Assessments Should Be Online

The world over, assessments are being migrated to online platforms. Why? That’s because online assessments offer several distinguishing advantages over their paper-based counterparts:

- **Relevance**: Certain jobs require demonstration of hands-on skills, which is not possible on paper. Examples are programming questions, design exercises, timed drills, simulations, etc., for which online assessments are the only effective way.

- **Cost-effectiveness**: Online assessments incur virtually no operational overhead, which saves big on costs. For organizations that have to visit several campuses every year, this becomes a considerable advantage.
**Scalability:** Because online assessments do not require extra infrastructure, these are highly scalable. This means the same assessment can be rolled out for your country-wide recruitment drive in a matter of minutes. In instances where last-minute changes to the assessment need to be made, this feature is indispensable.

**Reliability:** One of the biggest hurdles in assessments is dealing with cheating. When you have offline assessments monitored by proctors, you can’t be 100% sure that everything will go as planned. Online assessments overcome this hurdle by offering webcam proctoring, which uses sophisticated techniques to monitor the test-taker via a webcam, and eliminates chances of cheating. This drastically reduces the proctor to student ratio, offering a much better alternative to traditional practices.
So what do students want? Most students don’t demand much; an assured offer for a job, with the commitment of a salary. But if you’re looking for outstanding talent, you need to understand that these students, more than anything else, want to excel at what they do. So why not try a different pitch the next time?

Instead of selling stories of your excellence, try selling them dreams.

Case Study

University of Kent

How do assessments help during campus recruitment? According to a research conducted by the University of Kent, assessments are far more accurate than any other method of candidate selection. Following are the estimates:

- Assessments: 68%
- Structured Interviews: 63%
- Aptitude Tests: 54%
- Personality Tests: 38%
- Bio-Data Forms: 38%
- Interviews: 15%
- References: 12%

In other words, combining assessments with other methods is your best bet in assessing talent.

As human beings, we like to have predictability and precision. This is why case studies and assessments traditionally have had a single-minded focus on precision: get the answer right, you’re in; get it wrong, you’re out. While precision has its value, enforcing it too strictly when recruiting - especially on campus - can make you overlook the essence of being human: creativity.

Why should creativity matter in campus hiring, especially when you are not hiring for artistic jobs?

That’s because creativity is not limited to the arts, but is mandatory to solve problems that are not well defined. Such scenarios occur often in business.

The book Creativity in Business, which is based on a Stanford University course, has this to say about the role of creativity in solving business problems:
In management, problems arise as different or new situations present themselves and they often require novel solutions. Frequently, it is difficult to see solutions to problems by thinking in a conventional fashion. Logical thinking takes our existing knowledge and uses rules of inference to produce new knowledge. However, because logical thinking progresses in a series of steps, each one dependent on the last, this new knowledge is merely an extension of what we know already, rather than being truly new. It would seem, therefore, that logical thinking has only a limited role to play in helping managers to be creative. The need for creative problem solving has arisen as a result of the inadequacies of logical thinking. It is a method of using imagination along with techniques which use analogies, associations and other mechanisms to help produce insights into problems.

So what can you do to look for the creative ones? You can start by not looking for absolute answers and instead embrace ambiguity. How you do that depends on you. You might want to use more subjective questions instead of objective ones. Or maybe introduce case studies that require novel, if incomplete, answers.

Case Study
Boston Consulting Group

A good demonstration of infusing creative exercises into campus hiring drives comes from the recent efforts of the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). When the BCG team found that it was having to interview more candidates than it had estimated (resulting in reduction of time per interview), it included case studies in the test that were ambiguous on purpose. The intent was to see how originally and creatively the students were able to think, and how fast they could arrive at a solution. Because there was no right answer, the hiring team also had to undergo special training to assess student responses.
Resumes tell a lot about the candidate, but they can't convey the whole story. Same goes for interviews, which can guide you in the right direction but won't be able to quantify your gut feeling. Say hello to assessments, the scientific way to measure the effectiveness of candidates, whether it be knowledge domain or behavioral skills. Using assessments, you can verify the skills advertised in candidate resumes, as well as figure out their unknown strengths and weaknesses. This will help you perform a statistical analysis on the candidates and identify potential leaders early. However, for maximum impact, assessments should be online.

Well, it's to see others do it and then try it out yourself. In the same spirit, we present here some examples of unusual campus recruitment drives where the companies went beyond established practices.

Why not get inspired and do something similar the next time you conduct a campus drive?!
Examples of Uncommon Campus Hiring Strategies

Let’s Talk Over Dinner

A trend quickly becoming popular is that of informal networking events at college campuses. Companies want to get to know students at a more personal level, and these events provide an opportunity to get away from the influence of academia and get to know the person. Interviews over dinners are common, where recruiters also judge a candidate’s sense of dressing, confidence-level, etc.

JP Morgan loves this format, and keeps experimenting with banker to student ratio to arrive at a better system. If you are hiring for high-responsibility positions, maybe you too can adopt this approach.
Conversation is Everything

Citibank has evolved its hiring strategy to the point where it thinks that rigid tests are no longer necessary. Instead, the company believes in earmarking students while they're still in their first year of graduation. The potential hires are presented case studies to see how they approach a problem. For students that finish college and are still deemed worthy, the company conducts three rounds of “conversations.” Focused on body language and mindset, these interviews aim at assessing how the candidate will fare in the long run.

That's right.

No tests, no rigid structures. Quite a deviation, but it works for Citibank!

Got a Facebook profile?

Facebook is not just a giant party where friends like to chat and post photographs. Some recruiters such as HCL have integrated social media into their recruitment programs. These allow the companies to not only have a wider reach into the student community, but also engage and assess them before more serious interest is expressed.

A company that uses, say, Twitter and Facebook to connect with students on a human level and shares meaningful stories would have gone a long way towards attracting and retaining right talent.
Parting Note

Campus recruitment has evolved. The really bright students are not looking for just another job; they’re looking for a place where they can be a part of transformation. To organizations of today, the choice is clear: innovate or perish.

We hope this e-book has given you enough food for thought to get started in the right direction. Use these examples in your next campus recruitment, or get inspired and try something totally new.

Even if not everything goes as planned, you'll end up with some invaluable insights.

Godspeed
What is Mettl?

Mettl is a Saas based assessment platform that enables organizations to create customized assessments for use across the entire employee lifecycle, beginning with pre-hiring screening and candidate skills assessment, training and development programs for employees/students, certification exams, contests and more.

TAKE A FREE TRIAL