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# 5 OVERLOOKED YET ESSENTIAL STEPS FOR EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

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Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission

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**Educational partnerships are designed to give companies a competitive advantage.** Such a relationship can **help an organization advance** its current employees' skills, attract the right new talent, and more. [Click here for 5 Must-Haves in an Educational Partner article.](#)

But companies may miss out on these exciting and **game-changing benefits** by ignoring key steps in the process. After all, while the educational institution can provide all the resources needed – such as internal communication announcements, posters and information packets – it doesn't have first-hand access into its partner organization to change culture.

Whether your company recently formed an **educational partnership** or has had one for years, focus on these 5 tactics to **benefit from the relationship.**

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# OBTAIN STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

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It's extremely difficult to build awareness of an educational partnership without the support of other leaders at your organization. To encourage positive sentiment towards the initiative:

Your educational partner may have such data available that you'll be able to utilize in this effort.

- Show leaders how the initiative ties into the company's overall mission and vision
- Present statistics that show how investing in your employees' education helps retain them and increase their morale
- Share case studies of businesses in your industry

# PROMOTE INTERNALLY TO BUILD AWARENESS

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There's a common misconception that if a company benefit is available, employees will take advantage of it. That's not necessarily the case – especially if employees don't know the benefit exists. To build awareness internally, it's vital to send out a company-wide communication, announcing the new educational partnership, why the relationship was formed, and how employees can benefit from it.

That initial communication is a good first step, but a thoughtful marketing plan that identifies unique touch points and key events can make a more substantial impact. Reminder messages should be distributed throughout the year, such as at the start of a new year when staff looks to achieve new goals or at the end of summer during back-to-school season. Additionally, your HR reps could also include the offerings in their email signature.



# MAKE THE PARTNERSHIP PART OF YOUR EMPLOYEE CULTURE

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Taking things a step further than initial brand awareness, it's important to make the value of education and ongoing development a part of your employee culture. Create a calendar of monthly reminders to help you stay on track, like the one here.

- Add details about the educational benefit to the HR section of your company's intranet
- Include features of the benefit in any new employee benefits training
- List bullet on educational assistance (along with other employee benefits, like 401K matching) within each new job posting at the company
- Create small information kits for managers to share at team meetings
- Hold education and benefits fairs at each office location
- Deliver promotional flyers to employees' homes

# MAKE THE PARTNERSHIP PART OF YOUR EMPLOYEE CULTURE

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Following the initial launch, identify individuals who have taken advantage of the offering, and invite them to serve on a team of advocates who can share their successes with other employees.

Setting up this team of recent grads and current students may be time-consuming or considered a stretch goal, but it can help your organization reach significant milestones.

# ASSESS PERFORMANCE AND OPTIMIZE

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Reporting is an essential component in determining if your educational partnership is working. Your educational partner should work with you to provide performance data and it's important to review it thoroughly.

Feedback on specific events, such as results of an on-site education fair, will enable you to see what's working and what needs improvement. Meanwhile, quarterly data will show trends, allowing you to tie spikes to specific tactics (e.g., employee emails, in mail flyers, etc.) at your organization. Both types of metrics will provide you with information you need to identify successes and future opportunities.



# GET FEEDBACK FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES

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In addition to external reporting, you should obtain insights directly from employees. Distributing an annual survey will allow you to learn what percentage of your employees are aware of the educational benefits, why certain individuals decided to take advantage of the offering, and why others have yet to look into it. Having the employee perspective will provide you with an objective assessment of what they need and want to stay engaged with their jobs.

**Following one or two of these tactics may bring some success. But implementing all five will allow your educational partnership to do what it's intended: help your organization keep and grow its talent.**



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Chris Dwyer is the Vice President of Educational Alliances at Colorado Technical University. He leads the university's efforts in assisting partner organizations to advance their current employees' skills, and attract and retain top talent.

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