

Building Relationships with Alumni using LinkedIn

Overview

In September 2013 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published a research paper on 'The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK'¹ which set out the results of their research into the wider benefits of international study in the UK to the graduates, their countries of origin and to the UK.

The alumni interviewed had extremely positive memories and perceptions of their experiences of study in the UK, and those perceptions had become more positive over time. In particular, alumni were positive about the contribution that their study in the UK had made to their career progression and had a strong expectation that further impact would ensue. A summary of the fifteen main benefit types identified by the research appears in the chart below and you can find detailed information on each benefit in the body of the report.

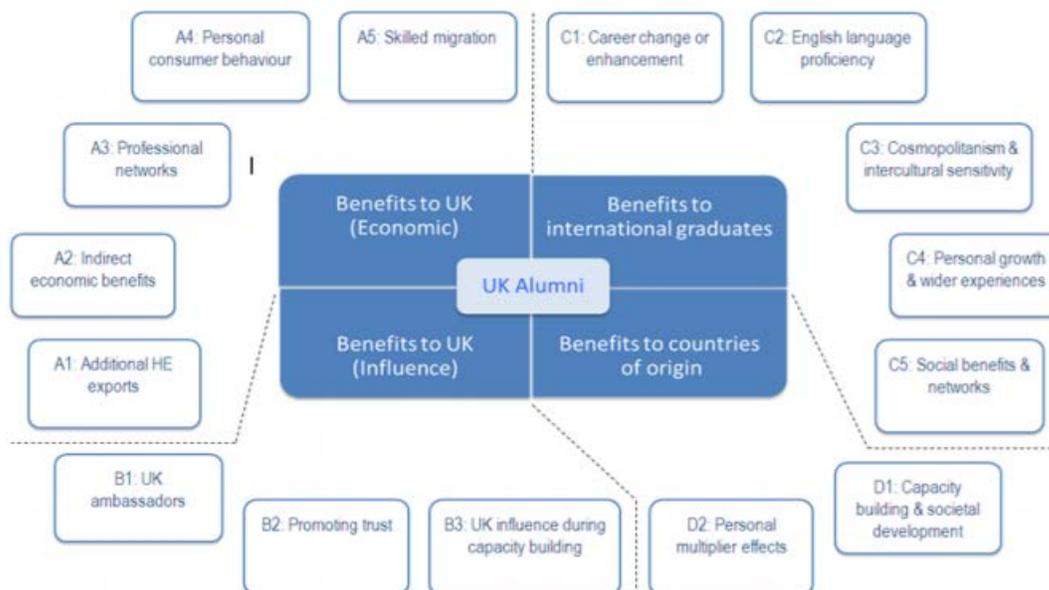


Figure 1: A depiction of the fifteen benefit types identified by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills grouped into four main categories.

A Developing View of Alumni Relationships

Traditionally, universities have viewed alumni primarily as a source of influence and fundraising. More recently, however, the importance of alumni in building international networks, in providing mentoring, in delivering inspiring entrepreneurship education and encouraging student success, and above all in understanding and addressing global grand challenges have received greater emphasis. Accordingly, universities now seek to engage alumni in a much more diverse range of programmes, activities and events.

¹ The full report is available from <http://bit.ly/1n6024g>

Using LinkedIn

In the networked age connecting and engaging with alumni has become easier than ever before. The University of Huddersfield has a student and alumni network on the ‘world’s largest professional network’ LinkedIn which is now around 50,000 strong. The functionality provided by the platform makes it easy to identify alumni in specific countries, sectors, businesses and roles and with a little effort it is also possible to find distinguished and influential alumni in the UK and overseas.²



A screenshot of the interface appears below. You will need to have a free LinkedIn account to use the site.

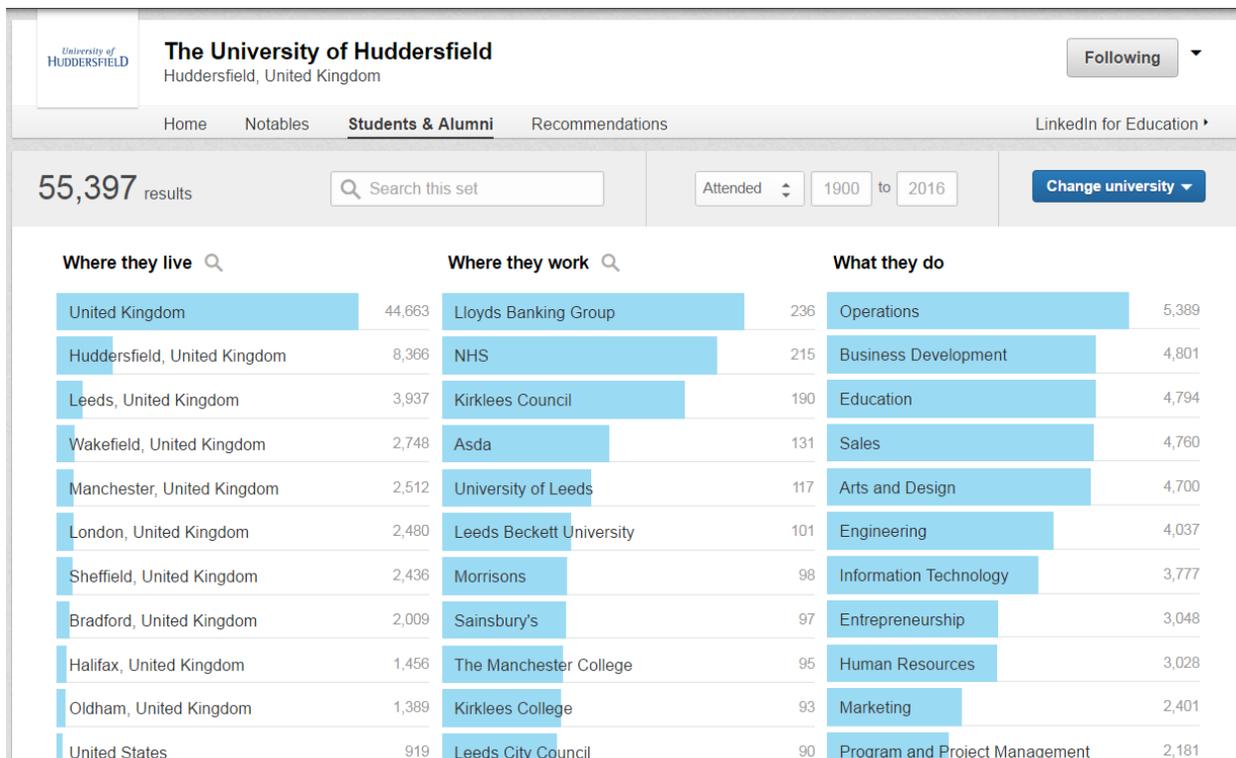


Figure 2: The University of Huddersfield LinkedIn Student and Alumni page.

It is possible to filter the results to give a more manageable – and more specific – list of potential contacts. Filtering for our alumni in the Netherlands who work as entrepreneurs, for example, brings up a list 33 graduates, five of which are captured in the screenshot below. You can access the full LinkedIn profile, including details of education, employment and expertise by clicking on each image.

² You can access the database at <http://bit.ly/2gEJVhk>

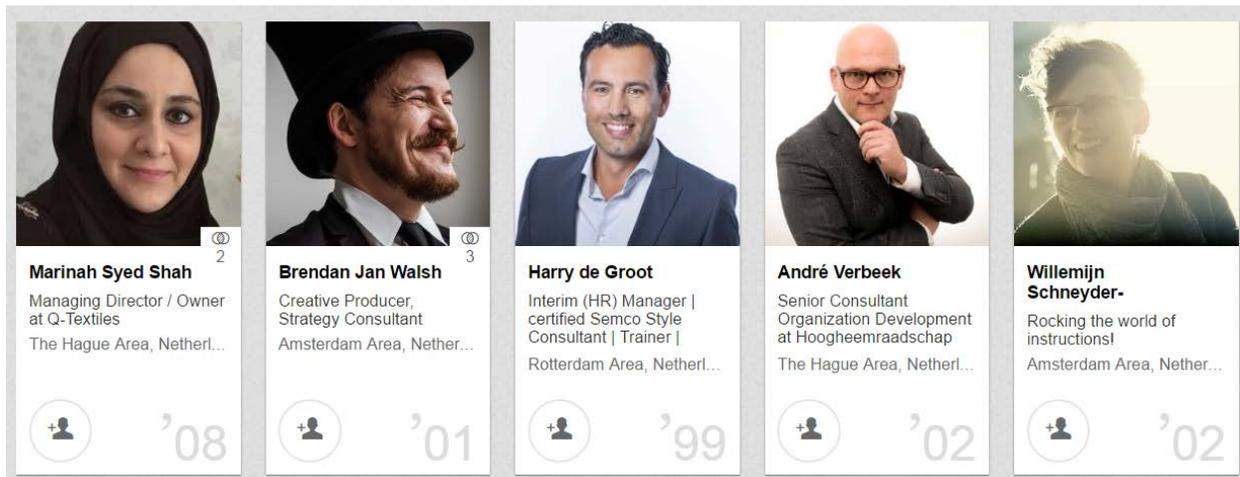


Figure 3: Five of the University's entrepreneurial alumni based in the Netherlands.

The large numbers in grey show the year the alumna/alumnus graduated from the University.

If you are planning a public engagement or regional socio-economic development event, a recruitment visit, a mentoring or training programme or any other activity or initiative that could benefit from the expertise and/or international dimension and exposure that our alumni offer then please consider reaching out to them via LinkedIn.³

If you think of an innovative way of engaging our alumni please let us know and share it with your colleagues across the University.

If you require any further assistance or guidance please contact the alumni staff in Marketing and Communications.

Ray Dance / James Devitt / Ian Pitchford
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³ A recent study commissioned by the Australian Government, for example, found that global leaders in entrepreneurship education expose young people to the best international startup ecosystems and cultures by engaging successful entrepreneur alumni as guest lecturers, mentors or teachers (see <http://bit.ly/28SfUXu>).