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Institution: **London South Bank University**

Type of proposal: **Workshop Paper**

Title of Paper: **Fostering an alumni “Give-Back” culture to help develop student self-esteem.**

Conference theme: **The changing student**

## **ABSTRACT**

### ***Rationale for workshop/poster***

The importance of university–industry links (UIL’s) to the learning environment and to enhancing employability attributes through “real-world” activities is well established (Alfonso *et al* 2012; Cole & Tibby, 2013). High-level UILs can however be difficult to achieve without the benefit of being a ‘top’ ranked university, perhaps resulting in a rather sporadic flow of opportunities into many HE classrooms, and where they could add greatest value. For example, marketing undergraduates at London South Bank University are often the first in the family to go to University and so employability attributes whilst fundamental to their development and future success are potentially harder to come by.

To overcome this barrier, we have achieved excellent results by actively managing our alumni network through dedicated social media at a course rather than at a University level for over ten years. The informal nature of the network (it is not designed to raise university funds), depends to a large extent on the established relationships between former student and lecturer, and has encouraged a productive “give-back” culture leading to an expanding range of varied and substantial opportunities for current students as the alumni base has matured.

The strategy has won awards because it greatly enhances teaching and learning, and positively influences student employability.

### ***Objectives/outcomes***

This workshop will explain the methods used to manage the network, together with the concerns and issues that arise. We will describe some of the materials developed through UIL’s, which include lectures and workshops, but also mentoring schemes, internships & placements, career opportunities, course development advice and validation panel memberships as well as whole-semester experiential learning through “live” case studies, and commercial and academic research opportunities. The purpose of the session is to stimulate discussion and share ideas with other Business School teaching colleagues to consider applications in their own subject areas and institutions.

### ***Main findings if known:***

The workshop will present summary findings from recent work designed to compare the perceived and actual usefulness of the approach for alumni and for students on various measures including course engagement, and the employability construct proposed by Dacre Pool & Sewell (2007).