

plazza careers

Playbook

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Reverse Engineer Your Top Hires

Unlock traits that make up your best hires and find more like them

Most of us develop intuition on what makes up our top hires – they were an English major who took computer science classes, they participated in varsity rowing, they were in an a capella group in college, they were a straight A student, the list goes on. It’s more anecdotal than scientific, which is where the limits creep in – there’s no way to systematically break down your top hires into traits, and build up searches that find similar students.

With Piazza, every student you hire has a high probability of having a Piazza account. And we have rich information on our students – which classes they’ve taken, which classes they’ve TA’d, and which classes they’ve received professor endorsements in. We’re able to provide you with a list of academic traits for any of your past interns or recent grads.

Say Shelby was that star intern; just pop her name into the Find Students Similar To feature and see a list of her traits – she’s a top student in Machine Learning, a TA to an algorithms class, a college-level varsity athlete, coding since the age of 13, and a top student in at least 5 classes. Now I run a search by selecting the traits that I care most about, and within seconds, I find hundreds more like her.

I can then send a highly personalized note to a student who matches Shelby’s profile: “Hi Melissa, I noticed your profile looked a lot like one of our past star interns – she was a TA in algorithms and had been coding since a young age, not to mention involved in varsity-level sports... do you have time to hop on a call? I’d love to tell you more about what we’re doing.”

Use the power of our network and data to reverse engineer your star hires and find more like them.



Double Down on Referral Networking

The most powerful way to tap into intern and recent grad networks

Until now, you probably had to chase your interns and recent grads to get the names of their top classmates. Even then, there was no systematic way they could list out names – they were left scratching their heads, trying to give you a suggestion or two. Maybe they leaned on tools like LinkedIn or class websites to give a few more but nothing had all of their classmates in an orderly fashion.

Every student's entire college network is on Piazza, and students have access to their network via the platform. Every student they've ever taken a class with is organized and searchable by class. So now all you need to do is invite your interns and recent grads to refer their classmates to you.

Prompt them with specific roles you have in mind: "Hey Ryan, any computer science majors that come to mind that would be well suited for our FDE role, more extroverted and with strong leaderships skills?" or "Hey Ryan, can you go through your Machine Learning classmates and tell me who'd be best for our data science team?"

Ryan can log on and at his own leisure, browse classes he's taken on Piazza and scan a list of his classmates. With a simple click of a button, he's able to refer classmates to you (his classmates don't know they're being referred) with relevant notes. You receive an email with the information and also which classes they took together.

You can now reach out to referrals with a highly personalized message: "Hey Melissa, Ryan mentioned you could be really great for our FDE role, given your strong leadership skills. This is a customer-facing role that requires a strong technical foundation – would you have a minute to chat?"

If you'd rather make it synchronous, you can sit down with your interns and recent grads over lunch, and review their classmates one by one, together.

For the first time ever, be systematic when tapping into your interns' and recent grads' networks, and recruit their top picks.



Support Special Initiatives on Diversity

Generate broad awareness for high-value, diversity-focused events

The most strategic companies are using Piazza to create awareness of and drive attendance to their diversity-focused initiatives. Because of our community of 250,000+ diverse technical students, from women to African-Americans to first-generation college students, recruiters can tap into their networks in the most meaningful ways.

They're launching a campaign to 2,000 of the brightest female engineers in the country, encouraging them to apply to their diversity-focused scholarship: "Hey Samantha, our CTO Shawna is deeply invested in helping women thrive in STEM environments. Our vision for the future involves diverse engineering teams in every industry, and to support this goal, we've started a scholarship for women in engineering. You can apply here, and feel free to reach out if you have any questions."

Or inviting 80 African-American students interning in the NYC area over the summer to a networking reception: "Hey Sean, I noticed that you're in the D.C. area this summer working at CompanyX. Given your involvement in tech, I wanted to invite you to a hosting a diversity networking reception this Friday at 8pm. I hope to see you there!"

Or engaging female students near their headquarters by inviting them to attend a series of talks featuring prominent female founders: "Hey Roxanne, the founder of PiedPiper, Anna Bradbury, will be speaking next week at our headquarters about her experience as a female founder and the importance of encouraging women-in-STEM initiatives. I'd love it if you could stop by, and feel free to bring your friends!"

Build a diverse pipeline by engaging diverse students in the most meaningful ways.



Launch Hypothesis-Based Campaigns

Be data-driven in your approach to recruiting

You probably have theories about what makes a great candidate for any given role. You can easily look at your past hires, identify the standouts, and see what makes them unique. It might be that your best sales people were athletes. Or your brightest engineers were eagle scouts. It could even be a unique combination of academic interests, like studying Computer Engineering and Philosophy.

With Piazza, you can test these hypotheses in a scalable, efficient way. Companies are even using Piazza to A/B test the messages they send, gaining valuable insights into which material (text, video, flyers) are most effective in generating student engagement.

For instance, a recruiter could launch a campaign to every student with dual CS & Art History majors: “Hey James, I saw that you were studying the unique combination of CS and Art History, and I thought I’d reach out. One of our lead engineers had a similar background in school and he’s killing it here. Do you have 15 minutes to talk this week?”

Or run an A/B testing campaign, letting 1,000 students across the country know about the amazing projects their past interns worked on during the summer, using 5 different templates. In one week, you have measurable insights into which template engaged the most students.

Generate powerful insights by testing your recruiting hypotheses.



Source Ahead of Events

Getting the highest ROI when sending executives & engineers on the road

Sending executives and engineers on the road incurs the highest opportunity cost to your business. And up until now there wasn't really an effective way to build relationships ahead of their arrival on campus. You bought resume books and blasted mailing lists, or published an announcement to a job board (the "post and pray" model) to drive attendance. So engineers and executives stood there, and all the while you were praying that students would show up. If you were lucky, you spent some time ahead of your trip scraping class websites to find students and message them. But it was nowhere near as efficient as you wished it could be.

With Piazza, there's both an efficient and effective manner to pre-source, pre-vet, and build meaningful relationships ahead of your team setting foot on campus, so you can justify the opportunity cost.

Run a search like: "Show me PhD students who have taken Computer Security classes at Cornell and received professor endorsements." Send them a message: "Hey, our Founder and CTO Maryanna will be on campus to discuss the problems we're solving in the security space. I saw you have strong domain expertise — I would love to extend a personal invitation for you to come by and say hi to her."

Or, if you're organizing an intimate dinner with your CEO, pre-vet each invitee on culture fit to ensure the dinner is as dynamic as can be. "Hey, I love that you've worked in startups before, and started your own company. I'm trying to pull together a small group of students for an invite-only dinner with our CEO; do you have a minute to hear more about it?"

Make the most of your executives' and engineers' time. Don't let them step foot onto campus blind.



Build Relationships Year Round

Engage students in the spring and summer to build your brand

Competition for young, technical talent is intense. The fall season is a frenzy on campus, with dozens of companies competing for the mindshare of the same handful of students. Ignoring for a minute the fact that the best engineers are the least likely to attend career fairs, there's still the hurdle of having meaningful interactions with the students who do stop by your booth; you have 5 minutes to make an impression, and most of that is filled with pleasantries. By the time you're ready to talk about the stuff that matters, the student has moved on to the next booth.

That's why recruiters are using Piazza to build relationships well ahead of peak recruiting season, making good use of the spring and summer to educate and engage students at their target schools. Then during the Fall, they can leverage those relationships to close the candidates they care about most.

For instance, start in the spring by telling potential future interns about what your last intern class accomplished: "Hey Fred, our lead engineer on the data science team is going to be hosting an AMA on Twitter, where he'll answer any and all questions you may have about the kinds of projects our intern worked on. Tweet us your questions anytime on Friday between 10am and 4pm!"

And over the summer, invite folks interning in your area to your office to have dinner with some of the engineering team: "Hey Melissa, I saw that you're interning at companyY in SF. I bet those projects are really cool. I wanted to let you know that we're gathering some interns working in the city to grab dinner with our engineering team next Tuesday. We're excited to share what our interns have been working on this summer. Let me know if you'd like to join!"

Build meaningful relationships in the off-season as your competitive advantage during peak season.



Launch Brand Building Campaigns

Build mindshare year-round so you're top-of-mind when it comes time to recruit

We're all competing in the war for talent. Which is why we show up to campus with raffle prizes, t-shirts, free food, ice cream, gift bags and more. Perhaps that gets students to engage with us, drop off their resume, and even take a step or two in the interview process. But when time comes for them to choose where to work, brand is what ultimately allows a company to win.

We're not talking brand in the sense of "have I heard of you?" We're talking brand in the sense of "do I know you, and am I excited by who you are?" This kind of brand takes time and energy to build. It requires building meaningful relationships. Students want insights to questions like: "What impact will I have? What do interns work on? Who are the people I'll work alongside?" When time comes to choose between offers, they're going with the one where they have answers, and they're excited about it.

Brand campaigns on Piazza are an easy and effective way to build brand, at scale, so you win in the war for talent.

Launch a campaign to students who've taken Distributed Systems and Computer Networking classes, inviting them to a virtual tech talk: "Hi, we're hosting a virtual tech talk with our engineers on the subject of distributed systems. I thought this would be relevant given your coursework, and that you might enjoy seeing how our engineers apply principles from academia to solve real world problems."

Launch a campaign to students who have started a company in college or have been coding since the age of 11, inviting them to learn more about your company's founding story: "Hi Steve, given your entrepreneurial background I thought you might find our Founder's story fascinating and directly relevant to your interests. I'd love to share more about her story."

Launch a campaign to business and finance majors who've taken computer science classes, inviting them to learn more on why a consulting role at your firm gives them a well-rounded start to their career.

Campaigns are your greatest competitive advantage come August. When other companies are first saying hello to students, you'll already be closing them.



Build International Pipeline

Connect with the brightest students, anywhere in the world

Recruiting top talent is a global operation – whether that is opening a new office in the UK or staffing a headquarters in Australia. And before Piazza, companies would use separate tools, teams, and strategies depending on the country they were in. But today, recruiting organizations are using Piazza to reach an international audience with zero additional overhead.

The power of Piazza for international sourcing starts with our community of 200,000+ students in over 90 countries. From the UK & Turkey to New Zealand & India, companies are messaging top students about career opportunities and events.

Like launching a campaign to 600 students at the University of Auckland: “Hey John, we’re looking for software engineers to join us in Sydney – given your domain expertise I thought you’d be a good fit. You can apply online here, or if you want to learn more we’ll be on campus hosting an info session next Wednesday at 6pm.”

Even better, you can build relationships with a few of the best students on each campus and tap into their networks for referrals: “Hey Mary, it was great chatting the other day! Your passion for using tech to solve real-world problems is apparent, and I’d love to meet more people like you. Do you mind taking 5 minutes to refer some similarly-minded classmates of yours?”

Built an international pipeline by launching campaigns and leveraging the networks of top students.



Run Laser Targeted Searches

Find and connect with students who have the qualities you care about

Up until now there was never a way to efficiently find all the college students you'd want to hire, in a single online database. Even if there were stubs (name, school, major) on sites like LinkedIn, you lacked powerful profile data on which to target. Maybe you employed an army of sourcers to run countless google searches, look up numerous github profiles, and scrape thousands of course websites – but it wasn't efficient, and it wasn't fun. Filtering on resume books doesn't count either, and that for sure doesn't scale across 1000 universities and 100 countries.

Piazza has changed all that; now you can run laser-targeted searches using the criteria you truly care about to find those who spike on aptitude and attitude. And the best part is, you don't have to worry about overlooking anyone since over one million students at 1500 schools and 90 countries use Piazza.

Say you're looking for front-end engineers, just run a search like: "Show me the students graduating in 2017 who know HTML/CSS/Javascript and have been a teaching assistant in a Web Development course."

Better yet, leverage your current interns and recent-grads to find out what the hardest classes on campus are, and then find the students who are top performers in that course: "Show me the top students in CS 2112 at Cornell."

Beyond expertise in the classroom, you can find students who are engaged both off-campus – winning hackathons, working on side projects, starting their own company – and in the professional world, having industry work experience or specific internships.

Combine all of the above to craft powerful searches like: "Show me mobile developers who have received professor endorsements in iOS programming classes, have published apps to the App Store, are student leaders on-campus, and previously interned at one of my talent competitors."

Target students with unique and powerful searches, using the profile data we have, in ways you never could before. And now with a smarter top of the funnel, focus your time and energy on the candidates that matter.



Launching Event Awareness Campaigns

Drive the right students to your events

10 years ago, most recruiters saw on-campus events as recruiting affairs – you’d attend a career fair in hopes of finding the handful of students you were going to hire. Today, the most strategic companies understand that career fairs and info sessions are marketing events. They want to build mindshare with as many students as possible, because they know that the brightest students consult their networks when deciding where to work. When they do, you want them to hear “I met an engineer from that company at the career fair last week – it seems like a fantastic team” or “I attended their tech talk over the summer and the problems they’re working on are amazing.”

With Piazza, companies are launching campaigns to the students they care about most to drive attendance to their events, whether on-campus or virtual.

They’re inviting 400 of the most qualified students on campus to come by their booth at their career fair: “Hey Mary, one of our data scientists is going to be at next week’s tech career fair, and we’d love to connect with you. I’m sure you two will have a lot to talk about given your background in analytics and data science.”

Or quickly notifying 1,000 students across all their target schools to log-in to their virtual tech talk over the weekend: “Hey John, our CTO is going to talk about the technical problems his team has been trying to solve before their next big product launch – you should join us this Saturday at 2pm online to join the discussion.”

Leverage campaigns to create awareness and drive attendance to your on-campus and virtual events.



Publish Events

Get the right students, not just any students, to your events

Events take a lot of time, money, and resources to plan and execute on – they’re a huge administrative effort, with little to no ability to control who shows up. You pretty much rely on students discovering your event through the campus website. Of course, students have so much going on in their lives that you’re not even sure if they saw that. So you resort to handing out swag, pizza, and raffle prizes to get people into the room. And all you’re thinking about is “please let the room look full.” “Did we get the right students to show up” is a question probably not on your radar.

Luckily, with Piazza, students are spending 3+ hours a night on the platform, engaging with classmates and instructors on coursework. So when a notification pops up, noting that “company X is visiting your campus, come learn about the technology that powers our user base,” students see it, click to learn more, and RSVP.

You can be targeted in who you publish your events to: “Publish my Data Science tech talk to all students who have taken Machine Learning classes,” or “Publish our LGBTQ Networking and Reception to seniors who are Computer Science majors and have self-identified as LGBTQ.”

Even better, you can pre-source and launch a couple campaigns to really get the word out (but not in a spammy way).

Launch a campaign to your past interns: “Our CEO is going to be on campus, be sure to let your friends know.” Or to female CS majors with compelling backgrounds: “I think you would be a great addition for our invite-only networking reception with senior women leaders, come by and say hi.”

Make the most of your events, and get the right students to come.



Build Diversity Pipeline (with Diversity Add On)

Use diversity filters to instantly connect with strong diverse candidates

Diversity is a passionate subject for many leading tech companies, and for many strong leaders within those companies. They want diverse workforces since it's known to improve business productivity and team culture. And yet, it's so hard to find diverse candidates – they're often the minority, which means you need all the help you can get to surface them. Many companies rely on sponsoring events and conferences geared towards these populations, but these end up looking no different from the post and pray model – investing huge amounts of time and money, and praying that the right students show up.

Over 50,000 professors worldwide adopt Piazza for their classes, and they bring 100% of their students when they do. So the good news is that we end up having 100% of diverse candidates logging on to the platform every night. There are over 250,000 female technical majors on Piazza that you're now able to tap into with a single search.

Find compelling female students: “Show me women who have taken machine learning classes, and are experts in Java.” Launch a brand campaign building strong ties: “Hi Annie, our CTO Isabelle graduated from Cornell 12 years ago, and is deeply passionate about the subject of women in tech – I would love to invite you to a virtual Ask Me Anything we are hosting next week.”

Connect with other minority groups – African Americans, LGBTQ, first-generation college students, and more. Run targeted searches using our diversity filters, and connect instantly via messages or campaigns.

Hire diverse talent in ways you never could before.



Export Folders

Keep your activity on the platform and outside of it, in sync

We've seen companies have numerous data sources – their ATS, digital resume books, paper resumes (!) collected from career fairs, and applications from other sources or job boards. Our goal is to help streamline your workflow as best as possible.

Export is enabled from folders. Whether they're students you already interacted with through the platform, or students you intend to message off the platform, add them to folders and with a simple click, export the folder of students to get their names, emails, academic information, and a zip file of resumes.

Side note: When messaging from within the platform, message templates are an easy and effective way to send personalized messages to students – with a single click, load message template “frontend positions” when messaging students in your folder of “strong frontend candidates.” If you plan to export and message students outside the system, we recommend remembering the targeting criteria you used when you sourced the folder so that you're still able to send a personalized message (students respond better when they see you put in the time and effort to send them a custom note).

Rely on our export tool to ensure your activity on the platform and off of it stays in sync.