

Better Connections

In January 2009, IESE Alumni Association launched the alumni portal featuring new content, improved navigation and easier access for its members. So far, the transformation has been well received by alumni: visits to the portal between Jan. 1 and March 1, 2009 were 233 percent higher than in the year-earlier period, reaching almost two million page views.

IESE's Alumni Association has tailored the new website to be the first port of call for alumni regarding continuous education sessions, events and IESE programs. The portal's structure is based on feedback from a series of focus groups with alumni from varying programs, ages and profiles, to identify which services are most interesting and relevant to them.

Based on the results, the homepage now prominently features five principle sections - Lifelong Learning, International Community, Professional Development, Resources and Services and My Profile – easing navigation for members.

"The purpose of the portal is two-fold: to integrate all internal aspects of the alumni community and to showcase external alumni activity. By combining offline and online activity, we can maximize the services we offer," says Mireia Rius, director of IESE's Alumni Association.

Rius explains that the portal's principle sections reflect the services that alumni value most: information, education and networking. "Through the portal, our alumni can access the resources they need to widen their personal and professional circles."

"We want to emphasize that the portal is a work tool and networking community for our alumni. It is this element of interaction and proximity that defines it as a portal rather than a website," says Rius. Members of IESE's Alumni Association have full access to all services, whereas other alumni have access to non-member services.

Visitors to the portal without a username and password have limited access to the portal, reinforcing alumni and Alumni Association members' status as IESE graduates. In a recent interview with Noticias.com, Lucas Carné (MBA '99), founder of the internet-based outlet company, **Privalia**, spoke of the advantages of creating exclusivity and member-only access to websites.

Lifelong learning

In terms of education, the Lifelong Learning virtual platform comprises various tools to support members. "E-conferences, cases and presentations are now more readily available and easier to access. While they are not intended to replace academic sessions, they act as reinforcement to further private study," Ruis said. On top of that, Alumni Association members can register for Continuous Education sessions online and invite guests.

Career development

Another advantage of joining the Alumni Association is the portal's improved Professional Development service, a popular feature exclusive to members. The association provides a mentoring service, career development and self-awareness programs to help members further their careers and achieve long-term goals.

Through a tailored personal profile, members can also receive job offer alerts, manage offers more efficiently and establish preferences. On top of that, the Alumni Association will launch a new digital platform within Professional Development in April to

provide a more in-depth and personalized career service.

Expanding circles

Other user benefits open to both association members and all alumni include an improved Alumni Directory. Increased search fields facilitate networking by allowing alumni to search for fellow graduates based on their interests, professional or personal information. Alumni can also update their user data and send update alerts to their peers through the portal platform.

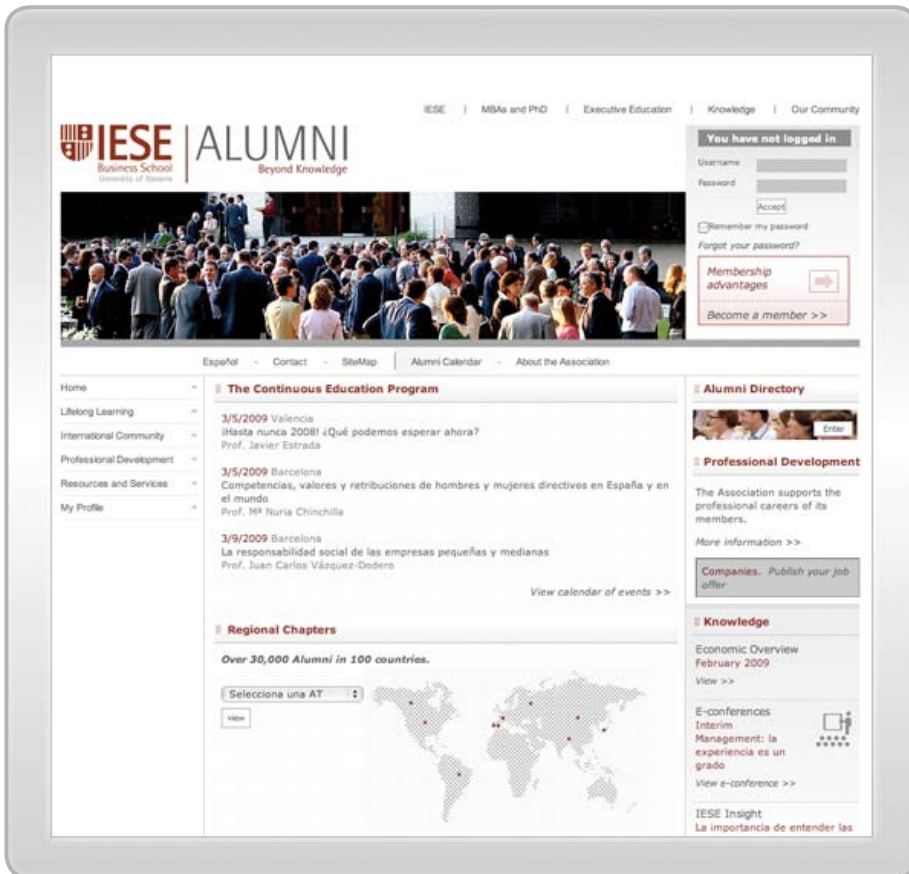
Virtual communities are a popular way of staying in touch and networking with other alumni. Alumni and members can create their own virtual community based on year of graduation (Class of), regional chapter or interests. Students can post discussions, documents, events and photos in the group as well as message other community members.

Pedro Galván (PDD '08), director of marketing and sponsorship at **Euroleague Basketball** and creator of the Management and Marketing in Sports virtual community, says, "I had wanted to meet other IESE alumni from the sports marketing sector for some time and when I discovered the possibility of doing this on the portal I signed up straight away. I've been surprised how quickly people have decided to join."

Elena de la Torre (PDG '08) initiated a virtual community for her graduating class, of which she is president. "We share group work and documents from meetings. It is a much easier way of sharing case studies and group photos with fellow classmates," she says.

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 <http://iese.edu/alumni>



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New look newsletter

Coinciding with the launch of the new portal, the Alumni newsletter was given a fresh face in January of this year. The monthly bulletin provides alumni with a summary of the association's activities, highlighting key upcoming Continuous Education sessions, recently published research papers and alumni news.

Readership of the English-language version of the newsletter has increased seven-fold since its re-launch.

The Alumni Association currently has 32,000 alumni, of which 13,000 are members. Membership is highly valued as it contributes to IESÉ's research activities, helps maintain teaching excellence and supports the school's goal of developing managers in emerging countries.

Other virtual communities to actively promote networking among alumni and strengthen ties to IESÉ include Women Directors, a community for women professionals and IESÉ-SECOT, a community for retired executives.

Constantly improving

Even with the overwhelmingly positive response from alumni and members

to the portal, the Alumni Association continues to look for ways to enhance the service. "We are constantly improving the portal according to the needs of our alumni. We strive to constantly innovate and use new technologies," says Rius.

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