

Boston University

How to 2x Alumni Mentor Reach & Engagement

A case study in using 'micronetworks' to help students learn by doing and build deep relationships with mentors

About Core:

Core is the easiest way to launch or improve mentorship at an organization, built for learners and fully integrated with Google Apps.

Case Study:



Boston University's strong undergraduate and graduate academic programs release thousands of talented individuals into the workforce every year. Some students will go into law, medicine, education, or other fields. And like other university students across the country, many of them have identified specific problems that they want to solve -- they're entrepreneurs who want to start businesses.

How to best support these early founders? Boston University relies on mentorship from local experts and alumni to support them. Core stepped in to help participants get the most out of their experience.

“Core helped me organize my network in a way that didn't place an extra burden on me as a busy founder.”

Boston University Summer Accelerator Founder

The Challenge:

How to overcome the fear of asking for help?

Asking for help can be tough for anyone. Although we're more connected than ever -- the average LinkedIn user has more than 900 connections -- the common narrative around networking is to continue expand our network. This often comes at the expense of building deep relationships with people we already know, and makes it hard to ask for help when you need it. This is especially so for those who are new to entrepreneurship or early in their career.

“The challenge we're looking to solve is that right now, a lot of our student entrepreneurs aren't used to recognizing that asking for help is a good thing,” says Giulio Fois, a program manager at the BUzz Lab. “By getting Core involved, we're reversing that.”

The Solution:

Building good communication & networking habits with Core

We worked with BUzz Lab to design a solution where students would engage in regular reflective practice every two weeks and send an update out to their personal mentoring network. Students would be matched to mentors within the existing mentoring network, but they'd also be able to invite mentors in from the student's own network as well. Over time, the updates would accrue to a form of identity for the student founders.

Our goal was to help student entrepreneurs make more progress towards their goals, and as a byproduct, invest in deep and lasting relationships with trusted mentors.

The Outcome:

A deeply engaged and productive mentor network

Core members shared impressive qualitative feedback with their mentees:

“She accomplished an amazing amount. Sometimes in the momentum to meet her goals, things happened very quickly. I think it would help her to have some time to slow down and really research and dig in further in some areas before moving ahead.”

“I hope that I've been able to provide him with perspective about our industry that has enabled him to develop a better product.”

“I think he has a bright future ahead as an entrepreneur, and I encourage an attitude of resilience. It's really needed until positive cashflow!”

And the data supports their words:

2X

increase in
mentor network size
to 44 mentors

94%

mentor opt-in rate

80%

average open rate
across updates to
Core members

50%

average click rate
across update to
Core members