



**Case Study:**

## **UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

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"The technology behind Affinity Circles' online social networking solution and the customer service of its team are the perfect combination. Our inCircle® community is hugely successful and allows us to provide a meaningful benefit to our alumni and friends. The Gator Nation Network is one of our best programs and we are thrilled with the product and service of Affinity Circles."

Randy Talbot  
*Executive Director*  
*University of Florida Alumni Association*

### **University of Florida Alumni Association Background**

The University of Florida Alumni Association (UFAA) was organized and chartered in 1906 by the first group of graduates from the Gainesville campus. The mission of the UFAA is to foster and enhance the relationship between the University of Florida, its alumni and friends, and to support the University's mission of teaching, research and service. In recognition of its success serving its constituents, the UFAA continually ranks in the top 15 alumni associations in the country.

Today, the University of Florida has alumni in every state and in more than 100 foreign countries, with alumni on record totaling over 300,000. Many alumni participate in Gator Clubs comprised of alumni and friends who represent the University of Florida in their communities. Gator Clubs sponsor and conduct a wide variety of programs and events in support of the University of Florida. The UFAA also features special interest groups, including the Student Alumni Association, the Association of Black Alumni and the Association of Hispanic Alumni.

### **Increasing Alumni Interaction**

One of the UFAA's primary goals is to build, grow and sustain relationships among alumni by providing dynamic content and communications tools. Additionally, in concert with the president of the University, the UFAA is looking to increase interaction between current UF students and alumni to connect them with internship and job opportunities.

Existing resources, such as the UFAA web site, the online directory and UF Today magazine, were useful tools but did not create a vibrant community where alums could connect and build personal and professional relationships. The UFAA sought a solution that embraced current technology to connect alumni and enhance the value of the UFAA.

## **A Dynamic Technology Solution**

The UFAA chose to launch an online social network to increase the value it offered to alumni and friends and capitalize on the branding message of the UFAA as the Gator Nation. Affinity Circles' inCircle network was selected because of its industry shaping social networking technology and proven ability to rapidly deploy product enhancements that add value for alumni members.

After signing with Affinity Circles in June 2005, the branded Gator Nation Network was delivered in August 2005 and launched in November 2005. Before launching to all alumni, parents and friends, the UFAA first seeded the Gator Nation Network with authenticated Gator Club members. Next, the UFAA sent email invitations to join the network to its entire database. The goal of the initial marketing effort was to capture the alumni base but the network will soon be opened to undergraduates as well to promote professional connections between UF students and alumni.

## **The Growing Gator Nation Network**

Since its launch, the Gator Nation Network has been used by younger and older alumni alike. Younger alums mainly network with friends, share blogs and search for housing and jobs. Older alums connect with friends and search for information on local events that allow them to find other Gators in their community. Groups are also a popular feature, with over 600 already formed on the Gator Nation Network. Alumni groups fall into numerous categories: industry, such as real estate and law, organizations, like fraternities and ROTC, interests, including flying and skiing/snowboarding, or clubs, like the New York Gators and the Florida soccer club.

- Over 19,300 registered alumni users or nearly 11 percent of total email addressable alumni
- Over 15 percent participation from all individuals who have graduated in the last five years
- Over 80,000 updates to alumni postal addresses and email addresses
- Over 148,000 personal connections made amongst alumni community
- Over 620 unique groups created by alums

## **Strengthening UFAA Value**

The UFAA has seen many positive benefits from its inCircle community. The Gator Nation Network has helped the UFAA increase the quantity and quality of contact data, which allows the Association to reach more alumni with information and services. The private social network has also promoted more alumni connections with local Gator clubs and their offerings, such as club events, educational and professional seminars, and community service involvement. Finally, the online social network has given the UFAA a forum to raise awareness of the Back to College program and other UFAA events where alumni and friends are invited to return to campus for an educational and social experience. By offering its alumni a trusted, branded inCircle community the UFAA has greatly strengthened its value and established a technology partnership to continuously deliver useful and relevant services to the Gator Nation.

**Affinity Circles can help your organization:**

- ✓ Connect with your alumni community.
- ✓ Drive quality contact information back to your database.
- ✓ Increase the effectiveness of your marketing programs.
- ✓ Empower alumni to manage communications previously handled by your staff.
- ✓ Create revenue growth opportunities.
- ✓ Build your brand and demonstrate value to your most important constituency.

**Contact us for a demo today!**

**[www.affinitycircles.com](http://www.affinitycircles.com)**

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