

MARKETING

## The Campus Rep: How Companies Market on Campus

by Jessie Qian



*Campus representatives are common sights at any college, boosting awareness of brands and their benefits among the student population. How should companies maximize their productivity?*

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They wave in and out of every campus crowd, ready to pounce at the slightest opportunity. They have boxes of “swag” - t-shirts, water bottles and keychains - which they give to every passing individual.

*There's certainly something to be said for representing a brand at a campus where people constantly come and go.*

Being a campus representative - known more colloquially as a “campus rep” - is one of the most common interning experiences that college students who are interested in marketing or sales can get. Campus reps serve to promote a company’s product on their college campus, and are responsible for spreading the word about the company they represent. Many college students don’t have time to intern during the school year between classes and part-time jobs, so the campus representative position is a much sought-after opportunity. There is minimum regular time commitment, students can spread their creativity as far as they want for promotion events, and they often gain a myriad of marketing, entrepreneurship, social media and graphic design experience.

There’s certainly something to be said for representing a brand at a campus where people constantly come and go. College students are tech-savvy and ready to absorb information, and a few clicks on a social media site will spur a product towards hundreds of students. Hiring campus reps garner a horde of followers to the marketed product, most of them Facebook friends or Twitter followers of a campus rep.

*However, there are many potential problems that campus rep managers must keep their eyes out for.*

On the other hand, every campus climate is different. Potential pitfalls for a campus rep program are everywhere, and it is not hard to see them. There are three particular details that companies must be sure to pay attention to.

### **1. Pay attention to campus culture.**

Not all colleges are made equal. An East Coast liberal arts college has a very different demographic than a school in the UC system. If a product must make its mark upon every college campus, tailoring different marketing approaches and solutions to individual schools is a natural requirement. This additionally means that programs must be sure to train their students in a way that fits their campus culture.

## 2. Keep an eye on student workers.

While large campus recruitment programs such as Adobe and Apple may have constant supervisors on their campus, smaller programs often have the marketing director running back and forth from one campus to another. There is almost no system of accountability while their employer isn't on campus, so it definitely warrants a trial period to make sure student reps are stellar and stay on track. Because of the necessity of campus rep programs, program managers should be advised to keep a close eye on what their reps want.

## 3. Build your program to encourage employee retention.

Every bit of compensation to student reps counts. It takes effort and transparency to make sure student reps get the same attention and comfort from a job as actual employees of the company. While college students need experience, they also have opportunities everywhere on campus and hence don't tend to stick around for very long. In order to sustain the existence of campus reps on campus for any company, the key is to build the program from the bottom up and keep in close eye on the needs of each student rep in order to ensure the greatest sustainability from each candidate.



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