

## CASE STUDY

# CUSTOM ONBOARDING TOOLS TO ACCELERATE CAREER SUCCESS

*Ardent*



## When a Great Product Isn't Good Enough

With the mission of supporting students at every stage of their educational journey, one higher education institution was looking for a solution that would empower its students to connect their educational goals with their professional and career pursuits. To support students' post-graduate career success, the school looked to create and launch a robust onboarding program that would help students get the most benefit from the on-campus career center and help them keep pace toward their professional goals before graduation.

### AT A GLANCE:



#### INDUSTRY:

Higher Education



#### SIZE:

550 - 600 MBA  
& MS Graduate  
Students



#### SOLUTION:

Custom eLearning  
Courses



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*WE RECEIVED VERY POSITIVE FEEDBACK, POSSIBLY SOME OF THE HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT SCORES EVER, ABOUT THE ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE FROM THE CURRENT CLASS. WE CREDIT A LOT OF THAT TO ARDENT'S SUPPORT.*

**— KEY STAKEHOLDER**

A New York university with a reputable school of business is one of only a small number of universities with an endowed career center to serve its business school students. This is a significant differentiating factor for the institution, and the resources provided through the career management center are a value-add for the MBA and MS students in the program.

The career management center helps students in four key stages throughout their education:

- Onboarding – done virtually (online and self-paced)
- Orientation – done in person
- Ongoing – conducted in person on campus throughout their education
- Offboarding – done in person as they graduate

The goal of the onboarding program is to introduce students to the career center team and the resources that are available to them to achieve their professional goals. The career center team works with students to identify and choose their career paths or specialties within their major. The center also offers services for career placement and advancement, such as internship search, effectively developing a resume, enhancing a LinkedIn profile, and the do's and don'ts of networking.

While the center is staffed with dedicated career professionals, the onboarding program wasn't connecting with students, resulting in low engagement and leading to underutilization of the career center benefits.

## **CHALLENGE:**

The career management center discovered that the business school students did not have a strong understanding of the importance of the onboarding program. It was unclear what the benefit of going through the program was or why they should engage with the career management consultants throughout their education. Something was missing from the onboarding experience, and it was failing to engage students.

The career management team needed a way to measure and track the progress toward students' readiness for their career launch (or relaunch). Rethinking the onboarding program was the first step in helping to better serve students and advocate for their success. Enhancing the incoming students' experience with the onboarding program and ensuring the content reinforced the overall learning objects and desired outcomes for the MBA and MS students was critical in supporting the career center's goals.

## **SOLUTION:**

Just like this dedicated career center partners with students to help with job placement and career growth, it partnered with Ardent to design an onboarding experience that would resonate and connect with students.

The new onboarding program needed to launch seven weeks after kickoff to accommodate the next incoming class of students. Working with the career management center leaders was an Ardent team consisting of our creative director, graphic designers, instructional designer, and project manager to help elevate the components of the onboarding program and deliver a more engaging experience for participants.



The creative team focused on improving the overall visual experience and presenting a more polished and professional course to the students. The creative director developed a “mood board” using the university and career center brand guidelines and imagery to develop a custom PowerPoint template. He oversaw the development of the template by the graphic designer, and even recommended the voiceover talent to professionally record the scripts for engaging audio content delivery.

The goal of the instructional design effort focused on helping align the content of each onboarding course with the overall objectives of the onboarding program. The instructional designer ensured alignment and consistency across each course throughout the entire program curriculum. The ID also helped to:

- Reinforce the course design and verify content was aligned with L&D best practices
- Optimize the organization of the content presented in each course
- Incorporate strong ID methodology to streamline the course content, ensuring high learning outcomes

The instructional designer also identified the appropriate video clips of alumni interviews to incorporate into the training materials to reinforce the learning objectives and developed student survey questions that would measure the effectiveness and impact of the onboarding program.

The combination of these efforts led to a more modern, streamlined, and engaging online onboarding experience which greatly increased student participation and completion.

## RESULTS:

Ardent's team delivered:

- A branded PowerPoint template to enhance the visual look and interactivity of the course materials
- A template learning session for the career center team to understand how to effectively use the branded template, including which slide layouts worked best for certain types of content
- Graphic design consultation
- Professional voiceover services to record the scripts for each of the onboarding courses
- Instructional design consultation on the organization and presentation of the onboarding content and identification of alumni video interviews to incorporate to reinforce the learning objectives
- A custom follow-up survey to be sent to the MBA and MS students after completing each of the courses and at the end of the overall onboarding program



## Does your learning strategy need a refresh?

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