Steppingblocks

Scaling Digital Career Counselor

Four Phases to Successfully Scaling Career Readiness Resources

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Table of **Contents**

What is Digital Career Counselor?

Career planning can be overwhelming. It can be hard to know what career paths make the most sense, what steps to take to achieve your career goals, and what skills are most valued in a given career field.

Digital Career Counselor gives students access to the data and information they need to make informed career decisions. Regardless of how unique a student's interests are or where they are in their higher education journey, the Digital Career Counselor platform has the tools to help students succeed. The more knowledge students have, the more potential they have to graduate on time, with less debt, and with the skills that employers require.

Through this platform, students can view career paths from the over 135 million profiles in Steppingblocks' data set, as well as the career outcomes from their institution's alumni. Students can take a personality test to better understand their career preferences and qualities. They can figure out if their career goals required an advanced degree, or if their skills align with the top skills of their dream company.

With the Digital Career Counselor, students can feel empowered to explore and identify the keys to their career success.

Who uses Digital Career Counselor?

Digital Career Counselor is primarily used by three main groups of people on campus - advising staff, faculty, and students.

Advising Staff

Advising staff use Digital Career Counselor during advising appointments to enhance discussions with students about their major and career planning.

Faculty

Faculty use Digital Career Counselor to gain valuable insights into their academic programs and majors, helping them better prepare their students for future success.

Students

Students use Digital Career Counselor to explore graduate outcomes related to their program, major, or desired career path. This data empowers them to make more informed decisions about their curriculum and job search strategies.

The Four Phases to Scale Digital Career Counselor on Campus

☑ **Exploration and Brainstorming**

☑ **Creating a Rollout / Marketing Plan**

☑ **Launch of Rollout / Marketing Plan**

☑ **Assessment, Revamp and Relaunch**

Phase One: Exploration and Brainstorming

After gaining access to the platform and considering how to introduce it to the campus community, it is important to collaborate with key stakeholders to explore and brainstorm the best approach for the process.

Students

Getting the student perspective when launching this new tool on campus is crucial for many different reasons.

Ensures Relevance and Engagement: Understanding students' needs, preferences, and challenges helps ensure that this new tool is relevant and engaging, increasing the likelihood of adoption and success.

Builds Trust and Buy-In: Involving students in the exploration process fosters a sense of ownership and trust. When students feel their voices are heard, they are more likely to support and advocate for the tool.

Enhances Inclusivity and Equity: Gathering diverse student perspectives helps ensure the tool is inclusive and meets the needs of all student groups.

Encourages Feedback and Continuous Planning: Engaging students from the outset establishes a feedback loop that can be used to continually improve upon marketing strategies based on the use and evolving needs of your students.

Phase One: Exploration and Brainstorming

Staff & Faculty

Gathering staff perspectives when launching this new tool on campus is important because...

Leverages Expertise and Experience: Staff members, such as advisors and career counselors, have direct experience working with students and understand their needs, goals, and challenges. Their insights help ensure that the marketing plan and what you highlight aligns with what students need.

Identifies Potential Challenges: Staff perspectives can highlight potential obstacles, such as gaps in training or what may need some extra explaining or clarification. This feedback allows for proactive problem solving and readjustment of the marketing plan before launch.

Facilitates Smooth Implementation: Staff buy in is critical for a successful rollout. Engaging staff early helps them feel invested in the tool's success, making them more likely to support and promote it to students and other stakeholders.

Improves Training and Support Staff feedback can inform the development of effective training programs and support materials, ensuring they feel confident and prepared to use and advocate for the tool.

By including the main stakeholders in the process of exploration and brainstorming, you ensure a more well-integrated, widely accepted and effectively used tool across campus.

Phase Two: Creating a Rollout / Marketing Plan

Once you have gained the insight of major stakeholders in the exploration and brainstorming phase, you then begin the process of creating a rollout and marketing plan, utilizing the data you gathered in phase one.

Marketing Plan Components

As you create your marketing plan, the following components should be considered.

Goal Setting: Clearly define the objectives of the rollout, such as increasing awareness, driving engagement, or achieving a certain number of users within a set timeframe. By having a goal in mind, you can keep track of usage, and continue to improve upon your marketing strategies.

Audience Identification: Identify the key audience, and tailor messaging and strategies to each group's needs and interests
Utilize insight gained from your exploration and brainstorming phase!

Messaging Strategy: Develop clear, compelling messaging that highlights the benefits of the tool aligned with what stakeholders identified as important in the brainstorming phase. Ensure the messaging, and what you highlight is consistent across communication channels.

Communication Plan: Create a comprehensive communication plan that includes things such as email campaigns, social media, campus newsletters and websites, and flyers and posters, ensuring you are promoting the tool in a variety of medias and platforms.

Phase Two: Creating a Rollout / Marketing Plan

Marketing Plan Components

As you create your marketing plan, the following components should be considered.

Training and Support: Provide training sessions and user guides for staff, faculty and students to help them understand the tool. Consider creating online tutorials or a dedicated help page.

Launch Events and Workshops: Organize launch events, such as informational sessions, demonstrations, or workshops, to showcase the tool's features and benefits. Consider virtual events to reach a broader audience.

Partnerships and Collaborations: Collaborate with student organizations, faculty, career services, and other departments to promote the tool.

Incentives and Promotions: Consider offering incentives, such as giveaways, contests, or recognition programs, to encourage usage and adoption.

Feedback Mechanism: Set up a system to collect feedback from users (surveys, focus groups, suggestion boxes) to identify areas of excitement from key users, as well as areas for improvement.

Marketing Strategy Examples

Student Testimonials:

Promote student testimonials and feedback via video, in email campaigns, and on social media posts!

Workshops, Presentations & Training

Host workshops, training sessions and presentations for key users so they fully understand the tool

Flyers & Other Postings

Post information and log in instructions around campus on tv screens, table tents, flyers or posters, and include the log in link on highly utilized campus websites

Showcase Data

Create a webpage that showcases some of the data housed in the tool, and encourage folks to log in to dive deeper into the data

Click here to listen to our Podcast Episode with the University of South Carolina and learn about their launch events, workshops and marketing strategies

Phase Three: Launch the Rollout / Marketing Plan

Once your marketing plan has launched, and rollout of the tool has begun, there are certain metrics that are important to keep an eye on and evaluate.

Marketing Plan Metrics to Track

User adoption and engagement rates: Track the number of users who sign up, log in, and actively use the tool. Are the adoption and engagement rates aligning to your marketing plan goals? How can you adjust if they are not?

Feedback and User Experience: Collect feedback from users. Pay attention to the positives - what they love, what they are excited about - as well as the pain points, and use these insights to enhance the user experience.

Training and Support Needs: Assess the need for more training sessions or support. Reach out to your partner success associate at Steppingblocks to schedule additional training sessions as necessary.

Communication Effectiveness: Evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies by tracking open and click-through rates for emails, engagement on social media posts, attendance at events and traffic related to webpages. Adjust messaging and outreach tactics based on these insights.

Stakeholder Engagement: Maintain communication with key stakeholders to ensure continued support and involvement. Gain insight on how the tool is being received and identify additional needs or opportunities for collaboration.

Phase Three: Launch the Rollout / Marketing Plan

Marketing Plan Metrics to Track

Usage Trends and Patterns: Analyze usage data to identify trends and patterns, such as peak times for access or most popular features. This information can help tailor future marketing efforts and improve the tool's relevance to your main user groups.

Incentive Effectiveness: If incentives were used to encourage adoption, monitor their effectiveness by tracking participation rates and subsequent engagement levels. Determine if they are driving the desired behavior or if adjustments are needed.

Sustainability and Ongoing Promotion: Track whether the initial surge of interest is sustained over time. Plan for ongoing promotion and user engagement to prevent the tool from becoming underutilized after the initial launch period.

Click here to read more about Marketing Steppingblocks on Campus

Click here to read more about Scaling Digital Career Counselor on Campus

Phase Four: Assessment, Revamp & Relaunch

After launching your marketing plan and evaluating its execution, you now have valuable data and metrics to assess its effectiveness. Use this feedback and engagement data to refine and update your strategy, then relaunch the plan to ensure you are continuously engaging existing users while reaching out to potential new ones.

Assess
Engage with key stakeholders. What went well? What didn't? Did our marketing plan reach those we wanted it to? Who did it miss?

Revamp
Add new strategies to reach those who were missed, change or remove strategies that were not effective, update messaging and outreach

Relaunch
Relaunch the new marketing plan and continue to assess its effectiveness. Relaunching is KEY to account for the arrival of new students and staff members

Scaling Digital Career Counselor: An Ongoing Process

☑ **Exploration and Brainstorming**

☑ **Creating a Rollout / Marketing Plan**

☑ **Launch of Rollout / Marketing Plan**

☑ **Assessment, Revamp and Relaunch**

Scaling Digital Career Counselor on campus should be an ongoing process. After the launch of your first marketing plan, each of the four phases will be useful to repeat as you add new staff and students every semester.

By continuing to assess, revamp, and relaunch your marketing plan, including feedback and insight from key stakeholders, you are more likely to reach and engage your target audience, and effectively rollout the tool.

Scaling Digital Career Counselor in Action at the University of South Carolina

Our partners at the University of South Carolina are a prime example of this scaling and rollout process, and they have seen growth and success with Digital Career Counselor on their campus. Here's how they did it!

Exploration and Brainstorming

- Held brainstorming and exploration sessions with students and faculty and staff that will be using the platform
- Asked students for their opinions on what they loved, what stood out to them
- Rebranded "Digital Career Counselor" to "Gamecock Gradstats"
  - The new name was voted on by students

Creating a Rollout / Marketing Plan

- Considered where they would get the most connection with students and other key stakeholders
- Made sure to plan events, marketing blasts (social media, emails, etc.)
- Provided training sessions for students, faculty and staff across campus
- Planned their communication strategies and promotional events strategically with student arrival to campus as well as where students are on campus

Scaling Digital Career Counselor in Action at the University of South Carolina

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✓ Launch of Rollout / Marketing Plan

- Followed their communication and marketing plans
- Collected feedback from key stakeholders (students, faculty and staff)
- Monitored the success of their events and other promotional strategies
- Analyzed when the tool was being used
- Planned for ongoing outreach and promotion to continue the upward trends of engagement

✓ Assessment, Revamp and Relaunch

- Evaluated their rollout plan
  - Were the promotional events successful? Did they gain the engagement wanted?
- Collected feedback from key stakeholders
- Revamped some of their promotional strategies, and relaunched the rollout plan to engage the new students arriving on campus

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Vicky Hamby and Helen Powers at the University of South Carolina for sharing the incredible work they have done with Steppingblocks on their campus!

Steppingblocks Resources

Steppingblocks has created a plethora of resources to help you leverage the platforms to the best of their ability. Click on the titles for each of the resources below to explore and see all that Steppingblocks can do to support your University

- Steppingblocks Help Center

- Steppingblocks Digital Career Counselor Use Cases

- Incorporating Digital Career Counselor in the Classroom Guide

- Marketing Steppingblocks on Campus Guide

- Scaling Digital Career Counselor on Campus at University of South Carolina Podcast Episode

- Maximizing Digital Career Counselor in Advising Guide

- Top 5 Ways to Scale Digital Career Counselor Guide

Partner Success Team Contact Information

At Steppingblocks, we greatly value the insights and ideas of our stakeholders. We warmly welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have. Whether you have comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Partner Success Team!

Click here to contact us!