

Getting and maintaining senior management buy-in for your project

Gaining management buy-in for your Digital Champion project is a critical factor for its success. Senior leaders have the power to draw in staff and other key people who can help you deliver, manage and promote your Digital Champion initiative. Without it you have no leverage if you are having difficulties and need resources or other support that your project needs to run effectively.

However, it can be practically impossible to gain the full engagement of senior leaders unless they have been involved in the process right from the start. Getting them on board early enough can be tricky but there are ways to engage them in an unobtrusive way. Here are some ideas:

1. **Identify a Leadership Champion.** Find out what the senior leadership is trying to achieve and how Digital Champions might support them and their strategic goals. Identify one senior leader who can be an ambassador for your DC project and can influence others. Arrange a specific time to talk it through; a short meeting will help you get their full attention. Practice a 30 second elevator pitch to give them so they too can succinctly describe your project to others and its organisational benefits. Share your road map so the leadership team can see how your Digital Champion project might develop.
2. **Let the numbers do the talking.** Gather facts and evidence to build a business case and demonstrate the importance and value of a Digital Champion approach within your organisation. Make sure everyone understands the problem and the opportunity. Here are a few useful statistics to get you started:
 - a. 1 in 5 adults (11.3 million) have limited basic digital skills, 4.3 million don't have any. *Good Things Foundation 2018*
 - b. It costs just 9p to transact with a customer online compared to £8.21 for a face to face contact. *SOCITM 2016*
 - c. 10% of the workforce do not have Basic Digital Skills. This group earns £13,000 less than those with all five Basic Digital Skills. *Good Things Foundation 2018*
 - d. 1 in 4 beginners (26%) do not use their new digital skills without ongoing support. *Longitudinal research study from Citizens Online April 2015*
 - e. 9 million people want to improve their productivity at work through digital. *Lloyds Consumer Digital Index 2018*
 - f. Employees who spend time at work learning are 47% less likely to be stressed, 39% more likely to feel productive and successful, 23% more ready to take on additional responsibilities, and 21% more likely to feel confident and happy. *Bersin/LinkedIn 2018*
3. **Don't always assume senior leaders are not interested.** Often senior leaders might not be sure what needs to be done and why or how a Digital Champion approach fits in with the organisation. Perhaps they may have their own personal challenges with digital skills capability. In a recent Digital Unite study amongst Digital Champions who were helping colleagues in the workplace around 1 in 5 (18%) were supporting senior management. Some leaders who have worked for decades to become experts in a particular field may see the introduction of digital as a challenge.
4. **Maintain the support once you have it.** Have regular catch ups with senior leaders, 15 minutes is all you need to give them a quick update on where things are at and key issues. Share Digital Champion successes and stories as widely and as often as possible using all available internal channels.