

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. 20 million people have low or very low digital engagement or skills. [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index 2021](#)
 - b. Over one-third of UK benefit claimants have Very Low digital engagement. [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index 2021](#)
 - c. Six per cent of households don't have home internet access, and 14% of adults access the internet only infrequently. 18% of over-64s do not have home internet access, neither do 11% of those in DE households. [Ofcom Online Nation 2021](#)
 - d. 10% of adult internet users only access the internet via a smartphone. [Ofcom Online Nation 2021](#)
 - e. 77% would improve their digital skills if they thought it would directly help them with a day-to-day task or piece of work. [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index 2021](#)
 - f. 67% of people said they would improve their digital skills if they knew there was support available. [Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index 2021](#)
 - g. A trained and supported Digital Champion helps an average of 30 people a year. *Digital Unite 2021*
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 one 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.