

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” skills. That’s nearly 38% of us. [Lloyds Consumer Index, 2022](https://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.html) (<https://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.html>)
 - b. 5 million people don’t know how to use an app. *Lloyds, 2022*
 - c. There are 20 Essential Digital Skills for work. 59% of us don’t have them all. 40% of the workforce don’t have the basics skills to stay safe online. [Essential Digital Skills for Work 2023](#).
 - d. 1 in 4 beginners (26%) do not use their new digital skills without ongoing support. [Longitudinal research study from Citizens Online April 2015](https://tinyurl.com/yc8jknww) (<https://tinyurl.com/yc8jknww>)
 - e. Those with high digital capability make up to £442 a month more than those in a similar job at a similar level but with low digital skills. *Lloyds, 2022*

You can find lots more [digital inclusion statistics](https://www.digitalunite.com/essential-digital-skills-work) on our website (<https://www.digitalunite.com/essential-digital-skills-work>).

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.