

THE LEARNING CHAMPION

PROMOTE
SHARE
INFLUENCE



The learning champion promotes learning within their sphere of influence. They embrace their own experiences as a learner and share them with others. They are an individual who helps others learn, and promotes both internal and external learning opportunities. They are someone who extends the reach to places which can be hard to reach.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

QUALITIES FOR SUCCESS

There are some **key qualities** that make a successful learning champion.

Humble
Innovative
Role model
Passionate
Enabler
Keen learner
Open to ideas
Responsive
Problem solver
Relationship builder
Listener

Another important quality is someone willing to lead and **pilot new initiatives!**

Some learning champions will also take on the role of **learning administrator** so consider this when looking at qualities.



THE CHALLENGES

Some of the biggest challenges are linked to not **understanding the role** of the learning champion including responsibilities, time needed and authority. Make sure that the champion, the manager and the learners know!

ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Make sure they have the **tools and resources** they need to carry out this role. Once they have this help them **get recognized** across the organization. Look at where the **greatest needs** are such as regional offices, giving them a sense of purpose. **Create a community** of champions that give them the peer support they will need. Don't be afraid of a little **competition** among champions but make sure to have a few **rewards and incentives.**

And have a **job description!**

Think about the qualities we have already mentioned. One of your biggest assets will be **diversity**. Span not just **gender** and **location**, but **age**, **years in service** and **level of seniority**. For some this may be an **opportunity for growth** so make sure to consider that when recruiting.

Consider adding more value to the role by using an **application process**. Have an open invitation to apply but don't hesitate to approach those you also think will be ideal for the role.

Try **posting the role on internal networks**, making sure to list out benefits for the organization, the learners, and the champion.

Always be upfront about **what is expected** of them.

Talk to them! **Set up a call** with each potential champion - You'll learn a lot more.



HOW TO RECRUIT

CASE STUDY: Samaritan's Purse®

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

International relief agency, Samaritan's Purse, has 20 Learning Advocates around the world, inspiring local staff to learn and develop. Theresa Decker explains the secret to their success.

Learning Advocates can be the drivers for an organization's vision but appointing them is not always easy and keeping them engaged in a voluntary role can be a challenge. At Samaritan's Purse, we focus on the fact that better equipped field staff means more beneficiaries are helped. We also invest a lot of energy in acknowledging our Learning Advocates' contributions publicly. We support them with a range of tools to build their capacity, have regular communication and provide regular learning content and training.

It takes the right kind of person to be an effective Learning Advocate; someone who has a passion for learning, a gift for teaching and the ability to motivate others. Our Learning Advocates are responsible for their geographical location, which helps build rapport with the country office, ensure consistency globally, and provide easy access to new resources." The program has been



Ruth Santos (sitting, middle) - Philippines Learning Advocate

in place seven years and it gained momentum once we recruited a designated liaison. The Learning Advocates forum now ranks as one of our top groups online, and attendance at our most recent webinar doubled from the previous year.

Our advice to any organization embarking on a Learning Advocate program is to get buy-in from senior leadership, put a detailed strategy in place before moving forward and stay in regular communication with Learning Advocates. If the program runs effectively it can help drive your organization forward but this requires effort at both headquarter and country office level. Learning Advocates can only motivate others if they are motivated themselves, and that means giving them all the tools and support they need to work effectively.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Think big but start small - it's okay to have big aspirations but make concrete goals that can help you get there. Start with a pilot group of champions and let them help you build the community. Remind them constantly that the most important part of their role is to nurture a learning culture - and don't forget to tell them why!

The success of any new learning program or initiative comes from embedding it into the strategies at all levels. They need to be part of the infrastructure.

Remember that learning should be on everyone's agenda - help your champions to get it there!

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