

Champions for Life



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Why is engaging champions important?

Engaging 'champions' (or **advocates for social change**) can be an essential 'tool' in your advocacy toolbox. It is an advocacy tactic that many organisations employ as a strategy for change, be it policy or organisational change, because of the benefits of supporting people with influence and passion to advocate for goals that matter to them and others around listen to. Working with champions can take many shapes and forms, depending on the **type of champion**.

Champions are categorised as:

Technical/issue expert

Political insider

High level influencer

Influencer communicator

What is a champion?

The most common attributes champions demonstrate, or can build on, are:

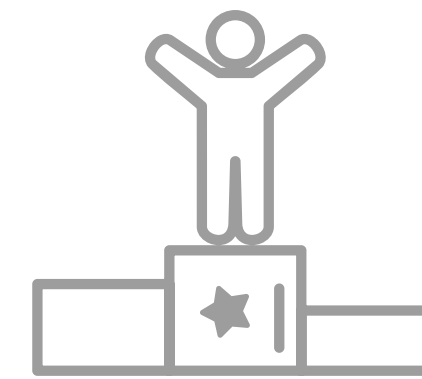
being **influential**, or the ability to affect decisions because of their position.

being **aligned**, or sharing a common position or values with the organisation they are partnering with.

being **committed**, or demonstrating continued dedication to an issue through being persistent, passionate and proactive.

being **capable**, or equipped with the right skills and knowledge to be effective in advancing an issue.

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How do you identify a champion?

Choosing champions that can successfully deliver your advocacy messages is both a science and an art with some key principles to be aware of:

Work with champions from diverse backgrounds as this allows you to build more **equitable leadership** and bring more diverse voices to the table.

Partner with champions who are knowledgeable about the **political and sociocultural context** to strategically engage advocates when the situation calls for it.

Don't try to engage too many champions at once; it's better to focus on a **small number** and invest in nurturing effective, long-term partnerships.

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How do you support a champion?

Support can be structured (such as a Fellowship programme) or adhoc. Potential champions will benefit from a more **structured package of support**, which offers a range of development opportunities. Those who already exhibit champion characteristics will benefit from support that is **one-off and tailored** to specific areas of growth. Consulting champions on what support they need to become effective advocates can foster ownership and individual creativity. Importantly, you need to invest in a trusting, **long-term relationship** (4+years) with a champion, as social change rarely comes about quickly.