Boost End User Adoption with a Community of Champions

Introducing a new digital workspace tool, such as VMware Workspace ONE®, can change the way in which employees work. And change is often hard, even in the most dynamic organizations. This is why VMware recommends launching an adoption program to boost employee engagement with the new tool and obtain the full value of your investment. An adoption program involves communicating to employees what the organization wants to achieve, how the new tool is going to help them, and the training they will receive.

To ease the process of creating an adoption program, VMware has assembled tools and resources for Workspace ONE and VMware Horizon® that organizations can use. The core of an adoption campaign consists of ongoing email, web and social communication from sponsors and executives, combined with documentation, training and support. But one of the most effective ways to overcome resistance, skepticism and inertia is to form a community of champions. Champions advocate on a more personal level to stimulate interest and curiosity around the new tools.

Champions are not necessarily business leaders or senior executives but rather engaged employees who are influential and respected by their peers. They understand the business that they operate in and its processes. While they might not be technology experts, they appreciate how the new technology can impact employees' performance and the workspace experience. Champions lead by example, translating a digital workspace strategy into reality.

What do champions do?

Champions act as communicators, mentors and troubleshooters.

Communicate – Champions engage their colleagues and show how the technology is beneficial both to the organization and to individuals. Unlike the official communication campaign, their engagement is personal and hands-on. Champions can demonstrate how the tool impacts positively on their own typical daily workflows.

Educate – Studies show how learning from co-workers is one of the preferred ways of acquiring skills. Champions train their peers by explaining through their own experience what there is to gain from the new tool in their daily work routine and by sharing discovered tips and tricks.

Overcome inertia and resistance – The most frequent adoption blockers for digital workspace technologies are inertia and resistance. Inertia occurs when employees are not aware or do not understand the new tools and their impact. As a result, employees decide to ignore the tool or activate it as expected but not use it. Resistance typically arises when users have concerns that have not been properly addressed in formal communication channels. Concerns can be deeply personal and revolve around fear, insecurity or privacy. Employees can be reluctant to let go of familiar work processes or have anxiety about learning new skills. Champions are in the best position to generate interest and curiosity about the new technology, understand the real nature of resistance, and raise awareness with the organization regarding ineffective communication.

Provide feedback – With a combination of knowledge of operational processes and understanding of how the technology helps, champions can identify early and unexpected issues with the implementation and help find possible solutions. Their input provides valuable feedback for the adoption and technology teams.

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Learn more

If you want more information on how VMware can support you with your adoption program, or you want to share your experience with building a champion community, visit vmware.com/products/workspace-one/end-user-adoption or contact us at useradoption@vmware.com.

Resources

Econometric Society. "Learning from Coworkers." Gregor Jarosch, Ezra Oberfield, and Esteban Rossi-Hansberg. March 2021.

McKinsey & Company. "Learning at the speed of business." Richard Benson-Armer, Arne Gast, and Nick van Dam. May 10, 2016.

Harvard Business School Publishing. "How to help your employees learn from each other." Kelly Palmer and David Blake. November 8, 2018.

Building a champion community

An adoption program delivers best results when it is activated at the same time as the technology deployment to allow for sufficient time to form a community of champions ahead of the Workspace ONE or Horizon launch. The adoption team identifies and recruits champions with the support of the project sponsor. The early-adopters community is also a good source for identifying champions.

After champions are appointed, they should receive early access to the tools and training so they can become proficient with all the features. If you have not fully developed your training or enablement resources, you can point champions to the enrollment guides and FAQs included in our adoption kits. Making a formal announcement about the new champions community encourages employees to seek engagement and fosters enthusiasm.

Champions meet regularly to receive updates regarding the technology rollout and related projects and activities. It is important to keep champions informed about the latest development so they can address comments and questions from other employees. Champions in return provide updates on the progress of their specific functions and give feedback to the adoption and implementation team. They can also have an important role in vetting communication messages and reviewing enablement material. Champions communicate through a peer forum, such as a dedicated social channel, to share experiences, success stories, best practices and tips. They should also have a dedicated repository to access information on the program.

For large, complex projects, the community might benefit from assigning champions to specific user groups, such as by geography or department, or use cases, like bring-your-own-device programs, remote working, mobile workflows or Horizon users, to more effectively answer questions and concerns.

How to recognize the champions' efforts

The leadership team and digital workspace project sponsor should advocate and promote the role of champions. Leadership defines the expected activities and time commitment. In most cases, a portion of their time needs to be formally allocated to their champions' role. Because their responsibilities are above and beyond their day-to-day duties, champions' contributions need to be clearly recognized. Champions should be rewarded with recognition in performance reviews and personal career progression.

Why you want a champion community

Many VMware customers have found that a champion community can be a key factor in boosting adoption and engagement. Champions are passionate about their role and happy to share their knowledge and lessons learned. Employees trust their advice, learn more effectively through their example, and are more likely to give open and constructive feedback.