



Case Study

Dundee City Council: Digital Champions

Executive Summary

For Dundee City Council to become a Digital Council by 2020, they recognise the need to help their workforce see the benefits of embracing a digital culture. Using staff survey data, they've developed and rolled-out a suite of digital training and also integral to their approach, has been the use of Digital Champions who have been instrumental in making staff more digitally aware, more digitally confident and more digitally receptive.

"The introduction of our digital champions has allowed us to progress a long-held desire to provide access for and communication with our more remote workforce i.e. those without council email accounts. This desire became an action for 'our people strategy' with the champions assisting the workforce with their digital skills and access via workplace or personal devices."

JANET ROBERTSON
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES
AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Background

[Dundee City Council's Digital Strategy \(2017\)](#) has clear aims to inculcate a digital focus and embed a digital culture within their workforce. They recognise that in order to achieve these aims they need to ensure all staff need to be comfortable with current and emerging technologies and have the necessary skills in order to support their digital citizens. Their staff have been encouraged to actively increase knowledge by pursuing what technology can achieve for their service rather than just passively using the tools and technology provided.

Drivers

Two specific drivers formed the basis of the digital champions project:

1. Undertake an assessment of existing skills and make plans for personal development training to upskill staff to the required level of ICT competency (and digital awareness) for their roles;
2. Improve digital access for members of the workforce who currently have little or no access to IT on a day to day basis – specifically to help those staff access payslips online.

Results

Following the initial digital skills survey there was:

- **An immediate response to staff requests** – champions are delivering a suite of bite sized, digital learning sessions, now available via the corporate training system;
- **A positive evaluation of the training** – and not just for the quality of the training provided but the council response to requests from the staff survey;

Through the provision of training on electronic payslips and how to access the staff intranet (a pilot project with Environment work groups) there was:

- **An immediate positive cultural impact** – staff who received the training stated they felt more included and were now 'back under the umbrella' of the council;
- **An immediate positive digital impact** – staff saw the security and instant access benefits of viewing electronic payslips on their mobile devices and were instantly considering other digital possibilities for home and work; these staff are now acting as champions within their own teams, helping others to access electronic payslips;
- **An increased interest in and utilisation of the intranet** – staff saw the benefits in using the intranet and this in turn will increase the effectiveness of council communication. There are plans in place to make the intranet available externally by December 2018 enabling these staff groups to access it on their mobile devices.

Implementation

An electronic survey was created and distributed across all staff to ascertain current and desired levels of digital skills. Concurrently, digital champions were recruited and allowed time from their own roles to attend meetings and get involved in any digital work that has required their input. The Learning and Organisational Development team worked closely with the champions to co-author champion role descriptions, design online champion 'bios' and jointly plan training and communication activities. The champions used Yammer to facilitate their internal communication throughout this phase to great success.



Figure 1 - Designing the Champion 'bios'



Figure 2 - Working with the Champions

The development of this initiative was done in an agile manner, trialling small aspects, reviewing the results and then adapting as required. Communication about events went through multiple iterations as the team had to work out the best way to reach multiple groups of staff – finally settling on using the intranet, combined with the corporate 'What's On' calendar and making sessions available on the corporate training database. Bite-sized training courses were delivered by the Digital Champions and the attendee evaluation of these has been very positive.

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Figure 3 – Digital Champion Biography

Biggest Challenges

The biggest project challenges were around:

- **Promotion and publication** – it is hard to reach all necessary people in the council (particularly if they have limited digital skills or access to technology to begin with); word of mouth and active selling by the champions were crucial during the early stages of this project;
- **Creating the right network of contacts** – knowing who to contact in different parts of the council can be challenging; you need to find and cultivate allies to help reach the parts you need access to;
- **Providing ICT resources to manual staff** – suitable space and resources for rollout sessions had to be negotiated; managerial support and assistance from the IT team was crucial in making this happen.

Recommendations/Lessons Learned

1. **Be Agile and creative** – experiment on a small scale and learn from your experimentation;
2. **Recruit Champions** – recruit as many willing champions as you can;
3. **Get managerial support** – support and buy-in from senior managers is crucial to success;
4. **Seek partnership opportunities** – collaborate and learn from/with other councils;
5. **Use the Digital Office** - it is helpful to have an awareness of what others are trying and people to contact for advice or sharing.

Participant Details

1. **Sue Holland-Smith** - Learning and Organisational Development Advisor at Dundee City Council
2. **Niall Reid** - Digital & Technical Advisor, Learning & Organisational Development Service at Dundee City Council

Documentation Links

1. [Digital Champion PowerPoint Presentation](#)
2. [Digital Champion Single Page Overview](#)

If you have a project that could be shared as a case study to other members of the Digital Partnership, email info@digitaloffice.scot.