



Are You Willing to Risk Losing Your Champions?

By Susan Saldibar

You hold a big meeting. Let's say it's a new piece of technology you're implementing in your community. You want to make sure all the key people are ready for training, well in advance of roll out. So, you give everyone their respective marching orders. Then, just as they are getting up to leave, you yell above the fray, "Wait a minute! We need to make sure we're all meeting our deadlines and doing the things we need to prepare." [You look around.] "Britney, I'm putting you in charge of checking in with everyone, okay? Keep a checklist and keep everyone moving. I want you to report to me daily. Let's set a weekly meeting. Got it? Okay, team. Let's do this!"

Everyone walks off, quickly forgetting half of what was in the meeting, moving on to their daily task lists. Except for the hapless Britney --- Britney the report-producer, official chain-jerker, appointed-cajoler, and everything else she'll have to do (that she never signed up to do).

Britney will fail.

What are you doing to create your next generation of leadership?

Jacque Brenan, Vice President of [Vigil Health Solutions](#), a Senior Housing Forum partner, knows exactly why and how Britney will fail and how the preparation for the training could, in turn, fail. She's seen way too many "Britneys" over the years. "The problem is that Britney has not been empowered as a champion," says Jacque.

Overseeing her share of installations and training for Vigil, Jacque has created a set of guidelines for selecting an internal "champion" to keep everyone on track and organized to maximize their training experience. And, while we're focusing on training in this case, these guidelines can be used for any event or program that needs a champion.

Your best champions already have winning qualities.

Here are Jacquie's three essentials that should go into selecting a winning champion (and a future leader):

1. **Put him or her in a position to be successful.** Ideally, they should...

- Have been with the organization long enough to know operational standards.
- Show an interest in the system/technology.
- Be a good communicator.
- Have the respect of their peers.

By the way, sometimes there is a tendency to give the job to someone low on the totem pole in an effort to draw them out and give them a sense of responsibility. Not a good idea. You may be setting him or her up for failure. "The people who are the best fit to be your champions are likely already displaying leadership traits," says Jacquie.

2. **Write "champion" into their job description.**

"There is nothing worse than asking someone to take on a new task or role and not giving them any time to work on it," says Jacquie. "You need to ensure that the champion has time in their day to spend on the associated tasks," she adds. So, in the case of Vigil, it might be running a report, checking a call screen, or training a new staff member on the system. Whatever the tasks, it needs to be clearly stated as part of their job. Not only for them, but for the benefit of others around them.

3. **Listen and respond.**

So, now that you've put your trust in this individual to be your champion and you've modified their job description accordingly, it's time to get their feedback after the training has occurred. What went right? What went wrong? This is where your champion can add real value to your programs. "You need to listen when they present suggestions to ensure that people, processes and policies are in line to use the technology in the most successful way," says Jacquie.

"By listening to their suggestions and trying to implement those changes you can, you will not only increase your success rate, but you'll be building a strong leader in the process," says Jacquie.

And, unless I'm missing something, building tomorrow's leaders is something we need to get good at doing. And quickly.

For more information on how to choose your next champion and build a future leader in the process, [contact Vigil Health Solutions](#).



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