

Evangelists & Champions on Your Team

The Art of Evangelism

The idea of Evangelism is simple, it comes from Greek and means “to proclaim good news.” This term has been championed by Guy Kawasaki for decades. Kawasaki served as the Chief Evangelist for Apple and now serves as Chief Evangelist for Canva, as well as Brand Ambassador for Mercedes Benz. In his words, evangelism marketing is “explaining to the world how your product or service can improve people’s lives.” It’s not about self-promotion, but rather sharing the best of what you, your team, and your organization produce with others who can benefit.

“If you’re a leader, you should evangelize for your organization and what it has to offer, and you should feel comfortable playing this role both internally – in break rooms, over email, through collaborative platforms – and externally, at industries conferences and via LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. In the social age, evangelism is everyone’s job.” – Guy Kawasaki

Evangelists on your team can be anyone. There is a danger of relegating the evangelists to specific roles within the organization. While marketing professionals are the frontline evangelist, sales professionals are the sellers of good news. Employees who believe in the mission of the company can share the good news with friends, customers, and other employees. And leaders are the ones in the organization with the most power and responsibility to tell the story. And to follow up with a brand promise that they ensure delivers results to customers, stakeholders, and team members.

“When you become an effective evangelist, you don’t just promote your organization—you set an example for other employees. You show that you are a passionate, engaged team member. You inspire your colleagues. And you demonstrate your leadership ability.” – Guy Kawasaki

There are three effective ways to evangelize: schmoozing, public speaking, and social media.

Schmoozing: Get to know the people around you, this makes it much easier to evangelize regularly. This is the process of building social connections. To schmooze:

- Get out – this is a contact sport. Get out of your office and visit different floors, locations, trade shows, conventions, seminars, conferences, cocktail receptions, etc.
- Ask questions – don’t dominate the conversation. Initiate it then listen.
- Follow up – send an email or call within 24 hours of meeting someone.
- Email effectively – keep them short and simple. Resend unanswered emails as a nudge. Always respond in 48 hours.

Public Speaking: Speech pushes you to develop a coherent message for evangelizing and gives you the opportunity to spread it to large crowds. For public speaking:

- Deliver quality content – Guy explains simply, “It’s much easier to give a great speech if you have something to communicate.”
- Omit the sales pitch – dive right in.
- Customize – tailor the first 3-5 minutes of each speech to the specific audience.
- Focus on entertaining – if your speech is dull, no amount of information will make it great.
- Tell stories – good speakers are storytellers. Great speakers tell stories that support their message.
- Practice and speak often – in order to get good at it, you need to give a speech at least 20 times.

Social Media: Get in front of the largest media platform in the world and play with it:

- Offer value, information, analysis, assistance, entertainment.
- Take chances. Add drama. Tempt with headlines. Keep it brief.
- Stay active – Guy defines this as 3-20 (non-repeated) posts a day.

This art of evangelism is being democratized and becoming accessible to everyone. It's about sharing the story in a way that is simple, clear, and easily passed along. We all love transformative stories we can relate to, and we really engage with stories that are shared by passionate people. Great leaders can equip their teams to understand, embrace, and share the good news. Be strategic about evangelism and remember, this is an art so keep practicing.

Champions of Strategy and Projects

The world lost a beloved champion this past week. Champions bring outstanding performance, expertise, passion and work ethic that pull them above the rest. As the year continues to progress TeamStrength members finalize their strategic plan and goals for the 2020. To ensure success on the myriad of projects and goals, don't forget to assign your champions.

Champions drive a strategic plan forward by ensuring regular team communication and following up with team members about their progress on their assigned tasks. An accurate, talked-about plan is a plan that is much more likely to be implemented, and good champions make sure these meetings happen. And while hounding team members may sound harsh, it isn't. It's the champion's job to make sure the team continues to move forward on a project that remains unfinished.

Champions are responsible for identifying strategic objectives and working with the team to ensure the vision is translated into requirements and solution design. They stay present, and identify and eliminate obstacles that threaten the project's viability. They prioritize phases of the project based on value and regularly update managers and clients with progress.

Champions ask the hard questions like,

- Does a task on the plan need to be changed, i.e., is it still relevant to the strategy and project?
- Has a team member run into problems completing a task that the rest of the team can help with?
- Does a team member have other responsibilities outside of the strategic plan that are taking him or her away from the strategic work? Can those outside tasks or the strategic tasks be reassigned so that the plan stays on track?

Champions help keep the team's eye on the prize and is typically a member of senior management or specific expertise that strengthens a strategic project's value by their experience.

Find your project champion. They are people within your organization who show traits such as:

1. Ability to motivate/inspire a team to buy in and become engaged in the initiative's success.
2. Finesse to negotiate with all parties to ensure success.
3. Exceptional problem-solving abilities and the resourcefulness to defeat obstacles.
4. Superior organizational talents, and a knack for keeping team members on track.
5. Stellar communications skills, keeping all project stakeholders aware and engaged.

Champions are heroes in the lifecycle of strategic initiatives and project management. Establishing this culture and attitude around your champion brings the support of the team. We have seen much higher completion rates when it is done well.

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/12/what-is-a-project-champion.html>

<https://www.stevenachaparro.com/blog/2017/5/17/6-things-business-teaches-us-about-evangelism>

<https://www.professionalgrowthsystems.com/org-culture/essential-key-strategic-plan-success/>

<https://hbr.org/2015/05/the-art-of-evangelism>