



CREATE A CHAMPIONS NETWORK

Unmind



03 INTRO: THE POWER OF CHAMPIONS



05 DEFINING THE ROLE

07 OUTLINING THE PAY-OFF

08 EXPECTATIONS AND COMMITMENTS

09 RECRUITING

10 ONBOARDING

11 INSPIRING ACTION

12 MEASURING IMPACT



THE POWER OF CHAMPIONS

15%

of people believe
company messaging

83%

trust information from
people they know

Champions are people who are passionate about wellbeing. Every organisation has them. Most aren't using them.

To create meaningful change around workplace mental health, you've got to find those people and give them the tools and the training they need. Done right, peer-to-peer programmes have way more power than anything top-down.

Champions are at every level and in every part of your business. They're the eyes, ears and voice of your wellbeing strategy.



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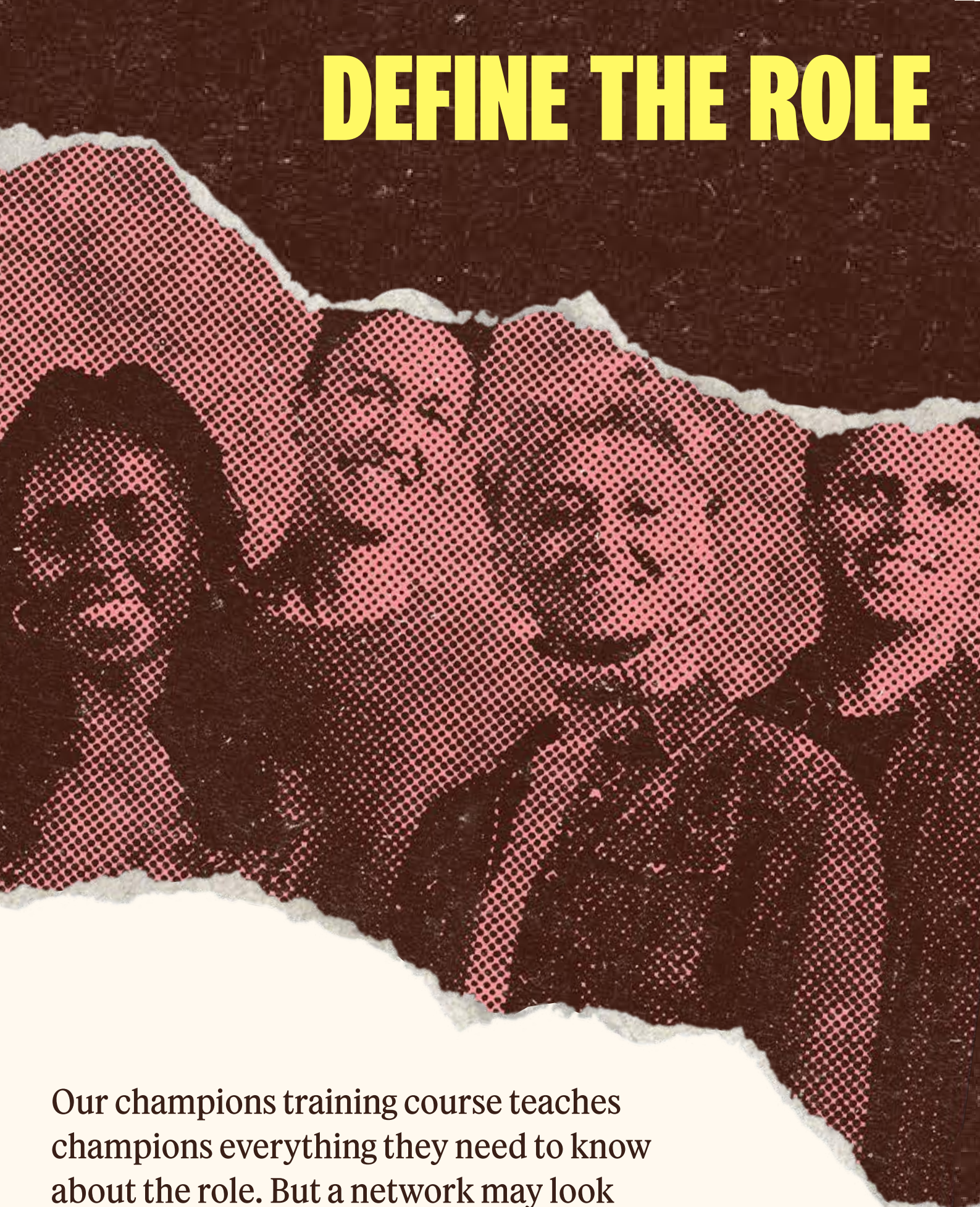
Our champions fly the flag for mental wellbeing. The passion they bring has led to brilliant ideas, incredible events and has started the discussion about mental health. Since we created the network and found a structure that works for us we've seen our employee engagement scores increase and a real change in the business around the perception and importance of mental wellbeing.

Amanda Webb

Head of Global Pay & Perks,
Gymshark

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DEFINE THE ROLE



Our champions training course teaches champions everything they need to know about the role. But a network may look different in different businesses. Here's a quick summary of the role which you can adapt to suit your business.



A champion's role is to:

1. Raise awareness of wellbeing activities and initiatives
2. Challenge stigma around mental health and wellbeing
3. Actively listen to their colleagues and signpost to support services
4. Build trust with their colleagues
5. Always respect confidentiality
6. Collaborate with other champions networks and share best practice
7. Help break the taboo of talking about mental health by being open about their own experiences, if they'd like to.



A champion's role is NOT to:

Counsel colleagues

Champions aren't expected to be mental health experts. They need to understand the support available and listen actively to colleagues so they can signpost to that support.

Diagnose mental health conditions

Again, champions aren't experts. It's helpful for them to learn about common mental health conditions, but only a medical professional can give a diagnosis.

Go beyond their own personal boundaries

There's no pressure for champions to talk about their own mental health if they don't want to, and if the role ever feels like too much, they should be encouraged to step back.

INCENTIVES & REWARDS

There should be clear incentives for someone to become a champion. Before you start promoting the role, make sure you're clear on what someone will get out of it. Here's some ideas to get you started:

- Shape the future of the organisation
- Connect with likeminded people in teams you wouldn't normally meet
- Show your commitment to wellbeing on LinkedIn and CVs
- Learn practical skills to spot signs of mental distress and understand common triggers
- Gain the confidence to step in and help someone who is distressed
- Get an increased understanding of common mental health conditions
- Develop important transferable skills like active listening.

Also think about how you'll reward your champions. The more valued they feel, the more engaged and effective they'll be.



EXPECTATIONS & COMMITMENT



Be clear about how much commitment is involved in being a champion when you recruit so people know what they're signing up for. Think about:

Role duration

We recommend six months to a year.

Time commitment

Be clear on how many hours a week it'll take.

Opt-in

At the end of the role, ask champions to actively opt-in rather than opt-out so they can decide if it's still right for them.

Training time

Our champions training course is split into five modules of easy-to-digest video content.

Confidentiality

Make sure people are clear on the importance of confidentiality and what it means in their role, if they can ever break it, and what happens if they don't respect it.



RECRUITMENT

Clear on all the above? You're ready to recruit! A few things to consider...

Nominations or volunteers?

Nominations mean you know you have people who will do the job well. Volunteers mean you know you'll have people with a genuine passion for wellbeing.

Application process or open to all?

Applications mean you can check people's passion and suitability for the role. Open process means fewer barriers to entry and you'll likely get more volunteers.

How many champions?

There's no magic number, but you'll need to make sure you have an even spread across the business so the network reaches everyone.

ONBOARDING

You've got your champions.
Now it's time to bring them up to speed.

1. Have a team kick off and get people excited!

The key to a successful champions network is a feeling of community. Bring them together early and ask them all to share why they chose to become a champion.

2. Talk about your mission and strategy

Make sure everyone's aligned and understands how their work fits into the bigger picture.

3. Bring in your exec sponsor

Make sure your champions see the initiative is really important to the company, and their efforts are valued.

4. Start training

Share our champions training course and make sure everyone understands and is prepared for the role.

5. Give them a contact

Make sure they know who to talk to if they have questions, or if any problems come up.



KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM



Setting up a champions network is one thing, keeping it going is another...

1. Regular meet-ups

We've said it before and we'll say it again. The key to making champions work is a sense of community. Make sure there are regular meet-ups and events so champions get to know one another. Set up regular communications channels and keep them active.

2. Start small



Champions will build confidence over time. Start them off with small ideas, like starting a meeting by asking attendees to share something they're grateful for. Gradually move onto bigger things like running events or starting their own initiatives.

3. Work with people's strengths

A project manager might be good at keeping everyone organised. Someone in marketing might be the best to promote wellbeing events. Leaning into people's skills makes the network effective and helps build people's confidence.

4. Shout about their wins

Shout about your champions wherever possible. It could be on internal comms channels, externally at events or on social media. Bonus points if you can get a shoutout from a senior leader.



MEASURE



IMPACT

It's important to know how well your champions network is working. It's hard to measure, but definitely not impossible.

1. Gather champion feedback

Ask your champions how often they're supporting their colleagues and what the outcomes are.

2. Measure support awareness

Use an employee survey to find out if people are aware of the support that's available. See if awareness increases over time with champions.

3. Measure support uptake

Track the uptake of your support programme, whether its an Employee Assistance Programme or Unmind.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Creating a champions network is a great first step to improving employee mental health. But real, lasting change takes a whole organisation approach.

With Unmind you can get:

1. Insights for leaders

For a mental health strategy that really works, you'll need meaningful data. Unmind Insights digs into data on absenteeism, presenteeism (working while unwell) and attrition caused by poor mental health. You'll get the actionable insights you need to create real change.

2. Tools to flourish

The Unmind app is designed by psychologists to help your employees understand and improve their mental health. Our tools and courses can help your people sleep deeper, stress less and lead more fulfilling lives — at work and at home.

3. Right care, right time

Unmind Talk gives employees access to a global network of therapists and coaches within the Unmind app. With no waitlists and no gatekeepers, they can book a session in just four taps.

Interested? Go to
<https://unmind.com/book-a-call>