



# Finding and forming staff ‘consumer champions’: Getting the right person for the job



If you want consumer engagement to be successful you must identify staff champions. To achieve significant results there will need to be champions sprinkled across the organisation, but the most important of these will be the service manager or Consumer Participation Officer.

## What skills are critical for staff champions?

The most successful staff champions for consumer involvement are those who are skilled at working with consumers AND able to work effectively within a health service:

Necessary for working with consumers:
absolute commitment to and belief in consumer engagement
ability to earn the trust and respect of consumers
understanding of the multiplicity of demands on consumers
ability to network and reach out to consumers
ability to talk and write without jargon—either bureaucratic or clinical
commitment to keeping consumers ‘in the loop’ and informed in a timely manner
ability to relate to people from diverse backgrounds

Necessary for working effectively on behalf of consumers in the health system:
ability to get things done and avoid bureaucratic delay--essential to avoid consumer discouragement or hopelessness
sufficient seniority or gravitas to be taken seriously across the organisation
ability to communicate with all staff groups—clinical and non-clinical—and understand their needs and concerns about consumer engagement
ability to see the big picture across the organisation and identify key opportunity areas
skills in evaluating participation activities and acting on results
knowledge of state and national policies and accreditation requirements relating to consumer engagement
knowledge of the diverse range of cancer consumer peak groups and the politics of the consumer movement
Knowledge of consumer engagement in other sectors of the health system

