

## CHECKLIST

# Essential Elements of a Successful Security Champions Program

Security Champions are developers with an interest in secure coding and the necessary skills to bridge the communication gap between security and development. They enable you to scale with the collaboration required in a DevSecOps culture, serving as conduits for critical knowledge transfers and improving communication to reduce production bottlenecks. With a successful Security Champions program in place, security teams have a voice and a hand in the development process so that your organization can move quickly and securely while keeping your data—and your customers' data—safe.

To get you started, here's a handy checklist of essential elements needed for every successful Security Champions program.

- 1 CROSS-FUNCTIONAL PARTICIPATION BETWEEN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT TEAMS**

Being part of a Security Champions program is not only great work experience, but it also enables individual contributors to make an impact on their organizations. Reach out to a variety of teams to see who's interested—you'll be pleasantly surprised by the response and will end up with an array of perspectives on the team for more innovative collaboration.
- 2 MOTIVATING AND REWARDING ACTIVITIES THAT DRIVE PARTICIPATION**

It isn't enough to simply set up a Security Champions program and invite all the members to planning and production meetings; keep everyone engaged through initiatives like Capture the Flag (CTF) events, leaderboard challenges, conferences, and bootcamps. When it's fun and rewarding, your contributors become evangelists for the security cause and recruit others to join.
- 3 CLOSE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

There's a glaring communication and knowledge gap between Security and Development. While Security may not understand the day-to-day responsibilities Developers face or the tools they use, Developers often have misconceptions about Security and how they operate. Close collaboration narrows these gaps and improves communication for smoother sailing.

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#### AN ENGINEERING-STYLE APPROACH TO THE PROGRAM'S FOUNDATION

Taking an approach that builds off the processes your Engineers are already using will cut down on a lot of setup and configuration time for project meetings. For example, if your Software Engineers are using SCRUM—an agile framework for development—then running your Security Champions program like a SCRUM team will make it easier for your Developers to adapt.

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#### SIMPLIFIED AND INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Keep it simple, right away. When it comes to streamlining communication between cross-functional teams, make it easy for Security and Development to communicate with chat tools like Slack or Discord. It's also a good idea to have dedicated channels set up for various projects too so that team members can cut through the clutter without having to schedule meetings.

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#### EDUCATIONAL TOOLS AND CHALLENGES THAT ENGAGE DEVELOPERS

Developers simply don't leave school armed with the knowledge they need to write more secure code. An integral part of your Security Champions program, educational tools like *Veracode Security Labs* give Developers (and Security) an edge by refining their knowledge. As they learn through hands-on training, they become active participants in your journey to enhanced security.

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#### A CONSISTENT CADENCE OF MEETINGS AND RETROSPECTIVES

As with any program, if you don't hold consistent meetings to plan for big projects and then evaluate the successes and failures, your team simply isn't learning. Use your Security Champions program to fine-tune processes with meetings that explore every element of Security, and retrospectives that identify what you can and should do differently next time.

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#### TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSIVITY ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

Security Champions initiatives are opportunities to demonstrate transparency and inclusivity across the organization. Make your meeting minutes, prioritized backlogs, and agendas available for collaboration. Also, include a wide audience of stakeholders in sprint reviews to reach more people and encourage adoption of the goals and initiatives you're supporting.



**Ready to start setting up a Security Champions program?**

**[Read this iPaper](#) to learn more about transforming developers into successful Security Champions within your organization.**

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