

Building Security Champions

Scaling your security!

Tanya Janca

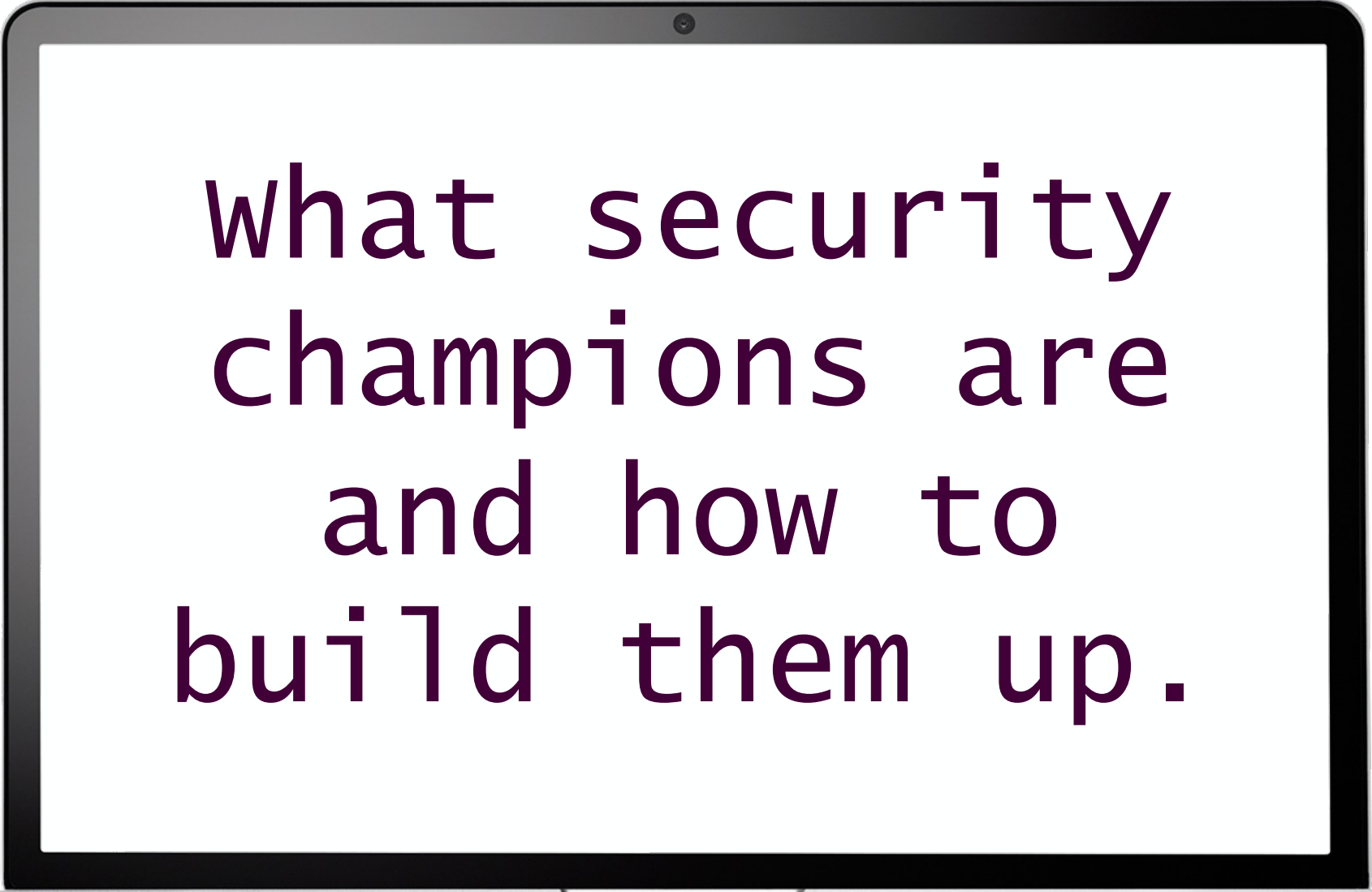


What are we going to talk about today?

A stylized illustration of a laptop with a black frame and a white screen. The screen displays the text 'Scaling your security team and program.' in a purple, sans-serif font. The laptop is shown from a slightly elevated front perspective.

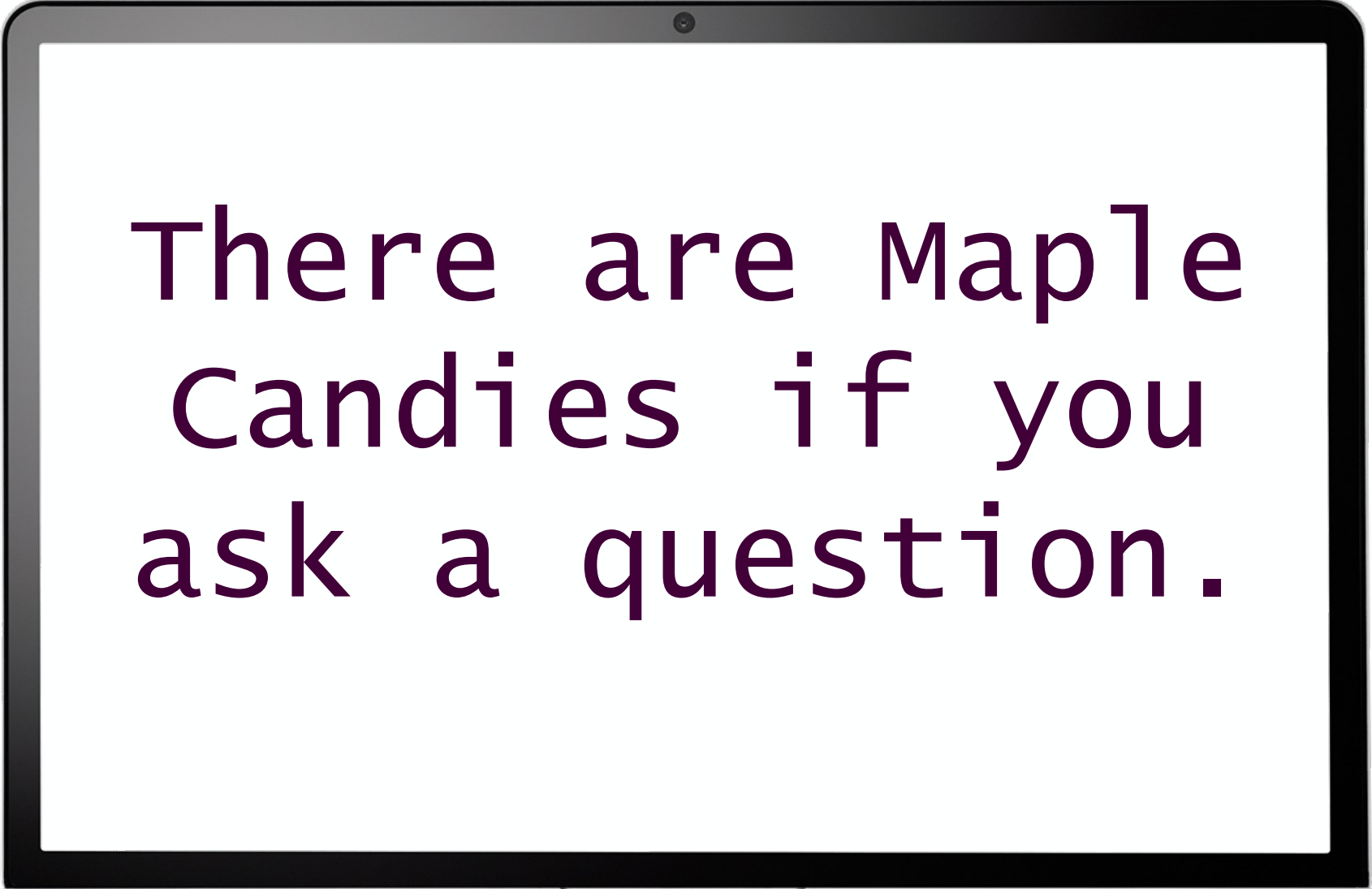
Scaling your
security team
and program.

What are we going to talk about today?



what security
champions are
and how to
build them up.

Questions at the end?

A stylized illustration of a laptop with a black frame and a white screen. The screen displays the text 'There are Maple Candies if you ask a question.' in a purple, monospaced font. The laptop is shown from a slightly elevated front perspective.

There are Maple
Candies if you
ask a question.

What is the recipe we will follow?

1. Recruit

2. Engage

3. Teach

4. Recognize

5. Reward

6. Don't Stop!

About ME!

Tanya Janca

- CEO & Founder @ We Hack Purple
- AKA @SheHacksPurple
- Author: **Alice and Bob Learn Application Security**
- 25+ years in tech, Sec + Dev
- Advisor: Aiya Corp, CloudDefense.AI, Nord VPN
- Blogger, Podcaster, Streamer, Builder, Breaker
- Faculty at IANs Research
- Nerd at Large



The Problem:

Not enough AppSec Pros.



Scaling Your Team and Program

We know there
aren't enough
AppSec engineers
to go around.



So we scale.

Security Champions

A Security Champion is a member of a team that takes on the responsibility of acting as the primary advocate for security within the team and acting as a first line of defense for security issues within the team.

Or more plainly:

The person who is most excited about security on a team. They want to read the book, fix the bug, or ask the security questions. Every time.

What *is* a security champion?

Your communicator

- They deliver security messages to each dev team, teaching, sharing and helping

Your point of contact

- They deliver messages to the security team, and keep you up to date on what matters to your team

Your Advocate

- They perform security work, for their dev team, with your help.
- They also advocate for security.

Let's *build* security champions!

Recipe; recruit, engage, teach, recognize,
reward, don't stop.



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Recruiting Your *Champions*



#1 Rule in Recruiting

Do not “voluntell” someone to be a security champion.

Attract the right people instead.

#2 Rule in Recruiting

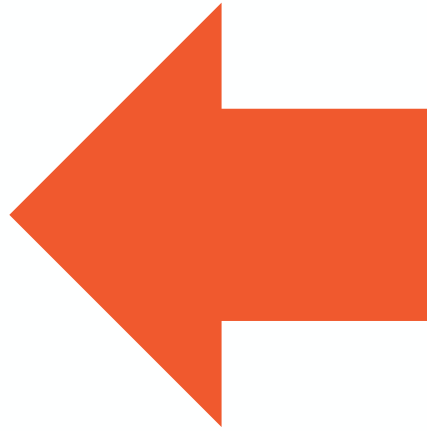
Ensure managers are on board and will give the champs time to do this important work.

Recruit

- Ask for volunteers instead of appointing people without consent
- Provide opportunities for them to reveal themselves
- Add to your email signature that you are looking
- Attract volunteers
 - Use lunch and learns or trainings
 - Anyone who asks questions or attends all the events is a potential champion
 - Use interesting titles for events if you can
- Your new mantra will get you results: “It’s my job to serve you”

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Engage your champions

- Occupy, attract, involve – in security activities
- Participate or become involved – with your champs!

Engage:

- bring them on an incident,
- share (appropriate) secrets, Deputizing and sharing sensitive info
- Let them see everything first, new tools, changes, information, etc.
- Create a mailing list to tell them new security stuff

Engage:

- Meet with them once every month, and have a present list of questions
- Brace yourself for bad news so that you can play it cool
- Team building events, let them know each other
- Invite them to join security communities

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What are you
going to teach
your champs?



Only what they need to know.
Nothing more.

What you need, expect and want from them, as champions.

Topics for Champions!

Secure
Coding and
Architecture

Your policies

Tooling!

Topics for Champions!

Secure Coding and Architecture

- Formal training on secure coding, with labs!
- Threat modelling
- Secure architecture (whiteboarding)
- Code Review
- How to fix the bugs they find
- Repeat yearly as a minimum

Topics for Champions!

Your policies

- Which policies, standards and guidelines apply to them
- Help them create missing guidelines
- Teach them how to be compliant, help them get there
- Their role during an incident
- Job shadowing
- Hold consultations to let them provide input on the policies that will affect them

Topics for Champions!

Tooling

- Custom training on tools they use
- What the output means
- How to validate results of tools
- How to install and configure tools
- Help them select the BEST tools
- Lunch and learns or hack-a-thons

Coaching

(a style of
Teaching)



Coaching

Coaching means enabling individuals and teams to achieve their full potential.

Facilitating the exploration of needs, motivations, skills and processes to assist them in making real, lasting change.

If we want teams to start practicing a *secure* SDLC, we need to support them getting there.

If we want security champions, we need to constantly reinforce the values we want them to evangelize.

Coaching

For Champions:

- Set up office hours
- Set repeating meetings
- Help them prioritize their security activities or bugs
- Always **be available**
- Help them set goals, then achieve them
- Teach them specific skills or tools
- Ask them what they need, then provide



A special note on Delegation

Some items shouldn't be the responsibility of the AppSec team, even if you know how.

- Fixing security bugs
- Updating frameworks
- Planning releases or upgrades
- Assignment of bugs to developers
- Running every scan
- Implementing and/or tuning every tool
- Writing unit tests

The list is endless, delegate what makes sense.

Do Not Delegate

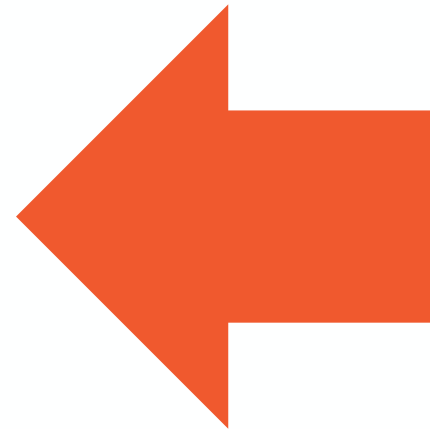
Some items shouldn't be delegated.

- Validating SAST results
- Giving security's approval on new technologies (or anything else on behalf of your team)
- Using new tools without proper training
- Training new champions

We are looking for partnership and assistance, not replacements for our team.

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It's important to recognize
your champions.

We want them to know they are doing a good
job, and not feel like they are trying really hard
to do two jobs, for one paycheck.



Recognize:

- Create a Certificate to put on their wall,
- Recognize them in front of their peers (special virtual background, star on their name in slack, etc.)
- Make sure to put a note in their performance review

Recognize:

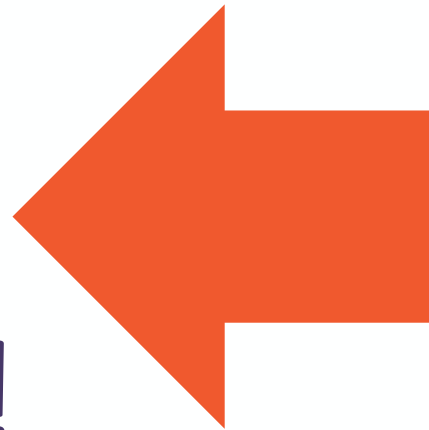
- Tell their boss every time they do something that makes a big difference
- Send them an email and tell them when they did something big, let them know that YOU saw

Recognize:

- Make their role on their team clear to them and their peers

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Reward them!



Reinforce good behavior,
instead of punishing bad.

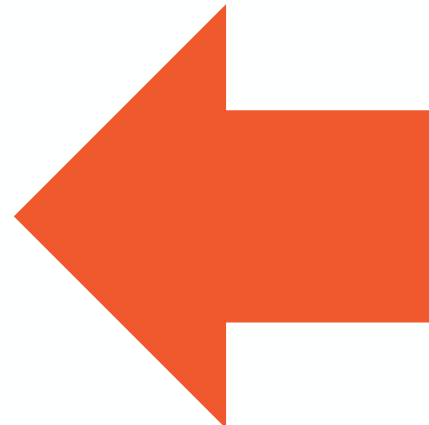
Reward good behaviour with anything you (reasonably) can.

- Security-related gifts - books, videos, training, CTFs.
- Giving them your time and attention is a reward.
- Help them with more than just security.
- Let them see a new tool first.
- Let them help you make decisions.
- Anything else you can think of.



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When in doubt, overcommunicate.

If you do not communicate regularly,
your program will disappear.

Quickly.



Don't let it slip

- Consistency is key
- Even if you just meet with them once a week, stay consistent with them
- Some champions take up more of your time than others, but they perform better than others
- If you have accidentally 'dropped' your schedule, pick it back up as as soon as possible
- Culture is a practice, it must be repeated over and over

It will fall apart faster than you think.

What is the recipe we will follow?

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3. To

We did it!

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Conclusion

We Learned:

- How to attract the right people to your program
- What to teach them, how to reach them
- How to engage them, and turn them into security advocates
- What to delegate and what NOT to delegate
- How to motivate them
- How to build an AMAZING security champion program

Our Recipe; recruit, engage, teach, recognize, reward, don't stop.

Resources



Join the community!!!!!!

Join the We Hack Purple Community for FREE

Community.WeHackPurple.com

Meet like-minded people and nerd out!

Awesome Books

- The DevOps Handbook
- The Phoenix Project
- Accelerate
- The Unicorn Project
- Alice and Bob Learn Application Security



I have a podcast!!!!

We Hack Purple Podcast, season 2, offers all sorts of security advice and best practices! Watch it on YouTube or subscribe on any platform.

<https://www.youtube.com/WeHackPurple>

Resources: Meeeeeeeeeee!

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THANK YOU!

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