

Developing the team

The map shows what to grow; these are the mechanisms that do the growing — and the guardrail that keeps it healthy.

Skill champions. For each critical skill, name the person who can answer questions, mentor, and validate level assessments. Champions turn every important skill into a place someone owns: learners know who to ask, assessments have a reference point, and the champion gets the recognition of being *the* person for something.

Cross-training. Wherever the heat map shows a single point of failure, pair a learner with the confident or expert owner. The learner grows a needed skill, the owner grows through teaching it, the column gains a second cell.

Learning partnerships. Match complementary gaps — she needs what he has, he needs what she has — and let them trade. Then *rotate the pairs*, so knowledge spreads through the team instead of pooling in corners.

And the guardrail: **keep it from becoming a contest.** A visible map of everyone's levels can curdle into a leaderboard if led carelessly — people hoarding expertise to stay special, inflating levels to keep up appearances. The countermeasures are cultural, and they're the leader's job:

- **Emphasise collective coverage over individual scores.** The team's win is a dark heat map, not a personal high score.
- **Recognise the people who teach.** If sharing knowledge is what gets celebrated, hoarding it stops paying.
- **Start with volunteers and show an early win** — enthusiasm converts skeptics better than mandates.
- **Keep check-ins brief and tied to real work** — the moment forest upkeep feels like ceremony, it starts dying.

A team run this way develops a distinctive feel: growth is normal, teaching is status, and nobody is irreplaceable in the brittle way — only valued in the durable one.



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