**Developing new services for our members**

At Charity IT Leaders we’re always looking for ways to match our big ambitions with limited resources, ensuring that we develop the most strategically significant innovations to consistently improve what we do for members.

This is a tricky balance to strike, so Laura Dawson has written this article to explain our newly launched Concept Papers, and invite you to share your ideas for innovation and development within Charity IT Leaders

We have big ambitions at CITL, and lots of great ideas for new initiatives and member services. Sadly we don't have the resources to implement all of them, so we've developed a new process to enable us to evaluate ideas within a flexible framework, so that we can make sure we progress the best concepts within the available resource.

 

We piloted this process at the last trustee meeting and reviewed four concept papers. All were approved by the trustees and were then presented in brief to the members at the quarterly meeting, who voted overwhelmingly for the CIO Mentoring paper to be worked up into a business case and implemented. I'll be working with Nick Napier, who many of you will know, to develop and implement this. We'll update you at the December meeting on progress.

Here's a brief synopsis of the challenges the four papers are addressing. If you'd like to read them in full you'll find them [**here**](https://members.charityitleaders.org.uk/CITL/Resources.aspx).

CIO Mentoring Panel - CIOs and other leaders often face challenges in daily working life and can struggle to get experienced advice to support the issues they may face.  This can range from skills such as leadership and management skills through to business acumen skills such as vendor relationship management and financial matters.  Often coaching is offered which can be helpful but assumes that the individual has the experience to dig within themselves to find the answer.

Peer Board Member brokering - Many of our members have technology boards made up of colleagues across their charity.  There can be a balance issue where the knowledge in the room of matters relating to architecture, data and technology can be less well understood and whilst the member is often well versed the balance of numbers can mean that individuals struggle to get their voice heard. In addition, it is very hard for technology leaders to gain board room experience.

Online Paper Review - Influencing decisions on investment or policy is a key activity in the role of Technology Leaders and Managers in Charities.  Often boards can overlook the skills and experience of internal staff in favour of other, possibly less effective, sources.  In addition, leaders rarely allow themselves the time to stress test their ideas or papers.  This service allows technologists to present their papers and ideas for critique and feedback in a safe space.

CIO presentation workshop - CIOs and other technologists in charities may well have had presentation training but rarely do they get an opportunity to present to a safe, knowledgeable cohort that will appreciate the content as well as the style.  Lack of opportunities to practice and creating spaces for practice can result in a lack of confidence in presenting ideas and papers.  Whilst the Online Paper Review (above) looks at writing style, this service looks at standing up in front of senior colleagues and giving the best of ourselves.

If you have any ideas you'd like to propose for us to consider, please get in touch with me, Laura Dawson, at **liaison@charityitleaders.org.uk** or direct to our administration support team **admin@charityitleaders.org.uk**