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Virtual CIO/IT Director
The New Paradigm in Technology Leadership for Charities and NGOs

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Making sure every penny of charitable income is invested wisely is becoming increasingly challenging in a modern digitally focused world. Keeping your technology relevant to the demands and requirements of staff, volunteers, trustees, donors and the media, whilst balancing costs and information security, needs professional guidance, leadership and support.

"The role of a Virtual CIO/ IT Director is new to many charities and NGOs"

Many charities and not-for-profit organisations have a Chief Executive and a small leadership team around them. However a significant number have no budget for an experienced IT Director, or Chief Information Officer, to support modernisation of technology platforms. A large number of charities need help improving their presence on the web, on smartphones and tablets, and leveraging social media for PR and to support fundraising.

Developing an optimal Digital and IT Strategy that focuses on governance, security, team collaboration, fundraising, digital and social media, cost effectiveness, delivers secure tools to users often out of the office and supports volunteers with varying abilities is critical for any charity and NGO in the 21st century.

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results."

- Winston Churchill

Charities have to maximise the value of each asset and capital investment. This leads to technology being used that is five, eight, or even ten years old. Often email platforms were installed a number of years ago; finance systems use older technology (possibly out of vendor support); there is limited use of WiFi, smartphone apps and tablets to enhance service delivery; internet firewalls that protect the organisation are old and configured with unoptimised settings; cyber security technology is not being used to protect personal data; collaboration tools and cloud services (often free to charities) that deliver so many benefits are not deployed; and older websites are not optimised for smartphones - which account for nearly 60% of all internet activity in the UK.

Modernising your technology platforms, whilst sustaining the challenge of maintaining or reducing operational costs, needs the support of an IT expert who has many years operational, budget and technology leadership experience.

"Is there a way to get the benefits of technology leadership, without the cost?"

This is where a highly experienced Virtual Chief Information Officer (CIO), or Virtual IT Director, can add great value to your management team. Many low-cost and free solutions exist to help you deliver the best technology to your stakeholders. In some cases, a move from on-premises servers and hardware to a Cloud based solution could reduce your technology costs, improve security and deliver a step-change in staff, volunteer, trustee, governance and fund-raising capability.

A Virtual CIO or IT Director is a model of technology leadership that delivers all the benefits of a full time employee without the costs. Whereas an interim manager typically stays with your organisation for a short period, the Virtual CIO can (if you choose) stay with you for the longer term. This delivers greater organisational insight to technology strategy development; long term commitment; integration with the leadership team and staff; ongoing oversight of projects; accountability for technology strategy, operational effectiveness, budget optimisation, vendor management and service delivery.

"Having a technology specialist who can hit the ground running, can see immediate opportunities to make a difference and contribute to the wider service delivery and fundraising plans is an important part of any activity in 2016 and beyond"

The Virtual CIO takes on the leadership role in the same way as a full time CIO, but operates for as many days per month as needed, or requested. The Virtual CIO is contracted for a number of days per month on a fixed term, or rolling basis. When they are not working for you they will be adding value with other organisations. Our vetted professionals can be trusted with confidential and sensitive information and will become a valued member of your team.

Today's Virtual CIOs and Virtual IT Directors have to be experienced in a wide variety of technology deliverables and have experience in cyber security management, digital platform development, smartphone optimised services, infrastructure and virtualisation, cloud services, software licensing, software development, telecommunications and have an in-depth knowledge of solutions, vendors, products and capabilities, both current and emerging, across a wide range of requirements.

"Whosoever desires
constant success must
change his conduct
with the times."

— Niccolo Machiavelli

Virtual CIOs are being used by many institutions for differing needs and requirements. From charities needing technology leadership that otherwise they could not afford; to schools and educational establishments looking to leverage cloud services and new advances in educational technology; to healthcare professionals looking for secure compliant systems within doctor surgeries and Trusts; to SME businesses that desperately wish to leverage technology and digital services, but have no budget for a full-time IT Director; to an enterprise looking for transformational leadership, board support and team mentoring.

CIOBureau provides a Virtual CIO and IT Director service to institutions looking for transformational change and technological evolution. We deliver a senior executive that serves as a CIO and IT advisor to your leadership team.

We have a selection of cost effective services that range from one day per month for Leadership and strategy teams, through to one day per week operational management, up to full time interim management for extended periods.

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