Digital Leadership 101 Conversation Starter Pack

Instructions for using this conversation starter pack with your trustee boards or staff and volunteer teams on implementing the Charity Digital Code of Practice

leadership **users** **culture** **strategy** **skills** **risks & ethics** **adaptability**

What does digital mean for you? Is it the nuts and bolts of having a website, sending an email or taking a donation online? What about IT security? Choosing systems? Is it key to how you deliver your social impact?

Digital is no longer an add-on or optional to the way charities and community organisations are run. Board members and CEOs face some tough decisions. Resources are tight and it's hard to know what to prioritise.

However, digital offers a big opportunity to increase the impact of your work, be more efficient, collaborative and secure funding.

This conversation starter pack has been developed to help CEOs and trustees of small charities explore the principles of the UK Charity Digital Code of Practice so that they can develop their organisation's digital capability.

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The Charity Digital Code

The Charity Digital Code of Practice has been developed to support charities of all sizes, budgets or causes in progressing with digital, offering a consistent framework for the sector to work towards. It is not a regulatory requirement, so it focuses on the principles and best practice in digital.

It uses the following definition for digital:

"Applying the culture, practices, processes & technologies of the Internet era to respond to people's raised expectations".

It goes on to say that this definition "shows how digital has evolved beyond channels (e.g. social media or websites) to a mindset, reflecting how it is forming people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours".

There is a large and small charity version of the code at https://doit.life/charity-digital-code and there are seven key principles set out below.

Leadership

Charity leaders must lead on digital as a way of helping their charities be relevant and sustainable.

Digital isn't just about channels. It's a strategic and governance issue and charity leaders need to know how digital could help realise their vision for their charity. Equally, digital raises questions about traditional ways of leading, offering opportunities for leaders to build networks and collaborate further.

User led

Charities should make the needs and behaviours of beneficiaries and other stakeholders the starting point for everything they do digitally.

Culture

Charities' values, behaviours and ways of working should create the right environment for digital success.

Strategy

Charities' strategies should be ambitious about how they can use digital to achieve their vision and mission.

This doesn't always mean investing money, but it does mean thinking creatively about how digital can increase impact and sustainability.

Skills

Charities should aim for digital skills to be represented at all levels of the organisation.

Digital success is very dependent on the confidence, motivation and attitude of the people who run, work and volunteer for charities. Technical and soft skills, such as questioning, persuading and influencing, are equally important.

Managing risk and ethics

Charities need to determine and manage any risks involved in digital.

Charities will also need to consider how some digital issues fit with organisational values and ethics. The latter is a broad area that may include anything from partnerships to the use of data by social networks to content.

Adaptability

Charities will need to adapt to survive and thrive as digital changes how everyone lives and works.

How to use this conversation starter pack

To use this conversation starter pack you will need to carefully read the seven overarching Charity Digital Code of Practice principles. You do not need to read the full Code if you don't have time, although it may help to familiarise yourself further with the topics.

The pack consists of a series of statements that demonstrate how you can meet the principles, and are based on the small charity version of the Code.

Each statement can be used to start a conversation with your trustee board, staff team or volunteers about using digital and your organisation's work.

All materials in this pack can be downloaded from https://superhighways.org.uk/latest/digitalleadership101/

What technical skills will I need?

You do not need to be a digital trustee, have specific technical knowledge about digital or be taking a lead on digital, IT, or technology to get a conversation started with your trustee board, staff team or volunteers.

However, if you do not have anyone with any experience of digital in your team you may want to find an external facilitator or volunteer adviser to help.

The Activities – Agree or disagree?

This activity introduces the key concepts of the Charity Digital Code of Practice. You can adapt it according to the number of participants, time and space available.

We recommend that you start your conversation with reading out the principles of the Code.

It's up to you and your team to decide if you could positively agree that you are already meeting the principle. (Don't worry — it's highly unlikely that you will. No one's perfect!).

Activities

Hand out the cards to individuals, pairs or small groups to discuss for a few minutes, then ask them to feed back to the whole group

AGREE or DISAGREE

Activities

You could also put Agree and Disagree signs at opposite ends of the room and ask participants to stand in a line between the two, choosing their position according to how much they agree or disagree with each statement. Ask participants why they have decided to stand in certain places

AGREE or DISAGREE

Activities

Or go digital! Use an online survey or collaboration tool to get feedback capture anonymous feedback for later discussion (we like www.mentimeter.com).

AGREE or DISAGREE

People with different skills, knowledge, experiences and roles may see digital very differently. The most important thing is to focus on what you're doing well, what you'd like to know more about and start an action plan for improvement.

You may wish to focus on only one principle for a shorter discussion, or even one statement for a 20 minute staff discussion.

| leadership | users | culture | strategy | skills | risks & ethics | adaptability |

About Superhighways:

Superhighways offers advice, training and IT support to help small charities and community organisations across London be more effective, raise their profile and demonstrate their impact using digital technology.

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