PSA Board Decision-Making and Proposal Process Policy

Introduction

The Professional Speaking Association (PSA) is committed to ensuring that all decisions, ideas, and proposals are made transparently, with thorough consideration and clear benefits to the organisation and its members. This policy outlines a robust yet streamlined process for submitting, reviewing, and tracking proposals or business cases, whether originating from Board members or non-Board members, ensuring they are effectively managed throughout their life cycle.

This policy aims to support decision-making by promoting openness, accountability, and a clear framework for all involved. Importantly, it provides an accessible structure for both large and small ideas, including those that may have minimal financial implications or result in amendments to existing policies.

Why We Need This Policy

The PSA operates with a small volunteer team and a growing membership base. It is critical to ensure that any business case or proposal brought to the Board is carefully considered, adds value to the membership, and uses resources efficiently. This policy ensures decisions are made efficiently, even for micro-ideas requiring less than £100 or no financial spend.

It also allows non-Board members to propose ideas, ensuring that all voices within the PSA are heard and that the Board operates with transparency and inclusivity.

Proposal and Business Case Process

Step 1: Initiation of a Proposal or Idea

1. **Submission by Board or Non-Board Members**: Any PSA member, volunteer, or officer can submit a business case, idea, or proposal. This can range from small amendments to larger initiatives requiring financial or resource commitments.

2. **Use of Business Case Template**: The proposer must complete a **Business Case Template** (see attached document) that outlines the idea, purpose, benefits to members, resources required, risks, and overall impact.

Step 2: Constructing a Business Case

The business case should include the following information:

- **Proposal Summary**: Brief description of the idea or proposal.

- **Purpose**: Why the proposal is being made and what issue it addresses.

- **Benefit to Members**: Direct and indirect benefits for PSA members.

- **Budget**: Cost implications, including a detailed breakdown for any financial resources required (for proposals with a spend over £100).

- **Resource Requirements**: Include time, people (volunteers), and external resources required to execute the proposal.

- **Impact Assessment**: The potential impact on membership, PSA operations, and any risks involved.

- **Timeline**: Proposed start and end dates of the project.

- **Return on Investment (ROI)**: Expected return or benefits, both tangible and intangible.

For micro-ideas (e.g., less than £100 spend or no cost at all), this process can be simplified but should still include the purpose, benefits, and impact assessment.

Step 3: Review and Submission Process

1. **Submit to Chair and Board Secretariat**: Completed proposals must be sent to the Chair and Board Secretariat **14 days before** the upcoming Board meeting to be included in the agenda.

2. **Circulation to the Board**: The business case will be circulated along with the agenda and Board pack for review by all Board members prior to the meeting.

Step 4: Decision-Making at Board Meetings

1. **Board Discussion**: The proposal will be discussed during the Board meeting, allowing for input from all relevant members. If necessary, specific Board members will be asked to review the proposal in advance for expert input.

2. **Decision Process**:

   1. A simple majority vote is required for most proposals.

   2. For proposals involving significant financial or operational implications (e.g., over £5,000 or contractual agreements exceeding £10,000), a 75% majority vote is required.

3. **Outcome**: The outcome of the decision will be recorded in the meeting minutes, including whether the proposal was:

   1. **Approved**

   2. **Deferred** for further information or development

   3. **Rejected** with feedback

   4. **Pending** for further discussion in future meetings.

Step 5: Tracking and Monitoring

To maintain transparency and accountability, all proposals and their status will be logged in a **Proposal and Business Case Register** (see attached Excel sheet). This log will include:

- **Proposal Title**

- **Submitted By**

- **Date of Submission**

- **Date of Board Decision**

- **Status** (In Progress, Deferred, Rejected, Pending, Completed)

- **Next Review Date** (if applicable)

- **Narrative** (Key discussions or feedback provided)

- **Budget/Resource Requirements**

- **Board Members Involved**

This register will be reviewed at each Board meeting, ensuring all proposals are tracked, and updates are provided to members.

Step 6: Post-Project Review (for Approved Proposals)

Once a proposal is completed, a post-project review will be conducted to assess the outcomes versus the initial business case. This review will include:

- Actual vs. projected costs.

- Actual vs. expected benefits to members.

- Key learnings and improvements for future proposals.

Guidance for Proposers

- **Be Clear**: Proposals should be concise yet detailed enough to provide a clear understanding of the potential benefits and risks.

- **Engage Early**: If you need help constructing a business case, Board members are available to coach and guide you on what is required.

- **Focus on Value**: Every proposal should directly or indirectly benefit the membership.

- **Consider Resources**: Always be clear on how much time, money, or volunteer effort is needed to bring your proposal to life.

- **Impact Matters**: Proposals that have a wider impact on the PSA or improve member engagement are likely to gain more traction.

Conclusion

This policy provides a structured yet flexible process for submitting, reviewing, and deciding on business cases and ideas within the PSA. It ensures transparency, accountability, and efficiency in decision-making, ultimately supporting the long-term success and growth of the association.

Attached Documents

- **PSA Business Case Template (DOCX)**: A guide for constructing and submitting proposals.

- **PSA Proposal and Business Case Register (XLSX)**: A tool to track the status of all submitted proposals.