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The CIOPages Executive Forum

The paid byline program in full — who qualifies, what it costs, the editorial bar every draft is held to, the stamp each piece carries, and what membership does not buy.

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132
live Buyer Guides

1,700+
vendors in the Directory

96
in-depth articles

102
glossary definitions

Everything here lives online and stays current: https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership

Version 1.3 · Updated August 2026 · Latest PDF: https://www.ciopages.com/downloads/ciopages-executive-forum-guide.pdf

START HERE

What's inside

For senior technology operators, and the comms teams acting for them.

https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership

The Executive Forum is where senior technology operators publish under their own byline, in a section kept deliberately apart from our editorial coverage. Membership is paid, every piece is reviewed and edited before it runs, and each one carries a stamp saying exactly what it is. This document is the whole program: what it costs, who qualifies, the bar a draft is held to, and the things membership will not buy at any price.

FIVE

How a Forum article looks

- The disclosure, reproduced at size
- Anatomy of a published piece

SIX

Process and terms

- Application to publication
- Rejection, refunds and rights

A note on how this is written

We've tried to say what's possible first and what isn't second, with the reasoning attached. Where the answer is "not for sale", it's a principle rather than an opening bid — usually because selling that particular thing would quietly ruin the reason our readers trust the site.

There is also an unpaid route onto the site — invited bylines, which cost nothing and carry no stamp. This document does not cover it; https://www.ciopages.com/contributor-program compares the two. If you qualify for an invitation you should not be paying us, and we would rather say so here than take the money.

Read by CIOs, CTOs, enterprise architects and their teams at mid-market and enterprise organizations — people comparing platforms, not browsing.

SECTION ONE

CIOPages Executive Forum

A byline section for senior technology operators — separate from our editorial coverage, reviewed, edited, and clearly stamped.

`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership`

The Executive Forum is a section of CIOPages set apart from our editorial coverage, where senior technology operators publish under their own byline. Joining costs $499 for the year and covers the review; each published article is $249, or $499 if you would rather we researched and wrote it from your intake. Up to 6 articles a year. Every piece is edited before it runs and carries a Paid Guest Contribution stamp, so readers always know what they are reading.

WHAT IT COSTS

Application & review	**Free to apply**	Your card is authorized at application and collected only if we accept — a decline is released, never billed
Membership	**$499 / year**	Covers the review and your standing in the Forum for twelve months
Each article you write	**$249**	Charged on publication — a pitch we turn down, or a draft that doesn't make it, costs nothing
Each article we write	**$499**	Researched and written from your intake and a short call. Your byline, your sign-off
Ceiling	**6 articles / year**	A cap rather than a target, so no single voice dominates the section

A first year with two articles you write yourself is $997; with four, $1,495. Nothing is collected until we have accepted you, and no article is billed until it publishes.

What membership gets you

- ✓ Standing to publish in the Forum for twelve months, and up to 6 articles in that year
- ✓ A genuine editorial pass on every piece: structure, clarity, house style, and a second read for claims
- ✓ Your byline, current title, a 40-word bio, and one link of your choosing
- ✓ A permanent URL on ciopages.com — no paywall, no expiry, no quiet removal
- ✓ A title and excerpt in the main Insights index, alongside our own writing
- ✓ Inclusion in The Throughline newsletter and our LinkedIn and X channels
- ✓ A print-quality PDF reprint of each published piece, for your own use
- ✓ A plain answer whenever we say no, including which specific thing didn't clear
- ✓ The option to have a piece researched and written for you from an intake, for $499
- ✓ No charge for anything we don't publish — the article fee lands on publication, not on commission

What it does not buy

- A dofollow link — every outbound link in a Forum article carries rel="sponsored"
- Placement in a Buyer Guide, or any movement in how a vendor is evaluated there
- An upgrade to a Directory record, or a Spotlight slot
- Editorial coverage of your product, now or later
- Publication of any particular draft — the six-article cap is a ceiling, not a guarantee
- Removal, relocation, or softening of the stamp
- Any influence over what our editors write about your company or your market

On traffic and leads

We don't promise traffic or leads. They are not what membership is for, and you should know that before you pay rather than after. What we can point to is the body of work a piece would sit alongside:

- 132 live Buyer Guides across enterprise technology categories
- 1,700+ vendors in the Directory
- 96 in-depth articles and 102 glossary definitions
- An editorial policy, published in full, that predates this program

What membership does give you is a permanent, edited byline in a specialist publication with a real bar — and an article you own, written to a standard you can put in front of a board.

SECTION TWO

Who we accept

Membership is reviewed before it is invoiced, and most declines happen at that stage.

`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership#who`

Who qualifies

- ✓ Sitting or recent CIOs, CTOs, CDOs, CISOs, chief architects and equivalent senior operators
- ✓ VPs and SVPs of engineering, infrastructure, data, security, or enterprise architecture at organizations of real scale
- ✓ Partners and principals at advisory firms, writing about an engagement they personally led
- ✓ Founders and senior executives at technology companies — writing about a practitioner problem, not their product
- ✓ Named authors who wrote the piece, or directed it closely enough to defend every claim in it

Businesses we decline outright

- Gambling, adult services, payday lending, and debt-relief operations
- Crypto token promotion, trading signals, and yield schemes
- SEO link networks, review farms, essay mills, and reputation-laundering services
- Any piece whose real purpose is to rank a third party's client
- Regulated medical, legal, or financial advice we are not in a position to verify
- Companies whose primary business is placing content on other people's websites

What we check before invoicing

- ✓ The company is real, currently operating, and has a verifiable presence beyond a landing page
- ✓ The author's title and tenure check out against public record
- ✓ No unresolved regulatory action, fraud finding, or consumer-protection judgment we can find
- ✓ The author is reachable at a corporate address, not a free mailbox
- ✓ The business is not in a category we decline (below)

SECTION THREE

What we publish

The areas our readers already come here for — a piece outside them is a harder sell, not an automatic no.

`https://www.ciopages.com/insights`

Enterprise Applications
ERP and CRM programs, platform consolidation, the migration nobody budgeted correctly, post-go-live stabilization

Cybersecurity & Identity
Identity programs, zero-trust rollouts that met reality, incident retrospectives, security operating models, board reporting

Data & Analytics
Data platform decisions, governance that survived contact with the business, quality debt, the warehouse-versus-lakehouse call you actually made

AI & Automation
Adoption programs, AI governance and policy, build-versus-buy, evaluation and guardrails, what went into production and what didn't

DevOps & Platform Engineering
Platform team formation, developer experience, pipeline consolidation, reliability practice, the internal platform that failed to get adopted

Foundational IT & Infrastructure
Cloud migration and repatriation, network and endpoint modernization, technical debt retirement, datacentre exits

IT Management & Governance
Operating models, portfolio governance, service management, the reorganization and what it cost

Architecture & Governance
Enterprise and business architecture practice, capability modeling, standards that stuck, architecture review boards

Technology Cost & FinOps
Cloud cost programs, license renegotiation, showback and chargeback, the savings number and how it was actually measured

Sourcing & Vendor Management
Selection processes, contract negotiation, managed-service transitions, exiting a vendor relationship

The Organizational Side
Team design, technical talent, succession, working with the board, earning and keeping a seat at the table

Industry Solutions
Sector-specific programs in financial services, healthcare, insurance, and manufacturing, where the constraint is regulatory as often as technical

SECTION FOUR

Editorial guidelines

The bar every draft is edited against, whether or not it was paid for.

`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership#guidelines`

One argument, stated early

Say what you think in the first 150 words. Not the topic — the argument. "Most platform teams fail because they are funded as projects" is an argument. "Platform engineering is an important trend" is a topic, and topics do not survive our review.

750 to 1,200 words

That's the preferred range: long enough to carry a real case, short enough that a CIO finishes it in one sitting. Pieces under 600 words rarely have room for evidence, and pieces past 1,500 are usually two articles that haven't been separated yet.

Specifics, or it doesn't run

A number, a date, a decision, a constraint, a thing that didn't work. The single most common reason we send a draft back is that every sentence in it could have been written by someone who had never done the work.

Self-promotion and unsupported claims are the two most common rejections

A mention of your company where the story genuinely requires one is fine. A piece that keeps returning to it is not, and we will send it back. The same goes for grand claims with nothing under them — "transformative", "industry-leading", "a 10x improvement" — unless you can show the data behind them and say where it came from. Between them, these two account for most of what we decline.

First person, where you were accountable

Write about what you owned. "We moved 40 services and stalled on the last six" earns attention that "organizations should consider a phased approach" never will.

Evidence you can point at

Cite standards bodies, vendor documentation, regulatory text, published research. If a number comes from your own environment, say so and give the denominator.

Name vendors honestly or not at all

You may name products, including competitors, where the argument needs them. What you may not do is arrive at your own product as the conclusion. If the piece resolves into a recommendation to buy what you sell, it is advertising, and we sell that separately.

Original and unpublished

Not on your own blog, not on LinkedIn, not syndicated elsewhere. We will check. After publication you may republish with a canonical link back, no earlier than 30 days.

Written by a human, and disclosed if not entirely

Drafting assistance is fine and we are not going to pretend otherwise in 2026. A draft generated wholesale and sent as original work is not, and reads exactly like what it is. The named author must be able to defend every claim in a conversation.

Do

- ✓ Send a pitch first — a three-sentence thesis and four or five bullets, not a finished draft
- ✓ Lead with the decision you got wrong before the one you got right
- ✓ Give real numbers, with the denominator, or say plainly that you can't
- ✓ Name the constraint that made the obvious answer impossible
- ✓ Link to primary sources — standards, documentation, filings, research
- ✓ Keep the bio to 40 words and choose the one link that matters
- ✓ Tell us if any part of the piece touches a commercial relationship you have

Don't

- Don't send a draft your agency wrote and your executive has not read
- Don't build to a conclusion that is your own product
- Don't pad with a market-size paragraph and three predictions
- Don't turn the piece into a tour of your product — occasional, load-bearing mentions only
- Don't reach for superlatives you can't evidence; an unsupported claim gets the draft returned
- Don't ask for the stamp to be moved, softened, or removed — it is not negotiable
- Don't request body links to your own domain; the bio link is the one we carry
- Don't submit anything already published, in whole or in substantial part
- Don't send a second draft while the first is still in review

SECTION FIVE

How a Forum article looks

The stamp every piece carries, and who writes which part of the page.

`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership#disclosure`

THE STAMP AS IT APPEARS ON THE PAGE — REPRODUCED AT SIZE

PAID GUEST CONTRIBUTION · CIOPAGES EXECUTIVE FORUM

This is a paid guest contribution, published in the CIOPages Executive Forum — a section that sits apart from our editorial coverage. The author is a Forum member. CIOPages reviewed and edited the article before publication and retains editorial control over its final form. Outbound links carry rel="sponsored". Forum membership has no bearing on our Buyer Guide evaluations, Directory records, or the work our editors publish.

The Platform Team We Funded Twice and Staffed Once

By **A. N. Executive** · Chief Technology Officer, Example Industries

- ✓ A Paid Guest Contribution stamp sits above the byline, at the top of the article, in a bordered block
- ✓ The same stamp appears on the article's card in the Insights index and anywhere else it is listed
- ✓ Forum pieces are grouped as their own section, distinct from our editorial coverage
- ✓ It is in the page's structured data, so aggregators and search engines see it too
- ✓ The wording is ours and is identical on every Forum piece
- ✓ It stays for the life of the article — there is no expiry after which it quietly disappears

ANATOMY OF A PUBLISHED PIECE

ELEMENT	WRITTEN BY	SPECIFICATION
Title	Both	Under 70 characters. A claim, not a category label.
Standfirst	Both	25–40 words stating the argument and who it's for.
Paid Guest Contribution stamp	Us	Fixed wording, bordered, above the byline.
Byline	You	Name, current title, organization.
Body	You	750–1,200 words across three to five sections with real subheads.
Evidence	Both	Inline citations to primary sources; rel="sponsored" on outbound links.
Pull quote	Us	Optional. One sentence, drawn from the body, chosen by us.
Author bio	You	40 words, one link — your company page or your LinkedIn.
Dates	Us	Published date and last-reviewed date, both visible.
Related resources	Us	Links to our guides and glossary on the same subject.

SECTION SIX

How it works, and the terms

Application to publication, and what happens when something is rejected.

https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership#process

01 Apply — **Authorized, not charged**

Your role, organization, the areas you'd write about, and anything you've published before. No draft, no commitment. We put the membership fee on your card at this point but do not collect it — the card is validated and held, nothing more.

02 We check — **3 business days**

Company, title, tenure, and the category screen. Most declines happen here, and we tell you plainly which check you didn't pass.

03 Accepted, or released — **$499 on acceptance**

If we accept you, the membership fee is collected and a welcome package arrives by email — the editorial bar, the topic areas we're commissioning against, and how to pitch. If we decline, the hold is released, nothing is taken, and the email says which check decided it.

04 Pitch an article — **5 business days**

A three-sentence thesis and four or five bullets. We come back with a yes, a redirect, or a no — with the reason. Pitch as often as you like; the cap is on what we publish, not on what you propose.

05 Write it, or have us write it — **$249 yours, $499 ours**

You draft it yourself, or you complete the intake and we research and write it for you from what you give us. Either way the byline is yours and you sign off on the final text.

06 Edit — **1–2 weeks**

We edit for structure, clarity, house style, and a second read on every claim. Substantive changes come back to you. Nothing publishes that you haven't seen in final form.

07 Publish — **3–4 weeks, pitch to live**

Permanent URL, stamp in place, listed in the Insights index with title and excerpt, and promoted through our newsletter and social channels. The article fee is charged here — a piece we don't publish is never billed.

If you'd rather we wrote it — $499 an article

Complete the intake, give us 30 to 45 minutes on a call, and we will research and write the piece from what you tell us. You review it, ask for changes, and sign off before anything publishes — the argument has to be yours, and the byline says so. What we will not do is write around thin material: if the intake comes back without a decision, a constraint or a number in it, we will say so and refund rather than produce something neither of us wants next to our name.

WHAT THE INTAKE ASKS

1. The argument in one sentence: what should a reader believe after reading this that they didn't before?
2. The work it comes from — what were you accountable for, over what period, and at what scale?
3. The constraint that made the obvious answer impossible: budget, regulation, legacy estate, politics, timing.
4. Numbers we may use — results, costs, timelines, team sizes — with the denominator for each, and whether it is public or needs anonymizing.
5. What went wrong, or what you would do differently. This is usually the part readers remember.
6. Systems, vendors and standards involved, plus any we must not name.
7. Who the piece is for: which role, at what kind of organization, facing what decision.
8. Anything legally sensitive — customer names, unannounced products, matters in progress.
9. Two or three things we should read first: internal write-ups, published research, vendor documentation.
10. Your bio in 40 words, and the one link you want it to carry.

Rejection, refunds and rights

- ✓ An application we decline is never charged — the hold on your card is released and nothing is collected.
- ✓ The membership fee is collected only once we accept you, and it covers the review and your standing for twelve months.
- ✓ Article fees are charged on publication. A pitch we turn down, or a draft that doesn't make it, costs nothing.
- ✓ The cap is six published articles per membership year. It is there so no single voice dominates the section, which is what would make appearing in it worthless.
- ✓ Membership is not refundable once your first article publishes, because the work it pays for has been done. Before that, tell us and we'll refund it.
- ✓ We may remove or annotate an article if a factual claim in it turns out to be false and cannot be corrected. We will tell you first.
- ✓ You keep copyright, including on pieces we write for you. You grant us a permanent, non-exclusive license to publish. You may republish after 30 days with a canonical link back.

SECTION SEVEN

Independence

What money can and can't influence, stated plainly.

https://www.ciopages.com/editorial-policy#independence

The analysis isn't for sale — and that's what makes the advertising worth buying

Which vendors appear in a Buyer Guide's Vendor Landscape, how they're characterized and how they're ordered are editorial calls made on market relevance. If they could be bought, the guides would stop being useful to the CIOs our advertisers want to reach, and the advertising would be worth nothing.

What we sell is placement, clearly disclosed

Spotlight Listings and Featured Vendor placements are advertising: each is labeled “Paid placement,” and each sits in a bounded module beside the analysis rather than inside it. That follows the FTC's guidance that paid placement should be disclosed clearly enough that no reader mistakes it for editorial judgment.

Paying changes nothing about how we cover you

A Spotlight buyer gets no softer assessment and no preferential ordering, and a vendor who has never paid us anything is covered on exactly the same terms. Where an assessment is unfavorable, we publish it and tell the buyer why.

A Forum piece runs because it cleared the same editorial bar as anything else here, and it sits in the Forum with its stamp on it so a reader knows what they have. Membership does not extend to a change in how we evaluate a vendor, a Buyer Guide ranking, or a dofollow link — which is precisely what keeps a byline here worth having.

APPENDIX A

Questions members ask

The ones worth answering before you apply rather than after.

`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership#faq`

Is this the same as your invitation-only guest bylines?

They're two different things and we keep them in separate sections. Invited contributions are unpaid and carry no stamp, because there is nothing to disclose. Forum articles sit in the Forum and carry the Paid Guest Contribution stamp wherever they appear, so a reader can tell at a glance which they are looking at.

Can my agency or PR firm write it?

They can help you draft and they can manage the process. The named author has to be the person whose argument it is, and has to be able to defend it in a conversation with our editor. We ask, and it becomes obvious quickly.

Why nofollow the links if I'm paying?

Marking paid links is what search engines ask for, and it protects your domain as much as ours. It also keeps the Forum worth appearing in over the long run — the standing that makes a placement here meaningful is the same standing that unmarked paid links erode. Your bio link is real and visible, and readers click links they trust regardless of the rel attribute.

What if you reject everything I pitch?

Then the refund terms above apply, and both sides have spent effort for nothing. That is why the application step is free and detailed: a mismatch costs less to find before an invoice than after one.

Do I have to commit to six articles?

No. The join fee covers the review and your standing for the year; after that you pay per published article, and many members run one or two. Six is a ceiling, not a target — it exists so no single voice dominates the section.

When am I charged?

The membership fee goes on your card when you apply but is not collected until we accept you — if we decline, the hold is released and nothing is taken. Article fees are charged when the piece publishes, so a pitch we turn down or a draft that doesn't make it costs you nothing.

What is the difference between the two article prices?

$249 is for a piece you write and we edit. $499 is for one we research and write from your intake and a short call, which you then review and sign off. Same editorial bar either way, and the byline is yours in both.

Do you edit heavily?

We edit for structure, clarity, and house style, and we will push hard on unsupported claims. We do not rewrite your argument into ours. If a draft needs more than two substantial passes, we will say it isn't working rather than write it for you.

APPENDIX B

Every link in this document

The online versions are the current ones — if this PDF and the site ever disagree, the site wins.

`https://www.ciopages.com/work-with-us`

The Executive Forum, membership in full	`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum/membership`
Apply to the Executive Forum	`https://www.ciopages.com/contributor-program/apply`
Published Forum articles	`https://www.ciopages.com/executive-forum`
Both routes onto the site, compared	`https://www.ciopages.com/contributor-program`

Contribution criteria in full	https://www.ciopages.com/editorial-policy#contributions
Our editorial principles	https://www.ciopages.com/editorial-policy
Send a correction	https://www.ciopages.com/contact?topic=correction
Contact us	https://www.ciopages.com/contact
This document, latest version	https://www.ciopages.com/downloads/ciopages-executive-forum-guide.pdf
The combined guide, all three parts	https://www.ciopages.com/downloads/ciopages-partner-editorial-kit.pdf

Something here didn't answer your question? Write to us at https://www.ciopages.com/contact and pick the closest inquiry type — it routes to the right person rather than the general queue. Questions that reach us twice tend to end up in this document, which is better for everyone.

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