



CODE OF CONDUCT

for

Certified Designated Individual Members



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Philosophical Background

- 1.1.1 MASA has identified applied skills and integrity as the pre-eminent professional attributes of Marketers. MASA is committed, in the interests of the marketing profession, to enhancing these qualities in all members, by providing appropriate guidance. This Code deals with professional attitudes and behaviour.
- 1.1.2 This Code is consistent in all material respects with international best practice.
- 1.1.3 The Code is established on the basis that unless a limitation is specifically stated the objectives and fundamental principles are equally valid for all Certified Designated Individual members, (hereinafter referred to as member/members) whether they be offering services to the public or employed in industry, commerce, the public sector, or education.

1.2 Characteristics of the Discipline

Professional conduct is distinguished by certain characteristics including:

- 1.2.1 Mastery of an intellectual skill acquired by experience and education;
- 1.2.2 Acceptance of duties to society as a whole in addition to duties to the client or employer;
- 1.2.3 An outlook which is essentially objective;
- 1.2.4 Rendering personal services to a high standard of conduct and performance.

1.3 The Public Interest

- 1.3.1 A distinguishing mark of professional conduct is acceptance of its responsibility to the public. The marketing profession's public consists of clients, governments, employers, employees, the business and financial community, and others who rely on the skills, objectivity, and integrity of members to maintain the orderly functioning of commerce. This reliance imposes a public interest responsibility on the marketing profession. The public interest is defined as the collective well-being of the community of people and institutions the member serves.
- 1.3.2 A member's responsibility is not exclusively to satisfy the needs of an individual client or employer. The standards of the marketing discipline are heavily determined by the public interest, for example:
 - 1.3.2.1 Marketing executives serve in various management capacities in organisations and contribute to the efficient and effective use of the organisation's resources;
 - 1.3.2.2 Members offering services to the public have a responsibility toward the public interest in advocating proposals that will best meet the needs of the client.
- 1.3.3 Members have a vital role in society. The business community, as well as the government and the public at large rely on members for sound and competent advice on a variety of business matters related to marketing. The attitude and behaviour of members in providing such services have an impact on the economic well-being of their community and country.



- 1.3.4 Members can remain in this advantageous position only by continuing to provide the public with these services at a level which demonstrates that the public confidence is firmly founded. It is in the best interest of the marketing profession to make known to users of the services provided by members that they are executed at the highest level of performance and in accordance with ethical requirements that strive to ensure such performance.

1.4 Objectives of the Marketing Discipline

- 1.4.1 The Code recognises that the objectives of the marketing discipline are to work to the highest standards of professionalism, to attain the highest levels of performance and generally to meet the public interest requirement set out above. These objectives require four basic needs to be met:

- 1.4.1.1 Credibility**

- In the whole of society there is a need for credibility in information and information systems.

- 1.4.1.2 Professionalism**

- There is a need for individuals who can be clearly identified by clients, employers, and other interested parties as professional persons in the marketing field.

- 1.4.1.3 Quality of Services**

- There is a need for assurance that all services obtained from a member are carried out to the highest standards of performance.

- 1.4.1.4 Confidence**

- Users of the services of members should be able to feel confident that there exists a framework of professional ethics, which governs the provision of those services.

2. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

To achieve the objectives of the marketing profession, members must observe a number of prerequisites or fundamental principles. The fundamental principles are:

2.1 Integrity

Integrity is essentially an attitude of mind. Adherence to certain standards of conduct and moral behaviour consistently practised will ensure integrity. A member should be straightforward and honest in performing professional services.

2.2 Objectivity

Objectivity is essentially the quality of being able to maintain an impartial attitude. It requires a member to be fair and not to allow prejudice or bias or influence of others to override objectivity.

2.3 Professional Competence and Due Care

A member, in agreeing to provide professional services, implies that there is a level of competence necessary to perform those professional services and that the knowledge, skill and experience of the member will be applied with reasonable care and diligence.



Members should therefore refrain from performing any services which they are not competent to carry out unless advice and assistance is obtained to ensure that the services are performed satisfactorily.

A member should perform professional services with due care, competence and diligence and has a continuing duty to maintain professional knowledge and skill at a level required to ensure that a client or employer receives the advantage of competent professional service based on up-to-date developments in practice, legislation, and techniques.

2.4 Confidentiality

A member should respect the confidentiality of information acquired during the course of performing professional services and should not use or disclose any such information without proper and specific authority or unless there is a legal or professional right or duty to disclose.

2.5 Professional Behaviour

A member should act in a manner consistent with the good reputation of the profession and refrain from any conduct which might bring discredit to the profession or do harm to others. A member should conduct themselves with courtesy and consideration towards clients, third parties, other members, staff, employers, and the general public.

2.6 Technical Standards

A member should carry out professional services in accordance with the relevant technical and professional standards. Members have a duty to carry out with care and skill, the instructions of the client or employer in so far as they are compatible with the requirements of integrity, objectivity and, in the case of members offering services to the public, independence. In addition, they should conform with the technical and professional standards promulgated by MASA, relevant authorities, and relevant legislation.

3. STATUS OF THE CODE

- 3.1 The objectives as well as the fundamental principles are of a general nature and are not intended to be used to solve a member's ethical problems in a specific case. Therefore, the Code also provides detailed guidance as to the application in practice of the objectives and the fundamental principles with regard to a number of typical situations occurring in the marketing profession.
- 3.2 If, having consulted this Code, doubt still exists in a member's mind, they should fully discuss the matter with an appropriate and senior member.
- 3.3 If a member conducts themselves in a manner which, in the opinion of the MASA Professional Designations Board (PDB) is discreditable, dishonourable, dishonest, irregular, or unworthy or which is derogatory to MASA, or tends to bring the profession of marketing into disrepute, such conduct will be considered an act or practice which shall be a transgression of the Code.

The process for dealing with transgressions of this Code is laid out in the **PDB's Disciplinary Policy & Regulations** wherein all outcomes will be guided by this Code.

It is emphasised that the Code sets out the way MASA considers a member should behave in certain circumstances and sets out those circumstances in which a member should very carefully consider their position before deciding on their course of action.



Breach of the Code will indicate only that an offence may have been committed. If a complaint is lodged alleging that a member has breached the Code, such member may well be called upon by the PDB in line with the Disciplinary Policy & Regulations to show cause why they consider that the breach, if there was one, did not constitute an offence.

4. JOINT AND VICARIOUS LIABILITY

- 4.1 A member may be held responsible for a breach of, or failure to comply with, this Code on the part of all persons who are –
- 4.1.1 their employees; or
 - 4.1.2 under their supervision; or
 - 4.1.3 their partners; or
 - 4.1.4 fellow shareholders in, or directors or employees of, a company controlled by the member and their partners and offering professional services to the public. (For purposes of this Code a company will be deemed to be controlled by members, if members between them hold directly or indirectly, more than half of the voting rights attached to the shares of the company or directly or indirectly and either alone or together with anyone else are entitled to exercise the de facto right to control the manner in which the business of the company is carried on [including, but without limitation, the right to appoint the majority of the persons entitled to exercise control over its management and affairs]); or
 - 4.1.5 Fellow members in or employees of a close corporation controlled by the member and their partners and offering professional services to the public. (For purposes of this Code a close corporation will be deemed to be controlled by members, if members between them hold an interest in the corporation which would entitle them to a majority vote at a meeting of members of the corporation or would otherwise entitle them to exercise the de facto right to control the way the business of the corporation is carried on.)
- 4.2 A member may not, under the guise or through the medium of a partnership, company, close corporation, or any other entity, do anything or allow anything to be done which they would not be permitted to do as an individual.
- 4.3 A member may not permit others to carry out on their behalf, either with or without remuneration, acts which, if carried out by themselves, would constitute a contravention of this Code.

5. INTEGRITY AND OBJECTIVITY

- 5.1 The principles of integrity and objectivity impose the obligation on all members to be fair, honest, and free of conflicts of interest, prejudice, and bias.
- 5.2 Members serve in many different capacities and there is an obligation on them to apply these principles, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage, whether they are in commerce, in industry, in academic situations, in the public sector or offering services to the public. Regardless of service or capacity, members should protect the integrity of their professional services, maintain objectivity, and avoid any subordination of their judgment by others.
- 5.3 Relationships or interests, whether direct or indirect, which could adversely influence, impair, or threaten their capacity to act with integrity and objectivity should be avoided. A member should not accept or provide gifts or similar favours which could impair their integrity or objectivity.



- 5.4 Members will be exposed to situations which involve the possibility of pressures being exerted on them. These pressures may impair their integrity and objectivity. It is impracticable to define and prescribe all such situations where these possible pressures exist, but reasonableness should prevail in identifying relationships that are likely to or appear to impair a member's integrity and objectivity.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 6.1 A member should be and appear to be free of any influence, interest, or relationship, whether direct or indirect which might be regarded, whatever its actual effect, as being incompatible with integrity or objectivity.
- 6.2 A member should be constantly alert to the possibility of a conflict of interest.
- 6.3 A member should consider the facts and circumstances before deciding whether their integrity and objectivity would be impaired by accepting an engagement or continuing in an employment position.
- 6.4 Such conflicts may arise in a wide variety of ways, ranging from the relatively trivial dilemma to the extreme case of fraud and similar illegal activities. It is not possible to attempt to itemize a comprehensive checklist of potential cases where conflicts of interest might occur.
- 6.5 It should be noted that an honest difference of opinion between a member and another party is not in itself an ethical issue.
- 6.6 It is recognised, however, that there can be factors which occur when the responsibilities of a member may conflict with internal or external demands of one type or another. Hence,
- 6.6.1 There may be the danger of pressure from an overbearing supervisor, manager, director, or partner; or when there are family or personal relationships which can give rise to the possibility of pressures being exerted upon them. Indeed, relationships or interests which could adversely influence, impair, or threaten a member's integrity should be discouraged.
- 6.6.2 A member may be asked to act contrary to technical or professional standards.
- 6.6.3 A question of divided loyalty as between the member's superior and the required professional standards of conduct could occur.
- 6.6.4 Conflict could arise when false, misrepresenting, or misleading statements or information are released or published which may be to the advantage of the employer or client and which may or may not benefit the member, as a result of such publication.
- 6.7 Where a member has reason to believe that their or their employee's involvement in an assignment would possibly cause a conflict of interest, they should immediately disclose this fact.
- 6.8 Where a material conflict of interest exists, a member should decline to act.
- 6.9 Where a member considers that it would be possible to act objectively, the engagement may be accepted provided:
- 6.9.1 the nature of the conflict is fully explained to each party for whom the member will be acting; and
- 6.9.2 the parties agree in writing that the member may act.

- 6.10 In applying standards of ethical conduct, members may encounter problems in identifying unethical behaviour or in resolving an ethical conflict. When faced with significant ethical issues, members not offering services to the public should follow the established policies of the employing organization to seek a resolution of such conflict. If those policies do not resolve the ethical conflict, the following should be considered:
- 6.10.1 Review the conflict problem with the immediate superior. If the problem is not resolved with the immediate superior and the member determines to go to the next higher managerial level, the immediate superior should be notified of the decision. If it appears that the superior is involved in the problem, the member should raise the issue with the next higher level of management. When the immediate superior is the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) the next higher reviewing level may be the Executive Committee, Non-Executive Directors, Trustees, Partners' Management Committee, or shareholders.
 - 6.10.2 Seek counselling and advice on a confidential basis with an independent advisor or appropriate and senior member to obtain an understanding of choices.
 - 6.10.3 If the ethical conflict still exists after fully exhausting all levels of internal review, the member, as a last resort, may have no other recourse on significant matters, such as fraud, than to resign from the employing organization, and to submit a memorandum setting out the reasons for resigning to an appropriate representative of that organisation.

7. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

- 7.1 A member should not undertake or continue with any professional services which they are not competent to carry out unless competent advice and assistance is obtained to enable them to satisfactorily perform such services. If a member does not have the competence to perform a specific part of the professional service, technical advice may be sought from experts such as other members, lawyers, actuaries, engineers, geologists, valuers or other experts as appropriate.
- 7.2 A member who is employed may be asked to undertake significant tasks for which they have not had sufficient specific training or experience. When undertaking such work, the member should not mislead the employer as to the degree of expertise or experience they possess, and where appropriate, expert advice and assistance should be sought.
- 7.3 Whether a member is offering services to the public or engaged in commerce, industry, academic life, or the public sector, they have a responsibility to keep themselves up to date in whatever field of activity they are engaged in.
- 7.4 A member should maintain their professional knowledge and skill. This requires a continuing awareness of developments in the marketing profession including relevant national and international pronouncements on marketing and other relevant regulations and statutory requirements.
- 7.5 All members should adopt a programme of continuing professional development.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 Members have an obligation to respect the confidentiality of information acquired about a client's or employer's affairs. The duty of confidentiality continues even after the end of the relationship between the member and the client or employer.
- 8.2 Confidentiality should always be observed by a member unless specific authority has been given to disclose information or there is a legal or professional duty to disclose.



- 8.3 Members have an obligation to ensure that staff under their control and persons from whom advice and assistance is obtained respect the principle of confidentiality.
- 8.4 Confidentiality is not only a matter of disclosure of information. It also requires that a member acquiring information during performing professional services shall neither use, nor appear to use, that information for personal advantage or for the advantage of a third party.
- 8.5 A member has access to much confidential information about a client's or employer's affairs not otherwise disclosed to the public. Therefore, the member should be relied upon not to make unauthorized disclosures to other persons.
This does not apply to disclosure of such information in order properly to discharge the member's responsibility according to the profession's standards, or when required by law.
- 8.6 The following should be considered in determining the extent to which confidential information may be disclosed.
- 8.6.1 When disclosure is authorized. When authorization to disclose is given by the client or the employer the interests of all the parties including those third parties whose interests might be affected should be considered.
- 8.6.2 When disclosure is required by law. Examples of when a member is required by law to disclose confidential information are: - to produce documents or to give evidence in the course of legal proceedings; - to disclose to the appropriate authorities, any infringements of the law which come to light.
- 8.6.3 When there is a professional duty or right to disclose:
- 8.6.3.1 to comply with technical standards and ethics requirements - such disclosure is not contrary to this section;
- 8.6.3.2 to protect the professional interests of a member in legal proceedings;
- 8.6.3.3 to respond to an inquiry or investigation by the Investigation or Disciplinary Committees.
- 8.7 Where a member is required to disclose information about a client's or employer's affairs, they should advise the client or employer that this is the case. Care should be taken to ensure that no more information than is strictly necessary is made available.

9. DISCRIMINATION

- 9.1 A member should not practice discrimination against any person based on race, colour, religion, gender, marital status, age, or origin. This includes engagement, promotion, dismissal, remuneration, transfer, training, and other practices relating to employment.

10. PUBLICITY, ADVERTISING AND SOLICITATION

- 10.1 Material prepared for the purposes of publicity, advertising and solicitation should be in good taste both as to content and presentation.
- 10.2 The material should conform to the accepted norms of legality, decency, honesty, and truthfulness.
- 10.3 Judgment as to what may or may not constitute good taste can only be made in the context of the facts on which that judgment is exercised.



- 10.4 It is possible, however, to give some broad guidance and general examples as to what might, in appropriate circumstances, be regarded as not being in accordance with good taste. Thus, material which is likely to give offence to religious beliefs, or is racist, is unacceptable. Other possible examples include the trivialisation of important issues, the deriding of public figures, disparagement of educational attainment and material which makes odious comparisons.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES

- 11.1 A member should conduct themselves in a manner, which will promote co-operation and good relations between members and within the profession.
- 11.2 The support of a profession by its members and their co-operation with one another are essential elements of professional character. The public confidence and respect, which a member enjoys, is largely the result of the cumulative accomplishments of all members, past and present. It is, therefore, in the member's own interest as well as that of the public, to support the collective efforts of colleagues through professional societies and organizations and to deal with fellow members in a manner that will not detract from their reputation and well-being.
- 11.3 While the Code prescribes certain specific actions in relationships with colleagues, these prescriptions do not define the limits of desirable intra-professional conduct. Such conduct should encompass the professional consideration and courtesies which each member would like to have fellow members extend to them.
- 11.4 A member should assist their fellow members in complying with this Code and should cooperate with the appropriate disciplinary authorities in applying the Code. To condone serious fault can be as bad as to commit it. It may be even worse, in fact, since some errors may result from ignorance rather than intent and, if let pass without action, will probably be repeated. In situations of this kind the welfare of the profession should be the guide to a member's action.
- 11.5 Although the reluctance of a professional to give testimony that may be damaging to a colleague is understandable, the obligation of professional courtesy and fraternal consideration can never excuse lack of complete candour if the member is testifying as an expert witness in a judicial proceeding or properly constituted enquiry.
- 11.6 A member should not irresponsibly criticise another member.
- 11.7 It is natural that a member offering services to the public will seek to develop their practice. However, in doing so they should not seek to displace another member in a client relationship by means which will lessen the effectiveness of technical performance. Further, a member should not act in any way that reflects negatively on fellow members.
- 11.8 A member should extend the same professional considerations and courtesies to any non-member with whom they may have a professional relationship.

12. FEES FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- 12.1 Members who undertake professional services for a client, assume the responsibility to perform such services with integrity and objectivity and in accordance with the appropriate technical standards. That responsibility is discharged by applying the professional skill and knowledge which members have acquired through training and experience. For the professional services rendered, the member is entitled to be remunerated.



- 12.2 In determining what constitutes fair remuneration a member may consider the value of the professional service to the client, the customary charge for similar services by other professionals, and any other special circumstances which may exist. No single factor is necessarily the determining factor. Agreeing on an acceptable fee is primarily a matter for negotiation between the member and their client.

13. CONFLICT OF LOYALTY

- 13.1 Members in employment owe a duty of loyalty to their employer as well as to their profession and there may be times when the two are in conflict. An employee's normal priority should be to support their/organisation's legitimate and ethical objectives and the rules and procedures drawn up in support of them. However, an employee cannot legitimately be required to:
- 13.1.1 break the law;
 - 13.1.2 breach the rules and standards of their profession;
 - 13.1.3 lie to or mislead (including misleading by keeping silent) clients or potential clients of the employer.
- 13.2 Differences in view about the correct judgment on professional or ethical matters should normally be raised and resolved within the employee's organisation, initially with the employee's immediate superior and possibly thereafter, where disagreement about a significant ethical issue remains, with higher levels of management or nonexecutive directors.
- 13.3 If members in employment cannot resolve any material issue involving a conflict between their employers and their professional requirements they may, after exhausting all other relevant possibilities, have no other recourse but to consider resignation. Employees should state their reasons for doing so to the employer, but their duty of confidentiality normally precludes them from communicating the issue to others (unless legally or professionally required to do so).



14. MASA CODE OF CONDUCT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____, with

ID / Passport number _____ and

MASA Professional/Membership number _____,

hereby declare that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to all **Fundamental Principles** and **Rules of Conduct** contained within this document. My conduct will reflect positively and do justice to the institution of being a Certified **Designated Individual Member** of **The Marketing Association of South Africa (MASA)**.

Signed:

MEMBERS SIGNATURE

DATE

