

CODE OF ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES

Members of the PR Council (PRC) commit to standards of practice that assure clients, the public and media, employees, and business partners the highest level of professionalism and ethical conduct in every relationship with a PRC member. This commitment is a requirement for application and continued membership in the PRC.

Our overriding principle is that openness and transparency not only are in the public interest, they are also necessary tools for meeting our clients' objectives. Members of the PR Council embrace our responsibilities to promote open and transparent dialogue. We carry out our business in accordance with the following code of ethics and principles that guide our relationships with clients and the public.

1. We adhere to the highest standards of ethics in the public relations profession.

The employees of public relations firms are members of a profession which has well-established guidelines for ethical behavior through professional organizations such as PRSA and the PR Council, as well as within their individual firms. We expect each of our employees to commit themselves to those guidelines and advise our clients' communications professionals to do so as well.

Members and their employees will be honest and accurate when recording time charges and seeking reimbursement of expenses, and member firms will not solicit or accept kickbacks or under-the-table payments in connection with business development efforts.

2. We protect the integrity of client information. Member firms will serve their clients by applying their fullest capability to achieve each client's business objectives. Members reserve the option to represent more than one client in an industry sector but any apparent conflicts must be vetted with relevant clients. PRC firms and their employees will respect client confidences and the privacy of client employees.

Our policies on data collection, transmission, storage, or other use will conform to the requirements of each jurisdiction where we operate. We will accept that part of our professional obligation to clients is to make sure that the intersection of our data practices and theirs, in relation to our work together, are discussed, understood, and well-managed.

Commercial relationships with business partners and vendors will be handled in a businesslike manner. Credit will be given for ideas and services provided by others, consistent with the terms under which those relationships are negotiated.

3. We honor our role in society. In their service to clients, public relations firms play a vital role in encouraging public discourse. The professionalism and objectivity of our firms helps clients engage in that discourse, and clients turn to us for our counsel and assistance to

vigorously pursue their organizational goals in educating or persuading audiences that matter most to them. Public relations firms help clients as diverse as government agencies, public and private companies, and not-for-profit groups. In a democratic and free-market society, our clients' goals often put us in the sphere of such complex issues as thorny policy debates, intense market competition or critical education needs in areas of public health, safety and well-being.

4. We are committed to accuracy. In communicating with the public and media, member firms will maintain total accuracy and truthfulness. We will not knowingly misuse or misrepresent data provided by our clients, third-parties or our own organizations, invent facts, falsify information, or intentionally mischaracterize the results of scientific research for any purpose. To preserve both the reality and perception of professional integrity, information that is found to be misleading or erroneous will be promptly corrected and the sources of communications and sponsors of activities will not be concealed.

5. We believe that our clients and the public are best served when third-party relationships with spokespeople, bloggers, partners and allies are open and transparent. Our bias in counseling clients is toward disclosure, which we believe is appropriate as a principle and effective as a communications tool.

Our clients and the public are best served when any relationship between third-party organizations and our clients is fully disclosed and when the sponsors of public relations tools such as video news releases and web sites are clearly identified.

Third-party spokespersons, such as scientists, economists, scholars, celebrities, online media "influencers" such as bloggers, or other third-party content experts who are involved in word of mouth communications, enrich the public discourse. Third-party organizations such as alliances or coalitions may be created to promote our clients' interests. When a spokesperson, expert or organization is paid for participation we will not conceal the paid nature of the relationship.

6. We are conscientious stewards of taxpayer dollars. Working for federal, state and local governmental entities involves a unique responsibility as it is paid for by taxpayers' dollars and, like the rest of our work, must uphold the public trust at all times.

Members of the PR Council are proud to play a vital role in the development and implementation of federal, state and local government programs. We recognize and accept this responsibility and act in accordance with the highest degree of ethical and financial conduct.

We will not misrepresent our status or the nature of inquiries to public bodies or create false impressions in our relations with such bodies.

We believe that the public is entitled to know the identity of our government clients. We encourage government agencies and their communications agency partners to publicly disclose all contractual relationships.

We strictly adhere to government rules and regulations regarding procurement and execution of government business and maintain the necessary training programs and physical infrastructure necessary to deliver on that commitment. We will not offer financial inducement or other payments to elected officials or civil servants except in accordance with applicable law, and we will employ former public service personnel only in accordance with the rules and confidentiality requirements of their former government or institutional employers.

7. We value diversity and inclusion in our profession.

We believe that a diverse workforce that includes individuals of different backgrounds, beliefs and perspectives strengthens our member firms and the profession. When selecting subcontractors and vendors, we seek assistance from a broad array of partners and suppliers to increase opportunities to foster diversity (i.e., minority-owned, women-owned, small business, etc.). The more “voices” that are present, the better able we are as advisors to help our clients speak to an increasingly complex world.

Members will adopt policies that assure equal opportunity for all job candidates without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, disability or any other basis prohibited by applicable federal, state or local law. With a knowledge that internships are critical to preparing young talent for positions in our agencies and fairly compensated internships bring more accomplished and diverse talent into the industry, our Members will pay interns at least minimum wage for the market, as well as overtime.

Council members will also respect the personal rights of their employees and former employees. They will provide employees the necessary tools to serve their clients and opportunities to develop their professional skills. They will safeguard the privacy and handle with respect the professional reputation of current and former employees.

We will not tolerate sexual harassment in our workplaces, in client relationships, or in media or supplier relationships. We will not participate in or condone any social media or other communications activities involving harassment or bullying.

We understand that in the environment in which we and our clients operate today, the behavior and standards of our clients, contractors, or business partners may reflect on our own organizations and our values. We recognize that we live in a time where a declaration of intentions is insufficient to maintain credibility and accountability. We understand that in many instances, our employees and the public may perceive us to be accountable by association for the decisions and choices of those with whom our firms are associated, even if we are unaware or not in any way responsible. As we would advise clients, we will take necessary steps to

examine the quality of our relationships and values of those with whom we have business relationships.

8. We are committed to agency practices that increase society’s confidence in the practice of public relations. When we engage with journalists, bloggers or other organizations, we disclose who we represent. We respect the opinions of journalists and other spokespeople as their own. We do not retain or compensate journalists to represent client interests in their media. We expect bloggers and other online influencers to be honest and accurate.

We will implement policies within our firms to carry out these principles, and we will train our employees about the imperative of upholding them and effectively communicating their importance to clients.

In addition, as a member of the International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO) we support the Helsinki Declaration.

Certification of Acceptance

I accept and agree to abide by the statement of principles outlined above. These standards of practice will be observed by the staff of the undersigned company.

Name of PRC Member Firm: _____

Principal’s name: _____ **Title:** _____

Principal’s signature: _____ **Date:** _____