



Centre d'études
sur les responsabilités sociales,
le développement durable et l'éthique

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR THE ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

**A review of the
Canadian Public Relations Society's
current Code of Professional Standards**

RESEARCH REPORT

July 2008

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 publiques

Notes:

- Use of the masculine is generic and applies to both men and women.
- Two organizations mentioned in the present document changed their names during this period – both names are used in the document:
 - From *Société des relationnistes du Québec* to *Société québécoise des professionnels en relations publiques* (2006)
 - From *Chaire de relations publiques* to *Chaire de relations publiques et communication marketing* (2008)

The project team is grateful for the support of Danielle Maisonneuve, professor, Department of Social and Public Communication and founder of the Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair at UQAM. Dr. Maisonneuve proposed the code of professional standards project and provided the team precious guidance at critical milestones.

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In alphabetical order and in language of business card:

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- Guy Versailles, ARP, président, Versailles Communication

The project team was also inspired by the teachings of our late colleague Yves Saint-Amand, APR, FCPRS, regarding the role of public relations ethics and the importance of professionalizing the public relations practice.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Ethics or Professional Conduct?

Responsibility relates to *ethics* the way that *accountability* relates to *professional conduct* – although the two concepts are not mutually exclusive.

Responsibility is a general notion, although more demanding than jurisprudence. *Accountability* – more closely related to jurisprudence – has a restrictive and more practical connotation.

Christian Saint-Germain, PhD

PART I

RESEARCH REPORT

1.1 Context

This project was initiated at a time when ethics issues were (and still are) of great concern to the public relations community at large, whether in Québec, Canada or the rest of the world.

The current decade has seen several initiatives which reflect this growing interest:

- In 2002, the Société des relationnistes du Québec¹ formed its first Ethics Committee. Its first action plan mentioned a project to propose a revised Code of Professional Standards to the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS).
- In 2004, the CPRS created an Ethics Network whose action plan mentioned a revision of the CPRS Code of Professional Standards.
- In March 2003, Global Alliance, an international association of public relations societies across the globe – over 60 partners representing 150,000 professionals – published a *Global Protocol on Ethics in Public Relations* to which member associations must adhere.

A recent large-scale study of Québec's public relations industry² reflects a growing interest in ethical and professional conduct issues on the part of Québec practitioners. The study reveals that, in 1990, only 60% of practitioners were familiar with the CPRS Code of Professional Standards, whereas by 2003, the situation had evolved – 90% claim to be familiar with their Code. Importantly, focus group participants stressed the importance of ethics and transparency, considered core values at the very heart of their role and professional credibility as communicators. These practitioners express great concern about the multiple examples of inappropriate behaviour displayed by those who claim to be public relations practitioners but who lack the training and competence, thus casting a shadow of doubt over the entire profession. Those surveyed believe that concrete disciplinary measures would go a long way towards protecting the credibility of trained, competent practitioners.

The SRQ Ethics Committee report for 2002-2005³ echoes those views (loose translation by authors):

- "For many public relations practitioners, it is unclear exactly what role the practitioner should play within his organization with respect to ethical matters."
- "Although members don't seem to possess much specific knowledge regarding ethical matters, they do show a great deal of interest in them."
- "In general, members are unfamiliar with the CPRS Judicial Process."
- "Members are not sufficiently aware of the obligation to report Code infractions."
- "Several members want their professional association to speak out when the ethics of public relations practitioners is put into doubt."

1. In 2006, the Association changed its name to: Société québécoise des professionnels en relations publiques.

2. Maisonneuve, D., Tremblay, S. and Lafrance, A.-A. (2004):

- *Les relations publiques : une profession à géométrie variable (rapport quantitatif)*, Centre for Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Ethics, Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).
- *Étude sur les relations publiques au Québec (rapport qualitatif)*, Centre for Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Ethics, Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).
- *Résultats de la recherche sur l'état des relations publiques au Québec - Faits saillants*, Centre for Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Ethics, Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

3. Collu, G. and Drendel, D. (2006). *L'éthique et la déontologie en relations publiques au Québec, Rapport et recommandations soumis au Conseil d'administration*, Société des relationnistes du Québec.

Public Relations Ethics

These concerns are not new, of course. In fact, the first international meeting of public relations practitioners, held after World War II, put ethics on its agenda.⁴ And these concerns were reflected in the first public relations codes of ethics developed in the early 1950s.

Today, most professional associations have a code of ethics, and several are now working to improve them. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), whose first code dates back to 1950, has refreshed its code several times, the most recent updates being in 1997 and again in 2000. The International Public Relations Association's (IPRA) *Code of Athens*⁵, adopted in 1965 and updated in 1968, was preceded by the *IPRA Code on Professional Conduct (Code of Venice)* in 1961. In 2006, IPRA added the *Code of Conduct of Public Affairs Worldwide*. Inspired by the *Code of Venice* and the *Code of Athens*, the *Code of Brussels*, as it is called, clarifies the conditions for the ethical practice of public affairs, thereby addressing a key area of public relations practice.

Because these issues directly touch practitioners' values and impact the integrity and credibility of their profession, many pages have been written on the subject by practitioners and non-practitioners alike. Guidance is increasingly available in the form of conferences and seminars, and ethics courses are offered as part of certain university programs. As far back as 1973⁶, when IPRA launched its *Gold Papers* – a review dealing with important public relations issues – the title page of the first edition was devoted to ethics. Of the 16 titles published since, eight have been devoted to ethics – the most recent in 2007. Also, several professional associations have created ethics committees to deal with complaints, code infractions and sanctions.

Over the years, the professional community has worked to develop effective means for implementing codes and complaint procedures that help protect the reputation and image of the profession. Cutlip, Center and Broom summed it up well: “[...] *having a code usually reflects a sincere desire among a vast majority of leaders and members to raise standards of ethical practice and to provide criteria to guide and judge individual behaviour. But a code without commitment, training, and enforcement means little in practice*⁷.”

4. Some time later, in 1955, this meeting would lead to the creation of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). Source: IPRA (2007), *Ethics in Public Relations*, Gold Paper No:16, United Kingdom, IPRA.

5. This Code is followed by the vast majority of associations around the world.

6. *First Report on Standards and of Public Relations Practice*

7. Cutlip, S.M., Center, A.H. and Broom, G.M. (2001). *Effective Public Relations* – Eighth Edition, Prentice Hall, p. 171.

1.2 Project Objectives

For a code of professional standards to remain vital and current, it must reflect the realities of the professional community it serves. And if it is to continue to be pertinent and useful, it must undergo regular review and updating. This was the purpose behind the Code of Professional Standards project.

The proposed new framework for ethical conduct aims to provoke thought and discussion within the public relations community. The revised Code is proposed to the Canadian Public Relations Society, with the conviction that it concretely addresses the multiple challenges facing public relations practitioners today as they navigate both the global marketplace, with its increasingly complex issues, and their own organizations which are undergoing considerable mutations in both management style and activities, and as they deal with their organizations' stakeholders. The content of the proposed Code is thought to be more explicit and more clearly formulated than the current CPRS Code, while remaining as concrete and practical as possible – the aim being to offer guidelines that are as well adapted as possible to the needs of today's communicators.

Project Team

The present *Proposal for a New Ethics Framework for the Public Relations Profession* is the product of a joint effort by the Centre for Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Ethics⁸ and Christian Saint-Germain, professor and researcher in the fields of ethics, applied ethics and bioethics at UQAM. The project was carried out in close collaboration with the Québec professional community and with the direct participation of the SQPRP's Ethics and Governance Chair, Hélène Gagné. Two members of the project team, Gabrielle Collu and Deanna Drendel, are founding members of the SRQ's Ethics Committee (2002) and the CPRS's Ethics Network (2004).

8. A research group within the Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

1.3 **Methodology**

The project was designed and implemented in four steps:

- A) Document review and analysis
- B) Drafting of a new framework for ethical public relations
- C) Consultation / validation with a group of practitioners and researchers
- D) Finalization of a proposal for a new Code of Professional Standards

A) Document review and analysis

Codes

- International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) – *Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators*
- European Public Relations Confederation (CERP) – *European Code of Professional Conduct in Public Relations / Code of Lisbon*
- International Public Relations Association (IPRA) – *Code of Athens*
- International Public Relations Association (IPRA) – *Code of Brussels*
- Canadian Public Relations Society – *Code of Professional Standards*
- Global Alliance – *Global Protocol on Ethics in Public Relations*
- Global Alliance – *Comparison of Selected PR Codes of Ethics*

Other documentation

- CPRS – *Conflict of Interest Declaration*
- CPRS – *Confidentiality and Privacy Declarations*
- CPRS – *CPRS Policy Statement Communications in Social Media*
- CPRS – *Judicial Process*

Reports – Studies – Publications

- Collu, G. and Drendel, D. (2006). *L'éthique et la déontologie en relations publiques au Québec*, Rapport et recommandations soumis au Conseil d'administration, Société des relationnistes du Québec.
- Cutlip, S.M., Center, A.H. and Broom, G.M. (2001). *Effective Public Relations* – Eighth Edition, Prentice Hall.
- IPRA (2007). *Ethics in Public Relations*, IPRA Gold Paper No:16, United Kingdom, IPRA.
- Maisonneuve, D., Tremblay, S. and Lafrance, A.-A. (2004). *Étude sur les relations publiques au Québec (rapport qualitatif)*, Centre for Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Ethics, Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).
- Maisonneuve, D., Tremblay, S. and Lafrance, A.-A. (2004). *Les relations publiques : une profession à géométrie variable (rapport quantitatif)*, Centre for Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development and Ethics, Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

B) Drafting of a new framework for ethical public relations

The project team, motivated by the principles of continuity and continuous improvement, used the current CPRS Code of Professional Standards (2007) as its starting point for the new proposed code, and took into consideration other codes applicable to public relations practitioners in 2007.

C) Consultations

Four separate consultations⁹ were conducted during April and May 2007 to validate progress. Before proceeding to the next step, comments and suggestions were considered and integrated as appropriate:

Group 1 – Researchers and professors

Group 2 – SQPRP's Ethics and Governance Committee

Group 3 – Preliminary consultation with a few members of CPRS's Ethics Network Steering Committee

Group 4 – SQPRP's Executive Committee

The new proposed Code of Professional Standards was submitted to the CPRS President in May 2007 and an information meeting was held on January 25, 2008¹⁰. By July 2008, the matter was under discussion with the CPRS.

Presentation and panel discussion

In April 2008, at the end of the project, the Public Relations and Marketing Communication Chair organized a presentation. Panelists included three members of the project team – Christian Saint-Germain, Gabrielle Collu and Deanna Drendel – joined by Nicole Beaulieu, SQPRP President and François Taschereau, General Manager, Edelman Public Relations. The event, attended by 80 participants, provoked great interest and a dynamic discussion.

D) Finalization of a proposal for a new Code of Professional Standards

All the observations gathered during the course of these consultations and discussions were analyzed and integrated, as appropriate, into the final proposal for a new Code of Professional Standards.

9. See Acknowledgments for list of persons consulted.

10. Participants: Derrick Peters, CPRS President; Sarah Jones, CPRS Judicial and Ethics Committee Chair; Karen Dalton, CPRS General Manager.

1.4 Description

This proposed new Code of Professional Standards is organized into two sections:

- Section 1
Duties and Obligations
- Section 2
Code Enforcement

PART II

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS - PROPOSAL¹¹

Forward

The following proposed Code lays out a basic framework for the ethical professional conduct of the public relations practitioner. A conduct which will enable him to establish, maintain and promote trusting relationships, based on knowledge and mutual understanding between the organization he represents and that organization's internal and external publics – with respect for the public interest.

The Code aims to reassure the public regarding the veracity of the information communicated during the exercise of the practitioner's responsibilities. It is understood that all CPRS members are expected to practice public relations with a respect for the highest professional standards.

The achievement of this end implies that the public relations practitioner must, by his every word and deed, work to create a climate of mutual trust by developing a process for two-way communications between an organization and its publics, enabling the organization to influence and be influenced in return¹².

SECTION 1

Duties and Obligations

- 1) The present Code stipulates the ethical standards, duties and obligations that apply to public relations practitioners.
- 2) A public relations practitioner who pays the annual membership fee to CPRS, or to one of its member societies, and who signs the CPRS Code of Professional Standards is considered to be a member of CPRS, or of that member society, and to have accepted the CPRS Code of Professional Standards as his own.
- 3) The public relations practitioner must act with respect for the public interest and must be familiar with all aspects of the positions he puts forward.

11. The content of this proposal does not, in any way, reflect current CPRS or CPRS member society standards. It is the product of a project submitted here in the form of a proposal, as described earlier in this document.

12. Maisonneuve, Danielle, Jean-François Lamarche, Yves St-Amand. *Les relations publiques dans une société en mouvance*, PUQ, 1998, p. 44.

- 4) The public relations practitioner must observe the rules of intellectual probity. Although he is not under obligation to possess specific scientific expertise, he must make every effort to verify the content and validity of the information he provides, with respect to its exactness and preciseness.
- 5) When questioned by the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues¹³, the public relations practitioner may not invoke his contractual duty of loyalty to a client or employer¹⁴.
- 6) Should a public relations practitioner discover, during the course of a mandate, that certain ethical issues or important facts have been concealed from him and that such information, had it been known, would have altered his decision to act on behalf of that employer or client, he must withdraw from the mandate, after providing notification¹⁵ to the employer or client.
- 7) In communicating information, the public relations practitioner must not employ expressions that are vague, confusing or so technical that they cannot be easily understood by his publics, whether they are specialized in the subject matter or not.
- 8) The public relations practitioner must not make inflated claims or unfair comparisons or appropriate the ideas or statements of other parties.
- 9) The public relations practitioner must not promise or guarantee results that exceed his skills or abilities.
- 10) The public relations practitioner must, during the course of a mandate, inform his employer or client of any change that might impact the mandate, including budget overruns, and provide an explanation.
- 11) The public relations practitioner must be prepared to publicly reveal the names of employers or clients whose interests he represents and must avoid associating with any party who fails to comply with this principle.
- 12) The public relations practitioner must not be associated with any party who claims to represent certain interests, or to be impartial and neutral, while in fact, it represents other, or hidden, interests.
- 13) The public relations practitioner must avoid any cavalier or negligent professional conduct that could discredit the public relations function or CPRS or one of its member societies.
- 14) The public relations practitioner must behave with fairness and courtesy when dealing with his employers, clients and past and present colleagues, and with representatives of the media and other publics.

13. See Section 2, Article 26 *et seq.*

14. In this Code, duties and obligations apply to all public relations practitioners, whether employees or self-employed.

15. The word "notify" here means to warn in writing.

- 15) The public relations practitioner has the obligation to promptly notify the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues¹⁶ regarding any conduct he observes that constitutes a breach of an article in the present Code.
- 16) The public relations practitioner must not, in any way, cause prejudice to a colleague's practice or professional reputation – with the exception of the obligation to denounce breaches of the Code to the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues.
- 17) The public relations practitioner must not make statements or take any action aimed at unduly influencing the media, government organizations or the legislative process, through means such as offering gifts, benefits or other inducements in exchange for favours or future considerations.
- 18) The public relations practitioner must not, in the exercise of his responsibilities, accept fees, commissions, incentives or other considerations from any party other than his current employers or clients.
- 19) The only gifts that the public relations practitioner may accept from his employers or clients are nominal gifts of symbolic value that do not compromise his independence.
- 20) When collaborating with members of other professions, the public relations practitioner must take into account the collaborator's code of ethics.
- 21) The public relations practitioner must practice the utmost discretion regarding information or special contacts acquired during prior employment or mandates. Unless specifically and personally authorized by the source, he must not use this information or these contacts against a former employer or client and/or when conducting future business.
- 22) The public relations practitioner must avoid all possible confusion – i.e. he must make a clear distinction – between his personal interests and the interests of his clients.
- 23) The public relations practitioner must, in the exercise of his responsibilities, avoid any form of conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest.
- 24) The public relations practitioner may consult the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues, in total confidentiality, regarding any professional conduct that appears to be in conflict with this Code.

The foregoing list of ethical stipulations is non-exhaustive.

16. See article 25 *et seq.*

SECTION 2

Code Enforcement

- 25) The CPRS mandates the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues to ensure compliance with the Code. The Committee rebukes or makes nominal reprimands – through its newsletter, Web site or any forum deemed appropriate – regarding professional behaviour that runs counter to the spirit and/or the letter of this Code. If necessary, in cases of serious or repeated violation of the Code, the Committee can expulse the offending member. The CPRS is ultimately responsible for enforcement of the Code.

- 26) The Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues is named by the CPRS Board of Directors. It consists of a chairperson and members selected from the following categories: two (2) accredited CPRS members – or members of CPRS member societies – with more than 20 years of experience and who are recognized for their sensitivity to ethical issues – because of their training, teaching or research activities; one (1) lawyer and member of the Canadian Bar Association; one (1) professional ethicist; two (2) members of the general public who belong to professions or trades (other than public relations) that are subject to professional and ethical codes of conduct. Members are appointed for a five-year term and each appointment may be renewed once. Financial compensation is set by the CPRS Board.

- 27) The Standing Committee receives complaints, in writing, and transmits them to the concerned member society. Should the member society fail to resolve the issue, the case is returned to the Standing Committee.

- 28) The Standing Committee must promptly advise the concerned CPRS member regarding the grounds for the complaint.

- 29) The Standing Committee must hear the CPRS member named in the complaint, should he request such a hearing in writing.

- 30) Refusal to respond without valid reason to the Standing Committee's correspondence and questions constitutes a breach of ethics punishable by the Standing Committee.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CPRS Code of Professional Standards

1. A member shall practice public relations according to the highest professional standards.
Members shall conduct their professional lives in a manner that does not conflict with the public interest and the dignity of the individual, with respect for the rights of the public as contained in the Constitution of Canada and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
2. A member shall deal fairly and honestly with the communications media and the public.
Members shall neither propose nor act to improperly influence the communications media, government bodies or the legislative process. Improper influence may include conferring gifts, privileges or benefits to influence decisions.
3. A member shall practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth, and shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information.
*Members shall not make extravagant claims or unfair comparisons, nor assume credit for ideas and words not their own.
Members shall not engage in professional or personal conduct that will bring discredit to themselves, the Society or the practice of public relations.*
4. A member shall deal fairly with past or present employers / clients, fellow practitioners and members of other professions.
*Members shall not intentionally damage another practitioner's practice or professional reputation.
Members shall understand, respect and abide by the ethical codes of other professions with whose members they may work from time to time.*
5. Members shall be prepared to disclose the names of their employers or clients for whom public communications are made and refrain from associating themselves with anyone who would not respect such policy.
Members shall be prepared to disclose publicly the names of their employers or clients on whose behalf public communications is made. Members shall not associate themselves with anyone claiming to represent one interest, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but who actually serves another or an undisclosed interest.
6. A member shall protect the confidences of present, former and prospective employers / clients.
Members shall not use or disclose confidential information obtained from past or present employers / clients without the expressed permission of the employers / clients or an order of a court of law.
7. A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without the expressed consent of those concerned, given after a full disclosure of the facts.
Members shall not permit personal or other professional interests to conflict with those of an employer / client without fully disclosing such interests to everyone involved.
8. A member shall not guarantee specified results beyond the member's capacity to achieve.
9. Members shall personally accept no fees, commissions, gifts or any other considerations for professional services from anyone except employers or clients for whom the services were specifically performed.

APPENDIX 2

Proposed Code of Professional Standards as Compared to Current CPRS Code of Professional Standards



Centre d'études
sur les responsabilités sociales,
le développement durable et l'éthique

A NEW CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

PROPOSAL

A comparison between the proposed code
and the current CPRS Code

July 2008

CHAIRE de relations publiques
et communication marketing
UQAM

Proposed Code

Code of Ethics Project Team

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Introduction

- The aim of this Code is to establish guidelines for the conduct of public relations practitioners to enable them to establish, maintain and promote relations of trust based on knowledge and mutual understanding between the organization they represent and the organization's internal and external publics, with respect for the public interest.
- The Code also aims to reassure the general public that the information provided, while performing the public relations function, is truthful. It is understood that all members of the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) must engage in public relations practices that meet the highest professional standards.
- Pursuing such a goal implies that public relations practitioners must, in all their activities, seek to "create a climate of mutual trust" by working to develop a "duel process of influence between an organization and its various audiences" permitting an organization "to have influence, but to also be influenced in return."¹

1. Maisonneuve, Danielle, Lamarche, Jean-François, St-Amand, Yves (1998), *Les relations publiques dans une société en mouvance*, PUQ, page 44. Free translation.

Presentation Format

Revised Code	Current Code	Comment
Article	Article reference <i>if exists</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> New formulation <i>or/and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> New content

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Section 1 Duties and Obligations

1

The present Code stipulates the ethical standards, duties and obligations that apply to public relations practitioners.

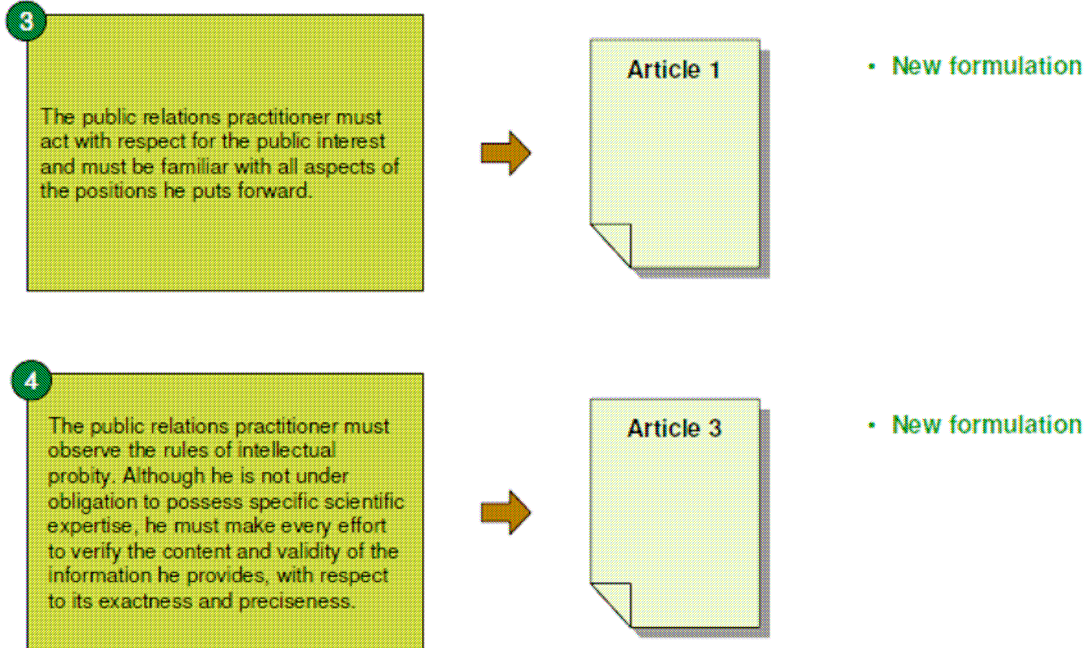
• New content

2

A public relations practitioner who pays the annual membership fee to CPRS, or to one of its member societies, and who signs the CPRS Code of Professional Standards is considered to be a member of CPRS, or of that member society, and to have accepted the CPRS Code of Professional Standards as his own.

• New content

Section 1 Duties and Obligations



Section 1 Duties and Obligations

5

When questioned by the Standing Committee on Ethical Issues, the public relations practitioner may not invoke his contractual duty of loyalty to a client or employer.

• New content

6

Should a public relations practitioner discover, during the course of a mandate, that certain ethical issues or important facts have been concealed from him and that such information, had it been known, would have altered his decision to act on behalf of that employer or client, he must withdraw from the mandate, after providing written notification to the employer or client.

• New content

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

7

In communicating information, the public relations practitioner must not employ expressions that are vague, confusing or so technical that they cannot be easily understood by his publics, whether they are specialized in the subject matter or not.

- New content

8

The public relations practitioner must not make inflated claims or unfair comparisons or appropriate the ideas or statements of other parties.



Article 3

- New formulation

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

9

The public relations practitioner must not promise or guarantee results that exceed his skills or abilities.



Article 8

- New formulation

10

The public relations practitioner must, during the course of a mandate, inform his employer or client of any change that might impact the mandate, including budget overruns, and provide an explanation.

- New content

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

11

The public relations practitioner must be prepared to publicly reveal the names of employers or clients whose interests he represents and must avoid associating with any party who fails to comply with this principle.



Article 5

- New formulation

12

The public relations practitioner must not be associated with any party who claims to represent certain interests, or to be impartial and neutral, while in fact, it represents other, or hidden, interests.



Article 5

- New formulation

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

13

The public relations practitioner must avoid any cavalier or negligent professional conduct that could discredit the public relations function or CPRS or one of its member societies.



Article 3

• New formulation

14

The public relations practitioner must behave with fairness and courtesy when dealing with his employers, clients and past and present colleagues, and with representatives of the media and other publics.



Article 2

• New formulation

Article 4

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

15

The public relations practitioner has the obligation to promptly notify the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues regarding any conduct he observes that constitutes a breach of an article in the present Code.

- New content

16

The public relations practitioner must not, in any way, cause prejudice to a colleague's practice or professional reputation – with the exception of the obligation to denounce breaches of the Code to the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues.



Article 4

- New formulation

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

17

The public relations practitioner must not make statements or take any action aimed at unduly influencing the media, government organizations or the legislative process, through means such as offering gifts, benefits or other inducements in exchange for favours or future considerations.



Article 2

- New formulation

18

The public relations practitioner must not, in the exercise of his responsibilities, accept fees, commissions, incentives or other considerations from any party other than his current employers or clients.



Article 9

- New formulation

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

19

The only gifts that the public relations practitioner may accept from his employers or clients are nominal gifts of symbolic value that do not compromise his independence.

- New content

20

When collaborating with members of other professions, the public relations practitioner must take into account the collaborator's code of ethics.



Article 4

- New formulation

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

21

The public relations practitioner must practice the utmost discretion regarding information or special contacts acquired during prior employment or mandates. Unless specifically and personally authorized by the source, he must not use this information or these contacts against a former employer or client and/or when conducting future business.



Article 6

- New formulation

22

The public relations practitioner must avoid all possible confusion – i.e. he must make a clear distinction – between his personal interests and the interests of his clients.



Article 7

- New formulation

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

23

The public relations practitioner must, in the exercise of his responsibilities, avoid any form of conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest.

• New content

24

The public relations practitioner may consult the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues, in total confidentiality, regarding any professional conduct that appears to be in conflict with this Code.

• New content

Section 1 Duties and Obligations

The foregoing list of ethical stipulations is not exhaustive.

Section 2

Code Enforcement (new content)

25

The CPRS mandates the Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues to ensure compliance with the Code. The Committee rebukes or makes nominal reprimands – through its newsletter, Web site or any forum deemed appropriate – regarding professional behaviour that runs counter to the spirit and/or the letter of this Code. If necessary, in cases of serious or repeated violation of the Code, the Committee can expulse the offending member. The CPRS is ultimately responsible for enforcement of the Code.

• New content

26

The Standing Committee for the Review of Ethical Issues is named by the CPRS Board of Directors. It consists of a chairperson and members selected from the following categories: two (2) accredited CPRS members – or members of CPRS member societies – with more than 20 years of experience and who are recognized for their sensitivity to ethical issues – because of their training, teaching or research activities; one (1) lawyer and member of the Canadian Bar Association; one (1) professional ethicist; two (2) members of the general public who belong to professions or trades (other than public relations) that are subject to professional and ethical codes of conduct. Members are appointed for a five-year term and each appointment may be renewed once. Financial compensation is set by the CPRS Board.

• New content

Section 2 Code Enforcement

27

The Standing Committee receives complaints, in writing, and transmits them to the concerned member society. Should the member society fail to resolve the issue, the case is returned to the Standing Committee for resolution.

- New content

28

The Standing Committee must promptly advise the concerned CPRS member regarding the grounds for the complaint.

- New content

Section 2 Code Enforcement

29

The Standing Committee must hear the CPRS member named in the complaint, should he request such a hearing in writing.

• New content

30

Refusal to respond without valid reason to the Standing Committee's correspondence and questions constitutes a breach of ethics punishable by the Standing Committee.

• New content

Summary

- Proposed code is more explicit
 - Clearer formulations
 - 15 new articles
 - 2 sections
 - Duties and Obligations
 - Code Enforcement : new section
 - Creation of a Standing Committee on Ethical Issues
-



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