



CODE OF CONDUCT (COC): PRCAI Prime Member or Affiliate Member- Consultancies/Agencies/Firms

As the PR and Communications Industry/ Service is gaining importance and are getting mainstreamed, it is important that the industry defines a voluntary Code of Conduct that guides how the members should conduct amongst themselves as well as with the clients to strengthen the perception about the industry and enhance the reputation of the industry.

Henceforth, this Code of Conduct document ("COC") shall strive to develop a culture of mutual respect and healthy dialogues amongst the industry members recognizing the spirit of one team.

1. A Prime or Affiliate Member Firm shall

- 1.1. Have a positive duty to observe the highest standards in the practice of public relations. Furthermore, a member has the responsibility at all times to deal fairly and honestly with clients, past and present, fellow members and professionals, the public relations profession, other professions, suppliers, intermediaries, the media of communication, employees, and above all else the public.
- 1.2. Be expected to be aware of, understand and observe this code, any subsequent amendments to it, issued by the PRCAI, and shall strive to conform to good practice as expressed in such guidance or practice papers.
- 1.3. Uphold this COC and co-operate with fellow members by implementing decisions on any matter arising from its application. Any member of staff of a member company who acts in a manner inconsistent with this code may be guided by the association or be disciplined by the association.

A Prime or Affiliate Member Firm shall:

- 1.4. Neither engage in any practice nor conduct itself in any manner detrimental to the reputation of the Association or the reputation and interests of the public relations profession and the industry practices at large.

2. Conduct towards the public, the media and other professionals

A Prime or Affiliate Member Firm shall

- 2.1. Conduct its professional activities with proper regard to the public interest.
- 2.2. Have a positive duty at all times to respect the truth and shall not disseminate false or misleading information knowingly or recklessly, and to use proper care to avoid doing so inadvertently or knowingly spreading fake news.
- 2.3. Have a duty to ensure that the actual interest of any organisation with which it may be professionally concerned is adequately declared
- 2.4. When working in association with other professionals, identify and respect the codes of these professions and shall not knowingly be party to any breach of such codes.
- 2.5. Honour confidences received or given in the course of professional activity.
- 2.6. Neither offer nor give, nor cause a client to offer or give, any inducement to persons holding public office or members of any statutory body or organisation, with intent to further the interests of the client if such action is inconsistent with the public or national policy or interest or in violation of any prevailing law in India

3. Avoidance of Discriminatory conduct and setting standard of Conduct towards colleagues

A Prime or Affiliate Member Firm shall

- 3.1. Adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth
- 3.2. Take all reasonable care that professional duties are conducted without causing offence on the grounds of gender, race, religion, disability or any other form of discrimination or unacceptable reference.

4. Hiring of an employee/ consultant who has served less than a year in his/her current/ previous organization

The members appreciate that solicited hiring where an employee has served less than 1 year of service in their present organization has a deteriorating impact on the organization in question, raised costs of acquisition for industry at large and goes against the ethos of good industry practice. In case an employee is leaving their current organization within 1 year of service, the Human Resource lead of both the companies in question will discuss such matter on a case to case basis and will come to a mutually agreeable decision as per good industry practice.

To minimize frequent job hopping and such hiring, the following shall be followed:

- 4.1. No member, affiliate member or their subsidiaries shall solicit to hire or hire any employee of the other member firm where such employee in question hasn't completed 1 year of continuous service with the current employer, without the prior written consent of the member firm with whom such employee is employed or taking a No Dues/ Relieving Letter/work experience certificate.
- 4.2. Provided, however, general solicitations for employees by way of open advertisements in media, Job sites (including, without limitation, trade media) shall not be included in the

scope of this restriction. However, even in such cases prior written consent of the member firm with whom such employee is employed should be taken or a No Dues/ Relieving letter/work experience certificate should be taken

- 4.3. However, in the following cases, the hiring company, preferably with the knowledge of the PRCAl, can hire such a person, if:
 - 4.3.1. She/he is forced to relocate to another city due to change of the job location of the spouse which necessitates change of job.
 - 4.3.2. She/he is forced to relocate to another city due to medical conditions or any exigencies in the family, or desire to move with the parents which necessitates change of job.
 - 4.3.3. Any other reason (other than financial compensation/ growth/ career opportunities) cited by the incumbent that justifies his/ her need to change the job sooner than 1 year
- 4.4. If a member firm does not follow the hiring codes related to one year of service, they will be at risk of being fined and repeat occurrences may lead to debarring of membership or any other corrective measure that the PRCAl Board deems fit.
- 4.5. PRCAl assures its member firms that by bringing attention to hiring ethics, PRCAl is not opposed to free market or individual or agency growth, but is working as custodians of good industry practices, to contain malpractices and raise industry standards.
- 4.6. As a best practice, the PRCAl recommends that the HR Managers of both firms in question should have a transparent dialogue.
- 4.7. PRCAl also recommends that the CEO and HR leaders of member firm cascade and communicate this to their own leadership and hiring teams, so they are aware of the consequences and pitfalls of acquiring such employees, such that gradually this practice is institutionalized and candidates also start appreciating that such job hopping is no more a virtue.

5. Conduct towards clients

A Prime or Affiliate Member Firm shall:

- 5.1. Safeguard the confidences of both present and former clients and shall not disclose or use these confidences, to the disadvantage or prejudice of such clients or to the financial advantage of the member firm, unless the client has released such information for public use or has given specific permission for its disclosure, except upon the order of a court of law.
- 5.2. Share, in good faith with other members, its learning from working with client (without naming the clients) for the overall benefit of all the members and in the interest.

A Prime or Affiliate Member Firm shall not:

- 5.3. Harm/disparage the professional reputation or practice of any another member. However, the member is free to present their own competitive edge, how they could be preferred choice or offer better/ more competitive services.
- 5.4. Be free to represent its capabilities and services to any potential client, either on its own initiative or at the behest client.
- 5.5. Misuse information regarding its client's business for financial or other gain.
- 5.6. Serve a client under terms or conditions, which might impair its independence, objectivity or integrity.

- 5.7. Represent conflicting or competing interests without the express consent of the clients concerned.
- 5.8. Guarantee the achievement of results, which are beyond the member's direct capacity to achieve or prevent.

By bringing a code on the hiring ethics, we as PRCAL, is not opposing play of free market or individual or agency growth but are custodians of healthy practices that only raised the bar and high standard for the industry.

We hereby agree:

Name of Agency CEO:

Name of Agency HR

Signatures of Agency CEO

Signatures of Agency HR Head

Date of signing:

Place of signing: