The Bottom-line Benefits of Ethics Code Commitment
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What is Ethics?

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"Ethics is concerned with how we should live our lives. It focuses on questions about what is right and wrong, fair or unfair, caring, uncaring, good or bad, responsible or irresponsible, and the like"
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A person's conduct is measured not only against his or her conscience, but also against some norm of acceptability that is determined by society, professional groups, or an employer.
When Problems Arise

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Public relations practitioners serve as advocates for their organizations or clients, but must also represent interests of various stakeholders in their organizations. Ethical questions arise when different parties have conflicting expectations. Critics often wonder if a public relations practitioner can act ethically while serving as a representative for a client or organization.
Common areas with conflicting codes of ethics

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1. Public Interest - when dealing with the "common well-being" of the public

2. Employer or Client - Your boss may ask you to do something that is questionable, but for the good of the company

3. Professional Organization Code of Ethics - A set of formalities laid out by a parent organization such as the PRSA

4. Personal Values - Your own set of morals that you've grown up with
PRSA Code of Ethics

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1. **Advocacy** - Serving the public interests by acting as responsible advocates for clients or employers

2. **Honesty** - Adhering to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of clients and employers

3. **Expertise** - Advancing the profession through continued development, research, and education

4. **Independence** - Providing objective counsel and being accountable for individual actions

5. **Loyalty** - Being faithful to clients and employers, but also honoring an obligation to serve the public interest

6. **Fairness** - Respecting all opinions and supporting the right of free expression
Why is Ethics Important?

According to the PRSA; "The practice of public relations can present unique and challenging ethical issues. At the same time, protecting integrity and the public trust are fundamental to the profession’s role and reputation. Bottom line, successful public relations hinges on the ethics of its practitioners."

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The Code

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The code advises professionals to:

- Protect and advance the free flow of accurate and truthful information.
- Foster informed decision making through open communication.
- Protect confidential and private information.
- Promote healthy and fair competition among professionals.
- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Work to strengthen the public’s trust in the profession.