

Working paper for Responsibility Group

Societal

Introduction to the Expression of Responsibilities

Public relations and communication professionals come from many different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs and are engaged by many different types of commercial and non-commercial organisations. There is a richness and strength in this diversity.

Irrespective of their personal background or employment, practitioners hold a special position as the nexus between organisations and stakeholders.

Responsible practice is crucial for the personal integrity of practitioners, the credibility of the profession, the long-term success of organisations and networks as well as societal progress through respectful dialogue, environmental preservation and the protection of resources.

Personal, professional, organisational, societal and environmental responsibilities will sometimes conflict. Our challenge is to continually address conflicts and work to resolve them so our responsibilities are compatible.

Public relations and communication professionals demonstrate responsibility by upholding a personal commitment of accountability that adheres to professional codes of conduct and applicable societal norms, rules, laws, and policies that preserve the integrity of our profession, their organisations, and are in line with societal expectations.

Societal responsibility is demonstrated by influencing decisions and undertaking actions that:

- Result from transparent - open, honest and accessible - processes and communication that balance public interests and organisational values.
- Support the sustainability strategies of the communities from which the organisation obtains resources and its licence to operate.
- Reinforce a commitment to being a valued citizen who gives back to the communities on which the organisation relies.
- Define accountability metrics against which contributions to society may be proactively measured and improved.

Organisational

Organisational responsibility is demonstrated by influencing decisions and undertaking actions that:

- Result from transparent processes and communications that balance internal and external stakeholder interest, societal norms and organisational values.
- Influence and contribute to the organisation's sustainability strategies.
- Reinforce an organisational culture of improvement by engaging internal and external stakeholders in meaningful dialogue and positive change.
- Define accountability metrics against which individual contributions to organisational performance may be proactively measured and improved.

Professional

Professional responsibility is demonstrated by:

- Abiding by, sharing with colleagues and operating in accordance with the relevant professional codes of ethics and conduct.
- Maintaining competencies by continually pursuing education and training so as to perform as a responsible and effective practitioner.
- Researching, abiding by and operating in accordance with the relevant societal norms, rules policies and laws.
- Demonstrating business value by defining accountability metrics against which the contribution of relationships and communication strategies in achieving organisational goals may be evaluated and improved.
- Providing strategic relationship and communication counsel to organisational leaders to ensure responsible decisions and actions.
- Reinforcing the value of relationship and communication.

Individual

Individual responsibility is demonstrated by:

- Recognising differences between one's personal values and those of stakeholders, communities and organisations, in line with societal expectations.
- Taking ownership of the professional standards by which day-to-day decisions and actions are governed.
- Dealing with stakeholder expectations by informing them of the professional standards by which public relations and communication efforts will be upheld.
- Seeking to understand the consequences and being willing to make tough decisions when circumstances, society or the organisation create conditions that prevent or contradict one's professional standards.
- Maintaining awareness of relationship and communication research and development and accepting personal accountability for ensuring that the relevant knowledge and skills are held or obtained.
- Being accountable for decisions and actions by applying effective practices.