Code of Conduct and Ethics

Management Consultants Association NZ

1. Purpose

The Management Consultants Association NZ is committed to promoting high standards of professional consulting and building confidence in the contribution consultants make to clients, organisations and communities.

This Code establishes the professional standards expected of Association members. It provides a common standard against which members can consider their own conduct and against which alleged breaches may be assessed under the Association's Professional Conduct and Complaints Procedure.

The Code is intended to be clear, practical and applicable across the wide range of consulting disciplines represented within the Association.

2. Application

This Code applies to all members when providing professional consulting or advisory services, representing themselves as a member of the Association, undertaking work on behalf of clients or employers, and participating in Association activities where their conduct may affect the reputation or integrity of the profession.

Members are responsible for understanding and complying with this Code. The Code does not attempt to prescribe every situation a professional consultant may encounter. Members are expected to exercise sound professional judgement and seek advice where appropriate.

3. Our Professional Standards

3.1 Integrity

Members act honestly, transparently and in good faith.

- provide truthful and accurate information;
- do not deliberately mislead clients, employers or stakeholders;
- acknowledge errors and correct them appropriately;
- give proper credit to the work of others;
- do not misrepresent their qualifications, experience or capability; and
- do not knowingly participate in dishonest, fraudulent, corrupt or unlawful activity.

3.2 Professional competence

Members undertake work for which they have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience.

- maintain their professional knowledge and capability;
- accept assignments within their competence;
- recognise the limits of their expertise;
- obtain specialist assistance where appropriate;
- exercise reasonable professional care and judgement; and
- ensure that their work is fit for its intended purpose.

3.3 Objectivity and professional judgement

Members provide advice and professional judgement that is objective, evidence-based and appropriately independent of personal interests, bias or improper influence.

For members employed within an organisation, objectivity does not mean independence from the employer. An internal consultant's professional responsibilities are exercised within the context of their employment, organisational purpose and delegated authority. They should nevertheless provide honest, objective and appropriately challenging advice, clearly identify material assumptions, risks and limitations, and disclose any personal or other interests that could reasonably affect their judgement.

For external consultants, objectivity similarly requires professional advice that is not improperly influenced by personal, financial or other interests.

Where a member's professional judgement is constrained by their role, authority, contractual obligations or organisational context, they should be transparent about those limitations.

Members must identify and appropriately manage circumstances that could compromise, or reasonably appear to compromise, their professional judgement. The Association's Conflict of Interest Policy and Process establishes the specific requirements for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest.

3.4 Respect and fairness

Members treat clients, employers, colleagues, stakeholders and other professionals with dignity, respect and fairness.

- communicate professionally;
- listen to and consider different perspectives;
- provide honest and constructive feedback;
- do not engage in bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour;
- respect legitimate professional disagreement; and
- do not deliberately undermine another professional's reputation.

3.5 Responsibility

Members take responsibility for their professional decisions, advice, commitments and actions.

- act in the legitimate interests of their client or employer, within the context of their engagement or employment;
- communicate significant risks and limitations;
- honour professional commitments;
- comply with relevant laws, regulations and contractual obligations;
- protect confidential information; and
- consider the wider consequences of their professional advice.

4. Responsibilities to Clients and Employers

Members should establish a clear understanding of the purpose, scope, responsibilities, deliverables, fees and relevant assumptions and limitations of their work.

External consultants should provide advice in accordance with the agreed engagement and the legitimate interests of their client.

Internal consultants should provide professional advice within the context of their employment and organisational mandate. Being employed by an organisation does not, by itself, compromise objectivity or constitute a conflict of interest.

Members should challenge a client, employer or stakeholder respectfully where they believe a proposed course of action presents a significant professional, ethical, legal or organisational risk.

5. Members Working Within Organisations

Members employed by an organisation remain subject to this Code when undertaking professional consulting, advisory or specialist activities within that organisation.

- provide objective and professionally considered advice;
- distinguish professional advice from management direction or organisational preference;
- identify material risks, limitations and alternative perspectives;
- disclose relevant personal or financial interests;
- not knowingly misrepresent evidence or professional conclusions;
- appropriately challenge decisions where they believe there is a significant professional, ethical, legal or organisational risk; and
- respect legitimate confidentiality and organisational authority.

Where an internal consultant is asked to provide advice or undertake an activity that conflicts with their professional obligations under this Code, they should raise the matter through appropriate organisational or professional channels.

6. Confidentiality

Members must protect confidential information obtained through their professional work. They must not use or disclose confidential information for personal or commercial advantage except where authorised or legally required.

Members should take reasonable steps to protect client or employer information, including information held electronically or through third-party systems. Particular care should be taken when using artificial intelligence or other technologies that may process confidential information.

7. Professional Representation

Members must represent their qualifications, experience, capability and professional status accurately in proposals, tenders, CVs, profiles, websites, marketing, presentations and other professional communications.

Members must not imply that membership of the Association constitutes an endorsement or guarantee of their services unless expressly authorised by the Association.

8. Fees, Benefits and Commercial Conduct

Members will be transparent about fees and commercial arrangements and must disclose material commissions, referral fees or other benefits that could influence a professional recommendation. Members should not accept gifts, hospitality or other benefits where doing so could reasonably compromise, or appear to compromise, professional judgement.

9. Professional Relationships

- represent other consultants fairly;

- respect intellectual property;
- give appropriate credit to others;
- honour professional commitments;
- avoid knowingly false or malicious statements; and
- contribute to the development of professional practice.

10. Raising Ethical Concerns

Members are encouraged to raise genuine concerns about conduct that may be inconsistent with this Code. Where appropriate, concerns should first be raised directly with the person concerned, but this is not required where doing so would be inappropriate, unsafe, impractical or likely to compromise the matter.

Concerns may be raised with the Association in accordance with the Professional Conduct and Complaints Procedure. Questions or concerns about a potential conflict of interest should be dealt with under the Conflict of Interest Policy and Process.

11. Professional Judgement

This Code cannot anticipate every circumstance. Members should consider whether their proposed action is honest, fair, within their competence, appropriately disclosed, objectively reasoned and capable of withstanding reasonable scrutiny.

Where the answer is uncertain, members should seek appropriate professional advice before proceeding.

12. Relationship with Other Association Documents

This Code establishes the standards expected of members. The Conflict of Interest Policy and Process establishes the requirements for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts. The Professional Conduct and Complaints Procedure establishes how alleged breaches are considered. The Association's Constitution and membership rules may establish additional obligations.

13. Commitment to Professional Standards

By becoming and remaining a member of the Management Consultants Association (NZ), members commit to uphold this Code and contribute to the integrity and reputation of the consulting profession.

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