

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS STATEMENT

JTC 573 – Strategic Digital Communication

Colorado State University by Ingrid Vanderploeg, April 2024

What do I believe?

It's an honor to share my professional ethics statement. When I graduated in 1999 with a degree in communications, I remember being conflicted about a career in communications. Could I work for a company that would sell a product or service I didn't believe in? In those days, communication specialists were often still seen and used as truth spinners to further a company's financial success, and that did not sit right with me.

Middle ground

I wanted to contribute my working hours to a peaceful, joyful world where all are created equal and treated with dignity and respect. Although I was still young and inexperienced, I knew deep down that I could not thrive in a job position where truth and transparency were not always apparent. But not having a job and no income wasn't an option either, so I had to find some middle ground. I chose to start working for the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions and began my journey as a communicator in the travel and hospitality industry. This industry focuses on travel for pleasure, creating experiences around food, lodging, and a broad range of activities while discovering our beautiful planet.

Healthy compromise

Working as a communication professional for an industry that spreads joy and happiness became a healthy compromise. I could support and defend this product and service on a profound personal level. Even though this industry does not come without significant challenges, the hospitality and travel industry is working hard towards a more sustainable future and practices to protect Mother Earth.

How do I apply these beliefs and values in my professional life, business, and college environment?

Throughout my career, I have embraced various ethical decision-making models, one of which is the TARES test. The TARES test, a tool for assessing the ethical implications of persuasive messages, has been helpful in my professional journey. I firmly believe that its application aids in creating ethical messaging, a principle I hold dear as a professional communicator.

TARES TEST

Truthfulness of the message

Authenticity of the persuader

Respect for the public you are persuading

Equity of the appeal

Social responsibility for the common good

My perspective

My personal journey, including immigrating to another country, becoming a mother, and venturing into business ownership, has significantly shaped my beliefs and values. These experiences have broadened my perspective, making me less self-centered and more focused on creating opportunities for others. They have also instilled in me a strong work ethic and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Self-improvement

Today, I firmly believe that self-improvement is the key to fostering a better work environment and the world for all, including myself. As we strive for personal growth, we become leaders and colleagues who inspire through our actions and behavior, not just words. This commitment to self-improvement will remain a cornerstone of my professional career, regardless of the industry in which I work. Through my actions and transparent communication, I hope to build trust and foster an environment of openness.

Code of ethics

My professional ethics statement and code of ethics are based on the following organizational principles and ethics of:

- International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) — Code of ethics for professional communicators, approved by the International Executive Board
- Institute for Advertising Ethics — Principles and Practices for Advertising Ethics

1. Be honest and authentic
2. Communicate accurate information
3. Obey laws and public policies
4. Protect confidential information
5. Support the ideals of free speech
6. Be sensitive to cultural values and beliefs
7. Give credit to others and cite sources
8. Do not use confidential information for personal benefit
9. Do not represent conflicting or competing interests without full disclosure
10. Do not accept undisclosed gifts or payments
11. Do not guarantee results beyond the ability to deliver

I will conclude this professional ethics statement with a quote from a recent study on self-improvement that acknowledges how this can contribute to professional development and the work environment.

"There is always room for moral improvement. However, very few prior reviews have focused on the phenomenon of moral improvement of self, social relations, or society. We first consider prevailing notions of the self-concept by highlighting the niche of theory and research that identifies an improving self as a possible identity and basis of motivation to act better and to be better."

APA Sources

IABC. (n.d.). *International Association of Business Communicators(IABC) — Code of ethics for professional communicators approved by the International Executive Board*. IABC. <https://www.iabc.com/About/Purpose/Code-of-Ethics>

Institute for Advertising Ethics. (n.d.). *Institute for Advertising Ethics —Principles and Practices for Advertising Ethics 2020*. Institute for Advertising Ethics. <https://www.iaethics.org/principles-and-practices> Leach, C. W., & Iyer, A. (2024). Moral improvement of self, social relations, and society. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 75, 295-310.

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