



## **GWA Statutes EACA Code of Ethics**

Preamble Today, the principles of ethical business conduct rank among the indispensable elements of successful corporate management. As the leading representative of the interests of the communication sector, we have formulated the following guidelines, which define the framework for the conduct of our members towards each other and towards all relevant groups (stakeholders). We regard the ethical guidelines as instructions with an automatic, obligatory character.

### **1. How we see ourselves**

The community of GWA agencies sees itself as a responsible, constructive and progressive force in the information society. Marketing communication in all its different forms (advertising, PR, etc.) is an indispensable element of the social free-market economy. The freedom to advertise is, in common with the freedom of opinion, an essential part of a pluralistic democracy. As members, we welcome committed competition. In this way, we promote economic dynamism and growth in the communication sector. Nevertheless, competition must also be based on ethical standards to ensure fair dealings among each other.

### **2. How we see communication**

Communication is a decisive factor of production. The successful marketing of products, services and ideas using marketing-communication means creates added value for clients, employees and stakeholders.

### **3. Laws and rules of behaviour**

Our field of activity is already comprehensively regulated by laws that prevent fraud and protect the consumer. These laws are supplemented by rules relating to processes and behaviour, which have developed into a system that, generally speaking, is self-regulating. This system has the advantage of flexibility and being able to react faster to new situations than any statutory measures. The prerequisite for the continued existence of this self-regulating system in our field of business is adherence to fundamental business ethics in all our activities and this is the aim of the GWA Codex.

### **4. The central values of the GWA Codex**

The GWA Codex defines the way we behave towards clients and all other groups of relevance to us. It is based on the values of respect, fairness and reliability. Our observance of these values is the



standard by which we shall be measured. We ensure that the members of our agency staffs are familiar with them and adhere to them.

## **5. We and our stakeholder groups**

### **5.1 Our clients**

Our endeavours are oriented towards a permanent increase in the value added of our clients. Working together as equals guarantees our joint success. Our clients have the right to impartial and objective advice, as well as work of the highest standard. We undertake to maintain secrecy about confidential client information regardless of whether specific secrecy agreements have been made. We undertake to make our terms of business as transparent as possible and to stick fully to all financial agreements made.

### **5.2 Our employees and colleagues**

The people in our agencies are our most important capital because their work creates values for our clients and our agencies. Therefore, we ensure appropriate working conditions, basic and advanced training and reasonable remuneration. We undertake to ensure that our employees have equality of opportunity and can work free of any discrimination.

### **5.3 Our service providers**

We undertake to deal with our service providers and suppliers in the same way as we expect to be treated by our clients.

### **5.4 Our competitors**

We undertake to compete fairly and honourably with each other and to treat our competitors and their work with respect. We reject price competition, which makes it impossible to provide high-grade services on a permanent basis. We regard paid competitive presentations as a practice that is particularly beneficial to our clients. Otherwise, existing clients must pay for potential clients.

### **5.5 The consumers**

We respect citizens and consumers as being responsible and enlightened. We orient ourselves towards the values of society and the laws of fair competition. We refuse to injure religious feelings, to discriminate against minorities or to support extremist interests of any kind. Besides responsible citizens, there are also vulnerable groups and people in our society and we respect their interests.



## **5.6 The media**

We believe in the diversity of the media and see the individual media as independent sources of information for the consumers. We take care when working on areas relating to the media that no harm comes to the media in terms of function and / or reputation.

## **5.7. Society and citizens**

We undertake that the work we perform is in accordance with the laws and the social, economic and ecological principles of society and that it promotes sustained development.

Through this Codex, GWA agencies are distinguished from other competitors on the market. Membership in the GWA is dependent on acceptance of this Codex. Resolved at the GWA Annual General Meeting, Berlin, 24 September 2004