

Code of Practice

Briefing pack

August 2009

- The Code of Practice is central to the MCA's professionalism agenda and an important part of our three-year strategy.
- The Code of Practice itself was signed off at Council in November 2008; since then work has been progressing on how we bring the Code to life. A member working group has been set up to oversee this activity.
- Two member workshops took place in April which developed our thinking about how we encourage members and clients to understand and benefit from the Code of Practice. 25% of the MCA membership either attended the workshops or directly contributed to the debate.
- The key recommendation from the workshops was that each member firm should agree and submit an individual statement of how they comply with the Code of Practice which will be lodged with the MCA and checked in the event of an audit.
- This idea has received unanimous support:
 - Membership committee on 3rd June endorsed the proposal
 - Supported by Council Members who dialled into a conference call held on 10th June
 - GP on 17th June signed off the proposal

- ***MCA members work to a Code of Practice. MCA members:***
 - *demonstrate their compliance with the Code before joining the MCA*
 - *explicitly renew their commitment to the Code every year*
 - *can be audited in the event of a client complaint to the MCA or on the initiative of the MCA Membership Committee. If upheld, complaints can result in reprimand or expulsion.*
- ***As members of the MCA, each company will always:***
 - ***Put their client's interests first***
 - MCA members make sure that the objectives and terms of any assignment, including remuneration, are agreed with the client in advance. In any conflict, the duty to the clients must prevail.
 - ***Focus on delivering sustainable value to the client***
 - MCA members ensure a clear focus on value and the transfer of knowledge to clients. Client references are always taken up before a company is admitted into the MCA. These must demonstrate high levels of client satisfaction. Member audits also review references from clients.
 - ***Employ people with the right skills and experience to help their client, and continually develop their expertise***
 - MCA members employ at least ten full time consulting staff, with relevant experience and qualifications. They also have formal training and development programmes for their consultants, together with annual performance appraisals.
 - ***Be clear and transparent with the client***
 - MCA members must disclose any information which could influence their ability to work on a particular assignment.
 - ***Be trustworthy, independent and objective***
 - MCA members keep strictly to all agreements about the confidentiality of information. They all have a management consulting service which is ring-fenced from any other business so that their advice is objective and fact-based. Members only accept work that they are qualified and have the capacity to undertake.
 - ***Be financially strong enough to deliver on their commitments***
 - All MCA members have a track-record in the industry – they have been in operation for at least three years before they join the MCA. They are financially self-supporting and can meet all their liabilities.

- The benefits of the Code of Practice are summarised as follows:
 - The Code of Practice is already helping us to gain traction with procurement organisations such as OGC and CIPS
 - Members of the buying community have stated that they believe that the MCA Code of Practice will differentiate MCA members from other providers
 - It will generate improved recognition for MCA membership as a badge of trust and quality by members, clients, media and influencers
 - It will strengthen member credentials
- The benefits of creating an individual statement of compliance:
 - It is a demonstration of how serious the MCA and its members are about quality standards
 - It reflects the fact that all firms are different and allow for a more individual approach to compliance
 - It reinforces the quality credentials of each individual member firm
 - It will be a resource which the member firm can use in their own marketing materials, website and in proposals to clients

Overview of Proposal

- Each member firm will need to agree and submit a short (1-2 page) individual statement of how they comply with the Code of Practice.
- This will be submitted to the Membership Committee for review.
- The individual statement of compliance will remain confidential between the member organisation and the MCA, though 'anonymised' examples will be available for review more widely.
- New members will produce their statement of compliance as part of their application process.
- Members will be asked to evidence their adherence to the individual statement of compliance in the event of an audit (the MCA audits approximately 10% of its membership every year).
- The requirement to produce a statement of compliance will be combined with the 2009 annual declaration process, which is launched in September.
- The MCA will provide support in the form of creating a resources area on the website with best practice examples and useful links. Support will be available on a 1:1 basis where necessary