

CONSULTING EXCELLENCE DECLARATION

As the global market leader in negotiation, The Gap Partnership provide negotiation consulting to clients around the world. We place the utmost importance on delivering high-value outcomes for our clients whilst also working transparently and in close partnership with them. As such, we are proud to be members of the MCA and to practise in line with the “Consulting Excellence” framework.

The nine principles of the “Consulting Excellence” framework govern our behaviour with clients, suppliers and employees, and resonates throughout our organisation. We believe that it is the gold standard for consulting practice and work hard to ensure that we are true to its principles. The ethos that drives our business is the pursuit of excellence in everything we do, so it’s a natural fit for us to work with the MCA to ensure that this rigour is consciously applied - and that we have evidence for it.

In making this declaration, we are delighted to have the opportunity to share examples of internal initiatives and policies, working practices, client testimonials, and independent research, to evidence how we live up to the “Consulting Excellence” promise.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

1) We are responsible and good citizens, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Observe all laws and regulations, both in letter and in spirit
- Respond constructively to legal, professional and related challenges
- Strive to be free of all discrimination or bias on the basis of gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability
- Avoid work that is inconsistent with these commitments or which could damage the consulting industry’s reputation

We do not undertake engagements which would present a conflict of interest or dishonour pre-existing client obligations. These mechanisms are directive so that our interactions with clients are always appropriate.

2) We conduct our business ethically, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Be open and honest about professional relationships (in a way that is consistent with other regulatory and commercial confidentiality requirements)
- Disclose relevant commercial interests or preferences (in a way that is compatible with other regulatory and commercial confidentiality requirements)
- Strive as far as possible to protect clients' interests and reputations
- Use confidential client information only for agreed purposes
- Avoid inappropriate gifts or entertainment
- Provide the best and most objective advice we can
- Treat competitors and others with respect
- Ensure wherever possible that the legal or contractual permissibility of behaviours is not used to mask their unethical nature

We have a strict Governance policy and have taken HR, operational and data protection measures to ensure we uphold the highest standards in protecting our clients' businesses.

<https://www.thegappartnership.com/Confidentiality>

We run a Client Engagement Training (CET) programme for all our client-facing employees, where we demonstrate our approach to engaging in discussions with clients, putting our clients' needs at its heart.

3) We foster an ethical culture, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Ask staff in their working lives to test the firm's and their own behaviour against those standards and to provide feedback as appropriate
- Promote internal discussions on ethical issues, including their relationships with business practices
- Avoid requiring staff, where reasonable to work in conflict with their own ethical beliefs
- Encourage and enable staff and others to raise ethical concerns and confidentiality
- Investigate and respond to concerns and take appropriate and timely action
- Zero tolerance of retaliation against any internal or external colleague who speaks up

We operate a Deal Support & Governance service through which our people can seek guidance to ensure they are always acting in our clients' best interests and in line with The Gap Partnership's Governance policy.

Every employee attends a number of sessions when joining the company as part of our robust Induction Programme. As part of this senior leaders from the business will outline our Governance process with practical scenarios and debate the complexities in order to reinforce the understanding of our policies across the business.

CLIENT SERVICE AND VALUE

4) We provide excellent consulting services which deliver the outcomes clients seek and need, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Discuss and agree on the outcomes clients seek, where possible before work begins, or as part of a mutually understood transparent process thereafter
- Listen carefully to clients to understand fully their needs and ways of working and determine how the firm can maximise value for them
- Deliver the consulting services that they commit to and aim to meet or exceed their clients' expectations
- Advise clients when the firm believes their requirements are not in the clients' interests
- Suggest alternative approaches and solutions, where appropriate, including, where the firm intends to stand down, other providers
- Challenge clients, where necessary, and deliver difficult messages, backed by evidence
- Continue to work on projects only where – 1) we are confident of achieving successful outcomes and generating real value for our clients through our outcome-focused approach 2) we have the right skills and competencies to always deliver on our client expectations and 3) we believe we can provide objective and impartial advice
- Transfer knowledge, skills and experience to clients through leaving behind a best-practice approach
- Ask clients to identify and promote cases where the firm has delivered excellence

Independent research conducted in 2016 by management consultants CIL rated us as the market leader in negotiation on a variety of measures, including the quality of our consulting and the value that we deliver to clients.

Watch CIL film.

We are proud to have many client testimonials, which we believe are one of the strongest proof points of the high quality of our client service and value. Mark Hughes, the Group Procurement Director at Premier Foods, provided us with one, in which he said:

“We are introducing Gap Champions within the procurement team. They will be responsible for re-energising the function and encouraging greater use of The Gap Partnership’s online planning tools. We’ve also started running a monthly ‘surgery day’ with the Gap Consultants, to deal specifically with big, complex negotiations. So far, we’ve held two surgeries and believe the payback on these alone has been one hundred fold.”

Read testimonial in full.

Whilst the skills used in Negotiation are applicable to different industries, we are always happy to have an conversations about the unique challenges that any company will face. This allows us to bring to life some of the ways we may approach a client’s challenge to maximise effectiveness for them. We have a number of case studies and testimonials from work we have done with clients, however our strict adherence to our Governance process means that much of the work we carry out cannot be discussed openly.

In order to ensure our consulting team are familiar with the latest trends in the markets and tools available to them we have a centralised consulting Knowledge Bank covering previous activities (redacted as appropriate to Governance rules) and strategies for approaching different types of negotiations. Consultants are also freely invited to contact experienced managers in the Global Consulting team for advice on particular projects this is always supported within Governance guidelines.

Case Study

- 5) We are transparent with clients and respond to their concerns, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:
- Give clients full access to relevant information about their firm and how it is organised. Through our engagements, we uncover valuable insights into our clients’ businesses which we share at the end of each engagement
 - Clarify who is accountable to clients for each consulting assignment
 - Respond positively to client demands for information

- Be open about the capabilities and competence of the firm, consultants and teams
- Ensure clients are served by skilled and expert consultants, always explaining who will be working with them and why
- Consult clients and agree next steps when team composition needs to change
- Ensure contract terms are designed with client input, access and promote high-value outcomes
- Avoid changing project scope or length without clients' explicit understanding and agreement
- Protect client confidentiality, data and IP
- Make it easy for clients to raise concerns and maintain a clear and accessible system for investigating and resolving complaints

As a part of our 5 step methodology the Review Stage is vital to solicit and understand both positive and developmental feedback. This is a good opportunity for clients to directly impact our areas of focus, be it proposition, people or process. We also solicit in a more informal manner such feedback during an engagement, in order to better service the client's need should there be any scope for improvement.

6) We always strive to improve the value we can deliver to our clients, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Being a learning organisation, capturing the lessons from assignments as a basis for future improvements
- Welcome feedback, negative and positive, and structure working relationships to ensure clients have opportunities to provide it
- Invest in research into our clients in order to maximise the value we deliver to them, as and to provide insights into their organisations which they may not already be aware of
- Identify and implement good practice from within the firm (and where appropriate from beyond)
- Participate in professional networks and industry bodies, to improve continuously the firm's understanding of the consulting industry and the sectors and clients the firm serves

We identified in many businesses the concept of Negotiation is something that happens at the end of a process, this does not marry up with our approach to negotiations and so we have pioneered the concept of Negotiation Frameworks. These Frameworks are tailored specifically for each client and set out a pathway for client organisations to embed Negotiation Strategy as a core business competency which ensures proper consideration of strategy and planning when approaching negotiations.

We invite all our clients to join our Alumni group, The Negotiation Society, a private group which provides members with the latest negotiation thinking, news, debate and opinion and embeds learning and skills from our negotiation consulting. We publish new content on it two to three times a week, including items such as comment on topical negotiation news and negotiation thought pieces.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

7) We undertake training and professional development planning each year, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Prepare an annual professional development plan that focusses on the appropriate training of individual consultants
- Provide a thorough and comprehensive induction programme for recruits
- Assess periodically the performance of all consultants and provide constructive feedback
- Encourage consultants to provide feedback on the firm's culture and performance, and commit to respond openly to suggestions for improvement

As a growing business, we recognise it's important for new starters to have a smooth transition into our business starting with a comprehensive "Induction Programme". The purpose of the week is for them to understand our culture, strategy and values, as well as what our central functional priorities are. Through bringing new starters together we aim to create a sense of cohort whereby individuals form strong relationships with others from around the world. This encourages new starters to share best practice throughout the business.

Feedback from a recent new joiner was:

"Incredibly proud to be a part of a company that cares so much about their staff. Thank you so much for putting this week on. It worked best through the different activities, lots of variation. Great to meet other people from different regions".

For the past three years we have taken part in the "Great Places to Work" survey, an independent assessment of employee engagement and workplace culture that we invite all our employees to participate in. The results are shared with all our people across the globe and initiatives are put

in place to respond to the feedback that is given. For example, in response to feedback on CSR, we set up a global scheme in which each of our regional offices regularly donate to a charity that is meaningful to them. In the UK, the chosen charity is The Pepper Foundation, which provides at-home palliative care to life limited children within the local area.

8) We promote strong core consulting capabilities and specialisms in our consultants and teams, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Ensure consultants are qualified to work at the level of seniority to which the firm appoints them and have the skills to be successful in their role
- Foster a culture that emphasises team-working and have a remote network of consultants on hand to access should another consultant require support or specific expertise
- Equip consultants with the skills to work in high-performing teams

It's imperative we hire the right people into our business. We invest significant time assessing and measuring the quality of candidates during our recruitment process. The induction of a consultant into our business is extensive, they each will spend several weeks understanding our developmental products before being running their own client sessions.

We have a central team who support consultants working in the field. When a consultant requires assistance, the team will draw upon the relevant knowledge and expertise from across our global talent pool and bring this to the consultant in a rapid and efficient manner.

9) We support our employees' career progression, professional development and welfare, and demonstrate this through our commitments to:

- Treat individual consultants fairly and without bias
- Encourage staff to participate in relevant professional networks

In 2016 we launched the 'Future Leader' programme, which was initiated following the results of our annual Talent Review. Eight consultants were elected from the UK and US teams to attend the programme which ran over a 12-month period. The programme provided them with 360 feedback from peers and senior colleagues followed by a series of one to one professional coaching sessions. They attended three classroom based modules focusing on different areas of

Leadership, and worked in two groups with a members of the Leadership Team as a mentor to carry out a strategic project.

We encourage our consultants to actively participate in MCA activity and network. For example, the MCA came in to our head office to talk to our consultants about Consulting Excellence and the latest trends in the consulting industry. We also participated in a Young MCA Event, in which we hosted an interactive introductory session to negotiation. We host weekly focus sessions internally where consultants are encouraged to discuss a relevant topic, from these discussions we have made improvements to several areas, including product design, training, visibility of career pathways , health, work-life balance and many more.