



BVPA Code of Conduct

Introduction

How should Public Affairs professionals perform their work in a socially responsible manner? How can they be held accountable? This Code of Conduct describes the rules that the members of the Dutch Professional Association for Public Affairs (BVPA) use as a starting point in their daily work.

For the BVPA Public Affairs means: the strategic process of influencing political decision-making as well as changes in society and public opinion that influence the functioning of one's own organization. We, as BVPA members, apply the following core values:

- 1) PA professionals work according to generally accepted social standards of knowledge, skills, integrity and confidentiality.
- 2) PA professionals are honest and reliable in contacts with colleagues and external parties.
- 3) PA professionals respect the customs, rules and codes of politicians, officials, other stakeholders and the public.
- 4) PA professionals adhere to the laws, regulations and rules that pertain to the practice of Public Affairs.

The Code of Conduct applies to all members and is inextricably linked to membership of the BVPA, regardless of the organization where they work. BVPA members are individually responsible for their behaviour, if this conflicts with the values and rules of the Code of Conduct. Individual members report their BVPA membership to the organization where the BVPA member is employed or works for. The BVPA member and their organization agree to inclusion on the BVPA website. If not, reasons for exclusion will be communicated to the members' committee.

Rules for Public Affairs

Members adhere to rules as defined in the Articles of Association and the Rules of Procedure. Members also adhere to the rules of conduct set out below. The Complaints Committee shall rule in all cases not covered by these rules.

❖ *Professionalism, Knowledge and Skills*

Members of the BVPA must perform their duties professionally. It can be expected that:

- they be aware of relevant laws and regulations and the (official and political) decision-making process;
- they protect the interests of the client (both external and internal to their organization) insofar as this is not contrary to the integrity mentioned below;
- the client and, where relevant, their organization explicitly notifies an assignment or course of action that is not compatible with this Code of Conduct;
- they regularly train themselves to maintain their level of knowledge and skills in the field of Public Affairs;
- They contribute to the positive representation of the profession towards third parties.

❖ *Openness and Integrity*

Members of the BVPA are open, honest and reliable in their contacts with politicians, civil servants, media, other stakeholders and colleagues. With conviction, they actively adhere to:

- laws or regulations, and associated legal interpretations;
- provide clarity about who they are, who they represent, including on behalf of which organization they act, as well as what interests they represent;
- provide a realistic picture within their own organization and / or with (potential) clients about the activities and goals to be delivered;
- provide reliable and accurate information; BVPA members have a best efforts obligation to verify information provided by the client (both external and possible internal) and be held accountable for it;
- Dutch societal norms and values relating to integrity.

❖ *Preventing Conflicts of Interest*

Members of the BVPA do not represent conflicting interests. In case of doubt, the parties involved are informed of the potential conflict of interest and must give their explicit consent. Members may undertake both political and societal duties; a conflict of interest must also be excluded in these cases.

❖ *Confidentiality*

Members of the BVPA deal with confidential information. Members should distribute confidential and / or internal information prudently and responsibly, while doing so with the consent of the information provider.

Compliance and Enforcement

Members of the BVPA endorse and respect the Code of Conduct and commit themselves to the BVPA's Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct. The committee handles complaints from members or third parties. The committee assesses and issues binding recommendations to the BVPA Board.

Note:

This is an informal translation of the Dutch code of conduct. The Dutch code of conduct is leading.