

## The Mobile Marketing Code of Ethics

(by 12snap, based on AFA)

Ethics is a cornerstone of business today - and even more so of the new discipline of Mobile Marketing. The mobile phone as most personal media in the world, more than all other categories demands for prudent and ethical behaviour in the industry.

Given the young age of mobile marketing as a discipline, it is easy to understand that other categories have a Code of Ethics while Mobile Marketing is yet missing one. Very much like the classic marketing categories, however, Mobile Marketing, too, needs a Code of Ethics. This becomes more and more clear as abuse of the mobile marketing opportunities in communication are becoming evident.

To extent the spirit from the existing Code of Ethics to the mobile space, we suggest to strongly base the Mobile Marketing Code of Ethics on existing ones. In our view, the Code of Ethics from the Advertising Federation of Australia, AFA (<http://www.afa.org.au>), builds an outstanding basis for a Code of Ethics for the marketing industry as a whole and as such also for our category of mobile marketing.

This is why 12snap has created the Code of Ethics below in the style of the AFA and adapted it to the Mobile Marketing industry. It is a combination of broad principles and specific issues which set standards of behaviour for people working in the mobile marketing industry.

We suggest and urge that all members of the Mobile Marketing Association, MMA (<http://www.mmaglobal.com>), should become signatories to the Code of Ethics. This confirms a commitment by the agency to comply with the Code and thereby strive for the highest standards of ethical practice in the young discipline of Mobile Marketing.

## The Code: What We Believe

- 01 In the Client's Best Interest.
- 02 Honour All Agreements.
- 03 Don't Break the Law. Don't Bend the Law.
- 04 Don't Abuse the Mobile Media.
- 05 Creativity is King.
- 06 Master the Technology.
- 07 Strive for Excellence in Everything You Do.
- 08 Look After Your Colleagues.

### 01 In the Client's Best Interest.

We each have a responsibility to ensure that the advice we give is the best we are capable of. Act in the best interest of your client. Do not tell clients what they **want** to hear. Tell them what they **need** to know. Always recommend what is right for your client, even if it is not in your agency's best financial interests.

#### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- Recommending a messaging campaign because of a bulk deal your agency has, even
- Though it's not the best answer to your client's brief, is unethical.
- Hidden fees are illegal. To know about it and do nothing is unethical.
- Defending a poorly performing campaign is unethical.

## 02 Honour All Agreements.

We need to honour all promises made to clients, colleagues and suppliers, whether written or spoken. These cover contracts, commissions, fees, charges, salaries, deadlines, briefs and quotations.

We must respect confidentiality since we are privy to valuable company intelligence in the form of marketing strategy, sales information, product development, customer research and competitive information. All colleagues should sign a confidentiality clause as part of their terms of employment.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- Swapping charges between jobs is not good business practice. And it's unethical.
- Not paying suppliers when you said you would is unethical.
- To benefit unfairly from confidential information is unethical.

## 03 Don't Break the Law. Don't Bend the Law.

The law exists to protect the public. We need to think beyond legal argument to moral argument. It may be easy to find loopholes, but it is not acceptable behaviour. Don't do it. Be sensitive to the impact of your message. Present your client in a positive way without stretching the truth unreasonably even if it is 'technically' legal. Don't break the trust we have with the public.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- To benefit from someone else's idea is unethical (and may also be a breach of copyright).
- Remember, we are paid for our insight and originality.
- To employ mobile content with your campaigns without having cleared the corresponding rights.

## 04 Don't Abuse the Mobile Media.

The mobile phone has a built-in payment mechanism via the mobile network operators. Do not abuse this with unethical behaviour by using premium number services that are costly to consumers or by selling subscription services without clearly expressing and alerting consumers. This holds for adult consumers and even more so for children. Do not target consumers without having an explicit double opt-in from them. Everything else is pure spam which will severely harm our industry.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- To drive revenues by asking consumers to unnecessarily reply to mobile marketing campaigns via SMS, possibly even to a premium short code.
- To lure consumers participating in campaigns with unsuspecting and innocent messages into adult content services with costs.

## 05 Creativity is King.

We are privileged utilizing the most personal media in the world - the mobile phone - for brand communication with consumers. This, however, demands for very sensitive behaviour. Do not send uncreative advertising to consumers - it will only annoy them. Do not send messages at early or late hours in the day or at weekends and bank holidays. Entertain consumers where possible, always be relevant and provide a clear benefit to consumers. The very personal environment of the mobile phone always ranks highest when thinking up mobile marketing campaign mechanics.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- Spamming consumers, even when an opt-in is given, with dull information about life insurances
- Sending out messages at 7am or on weekends.

## 06 Master the Technology.

Executing mobile marketing campaigns still is technologically complex. Strive for highest standards and do not short-cut in execution by not adapting mobile content to different mobile phone formats, or by not testing properly.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- To send out mobile content adapted for one mobile format only.
- To offer least-cost routing messaging with campaigns where messaging quality is critical.
- To send out mobile applications that are not properly tested.

## 07 Strive for Excellence in Everything You Do.

People do their best when encouraged to do so, be they your colleagues, clients or suppliers. Don't settle for less than the best you can be.

**Colleagues:** Try to create an open, trusting environment where staff are encouraged to excel, and reward them appropriately. Look after one another and, where possible, help with important issues like studies or at times of personal crisis.

**Clients:** Develop an open, trusting relationship that can withstand the ups and downs of business. Always give the best you possibly can. Don't settle for the mediocre or mundane. But don't feel afraid to say no if a demand is unfair.

**Suppliers:** Trust your suppliers. Work with them. Give them enough time to do the work to your best standard and theirs. Don't bully them. Share successes with them. Your suppliers should want to work with you again.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- Passing on an unfair client demand to your colleagues (eg: not enough time or budget to do a job properly) is unethical and won't encourage their best work.
- Reducing a supplier's fee because of your own cost over-runs is unfair. And unethical.
- When something goes wrong with a job or you fail to meet a deadline and it is your fault, accept the blame. Don't hide it from the client. Warn them, so something can be done about it.

## 08 Look After Your Colleagues.

You should recognise both the demands and the rewards of working in a mobile marketing agency. It can be hectic. It can be frustrating. It also can, and should, be fun.

Everyone in advertising works long hours, often including late night and weekend work. It is the nature of the business we are in. However, there is more to life than work. To create an environment where employees are penalised or lead to believe they will be penalised for **not** working unreasonable hours is unethical.

You should learn to balance the job with the rest of your life so that you keep a perspective. Remember your family and friends. Remember your soul. Responsibility is a two-way street. Look after your colleagues. You are a team and need one another to succeed to your expectations. Each of us has distinctive and valuable skills.

Look for the best in one another, acknowledge it, and reward it. Everyone should feel that if they're giving a lot, they are well rewarded, not just in salary, but with recognition and support.

### Examples of unethical behaviour:

- Keeping important client information to yourself when it should be shared with colleagues, is unethical.
- Don't blame a colleague for your own mistakes. Don't hide mistakes.
- Scoring points at the expense of a colleague is unethical. You'll lose more than you win. Equally, not supporting a colleague when you know they are right, is unethical.