

# code of professional ethics

The following code provides an outline of ethical guidelines designed to advance the quality of the industrial design profession. The articles specified within this code should not be considered exclusive of one another, but rather should be applied in a consistent, holistic approach in the everyday practice of industrial design.

*Last updated April 2010*

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## article I

### benefit the client

Industrial designers' ultimate responsibility to their clients shall be realised by providing appropriate and original designs, which represent both value and benefit to their clients, clients' customers and the general public, while meeting the clients' ethical, business objectives.

- a) **Recognition of client's objectives.** Designers shall work within the limits of their profession to further the short and long-term interests of their clients through provision of the following:
  - regard for strategic, economic and technical objectives,
  - appropriate, high-quality and competitive designs,
  - best professional practice,
  - efficient, economic and environmentally-sound production means, and
  - honest business practices.
- b) **Clarity of contractual agreements.** Designers will clearly define the basis on which their total remuneration is calculated, before accepting an assignment.
- c) **Respect for client confidentiality.** Designers will maintain absolute confidentiality in all matters concerning a client's technology, strategy, organisation and business practices and/or any other matter, which is defined as confidential by the client, unless expressly permitted to disclose such information by the client, or if and when such information becomes part of the public domain.
- d) **Acknowledgment of personal/professional conflicts.** Designers will not consciously assume or accept a position in which their personal interests conflict with their professional duty. Should a designer find her/himself in such a position, the designer will inform the client of these conflicts.
- e) **Increased efficiencies through the effective application of digital technology in design practice.** The designer shall apply Computer-Aided Industrial Design (CAID) technology and facility, to improve design quality and lower the risks associated with product development. The implementation and use of an effective web-based environment also enables designers to maintain fluid lines of communication and instant data transmission.

## article II

### benefit the user

Designers recognise their contributions to the social, individual and material well-being of the general public, particularly with regards to health and safety, and will not consciously act in a manner harmful or contradictory to this well-being.

Industrial designers shall advocate and thoughtfully consider the needs of all potential users, including those with different abilities such as the elderly and the physically challenged.

In this respect, designers will think of the whole value chain, from production to sales and use of the product. Designers realise that the humanisation of technology, the idea, usability and even the enjoyment of the product are part of their responsibility.

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## article III

### protect the earth's ecosystem

Ultimately, the best interests of current and future generations can only be protected if the world's ecosystem can be safeguarded. Consequently, designers shall adopt the following principles of environmental stewardship:

- a) **Advocacy for safe products and services.** Designers will advocate with their clients the development of environments, landscapes, products, communications and packaging that minimise environmental harm and are safe for use by all people.
- b) **Protection of the biosphere.** Designers will seek to minimise the release of any pollutant that may endanger life, air, water, or earth.
- c) **Sustainable use of natural resources.** Designers will strive to specify processes and materials, which are the result of sustainable and/or renewable natural resources, including the protection of vegetation, wildlife habitat, open spaces and wilderness.

Designers will share information that will help their peers make the best choices in specifying materials and processes.

- d) **Reduction of waste and increasing recycling.** Designers will try to minimise waste. To this end, they will design for durability, adaptability, repair and recycling of the product.
- e) **Wise use of energy.** Designers will choose environmentally safe energy sources and adopt energy conserving means of production and operation whenever possible.
- f) **Use of new technology.** Designers will remain continuously aware of the possibilities offered by new technologies, and use them to create new resource-saving materials.

## article IV

### enrich cultural identity

Industrial designers acknowledge that the environments, objects and services created as a result of the design process both reflect and help to define the cultural identity of their nations and distinct societies within nations. Designers shall strive to embody and further the cultural traditions of their national societies while incorporating the best characteristics of international design principles and standards.

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## article V

### benefit the profession

Designers shall abide by the following guidelines in order to further ongoing development of – and respect for – the industrial design profession itself:

- a) **Advocacy for professional business practices.** Professional business practices will be strengthened by applying the following principles:
  - professional advancement will be based primarily on the quality of design work and not at the expense of other designers,
  - no work will be undertaken at the invitation of a client without appropriate payment, unless for a charitable or non-profit organisation,
  - the client will be notified in advance, when a designer may benefit financially (through association with any company, firm or business) from any recommendations made by him/her during the realisation of a project, and
  - when asked to advise on the recommendation of other designers, a designer will accept no payment in any form from the selected designers.
  
- b) **Support for ongoing development of the profession.** Professional development will be supported through the provision of:
  - opportunities to apply acquired design skills to challenging projects,
  - fair recognition for work undertaken,
  - opportunities for further education,
  - respectable working practices and remuneration to colleagues, sub-contractors, suppliers, etc. with which the work has been undertaken, and
  - endorsement of, and (where possible) participation in, activities and programmes which aim to enhance the design profession, whether by professional organisations, educational institutions or legislative bodies.
  
- c) **Congruity of professional image.** Promotional endeavours will consistently reflect professional aims and will include only factual, truthful statements and, where appropriate, objective, constructive criticism.

**The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid)** is a non-profit organisation that protects and promotes the interests of the profession of industrial design. Founded in 1957, Icsid serves as a unified voice of over 50 nations through which members can express their views and be heard on an international platform. Since its inception, Icsid has continued to develop its wide-reaching network of students and professionals devoted to the recognition, success and growth of the industrial design community. Together, professional associations, promotional societies, educational institutions, government bodies and corporations create a comprehensive and diverse system on the forefront of industrial design education and progress.

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