

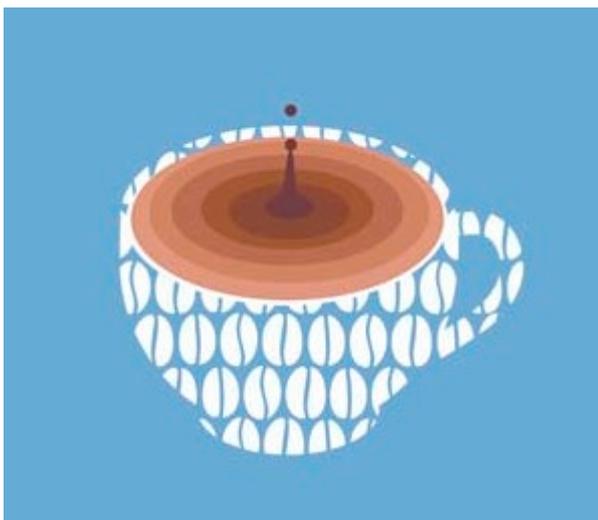
5 Ways to Make Ethics Part of Your Daily Routine

Janelle Guthrie and Margaret Ann Hennen

Often when [PR](#) professionals think of ethics, our minds automatically go into crisis prevention mode. How many of us have been thrust into the position of defending our clients, corporations or political leaders when their ethical compasses go astray?

Living the PRSA Code of Ethics means so much more.

That's why our Chapter ethics officers are so important. Ethics officers are senior leaders in their organizations – who are often past Chapter presidents or new professionals, wise beyond their years. They've seen it all – and they're willing to share their knowledge to help us all elevate our profession and avoid a lot of pain. Part of their job is to help members talk through concerns and reach actionable decisions. But let's not leave it all up to them.



Here are five ways to infuse ethics into your life on a regular basis:

1. Earn your APR.

Expertise is a core value supporting the PRSA Code of Ethics. It is central to the Code's emphasis on "enhancing the

profession.” By earning your APR, you demonstrate your commitment to the ethical practice of our profession – and that means a lot to our employers and potential clients.

2. Engage in a Twitter chat or share on social media.

Kerstin Sachl, president of Daddy PR and ethics officer for the PRSA Miami Chapter, tweets a thought-provoking PR ethics question each Wednesday to keep ethics top-of-mind for her followers. Follow her at #EthicsWednesdays or #checkyourethics.

You can also join several PRSA Ethics Chats during September’s Ethics Month by following #PREthics – or simply watch for ethical issues in the news and share them on your own social media platforms.

3. Follow the PRSAY blog or post your own thoughts.

Several times throughout Ethics Month, the PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards (BEPS) will populate the PRSAY blog with ethics posts – but that doesn’t mean that you can’t post ethics guidance all year round.

Jaime Dray, marketing communication specialist for ARDEX Americas and ethics officer for the PRSA Pittsburgh Chapter, recently blogged about the importance of individual ethics on the Chapter’s blog, and plans to write another post for Ethics Month.

4. Teach an APR training session or lead a discussion at a local university.

We both keep ethics alive by sharing our expertise at APR training courses or local universities. The PRSA Ethics pages and the APR training manual provide plenty of information to help you put a fresh perspective on age-old ethical dilemmas – and we are happy to share our presentations. Why not offer your expertise to others?

5. Be a mentor.

The PRSA Code of Ethics recognizes our duty to enhance the profession. Not only does this apply to how we practice public relations, but also to how we help our peers and others recognize good and bad ethical decisions.

We aren't the only ones who've participated in brainstorming sessions with smart and well-intentioned colleagues who have suggested posting anonymous comments on the Internet to support our clients. Many don't realize that this suggestion is taboo by ethical standards. PRSA's Ethical Standards Advisories (ESAs) are great teaching tools for our friends and co-workers.

No matter how you choose to infuse ethical behavior into your daily practice, remember that BEPS is here for you. Visit www.prsa.org/ethics to find a variety of resources, including ESAs, case studies and best practices – all designed to help you be ethical every day.

What you do within your Chapters and communities is critical to advancing ethical PR practice. Let's work together to make it happen.

This story originally appeared in the Fall 2015 issue of Tactics.

Janelle Guthrie, APR, and Margaret Ann Hennen, APR, Fellow PRSA, are co-chairs of the BEPS Chapter Outreach Committee.