



WOMMA's Practical Ethics Toolkit

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10 Principles for Ethical Contact by Marketers Discussion Draft For Public Comment

Press Release

10 Principles to Help Companies Work Ethically with Bloggers WOMMA Ethics Tool Provides Clear Guidelines for Marketers

Chicago, 11-2-2006 -- The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) today released for public comment a draft of the WOMMA Ethical Blogger Contact Guidelines, which gives marketers a 10-item checklist with which to make sure they are always appropriate and ethical when communicating with bloggers. WOMMA is asking for feedback and revision from the blogging community and all interested parties.

"It is vital that marketers understand the rules of the road when communicating with bloggers," said WOMMA CEO Andy Sernovitz. "We're committed to making it easy to be ethical."

When companies engage with blogs, they are more open, transparent, and accountable. As companies respond to this call to participate, they need clear guidance on the rules of the road.

Marketers who want to join blog conversation must, 1) decide if and when it's appropriate, 2) do it ethically, respectfully, and with good taste. If they choose to engage bloggers, then these guidelines will help them do it right.

Modeled on the WOMMA Ethics guidelines of honesty of relationship, opinion, and identity, this simple tool helps companies educate their entire staff on exactly which behaviors are appropriate.

"It's an easy way to teach your team and to avoid mistakes that will be harmful to your reputation," said David Binkowski, director of online outreach, Hass MS&L, who is co-chair of the project. "Prevention is a powerful protection."

This code is the second tool in WOMMA's Practical Ethics program, which gives companies the tools they need to prevent unethical practices before they start.

This document applies specifically to marketers. It does not cover "how to blog" or rules for internal blogs. WOMMA is in no way making a statement on blogger behavior or attempting to assert authority over the blogosphere. Our job is to educate marketers.

"This tool sets a new standard for disclosure in emerging media," said Robert Ricci, VP, web relations, Weber Shandwick Web Relations. "Hand these guidelines to everyone on your staff who's working with bloggers, and make sure they follow them."

WOMMA is calling for public comment from marketers, bloggers, and consumers in order to make this tool as useful and effective as possible. For more information, or to submit a comment, visit www.womma.org/blogger.

About WOMMA

WOMMA is the official trade association for the word of mouth marketing industry. Our 300 corporate members are committed to building a prosperous word of mouth marketing profession based on best practices, measurable ROI, and ethical leadership. Learn more about us at www.womma.org.