

# Press Release: Ethics Adoption Made Easy

## WOMMA Publishes Toolkit to Help Companies Commit to Word of Mouth Ethics

Chicago, Nov. 9, 2006 -- The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) today introduced the WOMMA [Ethics Adoption Toolkit](#), a collaborative ethics document library for companies that want to make a formal commitment to ethics in word of mouth marketing. Dell announced that it will be the first to support the initiative.

Companies can use the toolkit to create their own policies in support of the [WOMMA Ethics Code](#), and then share them with employees, vendors, and consumers to ensure their word of mouth marketing efforts are ethically sound.

"These are the tools you need to make ethics real inside your company," said WOMMA CEO Andy Sernovitz.

The Ethics Adoption Toolkit includes all the elements that companies need to make word of mouth marketing ethics an official policy within their organization -- including sample letters, contracts, press releases, and more. They are all customizable and can be modified to suit individual companies' needs and priorities.

This is the third tool in WOMMA's new [Practical Ethics program](#), which gives companies tools to prevent unethical practices before they start. It empowers companies to embrace ethical word of mouth marketing tactics, and avoid unethical ones, all while educating employees, vendors, and customers. The other elements of the program are the [Ethics Assessment Tool](#), which helps companies identify unethical practices, and the [Ethical Blogger Contact Guidelines](#), which helps companies train their staff on how to work appropriately in the blogosphere.

Dell, which today [announced](#) a comprehensive online dialogue policy for its employees and representatives, used WOMMA's toolkit to validate that its guidelines would help ensure accuracy and transparency of its blogging program.

"Our new policy extends Dell's Code of Conduct to online communication channels and prescribes a higher standard for Dell employees, suppliers and other company representatives," said John Hamlin, senior vice president for Dell's global online business and global brand marketing. "The WOMMA code of ethics provided an excellent baseline for our new policy."

By promoting the WOMMA Ethics Code guidelines of honesty of relationship, opinion, and identity, this simple toolkit helps companies demonstrate a measured commitment to building both consumer trust and professional credibility.

"This isn't about paying lip service to industry watchdogs," Sernovitz said. "This is about making a formal commitment to doing responsible, ethical word of mouth marketing."

The Ethics Adoption Toolkit is based on pioneering work by WOMMA Ethics Council co-chair Gary Spangler of DuPont, which was the first company to make a formal, comprehensive commitment to the WOMMA ethics program.

"It's not enough to believe in ethics," said Spangler, a WOMMA board member and E-Business Leader, DuPont Electronic & Communication Technologies. "Companies need to explicitly embrace them, and require their peers and partners to do the same. This toolkit helps get everyone on board."

One powerful step a company can make is including its vendors in its efforts to inform the organization about word of mouth ethics. To thrive, stealth marketers rely on income from companies paying them to engage in unethical practices. Companies can do their part to end stealth marketing practices by educating their vendors, and by requiring them to honor the WOMMA Ethics Code in their own operations.

To learn more about the Ethics Adoption Toolkit, or to find out how to establish your own ethics standards, visit [www.womma.org/adoption](http://www.womma.org/adoption).

## About WOMMA

WOMMA is the official trade association for the word of mouth marketing industry. Our more than 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](http://www.womma.org).