

Prepared by ICC Commission on  
Marketing and Advertising

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## Implementation Guide for the ICC Marketing Codes

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## Introduction

The International Chamber of Commerce has been a major rule-setter for international advertising since 1937, when the first ICC Code on Advertising Practice was issued. Since then, it has extended the ICC self-regulatory framework on many occasions to assist companies in marketing their products responsibly. Previously separate codes were revised and brought together in 2006 as the Consolidated ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications Practice<sup>[1]</sup> and most recently updated in the 2011 revision, following in the long-established tradition of promoting high ethical standards for advertisers, advertising agencies and the media around the world. The global codes are regularly reviewed and updated by the ICC Commission on Marketing and Advertising, which brings together some of the best marketing, self-regulatory and legal expertise available from the range of participants in the industry and from around the world.

The Code is a fundamental underpinning but the credibility of self-regulation depends on its implementation. For the individual company or any other organization a commitment to a Code of Conduct will be of true benefit only when the principles and rules are made part of the governing policy and are actively applied and enforced.

This Guide has been drawn up with a view to facilitate the practical use of the ICC Marketing Codes specifically. However, it is based on general and sound principles of compliance, and may therefore prove helpful in relation to other sets of rules. In particular, it will easily apply to the implementation of national or sectoral codes in the field of marketing communications, which throughout the world are based on the ICC Codes.

Although the Guide gives advice on how to implement the Codes within an organization, the need to support and combine efforts with any relevant self-regulatory bodies set up by the industry should be underscored. When established with the means to be effective, such schemes multiply the value of self-regulation. Consultation of self-regulatory decisions 74(i)-2.(o)1.1(v)18Ch(ti)-.5(n)7.4(d)7.7(v)-4(a)ionsc2(tation of 4(h)7.1 Scop

## Principles

1. Endorsement and commitment

The board/top management should endorse the Code in question and make a firm commitment to effective compliance that is to permeate all relevant parts of the organization, including branch offices and subsidiaries. This should be supported by action.

2. Policy integration

The endorsed Code – and adherence to relevant industry rules based upon it - should be made an integral part of the organization's strategy and business objectives. This should be

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## Application

### Endorsement and commitment

For the Code to take effect within the organization it must be clearly and visibly endorsed by the Board/ top management. Effective implementation requires an active commitment from the leadership to develop and maintain a programme for its operation and enforcement.

There should be an explicit message that observance of the Code is mandatory, and that lip-service does not meet the compliance requirement. Compliance should be the same as for any legal obligation. Also, it should be clear from the outset that accountability will be assigned to relevant management levels throughout the organization.

The reasons why the Code is being implemented should be widely communicated to the organization.





# The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

ICC is the world business organization, a representative body that speaks with authority on behalf of enterprises from all sectors in every part of the world.

The fundamental mission of ICC is to promote trade and investment across frontiers and help business corporations meet the challenges and opportunities of globalization. Its conviction that trade is a powerful force for peace and prosperity dates from the organization's origins early in the last century. The small group of far-sighted business leaders who founded ICC called themselves "the merchants of peace".

ICC has three main activities: rules-setting, dispute resolution and policy. Because its member companies and associations are themselves engaged in international business, ICC has unrivalled authority in making rules that govern the conduct of business across borders. Although these rules are voluntary, they are observed in countless thousands of transactions every day and have become part of the fabric of international trade.

ICC also provides essential services, foremost among them the ICC International Court of Arbitration, the world's leading arbitral institution. Another service is the World Chambers Federation, ICC's worldwide network of chambers of commerce, fostering interaction and exchange of chamber best practice.

Business leaders and experts drawn from the ICC membership establish the business stance on broad issues of trade and investment policy as well as on vital technical and sectoral subjects. These include financial services, information technologies, telecommunications, marketing ethics, the