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Content analysis of public relations codes of ethics

Thomas Clement Bernal
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San Jose State University, 1992

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CONTENT ANALYSIS
OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS CODES OF ETHICS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of
Journalism and Mass Communications
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Thomas Clement Bernal
May, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CODES OF ETHICS

by Thomas C. Bernal

The study reports the results of a content analysis of Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations* and the International Association of Business Communicators' (IABC) Code of Ethics. The specific articles of each organization's Codes of Ethics are analyzed to determine whether they satisfy the ethical requirements of the utilitarian Principle of Utility (an act is ethical if it creates the greatest good for the greatest number of people), and Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative (an act is ethical if a reasonable person can will it to become a universal law). The study reveals both PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics are close to satisfying the ethical requirements of the given ethical theories but fail to do so as a whole (minor modifications put the Codes of Ethics in accord with two ethical theories). In addition, this study investigates the subjects of duty in the articles, whom the codes benefit, whether the situation is taken into account, whether the articles are specific or vague, how PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics are similar and different, and potential ways in which the Codes of Ethics can be improved.

* PRSA's Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations is henceforth referred to as Code of Ethics.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Two prominent organizations represent individuals in the industry of public relations. They are the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). These organizations represent portions of a growing public relations community of over 250,000 persons. PRSA represents 15,000 members and IABC represents 11,000. Members hold allegiance to the given organization and benefit from the services they offer. The services these organizations offer include accreditation, assistance in education, access to resources, monthly journals, codes of ethics, advocacy for public relations professionals, and access to data bases, as well as other services.

This study focuses on the Codes of Ethics provided by each organization (Appendices A and B). PRSA and IABC both possess Codes of Ethics for their members. PRSA's Code of Ethics was adopted in 1950 and revised in 1954, 1959, 1963, 1977, 1983 and 1988. IABC adopted its Code of Ethics in 1976. In 1985, modifications changed it to its present form. Both organizations' Codes of Ethics came years after the establishment of each given organization.

The importance placed on public relations ethics is evidenced by common suspicions held by many Americans. The literature on the subject portrays public relations as enormously influential and the press and public as concerned and suspicious about practitioners' behavior. They often see practitioners as people of questionable motives and ethics. In an effort to help

practitioners determine ethical behavior, PRSA and IABC established separate Codes of Ethics. Although the stated purpose of each organization's Codes is similar, the Codes themselves differ. In addition, neither organization furnishes a premise from which the Codes presumably come, which raises the simple question: what are these Codes of Ethics based on and how does one evaluate them? This study analyzes the Codes' content and tests them against the ethical theories of utility and Immanuel Kant to establish a premise on which the important Codes of Ethics can rest.

Determining whether ethical codes comply with two major ethical theories is worth investigating. Prior to the establishment of the Codes of Ethics, each organization represented ethics as a virtual non-issue. In addition, neither organization provides the rationale behind the Codes and their specific articles. The journals of each organization do not tell members or scholars on which foundation, if any, the Codes are constructed. More recently, the issue of public relations ethics has grown and the issue has received more print in the two organizations' journals. However, the rationale behind the Codes remains unstated.

Justification for this study is also evidenced by the organizations' inability to provide sufficient information as to how these Codes of Ethics were determined. James Little, PRSA chairman of the Board of Ethics (1989-1992), states the revisions that have come over the years generally come out of a need to address a growing ethical issue and "that's probably how the first articles came about." Dr. William Briggs, chair of the IABC Ethics Committee and professor of public relations at San Jose State University, suggests business communicators examine ethics through the "wrong end of the

telescope." According to Briggs, if business communicators are to help define the boundaries of acceptable social behavior, they require a vantage point which takes into account established moral philosophy.

This study reveals philosophical foundations on which PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics and their articles may rest. These foundations are represented by the tested philosophical theories of utilitarianism and Kant and the respective schools of Realism and Idealism. The application of two ethical theories adds value and legitimacy to the Codes and makes them more dynamic.

The methods of utilitarian and Kantian ethics are used in an effort to find at least two ethical theories on which the Codes can be based. These two ethical theories are used for several reasons. First of all, they both represent prominent ethical theories and have a long history established in independent schools of philosophical thought. Both schools of philosophical thought follow tenets which have been examined and enhanced over the course of thousands of years (Appendices C and D). In addition, the theories of utility and Kant focus on ethical concepts that have been examined since ancient Greece.

The ethical theory of utility focuses on the concept of pleasure or hedonism as a means of determining ethical behavior. Aristotle (c. 384-322 B.C.) viewed happiness as the ethical end. Epicurus (c. 341-270 B.C.) equated good with pleasure. Aquinas (1224-1274) added an eternal realm as the source of happiness. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) argued that natural law caused man to surrender individual rights in return for security under social contract. Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) advanced the idea of a necessary order

which man pursued selfishly. Henry More (1614-1687) posited that man experiences pleasure by doing good and John Locke (1632-1704) defined good as that which most likely brought about pleasure and avoided pain. The French Encyclopedists believed the self-centered pursuit of pleasure was the inescapable rationale behind any action. From this background John Stuart Mill (1808-1873) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) focused on the concept of pleasure when developing their theory of utility. Evidence of this trend is elaborated on in chapter two.

Kant's ethical theory follows the ancient concept of duty. Socrates (c. 469-399 B.C.), Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle all spoke of man's duty to act virtuously. Later, the Stoics popularized the notion of duty based on reason (Runes, 1983, p. 101). Grounded on the Stoic examination of duty, Jewish and Christian teachings stressed the concept of duty to God (Baldwin, 1940, p. 301). "But it was Kant who pressed the logic of duty to its final conclusion. The supreme law of duty, the Categorical Imperative, is revealed intuitively by the pure rational will and strives to determine the moral agent to obey only that law which can be willed universally without contradiction, regardless of the consequences" (Runes, 1983, p. 101).

The choice of utilitarian and Kantian ethics is good because each offers a completely different approach to the understanding of ethics. Applying the fundamental differences of Realism and Idealism and the concepts of each theory (pleasure and duty) allows us to examine the field of ethics from both an experiential and an intuitive point of view. This provides the study with the practicality of utilitarianism and the depth of Kant's theory of ethics.

Also, these two theories are used as a result of their nature. Both theories provide a very concise means of determining whether or not an activity can be determined ethical. Utilitarianism uses the Principle of Utility and Kant's theory uses the Categorical Imperative. With these simple tests we determine whether a given article satisfies the ethical requirements of theory.

Finally, these two ethical theories potentially further the efforts of each organization. Both ethical theories can be used to establish or revise standardized Codes of Ethics. In addition, the theories can easily aid organization members and guide them on non-specified situations. They also possess the ability to promote dialogue on the subject of ethics.

The following briefly summarizes the utilitarian and Kantian principles used to determine the rightness or wrongness of an act.

John Stuart Mill (1808-1873) with Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) formed the political movement of utilitarianism which prescribes simple grounds to determine right and wrong.

Nature hath placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is from them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne (Bentham, 1823, p. 1).

In these terms, utility offers an objective principle to determine good. From this principle Bentham places primary emphasis on the consequence of an activity and its ability to provide pleasure and avoid pain for the greatest

number. Both Bentham and Mill advanced what is today known as utilitarianism based on hedonism. In short, Mill's and Bentham's theory of utility came down to the interpretation of the single Principle of Utility which states an activity is determined *ethical when it produces the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number*.

Unlike the utilitarians, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) held faith in abstract truths. Diametrically opposed to the realist, Kant believes man creates reality from his mind. From this premise Kantians countered the utilitarians and proposed an ethical theory based on duty rather than pleasure. Kant's ethical theory categorizes ethical behavior as that governed by the will freely to obey one's *duty* to follow virtuous motives. Virtuous behavior is successfully applied to his Categorical Imperative which suggests: "I ought never act in such a way that I could not also will that my maxim should be a universal law" (Behler, 1986, p. 69). The Categorical Imperative is Kant's way of determining whether something is ethical.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

As stated before the ethical theories of utilitarianism and Kant come out of different schools of Western thought. They are also based on different principles. Utilitarianism focuses on pleasure or hedonism. Kant focuses on duty.

The notion of hedonism in ethics dates back to ancient Greece and continues as a theme in Western philosophy. The following lists Western philosophers who acknowledged the concept of pleasure within their different ethical theories.

One example is Thrasymachus as illustrated in Plato's *Dialogues*. Thrasymachus saw man as governed by the pleasures of self interest. In Book I of the Republic he confronts Socrates and asserts: "men's actions come as a result of their effort to further their self interest by exercising their advantage over others" (Hamilton, 1982, p. 589). This power over others allows one to continue one's interest, which includes pleasure.

One of the great ethical philosophers is Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). He viewed ethics from a teleological point of view in terms of happiness. In other words, happiness is the ethical end. In addition, Aristotle suggests that ethical activity must be manifested over a whole life and not merely for brief periods (Copleston, 1985). The good that all men seek is happiness, Aristotle declares, and he defines happiness as the result of a life governed by reason, as "an activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue" (Ross, 1958, p. 158).

Like Socrates and Plato he viewed the ethical as objective. In his opinion there were two ways in which the individual comes to realize what is right and wrong. One is science. The other is by way of intuition (Copleston, 1985, p. 343). Either one, or both, allow us to see a given truth or principle as self-evident.

Based on the above, the individual, organization, and state act ethically when they follow a scientifically or intuitively derived opinion, code, or law that is designed to bring about happiness. Unlike Plato, Aristotle held that the individual strives for happiness rather than well-being.

Another early Greek who considers pleasure the means to distinguish between good and bad is Epicurus (c. 341-270 B. C.). Epicurus founded one of the two dominant philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period, epicureanism; the other being stoicism (Russell, 1972, p. 240). Epicurus' ethical theory emanated from the Cyrenaic doctrine formulated by his philosophical predecessor Aristippus. Both men concurred that pleasure is the supreme good and human nature is so constituted that men will always seek pleasure and avoid pain. "To them pleasure was the only intrinsic good and pain the intrinsic evil" (Albert et. al, 1975, p. 62). However, Epicurus distinguishes between "natural pleasure," which is healthful, and "unnatural pleasure" which is harmful. Ultimately, Epicurus advises moderation as the means of maximizing pleasure (Tsanoff, 1942, p. 14).

Another prominent ethical philosopher who considers happiness in the field of ethics is Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274). Aquinas follows Aristotle's view of happiness but considers it incomplete. In Aquinas' view happiness comes from beyond this world and enters the realm of the eternal

" . . . happiness comes about by the vision of absolute truth" (Copleston, 1985, pp. 400-402). According to Aquinas man can naturally determine right and wrong by examining whether "things are either good or bad in so far as they are or are not means to attainment of happiness" (Copleston, 1985, p. 405). Acts are either in harmony with the final end or out of accordance with order of reason (its immediate end being incompatible with the "final end.")*

Much later, in the *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) states man's behavior is governed by the hedonistic aim of self-preservation (Hobbes, 1885). The drive toward self-preservation shows itself in the human quest for social harmony, and in man's drive to exert power over others. As a result of the "law of nature" man seeks peace. This causes man to accept a social contract in which he surrenders his individual rights or powers in return for the security society's laws grant him.

Following Hobbes, Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) also subscribed to the principle of pleasure as a means of determining the rightness of behavior. Spinoza also believes man acts as a result of the drive for self-preservation and power. However, he contributes a naturalistic angle to the hedonistic ethical approach. Spinoza contends by following the laws of human nature man acts selfishly out of passion, while "more free" individuals pursue a "necessary order" of all things (Spinoza, 1927). According to Spinoza, the desire to pursue a necessary order follows man's intellectual love for God which leads to virtue and pleasure.

* Aquinas' and Aristotle's theory on politics apply to the codes of ethics because both stress the need for rules to govern man toward the goals and ends of society (or organizations).

Along the same lines as Hobbes and Spinoza, the Cambridge Moralist Henry More (1614-1687) suggests people conform to a social principle even when it conflicts with their natural desires and private interests. Like Spinoza, More posits that people do so because the soul experiences pleasure from a sense of virtue (More, 1930).

In *Essays concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke (1632-1704) attempts to advance the hedonistic approach to ethics of those before him by combining Descartes' mathematic model to psychological hedonism. For Locke, goodness and justice are determined by *experience*, specifically the experiences of pleasure and pain. Therefore, he also defines good as that which is most likely to bring about pleasure and avoid pain (Locke, 1931).

Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) also implies man acts as a result of his drive toward pleasure. Clarke considers cognitive reasoning the sole reason for man's willingness to conform to ethical standards. In Clarke's opinion Christian revelation provides adequate grounds to act morally. Therefore, a Christian's fear of God and punishment become an additional factor in determining ethical behavior. This fear of punishment not only provides a motive for acting benevolently toward others but also contributes to the argument that men act out of self interest (Clarke, 1823).

The Encyclopedists, Denis Diderot, Claude Helvetius, and Baron Paul Dietrich d' Holbach, held that the self-centered pursuit of pleasure is the inescapable rationale behind any action. These men advanced the laissez-faire philosophy based on the opinion that government alone fails to meet the interests of man and they inspired legislators to eventually enact laws which reflected the concept of utility (Altschull, 1990, p. 83).

With Mill, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) developed utilitarianism. Based on the the belief that all actions are motivated by a desire for pleasure and a fear of pain, Bentham developed the principal of utility which "approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question" (Bentham, 1823, p. 1). Later, this principle is referred to as the Principle of Utility which Mill and others use to determine whether an act is ethical based on its ability to bring happiness to the greatest number.

From Epicurus to Bentham the specific principle of "utility" has been used (Mill, 1969, p. 35). In his article *Utilitarianism*, published in *Fraser's Magazine* (1861), John Stuart Mill explains what is known today as utilitarianism. He states that the creed, which accepts as the foundation of morals "utility" or the "greatest good principle," holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness (Mill, 1969, p. 36). By happiness he means intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness he means pain and the privation of pleasure. He also notes that pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends, and that all desirable things are desirable either for their inherent pleasure or as a means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain. Utilitarians conclude that happiness is the sole end of action, and the promotion of it is the test by which to judge all human conduct, from whence it necessarily follows that it must be the criterion of morality (Mill, 1969, p. 65) With this in mind, the utilitarian looks to the consequence of an act to determine whether or not it is ethical.

Based on this principle, as stated above, the motive of an activity has absolutely no bearing on whether it is right or wrong.

Mill adds to the concept of utility a simple means of determining which pleasures are better than others. Unlike the ancient Greeks, who based the value of pleasure on intensity and duration, Mill takes into account the amount of people that are being affected by pleasure. On this premise, Mill attests the greatest good is that which benefits the greatest number.

By boiling their theory of ethics down to one principle—it is right if it creates the greatest good for the greatest number—the utilitarians appear to be very practical and ultimately selfish. Some critics argue that utilitarianism does not recognize in humans the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. Mill responds to this in two ways. He points out that the utilitarian's morality does in fact recognize the human power to sacrifice one's personal greatest good for the good of others. However, he considers it a waste of time (Mill, 1969, p. 45). It is considered contrary to reason and the principle of the greatest happiness. Also, Mill responds to these critics by admitting the theory of utility focuses on the individual but its primary interests may benefit society as a whole.

The great majority of good actions are intended not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous man need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the rights, that is, the legitimate

and authorized expectations, of anyone else. The multiplication of happiness is, according to the utilitarian ethics, the object of virtue; the occasion on which any person has it in his power to do this on an extended scale—in other words, to be a public benefactor—are all exceptional; and on these occasions alone is he called on to consider public utility; in every other case, private utility, the interest or happiness of the person, is all he has to attend to (Mill, 1969, p. 47).

Mill also points out utilitarians' acceptance of obligation and explains how the Principle of Utility effects it. According to Mill, people are obligated to follow their feelings. By "following" one's feelings of sympathy, love, and fear the person better guarantees happiness. Mill's example is fear of God (Mill, 1969, p. 56). Many people in Western and Eastern civilizations believe that a transcendent form will punish them for wrongdoings. For example, in the Bible it says angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where they will weep and grind their teeth (Matthew, 1968, p. 23). Therefore, many people will behave justly because it is in the best interest of their happiness. Wright's study shows public relations practitioners examine ethics with religious feelings in mind (Wright, 1989, p. 30).

All theories are subject to criticism, and the theory of utility is no exception. Despite its practicality and simplicity arguments have been raised against the theory.

One argument points out that utilitarianism's logic is circular. Utilitarians think happiness is desirable because we desire it. No reason is given why general happiness is desirable, except that each person desires it. Mill attempts to get beyond this by stating

The only proof capable of being given that a thing is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it; and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce anything that is desirable, is that people do actually desire it (Mill, 1969, p. 52).

Based on this reasoning, anything which is considered good as an end must be admitted to be good without proof (Moore, 1969, p. 96).

Another criticism of utilitarianism stems from the value it places on given acts. In the case of Jeremy Bentham, he avoided placing values of one act over another. However, as stated before, Mill does place differing values on given activities. In doing so Mill is faced with the problem of quantifying degrees of pleasure. Some, like G. E. Moore, consider Mill's system purely subjective and far from science. In addition, it is hard for the utilitarian to predict how much pleasure or pain an act might bring in the long run. The immediate consequence might be obvious. However, the long term effects of an act are less certain, if predictable at all.

Duty and Intuition

The second ethical theory used in this thesis is that of Immanuel Kant. Kant uses the concept of an individual's duty to govern the rightness or wrongness on an activity. As stated previously Socrates (c. 469-399 B.C.), Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle all spoke of man's duty to act virtuously. Later, the Stoics popularized the notion based on reason (Runes, 1983, p. 101). Grounded on the Stoic examination of duty Jewish and Christian teachings stressed the concept of duty to God (Baldwin, 1940, p. 301). "But it was Kant who pressed the logic of duty to its final conclusion. The supreme law of duty, the Categorical Imperative, is revealed intuitively by the pure rational will and strives to determine the moral agent to obey only that law which can be willed universally without contradiction, regardless of the consequences" (Runes, 1983, p. 101).

In this tradition Kant establishes his ethical theory in *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. In this book, Kant draws attention to the nature of ethics by comparing it to the science of physics. Physics draws its conclusions from the laws of nature. Kant notes similarities and differences when comparing the study of ethics and the science of physics. Their similarity lies in their reliance on sensual experience. However, the important difference that Kant emphasizes is that ethics must go beyond natural laws to develop ethical conclusions. Instead, ethics uses non-empirical or *a priori* information. This distinction completely separates Kant from the utilitarians. In Kant's theory, people determine whether something is right

based on whether it satisfies our duty to follow his "first principle" or Categorical Imperative.

Kant describes two forms of ethical study. One is ethics by nature, or practical anthropology. The other is ethics *a priori*, or *metaphysics of morals*. A large part of ethics is determining what one ought to do. According to Kant, any knowledge of what one *ought* to do must be achieved by way of *a priori* knowledge. Evidence of this belief comes as a result of man's willingness to praise an individual for a given activity (Kant, 1963, p. 66). All imperatives are expressed by the words "I ought." When I say that "I ought" to do something, I mean that I recognize an action of this kind to be imposed or necessitated by an objective principle valid for any rational agent as such (Kant, 1963, p. 26).

In an attempt to determine the nature of the good we ought to seek, Kant comes to the conclusion that good will is good in all circumstances. A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes—because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end. It is good through its willing alone—that is good in itself (Kant, 1963, p. 62). With this in mind he places emphasis on the human will to act ethically. Unlike the utilitarians, who consider the consequence, Kant considers the motive to determine ethical behavior.

Kant argues that moral activity is determined as a result of duty. If someone does something for the sake of pleasure it is merely that. However, when acting out of duty the activity acquires moral value worthy of honor and praise ". . . a human action is morally good, not because it is done from immediate inclination — still less because it is done from self-interest — but because it is done for the sake of duty" (Kant, 1963, pp. 66-67). It is the motive

of duty, not the motive of inclination, that gives moral value to an action. According to Kant, duty is assessed by reason and causes us to respect or revere laws.

With all of these premises in mind Kant states the "first principle" or the Categorical Imperative. According to Kant, from this principle alone we can determine the rightness or wrongness of any activity. The principle states "I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law."

One criticism against the Categorical Imperative is its universal approach. According to Kant, if an act is bad under certain circumstances, it is bad under all circumstances. In other words, we should never steal, lie or kill. The universal approach prevents us from taking into account the situation in which an act takes place. However, Dr. Scott Cook, professor of philosophy at San Jose State University, notes some Kantians would consider the articles of the Codes of Ethics too specific to be considered moral maxims.

Also separate from the utilitarians, who base everything on the value of pleasure, are those who follow the ethical theory of intuition. The theory of intuition believes man knows right and wrong as a result of intuition. People come to know right and wrong by way of conscience, a "gut feeling" or simply common sense.

In his theory, Joseph Butler (1692-1752) suggests a man's conscience determines the rightness or wrongness of a given act. Out of instinct and/or reason man's conscience guides him toward self-preservation and self-love (Butler, 1949).

David Hume (1711-1776) accepts the theory of utility but points out people also make ethical judgements based on a real "sentiment of approbation" (Hume, 1953). For Hume, a person must also reckon with how he *feels* about an activity.

The theory of intuition is also supported by Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882), an idealist who holds the individual person is a part of the universal and divine. According to Green a person's failure to act ethically is due to his inability to realize or identify with a universal mind (Green, 1795).

Francis H. Bradley (1846-1924) is another intuitionist who holds that punishment is justifiable based on intuition or common sense. For Bradley people use intuition as a means of furthering cosmic harmony (Bradley, 1876).

In *Methods of Ethics* Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900) combines the social utility of Mill with the intuition of Butler and Kant. Sidgwick differentiates between psychological hedonism and ethical hedonism. He adopts the latter and grounds it on intuition. Intuition is used in Sidgwick's theory of ethics because, in his opinion, certain ethical principles and duties are self-evident. Sidgwick concludes that social utilitarianism offers the true means of moral judgement but emphasizes that it must be grounded in the awareness of one's moral obligations described by Kant and Butler.

In his book *Principia Ethica* George Edward Moore (1873-1958) dwells on the nature of good and comes to the conclusion that good is undefinable and a nonnatural characteristic. According to Moore people do not learn the meaning of good from others. Instead, people are simply aware of its nature.

Business Ethics

According to Bevins there is a prevailing attitude among public relations professionals today that moral obligation, if it exists, is either the domain of employers or clients or can be discharged by referencing a professional code (Bevins, 1987, p. 195). Often, the technicians place the responsibility for ethical behavior on management because of their added responsibility to the client. Guidelines that these public relations practitioners can use to determine whether moral compromise might result include: 1) consider the matter from the basis of existing rules, 2) consider legal canons, 3) reference such theories as utilitarianism.

A four year longitudinal survey of business graduates was used by Peter Arlow in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of some of the past proposals to improve business ethics. The study found that graduates of business school maintain a consistent assessment of proposals to improve business ethics with the exception of a significant disapproval of government regulations. The negative attitude towards government regulations is attributed to business graduates adopting a common business viewpoint (Arlow, 1988, p. 300). In addition, Arlow points out both recent graduates and business executives disapprove of religious leader participation in determining ethical norms for business and consider the family as the most important ethical training and education as the least.

According to Leonard Brooks a growing interest in business ethics has come about as a result of: 1) diminishing confidence about corporate activities, 2) an increased emphasis on quality of life, 3) a rising expectation of

penalization of corporate executives when caught, 4) the increased power of special interest groups, 5) publicity generated from the above, and 6) a change in the objectives that control business. As a result of this increased interest in business ethics Brooks suggests seven ways to improve the "effectiveness" of existing codes of ethics. These seven ways include 1) loosening confidentiality guidelines, 2) establishing an objective and fair hearing process, 3) protecting employees, 4) mentioning employee rights, 5) improving motivation to comply, 6) reviewing conflicts of interest, and 7) harmonizing your own codes of ethics with other codes of ethics (Brooks, 1989, pp. 32-35).

After analyzing normative moral theory in 25 of the leading business ethics text books, Robbin Derry and Ronald Green conclude a serious lack of clarity exists on how to apply theories of ethics to specific cases (Derry et al., 1989).

Charles Stoner points out moral directives or codes can bring about a "business culture" that generates an understanding of appropriate moral actions for its members. Formal statements by corporate leaders, encouraging moral business behavior, enhances the likelihood of ethical behavior. To build an ethical culture an organization should establish, maintain, internalize and appreciate clear moral values. Corporations will only act morally when businesses incorporate key moral values into their organizational cultures (Stoner, 1989).

Frida Furman takes a "down to earth" approach to ethics and asserts business ethics cannot merely be grounded in abstract philosophy. Instead,

she suggest we should base our understanding of business ethics in economic, social, political, and cultural realities of the business world (Furman, 1990).

Phillip Lewis et al. suggest business people should be given general information regarding the many approaches to solving ethical dilemmas rather than specific codes of ethics. According to Lewis, knowledge of many ethical methods helps people determine, what ethics is, why one should act ethically, and how one acts ethically. Ethics is primarily interested in duty, virtue, justice, and pleasure (Lewis, 1990).

D. Randall studied 94 published empirical articles on ethical behavior and opinions of business people and found little is known about the quality of empirical research on the ethical beliefs and conduct of organization members (Randall, 1990, p. 457). More than half of the articles were vague and often omitted methodological detail. Most of them expressed no concern for the reliability or validity of devices of measurement. In addition, they often characterized low response rates, convenient sample populations. Randall contributes these characteristics to the nature of ethical research and the sensitivity of the topic.

Frank Wylie suggests business communicators should ground business ethics on the belief that ethical acts serve both the interests of an organization and the public. Ultimately, he suggests communicators can influence change by pointing out to management the positive effects of moral behavior, e.g. long term profits, loyal and productive employees, and a positive company image (Wylie, 1990).

Members of the legal, medical and accounting professions are guided in their professional behavior by their respect of codes of ethics. These codes of

ethics are always changing as they respond to forces that are inside and outside of the professions. Often, codes come about as a result of crisis (Backof et al. 1991, p. 99)

Public Relations Ethics

Because of the economic importance of communication programs, the potential social impact of effective public relations, and the lack of previous systematic efforts to evaluate public relations empirically, Wright calls for research on how to deal with the ethical development of communication practices (Wright, 1982).

Ethics can not be approached without difficulty since some believe empiricism does not work with moral and ethical statements. Yet such studies must be attempted in hope that public relations might one day be able to move from its present outdated state of ethical relativism (Wright, 1982, p. 16).

The importance of ethics research in public relations becomes paramount when one considers the way in which ethics affect the industry, and more importantly the public at large. Generally, the public expresses concern about the behavior of practitioners and often views them as business people who put money before the interests of their clients.

The public impression is that the expertise of public relations firms is readily available to the highest bidder with no consideration given to professional values, fair

play, and ultimately, the public interest. There doesn't even seem to be much consideration for client's long term interest. It is no wonder that public relations has a reputation for flackery when practitioners take no responsibility for what is communicated (Wilcox, 1984, p. 16).

This comment responds to a September 13, 1984 article in the *Wall Street Journal*. The author asked an account executive of Daniel Eldelman about the ethics of a negative campaign. The practitioner representing a rival of U-Haul distributed information about wheels falling off of U-Haul trucks. The practitioner responded "It was the client's idea. We're merely the PR firm that represents them."

Comments like this, which divert responsibility or rationalize ethically questionable business practices, are examined in the August, 1986, *Harvard Business Review* article "Why Good Managers Make Bad Ethical Decisions." In the article, Gellerman provides four comments business men use to rationalize unethical behavior:

"This action is not really wrong, illegal, or immoral . . . even though it may look that way . . .

Most any action is okay if it's in the best interest of the individual or the corporation . . .

This will never be found out . . .

This action will be condoned because it helps the organization, company, or the objectives of the project" (Gellerman, 1986, p. 88).

These rationalizations support the opinion that ethics "depend on the situation"—providing society with an array of situations that may be used to justify just about any ethical dilemma.

Wright examines public relations ethics while focusing on the individual's ethical character. Wright bases his approach on the premise "public relations will never be anymore ethical than the level of basic ethical morality of the people who are in public relations" (Wright, 1989, p. 19). Wright also suggests the moral values of North American practitioners results from a concern for social and economic well being, what a deity is thought to see as right or wrong, what is "basically" right or wrong, purity, society's welfare, and financial security.

Pollock found in a 1989 study 89 percent of practitioners think their company behaved ethically and 12 percent of those companies took no action upon discovering unethical conduct. Furthermore, 58 percent of the practitioners saw nothing done within the previous three years by their companies to improve the ethical practice of public relations, while only 39 percent said their organizations were doing something to discourage violations of ethical conduct.

Similar to Pollock's findings, Heger conducted a non-probability survey which found among practitioners surveyed almost half would not quit their job because of an ethical objection. "More often than not, the majority called

practitioners "somewhat ethical . . . the second most common response was to call practitioners "highly unethical" (Heger, 1989, p. 35). The respondents agreed that ethics need further study and that business communication ethics is a serious matter today. "Eighty-two percent agreed strongly . . . 16 percent were neutral and 3 percent disagreed strongly" that ethics was a serious matter (Heger, 1989, p. 36).

Selingman and White supplement the literature by providing examples of ethical misconduct in business to promote the image of a product. The authors furnish situations in which communication professionals corrupt the integrity of channels of communication. They note that travel writers receive free travel and car magazine editors are on the payroll of major car manufacturers. A controversy even resulted from Coca-Cola's decision to send journalists five dollars in a promotional Coca-Cola can (*Bulldog Reporter*, April 16, 1990, p. 4). These instances provide examples in which practitioners might become biased as a result of subtle or blatant bribery. This behavior challenges PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics.

Contemporary Theme

There seems to be a recurring theme within the public relations community today. The theme echoes in public relations conferences, the literature, and public relations classrooms. Basically stated, if you would not want everyone to know about it, do not do it. This was the sentiment expressed by the October, 1991 PRSA ethics conference panel. In questions of potential conflict of interest, one should ask; "How would I act if the sun were

shining on my actions?" (Will, 1992, p. 10). This opinion was also supported by PRSA president John Paluszek during a speech given before his local PRSA chapter. Paluszek concluded his speech by suggesting a final remedy to ethical dilemmas. "Ask yourself, How will this look on page one of the local daily paper?" (Paluszek, 1982, p. 24, 25). Both of these statements emphasize public approval as a means of determining right and wrong.

The Function of Ethics

The stated purpose of the Codes of Ethics set forth by IABC and PRSA include the following, respectively: The IABC Code of Ethics has been developed to provide IABC members and other communication professionals with guidelines of professional behavior and standards of ethical practice (IABC, 1991); the PRSA articles have been adopted by the Public Relations Society of America to promote and maintain high standards of public service and ethical conduct among its members (Wilcox et al. 1989). Wilcox also notes that the PRSA Code was established so public relations could distinguish itself from "shady promoters and ballyhoo advanced men who, unfortunately had been quick to appropriate the words 'public relations' to describe their operation." Edward Bernays, who was the original advocate for public relations codes of ethics, and gave public relations its name, wanted them in order to advance the industry's efforts to make public relations a "profession" (McBride, 1989, p. 15).

An issue in public relations ethics is the discussion of how ethics serves the practice of public relations. Finn stresses a need for practitioners to

bring ethical issues out in the open. "When ethical problems are brought to light, the dilemmas can be viewed in the perspective of thoughtful observation on the conduct of life. . . . Such discussion dignifies the question, relieves us of the anxiety of dealing with them privately, and possibly makes us feel better about the decision we make" (Finn, 1958, p. 57). Such activity better facilitates the role of public relations.

Jay Black et al. claim the function of media codes are limited by the philosophies upon which they are based. He eventually posits that ethical codes may cause unethical behavior because they may be founded on unethical philosophies (Black et al. 1985, p.30).

Conversely, Brown adamantly asserts the issue of ethics in public relations merely provides a means to an end. "Achieving professional status in an organized way is the real issue" (Brown, 1986, p. 20). Brown ultimately argues codes of ethics do little to promote professional status because they lack enforcement.

Koten links a higher ethical standard to aid companies, the nation and society. "The willingness of public relations to bring new standards of ethical and educational behavior to the business world can advance the reputation of all business" (Koten, 1986, p. 11). In addition, Koten stresses education as the means to improve standards in American business. "Much of public relations and all American business depends on the preparation of those who follow to improve the ethical practice of business" (Koten, 1986, p. 9).

Bevins stresses a need to apply ethical theories to the practice of public relations. He notes that although codes hold value as a source of reference, public relations requires ethical grounds in theory above and beyond

professional codes (Bevins, 1987). "By applying a number of ethical theories to a public relations problem, both the skilled public relations technician and the public relations professional may arrive at similar conclusions concerning moral obligations" (Bevins, 1987, p. 195).

Pollock found that "Eighty-five percent of the communications professionals at IABC's annual conference believed that ethics affects the bottom line (\$). Sixty-three percent of these respondents think ethical concerns can hurt or help a company's reputation, while another 21 percent are convinced ethical issues can invite costly regulation" (Pollock, 1989, p. 48).

Ethics In Education

Koten is not alone when placing emphasis on education for the foundation of ethical improvement in public relations. The literature on this subject raises concern for what educators, and specifically textbooks, say about the subject.

Public relations students do not get a very rounded, complete view of the issues related to honesty in communications (Culbertson, 1983).

Culbertson examined six "public relations principles" textbooks and found textbooks rarely referred to honesty or lying on the part of practitioners.

Culbertson also suggests a "greater emphasis should be placed on the role of truth in the real world that all public relations students eventually enter" (Culbertson, 1983, p. 65).

Kopenhagen examines the literature on practitioners' and journalists' values and concludes "the wariness journalists feel toward public relations

practitioners, and the consequent defensiveness practitioners feel about their communication with the media, has its roots in journalism education" (Kopenhagen, 1985, p. 34). She notes part of this comes from journalism students being taught "to hate and reject news releases" (Kopenhagen, 1985, p. 34).

In their 1988 article "Context Before Conduct," Jurgensen and Lukaszewski suggest the individual should take responsibility for ethical decisions in business. They also stress the need for more development of foundational principles to help foster more ethical practices within the public relations industry.

In "What's Really Being Taught About Ethical Behavior," Pratt and Rentner review 1985-1989 literature on public relations ethics. The article analyzes listings in *Public Relations Review*, the PRSA's *Accreditation Guide*, and four of the most popular introductory texts used in public relations principles courses. As a result of their examination they conclude the above literature lacks conformity, definitive research, and theoretical framework (Pratt & Rentner, 1989).

Today, media students are taught the ethical philosophy of objectivity and public relations students are often taught subjectivism along with objectivity (Stacks, et al., 1989). Don Stacks points out that public relations ethics basically comes down to two considerations from the view of subjectivism: the needs of the practitioners (i.e., keeping the job) and the needs of the public (as opposed to the company needs).

Public Relations' Ethical Image

The literature on the subject of public relations ethics indicates practitioners view themselves as ethical. However, they have a long way to go before changing the public's negative perception of practitioners' behavior. This portion of the literature clearly indicates if codes of ethics serve no other purpose they should exist merely to let the public know certain standards are expected of public relations practitioners, especially PRSA and IABC members.

Aronoff found even though practitioners and journalists share almost identical news values, journalists hold practitioners in low occupational esteem (Aronoff, 1975).

Fox defends the ethical image of public relations while portraying it as misunderstood. Fox presents the practice as advantageous to society because it provides the public with an opportunity to scrutinize information under the "cleansing light" of publicity. Aronoff also claims the poor ethical image of practitioners results from criticism by journalists and academics. The criticism harbors a "deep seated fear of being manipulated" (Fox, 1980, p. 155). The author supports his defense of public relations' image by referring to the 1974 Roper survey which contradicts claims that practitioners are unethical.

In 1974, during the height of Watergate, a Roper organization survey indicated public relations people served a useful social function, were concerned with public welfare, and were more ethical than advertisers. They were "rarely called dishonest, though there is a certain low level of suspicion that they are mercenary and slick . . . charges that public relations people are

there to paper things over and give the public false impressions are not supported" (Thayer, 1980, p. 162).

In a review of twelve introductory mass communication texts, Cline found among the books selected most equated public relations with publicity and press agency. An extremely negative tone appeared, as seen by the following citations:

PR is dangerous. Publicists do not often lie, but telling half the truth is an integral part of their business, and stretching the truth is not uncommon. Moreover, they do it in secret; their work does not carry the unspoken caveat emptor of paid advertising (Sandman, 1976, p. 367).

Many turn to PR specialists whose prime function is obtaining that space free of charge. (An extreme example of free media coverage happens when fringe political groups kidnap or assassinate well known people just to focus media attention on their concerns) (Whetmore, 1979, p. 265).

The authors, traditionally schooled as journalists, inherited an anti-PR bias and are said to play a part in fueling a fear of public relations (Cline, 1982). Gross adds that fears of yesterday's flack continue as the power of public relations skills delineate practitioners as a subliminal threat to which many people respond with suspicion and unease . . . today the entire profession is said to be simply amoral (Gross, 1984).

A review of the PRSA Code of Ethics shows that the Codes have become a public relations device to allow claims of adherence to virtue and in

part a matter of constraining free competition (Olasky, 1985, p 43). Olasky points out that "responsibility to the public" needs definition and the codes of ethics need enforcement to be of any value. He also suggests that people in the media, who often criticize practitioners, should "blow the whistle" on wrongdoers.

Journalists often stereotype practitioners (Kopenhagen, 1985). This is also displayed in Winkleman's 1987 study which found practitioners are often equated to publicists and rarely portrayed as specialists managing plans, research, evaluation and counseling. The press' part in reinforcing public relations as unethical has added to the public relations stigma. Media in most countries berate public relations—sometimes for justifiable reasons, but often because of professional prejudice (Awad, 1987).

The issue of ethics became paramount during the 80's "when many of Wall Street's best and brightest found their careers cut short by a bout with ethical lapse known as insider trading. More than 100 Reagan administration appointees were questioned about problematic ethical or legal behavior" (Winkleman, 1987, p. 28). Perhaps the greatest blow came to the public relations industry when Public Relations Society of America's national president Anthony Franco resigned after being charged by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for insider trading. Although research shows that public relations practitioners view themselves as more ethical than outsiders believe them to be, in most parts of the world public relations is not perceived as highly ethical. Often this is caused by public relations' sins of the past (Awad, 1987).

An example of past sins is the early press agents who exaggerated press releases and advertisements to the point of being out-right lies. In addition, the publicist historically served the interest of big business and threatened society with tools of mass deception.

The pioneers of public relations, Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays, conceived the practice as a complex persuasive tool. "Despite Bernays' recognition of the pairing of social science methodology with the art of rhetoric and persuasion, the practice has remained chiefly one-sided in its primary function of persuasion. Often the public is still viewed as 'them' while the employer or client is seen as 'us.' Client loyalty is said to remain the paramount concern of the practitioner and his chief role as the advocate" (Bevins, 1987, p. 195).

In contrast to the negative image, Grunig (1976), Greyser (1981), Cutlip et al. (1985), Newsome (1985), Grunig (1984) and Wright (1989) agree "while the general public often believes practitioners have minimal ethics and morals, and would do anything to manipulate mass audiences, those working in public relations generally view their role as a responsible one with a positive effect upon society" (Wright, 1989, p. 19).

It appears that those who work in public relations see themselves as ethical; however, many journalists and others in the media still believe public relations has scant ethics and morals (Cutlip et al., 1985; Greyser, 1981; Grunig, 1976; Grunig et al., 1984; More et al., 1985; Newsom et al., 1985; Stacks et al., 1989).

Olasky criticizes practitioners' willingness to shape the truth in order to keep their job or make print. He suggests students lack an accurate perception

of how public relations is practiced when he states "students need to know what the real world of public relations is like. . . . One expert in media relations said students should know the real satisfaction in laying it on one of the prestige papers" (Olasky, 1985, pp. 41, 42).

Olasky also examines the effect poor ethical practice has on the industry. For example, negative publicity presents a new ethical problem for practitioners (Olasky, 1987). The negative campaign provides a "beneath the surface technique that causes advocates of one position or another to believe that they can no longer get a fair hearing" (Olasky, 1987, p. 21). Practitioners should be wary of the adverse effect negative tactics has on the ethical image of public relations (Olasky, 1987).

The above information indicates people question the ethics of public relations practitioners. Also, it suggests business codes of ethics and public relations codes of ethics serve the industry of public relations and the public at large. As stated in chapter one, no philosophical foundation has been provided by PRSA or IABC to support their given Codes of Ethics. Therefore, this study introduces the ethical theories of utility and Kant to determine whether or not the articles of each Code meet the given requirements of the two ethical theories. In this effort the following research question is raised: Do the Codes of Ethics meet the requirements of ethical behavior prescribed by utilitarian and Kantian ethics as two major schools of moral philosophy that traditionally bear on applied ethics? To determine this, the following research hypothesis is tested: *International Association of Business Communicators' and Public Relations Society of America's Codes of Ethics*

satisfy the requirements of ethical behavior required by the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative.

Also, this study answers the following subsidiary questions:

1. Do the PRSA's and IABC's articles state or imply the presence of obligation, and if so, to what or whom?
2. Do PRSA's and IABC's articles benefit the organizations or society?
3. Do the PRSA's and IABC's articles take into account the situation in which an act takes place?
4. Do PRSA's and IABC's articles rely on intuition to determine ethical behavior?
5. Are the PRSA's and IABC's articles vague or specific?
6. In what ways are the PRSA's and IABC's articles the same? How do they differ?
7. How can the PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics be improved?

The research hypothesis and question six compare the Codes of Ethics to ethical theories and the Codes themselves in an attempt to better understand their nature. Questions one through five are used to determine whether or not the Codes of each organization follow the concepts prescribed by utilitarianism and Kant and whether we can ground the the Codes of both organizations in the two major ethical theories. Question number one looks for the presence of obligation or "Kantian" duty. Question number two examines the benefits or pleasure that the articles bring. Question number

three asks whether the situation is taken into account and provides insight as to whether the articles can be universalized. Asking whether the Codes use intuition in question number four gives us a clue as to which school of thought the articles may subscribe. Question number five asks whether the Codes are vague or specific and gives us an indication of whether they can be universalized. Finally, question number seven is used to provide information which may improve the Codes of Ethics.

Elaboration of Questions

The word "article(s)" refers to one (or more) of the 17 statements of prescribed behavior in the PRSA Code of Ethics and the seven statements of prescribed behavior in the IABC Code of Ethics.

The research hypothesis suggests that International Association of Business Communications' and Public Relations Society of America's articles satisfy the requirements of ethical behavior required by the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative. The hypothesis examines whether each article, when applied to the Categorical Imperative and the Principle of Utility, "satisfies the requirements of ethical behavior required by utilitarianism and Kant." What is meant by requirement is the necessary behavior that is called for in order for something to be ethically correct. The Principle of Utility requires that the Code provides the greatest good for the greatest number of people in order to be considered morally correct. The Categorical Imperative requires that reasonable

people would will the behavior prescribed in the Code to become a universal law for everyone to follow.

Question one asks do the PRSA's and IABC's articles state or imply the presence of obligation, and if so, to what or whom? This question asks whether an article specifically states or implies that a member has an obligation or duty to someone or something. If an obligation is mentioned or implied this question will also examine to what, or to whom, the member has an obligation. Obligation refers to the rationale or motive that governs the activity.

Question four asks do PRSA's and IABC's articles rely on intuition to determine ethical behavior? Intuition refers to that which is *a priori* and beyond cognitive reasoning.

Question five asks whether the PRSA's and IABC's articles are vague or specific? Vague refers to that which requires the readers' own interpretation. Specific refers to that which leaves no room for personal interpretation.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study conducted a content analysis of the IABC Code of Ethics and PRSA Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations. Each individual article was checked against the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative. The analysis shows whether or not each individual Code satisfied what is required of ethical conduct in each of the ethical methods. The possible answers to each sub-unit of analysis were YES and NO. If any article from a Code did not meet the requirements of a given ethical theory then the Code as a whole did not meet the requirements of the given theory. In other words, all of the articles must have met the requirements of the given theory in order to have met the requirements of the theory. This also applied to the subsidiary questions. Recording charts were used to keep track of the appropriate categorization.

The author of this thesis served as the coder. Therefore, the validity of the study may be limited by the discretion of the author. Furthermore, the validity of the study may be affected by the author's interpretation of the two ethical theories and the literature on the theories. An additional limit to the study is the author's interpretation of the content (articles within the Codes of Ethics) required beyond the information/interpretation provided by the respective organizations.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Research Hypothesis

International Association of Business Communicators' and Public Relations Society of America's Codes of Ethics satisfy the requirements of ethical behavior required by the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative.

A copy of the PRSA and IABC Codes can be found in Appendices A and B. Results to question one are summarized on the next page in Table 1. "Y"'s represent successful application of the given principle. "N"'s represent failure to apply the given principle. *An itemized response to this question and questions two through seven can be found in Appendix G.*

Table 1 - Research Hypothesis

CODE	UTIL.	KANT
PRSA 1	Y	Y
PRSA 2	Y	Y
PRSA 3	Y	Y
PRSA 4	Y	Y
PRSA 5	Y	Y
PRSA 6	Y	Y
PRSA 7	Y	Y
PRSA 8	Y	Y
PRSA 9	Y	Y
PRSA 10	Y	Y
PRSA 11	Y	Y
PRSA 12	Y	Y
PRSA 13	Y	Y
PRSA 14	N	N
PRSA 15	Y	Y
PRSA 16	Y	Y
PRSA 17	N	N
IABC 1	Y	Y
IABC 2	N	N
IABC 3	Y	Y
IABC 4	Y	Y
IABC 5	Y	Y
IABC 6	N	N
IABC 7	N	N

Principle of Utility and Categorical Imperative

Applied to PRSA's Codes of Ethics

Although fifteen out of 17 PRSA articles satisfy the requirements of the Principle of Utility, taken as a whole the PRSA Code of Ethics fails to satisfy the requirements of the Principle of Utility.

The articles themselves appear to prescribe behavior that would commonly be accepted as ethical. For example, the articles do not expect practitioners to break laws. Instead, the articles prescribe virtuous activities that most reasonable people would condone, e.g., do not lie, practice integrity, obey the law. For this reason most of the articles call for behavior that meets the requirement of the Principle of Utility.

However, article numbers 14 and 17 have the potential to cause pain. If an article has the potential for causing pain to millions and this pain outweighs any kind of pleasure, then the code fails the requirement of the Principle of Utility.

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner. This code of silence may cause people pain. If a practitioner breaks several of these articles, causing many people pain, and knowledge of his nature would reduce pain and bring pleasure, then his reputation should be known. Therefore, article number 14 may reduce the happiness of the many members of the public.

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires

conduct contrary to the articles of this Code. This is in not in accord with the Principle of Utility because it requires a member to follow article number 14 which violates the Principle of Utility.

Fifteen out of 17 of the PRSA articles satisfy the requirement of the Categorical Imperative. In addition, number two is questionable. The 17 PRSA articles are very close to satisfying Kant's ethical requirement, but, as a whole, fail to do so.

When all the articles of PRSA's Code of Ethics are applied to Kant's Categorical Imperative, certain articles are vulnerable to unethical behavior. These two articles include number 14 and number 17.

PRSA article number 14 (A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner) could bring adversity. If the member practices unethical public relations at the expense of others the reasonable person can not will this article as universal law. When article number 14 is universalized, PRSA and all of its members acquire a responsibility to shield the most abominable reputations from public scrutiny, even at the grave expense of society.

Article number 17 (member shall sever relations if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of the Code) cannot be willed a universal law. Article 17 requires members to sever relationships with persons who justifiably choose not to follow a harmful article like number 14. Therefore, neither article 14 nor 17 should be willed universal laws. In addition, although article two can be willed a universal law, it runs into problems when applied to the Categorical Imperative. Article number two reads: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity

while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process. As long as these two interests are in accord and do not conflict this can be willed as universal law. If the client's interest and the democratic process conflict the reasonable person cannot will the article a universal law.

Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative Applied to IABC's Code of Ethics

The IABC articles satisfy the requirements of the Principle of Utility in four out of seven articles. As a whole the IABC Code of Ethics fails to satisfy the requirements of the Principle of Utility.

Application of the Principle of Utility runs into problems in articles two, six and seven. Articles two, six and seven contradict the Principle of Utility because following any of them may cause unnecessary pain and may prevent pleasure for millions.

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used. This is bad when it is necessary information and detrimental to society if not provided. An example would be a situation in which a practitioner informs the public about the confidential business practices of his former company that are detrimental to society. An extreme example would be a company that leaks lethal chemicals into a city's water supply. Existing laws already require this

person to disclose the information. Therefore, as presently stated, this article does not satisfy the Principle of Utility.

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others. The same reason given for article number two applies to this article. Following this article could result in a situation that adversely affects society. In addition, it may conflict with articles four and five when the law calls for disclosure.

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards. This article does not satisfy the Principle of Utility because it would require communication professionals to adopt articles two and six which may violate the Categorical Imperative.

Although articles two, six, and seven prevent the IABC from satisfying the requirements of the Principle of Utility, minor modification put IABC's Code of Ethics in accord with the ethical theory of utility.

When the IABC Code of Ethics is applied to Kant's Categorical Imperative it meets the requirement of the principle four out of seven times. As a whole the IABC Code fails the requirements set forth by Kant.

Like the PRSA articles, when examined in the light of Kant's Categorical Imperative, minor flaws become apparent in IABC's Code of Ethic. Three of IABC's articles can not be willed universal laws.

Article number two (Communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used) cannot be willed a universal law when it is necessary information and detrimental to society if not provided. An example would be a situation in which a practitioner informs the public about the confidential business practices of his former company that are detrimental to society. An extreme example would be a company that leaks lethal chemicals into a city's water supply. Existing laws already require this person to disclose the information. Therefore, as presently stated, this article cannot be willed and is not a universal law.

Article number six (Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others) cannot be applied for the same reason given for article number two. Universalizing this article could result in a situation which would adversely affect society. In addition, it may also conflict with articles four and five when the law calls for disclosure.

Article number seven (Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards) cannot be willed a universal law because it would also require communication professionals to adopt articles two and six which may violate the Categorical Imperative.

In summary, the PRSA and IABC Codes of Ethics fail to meet the requirements of the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative. However, both Codes of Ethics are very close to satisfying the requirements prescribed by these principles.

Question One

Do the PRSA's and IABC's articles state or imply the presence of obligation, and if so, to what or whom?

The following table is a summary of question one's results. The existence of obligations are represented by "Y"s in Table 2.

Table 2 - Question 1 Matrix

CODE	Q #1
PRSA 1	Y
PRSA 2	Y
PRSA 3	Y
PRSA 4	Y
PRSA 5	Y
PRSA 6	Y
PRSA 7	Y
PRSA 8	Y
PRSA 9	Y
PRSA 10	Y
PRSA 11	Y
PRSA 12	Y
PRSA 13	Y
PRSA 14	Y
PRSA 15	Y
PRSA 16	Y
PRSA 17	Y
IABC 1	Y
IABC 2	Y
IABC 3	Y
IABC 4	Y
IABC 5	Y
IABC 6	Y
IABC 7	Y

PRSA Articles

Objects of obligation and their frequency are represented by "X"s in Table 3.

Table 3 - PRSA Obligations

OBJECT	ARTICLE NUMBER																	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Client		X	X						X	X	X	X	X					7
Employer		X	X						X		X	X	X					6
Public	X		X				X								X			4
Others			X					X			X							3
Truth				X	X	X												3
Peers			X											X				2
Democracy		X																1
Freedom			X															1
Self											X							1
PRSA																X		1
Articles																	X	1

The PRSA Code of Ethics suggests practitioners are obligated to many different persons and things. Each article either states or implies an obligation to at least one thing. The articles emphasize an obligation to the clients and the employer. The public, others and truth are moderately emphasized. In addition, obligations to peers, democracy, freedom, oneself, PRSA and the articles are mentioned.

Seven out of 17, or 40%, of the articles suggest a practitioner obligation to the client. Six out of 17, or 35%, of the articles suggest practitioners are obligated to the employer. The three most often mentioned things

practitioners are obligated to, after client and employer, are the public, others and truth. Each of these are mentioned in at least three separate articles. Peers are mentioned twice and the democratic process, freedom, one's self, PRSA and the articles are all mentioned once.

Practitioners are obligated to people 55% of the time and non-living entities the rest of the time. Thirty-six percent of the obligations are non-material. Examples include articles, freedom, democracy and truth. Well over 63% of the PRSA articles consider practitioners obligated to something outside the profession of public relations. This includes all obligations except the articles, PRSA, one's self and one's employer.

In summary, the articles clearly indicate practitioners have an obligation to many different things. More often than not, practitioners are obligated to people, specifically clients and employers. Some of the things to which practitioners are obligated are transcendent and most are beyond the profession itself.

IABC Articles

Objects of obligation and their frequency are represented by "X"s in Table 4.

Table 4 - IABC Obligations

SUBJECT	ARTICLE NUMBER							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Law			X	X	X	X		4
Employer		X			X			2
Profession	X							1
Source		X						1
Ethics				X				1
Others					X			1
Client					X			1
Customer					X			1
IABC							X	1
Articles							X	1

The IABC articles suggest practitioners have an obligation to many different people and things. Every article implies or directly states an obligation to one or more things. The obligations that are emphasized include an obligation to the law and an obligation to one's employer. In addition to these two obligations, the IABC articles suggest practitioners have an obligation to eight different things.

The articles indicate practitioners have an obligation to the law in four different articles, more than half of the articles. An obligation to an employer is mentioned twice and is the second most mentioned obligation. Other obligations that are implied or mentioned by the IABC Code include the profession, the source, ethics, others, the client, the customer, the IABC, and the articles themselves.

Sixty-percent of the objects of obligation go beyond public relations as a profession. In other words, practitioners are obligated to things not directly associated with the public relations industry 60% of the time. The obligations that involve public relations as a profession include the employer, the profession, IABC and the Code.

The Code is obligated to non-material entities 30% of the time. These obligations include law, ethics, and the articles. Forty-percent of the time the obligations are persons.

In general, the articles of ethics clearly indicate practitioners have an obligation to many different things, some of which are transcendent and most of which are inanimate and beyond the profession itself.

Question Two

Do PRSA's and IABC's articles benefit the organizations or society?

The following tables provide summaries of question two results. Benefits are represented by "Y"'s and the absence of benefits is represented by "N"'s in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5 - PRSA Benefits

OBJECT	BENEFITS	
	INDUSTRY	SOCIETY
Client	Y	Y
Employer	Y	N
Public	Y	Y
Others	Y	Y
Truth	Y	Y
Peers	Y	N
Democracy	Y	Y
Freedom	Y	Y
Self	Y	N
PRSA	Y	N
Articles	Y	Y

Table 6 - IABC Benefits

SUBJECT	BENEFIT	
	INDUSTRY	SOCIETY
Law	Y	Y
Employer	Y	N
Profession	Y	N
Source	Y	Y
Ethics	Y	Y
Others	Y	Y
Client	Y	Y
Customer	Y	Y
IABC	Y	N
Articles	Y	Y

It stands to reason that those objects to which the articles are obligated benefit from practitioners acting on those obligations. Therefore, those things to which the practitioners are obligated will be used to determine whether the articles work toward the benefit of the public relations industry or society. The answer to this question will be determined based on the practitioner obligations discussed in question two.

The articles themselves exist for the purpose of improvement. They suggest a problem and call for improvement of a situation. Otherwise, what purpose would Codes of Ethics serve? The literature also suggests the Codes of Ethics were developed because the ethics of the industry were in question. PRSA states the purpose of its Code of Ethics is to promote high standards. IABC states its Code of Ethics provides standards to be followed. Therefore, both Codes of Ethics exist for the purpose of improving or maintaining high standards.

The requirements of the articles aim ultimately to benefit certain parties. The purpose of this question is to determine who these individuals are and to gain insight to the potential motivation behind Codes of Ethics. Some suggest one of the main motivations behind public relation's Codes of Ethics is to promote the industry itself (Brown, 1986; Koten, 1986; McBride 1989; Pollock, 1989; Wilcox, 1989). Despite this, objects of obligation with the specific articles suggest the Codes of Ethics benefit both society and the industry of public relations.

Based on the objects of obligation, PRSA's articles benefit objects outside of the industry 63% of the time. The same is true for IABC's articles 60% of the time. This number might indicate that PRSA and IABC are

obligated to things outside of the profession. However, it should also be noted that in every case of an exterior obligation, the industry of public relations eventually benefits indirectly. For example, a practitioner's ethical obligation to clients benefits the client. However, it ultimately benefits the practitioner. Many ancient and modern philosophers agree people benefit from doing "the right thing." Furthermore, practitioners financially profit from the positive benefits of a positive ethical reputation.

Both IABC's and PRSA's articles serve the industry without exception. In fact, the industry benefits from more articles than does society. Table seven below (Question Two Matrix) demonstrates how the obligations benefit the industry of public relations and society. The presence of a benefit is represented by a "Y" and lack of a benefit is represented by an "N".

Table 7 - Question 2 Matrix

PRSA			IABC		
BENEFITS			BENEFIT		
OBJECT	INDUSTRY	SOCIETY	SUBJECT	INDUSTRY	SOCIETY
Client	Y	Y	Law	Y	Y
Employer	Y	N	Employer	Y	N
Public	Y	Y	Profession	Y	N
Others	Y	Y	Source	Y	Y
Truth	Y	Y	Ethics	Y	Y
Peers	Y	N	Others	Y	Y
Democracy	Y	Y	Client	Y	Y
Freedom	Y	Y	Customer	Y	Y
Self	Y	N	IABC	Y	N
PRSA	Y	N	Articles	Y	Y
Articles	Y	Y			

This does not come as a surprise since an organization would not suggest things which would ultimately be detrimental to the industry. In addition, this happens because the industry benefits when society benefits from the ethical actions of the industry. Clearly, the industrial benefits provided by the articles provide reasons for their existence. This is supported by the fact that some of the articles focus solely on the industry. However, this does not justify condemnation of the Codes. As pointed out, the articles on the whole are also good for society. In addition, the individual practitioner ultimately follows his own motivation, whether it be for society, his profession or both.

Question Three

Do the PRSA's and IABC's articles take into account the situation in which an act takes place?

The following table provides a summary of the results to question three.

Acknowledgement of the situation is represented by "Y"'s in Table 8. "N"'s are used when the situation is not taken into account.

Table 8 - Question 3 Matrix

CODE	Q #4
PRSA 1	N
PRSA 2	N
PRSA 3	N
PRSA 4	N
PRSA 5	N
PRSA 6	N
PRSA 7	N
PRSA 8	N
PRSA 9	N
PRSA 10	N
PRSA 11	N
PRSA 12	N
PRSA 13	N
PRSA 14	N
PRSA 15	N
PRSA 16	Y
PRSA 17	N
IABC 1	N
IABC 2	N
IABC 3	N
IABC 4	N
IABC 5	N
IABC 6	N
IABC 7	N

PRSA Articles

PRSA's articles take a situation into account only once. This takes place in article number sixteen which reads: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient reason by the judicial panel. No other PRSA articles make exceptions. Because PRSA articles are designed to "promote and maintain high standards of public service and ethical conduct among its members" and general articles promote high standards, they are acceptable. In addition, to include every situation would be impossible. This provides another rationale for keeping the articles general.

Based on the current context of the article one should categorically follow the prescribed behavior, excluding the exception provided in number sixteen.

IABC Articles

None of the IABC articles indicate the situation should be taken into account when considering the application of an article. Based on IABC's articles, the articles themselves apply in every situation. In addition, no part of the IABC Code of Ethics' allows consideration of the situation in which an act occurs. However, the IABC articles do state in the introductory and post-article text the IABC headquarters will assist members in interpreting and/or applying the articles. These notes of available elaboration on the articles may

be considered means in which a situation may ultimately be taken into account.

Question Four

Do PRSA's and IABC's articles rely on intuition to determine ethical behavior? In other words, do the articles rely on *a priori* non-cognitive reasons such as feelings or one's conscience?

Table 9 represents a summary of question four's results. The use of intuition is represented by "Y"'s and "N"'s are used to represent cases in which intuition is not used.

Table 9 - Question 4 Matrix

CODE	Q #5
PRSA 1	N
PRSA 2	Y
PRSA 3	Y
PRSA 4	Y
PRSA 5	Y
PRSA 6	N
PRSA 7	N
PRSA 8	N
PRSA 9	N
PRSA 10	N
PRSA 11	N
PRSA 12	N
PRSA 13	N
PRSA 14	N
PRSA 15	Y
PRSA 16	N
PRSA 17	N
IABC 1	N
IABC 2	N
IABC 3	N
IABC 4	N
IABC 5	N
IABC 6	N
IABC 7	N

PRSA Articles

The PRSA articles do rely on intuition in five out of 17 Codes. They include the commonly accepted concepts of justice and equality.

The concepts of justice and equality are based on intuitive values. We make the assumption that men are equal and that equality is just because the values established by society indicate this. The values upon which we draw these conclusions are beyond reason; we sense them.

PRSA article number two relies on the concept of equality to determine ethical behavior. Articles three, four, five, and 15 rely on the concept of fairness or justice.

IABC Articles

The IABC Code of Ethics does not rely on intuition because it never uses words or statements that require an *a priori*, or intuitive, understanding of their meaning. Evidence of this is provided in the Code itself as well as Appendix G.

Question Five

Are the PRSA's and IABC's articles vague or specific?

Table 10 represents question five's results. "S"'s represent specificity and "V"'s represent vagueness.

Table 10 - Question 5 Matrix

CODE	Q #6
PRSA 1	S
PRSA 2	V
PRSA 3	S
PRSA 4	V
PRSA 5	S
PRSA 6	S
PRSA 7	S
PRSA 8	S
PRSA 9	S
PRSA 10	S
PRSA 11	S
PRSA 12	S
PRSA 13	S
PRSA 14	S
PRSA 15	S
PRSA 16	S
PRSA 17	S
IABC 1	S
IABC 2	S
IABC 3	S
IABC 4	S
IABC 5	S
IABC 6	S
IABC 7	S

PRSA Articles

For the most part, the PRSA articles are specific and do not require interpretation. However, words in articles two and four are vague.

Article number two refers to high standards. The word high is subject to interpretation. In addition, article four uses the word extravagant which is also subject to interpretation. These two instances provide situations in which a word causes vagueness. However, in each of these cases the meaning of the word is generally understood and does not demand interpretation. With this in mind, the articles as a whole are specific and require little if any interpretation.

IABC

IABC codes of ethics are specific and do not require additional interpretation.

Question Six

In what ways are the PRSA's and IABC's articles the same? How do they differ?

There are a surprising number of differences between the two Codes of Ethics. The most obvious is the quantity of articles and the number of issues that are covered by both. PRSA uses 17 articles and raises 12 issues. IABC uses seven articles and raises six issues. The issues raised by PRSA include honesty and integrity, dealing fairly, truth, bribes, identification of client, guarantee of achievements, conflict of interest, privacy, damage of reputation, informing the society of violations, and the obligations to appear for review and sever relations if required. The issues raised by IABC include honesty and integrity, the source, legal obligations, privacy, personal benefits and the obligation to follow the articles. Excluding the issues of honesty and integrity and privacy, all of the articles raise different issues. The articles of each organization do not contradict one another; however, they fail to cover similar ethical issues in all but two occasions.

A second difference between the two organizations' Codes of Ethics can be observed through the objects to which they claim obligations. Out of the PRSA's 11 objects of obligation and IABC's ten, only four are the same. The two organizations only agree members are obligated to client, employer, others and the articles themselves. In addition, PRSA strongly emphasizes the obligations to client and employer while IABC does not.

Contrary to the differences, there are several similarities between the two organizations' Codes of Ethics. For example, each organizations' Codes of Ethics come very close to satisfying the requirements of the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative. As mentioned in response to the research question, both Codes of Ethics narrowly fail to satisfy the requirements of the ethical theories. In addition, with minor modification of specific articles, the two Codes of Ethics of the organizations could satisfy the requirements as set forth by utilitarianism and Kant.

Another similarity is that both organizations' Codes of Ethics state or imply obligations in every individual article. In addition, both organizations consider members obligated to honesty, integrity, and privacy.

A third general similarity comes as a result of neither organization taking into account the situations in which an act may take place. In other words, with the exclusion of one article, neither organization provides exceptions to the rules. Instead, both organizations generally present their articles as though they apply in every situation.

A fourth similarity is that both of the Codes of Ethics are specific. Both organizations leave little or no room for the member to interpret the Codes of Ethics. It is implied, after reading a Code and its stated interpretation, that a member knows exactly what one should or should not do under all circumstances.

Question Seven

How can the PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics be improved?

PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics aim to serve an excellent purpose. They bring attention to the subject of ethics and exist to improve and maintain high standards. They help practitioners make important decisions while influencing many people and benefiting the industry of public relations and society as a whole. Because these Codes of Ethics serve such an important role, a study of their content is valuable. It provides insight to the foundation from which the Codes can stand. In addition, an examination of the Codes of Ethics in light of two major ethical theories and several subsidiary questions has shown both deficiencies and strengths in the Codes. This question looks into some of the deficiencies and suggests possible ways of overcoming them.

If the PRSA or IABC are interested in following the Principle of Utility or the Categorical Imperative, the following suggestions are in order. Both organizations should add short clauses to three articles. If done, all of the PRSA and IABC articles will satisfy the requirements of the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative.

Fifteen out of 17 PRSA articles of ethics satisfy the requirements of the Principle of Utility. As a whole, the PRSA articles fail to satisfy the requirement of the Principle of Utility because article number 14 has the potential to cause pain. In addition, PRSA fails to meet the Categorical Imperative for the same reason. PRSA article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of

another practitioner. If an article has the potential of causing pain to millions and this pain outweighs any kind of pleasure, then the article fails the requirement of the Principle of Utility. In addition, such pain would prevent a reasonable person from willing such behavior to be a universal law. Article number 14 has the potential of causing pain to many, as in the case of the individual whose reputation should be known to prevent harm to society. Based on the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative this article should be rejected or changed. One modification that would allow this article to meet the requirements of Utility and Kant would be the addition of the clause " . . . except when following this Code creates significant expense to others." In doing so all of the PRSA articles meet the requirements of both ethical theories.

Similar modifications to IABC articles number two and six would meet with the same results. The IABC articles satisfy the requirement of the Principle of Utility in four out of seven articles. As a whole, the IABC Code of Ethics fails to satisfy the requirement of the Principle of Utility. In addition, when the IABC articles are applied to Kant's Categorical Imperative they meet the requirement of the Categorical Imperative four out of seven times. They fail because articles two and six have the ability to cause unnecessary pain and may prevent pleasure for millions. Therefore, they can not be willed a universal law.

Article number two states that professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used. Article

number six states that communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others. These two articles do not meet the requirement of utility and Kant because the information the articles refer to might be necessary to prevent the pain of many. Under those circumstances the articles may not be for the greatest good, nor would it be willed a universal law by the reasonable person. As suggested above, an addition of a clause would overcome this obstacle.

The additional clause in this situation is slightly more complicated. In order to satisfy the Principle of Utility the exception would have to take into account the number of people adversely affected. The exception should be followed when more people suffer from deprivation of the information as opposed to those who benefit. Therefore, the additional clause should read "except when at the expense of a significant number." The significant number should be interpreted as that number which surpasses the amount of people who benefit from the act.

A second improvement would eliminate redundancy among the articles. Redundancy can be eliminated in PRSA articles eight and ten and IABC articles three, four and seven.

To begin, PRSA's Code of Ethics are redundant in the cases of articles eight and ten. Article eight states a member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest. This article is already satisfied by article number ten which states a member shall not represent conflicting or competing interest

without the express consent of those concerned, given after full disclosure of the facts. Therefore, this study recommends eliminating article number eight because its content is represented in article ten.

IABC should eliminate the first part of article number seven which states communication professionals should follow the articles. This is unnecessary and redundant. Furthermore, article number three states communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities. Similarly, article four states communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates. IABC interprets this to mean not "looking the other way" when illegal activity has been observed. These two articles say the same thing: Do not violate the law. In fact, the two articles can easily be incorporated into one. This can be done by stating: Communication professionals will abide by all laws and regulations governing professional activities.

A major consideration is the fact that the articles require people to follow the law. This is redundant. The obligation to follow all laws exist for everyone regardless of the Codes. Therefore, elimination of IABC's emphasis on the law, and even its mentioning of laws, would not detract from the purpose of the articles. This is a significant consideration when one takes into account the effects of doing so. Because plagiarism, being an accessory to a crime, violating someone's right to privacy and other forms of violating the law are already restricted in our society, all of IABC's articles are redundant except when mentioning one's obligation to practice honesty and integrity.

With this in mind, the only way in which IABC provides communication professionals with guidelines for professional behavior and standards of ethical practice, beyond that which is already required, is when they state be honest and practice integrity. Instead of ethics, the IABC articles suggest communication professionals need information to help members understand the laws governing their profession. This study suggests reducing the Codes of Ethics to include only articles which provide guidelines beyond those already required by law.

A third suggestion recommends PRSA create a means of guidance other than the specific articles. IABC's articles are specific; however, they state IABC headquarters is available for guidance. This gives IABC members the advantage of going beyond the articles themselves and getting details not mentioned in the specific articles (e.g., certain situations). It also gives IABC the ability to guide its members instead of expecting them to look to the Code as the final word on ethics. Philosophy Professor Scott Cook of San Jose State University makes the point that the best Codes of Ethics create dialogue that help people make ethical decisions. Specific Codes such as IABC's and PRSA's make dialogue more difficult because the answers are already there. For these reasons, PRSA should at least include text that informs members that PRSA representatives can be contacted to assist them in interpreting and applying the articles. This will also inform members that the Codes of Ethics are not necessarily the last word on ethics and that situations may be considered when determining whether something is right or wrong.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This study examined the Codes of Ethics used by the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators. It focused on the specific articles of each organization's Codes to determine whether or not they met the requirements of two major ethical theories. The Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative, respectively, from utilitarianism and Kant were used to see if the two Codes of Ethics are in accord with the two philosophical theories.

The results of this study show that the Codes of each organization come very close to satisfying the ethical requirements prescribed by utility and Kant. Furthermore, minor modification in a few of the articles places the Codes in accord with two major ethical theories of long history. The affinity between the ethical theories and the Codes of Ethics is important because it reasonably grants us the ability to ground the the Codes of both organizations in major ethical theories.

In addition, the subsidiary questions of this study provide insight into the nature of the Codes of Ethics. Questions one through five are used as additional means of determining whether or not the Codes of each organization follow the concepts prescribed by utility and Kant. Question number one looks for the presence of obligation or duty. The concept of duty is an integral part of Kant's ethical theory. The investigation of the articles shows the organizations recognize an obligation or duty to objects inside and

outside of the industry of public relations. This promotes the opinion that Kant's ethical theory supports PRSA and IABC Codes of Ethics.

Question number two examines the benefits or pleasure that the articles bring. The investigation shows that the codes benefit, or bring pleasure to, many people. This bolsters the belief that the ethical theory of utility supports PRSA and IABC Codes of Ethics. Question number three asks whether the articles take the situation into account and provides insight as to whether the articles can be universalized. Willing an act as universal law is the focal point of Kant's ethical theory. Because PRSA and IABC articles rarely, if ever, take multiple situations into account, they are hard, and sometimes impossible, to universalize as willed laws. This information encourages the Codes to take multiple situations into account.

Asking whether the Codes use intuition in question number four gives us a clue as to which school of thought the articles may subscribe. PRSA's use of intuition within their articles aligns the Code with Kant's theory and the school of Idealism. Contrarily, IABC's articles do not utilize intuition. This disassociates IABC from Kant's ethical theory and places it closer to the tenets of Realism. Question number five asks whether the codes are vague or specific. For the most part, both Codes are specific. Because they are specific it makes it hard, if not impossible, to will the articles as universal laws. This discovery encourages making the articles less specific.

Question number six asks how the Codes of Ethics are similar and different. The findings for this question show the Codes have some similarities and many differences. Finally, question number seven is used to provide information which may improve the Codes of Ethics.

Several things have been determined as a result of this study. First of all, the study has shown that as a whole the PRSA and IABC Codes of Ethics come very close to satisfying the requirements of the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative. Two of PRSA's and three of IABC's articles fail to satisfy the requirement of the Principle of Utility. Likewise, two PRSA and three IABC articles fail to satisfy the requirements of Kant's Categorical Imperative. Furthermore, the articles of both organizations which fail the Principle of Utility are the same as those which fail the Categorical Imperative. In respect to the articles of each Code of Ethics, if PRSA and IABC are interested in following the requirements of both ethical theories they can do so by making minor modification to the articles which fail. This can be done by adding simple clauses which take both theories into account. This is a significant finding because minor changes put the Codes in accord with two major ethical theories. As a result of this, both Codes of Ethics are provided with two major philosophical foundations on which they may rest.

Also, this study shows practitioners are obligated to many different objects. Each article either states or implies an obligation to at least one object. PRSA's articles emphasize obligations to clients, employers, the public, others, truth, peers, democracy, freedom, oneself, PRSA and the specific articles in the Code of Ethics. The articles within PRSA's Code indicate practitioners are obligated to people, specifically clients and employers. Some of the things to which practitioners are obligated are transcendent and most are beyond the profession itself.

The IABC articles also suggest practitioners have an obligation to many persons and objects. The objects to which members are obligated include the

law, one's employer, the profession, the source, ethics, others, the client, the customer, the IABC and the articles of the Code. In general, the articles indicate practitioners have an obligation to objects which are transcendent, inanimate and beyond the profession itself. This is significant because it suggests both organizations recognize obligations or duties to objects inside and outside of the industry of public relations. This promotes the opinion that Kant's ethical theory supports PRSA's and IABC's Codes of Ethics. We can make this conclusion because both recognize obligations or duties which suggest why members *ought* to behave a certain way.

This study also points out the articles of both organizations serve both society and the industry of public relations. However, the industry of public relations benefits from every article in both organizations' Codes and more often than society as a whole. Understanding the benefits or pleasures governing the articles bolsters the belief that the ethical theory of utility supports PRSA and IABC Codes of Ethics. These results are also significant because they provide insight as to the motivation behind the Codes of Ethics. The findings of question three suggest the articles benefit the industry of public relations. This finding supports literature which states the Codes are developed to further the profession of public relations.

Examination of the articles also shows the situation in which an act takes place is not taken into account. This is significant because it raises the important consideration of whether these articles should be followed in every situation or followed as a general means of guidance. It could be implied in PRSA's Code of Ethics that situations are taken into account and are extra-topical when beyond the conduct expected of a responsible professional;

however, this is not stated in the Code of Ethics. James Little, PRSA's three year chairman of the Board of Ethics (1989-1992), says PRSA codes are used to provide guidance. However, they are ridged and do more than guide. Based on the current context of the articles one should categorically follow the prescribed behavior, excluding the exception provided in article number sixteen. Because PRSA and IABC articles do not take the situation into account, they are hard, and sometimes impossible, to will as universal law. This information suggests the potential need for more "situational" articles.

Other information provided by this study shows the PRSA articles rely on intuition in five out of 17 articles. They include the commonly accepted concepts of justice and equality. The use of intuition as a means of determining ethics makes the articles abstract. Although abstract, the articles themselves never go beyond the human experience. They are based on nature and abstract thought. This is an important consideration because it makes the articles vulnerable to criticism and harder to interpret. Although the PRSA articles are straightforward enough, the practitioner has the opportunity to ask which values are being considered and how. In addition, the PRSA's interpretation of fairness becomes as easily changeable as one's intuition. On the other hand, the use of abstract or intuitive concepts give the Code of Ethics necessary depth. Depth, or intuition, may be necessary to know why one "ought" to do something for its own sake rather than one's personal benefit.

IABC does not rely on intuition in any of its articles. This is important because it gives us an indication of "which side of the fence" IABC falls in terms of a school of ethical thought. Because they do not use intuition the

IABC articles are disassociated from the Idealist school of thought. This suggests an IABC detachment from the philosophical tenets used by Kant. In this respect IABC's Code of Ethics is more in line with the theory of utility and the school of Realism. Likewise, PRSA's articles are aligned with the views held by the School of Idealism because both rely on intuitive concepts. This affinity gives the organizations ethical schools on which they may choose to base their Codes of Ethics.

An examination of question number five shows PRSA's and IABC's articles are specific. In the case of PRSA's articles, the words high and extravagant are subject to interpretation. Other than these situations, both organization's articles are specific. They do not require interpretation. This is an important consideration because it gives insight to the purpose of the Codes of Ethics. When articles are specific they set the standard and provide expectations. When articles are vague they serve more as tools of guidance and require members to come to their own conclusions.

The lack of ambiguity in PRSA articles supports the claim that the Code exists to "promote and maintain high standards." However, the specificity potentially undermines people's ability to interpret the articles for themselves. It provides a "ten commandment" approach to ethics rather than a means of guidance. This approach has the potential of reducing important dialogue on the subject of public relations ethics. IABC states their Code serves as a guideline. Due to the specificity of IABC's Code we know they mean rules when they use the word guidelines. Also, because both organizations' Codes are generally specific it is harder, if not impossible, to will the articles as universal laws.

The study also exhibits the similarities and differences between the articles of each organization. This is an important consideration because it shows a lack of agreement between the organizations on a subject as important as public relations ethics. The consistencies are significant because they stress the importance of certain issues. In addition, both differences and consistencies provide content which may be used in future studies.

This study points out the difference in quantity among articles of PRSA and IABC. PRSA uses 17 articles and raises 12 issues. IABC uses seven articles and raises six issues. Excluding the issues of honesty and integrity and privacy, all of the articles raise different issues. The articles of each organization do not contradict one another; however, they fail to cover similar ethical issues in all but two occasions.

A second difference between the two organizations' articles can be observed through the objects to which they claim obligations. Out of the PRSA's 11 objects of obligation and IABC's ten, only four are the same. The two organizations only agree members are obligated to client, employer, others and the articles themselves. In addition, PRSA strongly emphasizes the obligations to client and employer while IABC does not.

Contrary to the differences, several similarities between the two organizations' articles are pointed out. As mentioned in response to the research question, both Codes of Ethics narrowly fail to satisfy the requirements of the ethical theories. In addition, with minor modification of articles, the two Codes of the organizations could satisfy the requirements as set forth by utilitarianism and Kant.

Another similarity is that both organizations' Codes of Ethics state or imply obligations in every article. In addition, both organizations consider members obligated to honesty, integrity and privacy.

A third general similarity comes as a result of neither organization taking into account the situations in which an act may take place. In other words, with the exclusion of one article, neither organization provides exceptions to the rules. Instead, both organizations generally present their articles as though they apply in every situation.

A fourth similarity is that both of the Codes of Ethics are specific. Both organizations leave little or no room for the members to interpret the articles. It is implied, after reading an article and its stated interpretation, that a member knows exactly what one should or should not do under those circumstances.

Finally, this study offers a suggestion when answering question number eight. It suggests the organizations add short clauses to three articles if PRSA or IABC are interested in following the theories of utility or Kant. The study suggests eliminating redundancy in the Codes of Ethics. Redundancy can be eliminated in PRSA articles eight and ten and IABC articles three, four and seven. It also points out the redundancy in requiring people to follow laws which already exist.

A third suggestion of the study recommends PRSA create a means of guidance other than the specific articles, e.g., IABC reference that headquarters are available to answer questions of interpretation. This will inform members that the articles are not the last word on ethics and that situations may be considered when determining whether something is right or wrong.

Collectively, the suggestions are significant because they provide suggestions which may aid the Codes of Ethics in more effectively concurring with Mill's Principle of Utility and/or Kant's Categorical Imperative.

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Appendix A
PRSA Code of Ethics
(see next page)

Appendix B
IABC Code of Ethics
(see next page)

The IABC Code of Ethics has been developed to provide IABC members and other communication professionals with guidelines of professional behavior and standards of ethical practice. The Code will be reviewed and revised as necessary by the Ethics Committee and the Executive Board.

Any IABC member who wishes advice and guidance regarding its interpretation and/or application may write or phone IABC headquarters. Questions will be routed to the Executive Board member responsible for the Code.

Communication and Information Dissemination

1. *Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication.*

The highest standards of professionalism will be upheld in all communication. Communicators should encourage frequent communication and messages that are honest in their content, candid, accurate and appropriate to the needs of the organization and its audiences.

2. *Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used.*

When one is changing employers, information developed at the previous position will not be used without permission from that employer. Acts of plagiarism and copyright infringement are illegal acts; material in the public domain should have its source attributed, if possible. If an organization grants permission to use its information and requests public acknowledgment, it will be made in a place appropriate to the material used. The material will be used only for the purpose for which permission was granted.

Standards of Conduct

3. *Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities.*

All international, national and local laws and regulations must be observed, with particular attention to those pertaining to communication, such as copyright law. Industry and organizational regulations will also be observed.

4. *Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their profes-*

sional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates.

It is the personal responsibility of professional communicators to act honestly, fairly and with integrity at all times in all professional activities. Looking the other way while others act illegally tacitly condones such acts whether or not the communicator has committed them. The communicator should speak with the individual involved, his or her supervisor or appropriate authorities—depending on the context of the situation and one's own ethical judgment.

Confidentiality/Disclosure

5. *Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right-to-privacy of all individuals, employers, clients and customers.*

Communicators must determine the ethical balance between right-to-privacy and need-to-know. Unless the situation involves illegal or grossly unethical acts, confidences should be maintained. If there is a conflict between right-to-privacy and need-to-know, a communicator should first talk with the source and negotiate the need for the information to be communicated.

6. *Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others.*

Confidential information can not be used to give inside advantage to stock transactions, gain favors from outsiders, assist a competing company for whom one is going to work, assist companies in developing a marketing advantage, achieve a publishing advantage or otherwise act to the detriment of an organization. Such information must remain confidential during and after one's employment period.

Professionalism

7. *Communication professionals should uphold IABC's standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards.*

IABC recognizes the need for professional integrity within any organization, including the association. Members should acknowledge that their actions reflect on themselves, their organizations and their profession.

AppendixC*

Basic Ontological Tenets of Idealism

1. The enduring substances of the world are of the natural mind.
2. Indestructible concepts are more real than destructible percepts.
3. The Supernatural world is more real than the natural world.
4. The abstract is closer to reality than the concrete.
5. There is an ideal social order for man; this idea exist nowhere earth, but it haunts the imagination of man.
6. It is impossible for a person to conceive of anything that is outside of his own experience; anything, that is independent of his consciousness.
7. Idealism (absolute) is built around the idea that mind is prior in the cosmic sense; that is, reality is one unified whole and this whole is of the nature Mind or Spirit.
8. The world is friendly to man and ideals have an objective reality in the nature of things.
9. Man is the highest expression of the creative power of God. Man was created in the image of his Maker and he shares some of the same attributes that characterize God himself.
10. There is more to the nature of reality and more to human nature and destiny than has been or ever will be revealed by the scientific method.
11. All reality (Hegel) is the surging and moving contest between opposites: night and day - cold and hot - up and down - life and death . . . the dialectic of nature.
12. Mind is the principle of explanation; we think with our minds using our bodies as aids. Mind is the explainer. Mind as the explainer is real.

* Moore, Bradley G., (1979) Philosophy Applied To Controversial Issues In A Democratic Society, Washington D.C., University Press of America, p. 40.

Mind, the real explainer cannot consistently regard anything else than itself that is more real than itself. For this supposed thing other than itself, supposed to be more real than itself, is itself a conception of mind.

13. The world of Spirit is the real or true world; real being does not come out of non-being nor does it return to it again. Real being is eternal.
14. There is one thing that no man can doubt – he cannot doubt he himself exists.

Appendix D*

Basic Ontological Tenets of Realism

1. Things exist independently of our knowledge process.
2. Reality is none other than the findings of physical sciences . . . the discoveries made through scientific methods, as matters of fact or sense.
3. Man must face reality not always to his liking; we do not make our world, we seem to find it.
4. The world is always presented in particulars as "this - red, that - blue, this - loud, that - soft tone, this rough, that - smooth impression, this - bitter, that - sweet taste.
5. Reality . . . means the sum total of all things, even those that exist in space and time and implies that whatever the regularities that occur, they are parts of the system and not imposed from without.
6. Material things are more real than immaterial things.
7. The realist (stressing the methods of science) refrains from the study of intangible-spiritual and aesthetic values unless they can be reduced to concrete laboratory situations (although there are few brands of realists who attempt to study intangibles).

* Moore, Bradley G., (1979) Philosophy Applied To Controversial Issues In A Democratic Society, Washington D.C., University Press of America, p. 42.

Appendix E

Question Matrix

Question One Through Eight Matrix

ARTICLE	Util.	Kant	Q #1	Q #2	Q #3	Q #4	Q #5	Q #6	Q #7
PRSA 1	Y	Y	Y	S E E N E X T A P P E N D I X	N	N	S	N / A	N / A
PRSA 2	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	V		
PRSA 3	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	S		
PRSA 4	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	V		
PRSA 5	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	S		
PRSA 6	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 7	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 8	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 9	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 10	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 11	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 12	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 13	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 14	N	N	Y		N	N	S		
PRSA 15	Y	Y	Y		N	Y	S		
PRSA 16	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	S		
PRSA 17	N	N	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 1	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 2	N	N	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 3	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 4	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 5	Y	Y	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 6	N	N	Y		N	N	S		
IABC 7	N	N	Y		N	N	S		

Appendix F

Question Two Matrix

Question 2 Matrix

PRSA	BENEFITS	
OBJECT	INDUSTRY	SOCIETY
Client	Y	Y
Employer	Y	N
Public	Y	Y
Others	Y	Y
Truth	Y	Y
Peers	Y	N
Democracy	Y	Y
Freedom	Y	Y
Self	Y	N
PRSA	Y	N
Articles	Y	Y

IABC	BENEFIT	
SUBJECT	INDUSTRY	SOCIETY
Law	Y	Y
Employer	Y	N
Profession	Y	N
Source	Y	Y
Ethics	Y	Y
Others	Y	Y
Client	Y	Y
Customer	Y	Y
IABC	Y	N
Articles	Y	Y

Appendix G

Analysis

Research Hypothesis

Question one is the hypothesis of this study: Do PRSA's and IABC's articles meet the requirements of ethical behavior required within the Principle of Utility and the Categorical Imperative?

Principle of Utility Applied to PRSA

Article #1: YES

Article number one reads: A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest. This statement complies to the Principle of Utility. The words "public" and "interest" encompass pleasure for the greatest number because the words refer to one public and one interest. Therefore, we can infer a singular public interest must be that which the greatest number consider an interest. Specifically, as stated by PRSA, the words public interest refer to respect for and enforcement of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America. This definition of interest includes human interest in happiness. Therefore, article one refers to happiness for the greatest number and does not violate the Principle of Utility.

Article #2: YES

Article number two reads: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process. This statement complies to the Principle of Utility. The virtues of honesty and integrity are conducive to the happiness of a people in a democracy. Because democratic refers to everyone, the article takes into account the greatest number possible. Article two takes into account happiness for the greatest good and is also in accord with the Principle of Utility.

Article #3: YES

Article number three reads: A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past or present clients or employers, and with fellow practitioners, given due respect to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinion of others. Dealing fairly with the public takes into account the greatest number once again. Also, we can reasonably predict fair dealings to prevent pain and better insure happiness. In following the theme of the two previous articles, this article also accounts for happiness for the greatest good.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: A member shall adhere to the highest standard of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideals and words borrowed from others. Similar to article

number 2, this article is conducive to the happiness of a people in a democracy. It does not violate the Principle of Utility.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible. This article is conducive to happiness and accounts for a greatest good when the issue of dissemination is raised. Because many others are involved as a result of dissemination of a lie this article applies to the Principle of Utility the same way as the previous article. It doesn't scream Principle of Utility, however, it does not violate it.

Article #6: YES

Article number six states: A member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government. Based on Mill's contention that dialogue is in the best interest of human happiness, this article can be justified. As long as communication and government provide happiness for the mass society a Code prohibiting corruption serves the happiness for the greatest number possible.

Article #7: YES

Article number seven states: A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made. This serves the Principle of Utility for the same

reasons given in article number five. Many people need truthful and accurate information to aid them in their pursuit of happiness. Knowledge of a source or a client can foster that outcome.

Article #8: YES

Article number eight states: A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest. This is in accord with the Principle of Utility for the same reasons stated above.

Article #9: YES

Article number nine states: A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control. Guaranteeing the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control can make many people unhappy. The client may become very unhappy when he does not get what he was promised. Secondly, the long term happiness of the member's business interest may be jeopardized. If the member fails to achieve that which was promised the reputations of both parties come under stress. By prohibiting this behavior the article fosters happiness for all persons involved.

Article #10: YES

Article number ten states: A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interest without the express consent of those concerned, given

after full disclosure of the facts. This is in the interest of the public's happiness because it helps provide unbiased information. It does not obstruct dissemination of information because the client can go to a separate practitioner to get the message out.

Article #11: YES

Article number 11 states: A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interest to all involved. Like article number ten, this reduces the chance of bias and is in the best interests of many people.

Article #12: YES

Article number 12 states: A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for whom services are performed without their expressed consent, given after full disclosure of the facts. This is in accord with the Principle of Utility for the same reason as number 11. It reduces the chance of bias and is in the best interest of many person's happiness.

Article #13: YES

Article number 13 states: A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients or employers. This is in the interest of everyone's happiness as prescribed by federal law.

Article #14: NO

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner. This "code of silence" may cause people pain. If a practitioner breaks several of these articles, causing many people pain, and knowledge of his nature would reduce pain and bring pleasure then his reputation should be known. The Code of Ethics only require a member to "blow the whistle within the organization," (see article 15) and not to authorities responsible to the public at large. Therefore, article number 14 may reduce the happiness of the many members of the public.

Article #15: YES

Article number 15 states: If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this Code, the member is obligated to present the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society (PRSA, not civil authorities). This is in accordance with the Principle of Utility for the reason given above, it is conducive to reducing potential pain and increasing happiness for the many people that practitioner would affect.

Article #16: YES

Article number 16 states: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this Code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient

reason by the judicial panel. This satisfies the requirement of the Principle of Utility because it reinforces the utility of article number 15.

Article #17: NO

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this code. This is in not in accord with the Principle of Utility because it requires a member to follow article number 14 which also violates the Principle of Utility.

Principle of Utility Applied to IABC

Article #1: YES

Article number one states: Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication. The virtues encouraged in this article ultimately benefit the happiness of the general public. It is more pleasurable than painful for the public to receive honest, candid, and timely communication. Therefore this Code satisfies the Principle of Utility.

Article #2: NO

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used. This does not satisfy

the requirement set forth by the Principle of Utility. It contradicts utility because failure to provide information may cause unnecessary pain and dissemination of the same information might produce pleasure for millions. Any situation in which this article causes unnecessary pain violates the Principle of Utility.

Article #3: YES

Article number 3 states: Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities. Following the law will allow the individual to live free of prison and the public will benefit from the individual's virtue.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates. This meets the requirements of the Principle of Utility because failure to resist illegal or unethical behavior is not for the greatest good of the public at large. The public may suffer as a result of the condoning. Not following this article would possibly result in non-pleasant effects.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all individuals, employers, and clients and customers. This article meets the requirement of utility for the same

reason as number three. Following the law will allow the individual to live free of prison and the public will benefit from the individual's virtue.

Article #6: NO

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others. This article fails the requirement of utility for the same reason given in response to article number two. Mass pleasure may result from the confidential information and failure to disclose it may cause pain.

Article #7: NO

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards. This article is also in violation of the Principle of Utility. It requires the communication professional to follow articles two and six which are also in violation of the principle.

Categorical Imperative Applied to PRSA

Article #1: YES

Article number one reads: A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest. This can be universalized as a law.

Article #2: YES

Article number two reads: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process. As long as these two interests are in accord and do not conflict this can be universalized. If the client's interest and the democratic process conflict it cannot be universalized.

Article #3: YES

Article number three reads: A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past or present clients or employers, and with fellow practitioners, given due respect to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinion of others. Dealing fairly with the public and clients is a behavior that few would object to. This can be universalized.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: A member shall adhere to the highest standard of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideals and words borrowed from others. This can be universalized.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous

communications for which he or she is responsible. This can be universalized.

Article #6: YES

Article number six states: A member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government. This can be universalized.

Article #7: YES

Article number seven states: A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made. This can be universalized.

Article #8: YES

Article number eight states: A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest. This can be universalized.

Article #9: YES

Article number nine states: A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control. This can be universalized.

Article #10: YES

Article number ten states: A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interest without the express consent of those concerned, given after full disclosure of the facts. This can be universalized.

Article #11: YES

Article number 11 states: A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interest to all involved. This can be universalized.

Article #12: YES

Article number 12 states: A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for whom services are performed without their expressed consent, given after full disclosure of the facts. This can be universalized.

Article #13: YES

Article number 13 states: A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients or employers. This is already a law in the United States. This can be universalized.

Article #14: NO

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner. There are reasons that would prevent a reasonable person from willing this a universal law. As stated, in the utilitarian application of this article the article could bring adversity and pain. Therefore a reasonable person cannot will this article a universal law.

Article #15: YES

Code number 15 states: If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this Code, the member is obligated to present the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society. This is already a law and can be universalized.

Article #16: YES

Article number 16 states: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this Code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient reason by the judicial panel. This can be universalized.

Article #17: NO

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this code. This cannot be willed a universal law

because it would require that everyone adopt article number fourteen which violates the Categorical Imperative.

Categorical Imperative Applied to IABC

Article #1: YES

Article number one states: Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication. This can be universalized.

Article #2: NO

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used. This cannot be willed a universal law if the information is necessary and detrimental to society if not provided. An example would be a situation in which a practitioner informs the public about the confidential business practices of his former company that are detrimental to society. An extreme example would be a company that leaks lethal chemicals into a city's water supply. Existing laws already require this person to disclose the information. Therefore, as presently stated, this article cannot be willed and is not a universal law.

Article #3: YES

Article number three states: Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities. Following the law will allow the individual to live free of prison and the public will benefit from the individuals virtue.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates. This is already a law and can be universalized.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all individuals, employers, clients and customers. Violating a persons privacy in most circumstances is against the law. Following the law will allow the individual to live free of prison and the public will benefit from the individuals virtue.

Article #6: NO

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others. The same reason given for article number two applies to this article as well. Willing this article a universal law

could result in a situation which would adversely affect society. In addition, it may conflict with articles four and five when the law calls for disclosure.

Article #7: NO

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards. This article cannot be willed a universal law because it would require communication professionals to adopt articles two and six which may violate the Categorical Imperative.

Question One

Do the PRSA's and IABC's articles state or imply the presence of obligation, and if so, to what or whom?

PRSA Articles

Article #1: YES

Article number one reads: A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest. This article implies practitioners have an obligation to the public.

Article #2: YES

Article number two reads: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process. This article states that practitioners have an obligation to clients, employers, and the democratic process.

Article #3: YES

Article number three reads: A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past or present clients or employers, and with fellow practitioners, given due respect to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinion of others. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the public, clients, employers, fellow practitioners, free inquiry, and others.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: A member shall adhere to the highest standard of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideals and words borrowed from others. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the truth.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible. This article also suggests practitioners have an obligation to the truth.

Article #6: YES

Article number six states: A member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the truth and government.

Article #7: YES

Article number seven states: A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the public.

Article #8: YES

Article number eight states: A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to others.

Article #9: YES

Article number nine states: A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the client and employer.

Article #10: YES

Article number ten states: A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without the express consent of those concerned, given after full disclosure of the facts. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the client and public.

Article #11: YES

Article number 11 states: A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interest to all involved. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to self, employer, client, and others.

Article #12: YES

Article number 12 states: A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for whom services are performed without their expressed consent, given after full disclosure of the facts. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to clients and employers.

Article #13: YES

Article number 13 states: A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients or employers. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to clients and employers.

Article #14: YES

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to other practitioners.

Article #15: YES

Article number 15 states: If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this code, the member is obligated to present the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the public.

Article #16: YES

Article number 16 states: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient reason by the judicial panel. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to PRSA.

Article #17: YES

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this code. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to this Codes of Ethics.

IABC Articles

Article #1: YES

Article number one states: Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to their profession.

Article #2: YES

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to an employer and a source.

Article #3: YES

Article number three states: Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the spirit of the letter of the law.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their

organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the law and ethics.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all individuals, employers, and clients and customers. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the law, employers, others, clients and customers.

Article #6: YES

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to the law as evidenced by IABC's reference to insider trading.

Article #7: YES

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards. This article suggests practitioners have an obligation to IABC and its codes.

Question Three

Do the PRSA's and IABC's articles take into account the situation in which an act takes place?

PRSA Articles

Article #1: NO

Article number one reads: A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest.

Article #2: NO

Article number two reads: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process.

Article #3: NO

Article number three reads: A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past or present clients or employers, and with fellow practitioners, given due respect to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinion of others.

Article #4: NO

Article number four states: A member shall adhere to the highest standard of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideas and words borrowed from others.

Article #5: NO

Article number five states: A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible.

Article #6: NO

Article number six states: A member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government.

Article #7: NO

Article number seven states: A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made.

Article #8: NO

Article number eight states: A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest.

Article #9: NO

Article number nine states: A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control.

Article #10: NO

Article number ten states: A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without the express consent of those concerned, given after full disclosure of the facts.

Article #11: NO

Article number 11 states: A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interest to all involved.

Article #12: NO

Article number 12 states: A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for whom services are performed without their expressed consent, given after full disclosure of the facts.

Article #13: NO

Article number 13 states: A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients or employers.

Article #14: NO

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner.

Article #15: NO

Article number 15 states: If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this code, the member is obligated to present the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society.

Article #16: YES

Article number 16 states: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient reason by the judicial panel.

Article #17: NO

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this code.

IABC Articles

Article #1: NO

Article number one states: Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication.

Article #2: NO

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used.

Article #3: NO

Article number 3 states: Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities.

Article#4: NO

Article number four states: Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates.

Article #5: NO

Article number five states: Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all individuals, employers, and clients and customers.

Article #6: NO

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others.

Article #7: NO

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards.

Question Four

Do PRSA's and IABC's articles rely on intuition to determine ethical behavior? In other words, do the articles rely on a priori non-cognitive reasons such as feelings or one's conscience?

PRSA Articles

Article #1: NO

Article number one states: A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest.

Article #2: YES

Article number two states: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process. The democratic process implies equality exists. One comes to this conclusion intuitively.

Article #3: YES

Article number three states: A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past or present clients or employers, and with fellow practitioners, given due respect to the idea of free inquiry and to the opinion of others. Here, fairness implies justice.

Article #4: YES

Article number four states: A member shall adhere to the highest standard of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideals and words borrowed from others. Justice is intuitive.

Article #5: YES

Article number five states: A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible. Justice is intuitive.

Article #6: NO

Article number six states: A member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government.

Article #7: NO

Article number seven states: A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made.

Article #8: NO

Article number eight states: A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest.

Article #9: NO

Article number nine states: A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control.

Article #10: NO

Article number ten states: A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without the express consent of those concerned, given after full disclosure of the facts.

Article #11: NO

Article number 11 states: A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interest to all involved.

Article #12: NO

Article number 12 states: A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for whom services are performed without their expressed consent, given after full disclosure of the facts.

Article #13: NO

Article number 13 states: A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients or employers. This is based on a legal right.

Article #14: NO

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner.

Article #15: YES

Article number 15 states: If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this code, the member is obligated to present the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society. Justice is intuitive.

Article #16: NO

Article number 16 states: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient reason by the judicial panel.

Article #17: NO

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this code.

IABC Articles

Article #1: NO

Article number one states: Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication.

Article #2: NO

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further, communicators should attempt to identify the source of information to be used.

Article #3: NO

Article number three states: Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities. Spirit of the law means the intent of the law and is not intuitive.

Article#4: NO

Article number four states: Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates.

Article #5: NO

Article number five states: Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all individuals, employers, and clients and customers. The right to privacy refers to a legal law.

Article #6: NO

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others.

Article #7: NO

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards.

Question Five

Are the PRSA's and IABC's articles vague or specific?

PRSA Articles

Article #1: SPECIFIC

Article number one reads: A member shall conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest. Public interest pertains to one thing only. Although it may be hard to determine what the public interest is once determined it is not subject to interpretation.

Article #2: VAGUE

Article number two reads: A member shall exemplify high standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client or employer and to the democratic process. "High" standards are subject to interpretation.

Article #3: SPECIFIC

Article number three reads: A member shall deal fairly with the public, with past or present clients or employers, and with fellow practitioners, given due respect to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinion of others. Dealing fairly with the public is based on the mores of society and not interpreted, therefore article three is specific.

Article #4: VAGUE

Article number four states: A member shall adhere to the highest standard of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair comparisons and giving credit for ideals and words borrowed from others. There is only one highest standard and, as stated above, fairness is based on the mores of society. However, the word extravagant is subject to interpretation.

Article #5: SPECIFIC

Article number five states: A member shall not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible. This article is straight forward and does not require interpretation.

Article #6: SPECIFIC

Article number six states: A member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #7: SPECIFIC

Article number seven states: A member shall be prepared to identify publicly the name of the client or employer on whose behalf any public communication is made. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #8: SPECIFIC

Article number eight states: A member shall not use any individual or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another undisclosed interest. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #9: SPECIFIC

Article number nine states: A member shall not guarantee the achievement of specified results beyond the members direct control. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #10: SPECIFIC

Article number ten states: A member shall not represent conflicting or competing interest without the express consent of those concerned, given after full disclosure of the facts. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #11: SPECIFIC

Article number 11 states: A member shall not place himself or herself in a position where the member's personal interest is or may conflict with an

obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full disclosure of such interest to all involved. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #12: SPECIFIC

Article number 12 states: A member shall not accept fees, commissions, gifts or any other consideration from anyone except clients or employers for whom services are performed without their expressed consent, given after full disclosure of the facts. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #13: SPECIFIC

Article number 13 states: A member shall scrupulously safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of present, former, and prospective clients or employers. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #14: SPECIFIC

Article number 14 states: A member shall not intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of any other practitioner. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #15: SPECIFIC

Article number 15 states: If a member has evidence that another member has been guilty of unethical, illegal, or unfair practices, including those in violation of this code, the member is obligated to present the information promptly to the proper authorities of the Society. Fairness is based on the mores of society. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #16: SPECIFIC

Article number 16 states: A member called as a witness in a proceeding for enforcement of this code is obligated to appear, unless excused for sufficient reason by the judicial panel. This article does not require interpretation.

Article #17: SPECIFIC

Article number 17 states: A member shall, as soon as possible, sever relations with any organization or individual if such a relationship requires conduct contrary to the articles of this code. This article does not require interpretation.

IABC Articles

Article #1: SPECIFIC

Article number one states: Communication professionals will uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by encouraging the practice of honest, candid and timely communication. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.

Article #2: SPECIFIC

Article number two states: Professional communicators will not use any information that has been generated or appropriately acquired by a business for another business without permission. Further communicators should

attempt to identify the source of information to be used. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.

Article #3: SPECIFIC

Article number three states: Communication professionals will abide by the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations governing their professional activities. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.

Article #4: SPECIFIC

Article number four states: Communication professionals will not condone any illegal or unethical act related to their professional activity, their organization and its business or the public environment in which it operates. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.

Article #5: SPECIFIC

Article number five states: Communication professionals will respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all individuals, employers, and clients and customers. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.

Article #6: SPECIFIC

Article number six states: Communication professionals will not use any confidential information gained as a result of professional activity for personal benefit or for that of others. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.

Article #7: SPECIFIC

Article number seven states: Communication professionals should uphold IABC standards for ethical conduct in all professional activity, and should use the IABC and its designation of accreditation (ABC) only for purposes that are authorized and fairly represent the organization and its professional standards. This article does not require interpretation and is specific.