

Ethics for Surveyors: What are the problems?

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Literature

- Surveyors' priorities:
 - Fairness;
 - Company/organisation interest;
 - Public interest;
 - Self interest.
- Ethical standards.
- Client pressure.

Ethical standards

- The changes:
 - Globalisation of property markets;
 - Employee cultural diversity;
 - Attitudes toward personal and corporate responsibility; and
 - Intensifying competition which results in:
 - Diverse ethical principles; and
 - The pressure to reduce ethical standards.
- The students identified the following areas:
 - Commercialism;
 - Fee competition;
 - Increasing workloads;
 - Increasing cost conscious attitudes;
 - Changing working environment;
 - Changing beliefs – need to survive in competitive environment.

On-line debate:

- July – August 2006;
- 172 Students;
- 1,600 postings;
- Non-cognate practitioners;
- Average age 29 (range 21 – 63);
- 65% male – 35% female;
- 94% UK-based;
- Based on professional experience.



Range of topics included:

- Private vs public sector regulation;
- Corporate culture;
- Corporate hospitality;
- Client pressure;
- Interpretation of "ethics";
- Wider social context;
- Influence of fees;
- Bids;
- Cultural perspective;
- Estate agency;
- Regulation and penalties;
- Internal organisational practices.

Demonstrates:

- Concerns of new professionals;
- Divergence of ethical opinions;
- Concern that subjective interpretations result in different behaviour.

RICS nine core values:

- Transparent system of conduct & regulation;
- But it:
 - Relies on individual judgement;
 - Is aspirational in nature designed;
 - For external stakeholders;
 - To allow for cultural interpretation.
- Therefore the students questioned whether,
 - It is sufficient?
 - It can be effective?

Norms and 'core values'

- Ethical values derived from:
 - Personal culture;
 - National culture;
 - Professional culture.
- Norm: *a common orientation toward that which one would like to do:*
- Core Value: inherently aspirational rather than actual practice. (Trompenaars, 2003; 196)

Professional Culture

- Important for establishing behaviour;
- In excess of any legal standards;
- Reflecting the entire profession;
- Affected by media coverage;
- Culture is: *collective programming of the mind which distinguished one group from another* (Hofstede);
- A unifying professional culture?
- Identify the real collective professional pattern.

Professional Culture

- Articulate professional culture;
- Raise standards;
- Involve:
 - Individuals;
 - Professional associations; and
 - Employer organisations.
- Professionalism is part of good governance.

- Process of exercising control;
- Risk control:
 - Identify and calculate risk;
 - Eliminate risk by avoidance, substitution;
 - Combat risk by re-engineering;
 - Minimise risk by controls;
 - Manage risk by focusing on 'material' risks.

- Works on Corporate Governance identify;
 - Fairness;
 - Transparency;
 - Accountability;
 - Responsibility.
- The students identified;
 - Fairness;
 - Positive influence on company;
 - Public interest;
 - Self interest.
- Good governance adds value

- Ethic principles have a commercial value;
 - Ethics must underpin professional culture;
- Evidence indicates some unethical practices.
- Ethical behaviour must be:
 - Taught;
 - Debated by the profession and employing organisations;
 - Seen to be practiced as well as practiced; and
 - Supported within the profession.