



Evaluating the ethics toolbox

Institute combines CPM and ARM codes of ethics, holding all members to same ethical standards

by Eileen Lynch

Have you checked your ethics lately? Do they reflect you in the best possible light to your clients, your employer, your employees? Should they be evaluated? Should they be re-tooled?

Professional real estate management ethics—specifically the IREM codes of ethics—provide a foundation for members' business practices.

In 2005, a workgroup from IREM's ethics and discipline committee performed an in-depth evaluation of the CPM and ARM codes. The ten-member group, chaired by Cher Zucker-Maltese, CPM, tried to determine if the codes needed some fine tuning or if they were already up-to-date, all-encompassing, viable and if they sent the right message—IREM members are held to the highest possible ethical standards—to the marketplace.

The group used the following questions as a framework for its research and evaluation:

- Do the codes protect the public?
- Do the codes promote competition?
- Do the codes reflect current business practices?
- Do the codes require revision?

The group reviewed ethics codes from the National Association of REALTORS® and its affiliates, other associations like the National Association of Building Owners and Managers and the International

Facility Management Association and financial institutions like Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley.

Ethics officers from Prudential, other corporations and Rutgers University were interviewed. The group also drew upon its experiences as members of the three IREM ethics boards—the inquiry, hearing and appeal boards.

The findings showed existing CPM and ARM codes were as good as or better than other codes. More importantly, the ethical concepts in the codes are relevant to today's business conditions. The evaluation also brought to light the CPM and ARM codes are similar in content: In fact, the group concluded the two codes should be combined into a single

same organization adhere to different codes.

“Clients and employers expect IREM members to act in an ethical manner regardless of their credential,” Zucker-Maltese said. “One code of ethics makes a powerful statement in the marketplace. One code will make the concepts more clear for members to understand and for the ethics boards to consistently and fairly enforce.”

The Governing Council approved the ethics and discipline committee's recommendation to move forward with the development of a single code at its November 2005 meeting.

Adopting a new ethics code is an important step, needing input from you, the IREM member. Please par-

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icipate in the process by reviewing the draft of the proposed IREM Code of Professional Ethics.

Why combine codes already proven to be effective?

“As an organization committed to high ethical standards, it only makes sense to combine the CPM and ARM codes and hold our members to the same ethical standards,” said Ann Reisch, CPM.

Furthermore, potential clients might question why members of the

participate in the process by reviewing the draft of the proposed IREM Code of Professional Ethics and providing your comments by April 1, 2006. You can review the proposed code at www.irem.org/JoinIREM/Ethics. Please send your comments to Eileen Lynch at IREM headquarters. □

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