

Public Matters' public affairs management and lobby consultants support and advise organisations active in the public, political, and administrative domain. PM advisors consider it their professional responsibility to adhere to several practical, moral, and ethical core values in the performance of their work in this domain, in addition to applicable legislation and regulations. These core values are laid down in the "Public Matters Code of Conduct". Every advisor is obliged to work in accordance with the letter and spirit of this code. The reputation of clients, stakeholders, the agency, and the profession are paramount. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with this code can lead to consequences under employment law. Based on Public Matters' mission, consultants' core activities consist of i.) advising companies, authorities, NGOs and trade associations on public affairs, stakeholder management and lobbying strategy/activities, ii.) influencing perceptions and decision-making, and iii.) building and maintaining networks with stakeholders. Since 2006, this code of conduct has been internally applied, safeguarded, reviewed and, if necessary, updated on an annual basis.

1. Honest and Reliable

- Information provided to Public Matters consultants will be treated confidentially. Information provided by a client will only be disclosed with his or her consent. This also applies to information provided by stakeholders.
- During contacts with stakeholders, no financial compensations, goods, or services are offered or accepted for (counter)services.
- Public Matters ensures a safe, modern, and robust state of internal digital environment to guarantee the confidentiality of information flows.
- Public Matters consultants are aware of existing legislation and regulations and developments within the professional field. Public Matters itself contributes to these developments through courses and educational contributions in higher education.

2. Transparent and Independent

- Any (semblance of) conflict of interest is avoided. Consultants do not take on assignments that conflict with the interests of existing clients. In case of reasonable doubt, this will be discussed with clients.
- Public Matters consultants provide information based on thorough research, knowledge and, where possible, verification. This information originates from reasonably verifiable and accessible sources of information, own sources and/or stakeholders.
- During contacts with stakeholders, the consultant is open about the purpose of the contact and on whose behalf this takes place. Questions will not be asked covertly, conversations will take place openly and by appointment.
- Consultants have a mediating role, and not a representative role in stakeholder contacts on behalf of clients.

3. Diligent and Quick

- Relevant information is made transparently available to clients and stakeholders. Public Matters consultants work based on objective and complete information, creating a realistic picture of the situation - and the goals that can be achieved. This guarantees the quality of advice.
- Consultants always justify actual hours spent to their clients so the latter can clearly oversee this. This accountability fits within the agreements made beforehand with a client.
- Advice is not only produced diligently, but also quickly. To be able to respond to developments in the public, political, and administrative arena, speed is essential. Speed and diligence must be in balance with each other and in accordance with Public Matters' quality standard. Complaints relating to this quality standard are handled carefully.

4. Socially responsible

- Public Matters is aware of the role it plays in the public and social domain. Therefore, Public Matters strives for a team of consultants that is as inclusive and representative as possible.
- Public Matters works according to a profit motive for clients with diverse backgrounds: authorities, business, trade associations, and NGOs in the Netherlands, 'Brussels' and abroad. Public Matters works based on differentiated advisory rates.
- Based on a *zero-rated* service, Public Matters advises a selection of organisations ('pro bono') that pursue a particular social interest. These are selected annually.

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