



# Guidelines for Professional Conduct

October 2020

The Strategic Management Society (SMS) is committed to understanding and improving strategic management practices in organizations around the world. SMS members contribute to this objective by researching and disseminating scientific and professional knowledge regarding strategic management through teaching and publishing and by engaging in consulting and managerial practice. As noted on our Web site and materials, we are a ‘professional society for the advancement of strategic management.’ These guidelines focus on two areas: basic values espoused and professional values which foster excellence in practice, research, and teaching. The basic and professional values constitute a platform upon which strategic management scholars and practitioners can build their academic and professional work. The intent behind this statement is to promote reflection and discussion regarding professionally responsible conduct. It is the individual responsibility of each member to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct in research, teaching, practice, and service. Following well-articulated values will improve the welfare of the individuals within our Society, as well as enhance the reputation of our profession.

## Basic Values

**(1) HONESTY AND INTEGRITY:** SMS members conduct their professional affairs in ways that inspire trust and confidence. As such, they aspire to truth, honesty, accuracy, and the avoidance of fraudulent activity, and they act in ways that respect others’ welfare and dignity.

**(2) OPENNESS:** SMS is a multidisciplinary society and, therefore, respect for different perspectives is encouraged. Members strive to be open in their interactions with others so they can most effectively learn from and build on knowledge from other areas. They seek to treat others with respect and dignity and as equal members of the Society through mutual trust and respect.

**(3) RESPECT FOR PEOPLE’S RIGHTS, DIGNITY, AND DIVERSITY:** SMS members affirm: (a) we do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, health condition, or marital, domestic, or parental status; (b) everybody has the right to hold and express their opinions and beliefs without prejudice and persecution; (c) everybody is entitled to express opinions that are different from those of the majority; and (d) everybody has equal rights and responsibilities as members of the Society.

**(4) PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC ACCOUNTABILITY:** SMS members form a society of scholars and practitioners who believe in and promote ethical scientific and professional behaviors. We seek to help all be accountable for their actions by promoting such sound professional standards of conduct.

## Values Associated with Professional Conduct and Activities

SMS members contribute to the field by supporting the mission and objectives of the Strategic Management Society and participating in the collective efforts of the Society. SMS members benefit from the Society's institutional infrastructure that disseminates members' research and knowledge and helps members network with each other. The values listed in the following sections foster the development of a society interested in supporting the profession.

**(5) MANAGERIAL PRACTICE AND CONSULTING:** Understanding and improving strategic management practices in organizations is a mission that benefits organizations and society at large. Therefore, SMS members regularly bring their research and knowledge to bear in the decision-making process of private organizations and public institutions, and contribute to debates about public policy wherever possible. It is a privilege of our profession to contribute knowledge that affects business and public policy, and we should welcome such opportunities to contribute to organizations and society. This privilege also involves certain responsibilities of the users of our knowledge, as well as society at large. The following principles govern the activities of SMS members as they offer advice to organizations or institutions:

- SMS members do not speak for or represent the Society, unless explicitly authorized to do so. In particular, SMS members should avoid entering into positions of advocacy where they may appear to act on behalf of the Society (e.g., when they speak from their position as officers of the Society).
- SMS members have a responsibility to accurately portray their experience and qualifications. SMS members should avoid providing private advice or making public statements on areas beyond their professional competence. Their credentials and capabilities should be represented accurately.
- SMS members intend to contribute to the success of organizations for the benefit of their diverse stakeholders and society. We seek to foster public policy initiatives that enhance the ability of organizations to contribute to society.
- Conflicts of interest should be disclosed if they in any way compromise one's ability to serve an organization. SMS members should comply with all applicable laws—domestic and international— and adhere to their organizations' policies, objectives, and ethical guidelines.
- SMS members benefit from the public trust in our profession and uphold that trust by providing a balanced interpretation of the knowledge in the field when providing prescriptive opinions or making public statements. They avoid false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent statements, either because of what they state, convey, or suggest, or because of what they omit.
- In situations where prescriptive advice or public opinion is given, SMS members should recognize and explain the broad impact of their recommended practices. Strategic management practices have important effects on the creation of value, the distribution of value among organizational stakeholders, and society at large. Providing an inclusive and multidimensional view of the impact of policies should facilitate the development of more effective organizations.

**(6) VOLUNTEERISM:** The SMS is an association of volunteers that depends on involvement and leadership from its members. SMS members should contribute their time and competences to support the activities of the Society, including serving as officers, presenters, editors, and reviewers.

**(7) RESPONSIBILITY AND CITIZENSHIP:** Officers and members of the Society and the Interest Groups seek to discharge their duties responsibly and according to the bylaws of the Society, and without conflicts of interests. They foster the quality and diversity of activities in the field, and do not use their roles to further their own research or promote personal agendas.

- SMS officers and members should not hold positions of responsibility in which their personal or professional interests and relationships could impair their objectivity or effectiveness. As such, it is appropriate to disclose relevant information about interests and relationships that may have the appearance of, or potential for, a conflict of interest.

**(8) KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND DISSEMINATION:** The SMS encourages meaningful exchange and dissemination of knowledge among its members and society at large. To make that exchange possible, SMS members should give priority to presenting and disseminating their work in SMS-sponsored conferences and publications.

- Differences of opinion or interpretation are inevitable and even healthy for the field. Criticism should be given and received in a climate of basic respect for the opinions of others.
- The purposes and sources of support for SMS members' projects should be clear to those who provide resources for research, colleagues, the organizations studied or providing information, and other parties affected by the research. SMS members should disseminate their findings widely and in a timely manner, while respecting commitments regarding confidential information and sources. Resources created in the course of doing research (such as databases and computer programs) should be made publicly available whenever possible.
- The field of strategic management includes many theoretical perspectives and methods, each of which provides guidance for the conduct of research. Researchers work within the tension of respecting and challenging prevailing theories and methods. Researchers should seek to advance scholarship through mutual engagement with those working within other theoretical and methodological perspectives.

**(9) INTEGRITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS:** Much research and knowledge creation in strategic management has prescriptive implications for managers or regulators. It is the authors' responsibility to disseminate their research and knowledge (through presentations, publications, teaching, or consulting) in ways that reduce the risk of misinterpretations.

- This requires integrity in the research process and transparency in the presentation of assumptions, methods, results, and boundary conditions.
- As researchers, we bear collective responsibility for the integrity and reputation of scholarship in our field. As such, researchers should not deceive or knowingly misrepresent (i.e., fabricate evidence, present misleading results, plagiarize), or attempt to prevent reporting of misconduct, or obstruct the research of others.
- Funding should be applied efficiently to advance research and in keeping with commitments to those who provide resources for research.
- Researchers should seek to ensure that their findings are properly understood and applied.

**(10) EDITORIAL AND REVIEW PROCESS:** The SMS facilitates the development, evaluation, and dissemination of research through the review process for conference and journal publications. The review and editorial process is critical to the health of the field, and SMS members should contribute to this process.

- SMS reviewers and editors should operate in a way that is respectful and fair to authors.
- SMS members who submit manuscripts to conferences and journals understand that they, thereby, also commit to voluntarily give of their time to provide reviews for these conferences and journals.
- SMS reviewers and editors should disclose and avoid conflicts of interests. SMS reviewers should decline requests to review others' work if they are aware of conflicts of interest. Editors should avoid conflicts of interests as well, and find alternative arrangements for the evaluation of research when such conflicts occur. For example, editors should not put themselves in a situation where they have to critically evaluate their own work, or accept their own work for presentation or publication, unless this is an explicit requirement of their role, such as an introductory article for a special issue.
- SMS reviewers and editors should use the doubleblind anonymity of the review process and insist that staff members conform to that practice.
- SMS reviewers and editors should strive for timely evaluations of all manuscripts and avoid delaying work under review unnecessarily.
- SMS members should decline requests for reviews when they believe that the review process may be biased and report problems when the integrity of the process seems to be in question.

**(11) TEACHING:** SMS members involved in teaching or executive education should strive to develop informative and challenging classes for their students. Likewise, helping prepare future teachers in the profession is a goal of the SMS.

- Teachers should conduct their programs and courses in ways that avoid discrimination on the basis of criteria irrelevant to academic performance. They should be fair, prompt, and reliable in evaluating students' performance.
- Teachers should strive to improve their methods and materials. Course content should accurately reflect the state of research and practice in the field and be responsive to students' needs and interests. Teaching, advising, and mentoring should prepare students to meet the managerial demands of their careers. Teachers should contribute to the improvement of teaching in the field by sharing their experience with colleagues, as well as writing cases and publishing textbooks or online instructional materials.
- Preparing researchers and teachers is essential to advancing knowledge. Teachers should strive to develop courses, curricula, and research opportunities that prepare doctoral students to contribute effectively to the field and succeed as faculty members. Mentors should give appropriate credit and authorship when coauthoring with students. They should seek to recognize and adequately compensate doctoral students for their participation in all professional activities.
- Senior faculty should be available to their less experienced colleagues by providing mentoring, which entails counselling them on academic activities and providing opportunities for professional growth.