

# **EDITORIAL CODE OF ETHICS**

## **February 2002**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Business-to-business editors have earned the highest level of trust among their readers. Many surveys have shown that executives and managers believe business-to-business publications provide the most accurate and credible information available.

That trust is both a high compliment and a challenge for those who plan, write and edit publications for a living. It sets a very high standard that they must work hard to maintain.

American Business Media has always held its editors to such high standards. Indeed, the annual Jesse H. Neal Awards, named for the Association's first president, were established in the mid-1950s to encourage editorial excellence and have become the highest honors granted for business-to-business journalism. And the Association's Code of Publishing Practice, which has been in place for more than 33 years, requires that all American Business Media member companies maintain strict standards of journalistic ethics.

The Editorial Committee of American Business Media works with its members to maintain editorial quality at all member publications. As part of that mission, the Editorial Committee formulated this Editorial Code of Ethics and Guide to Preferred Practices, which has been approved by the American Business Media Executive Committee. The document lays out guidelines that apply to editors working for print publications. A companion American Business Media document, Editorial Code of Ethics and Guide to Preferred Practices on the Web, specifies guidelines for online and other electronic publishing.

American Business Media intends this document to provide a universal set of guidelines formalizing the high standards to which we all adhere.

### **AMERICAN BUSINESS MEDIA GUIDE TO PREFERRED PRACTICES**

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

Editors should not invest in companies and/or industries they personally cover (this does not preclude investments in mutual funds, pensions, or 401(k) plans that hold shares in a manner not directly controlled by the editor). Their spouses and other immediate family members should also avoid personal investments that might reflect unfavorably upon the editor. Investing on the basis of "insider information" is, of course, a violation of securities laws.

If a conflict arises in an investment held by an editor before his/her employment, or because of a merger or acquisition, he or she should immediately bring the conflict to the attention of his/her supervisor.

### **Gifts**

Editors should not accept any gifts or favors, except those of nominal value, from companies or associations they cover, their public relations representatives or any other person or organization related to companies they cover. The editor's supervisor should determine what is of "nominal value."

Editors may accept occasional meals and refreshments in the course of business dealings.

### **Outside Activities**

Editors should not accept freelance work from companies, associations or any other entity they cover.

Because editors are expected to speak as authorities within their markets, they may accept invitations to appear on television, radio and other electronic media and may accept payment upon approval of magazine management.

Editors should not accept payment of any kind for making speeches, judging contests or making appearances at functions held by companies or associations they cover.

Reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in connection with such speeches may be accepted.

Editors may also accept "speaker gifts" of nominal value for participating in such events.

Editors may accept fees for speeches given on their own time if there is no conflict with their editorial duties.

### **Travel**

Editors should not accept payment of travel and hotel expenses incurred in the course of performing editorial duties from any source other than their employers.

In cases of group press affairs, presentations and other events involving representatives from several publications, editors may accept transportation and accommodations arranged by the information source. However, it is highly recommended that publications reimburse information sources for all of these expenses.

## **Relationship with Advertisers**

Selection of editorial topics, treatment of issues, interpretation and other editorial decisions should not be determined by advertisers, advertising agencies or the advertising departments of publications.

Editors should not permit advertisers to review articles prior to publication.

Advertisers and potential advertisers should never receive favorable editorial treatment because of their economic value to the publication. Similarly, non-advertisers should not receive unfavorable editorial treatment or be excluded from articles because they do not advertise. This provision applies not only to stories and articles but to all products of the editorial group, including lists, rankings, product- or company-of-the-year awards and other such special features and events.

Editors should have the right to review, prior to publication, all sponsored content and other advertiser-supported materials of an editorial nature.

## ***AMERICAN BUSINESS MEDIA EDITORIAL CODE OF ETHICS***

*Editors, reporters and writers employed by American Business Media publications adhere to the highest standards of journalistic practice. In doing so, they pledge to:*

- *Maintain honesty, integrity, accuracy, thoroughness and fairness in the reporting and editing of articles, headlines and graphics.*
- *Avoid all conflicts of interest as well as any appearances of such conflicts.*
- *Make a clear distinction between editorial and advertising. Editors have an obligation to readers to make clear what content has been paid for, what is sponsored and what is independent editorial material. All paid content that may be confused with independent editorial material must be labeled as advertiser-sponsored.*
- *Maintain an appropriate professional distance from the direct preparation of special advertising sections or other advertisements.*
- *Show the distinction between news stories and editorials, columns and other opinion pieces.*
- *Accept as their primary responsibility the selection of editorial content based on readers' needs and interests.*

**Chair:**

*Government Computer News*

Kevin McKean-

**Committee:**

David Barbour-

Joseph Cappel - Crain Communications, Inc.

*Medical Economics*  
*Advertising Age*

Bill Gloede -

William Glasgall-

Marie Griffin – Consultant

*Better Roads Magazine*  
*Aviation Now!*  
*Pork*  
*Supermarket News*

Pat Panchak- Penton Media, Inc.

Rama Ramaswami-

Boyce Thompson- Hanley-Wood, Inc.

*Heavy Duty Trucking*

675 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-5704

info@abmmail.com