



Ethical conduct,  
professionalism and  
general expectations of  
professional quantity  
surveyors.

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A **professional** is a member of a [profession](#) or any person who earns a living from a specified professional activity. The term also describes the standards of education and training that prepare members of the profession with the particular knowledge and skills necessary to perform their specific role within that profession. In addition, most professionals are subject to strict codes of conduct, enshrining rigorous [ethical](#) and [moral obligations](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Professional standards of practice and ethics for a particular field are typically agreed upon and maintained through widely recognized [professional associations](#).

# What are the six traits of professionalism?

- Professional knowledge.
- Proper demeanor.
- Competency and Reliability.
- Honesty and Integrity.
- Positive Attitude.
- Maintaining Poise

# The Key Features of a Profession

Essential elements. This is not easy because so many groups have been eager to appropriate the title of profession in order to enjoy the social rewards that go with it.

**IMPORTANT AND EXCLUSIVE EXPERTISE.** For an occupational group to be a profession, it must provide its clients with something the larger community judges extremely valuable, either because of its intrinsic value or because it is a necessary precondition of any person's achievement of valued goals, or both.

**INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RECOGNITION.**

internal relationships of which the most important is a mutual recognition of expertise on the part of its members.

The expertise of a profession is also recognized by the members of the larger community.

**AUTONOMY IN MATTERS OF EXPERT PRACTICE.**

Those served by a profession routinely grant its members extensive autonomy in the performance of the profession's practice.

**THE OBLIGATIONS OF PROFESSIONS AND PROFESSIONALS.**

The final and, for present purposes, the most important feature of the institution of profession is that membership in a profession implies the acceptance by its members of a set of ethical standards of professional practice.

# PROFESSIONAL NORMS

Professional norms attempt to answer such questions as "What professional norms apply to this situation?" and "What is a member of this profession obligated to do in this situation?"

Briefly stated, the nine categories of questions about professional obligation are:

1. Who is (are) this profession's chief client(s)?
2. What are the central values of this profession?
3. What is the ideal relationship between a member of this profession and a client?
4. What sacrifices are required of members of this profession and in what respects do the obligations of this profession take priority over other morally relevant considerations affecting its members?
5. What are the norms of competence for this profession?
6. What is the ideal relationship between the members of this profession and co-professionals?
7. What is the ideal relationship between the members of this profession and the larger community?
8. What ought the members of this profession do to make access to the profession's services available to everyone who needs them?
9. What are the members of this profession obligated to do to preserve the integrity of their commitment to its values and to educate others about them?



# WHAT IS ETHICS?

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Ethics refers to a standard governing the conduct of a person or members of a profession.

There are three aspects to ethics;

Discerning right from wrong

Doing what is right

Ethics is action, the way we practice our values; it is a guidance system to be used in making decisions.

# The impact of the lack of ethics helps us to understand the importance of ethics

## Examples of unethical conduct include

Every time a Police Officer receives a bribe to cover up an issue, it encourages disobedience to law which ultimately fuels the breakdown of law and order-police extortion tollgates

Health professionals who divert medical supplies from public institutions where they are to be administered to the sick may benefit from the ill-gotten wealth, but their actions increase health-related problems in the society and impacts negatively on national productivity;

Slow movement of files in offices,

Public Service officers who engage in over-invoicing in connivance with contractors to loot public treasury are diverting resources which should have been deployed to provide physical and social infrastructure to improve the living standards of the people.

Ghost workers syndrome

Election irregularities

Substandard buildings and infrastructure

# DANGERS AND CONSEQUENCES OF UNETHICAL BEHAVIOURS

Unethical conduct, immorality or negative values are devoid of ethical benchmarks. They are dangerous social evils. They can be damaging to the society, to the extent of leading to a failed state. And, like all forms of things that are wrong, the dangers are multifaceted and some of them concrete enough.

Loss of international credibility

- Educational certificates
- Financial institution documents disrespected
- Agreements with the government are suspect

Business becomes risky and costly

International partners keep us at a distance

Reduction in quality of goods and services

Companies cut corners to improve profit margins

Culture of late or delayed payments

Healthcare risks

Loss of foreign investment that could lead to economic growth

Loss of the value of the dignity of hard work-youths

Inability to develop tourist potential

Societal- lack of ethics has crept into our religious institutions

Lack of deep thinking and shallowness

Policy mirage



# LET'S LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE UNETHICAL BEHAVIOURS OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS

As custodians of the people's finances, Quantity Surveyors are the ethical spine of the construction industry

Bid rigging and collusion tendering

Conflict of interest

Disclosure of confidential project baseline

nepotism

Insincerity to Clients and Other Professionals

Concealing of Professional Errors

Wrong information with Intent to Mislead

Incompetency and overstating qualifications to secure the job

Bribe Taking and Colluding with Contractors

Failure to submit Essential Document Promptly

Inflating Quantities in BOQ

Inflating Contract Sum

Charging Client for Work not done

Revealing Official Secret

Collision with Other Professionals

Using poor quality goods

# Unethical practices lead to:

dissatisfied clients,  
late compensation due to delays,  
low productivity/efficiency of project team,  
deterioration in professionalism,  
poor workmanship,  
high maintenance,  
upward review of contract cost,  
poor project coordination,  
poor quality infrastructure development,  
stunted growth of the industry,  
reduction in the life span of building,  
loss of public trust,  
conflicts between client and construction team

WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT ETHICAL  
PRICIPLES HAVE A COMMERCIAL  
VALUE, OR MORE IMPORTANTLY,  
THAT THE ABSENCE OF  
COMMERCIAL VALUES HAS A  
COMMERCIAL COST THAT CAN BE  
DEVASTATING



Competency for construction professional is generally agreed to comprise of two elements-the actual performance of a required skill and the personal attributes which underlie such performance. There is no doubt that technical knowledge in the required areas of a profession is crucial when working in all aspects of the construction industry. There is a growing belief that the personal attributes of character, values and attitudes are more important in optimizing performance in the industry. The importance of individual values ethical conduct is an essential element in developing a better practice culture in the construction industry. These aspects determine the attention to detail and the quality of the finished work. However, emphasis of learning for quantity surveyors has traditionally focused on technical and performance knowledge which is regarded as a necessity, with less consideration on approaches to internalize and establish ethical values and conduct into the professionals

# HOW DO WE MAINTAIN ETHICS?

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There are actually two policemen of ethics;

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The external policeman comprising ethics codes, contracts, regulations, enforcement as well as the fear of reputation loss.

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The internal policeman or conscience.



STAND OUT AMONGST THE CROWD



BETTER POSITIONED TO MANAGE  
STRATEGIC ALLIANCES INTERNATIONALLY  
GREATER AND MORE LOYAL CUSTOMER  
BASE

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# BENEFITS OF ETHICS

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Thought leaders in ethics recognize that ethics codes on their own have limited impact since they don't make people ethical or make people with bad judgement wise. Having a code of ethics without creating an ethical culture and a comprehensive ethics program is like having a Ferrari without wheels—i.e., it looks good, but you're not going anywhere.

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“Ethics is the oil that flows between business relationships to stop sparks flying.”

The absence of ethical values has a commercial cost-sometimes that cost can be devastating. The cost is personal, commercial, professional and global. Quantity surveyors cannot afford to be seen as anything other than an ethically responsible profession.



The question now is who will stop  
the slide?

Is it worth it to you individually?

Corporately?

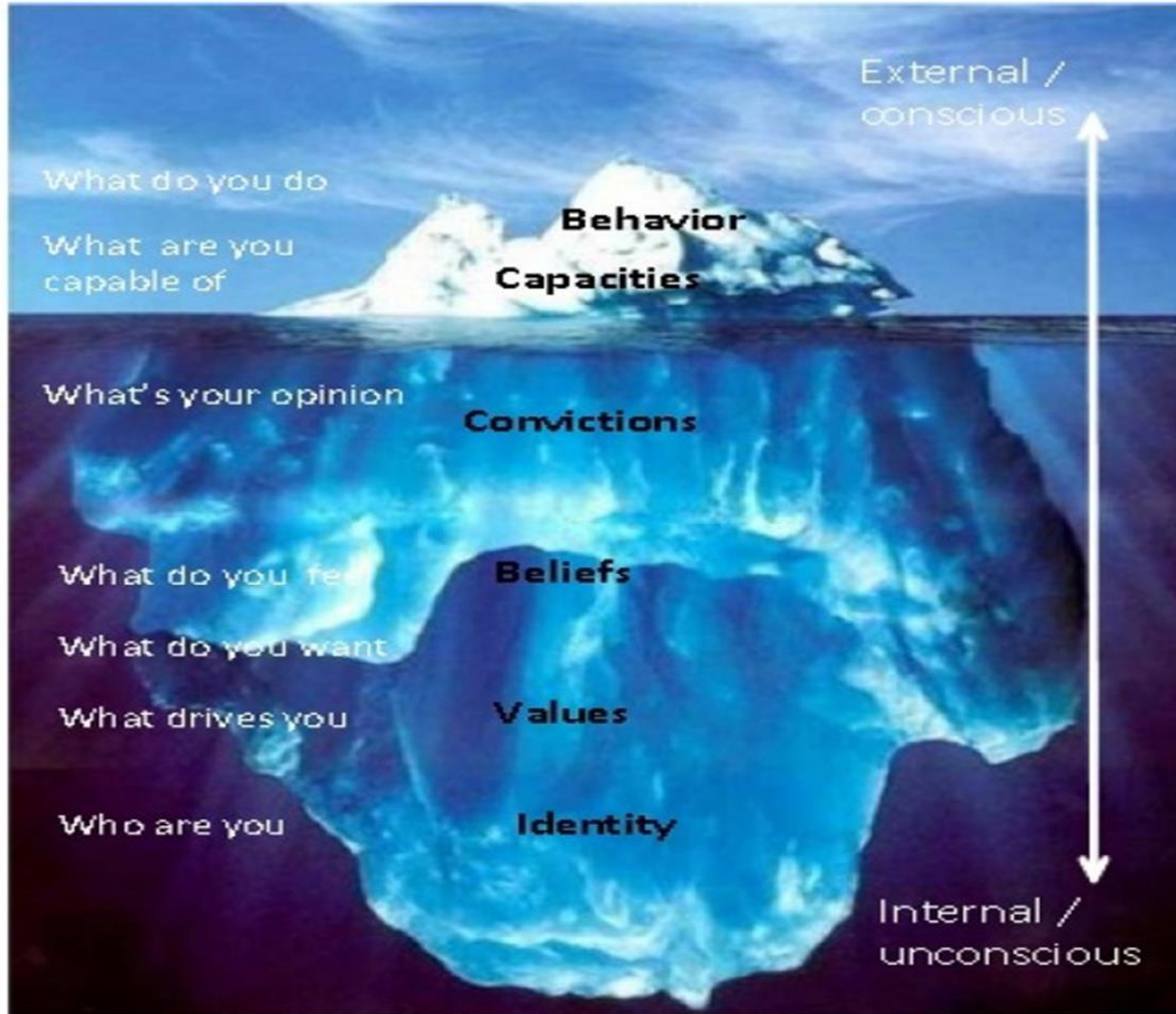
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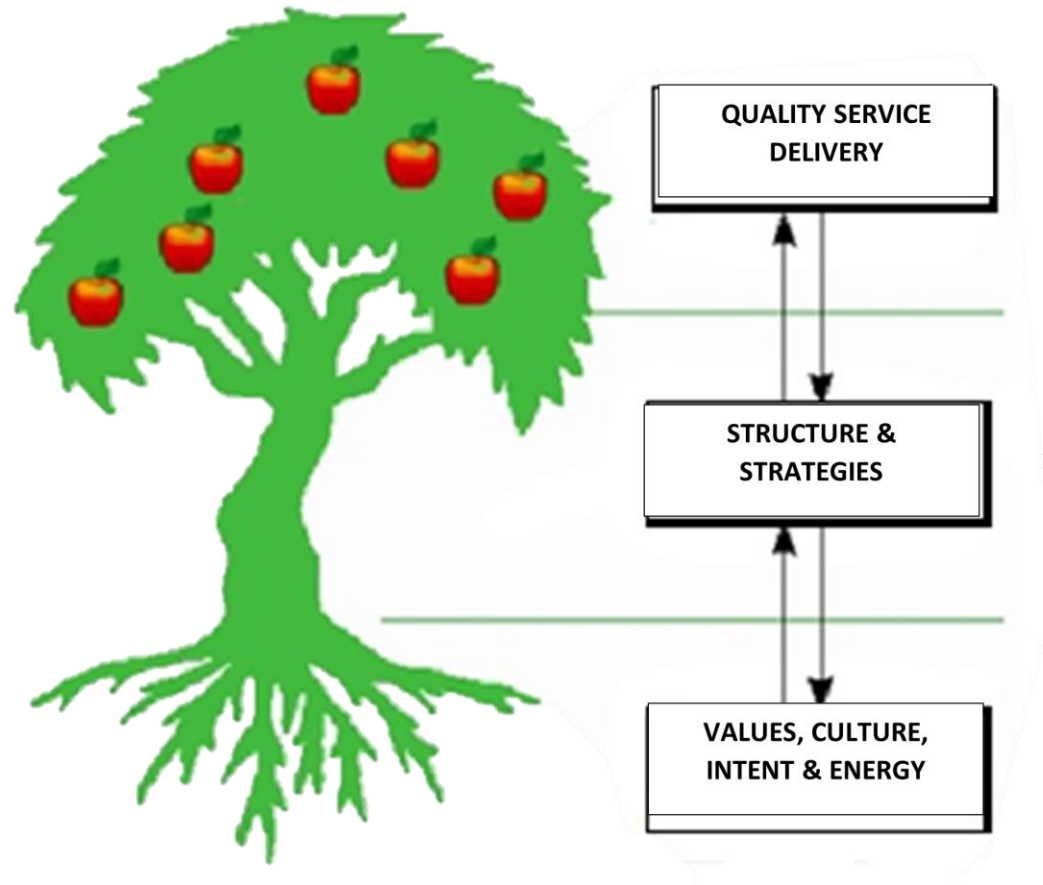
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# The ICEBERG

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MDAs as  
fruit bearing  
tree

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# Personal Ethics Statement

A statement developed by an individual reflecting the most important personal values and morals used to build their roadmap for living.

What is the statement meant to do?

- Represent what we strive to be
- Influence our actions and interactions
- Demonstrate how we put our guiding ideals into practice
- Serve as a support system for decision making
- Be our “Go To” during difficult situations

# Building Your Statement

- Decide on the values and morals that are most important to you
- Decide on a format (next slide)
- Work on your statement over time...tweak along the way
- Consider sharing it with others for feedback
- Keep it somewhere visible/handy

➤ Good place to start

➤ "I will..."

➤ "I commit to..."

➤ "You can expect..."

➤ "My actions..."

# Why bother with personal ethics?

Strong personal ethics typically translate into worthwhile benefits:

- Trusted relationships at home and work
- Valued contributions at home and work
- Positive attention from employers, family and friends
- Peace of mind, better overall health, emotional stability & lasting relationships

Can you think of more benefits?



# Rationalization Filter

Does your personal ethics statement leave room for any of the following?

- “Everybody does it.”
- “Nobody will notice.”
- “I don’t get paid enough to deal with that.”
- “It will take too much time to do it right.”
- “Just this one time.”
- “It’s not like I’m hurting anyone.”
- “I’m not a whistleblower.”
- “I’m too close to retirement.”
- “I’m minding my own business.”