

ETHICAL CONDUCT, PROFESSIONALISM AND GENERAL CONDUCT EXPECTED OF A PROFESSIONAL QUANTITY SURVEYOR

Presented by

QS Aluko-Olokun, Bukola Adenike, PhD, FNIQS, FICIArb.

AT

THE 2025 QSRBN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

14th & 15th May, 2025

INTRODUCTION

- The Construction industry plays a very vital role in the development of a country.
- The industry thrives on huge capital investments making it volatile and highly susceptible to fraud and other unethical practices.
- One of the major professions that serves as the bedrock and determines to a large extent the success of this industry is the Quantity Surveying profession.
- Unethical practices in the construction industry are a global phenomenon.
- In the face of its size and fragmentation, construction industry is often cited as plagued with unethical practices.
- More significantly Quantity Surveyors as construction cost managers are the cynosure of all eyes both within the construction industry and the country at large.



Ethics and Moral Values



“ Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do ”

-Potter Stewart

- Ethics is defined as the moral principles by which a person is guided
- It involves the study and understanding of morality, moral principles, and the moral decision-making process.
- Morality has no universal standard but it is accepted as a necessary behavioural standard for judging or determining right or wrong conducts.
- Moral character is shaped by family, religion, and education long before an individual joins a profession to make a living.
- The family is the bedrock of moral teaching.

Personal Ethics vs Professional Ethics

- **Personal ethics**- personal ethics is that which determines or guides one's decision as a person.
- **Business** - applicable on the grounds that business exists not solely to suit certain individuals, but because business serves society.
- **Professional ethics**- relates to the duties owed to the public by the professionals, to each other, and to themselves in regard to the exercise of their profession.
- This is often described as “**doing the right thing**” .
- In the context of the construction industry, ethical behaviour is measured by the degree of **trustworthiness and integrity** with which companies and individuals conduct themselves professionally.
- In the QS profession, personal and professional ethics cannot be separated .
- Personal ethics, morality, and integrity will strongly influence a person's professional ethical conduct.

“The deciding factor as to whether a person retains a high level of moral standards ultimately lies in the “why they are who they are and why they do what they do””



CHARACTERISTICS OF A PROFESSIONAL



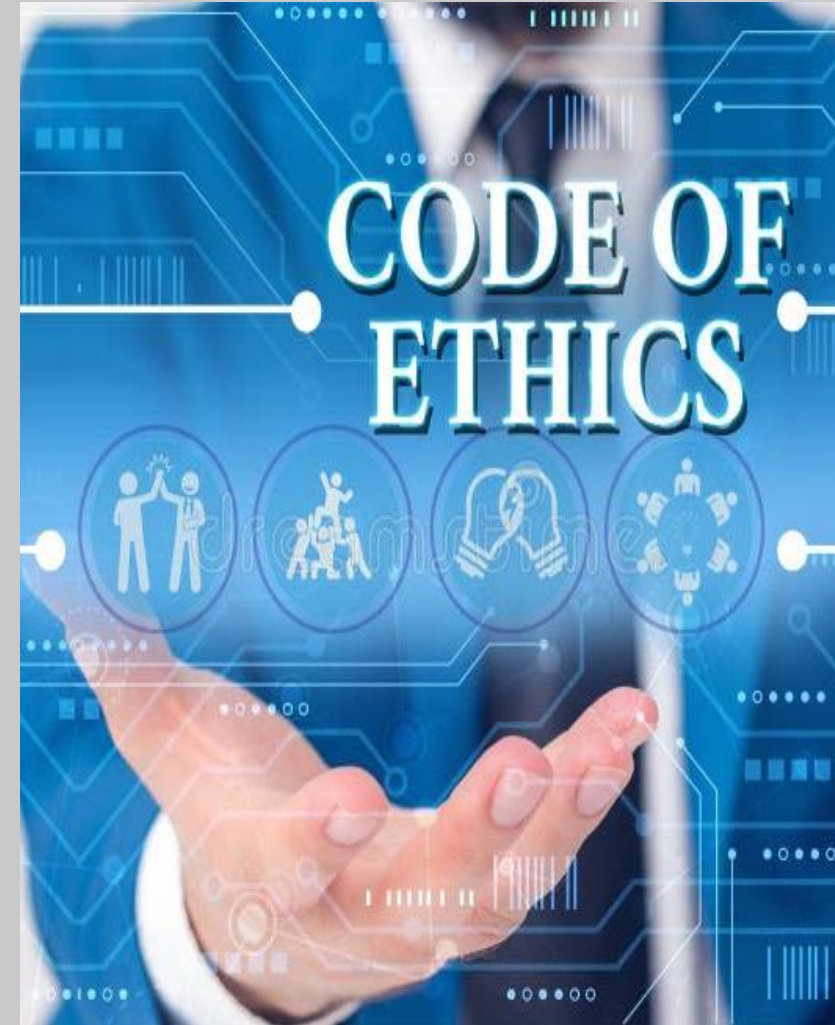
- **Education and level of training** (extensive via higher institution and continuous professional development and training),
- **Conduct, skills & professionalism** as a dominant component,
- **Autonomy in workplace,**
- **Judgment** (professionally expedient with tact, experience and knowledge);
- **Independence** (charge fees or work with organization),
- **Offers valuable service** to the society with little or no self-interest,
- **Dedication to work** is very high and pride is exhibited in quality of service rendered.
- **Professionalism** is therefore the high standard that is expected from a person who is well trained in a particular job.

Overview of the NIQS and QSRBN Code of Ethics

- The practice of quantity surveying profession in Nigeria is regulated by the Quantity Surveying Registration Board of Nigeria (QSRBN) Act No.31, of 1986, CAP.Q1, LFN, 2004.

The Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) code of conduct and the QSRBN Act both represents the:

- **Essential minimum frame work** within which members provide their services,
- **Reflect the ethics and culture** of quantity surveying profession and the **spirit of the laws** governing the profession,
- **Identify the key principles** and values that should guide the day-to-day practice and
- **Emphasize the core values** that should be honoured.
- Require that QS not only recognize their responsibility to their client but also their responsibility to the public and fellow professionals.



Fundamental Ethical Principles of most Professional Bodies includes



Honesty

fair, truthful
and
morally
upright



Fairness

- Exercise duty of care
- Achieve good quality



Fair reward

- Avoid acts that could lead to unfair reward



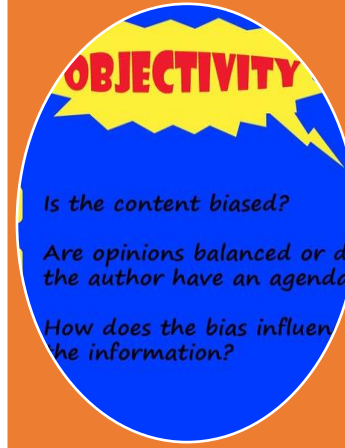
Reliability

- Discharge duties effectively
- Maintain up to date Skills



Integrity

- Firm principles
- High Moral/professional standards



objectivity

- avoid situations in which conflicts of interest may occur
- Disclosure is required



Accountability

- be accountable for your actions

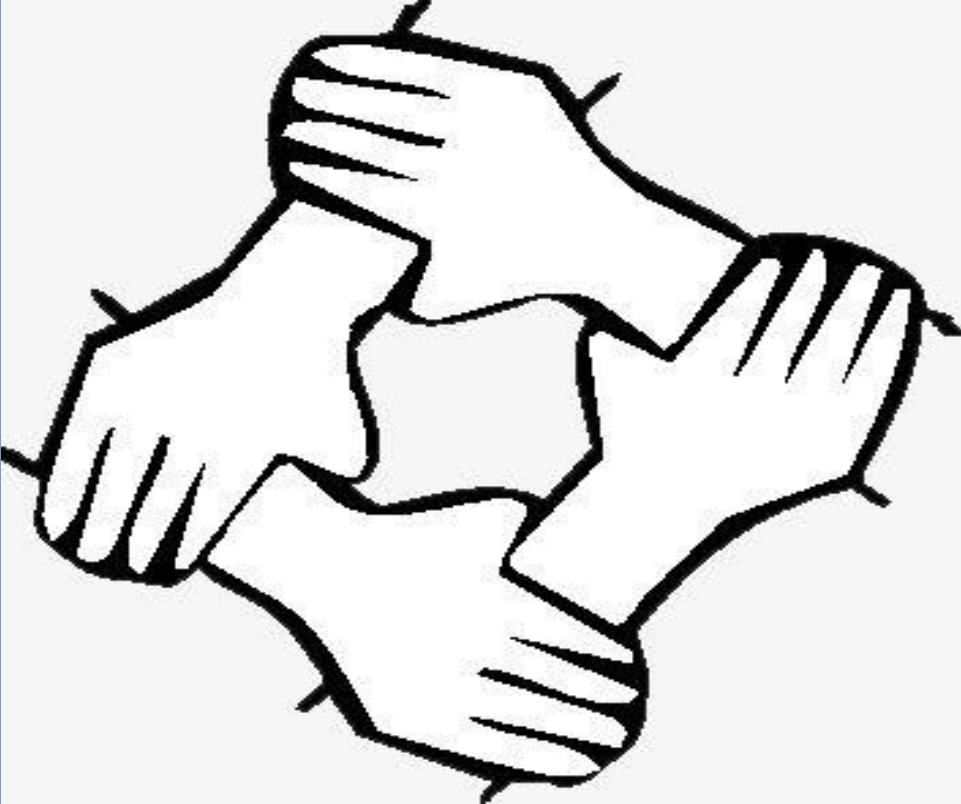


Other General Conduct Expected of a Professional QS are as follows:



- Being polite and communicate respectfully
- Punctuality
- Dressing appropriately
- Offer assistance to others
- Avoid social media
- Cultivate Professional boundary
- Seek support and guidance

WHY IS ETHICS SO IMPORTANT?



"Try not to become a person of success, but rather try to become a person of value" -Albert Einstein.

It unites people and leadership

It increases trust among stakeholders

It satisfies basic human needs

It creates credibility.

Improves decision making

Decreased legal problems and greater profitability

PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

Unethical practices

- Poor bid analysis,
- Non-transparency in the selection process,
- Fraud and insider dealings,
- Falsification of prequalification documents,
- Negligence to duty, Nepotism

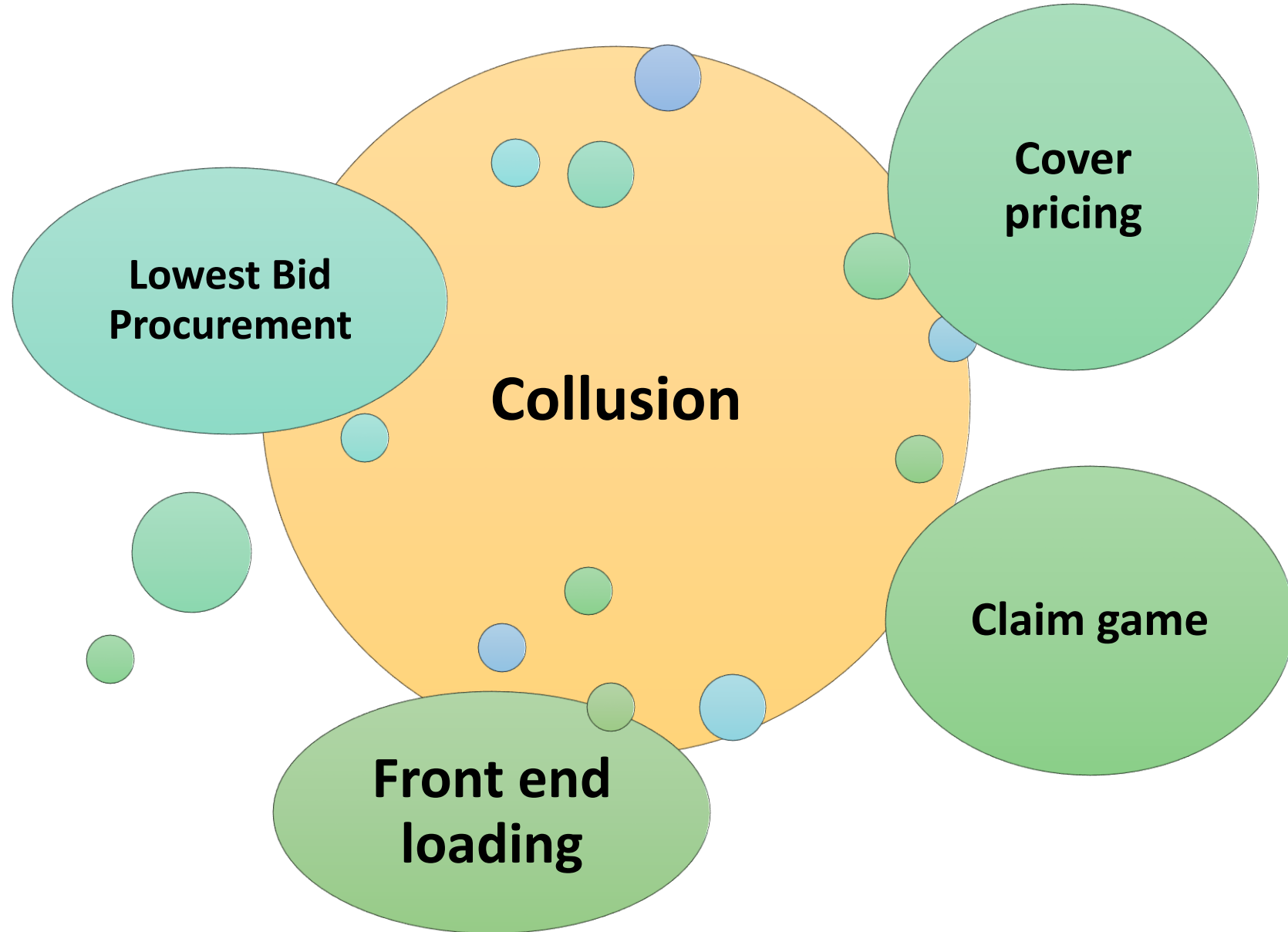
Engagement in private practice.

it is illegal for any member working under the civil service to be engaged in two full time paid jobs (**Rule (030425) of the Regulated and other Professions Private Practice Prohibition Act, (Cap.390) Part II**)

Bribery and Corruption

The act of giving, offering, receiving or soliciting for any item of value to influence the action of official or other persons in charge of a public or legal duty.

PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT



Causes and Effects of Ethical Failure

Causes of Ethical Failure

- Breakdown of individual moral standard
 - *“Nigerian factor- everybody does it”*
 - *“if it doesn’t hurt anyone else, I can do whatever I wish”*
 - *“What I do in my private life is my business”.*
 - *“My employer has no right to evaluate or punish me for my private conduct as long as my job performance is not de -graded.”*
- Bad Leadership
- Organisational Culture
- Lack of proper remuneration

Effects of Unethical Practices

- Disruption of construction process, thereby hampering economic fortune
- Missed development opportunities
- Unstable environment for business
- The quality of construction projects may not be assured
- Reputational risk.
- Increase in the cost of public contracting
- Disputes/litigations - Criminal prosecutions, fines and blacklisting of the affected professionals

Ways of Managing Ethical Issues

- **Personal Convictions-** we cannot prescribe for every conceivable circumstance
- **Implementing Code of Ethics-** . Law is a last resort when private morality does not prevail.
- **Effective Leadership**
- **Incorporation of ethical criteria** during recruiting and selection
- **Adequate remuneration** and work compensation
- **Education and Training**
- **Blacklisting firms /companies-** Fear of career derailment, of public exposure etc.
- **Encourage whistle blowing**



Conclusion

The growing demand for good ethical practice in all forms within the construction industry and most importantly the quantity surveying profession is a step in the right direction.

As the profession continues to evolve in the promotion of the art and science of quantity surveying, it is absolutely necessary to ensure that ethical principles are upheld and not negotiated, for the credibility of the entire profession may be threatened when there are lapses in occurrence of unethical behaviors.



Thank You For Listening

