

Ethical Marketing Policy

An introduction to our ethical marketing approach

At mark-making*, we believe that the best way of doing good business is by being a good business. And this means considering the impact of every decision we make.

A significant part of this decision-making revolves around the way we conduct ourselves as a professional organisation, including, in no small part, the way we go about developing our creative output – both for ourselves and for our clients.

Marketing in an ethical way involves doing lots of little things properly, all of the time. Whenever we do one of these ‘things’, we leave behind a positive impression.

We call impressions like these our goodmarks*.

And it’s our desire to keep leaving these goodmarks* that underpins our commitment to having an Ethical Marketing Policy that’s more than just a tick-boxing exercise – rather something that acts as a daily reminder of the standards we set for ourselves within our work.

Before we get into what our Policy actually covers, it’s worth noting that, although the following content has come from us, and is bespoke to us, we do draw guidance from the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) CAP code, as well as the Design Business Association (DBA) Code of Conduct.

Who does our Ethical Marketing Policy apply to?

Our policy applies to two main audiences.

Firstly is our own mark-making* team – the mark-makers (direct employees of the agency). For this group, adherence to our Ethical Marketing Policy (EMP) is non-negotiable.

The second group is what we call our wider mark-making* family. By this, we mean any third-party organisations or individuals we work alongside to produce our creative output.

We’ll always seek to use third parties that share our values – and we’ll always encourage existing ones to align with them, too.

Our five EMP fundamentals and specifics

We break down our mark-making* Ethical Marketing Policy commitments into five specific pillars. Fundamentally, though, any work we produce is always required to be **legal, decent, honest, transparent, respectful** and **considered**.

1. Legality and Governance

We commit to undertaking any measures necessary to ensure that, to the best of our knowledge and ability, all marketing we produce is lawful, and done within the approved system of organisation and control that governs it.

We comply with all relevant **Data Protection** acts and regulations – including the General Data Protection Regulation (**GDPR**).

This means that our email marketing is always permission-based and our digital marketing targeting approach is always appropriate (we take steps to understand tracking, cookies etc.).

2. Honesty and Transparency

We commit to absolute honesty and openness in all aspects of our marketing activity, with the aim of making sure we always represent our work's true commercial purpose.

We actively avoid any form of **Impact Washing**, meaning we never knowingly conceal from, or mislead, our audience.

We also make sure our marketing comms are clearly distinguishable as marketing comms – e.g. ensuring clarity on whether content is paid advertorial or editorial content.

3. Treatment of People

We commit to treating people fairly, equally and without prejudice of any description. We produce marketing that's sensitive to the individual, the wider community and the current cultural climate.

Our marketing never features **stereotyping, exploitation** or **appropriation** of the underrepresented or historically oppressed. It never intentionally offends prevailing standards of decency and it doesn't abuse customers' trust or lack of experience / knowledge.

If we use a person (or people) in our marketing to highlight a negative situation, care is always taken to portray them with honesty, integrity and dignity (see section 02).

The **use of children** and those under the age of 18 within our marketing is appropriate, decent and sensitive. Positive social behaviour, lifestyle and attitudes are never undermined.

Our aim is always to show a fair, balanced and accurate representation of modern society.

4. The Environment

We commit to never producing marketing that elicits a negative contribution to the world around us – and actively encourages positive impact whenever possible.

Whatever the requirement may be, we always make sure our marketing is consistent with current social, economic and environmental principles – taking the latest **governmental and/or scientific guidance** into account to help ensure this.

Whenever we're required to make any environmental claims in our own marketing, we base them on the full lifecycle of the product being promoted.

5. Responsibilities

We commit to taking full responsibility for the ethical integrity of the marketing we produce – and making ethically-focused quality assurance a fundamental part of our marketing process.

We actively encourage ongoing reflection regarding all marketing we produce. And we provide regular **ethical marketing training** for all relevant employees.

Our Directors have ultimate responsibility, and accountability, for ensuring compliance with this policy. On a day-to-day basis, however, our wider Leadership Team is the group with ethical stewardship of our marketing.

Finally, we'll continue to **evaluate the effectiveness** of our mark-making* Ethical Marketing Policy to ensure it remains relevant and fit-for-purpose. And we'll communicate it to all third parties at the beginning of any new business relationships.

This Policy has been communicated throughout our company. It will be reviewed on a regular basis to evaluate continued relevance, monitor compliance, and drive continuous improvement.

This Policy is effective from 1st January 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Turner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Turner
Co-Founder