

board of architects singapore

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To All Registered Architects

GENERAL GUIDELINES ON ADVERTISING FOR ARCHITECTS

This circular serves as a general guideline on the forms of advertising that architects could adopt should they wish to publicise their practice.

Advertising for architects is governed by the provisions set out under Rule 5 in the Architects (Professional Conduct and Ethics) Rules which is extracted at **Annex A** for your easy reference. In particular we wish to draw your attention to Rules 5(2) and 5(3) which stipulate that

5(2) In publicizing his practice, an architect shall uphold the dignity, standing and reputation of the profession. .

5 (3) No architect shall publicise his practice in a manner which

- a. is likely to diminish public confidence in the profession or otherwise bring the profession into disrepute;
- b. may reasonably be regarded as misleading, deceptive, inaccurate, false, or in any way unbecoming the dignity of the profession;
- c. is determined and pronounced by the Board to be an undesirable manner of publicizing the practice of an architect.

To assist architects who wish to introduce measures to promote their practice, the Board has drawn up a list of the possible types of publicity materials that architects could use. The list is at **Annex B**.

The Board recognizes that it is hard to draw the line between dignified advertising and undignified solicitation for work. Architects are therefore urged to err on the side of restraint and be mindful of the possible effects of denigrating the profession's standing. Fundamentally the form and content of the publicity material should at all times uphold the dignity and stature of the architectural profession.

NG LYE HOCK, LARRY
REGISTRAR

Architects Rules 1991

The Schedule

(Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics)

Part I

CPCEI Rule 5 –

Advertising

5. (1) An architect may, subject to this paragraph, publicise his practice or allow his employees or agents to do so.

(2) In publicising his practice, an architect shall uphold the dignity, standing and reputation of the profession.

(3) No architect shall publicise his practice in a manner which –

(a) is likely to diminish public confidence in the profession or otherwise bring the profession into disrepute;

(b) may reasonably be regarded as misleading, deceptive, inaccurate, false, or in any way unbecoming the dignity of the profession; or

(c) is determined and pronounced by the Board to be an undesirable manner of publicising the practice of an architect.

(4) For the purpose of this paragraph, publicity shall be regarded to be misleading, deceptive, inaccurate or false if it –

(a) contains a material misrepresentation;

(b) omits to state a material fact;

(c) contains any information which cannot be verified; or

(d) is likely to create an unjustified expectation about the results that can be achieved by an architect.

(5) In publicising his practice, an architect shall ensure that –

(a) any claim to his expertise or specialisation can be justified;

(b) the publicity does not make any comparison or criticism in relation to the fees charged, or the quality of the architectural services rendered, by any other architect;

(c) the publicity does not make any reference to any building project in which he had not rendered any architectural services;

(d) the publicity does not make any direct or indirect mention of any building project in which he had rendered architectural services if the provision of such information will involve a breach of confidentiality he owes to any client or former client; and

(e) where the publicity makes any direct or indirect mention of any building project, he shall state his specific involvement in that project and give due credit to any other architect involved in that project.

(6) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (5), the following factors shall be taken into account in justifying any claim to expertise or specialisation:

(a) the academic qualifications of the architect;

(b) the architect's experience in rendering architectural services of a similar nature having regard to the complexity of the design and construction;

(c) the architect's resources and capacity to render such architectural services which he claims to have expertise or specialisation in; and

(d) such other factors as the Board may determine to be relevant.

(7) It shall be the responsibility of every architect to ensure that any publicity relating to his practice complies with this paragraph, whether such publicity is conducted by him or any other person on his behalf.

(8) Where an architect becomes aware of any impropriety in any publicity relating to his practice, it shall be his responsibility to use his best endeavours to procure the rectification or withdrawal of the publicity, and to prevent its recurrence.

(9) The responsibility of an architect under this paragraph shall not be capable of being delegated to any other person, whether or not that person is also an architect.

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To bring some clarity, the Board under Rule 5(3)(c) pronounces upon the acceptability of the following common form and content of advertising:

Allowable Forms of Disseminating Information

S/N	Types of Information	Medium	Remarks
1	Listing of firm's name and contact details and projects undertaken by the firm	Directory which could be print or web-based of renowned professional institutes such as SIA, AIA and RIBA	<p>Primary reason for the listing in a professional directory with content and form that are monitored by these renowned and reputable institutes is for dissemination of information regarding the practice.</p> <p>Architects are to consider the reputation of the listings and institutes before listing with them.</p>
2	Showcasing projects or the practice/architect	<p>a) Print Media (Architectural book, Monograph or Periodical;</p> <p>b) TV/Radio/Internet;</p> <p>c) exhibition;</p> <p>d) conference, forum, talk & seminar;</p> <p>e) CDs & Thumb drives</p>	<p>Primary reason for the publication is for discussion and dissemination of knowledge and marketing of services. Architects should take care to adapt the tone of their materials to a professional one.</p> <p>For print media and exhibition, editors will normally guide this. Architects should request for a copy of the draft article to check facts particularly on the appropriate attribution of authorship of the work especially in the case of collaborations.</p> <p>For TV, Radio or Internet media and conference, forum, talk and seminar and distribution through CD-ROM and thumb drives, the same principles would apply in the messaging and tone and proper acknowledgement of authorship for the projects featured.</p> <p>It would be good practice to acknowledge the firm that architect was employed when the project was undertaken should the architect had</p>

		Non-architectural publications such as lifestyle magazines, etc	<p>since left that firm's employment.</p> <p>Bringing knowledge of the profession to the mass market is beneficial. However, architects should be aware that these publications are often not clear on the difference between architects and other kinds of designers and exercise caution. Architects should take the opportunity to educate the writers and editors on the Architect's Act and the legal connotations of the word and derivatives of the word Architect, and should always request a copy of the article for fact checking. The architect should always supply a fact sheet, with project credits and terminology clearly defined, and request that the publication follow these attributions and credits to the letter.</p>
3	Advertising for recruitment of staff	Print/internet media	The information presented is to be professional and factual for the purpose of recruitment.
4	Announcement of updates, projects, events	<p>Print/internet media</p> <p>Mass email</p>	<p>The information and tone of the contents shall be for the purpose of communicating with clients & industry partners to provide updates, projects undertaken and announcement of events and not for soliciting. Proper acknowledgement of authorship especially on collaboration should be provided.</p> <p>The mailing list is targeted as a subscriber list or privately compiled list and in accordance with the Spam regulations.</p>
5	Print advertisement	Trade or specialist magazines	Architects should ensure that the information given in the advertisement is accurate and that projects featured if any, are carried out by him/his firm. A professional tone should be adopted.

6	Promotional messages	Promotional Company Brochure	Architects should ensure that the information presented is professional, and distribution is targeted and not indiscriminately mass distributed.
7	Greetings with firm's logo and possibly with images of projects undertaken by firm	Seasonal and Holiday Cards	Architects should ensure that the message is focused on community and relationship building. Eg greetings for Christmas, Chinese New Year and other holidays.
8	Congratulatory Notice with firm's name and logo	Print media	Architects should ensure that the message is focused on the congratulatory message for projects that they are associated with. Image of the project that is the subject of the congratulatory message that the firm is associated with can be included in the notice. Where the message is for an individual, architects should ensure the message is not to advertise its services or projects.

Frequently asked questions:

Ethical Conduct of Architect

Q1 Can I take part in a blog site to talk about my projects?

A1 Always remember that when participating in any forum or platform, you need to adopt a professional and ethical tone. The issue is not what type of media but rather the manner and tone that is adopted in such discussion. For example, credit works accordingly when such works are done in collaboration with others. You should seek permission to take credit for works that you may have worked on but was done when you were in another firm.

Q2 Can my firm print our firm's name and logo on T-shirts?

A2 You need to be clear about the purpose for printing such T-shirts. The message and image conveyed should not be one that would denigrate the profession. Such T-shirts should not be used for example to advertise the services of the firm or allow others to perceive it as such. Adopt a professional image and tone for such T-shirts. Such T-shirts should not be for mass-marketing purpose, or be associated with cheap jokes, etc. It is acceptable for firms to have specially designed corporate T-shirts to help build identity and pride for their staff and these are used during celebrations, games, outings organised for the

firms.

- Q3 *Can I promote my firm and its architectural services on websites that offer a collection of architectural services with matching services to clients and architects?*
- A3 You should ensure that whichever website that you use, the contents on your firm uphold the dignity of the architectural professional. The contents should not for example purport that your firm offer the lowest fees, etc.