14 Professional Associations and Trade Unions
(incomplete)

A What is a professional association? What kinds of things do they do? Do all professions have associations?

B What do trade unions do? How are they different from professional associations?

C What do the words and phrases in the vocabulary box mean?

- a guild
- peer support
- endorsement
- a misleading claim
- a code of professional conduct
- to abide by something
- a provision
- on behalf of somebody
- in contravention of
- discredit
- in breach of
- a subsequent revision
- confidential
- to disclose
- thorough
- cutting corners
- impartial
- to represent

D Put one item from the vocabulary box into each gap. You may have to adapt the words.

Arnie Fischer speaks __1__ several thousand trade union members. He often has __2__ discussions with business and government officials. He must not __3__ the information. Often business leaders try to __4__ him by making __5__ about what he said in private. Sometimes Mr Fisher makes an audio-recording of meetings so there can be no __6__ about what happened. Mr Fischer is not __7__ because he __8__ the workers but he agrees __9__ a code of professional conduct for negotiators. Mr Fischer works hard and doesn’t __10__.

E Look at the article quickly. What kind of person does Mr Bibby see as a typical reader of his article?

F Look at the article again quickly. Find three things that the Guild of Management Consultants does.

G Are the following statement about the article true or false.

1. Mr Bibby thinks that most people already understand the professional status of management consultants
2. The Guild of Management Consultants can confirm a consultant’s professional ability
3. The Code of Conduct binds all members
4. All the members of the Guild have to vote to change the code.
5. Only members of the Guild are affected by the Code of Conduct
6. The Guild can punish members who break the code of conduct
7. Members of the Guild can accept any work they want
8. Once a contract has been signed with a client it cannot be changed.
9. Management consultants need to keep secrets
10. The Guild is not concerned with consultants working methods

H A close friend who runs a small perfume business has written to you asking for advice on whether to hire a management consultant. In the letter inform her of what she can expect. Remember you are writing to a close friend.
Maintaining High Standards

Good management consultancy is about maintaining high standards, argues senior management consultant, Ralph Bibby.

Nothing is more irritating than when people ask, ‘Oh, are management consultants professionals? Do you have ethical standards?’ Of course we do, and I hope this article fills a gap in people’s knowledge which has long needed to be filled.

Our professional association, the Guild of Management Consultants – organised at national and regional level - promotes excellence in the profession by supporting, qualifying, and regulating individual management consultants. Membership of the Guild brings many benefits including peer support and the ability to display an independent endorsement of a management consultant’s skills.

In their work members of the Guild give advice to all levels of management and with this comes the obligation to maintain the highest standards of honesty and competence. The Guild, as the professional body for management consultants, has a Code of Professional Conduct which lays out duties and obligations which are required of all members.

The Guild Council may, from time to time, issue further principles, rules or notes which will be published in our Gazette The Management Consultant. Members are expected to abide by all such new provisions from the date of their publication.

The principles, rules and notes of the Code apply not only to the members personally, but also to acts carried out through a partner, co-director, employee or other agent acting on behalf of, or under the control of, the member.

Guild members may face action by the Disciplinary Committee of the Guild if they act in contravention of the Code, or if they discredit the profession by their conduct. Members may be required to make a declaration in answer to enquiries from the Guild Council concerning their professional conduct. A member failing to make such a declaration may be found in breach of the Code of Conduct.

One of the most important rules is that a member will only accept work that they are qualified to perform and can provide the client with an effective service. Guild members must not make any misleading claims and will provide references from other clients if requested. That means, for example, if our firm were asked for advice in business management in Chad, we would not accept as we have no experience of working there.

Money and fees are also important. A member must agree formally with the client the scope and nature of the services to be provided and the cost before the start of the work. Any subsequent revisions to the agreement must be discussed and agreed with the client.

All clients expect management consultants to keep the affairs of the client companies confidential. Management consultants must hold all information concerning the affairs of clients in the strictest confidence and in no circumstance may disclose information obtained during the course of their work.

And finally it goes with saying that management consultants must act to the highest professional standards in their work. We must always make certain that our advice, solutions and recommendations are based on a thorough and impartial consideration of all the information available. There can be no room for cutting corners or laziness.

Everybody should now understand that management consultants are not only members of one of the higher professions, but also that our professional association ensures that we provide the highest standards of service.

Ralf Bibby is senior partner in the firm Bibby and Jenner and was chairman of the Guild of Management Consultants 2003-04.
Answers

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D.

1. on behalf of  2. confidential  3. disclose  
4. discredit  5. misleading claims  6. subsequent revision  
7. impartial  8. represents  9. to abide by  
10. cut corners

G.

1  F  
2  T  
3  T  
4  F  
5  F (employees too)  
6  T  
7  F  
8  F (it can be changed if both parties agree)  
9  T  
10  F