

# 2013 Ethics Committee Report

**PRESENTED BY** STÜSSY TSCHUDIN RGD, VICE PRESIDENT, ETHICS & COMMITTEE CHAIR

**MEMBERS:** LUC BERGERON RGD, ERIN BOYCE RGD, LIONEL GADOURY RGD, MARK MCALLISTER RGD, ROD NASH RGD

The Ethics Committee's primary mandate is to advise on ethical issues that arise from design professionals, educators, managers and/or buyers of design.

A focus of this Committee continues to be lobbying against requests for spec in RFPs. In 2013, 20 letters were sent with a success rate below last year's 40%, but we were pleased to see an increase in the number of clients contacting RGD directly for advice on developing ethical RFPs. And, our success rate so far in 2014 is back up around the 40% mark. Where possible, we document successes on the RGD website. Successes from 2013 included the revision of an RFP that originally asked for webpage designs; an RFP that requested concepts for a branding project; and clarification on an RFP where compensation was provided for concept work.

***“With the clear information on the RGD website, we were able to understand the greater creative process involved and correct our RFP.”***

**CANOEKAYAK COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

A particularly unfortunate spec contest was launched by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) to invite design students to design its logo. In addition to contacting ACCC to explain industry best practices and offer assistance to run a fair and more effective process, RGD asked program coordinators to contact ACCC to speak out. This situation highlights the difficulties educators face when trying to incorporate real-world projects into design curriculums without compromising the value of the design industry. We hope to have guidelines in place to help address this issue before the academic year begins in September.

***“It is important to follow best practices when offering internships. Having guidelines helps ensure a quality internship experience for all.”***

**FRANK CHARTRAND RGD**

Another area where the Committee focuses its advocacy is on internships, with the adoption of new Internship Guidelines. As a regular practice in the creative industry, internships provide emerging designers with practical job skills and hands-on work experience to help launch their careers. RGD's Guidelines for Internships comply with the Ontario Ministry of Labour, which requires interns to be compensated with minimum wage unless the placement is offered through a college or university. The document touches on key components of the internship experience in addition to responsibilities of the firm

and intern. Recent crackdowns by the Ministry of Labour underscore RGD's foresight in this area.



When the Canada 150 logo controversy made waves last December, RGD addressed the issue swiftly, without compromising accuracy. Within a day of the story being published, we had a statement from RGD President Lionel Gadoury with a call to action for designers and an assurance that we were contacting government to ensure our voices were heard. Media, locally and internationally made note of our position, including *Strategy*, *Creative Review*, *Fast Company*, *Marketing*, *Toronto Star*, *Azure*, *Metro News*, *Radio Canada Quebec* and *Grafika*.

In addition to advocacy, the Committee continues its work on the Rules of Professional Conduct, a cornerstone of RGD certification. The new Rules summarize the ethical conduct required of an RGD in a way that is easy for both designers and clients to understand. Each of 8 Rules is supported by Policies, Best Practices, Examples and Additional Resources. Policies cover areas that can be acted upon by RGD's Grievance Committee. Best Practices cover behaviour the Committee feels is important, but would be impractical to enforce. Situational Examples clarify ethics in practice. Resources provide background.

With the new Rules being fully adopted, the next step, which we have already been hard at work on, is revising the Rules section for the Written Test portion of the RGD Exam. These new questions will help ensure that all new Registered Graphic Designers have a clear understanding of their ethical responsibilities as documented in the new Rules of Professional Conduct.