



THE IRC QUALITY CHARTER & MISSION STATEMENT

Summary: We strive to be the premier transnational technology transfer network in Europe for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. The IRC network should be Professional, Responsive, Informative, Dependable and Encouraging (PRIDE) Marie Magali Sarry

1 INTRODUCTION

To establish itself as the Network of Excellence, the IRC Network has adopted a Global Quality Policy, which combines:

- The Quality Management System (QMS)
- The Performance Indicators (PI)
- The Quality Charter

The Quality Charter has been designed by the “Codes of Conduct” Working Group, chaired by Dr David Reynolds from IRC East of England. It has been presented and warmly welcomed at the 7th IRC Annual Meeting held in Nuremberg, in November 2002. The Quality Charter is made up of four elements:

- A Mission Statement
- Core Values
- Codes of Conduct
- The practical implementation of the Codes of Conduct

According to the ‘Benchmarking Implementation Report’:

“The first contact with the company is crucial for a successful first impression and subsequent company visits. Since SMEs might not be aware of IRC activities and services it is of paramount importance for the IRC to be able to communicate in a clear and concise manner its mission, service offer and competencies, as well as convince the firm of the usefulness of their service.”

This professional approach lies at the heart of our Quality Charter, which is a statement of the values and business practices of our network towards all stakeholders. Let’s be even more concrete and take the definition of Dr David Reynolds:

“Imagine building a house. The Mission Statement provides the plan. The Values determine the foundations and basic structure of the building. The Codes of Conduct determine the way individual rooms are laid out within the house. Because of their fundamental nature an organisation’s Values are rarely changed. However, Codes of Conduct can be changed as and when appropriate.”

Each member of our network should adopt, on a voluntary basis, the IRC Network Quality Charter. Through its acceptance, the IRC Network will ensure that its staff shares the same important values and will create among its members an “Esprit de Corps”.

Definitions:

Global Quality Policy = QMS + PI + Quality Charter

Quality Charter = Mission Statement + Core Values + Codes of Conduct + Practical Implementation of the Codes of Conduct

2 OUR MISSION STATEMENT

“We strive to be the premier transnational technology transfer network in Europe for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.”

3 OUR CORE VALUES: PRIDE

The IRC Network Core Values:

- Fuel our mission to be the premier transnational technology transfer network in Europe for
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises,
- Lay the groundwork for the lasting relationships we cultivate with clients and partners,
- Are the quality we seek and encourage in the people who work within the IRC Network.
- The strength of our network is founded on five fundamental values, which form the word PRIDE.

We take P R I D E in all we do. We aspire to be

P rofessional

R esponsive

I nformative

D ependable

E ncouraging

P rofessional

We aspire to be a network of professionals. We are people who have a broad knowledge of technology, technology transfer and business. We follow best practice standards in all our dealings with both network partners and clients. We will use every opportunity to build the network, embrace best practice, and encourage the support of IRC colleagues as we apply our knowledge to help achieve successful transnational technology transfer.

R esponsive

We aspire to evaluate promptly all technology matches/responses even when the answer is no! We will respond to every communication from other IRC Network members courteously and do our best to help whenever we can.

I nformative

We aspire to keep our network partners well informed of the status of any leads, contacts and negotiations and when there are delays with our client.

D ependable

We aspire to build trust amongst network members through our behaviour and responsiveness. Our network partners will be able to depend on us because we keep our promises.

E ncouraging

We aspire to carry out our work with enthusiasm and appreciation. We will not take things for granted. We will champion the IRC network and make it not just the largest TT network but also the Network of Excellence in terms of quality in the delivery of our services!

4 OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

The adoption of Codes of Conduct is increasingly becoming recognised as a key means to increasing transparency. Codes of Conduct are important to set the tone for all employees and to indicate to third parties the standard to be expected from the IRC Network.

IRC to CLIENT

Building ... Value and Credibility

- *Recruit motivated and suitable clients*
- *Offer realistic services*
- *Deliver on promises*

- *Be professional: serious, responsive and committed*

IRC to IRC

- *Building ... Trust & Enthusiasm*
- *Reply promptly*
- *Provide complete and correct information*
- *Maintain up-to-date status*

IRC to CU

- *Building ... Effectiveness and efficiency*
- *Build Excellence*
- *Contribute to the continuous development of Excellence in the network*
- *Provide complete and correct information on time*
- *Share Best Practices*

5 PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODES OF CONDUCT

The documents to be elaborated for the practical implementation of the Codes of Conduct should help standardise and professionalise the way we work as a network and also the range of services we offer our clients.

These documents could cover the following areas:

- Agreements
- Client recruitment
- Company visits
- Expression of Interest
- Innovation financing
- Mentoring initiative
- Monitoring, managing and reporting effectively on own performance
- Staff exchange
- Technology audits
- TTT Event
- Technology Offers/Technology Requests

6 BAD PRACTICES

We should eliminate the following Bad Practices from the network, as such behavior is unacceptable in a Network of Excellence (non-exhaustive list):

- Offering unrealistic services to clients
- Not responding to a specific email from an IRC colleague
- Not providing the full information required when responding to a Technology Request or Technology Offer
- Asking for more information without being specific
- Not making time for your clients and partners
- Cancelling event participation without notice
- Operating independently: pursuing your own objectives at the expense of the rest of the network

PRATICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT: EOIs

Produced with the support of: IRC Austria, IRC East of England, IRC Help-Forward, IRC Flanders, IRC North Rhine Westphalia, IRC Norway, IRC Centr-EST, IRC Northern Ireland

Summary: A simple guide to how an IRC can ensure that the service it delivers to IRCs is professional, delivering the same level of service to your colleagues in the network as you would expect your colleagues to deliver to you.

1 THE WAY WE SHOULD WORK

This document has been produced in response to concerns raised over the quality and consistency of services delivered by IRCs to their colleagues in the network. The success of the network rests upon the quality of companies that the IRCs work with and their commitment to the technology transfer process (see attached an example of a company/IRC commitment agreement). However these factors are irrelevant if IRCs deliver a poor quality service to their colleagues. This document offers a simple guide, how an IRC can ensure that the service it delivers is professional. The premise upon which all codes of conduct are based is the same, treat others in the way you wished to be treated yourself. This document should be seen and used in the same light, deliver the same level of service to your colleagues in the network as you would expect them to deliver to you. This document focuses on the BBS, however what is described, the professional follow-up of expressions of interest is applicable to most IRC activities.

1.1. Wherever possible EOIs (expressions of interest) received by an IRC should be passed onto the company behind the profile within 5 working days of its receipt and the IRC behind the EOI should be informed.

1.2. EOIs must be clearly defined to ensure that a response can be made within the allotted time. The EOI should:

- Provide both the title and reference number of the TO/TR
- Provide a brief profile of the company and contact details if the company is happy to supply them at this stage
- For a TR explain what the company is offering to solve the problem or match the need described
- For a TO explain how the company would like to use or exploit the technology being offered
- If further information is required specify exactly what type of information is required

1.3. Wherever possible EOIs should receive a response within 10 working days. The response should either:

- Confirm that the company is interested in developing further contacts
- The company is not responding because.....
- That more information is required (see above)
- That the EOI is still being considered
- That the match is not appropriate

1.4. The IRC representing the company should keep the IRC behind the EOI regularly informed of the progress with the TOTR, generally a monthly update would be appropriate.

1.5. Wherever possible all enquiries from either IRC should receive a response within 3 working days even if there is no new information available. An indication that nothing is happening is better than complete silence.

1.6.. If there is a positive response to the EOI and company details are exchanged then the company IRC should, where possible, provide a monthly update on progress to the EOI IRC. Once again an indication that nothing is happening is better than complete silence.

1.7.. If either of the companies are reluctant to move forward with the negotiation process then each IRC has an obligation to be honest and inform the other side that in their opinion there is no serious chance of TTT. Each IRC is best placed to assess the commitment of their clients.

1.8. If a profile is dead then all those involved must be informed and if the profile is on the BBS it should be removed by the IRC.

2 COMPANY AND IRC COMMITMENT

2.1. Before the technology profile is sent out the Project Officer shall ensure that the company behind the profile is fully committed to the TTT process, it understands the implications of submitting the profile and the obligations placed upon it.

- It must respond promptly to any enquiries whether from its local IRC, the transnational IRC or the match, even if the response is negative

- It must have extra information available to support the original technology profile
- Be prepared to talk with companies provided by the network if they match their needs
- That the company will keep its local IRC informed of all negotiations and discussions that may develop from initial contacts supplied by the network

2.2. If possible the Project Officer should ask the company to sign a commitment agreement with the IRC which will clearly outline what is expected of the company and in return what the company can expect from the IRC.

The following is an example of the type of agreement a company and IRC might sign.

“I the undersigned, representative of company xxxxxxxxxx agree to respond promptly to any requests made by the IRC xxxxxxxxx relating to the promotion of product/technology/service xxxxxxxxxxxxxx or the search for technology solution relating to xxxxxxxxx through the IRC network. This may include a request for more detailed information or the serious assessment of company profiles provided by the IRC that match the requirements of company xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Further that if any addition discussions develop from the initial contact provided by IRC xxxxxxx I shall keep the IRC informed.”

In return IRC xxxxxxxxxx is committed to effectively promote company xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx’s product/technology/service or search for a technology solution through the IRC network. Specifically:

- the IRC will assist with the production of a technology profile
- Will promote this technology profile to the network
- Will screen and match any responses from the network to ensure that what the company receives is of use
- Will ensure that any companies provided are committed to the IRC process and provide as much information as is required by company xxxxxxxxxx.
- Will keep company xxxxxxxxxx regularly updated on the progress with the technology profile
- Will provide the necessary assistance (translations, location for meeting, etc.) for any negotiations that may result from the matching process
- Will provide the necessary assistance (travel arrangements, location for meeting translations etc.) if face-to-face negotiations result from the initial discussions
- Will provide advice and assistance with issues relating to contract negotiations, licensing, IPR etc. and any other services that are deemed appropriate by the IRC and the company.