



Serving the Vending, Coffee Service and Foodservice Management Industries

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AN OPEN LETTER FROM NAMA ABOUT INDUSTRY ETHICS

Our industry is facing tough times, with Operators working harder than ever for a bottom line that allows for future growth, investment in technology and sustainability. Competition is hard enough but when the playing field is not level, we all lose.

Business practices influence public perception. NAMA's Code of Ethics, in response to concerns about industry ethical practices, addresses integrity, sound financial reporting practices, cleanliness, service practices safety, employee relations and community citizenship, the values that NAMA and its members stand for. It's been the core for NAMA's work to improve our industry's image and raise professionalism by driving business conduct beyond reproach.

The Code of Ethics was just the first step of a long-term program created to achieve those goals. It was followed by audit standards to assist accountants in identifying unethical financial practices when auditing vending companies and a wide-spread emphasis on ethics in NAMA Education and at Expos. Many have welcomed the Code to strengthen the public's respect for the industry, using it in sales proposals and company mission statements, showing customers our industry cares about ethical business practices.

So it was and remains a strong first step. But, by law, NAMA does not have the ability to enforce the Code, which has blunted momentum. Tough economic times only provide more impetus for some operators to skimp on Integrity and Honesty with underreporting sales for commission and sales tax purposes at the heart of it. NAMA has looked long and hard at third-party ethical certification, developing and testing various concepts. While voluntary third-party certification can be made to work, the cost rules it out for virtually all but a handful of today's operators.

The most viable option is client education about ethical practices, making the demand for integrity and the systems that make it possible, common-place. Such a program is best delivered by operators to their clients, backed-up by a coordinated national campaign by NAMA. Acting in the best industry interests, this program will give operators the tools they need to educate clients and it positions NAMA to support them with public relations and other client-messaging programs.

Companies that cheat drag us all down and the time has come for that to stop. Our industry must stamp out unethical and non-professional business practices. The effort to do so will be no small task but bringing back true competition will only benefit our clients, our customers and NAMA members everywhere.

The NAMA Chairman of the Board will announce this program at the National Expo in St Louis. Be there to learn how you can help restore the image and respect our industry deserves.

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