

## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 OCTOBER 2014

### **CEA LAUNCHES FREE E-LEARNING WEB APPLICATION ON ETHICAL ADVERTISING**

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) has introduced an e-learning web application on CEA's Practice Guidelines on Ethical Advertising, as part of its free online resources for the estate agency industry and consumers. The web application is aimed at enabling Key Executive Officers (KEOs) of estate agents and real estate salespersons to gain a better understanding of the advertising guidelines in an engaging manner. Consumers may also use the web application to learn the do's and don'ts in advertising when they look for salespersons to help them with their property transactions. The web application is hosted on the CEA website ([www.cea.gov.sg](http://www.cea.gov.sg)) and can be accessed using Flash-based browsers.

2. The e-learning web application features 12 chapters of scenario-based comic strips that illustrate ethical advertising in different areas, such as on description and correct use of property, claims in advertisement, seeking owner's consent and on different methods of advertising. The comic strips are accompanied by audio narration which brings the characters to life, while explaining the guidelines to the user in a lively way. Users can select the chapter they wish to view or view them in sequence. At the end of each chapter, users can take an interactive quiz to assess and reinforce their understanding of the topic. The application was developed over the course of a year.

3. Chan Kwok Cheong, Deputy Director (Policy and Planning) of CEA said: "In designing the app, we referred to real-life case studies to ensure that the scenarios

presented were realistic and provided practical examples that the industry and consumers could use. As this is the first time that we are testing the e-learning method, we also sought ideas and inputs from the industry. We hope that e-learning could open up opportunities for a more diversified and enhanced learning experience for KEOs and their salespersons. We may also consider working with approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training providers to develop e-learning applications on other topics in future.”

4. The Practice Guidelines on Ethical Advertising was chosen as the topic for the testing of the e-learning approach as advertising is a key activity of the industry and is a fundamental area that estate agents and salespersons are required to be well versed in. Issued in June 2011, the Practice Guidelines set out the dos and don'ts on advertising, guidelines on acceptable contents and the method of advertising, and case examples. The Practice Guidelines can be downloaded from the CEA website ([www.cea.gov.sg](http://www.cea.gov.sg)).

5. Though the total number of complaints received by CEA has decreased over the years, complaints relating to advertising, such as misleading, missing or inaccurate information, have remained in the top three categories of complaints. CEA hopes that as salespersons develop a better understanding of the Guidelines, they would be able to facilitate property transactions smoothly.

**Annex:** Example of a chapter in the e-learning web application

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## **About Council for Estate Agencies**

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) is a statutory board established under the Estate Agents Act to regulate and promote the development of a professional and trusted real estate agency industry. The key responsibilities of CEA are to license estate agents and register salespersons, promote the integrity and competence of estate agents and salespersons, and equip consumers with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions in property transactions. For more information, please visit: [www.cea.gov.sg](http://www.cea.gov.sg)

### Example of a chapter in the e-learning web application

#### Chapter 2: No misleading information

The comic strip depicts a salesperson who provides misleading information in his advertisement flyers by stating his client's property with a marked up asking price and inflating the selling prices of past transactions. He is advised by another salesperson to do so. CEA investigates the matter and finds both salespersons to be in breach of CEA's Practice Guidelines on Ethical Advertising.

