

What is Professionalism?

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Professionalism is defined as a “person engaged or qualified in their field, an expert, someone certified in an area of their profession”. The word “professional” is tossed around a lot. Everyone has their own image and their own definition of what the word professionalism means to them. Companies have in writing and policy how professionalism is defined and should be demonstrated within that company.

The following are universal agreements on the subject of professionalism within most industries.

Always performing to the best of your abilities in every aspect of your career is at the top of the list. This may sound ambiguous and all encompassing. It is all encompassing. Most career minded individuals know the basics of their day to day jobs. Pull those basics apart and then evaluate yourself as to whether you are the best at all of your job skills and abilities.

Become an expert at the skills needed to perform your job. This often means ongoing education in your chosen field. No one can stay qualified in their field in this changing world if they are not constantly educating themselves. Keep your knowledge up to date.

Customer satisfaction is primary in all professions. If all employees understood that satisfying the customer’s needs is the company’s main goal, the fear of being laid off would not be realistic to its employees. The employee who understands the concept of outstanding customer relationships is always a valued employee by the successful business.

How to satisfy the customer and keep the customer’s loyalty is the foundation of professionalism. These cornerstones are the building blocks for that solid foundation.

Professionals are not time clock tethered. Their time is managed by the tasks at hand. Daily goal setting and follow through to complete the tasks at hand is self-satisfaction. There are plenty of opportunities to self-manage.

Self-management begins when the individual starts their day. The clothes, shoes, and tools they choose for their work day sets them apart from others as soon as they appear at work. The attitude they carry into the office sets them apart. They are someone everyone is happy to see. The person who at the end of the day is still demonstrating a dependable attitude is the one every employer wants to acknowledge.

The customer does not want to see an overly stressed person. Keeping personal issues personal and taking time to recharge is what goes along with self-management. Never would an employee undermine, bully, gossip, or swear at the customer or fellow associates. This is not professionalism. It's the formula for dismissal; therefore, knowing acceptable communication skills is one of the building blocks for professionalism.

Understanding basic good manners and using these guiding principles are a building block for attaining the job and becoming more valuable within your career. Basic good manners including honesty, trustworthiness and acceptable etiquette skills are what companies expect.

The professional knows how to address the customer at an initial meeting by using respectful introductions and conversation skills. The professional would know how to handshake, communicate, introduce the product and lead the customer to a successful sale.

If invited to be in a social setting such as lunch, the professional is confident with the basics of proper dining etiquette. Some companies take the candidate to lunch as part of the hiring process to know how well this person can perform in a stressful situation. For the company's peace of mind it also demonstrates how this candidate will perform when out with a valued customer.

One's professionalism can be quickly judged by all individuals in just a few seconds. You must speak positively and have excellent communication skills coupled with good manners. Acceptable attire for the career you enjoy or the career you wish to attain is a huge statement for your first impression when meeting a customer or on a job interview.

Self-management in the area of completing the job accurately and thoroughly is the sign of a true professional and the final building block for a solid career. Professionals are expected to manage their time and work habits for outstanding company results. They are given wide latitude in their daily self-management and there is a personal sense of accountability about not abusing the privilege. Those who achieve more than expected from themselves will always grow within their company and will always be referred to as a "true professional".

Rita Santamaria is the owner of Champions School of Real Estate and Champions School of Professional Development. Champions offer courses in Real Estate, Loan Officer, Appraisal, Inspector and to become more professional in any career, Champions has the Professional Development School including Public Speaking. To enroll today, ChampionsSchool.com and TheChampionsProfessional.com