

PROFESSIONALISM TIPS

General Concepts to Keep in Mind Regarding Professionalism:

- There are 4 main areas to focus on regarding professionalism:
 - Your behaviors/actions (what you do)
 - Your attitude (how you think)
 - What you say
 - How you dress
- Keep in mind that professionalism is *somewhat* subjective (people see it differently based on personal opinions/biases)
- The key is to **find the cultural norms for your environment** (what are MOST people doing) and aim for that AND HIGHER
 - If most people come to work in khaki's and a polo or button down shirt, wear the same or better (dress pants and a dress shirt). Do NOT come in with jeans or t-shirts.
- Mirror/model yourself after those at work who demonstrate the highest level of professionalism
 - There might be people at work who say inappropriate jokes, are vulgar or don't work very hard. Maybe they have a bad attitude or always talk about other people. Just because some people *do* it doesn't mean it's acceptable or professional.
 - Pay attention to those around you. Whom are the ones getting recognition, awards, promotions? These are the people you should be modeling yourself after.

10 Examples of Professionalism:

So, what *does* professionalism look like? Following are a few keys to being professional in the workplace:

- **Be present** – be there and be on time
- **Dress appropriately** – watch what your colleagues wear and dress *at least* as good or better
- **Be polite & respectful** – regardless of how you're treated by customers, colleagues, etc., rise above it; "play nicely" with others; regardless of what you think, it's not about you RECEIVING respect first; respect is *earned*, not automatically given
- **Have a good attitude** – most things you CANNOT change; but you CAN control your attitude. Non-verbals like smiling, listening and being pleasant WILL impact people's perception of you
- **Do your best work, but don't be a perfectionist** – a bit confusing, right? A half-hearted attempt will get you the WRONG sort of recognition. You need to work hard/well, but be as efficient as possible; trying to be perfect can prevent you from getting things done on time (which is as equally important as quality); and, yes, it's a balancing act!
- **Go above and beyond** – this doesn't mean you have to say yes to everyone every time; but an "it's not in my job description" attitude will *quickly* give you a "not a team player" reputation
- **Be dependable** – people need to know they can trust you to get things done when you say you will and that you'll be there when they need you
- **Be ethical** – show integrity and character; just because you don't think anyone is watching, doesn't mean they aren't; in fact, they likely ARE watching
- **Communicate clearly** – ask for clarification when needed; when you're having trouble with something, speak up (don't wait until it's too late); make sure what you say is clearly understood; make sure the things you say and what you write is professional
- **Be a work in progress** – be willing to accept feedback; you are NOT a finished product, so when your boss has things for you to work on/get better at, take it from the standpoint that they are trying to HELP you become the best employee you can be