

Professionalism in the Workplace

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



Professionalism in the Workplace

What Are Some Basic Ways You Can Display Professionalism?

- ❖ Dress for the job
 - Before your first day on a job inquire about the typical dress code for the office
 - Observe what others are wearing
 - Be aware of the details (hair, jewelry, cologne/perfume, etc.)
 - Watch this video on dressing for success: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0DFwGy8wUg>
- ❖ Prepare to do the best job you can
- ❖ Communicate with respect
 - Listen carefully and take constructive criticism well
 - Respect other's privacy
- ❖ Accept responsibility



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What Are Some Basic Ways You Can Display Professionalism?

- ❖ Keep your personal problems...personal!
 - Focus on your job
- ❖ Finish your tasks
 - If working on a large, time-consuming, task break it down into smaller tasks to show that progress is being made
 - Here are some tips for staying on task, and prioritized, at work:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF-GShM6Adk&feature=results_video&playnext=1&list=PL21FF6DF71C49F64A
- ❖ Turn off your cell phone
 - Use your break time to text or check personal messages
 - Keep your voice down while talking (be it a personal or business call)



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What Can Students do to Practice Professionalism?

- ❖ Turning in work on time
- ❖ Interacting politely with professors and students
- ❖ Paying attention in class
- ❖ Not missing class, and coming to class on time
- ❖ Not making excuses, and taking responsibility for poor work
- ❖ Not doing as little as possible to get a decent grade
- ❖ Not complaining that the work is too hard or too much



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Common Mistakes New Employees Make in the First Month:

- ❖ Misunderstanding the corporate culture
- ❖ Not asking enough questions
- ❖ Lacking integrity
- ❖ Not following the rules
 - Learn office rules and policies, culture, and dress code
- ❖ Lacking attention to detail
- ❖ Making job-related errors
- ❖ Communicating poorly
 - Treat everyone with respect
- ❖ Misinterpreting the job description
- ❖ Poor interaction with co-workers
 - Get to know your co-workers, but avoid excessive chattiness
- ❖ Trying to change things too fast



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Some Other Unprofessional Qualities Include:

- ❖ Sloppy appearance or dress
- ❖ An over concern about advancement/promotions
- ❖ Poor work ethic
- ❖ Sense of entitlement
- ❖ Overall bad attitude



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Review of Recent Research

- ❖ In a recent study conducted by the University of Michigan it was found:
 - Employees who had more personal items in their workspace (i.e. pictures of friends and family, etc.) were seen as **less** professional than those without those items
 - Job candidates were viewed more **negatively** when they attempted to discuss an employer's personal life (described in the study as referring to the boss' family picture or other items in his/her office)
 - Conclusions drawn from the study were:
 - During the interview stage for a job it's important to focus on the job itself, not to attempt to befriend the employer
 - New employees who want to appear professional should minimize the amount of personal items in their workspace



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Dealing With Your Boss

- ❖ Be proactive and request an “Expectations Meeting”
 - Find out what your boss needs you to do in the first few weeks
 - What are the goals, and are they concrete/measurable
 - List your top job priorities and see if they with your boss’ list
 - Observe your boss’ personality and leadership style
 - Watch as the following video provides more tips:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dulMIWzYQVg>



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Networking With Co-Workers

- ❖ Get out of your office, and your comfort zone, and meet people that can tell you the hidden rules of success
 - Try to network with 3-5 new people in the first two weeks
 - Reserve 2 days per week for networking lunches
- ❖ When networking, be sure to listen and accept advice about the Dos and DON'Ts of the office
- ❖ Start to build allies within your office
- ❖ Find one, or more, mentors that are willing to take you under their wing
- ❖ Take a look at this humorous take on networking: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j1nHdURKgE>



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Timeliness

- ❖ Plan to arrive at work 15 minutes early
- ❖ Build time for bad weather, traffic, construction into your commute
- ❖ Set a schedule with your boss early in your tenure so you both know what to expect
- ❖ Communicate with your boss any conflicts that do arise



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Sources

- ❖ “Professionalism in the Workplace and First year on the Job,” Salisbury University Career Services Office
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- ❖ Heaphy, Emily, Sanchez-Burks, Jeffrey, and Ashford, Susan. Cultural Impressions of Professionalism. University of Michigan, Ross School of Business.