

## Am I a Professional?

Being a professional is much more than having a certain level of education or belonging to a professional body. In fact, most aspects of being a professional are not taught in college or university programs. Professionals are committed individuals found at all levels of the organization who demonstrate the following characteristics:

Professionals are people who approach work every day with positive attitudes. They see the cup as half full and not half empty. They present themselves in a well groomed and properly dressed manner and demonstrate effective daily work habits.

Professionals are people who communicate best by listening first, understanding the situation second, and sharing their solutions last. They also pride themselves on being highly effective in both verbal and written communication. They clearly understand that it is not what you say that affects others most but it is how you say it. They also unselfishly make time to listen to others.

Professionals are people who see their work as a career or calling, not simply a job. They realize the world is constantly changing and therefore are always seeking to acquire new knowledge and skills that enable them to keep up with these changes. This enables them to develop more innovative approaches to satisfy their customer needs.

Professionals are supportive team members. They celebrate other's successes and provide empathy when they are down. They understand where the organization is going, what their role is, and regardless of their position, demonstrate appropriate leadership as well as followership skills on a daily basis.

Professionals are people who know that success at work only comes when they help others succeed. They understand that only when their customers, fellow workers, and the organization succeed, they succeed. They further realize that to achieve success they must work hard and demonstrate strong morals and ethics. Their humble and honest approach builds long lasting trust, respect, and loyalty with others.

Professionals are determined, efficient, organized, and effective in completing their work on time and with pride. They manage their time, work responsibilities, organizational resources, as well as their internal and external customers in an effective yet caring manner. They maintain their professional demeanor even in difficult and challenging situations and realize that problems are best solved when people keep their cool, try to understand others and work collaboratively to find satisfactory solutions.

Professionals are people who always question what they are doing and why they are doing it. They are continually searching to find better, easier, faster, more quality effective ways to do their work. They are outcome focused individuals who set challenging, yet specific, realistic, achievable, and measurable goals. They spend the time necessary to identify short as well as long term goals and then establish effective monthly and yearly plans to achieve those goals earlier than planned.

Professionals recognize that good food and proper exercise are key ingredients in their energy level, personal health, and productivity. They also pay close attention to their social, emotional, spiritual, and mental health needs as well as family needs and understand the importance of keeping the right balance in each.

Professionals would prefer to work in an organization that provides high quality products and/or services that meet the changing needs of their customers/clients/patients/students. They would prefer to take on duties and responsibilities that are meaningful to them and add value to others. They would like to be thanked, praised, and acknowledged from time to time when they produce notable high quality results.

Professionals would prefer to work with rather than for other dedicated and skilled professionals at all levels of the organization. They would prefer to be treated in a sincere manner, with courtesy and respect. They would like to be paid competitively for their work, have a position of trust and respect, and find purpose and meaning in their work.

Professionals realize their organization is part of a community and therefore consider the long term best interests of their community in decision making. They are concerned about the world, the environment, and their fellow man. They make just decisions for the common good. They don't separate their work from the world around them but see their work as a way of life. Put simply, a good professional is a good citizen who volunteers time in the community to help others.

Above all, professionals are people who always treat others with respect, courtesy, care, and consideration regardless of race, cultural background or position in the organization. They are humble, kind, patient, and demonstrate a sincere willingness to help others.