



## Quick Guide to Demonstrating Professionalism

**What is it?** Professionalism is the conduct, behavior and attitude of someone in a work or business environment. A person doesn't have to work in a specific profession or industry to demonstrate the important qualities and characteristics of a professional. Professionalism is associated with a strong market reputation, solid work ethic, and excellence in job performance.

### There are Several Key Elements of Professionalism:

#### Appearance

- Dress professionally – this is expected at every job interview, career fair, or professional event. It shows respect and creates a very positive impression that you are confident and competent.
- Professional attire can look different depending upon what industry and organizations you are targeting for employment.
- **Business Professional** – for men, this means a black, gray, or navy suit with tie. Shirts should be ironed, shoes polished, and dark socks worn. For women, this includes a few options, such as a modest dress, skirt and blouse, or pantsuit. Everyone should ensure that clothing worn is not too tight, loose, or low cut. Heavy makeup, excessive jewelry, and messy hairstyles are not recommended.
- **Business Casual** - for men, this could be dark jeans with an ironed blazer and button-down shirt, or khakis and a nice sweater. Black or brown shoes should be worn, with dark socks. For women, this could be a dress, dark washed jeans and a blouse, or a skirt with a blouse and possibly a cardigan. Wedges or flats are recommended for shoes.
- In the end, dress to impress. It is better to be too formal than too informal.

#### Behavior and Attitude

- Professionalism means behaving appropriately in class or on the job and maintaining a positive attitude while respecting your classmates and/or co-workers. Turn off or silence your cell phone.
- It means showing up for class or work on time and being prepared to contribute in a meaningful way.
- Use formal salutations when speaking to or writing emails to faculty/staff members and employers, such as "Mr. Jack Smith," or "Ms. Laura Bennington," or "Professor Cloud." Do not use "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam," or informal terms such as "hey there" or "what's up."

#### Social Media

- Clean up your social media profiles. Don't use inappropriate email addresses, like [beachbody@hotmail.com](mailto:beachbody@hotmail.com). Develop a LinkedIn profile and feature a professional headshot/picture.
- Shake hands firmly, but only if a hand is offered to you first. Fist and elbow-bumps are now common.