

## *What does it mean to be a professional?*



## COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

TAKING PRIDE IN ALL WE DO

Professionalism ♦ Respect ♦ Integrity ♦ Discipline ♦ Excellence

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Professionalism is a word often heard in the College of Business, in fact, it is included in the college's set of core values. Unfortunately, too many people in the corporate world only give lip service to true professionalism. However, when you leave Southern Miss and join the corporate world, you should endeavor to be a professional in all that you do.

Many people think they become a professional simply by obtaining a degree and working for a company. But being a professional means so much more than that. Attitude and actions play a major role in professionalism. It means being true to your profession and striving to excel in every task you undertake.

Characteristics of a professional include:

1. Competency – not only have the ability to perform tasks assigned, but also staying up-to-date on technology, regulations and policies, or any other factor affecting your ability to perform your job.
2. Accountability – be responsible for all of your actions; don't "pass the buck." Be someone everyone knows they can rely on.
3. Doing What is Right - follow Codes of Conduct and Ethics as set by your profession and employer. The moment you do something you feel is wrong you are an unprofessional.
4. Planner – avoid unnecessary rushes to complete tasks, try to keep things running on a smooth schedule.

5. Strong Oral and Written Communication – take care to communicate to co-workers, customers, and vendors in a clear and concise manner.
6. Good Decision Maker – gather data and analyze the situation before making a decision.
7. Loyalty – never criticize your employer to outside individuals. Keep all internal data and information within the company.
8. Respectful – of co-workers, supervisors, vendors, and especially of customers.
9. Good Attitude/Behavior – keep a positive attitude and never let your "bad day" affect others. Don't abuse privileges at the office. Keep personal tasks to a minimum.
10. Punctual – always be on time to work, to meetings, and to appointments with clients. Be mindful of other people's schedules.
11. Proper Attire – follow the organization's dress code. To be treated like a professional, you must look like a professional.

### **Professionalism as defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary**

Pro • fes • sion • al • ism (noun)

- of, relating to, or characteristic of a profession
- engaged in one of the learned professions
- ★ (1) : characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession (2) : exhibiting a courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike manner in the workplace

## *Do You Have The Skills Employers Look For?*

Does your resume reflect these skills and qualities?

During an interview, can you give specific examples of how you demonstrated these skills?

<b>Employers Rate the Importance of Candidate Qualities/Skills</b>	
Communication skills (verbal and written)	4.7
Honesty/integrity	4.7
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	4.5
Strong work ethic	4.5
Teamwork skills (works well with others)	4.5
Analytical skills	4.4
Motivation/Initiative	4.4
Flexibility/adaptability	4.3
Computer skills	4.2
Detail-oriented	4.1
Leadership skills	4.0
Organizational skills	4.0
Self-confidence	3.9
Friendly/outgoing personality	3.8
Tactfulness	3.8
Well-mannered/polite	3.8
GPA (3.0 or better)	3.7
Creativity	3.6
Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker	3.2
Sense of humor	3.2

You can develop these qualifications through class assignments, work experience, and involvement in the various campus and community organizations.

(5-point scale, where 1= not important and 5=extremely important)

*Source: SHRM®/CNNfn Job Satisfaction Survey Report 2004*

Do you have a job or an internship? Look how valuable the experience will be for you!

<b>Employers Rate the Importance of Experience*</b>	
Relevant work experience	4.0
Internship experience	4.0
Any work experience	3.5
Co-op experience	3.4

Build your experience now. Contact the Career Services Office today.

(5-point scale, where 1= not important and 5=extremely important)

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