

Being A Professional

Dr. J.T. (Tom) Snell

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 an organization who demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Professionals approach work with a positive attitude every day. They see the cup as half full and not half empty. They present themselves in a well-groomed, properly dressed manner and demonstrate effective daily work habits.
- Professionals communicate best by listening first, understanding the situation second, and sharing their solutions last. They pride themselves on being highly effective in both verbal and written communication. They understand that it is not what you say that affects others most, but how you say it. They unselfishly make time to listen to others.
- Professionals see their work as a career or calling, not simply a job. They realize the world is constantly changing, and 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 the needs of their customers.
- Professionals are supportive team members. They celebrate others' successes and show empathy when others are down. They understand where the organization is going and what their role is. Regardless of their position, they demonstrate appropriate leadership and followership skills on a daily basis.
- Professionals know that success at work only comes when they help others succeed. They understand that they succeed only when their customers, fellow workers, and organization succeed. They 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 from and toward others.
- Professionals are determined, efficient, organized, and effective in completing their work with pride and on time. They manage their time, work responsibilities, and 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 always question what they are doing and why they are doing it. They are

continually searching for 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 both short-term and long-term goals, and establish effective monthly and yearly plans to achieve those goals.

- Professionals recognize that good food and proper exercise are key ingredients in their energy level, personal health, and productivity. They 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 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 prefer to take on duties and responsibilities that are meaningful to them and add value to others. They like to be thanked, praised, and acknowledged when they produce notable high-quality results.
- Professionals prefer to work with rather than for other dedicated and skilled professionals at all levels of the organization. They prefer to be treated in a sincere manner, with courtesy and respect. They 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 consider the long-term best interests of their community when they make decisions. They are concerned about the world, the environment, and their fellow men and women. 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. A 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, and patient, and demonstrate a sincere willingness to help others.