



Professional Outlook

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What you will learn

At the core of the lesson

You will learn how to:

- Identify professional behaviors
- Discuss why professionalism is important
- Describe how professionalism relates to you
- Describe how professionalism relates to coworkers
- Maintain a professional attitude when you work with customers

Key terms

- Dress code
- Empathy
- AWS Lambda
- U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance
- Customer-centricity



What is professionalism?

Why are the following behaviors professional or unprofessional?

For each scenario, ask:

- How does this affect their fellow coworkers?
- How does this affect the business?
- How does this affect customers?

Scenarios

1. Richard is consistently 15–20 minutes late for work.
2. Every day, John is grumpy and negative. He constantly complains about work, the office, the customers, or anything at all. Sometimes, he sits at his desk and complains out loud—to no one!
3. Martha is the person to ask when her team needs help, but getting her help is difficult. She isn't busy and is often seen taking personal calls while someone patiently waits at her desk for help.
4. Mateo is the person in the office who says, "I didn't do it!" When everyone else on the team makes mistakes, they quickly take ownership of the error and work to fix it. Mateo, however, will blame others when he feels threatened.
5. Jane works hard and can be relied on to do a great job. However, from time to time, Jane rants. When she rants, Jane often uses inappropriate language.

Physical appearance

Dressing appropriately and how it affects professionalism

- What impression might a hiring manager have about someone who's dressed in clean, unwrinkled clothing versus someone who's dressed in dirty or wrinkled clothes?
- What if the company has no stated dress code? How would you figure out what kind of clothing is considered to be professional?
- Compare working as a member of the cloud IT team at a fashion company in Atlanta that specializes in activewear versus working at a high-end fashion company in New York City. They are both fashion businesses, but do you think their everyday professional clothing will have differences?



4

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Other questions to consider:

- Do you need to dress up (suit, business casual, and so on)?
- How do you express your own personal style?

A high-end fashion company in New York City will look for the latest suits, dresses, and trends. At the activewear house in Atlanta, they will look for the latest athletic shoes and clothing, tech wearables, and so on.

A professional image, as expressed in how you dress, will affect how you work with customers. This situation also includes jobs where you don't talk to customers face-to-face.

Physical appearance for the interview

For a job interview:

- If you can, learn about the company's dress code before the interview
- Follow the dress code
- Consider dressing slightly better than the dress code

Discussion: Should you cover up tattoos or remove excessive body jewelry at the interview?



Now you look like a professional, but can you work with customers like a professional?

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A *dress code* defines the expected clothing standard in an organization. It can vary based on industry.

- For an interview, consider dressing slightly better than the company's dress code.
- For the discussion, consider who the prospective employer is and their public style.

Professionalism when you work with customers

What does it mean to be professional when you work with customers?

Here are some characteristics of professionalism. Discuss each characteristic and brainstorm some concrete examples.

- Patience and focus
- Ability to talk in a clear, concise manner (can get to the point quickly)
- Concrete knowledge about the product or service
- Staying calm when the customer is angry and upset
- Reading customer cues through their language, attitude, and so on
- Writing in a clear and concise manner

Professionalism when you work with customers

Group exercise

Form groups and discuss the differences between talking to each of the following groups.

What are some of the differences when you talk to your:

- Family
- Friends
- Coworkers
- Boss
- Customers

Professionalism and empathy

Professionalism also requires being able to relate to someone else's feelings

Empathy: The ability to be aware of or understand to the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of other people.

When you are empathetic, it can have many positive affects in your life and work environment.

1. Your coworkers will feel comfortable discussing issues.
2. Other people feel like they matter.
3. People feel safe discussing sensitive issues.
4. People feel safe admitting mistakes.
5. Being empathetic helps create an open and communicative environment that can improve the quality of work.

Professionalism and empathy, continued

Professionalism and empathy scenario

Scenario

Sofia rushes into your meeting. She's several minutes late. After putting her laptop on the conference room table, she immediately puts her head in her hands and shakes her head. You also notice a letter that she dropped on the table with the words "Unacceptable, Sofia!" written in red at the top. The handwriting is unmistakable: it's your boss's handwriting. The meeting just started, and no major subjects have been covered yet. What should you do?

- Should you act now or wait until after the meeting?
- What would you say to Sofia? What is the first thing that you should say?
- How can you show genuine concern, but also be sensitive to Sofia's privacy?

Follow-up

How do your actions earn trust among your peers?



Professionalism in customer satisfaction

Be customer-obsessed

Start with the customer, work backwards.

Start with what's most important to the customer and work backwards to actions that will make that happen. This process can help eliminate unnecessary activities and bring value to the customer.

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Amazonians follow the Leadership Principle of customer obsession. You start with the customer and work backwards. Amazonians don't start with a product and try to sell it to a customer. Instead, Amazonians obsess about the customer! Customer satisfaction is an important measure of professionalism, and it can also be used to determine the level of customer-centricity.

Putting it all together

Two scenarios for discussion

- The confused customer
- The angry customer

Scenario 1: The confused customer

Read the scenario. When everyone is finished, discuss what elements of professionalism are appropriate.

A billing issue

A customer calls the service center because they are confused by their bill. They were told by Sales that they would receive 1 million free invocations that use AWS Lambda each month. The caller thought that there was no way the programmers would use Lambda more than 1 million times per month. However, the bill for Lambda was just under \$70 dollars.

At one point in the call, the customer says, "I should have never started using the cloud! Now, I'm in trouble and I can't figure it out!"

What do you do, and what elements of professionalism are needed?

Scenario 1: The confused customer

The customer:

- **Doesn't understand the bill**
- **Might not trust the programmers**
- **Has serious questions about using cloud compute**

Elements of professionalism

- **Clear communication** – State back the problem to the customer clearly. Build trust by showing that you understand.
- **Product knowledge** – Be able to state, “Yes, you definitely receive 1 million invocations per month at 400,000 GB/s of compute time per month.”
- **Following customer cues** – What does the customer’s comment that “I should never have...” tell you?
- **Empathy** – Can you relate to the customer’s situation of being confused by something that they think is complex?
- **Decision-making** – What parts of professional decision-making could you use to help the customer? Hint: Understand the problem, gather data.

Resolution: By looking into the details, you find that the customer’s programmers called Lambda 32.5 million times, with memory settings between 128 MB and 1,024 MB.

Scenario 1: The confused customer

Resolution

You clearly communicate that you understand the question about the bill and the customer's confusion. However, when the customer needs help, you are there to help them.

You look into the details, and you find that:

- Lambda was called 32.5 million times.
- Memory settings were between 128 MB and 1,024 MB.
- AWS did cover the first 1 million invocations at 400,000 GB/s of compute time.

You empathize that understanding the bill is a challenge at first, but AWS has tools to help. You explain that you would be happy to send a link to the AWS Lambda calculator so the customer's programmers can start forecasting their spend. You can also contact Sales to have them reach out to the customer to help them better understand the bill.

Scenario 2: The angry customer

Read the scenario. When everyone is finished, discuss what elements of professionalism are appropriate.

A security issue

A customer who handles IT for several medical offices calls into the service center—and they are very angry.

They explain (and shout) that their company was led to believe that AWS was compliant with the U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). However, a medical office manager was told that there are no HIPAA certifications for cloud service providers. Now, their customers are threatening to sue because they can't produce a HIPAA compliance report.

They say that they were misled about HIPAA compliance with AWS. They demand to have their data expedited back to them through AWS Snowball.

What professional skills can you use to help this customer?

Scenario 2: The angry customer

The customer

- Might not understand AWS compliance
- Is under a large amount of stress
- Made an extreme request to resolve the issue, but it might actually make the situation worse

Again: The elements of professionalism

1. **Clear communication** – Similar to the scenario with a confused customer, show that you know and understand the problem.
2. **Patience and focus** – The customer is upset and angry. As a professional, you must remain patient and focused on the customer's needs.
3. **Product knowledge** – You know that customers who require HIPAA compliance use AWS, so there must be a misunderstanding.
4. **Empathy** – How can you relate to the customer and earn trust?
5. **Decision-making** – This is a complicated situation. What can you do to start developing a solution?

Class discussion: Discuss this scenario as a class. What would you do?