

# PROFESSIONALISM

How to stand out from the crowd

# THE REASON YOU JOINED

Most of you joined Alpha Kappa Psi in order to learn “professionalism,” but professionalism isn’t a tangible skill that you can learn in a day.

Professionalism comes from knowing the basics of professional etiquette, confidence and presence, and common sense.

Once you know the basics, it takes practice to embody certain qualities that professionalism requires.

A close-up photograph of a man's torso and neck. He is wearing a dark pinstriped suit jacket over a white dress shirt and a blue and white striped tie. His right hand is visible, adjusting the knot of the tie. The background is dark and out of focus.

**DRESSING  
PROFESSIONALLY**

# CAN'T I JUST WEAR JEANS?

No. Dress the way that you would want your employer to see you. You want to come off as put together, clean, and composed. You could be the smartest person in the world, but dressing anything less than perfect can make you look distraught, scatter-brained and dirty.

# LEVELS OF DRESS

## Casual

- More suited to the tech and startup industry, casual clothing is appearing well dressed without having to wear dress pants

## Business Casual

- Formal-business casual is wearing a suit without the jacket, however, casual-business casual can be slight altered to lean more towards the casual level of dress

## Business Professional

- Formal means wearing a suit. It's only a suit if the jacket and pants are made of the same fabric, and are the same color. Which means 99% of the time you buy them together





# WOMEN'S CASUAL

## Shoes

- Shoes should not be sneakers or flip flops. Can be either flats, heels, or wedges.

## Bottoms

- Darker jeans or black jeans are acceptable and leggings with dresses may work as well. If you are wearing skirts they should be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.

## Tops

- Simple blouses and nice shirts can be worn however they should not be low cut and should not have spaghetti straps.

## Dresses

- Dresses can be worn however they should not be too body conscious and should be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.



# WOMEN'S BUSINESS CASUAL

## Shoes

- Shoes should only be closed toed flats or close toed heels. The color of the shoes may be either nude or black.

## Bottoms

- Bottoms can be neutral or dark colored dress pants or tailored skirts. Skirts should not be too tight and should be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.

## Tops

- Simple blouses and nice shirts can be worn however they should not be low cut and should not have spaghetti straps.

## Dresses

- Neutral or dark colored dresses can be worn however they should not be too body conscious and should be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee.

## Jackets

- Neutral or dark colored cardigans and blazers are acceptable.





# WOMEN'S BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

## Shoes

- Black close toed pumps.

## Suit Pants

- Suit pants should be tailored to your form and neither too tight nor too baggy. They should be black, gray, or navy.

## Suit Skirt

- Suit skirts should be too tight to your body. They should be black, gray, or navy and be no shorter than two inches above your knees.

## Suit Jacket

- Jackets must match your pants. They should be tailored to your form so that they're fitted, but not too tight.

## Tops

- Tops should be neutral or pastel colored blouses that are not too low cut.

## Dresses

- Fitted dress that is neutral or dark colored.



# WHERE TO SHOP

- I don't care what I look like: H&M, Forever 21
- I want to look good, but need to be a little budget conscious: J Crew, Banana Republic, Nordstrom, Limited, Express
- I want to look good, and am willing to spend a bit more to make it happen: Bloomingdales
- My dad is one of the biggest diamond exporters in India: Barneys, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue



# MEN'S CASUAL

## Bottoms

- Any color chinos, dark jeans, khaki/pressed shorts are also acceptable and wear a belt.

## Shoes

- Not sneakers, or flip flops. Sandals only if they're nice leather ones. Pretty much everything else goes.

## Tops

- No t-shirts, or tanks. Casual button downs, nice sweaters, or pressed button downs are preferred.



# MEN'S BUSINESS CASUAL

## Bottoms

- Any color chino, though be conservative (avoid red, yellow, etc.). Also dark grey/black/navy dress pants.

## Shoes

- Lace ups, loafers, drivers, leather boots; go for neutral/dark colors. Avoid boat shoes, chukkas, and other semi-casual footwear.

## Tops

- Button down shirt (pressed, not a casual button down) tucked in with a belt. Sleeves can be rolled up if it's hot out. Blazer optional. Sweaters on top of button downs are also acceptable if it's cold out.



# MEN'S BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

## Bottoms

- Go for dark colors like navy blue or dark grey. Black is out of vogue for professional wear, it's more for funerals and dinner parties. Pants should be hemmed so they don't bunch up on your ankles.

## Tops

- Neutral light pastel colors for your shirts. Usually white or light blue, but pink, yellow, and darker blues can work as well.

## Ties

- Ties must ALWAYS be darker than your shirt. Light ties on a dark shirt makes you look like you're going to highschool prom. They should also be thin enough to look stylish, but also not so thin that you look like an idiot.

## Jackets

- Jackets must match your pants. They should be tailored to your form so that they're fitted, but not too tight. One vent or two vents is fine, no vents makes it harder to tailor. Lapels are flexible. Two buttons is safest, but a European cut jacket can look good with one button and very tall people can pull off three. When wearing two buttons only do the top button, when wearing three buttons always do the middle one and sometimes do the top one (depending on height).

## Accessories

- Don't use any accessories unless you're in some position of power. If you show up wearing cufflinks and a pocket square as an intern you'll get trashed. Don't wear tie-bars, period.





# WHERE TO SHOP

- I don't care what I look like: Men's Wearhouse, JoS A Bank
- I want to look good, but need to be a little budget conscious: J Crew, Banana Republic, Nordstrom, Brooks Brothers
- I want to look good, and am willing to spend a bit more to make it happen: Bloomingdales, Theory, Hugo Boss, Indochino
- My dad is one of the biggest diamond exporters in India: Barneys, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Custom Made

A close-up, warm-toned photograph of a hand holding a fountain pen, poised to write on a piece of paper. The pen is a classic fountain pen with a gold-colored nib and a black barrel. The hand is positioned in the upper left, with the pen tip pointing towards the lower right. The paper is light-colored and shows some faint, cursive handwriting. The background is blurred, showing more of the hand and the paper. The overall mood is professional and focused.

# EMAIL ETIQUETTE

# WHY HAVE PROFESSIONAL EMAILS?

60% of real-world communication is nonverbal, which means that 60% of your emails can be misinterpreted. If you follow basic templates it will make it less likely for people to misinterpret the tone in your emails. The best professional emails elicit a response from the recipient almost immediately because they are clear and understanding of your email request. Use common sense when emailing employers; this isn't AIM Chat Client.

**DO NOT:** Have smiley faces, ellipses, excessive exclamation points or question marks, colloquial language, etc.

# WORK EMAILS: GREETING

The greeting is necessary to address the person you are talking to appropriately. It starts with a salutation leading into the first sentence of your email which would be introducing yourself or a cordial line to the recipient.

**Most Formal**- Dear Mr./Mrs. John Doe

**Formal**- Dear Mr./Ms. Doe

**Informal**- Dear John

# WORK EMAILS: SENDOFF

Sendoffs (aka: email signatures) are a way for the recipient to find out your position in a company, class/major at your college, or contact information in case they would like to follow up with you in the future.

# WORK EMAILS: SENDOFF (EXAMPLE)

**Formal:** Best Regards, Warmly, Sincerely,

Sanika Natu

PwC | Product & Services Industries

Office: (312) 298-6684 | Mobile: (650) 224-3595

Email: [sanika.s.natu@us.pwc.com](mailto:sanika.s.natu@us.pwc.com)

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

One North Wacker Dr, Chicago, IL 60606

<http://www.pwc.com/us>

**or**

Sanika Natu

Carnegie Mellon University

Information Systems & Business Administration - Class of 2015



# WORK EMAILS: FOLLOW-UP

Put your name and the reason for the email so that it's clear to the reader what your email is about before they even open it.

Start your email with something that the person will remember you from. If you're following up from a recruiting event, then the 100 other students/interns/employees are doing so as well, so make sure that they remember you.

Be concise. No one wants to read a 20 page email. Whoever reads your email will skim it in exactly 5 seconds to decide whether it's worth it for them to respond, so get to the point quickly and tell them why you're emailing them in one sentence.

# WORK EMAILS: FOLLOW-UP (EXAMPLE)

Dear Christina,

I hope you enjoyed your time here at Carnegie Mellon University and I'm glad I got the chance to meet you at the TOC. I enjoyed talking to you about the PwC Case Competition last year, and I feel like I got a sense of not only the kind of work and projects at PwC, but also the PwC company values and social impact.

I know you mentioned that the main focus of this month would be for full-time positions, but I did apply for the PwC Advisory Security Consulting Internship via TartanTrak and the PwC careers website. I'd love to stay in touch with you, and hear more about your experience and additional opportunities at PwC. Please let me know any next steps I should take. Thank you again for taking the time to talk to me this past week!

Best Regards,

Sanika Natu  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Information Systems & Business Administration - Class of 2015

# WORK EMAILS: MEETINGS

If you are trying to set up a meeting with someone, make it as easy as possible for them given their schedule. For example, it's easier for you to list all your available times and have them choose from those times rather than sending 5 emails back and forth to find the best possible time.

# WORK EMAILS: MEETING (EXAMPLE)

Subject Line: Nick Lam: Rho Pledge Class Meeting Request

Dear Sanika,

I hope this email finds you well. I am a member in the Tau Pledge Class of Alpha Kappa Psi and would like to have an opportunity to get to know you better. Is there an available time within this weekend and next week to meet with me?

Here is a list of my available times:

Saturday (Feb 16): 2:30-10:00PM

Sunday (Feb 17): 11:00-8:00PM

Monday (Feb 18): 7:00-10:00PM

Tuesday (Feb 19) 3:30-9:00PM

Please let me know if one of these times will work with your schedule. If none of these times are convenient, please let me know some times you are available. Feel free to contact me by email: [nlam@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:nlam@andrew.cmu.edu) or by cell: (412)759-6668. Thank you. I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,  
Nick Lam

# COLD-CALL EMAILS

The basic premise is introducing yourself and establishing a networking relationship.

Keep these emails concise and make sure that you get to the point quickly.

More information will be included in a future Networking deck.

# TEXTING PROTOCOL

Do not text your employers or brothers unless they have given you specific permission to text them or they have set the precedent of texting you informally. If you have to text in emergency make sure you address them respectfully.

## **Example:**

*Hello Sanika, I hope you are doing well. This is Nikita and I am texting you because I am at the black chairs for our meeting and wanted to double check whether I was at the correct location or had the right time. Please let me know and thank you so much!*



# ADDITIONAL TIPS

# THE BIGGEST TAKEAWAY

Confidence exudes professionalism. Think about the most confident person you know. What's your first impression of them?

When someone is confident through body language, being articulate, and being put-together, people automatically think that they are very professional.

There's a reason why people say "fake it until you make it." Practice simple ways to improve your confidence.

# PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING

The most professional people are also great public speakers. Being articulate and concise also exudes professionalism. If you talk quickly and act nervously, you'll come off as shy and unprofessional.

More information will come in the Public Speaking deck.

# YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Be conscious of having your own personal brand. What do you want to be known for? If you could be the best at anything, what would it be?

Most of the most professional people are known for something whether it is a skill, character, personality, or hobby.

When people know you for being good at something, they will begin to request your expertise.

# BE PROMPT

- Respond to emails quickly
- If you're on time you're late
- Never miss a meeting

People who are always late to everything, miss meetings, or never respond to emails ultimately lose credibility. When you do these things you either think your time is better than everyone else's or you are scatterbrained, neither of which is a good image to have.

# LANGUAGE AND CONVERSATION

Always have appropriate language with your employers. Unless your employer indicates that he/she is inclined to move the conversation towards a more social level do not swear, bring up alcohol or parties, or talk about anything else that you would have to question how they would react.

The same goes for meetings with brothers; do not bring up anything that you would not bring up with your boss.

Clean up your online profiles. We'll discuss this in more detail in a future Online Presence deck.



# HANDSHAKES

A handshake is one of the first impressions your employer gets when they meet you and can be easy to mess up.

Be the first to extend your hand and make sure that your handshake is firm, yet not too rigid. Always meet the grip or strength of the person who is shaking your hand so that it is not a constricting clasp nor a limp handshake.

Maintain eye contact, have the handshake last no more than 4 seconds with only one or two pumps, and say "Hello Sanika," "Good Morning Sanika," "Good Afternoon Sanika," "Good Evening Sanika," etc.

# ASSIGNMENT

# YOUR ASSIGNMENT

1. Greet every brother you see on campus with a salutation and their first name.
2. Dress business professional for every pledge meeting and dress business casual for every pledge workshop. Email anyone from the PM/PIC team if you need clarification on dress.
3. Meet with your pledge brothers and your PM and PIC. Sign up for PM/PIC slots and take a picture for every one-on-one meeting with your pledge brothers.