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CBEL

October 8, 2017

As part of CBEL, I had to volunteer for FreeGeek Vancouver. Started at Portland, OR in 2000, the organization ethically recycles electronics. Their main goals are both environmental and economical: recycling and reducing electronic waste, and engage local community by providing training and selling electronics at economic prices. My duty as a volunteer was to test donated computers, mark them ready for a sale the organization is hosting, and carry them to the sale location. The main purpose of the day was to test as many computers as possible, so to lift off the most work from regular volunteers possible. During the whole process, I learned about professionalism(CEAB 8), not only in my appearance and language, but also in my actions.

As I have only recently joined the mechanical engineering and have only worked internally as a part of the department, this volunteering gig was one of the first times I’ve externally represented UBC. Additionally, I was feeling a bit unwell that day - somewhat worn out. Still, it is very important to put on a professional appearance. Although my nose was runny, I communicated without fault with the volunteer coordinator, in a professional manner. By treating the people I’m working with courteously, it made communication smoother, I felt more free to ask more questions, and work was done at a rate faster than I expected. Not only that, UBC and the mechanical engineering department was seen in a respectful light because of how I acted and represented it.

While I was carrying tested computers to front of the house, a customer asked me about the specifications of the computer. As professionalism is not just appearance, as it also pertains to the protection of public interest, I can not claim expertise on something I’ve volunteered for only about an hour. It would be deceitful and I would not have been protecting the interest of the public by giving minimally informed opinion, from a position of assumed expertise as a volunteer staff. Hence, I told him honestly and courteously that I didn’t know, and referred him to the team of staff. After my referral, he went to ask a staff and got a more informed opinion to buy a computer of his choice. I was very proud of myself for acting in an appropriate and helpful manner.

I learned to develop myself as a professional engineer from this experience. As a result of CBEL, I learned to represent the organization I’m from in a professional manner, and learned to uphold public interest above all. I will continue to learn to become a professional engineer by improving on my professionalism, both on manners and actions, and while working, volunteering, or being an example to the community around me.