Professionalism

There is a lifelong lively debate concerning the essence of professionalism. Some people believe that it is a set of skills and knowledge, which come with age and fruitfully completed tasks, while others are confident that it is a combination of personal traits, maturity, behaviors, and appropriate appearance. Those belonging to opposing groups would view wearing a t-shirt to an interview from different perspectives, as those supporting the first standpoint would believe that looks do not affect professionalism, while the believers of the second approach would dispute it ardently. In this essay, an attempt to speculate on various dimensions and draw lines connecting them will be made.

First and foremost, professionalism refers to competence. It is inseparable from obtaining a particular volume of knowledge and developing a specific set of skills, which are critical for coping with job duties and constantly improving performance. In this view, the perception of professionalism differs across industries, as what is a valuable talent in one sector would be meaningless in another. For instance, being proficient in accounting is inappropriate in mining just like the ability to run assemble lines does not comply with surgical practice. At the same time, professionalism is connected to effective communication skills whether it is verbal, non-verbal or writing communication.

In addition, professionalism can be viewed as behavior. In this case, it refers not only to decency and managing to cope with job duties regardless of emotions but also acting ethically. It means that true professionals are always dedicated, respectful, and separate personal matters from work-related ones, thus avoiding interrelation and collision of the two. This behavior is common both inside and outside their workplace environment, as true professionals always know how to address work-related issues outside office hours. For example, if a doctor sees an individual losing consciousness at the subway station, helping this person instead of ignoring the problem would point to professionalism of a doctor. The same would be true if a policeman lands a criminal outside of working hours. Moreover, a true professional addresses each situation following laws, regulations, and predetermined job duties.

Finally, professionalism is a set of personal traits. Of course, it is inseparable from competence and ethical behavior. However, there are some character traits, which determine predisposition to growing highly professional. For instance, self-management, responsibility, punctuality, and dependability are valuable determinants of professionals, as they are helpful for working on the first two aspects of professionalism – competence and behavior. On the other hand, it is rarely related to narcissism and inability to accept criticism because they slow down personal growth and continuous improvement. All in all, professionalism is about engagement and passion for work, as they are the drivers of self-development.

To sum up, professionalism is inseparable from individuality. Even though there are some generally acceptable determinants of this concept such as behaviors, competence, and personal traits, the very essence of professionalism is synonymous with standing out from the crowd. However, it is not connected to becoming an attention seeker. Instead, professionalism is turning into a remarkable person, who strives for constant improvement in order to increase work-related effectiveness. At the same time, it is about the ability to determine an appropriate frame of behavior and pay specific attention to filling existing gaps in knowledge and skills. So, when viewing the situation with a t-shirt, it is vital to find out whether it was the only option for drawing hirer’s attention compensating absence of talents and creative potential.