

Professionalism

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Abstract

What do you know about ‘professionalism’ when you say that you are a ‘professional’? Most of the people think if they have the jobs in their hands, they must be called professionals. They do not know the difference between an employee and a professional. They think that to spend the time from morning to evening in the office is enough to make them professionals but it is not true. ‘Professionalism’ is not a task that must be completed within the time that has been given; it is an art that develops within a person and seems as it is inherent in him when he has an absolute devotion and dedication for his art.

Key Words: Professionalism, professional, employee, task, art, devotion, dedication

Introduction

What is ‘professionalism’? Will it be called a professional world where professionals are committing a number of mistakes and blunders intentionally or unintentionally and providing them a name or phrase ‘professionalism or professional world’? It is an unbelievable fact but it is happening in our own world. ‘Professionalism’ is a word that is easy to articulate but difficult to understand. If we see the scenario of today, we will find that everyone is ready to answer this question and everyone is confused when he has to justify his own answer.

In fact, the professional phenomenon does not have clear boundaries. It has a number of shades and definitions. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines it as “the high standard that you expect from a person who is well trained in a particular job; great skill and ability; the practice of using professional players in sport”.

The Chambers 21st Century Dictionary defines the word ‘professionalism’ in six ways:

1. earning a living in the performance, practice or teaching of something that is usually a pastime;
2. belonging to a trained profession;
3. like, appropriate to or having the competence, expertise or conscientiousness of someone with professional training;
4. habitually taking part in, or displaying a tendency towards, something that is despised or frowned upon;
5. someone who belongs to one of the skilled professions;
6. someone who makes their living in an activity, etc that is also carried on at an amateur level.

Demand Of The Employers

If we see the picture of this post- modern world, it will be seen that many employers now demand a particular set of expertise and competencies from their employees. The role of the Institution is to ensure that we co-ordinate our professional qualification with these new competencies and show that membership of a professional body is the best way to exhibit and maintain professional skills. We need to show the employers how the staff with professional qualifications has the capacity to meet contemporary challenges such as authentication, ordinances, procurement, environmental appraisal and much more.

Characteristics Of Professionals

As it is said earlier, professionalism does not have a straightforward concept to define. The word 'profession' is, today, almost synonymous with occupation: the term professional is now applied to a wide range of such individuals as footballers and cricketers. For an analytical understanding of professionals I looked to the work of Professor Robin Downie, the Department of Moral Philosophy, Glasgow University, who has written extensively on this subject. Seeking to identify the essential nature of professions by examining what existing professions do, he has developed six characteristics of professionals summarised as follows:

1. The professional has skills or expertise proceeding from a broad knowledge base.
2. The professional provides a service based on a special relationship with those whom he or she serves. This relationship involves a special attitude of doing good tempered with integrity. This includes fairness, honesty and a bond based on legal and ethical rights and duties authorised by the professional institution and legalised by public esteem.
3. To the extent that the public recognises the authority of the professional, he or she has the social function of speaking out on broad matters of public policy and justice, going beyond duties to specific clients.
4. In order to discharge these functions, professionals must be independent of the influence of the State or commerce.
5. The professional should be educated rather than trained. This means having a wide cognitive perspective, seeing the place of his or her skills within that perspective and continuing to develop this knowledge and skills within a frame work of values.
6. A professional should have legitimised authority. If a profession is to have credibility in the eyes of the general public, it must be widely recognised as independent, disciplined by its professional association, actively expanding its knowledge base and concerned with the education of its members. If it is widely recognised as satisfying these conditions, then it will possess moral as well as legal legitimacy, and its pronouncements will be listened to with respect.

These are the characteristics that must be found in a professional. It is right that each professional body has its own ideas of the characteristics that its professionals must possess for being considered a professional and all these characteristics are stated in its codes of conduct and ethics. Here are given some very important professional characteristics that are expected by most of the professional bodies and that are common in them:

1. keeping oneself up to date with one's professional field;
2. helping, supporting and co-operating with one's colleagues;
3. showing concern for the well being of his clients;
4. binding to the relevant legislation;
5. respecting clients and helping them in taking decisions;
6. doing always more than expectation;
7. communicating effectively;
8. having a habit of sharing knowledge;
9. doing what one say and saying what one can do; and
10. keeping a smile on one's face and right attitude in one's heart.

Difference Between An Employee And A Professional

What does it mean when one says that one is a professional? Will it be enough for a person to have a job in his hands? Are you sure that that person has the characteristics of being called a professional or would you like to differentiate between these two terms – an employee and a professional?

Your office time that you spend from morning to evening can make you an employee but it can never make you a real professional.

In fact, it can be understood that an employee is a person who is employed and trained in a company or institution. He is the person who works under the direction of a professional management. He demands constant superintendence and always requires to be informed and ordered by his superiors and employers. On the other hand, a professional is an employee in a company or institution who has expertise in his field and bears himself well to suit his profession. He is always honest with his profession so he never waits that he should be told or ordered to come on time and constantly monitored by his superiors and employers. He loves and learns to follow the company or institutional manners with as much sincerity as possible. He knows very well how to dress, behave and work in the workplace. Professionalism becomes inherent in his character and personality. If the professional does not find his workplace environment fit for him, he will definitely propose the required changes to be considered by the professional management for a better set up at the professional site.

Professional Ethics

If we talk about professional ethics, we should remember that they are not the universal truths that may remain applicable in each and every circumstance and may be learnt at once. It is a constant process of supervising the time that is being faced, and, according to that situation, the required and relevant steps must be taken. The things that may be acceptable and ethical today, or in a particular society or situation, may be considered differently by others or at another time. Professional ethics stand for not only producing and delivering high quality specialist services but also contributing vitally in shaping our general beliefs in a rationally based, open society.

Conclusion

In fact, professionalism is not a task that can be done and learnt; it is an art of developing a skill in one's own self for doing one's profession for oneself as well as one's professional body. 'Professionalism' may be defined as a process of achieving perfection in a particular field and changing your perfection in a job for getting your livelihood with absolute honesty and proving yourself an asset for your own self as well as the institution or the workplace where you are employed.

Thus 'professionalism' has the following characteristics:

1. 'Professionalism' means to put all your efforts in doing your profession honestly and trying your best to give it a reach that may touch the sky of success.
2. 'Professionalism' means to have a will power for being the best employee in taking the institution or company to great success.
3. 'Professionalism' means to try to be a professional in every task that you do each and every day.
4. 'Professionalism' means to devote your body and mind to your profession.
5. 'Professionalism' teaches a professional that in any field you should be able to accomplish any work and task with any colleague even if you dislike that person or have personal confusions and misunderstandings with him because a professional should remember the difference between personal and professional.
6. 'Professionalism' makes a person able to work autonomously and gives him the potential of having the skills and ethics to finish the work that he starts.

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