be better elaborated upon, especially for our newcomers whom we have just welcomed, and who are just starting their new positions as Extension Educators.

What exactly are the elements of a “businesslike” manner? How exactly can we “exhibit” professional behavior? We want to specify some of the answers of this broad topic in this issue of the Extension Exchange.

There may be many different ideas that emerge when...
talking about professional behavior. Individuals may possess completely different notions about what is “businesslike” and what is not. A person from another country, for example, may not be familiar with American professionalism. When he or she tries to integrate his or her learned traits to a new business setting, others might view it as lacking experience or as incompetent.

Cornelius Grove and Willa Hallowell of Grovewell Leadership Solutions (a leadership coaching firm) said it best when they mentioned that we all need to be “clear in our own minds what a professional means in the context of U.S. business.” In the 2002 article titled, “The Seven Balancing Acts of Professional Behavior in the United States,” Grove and Hallowell listed and described all the elements that they perceived to be values of “acting professionally.”

Though there could be thousands of different elements that may arise from this topic, we felt that these “seven traits” were not only well-executed, but also centered on the right areas to better understand professional behavior. On the right, you will read about the seven traits.

1. Individualistic, yet restrained.
   Individualism is all about taking initiatives. To perform tasks without having to be told is valued in a professional atmosphere, but only to a certain point. Working independently means to act upon work objectives and not upon one’s own personal interests.

2. Egalitarian, yet respectful.
   To be egalitarian is to believe in the equality of people. The levels of job title hierarchy is only used to appoint the different roles and responsibilities that employees receive, not to place different values on different human beings. To be professional is to be ready to take on a job role while maintaining cordial relationships with colleagues, and without acting superior to others.

3. Assertive, yet sensitive.
   A professional must be able to balance confidence, with being aware of his or her effect on others. Avoid being perceived as too confident or arrogant. Be mindful of people’s feelings and learn how to control your temper.

4. Accurate, yet tactful.
   To be tactful is to have a keen sense of knowing what to say or do to avoid giving offense. Being accurate and honest is always valued. However, not always revealing the shortcomings of a person or an embarrassing situation is as much, a valued quality.

5. Punctual, yet patient.
   Keeping an agenda is the best way to get things done during the day. Work activities are expected to begin and end on time. But keep in mind that those around you also follow a schedule, therefore, being a professional calls for the need to be sensitive to others’ workloads and priorities.

“...we all need to be clear in our own minds what a professional means in the context of U.S. business.”
6. Warm yet, “cool.”
   It is expected that conflicts will arise at work. When we participate in “heated” arguments, we let our prides control our ability to consider a differing opinion. Grove & Howell explains that conflicts should be kept in a “warm” state indicating that there may be differences in opinion, yet, the likelihood of allowing them to amount to a “heated” argument should be kept to a minimum. When two ideas fall on opposite ends and both parties work to accept these differences, we need to maintain rationality, objectivity, and be free of emotional highs and lows. These traits, to Grove and Howell, mean maintaining a “cool,” demeanor.

7. Optimal, yet practical.
   Although many individuals strive for excellence, one should not expect 100% perfection all the time. Grove & Howell said practical considerations should be balanced with the quest for optimal results. Improving one’s knowledge, skills, job quality and output are traits that are worth as much value as a flawless job well done. Think about what you get out of the whole experience and not by counting your mistakes.

---

Co-workers have a huge impact on your mood during the day. You spend long hours with them five days a week, getting to know who they are as more than just your secretary, boss, program assistant etc. However, revealing too much may put a strain on your professional relationship. It is all too easy for work relationships to go a negative direction.

As an Educator, think about what kind of relationships you deal with at work. There are paraprofessionals, county and district directors, area specialists, district program specialists, state professionals and other support staff whom you may deal with on a day to day basis. Most of you even have to deal with clientele who have issues about an event or activity, or are just unhappy about something.

Of course each person will have varying experiences on the job. However, keep in mind that in order for work relationships to be effective, you have to know boundaries.

Work relationships can be sincere, but at the same time competitive. In order for you to get through the toughest days, you really can’t take things personally. Allow yourself to focus on yourself and what makes you a good worker. Do not let pettiness and social cliques distract you from your goals as an employee.

Another tip would be to always be open to constructive feedback. You will have some days when a person from a higher level of job hierarchy will make you feel that something you did was simply not good enough. But just think that knowing you are willing to make the changes to produce quality work will strengthen your trust for the person who advised you, and (continue reading ‘Relations’ on pg. 4 )
vice versa. At the same time, complying with his or her request will show that you do not only care about producing quality work, but will prove that you are a reliable person to do the job.

Those who like to work independently tend to be more self-reliant, which is a great trait to have. However, there is such thing as being too self-reliant. Sometimes this may lead to the lack of trust in the input or advice of other individuals. What is missing in this scenario is the person’s willingness to work together. Once employees realize that co-workers are working towards the same or common purpose, active listening will help attain mutual understanding, which will breed respect and cooperation with one another. Having this quality will help strengthen work relationships, which is also best carried out if one avoids making premature judgments. Remember: you do not always have to take people’s advice, but listening to them and letting them know that you acknowledge their input will show respect and consideration for another’s importance in the workplace.

The tips that have been mentioned so far are golden when it comes to keeping professional relationships in tact. It really all boils down to the individual. Is he or she willing to invest in the relationship? Does he or she have enough patience, control and concern for the effectiveness of the team, or rather, the entire goal of OCES?

We will leave the decision up to you.

---

**In a Nutshell...**

**Here’s what we covered:**

1. Avoid revealing too much personal information about yourself in the workplace.
2. Know boundaries: keep professional and personal lives separate.
3. Don’t take things too personally.
4. Always be open to constructive feedback.
5. Don’t ignore others’ requests. Active listening will help attain mutual understanding.
6. Respect breeds more respect and an easier ability to cooperate.
7. Avoid making premature judgments.
8. Acknowledge one’s input, even if you have decided not to take their advice.
9. You have complete control of the kind of relationships you cultivate at the work place.

---

**4 Things that get in the way of an effective relationship:**

1. Mistrust
2. Stereotyping
3. Excluding others and their ideas
4. Having unclear expectations of each other
We thank all of the people who joined us at the New Educators Orientation, August 10 to 12. It was such a pleasure getting to meet everyone. We also thank the speakers and state specialists for their contribution and efforts. You all did a great job!

Introducing our new folks:

In the front row (L-R) we have: Jay Parker of Muskogee County, Emily Gregory of Grady County, and Carl Oblander of Murray County.

In the back row (L-R) we have: Valeri Evans of Kingfisher County, Lindsay Ensley of McCurtain County, Brandy Watkins of McClain County, Kendra Piasciki of Comanche County, and Penny King of Sequoyah County.

“Go Pokes!!!”

We thank all of the people who joined us at the New Educators Orientation, August 10 to 12. It was such a pleasure getting to meet everyone. We also thank the speakers and state specialists for their contribution and efforts. You all did a great job!
Joyce, I enjoy your newsletter, but can’t remember how to access it. Can you give me the Web site? Thank you.
-From Bobbi Donat; Nutrition Education Assistant

Bobbi,
Unfortunately, we have not posted issues of the *Extension Exchange* on a Web Site yet. However, this is one of our current goals. For the mean time, current issues of the newsletter are distributed by email through a listserv. Each email contains a PDF attachment of the newsletter, which is currently the only method to access it. If anyone is interested in previous issues, just let us know and we will email you any issue you would like to see again. Our contact information is on the front page of every newsletter. Thank you so much for getting in touch with us and please send us more of your exchanges in the future!
-From the Staff and Program Development Team

Great newsletter….I must confess I'm sorely tempted to print this out on paper …. especially the part about the paper clutter :) 
-From Sue Gray; Extension Educator Tulsa County

Source: http://comics.com

*This month's wise owl words of wisdom*

“The difference between try and triumph is just a little umph!”
-Marcus Annaeus Lucanus, Roman Poet

*Until our next exchange!*