



# Elsabé Manning

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## **PROFESSIONALISM COURSE (One day)**

'**PROFESSIONALISM**' is the term used to describe the internationally accepted standards or expectations that society has of people's conduct and levels of competence in the workplace. These standards of conduct are set by society, management, our peers, our customers, our staff, our families and of course, us.

Being professional means that your conduct has to remain above reproach at all times—and must fit in with the circumstances and situations in which you find yourself. Being professional requires that you comply willingly with the highest ethical standards and that you have a deep awareness and understanding of appropriate business behaviour in various cultures. It also requires a high degree of knowledge, skill, ability, attitude and sound judgement.

### **COURSE OUTLINE (and measurements of professionalism):**

1. Image
2. Business etiquette
3. Telephone and e-etiquette
4. Manners
5. Communication: verbal, non-verbal (body language) and written
6. Relationships
7. Competence
8. Responsibility and accountability
9. Trustworthiness
10. Empathy and compassion
11. Respectfulness
12. Emotional maturity (Emotional Intelligence)
13. Work ethics.

Your professionalism is also measured by the extent to which others can rely upon you and trust that you are willing and able to follow through on commitments, avoid conflicts of interest, and are able to remain objective, and that you will adhere to the norms and expectations of business associates and of society at large.

True professionalism will command respect, but it also means that you will have the ability to show respect toward others in authority—and to the rights and privileges that belong to those in authority.

We learn very well and very fast through observation—examples set by others. The people we are most affected by and who have the most influence on our behaviour are people in authority and people we admire. That is why it is always so important to set an excellent example to others. Your behaviours will be mimicked and copied, not only by your children, but by your staff and peers, friends and family and all who look up to you.

There is no greater compliment than someone imitating and admiring us, but admiration, for whatever reason, comes with great responsibility to do the right thing and to ensure that our conduct remains above reproach. Our behaviour today will help to shape tomorrow's leaders.

It is not always easy to retain one's individuality whilst living up to the social norms and expectations of business associates. Professionalism skills will help you to demonstrate your individuality subtly, while still displaying norms of behaviour that will not upset others.

## **VALUE TO THE COMPANY**

There is no doubt that companies need—and indeed demand—well-behaved, emotionally mature people to manage their resources, of which people are the most valuable resource.

Most companies demand that their staff behave professionally at all times, but they do not offer any explanation of what that means, and staff do not readily admit their ignorance because they are 'supposed' to know what professionalism means. We simply assume that everyone knows how to conduct themselves in every situation. In addition, many of us expect western manners and etiquette from all South Africans, leaving no room for error and totally disregarding African—and other—cultures.

Improved professionalism will not only ensure individual growth and development, but this new behaviour will create more cooperation and respect, improved communication and higher performance in teams as well. This will in turn uplift the entire company through fundamental change in its culture—which involves shared assumptions, beliefs, values and norms, behaviour and communication patterns. Edgar Schein wrote: 'Company culture is the key to excellence and the function of leadership is the creation and management of culture'. What

better way to improve company culture than to train, coach, mentor and develop its most valuable resource to reinforce new, professional behaviour? My course and book were specifically written with that in mind.

## **OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE**

### **Participants will discuss and commit to:**

1. The organisation's expectations of them with regards to their conduct
2. Improving their image, grooming and deportment
3. Minding their manners
4. Acting professionally at all times in the workplace and with clients
5. Improving their own professionalism skills and knowledge
6. Acting more respectfully in the workplace and with clients
7. Being more caring and compassion
8. Communication skills - verbal; non-verbal; telephonic and electronic
9. Acting with more consideration and respect toward others.