

PROFESSIONALISM
FOR
SUPERVISORS

PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL

Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)

State of Louisiana

PROFESSIONALISM FOR SUPERVISORS

Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)

Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service

***Office of Human Resource Management
304 Thomas Boyd
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Phone (225) 578-2280
FAX (225) 578-9499
cptp@lsu.edu***

Revised: 9.19.14

PROFESSIONALISM AND PRODUCTIVITY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide supervisors with the tools and strategies necessary to enhance the level of professionalism for themselves, as well as their team. Topics discussed include professional behavior, communicating as a professional, managing conflict as a team member, personal organization and productivity, and personal goal setting.

JOB OUTCOMES

- Communicates ideas and facts verbally in a clear and organized way.
- Builds productive working relationships with key individuals and groups.
- Treats all individuals with sensitivity and respect.
- Demonstrates appropriate levels of personal job expertise in daily work responsibilities.
- Maintains a professional demeanor in stressful or difficult situations.
- Demonstrates a personal commitment to quality public service.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Assess current levels of professional behavior and develop strategies for improving effectiveness.
- Explore the various elements involved in communicating as a supervisor and develop techniques for enhancing skills.
- Examine the aspects of work organization/time management, recognize personal time wasters and generate strategies for increasing productivity.
- Develop personal goals for increasing overall efficiency and effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONALISM

Professionals are people who have experience and skill in a specified role or occupation. Professionals are found at all levels of an organization. Being a professional is not dependent on someone's title. Developing and maintaining a level of professionalism within the workplace can be challenging at times, but it can and should be done.

Individual and Small Group Activity

What: What is a Professional?

How: Individually:

- What does professionalism mean to you?

In small groups:

- Brainstorm three examples of each:
 - Professional Behavior
 - Non-professional behavior.
- Brainstorm qualities of a professional supervisor.

Notes:

Characteristics of a Supervisor

1. Concerned about improving their standards of performance and the performance of their team
2. Committed to self-development and life-long learning
3. Look for *what's* wrong rather than for *who's* wrong
4. Self-directed
5. Appreciate the accomplishments of others
6. Make positive contributions to their growth as well as their team's growth
7. Systematically measure progress toward realistic goals

Supervisors, as well as professionals, are flexible, courteous, competent, helpful, responsible, well-groomed, efficient, patient, and knowledgeable. They are good communicators, listeners, and team players, and they consistently demonstrate a positive attitude.

As a representative of your agency, your appearance and behavior make an impression on the people you serve as well as on your co-workers. Your work activities often involve interaction with others, and work must often be produced through your co-workers. Professionalism can enhance your self-image and the respect your co-workers have for you. It can also improve the organization's climate, which affects employees' attitudes, motivation, and productivity.

Individual Activity

What: Professionalism Self-Inventory

How: Take the professionalism self-inventory to see where you rank in your professionalism.

Circle the number you feel best represents your current skill level, with five being the highest and one being the lowest.

	COMPETENCY: ORAL COMMUNICATION
1 2 3 4 5	1. Communicates ideas and facts verbally in a clear and organized way.
1 2 3 4 5	2. Adjusts style, tone, and level of verbal communication to fit the audience and situation.
1 2 3 4 5	3. Listens to others and shows understanding of what they are saying.

	COMPETENCY: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
1 2 3 4 5	4. Communicates ideas and facts in writing in a clear and organized manner.
1 2 3 4 5	5. Adjusts style, length, and level of written communication to fit the audience and situation.

	COMPETENCY: PARTNERING
1 2 3 4 5	6. Builds productive working relationships with individuals and groups.

	COMPETENCY: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
1 2 3 4 5	7. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of all individuals.
1 2 3 4 5	8. Treats all individuals with sensitivity and respect.

	COMPETENCY: ACCOUNTABILITY
1 2 3 4 5	9. Takes personal responsibility for work products and services.

	COMPETENCY: PROBLEM SOLVING
1 2 3 4 5	10. Recognizes and defines problems and issues.
1 2 3 4 5	11. Recommends appropriate solutions to problems.

	COMPETENCY: CUSTOMER SERVICE
1 2 3 4 5	12. Integrates customer/client needs and expectations into delivery of services.
1 2 3 4 5	13. Improves the quality of the services provided on an ongoing basis.
1 2 3 4 5	14. Demonstrates a personal commitment to quality public service.

	COMPETENCY: PERSONAL JOB EXPERTISE
1 2 3 4 5	15. Demonstrates appropriate levels of personal job expertise in daily work responsibilities.
1 2 3 4 5	16. Applies procedures, regulations, and policies related to personal job expertise appropriately.

	COMPETENCY: ADAPTABILITY
1 2 3 4 5	17. Responds constructively to change and setbacks.
1 2 3 4 5	18. Maintains a professional demeanor in stressful or difficult situations.
1 2 3 4 5	19. Modifies behavior and work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
1 2 3 4 5	20. Remains open to new ideas and approaches.
1 2 3 4 5	21. Works on a number of different projects without losing focus.
1 2 3 4 5	22. Adjusts as quickly as possible to new situations that need attention.

	COMPETENCY: CONFLICT RESOLUTION
1 2 3 4 5	23. Resolves conflicts, confrontations, and disagreements in an appropriate manner.
1 2 3 4 5	24. Takes steps to prevent destructive conflict situations.

	COMPETENCY: DIVERSITY AWARENESS
1 2 3 4 5	25. Recognizes the value of individual differences at all levels of the agency.
1 2 3 4 5	26. Helps to maintain a climate in which everyone is respected and recognized for their contributions.

	COMPETENCY: WORK GROUP TEAM BUILDING
1 2 3 4 5	27. Encourages cooperation and team-work within agency and work group.
1 2 3 4 5	28. Supports group problem-solving and participative decision-making.

	COMPETENCY: INTEGRITY/HONESTY
1 2 3 4 5	29. Displays and encourages high standards of honesty and integrity.
1 2 3 4 5	30. Uses ethical practices in all work activities.
1 2 3 4 5	31. Demonstrates consistency between words and actions.

	COMPETENCY: CONTINUAL LEARNING
1 2 3 4 5	32. Evaluates personal strengths and weaknesses, and assesses their impact on others.
1 2 3 4 5	33. Invests time and energy in self-development and professional growth.

Competency Rating Sheet

The final step in scoring the survey is to rank order the competencies in relation to how important they are to your job. Rank ordering is simply listing the competencies from highest to lowest. This will help you see which competencies are the most important to your job.

Rank	Competency
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	

COMMUNICATING AS A SUPERVISOR AND A PROFESSIONAL

Good communication skills are important to a supervisor and can greatly affect professionalism, job performance and productivity. Communication is made up of verbal and non-verbal components.

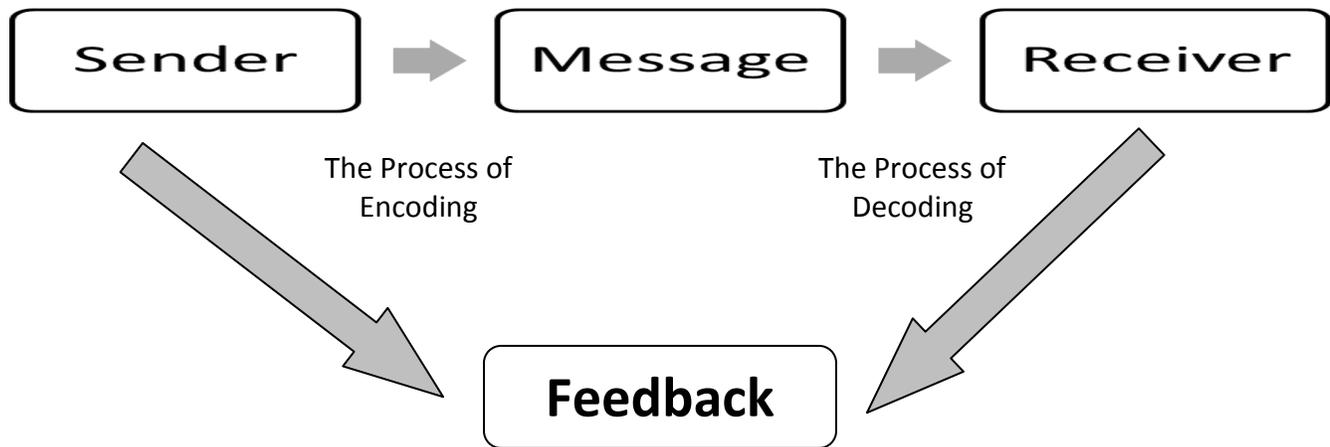
Individual Activity

What: Communication self-evaluation

How: Evaluate your communication style by completing the following survey.

		Almost Always	Sometimes	Seldom
1.	I tactfully say what is on my mind.			
2.	I avoid sarcasm when speaking.			
3.	I think before I speak.			
4.	I avoid anger in work conversations.			
5.	I am sensitive to the feelings of others.			
6.	I avoid gossiping.			
7.	I avoid complaining.			
8.	I make myself clear when I speak.			
9.	I listen without interrupting the speaker.			
10.	I avoid distractions when I am speaking or listening.			
11.	I ask questions if I do not understand.			
12.	I am open to the ideas and opinions of others.			

Communication Process Review



Effective communication is a two-way process through which we send and receive messages. The impact of a message is determined by the parties' tone of voice, choice of words, and nonverbal communication. How effectively you communicate contributes to your overall success as a professional.

Nonverbal Communication

An often overlooked aspect of the overall communication process is nonverbal communication. It represents more than 55% of the message you send. When your verbal message and nonverbal message are not in "sync," you are sending a mixed message. Dr. Mehrabian, author of *Silent Messages*, indicates that 90 percent of the time, the receiver of your mixed message will believe the nonverbal aspect. In other words, *actions speak louder than words!*

As a supervisor, when you increase your power in the area of nonverbal communication, you will begin to experience increased rapport and a better understanding of others. In turn, that can lead to expanded trust, credibility, and productivity.

Small Group Activity

What: Nonverbal communication

How: Read the following descriptions of gestures, body language, or facial expressions, and write down what you think each communicates.

- 1. Arms crossed

- 2. Poor eye contact

- 3. Tapping fingers on table

- 4. Wrinkled forehead

- 5. Leaning back in chair

- 6. Rolling eyes

Active Listening

Listening is a part of everything done in the workplace. Effective listening provides a great foundation for professional behavior. However, it is important to note that there is a major difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is the physical capability to perceive “noise.” For example, you may hear an airplane. Listening requires a mental process to translate “noise.” When you listen to others and hear their words, you must go through a mental process to understand the meaning of the message. This is listening.

The Cost of Poor Listening

Actively listening is tough. We hear things during the day, but there are many times that we miss what is being said because we are not really listening. Someone with poor listening skills might duplicate work efforts or perform assignments that have been changed or rescheduled. Poor listening might also cause someone to not meet the needs of internal and external customers.

Small Group Activity

What: Active Listening and The Cost of Poor Listening

How: In your groups, answer the questions below:

How important is active listening as a supervisor? Why?

What are some of the negative results experienced in your workplace because someone did not listen?

Notes:

Active listening can be the key to solving problems and reducing conflict, misunderstanding, and unpleasantness. Additionally, the payoffs for improving your active listening skills are enormous. You will have fewer communication glitches, your relationships will improve, your productivity will increase, and you will be able to break through those barriers of poor listening to become a more effective and successful communicator.

Dr. Stephen Covey put it very well in his book, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, “We need to speak to be understood and listen to understand.” Learning how to communicate effectively is one of the most rewarding skills we can develop. Though it is a process that requires work, it is well worth the effort.

When working on becoming a better listener, you can follow the **PLAN** and **SEEK** steps:

- P**lan what you’ll do.
- L**et your listener’s needs drive what you’ll say.
- A**ddress your listener’s concerns.
- N**ow express yourself confidently.

and

- S**tate the information you need.
- E**ncourage the person by showing your interest.
- E**xplore the topic by asking questions.
- K**eep checking by restating what you hear.

Small Group Activity

What: Active listening

How: Brainstorm barriers to active listening.

Notes:

Active Listening Strategies

- Desire to listen
- Take notes as others are speaking
- Raise your expectations of yourself – and others
- Become a “whole body” listener
- Give the speaker your full attention
- Maintain eye contact
- Create a good listening environment
- Ask questions, paraphrase, confirm
- Block out distractions
- Control your emotional “hot buttons”
- Avoid interrupting and/or finishing the other person’s statements

Utilizing “I” Messages for Improved Communication

A technique for improving your communication is the use of “I” messages, which is simply rephrasing a statement and substituting “I” for “you.” This will allow you to develop positive remarks and generate an atmosphere of mutual problem solving.

“I” + What You Think + The Situation

“I” + What You Feel + The Situation

Benefits of “I” Messages

- Helps you to express yourself more concisely and clearly
- You take responsibility for your thoughts and feelings by explaining the reasons behind them
- Does not blame the other person
- Discloses your real message
- Makes the other person deal directly with you
- Avoids misunderstanding by using diplomacy and a positive approach to the situation

Professional Behavior on the Job

A major component of investing in yourself at work is exhibiting professional behavior. Establishing and maintaining a professional image is important for every employee. The employee who practices professional behavior always stands out.

Professional behavior is to be admired and will enhance your self-respect and the respect others have for you. When you look and act the part of a professional, you feel like a professional and others have more confidence in your judgment and ability.

5 Ways to be Professional on the Job

Acting like a professional really means doing what it takes to make others think of you as reliable, respectful, and competent. This can take on many different forms.

1. Reliability. People can depend on you.
2. Honesty. You tell the truth and are upfront about where things stand.
3. Integrity. You are known for your principles.
4. Respect for Others. Treating all people as if they mattered is part of your approach.
5. Supporting Others. You share the spotlight with colleagues, take time to show others how to do things properly, and lend an ear when necessary.

CONNECT & BELONG

The value of connecting with co-workers aids in creating a team environment in the workplace. Working as a team can help boost the morale, productivity, and quality of work in the workplace. Ask yourself, “How do I help to create a sense of teamwork at my workplace?”

Individual Activity

What: Connect and belong

How: Answer the questions below.

Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

How do you help create a team environment in the workplace?

How can you meet your needs while meeting the needs of your team?

What components create the team environment you desire?

Working in a Team

Ripple Effect

A ripple effect in a team is when your actions directly impact others and the entire agency. It is easy to forget that individual behaviors affect a greater portion of the agency than anticipated.

When working in a team, there are some guidelines to remember:

1. **T**hink of the big picture
2. **E**xtend a hand
3. **A**ppreciate ideas and actions
4. **M**ake your needs known

Think of the Big Picture

First, you must understand how the team contributes to the work of your agency. Then you will need to evaluate how your actions affect your team and the agency as a whole. Lastly, look at ways to work more effectively with people who depend on you and on whom you depend.

Extend a Hand

On a team, it is very important to share ideas with others. Hording knowledge does not positively affect anyone on the team and could possibly lead to conflict in the future. If you notice that your team members are overloaded, making an effort to assist when possible extends your hand of support to others. However, before jumping in to help, ask if your help is wanted.

Appreciate Ideas and Actions

Within teams there are inevitably multiple ideas and opinions. It is important to recognize and appreciate the ideas and opinions of all the team members. Also, allow other people to work with you to achieve a common goal. Don't forget to give recognition where recognition is due.

Make Your Needs Known

If you find you need help, resources, or anything else, don't forget to ask others for assistance when you need it. Having more than one person involved can help expedite the process and generate more creativity. Multiple ideas can also help solve problems.

Individual Activity

What: Teamwork

How: Identify areas in which you can improve the following:

1. **T**hink of the big picture
2. **E**xtend a hand
3. **A**ppreciate ideas and actions
4. **M**ake your needs known

Notes:

1. **T**hink of the big picture

2. **E**xtend a hand

3. **A**ppreciate ideas and actions

4. **M**ake your needs known

Resolving Conflict as a Team Professional

The most successful organizations have discovered the secret of teamwork, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. One way you, as a professional supervisor, can increase team productivity is by effectively resolving conflict.

Guidelines for Dealing With Conflict

- Control your emotional hot buttons.
- Tell yourself to remain calm.
- Say nothing until the other person calms down.
- Listen for facts and feelings.
- Offer your support.
- Ask questions to better understand the situation.
- Give information to clear up misunderstandings.
- Seek a solution.
- Know when to walk away, reschedule the meeting or take a break.
- Try to see the all points of view.
- Apologize when necessary.
- Use active listening strategies.
- Use “I” messages to reduce tension.
- Remain professional throughout the conflict experience.
- Address the problem rather than attacking the person.
- Think before you speak.
- If appropriate, use humor to diffuse a potentially stressful situation.
- Use non-defensive or open body language and appropriate eye contact.
- Deal with the conflict privately.

NOTES: _____

TAKE PRIDE & EARN RESPECT

Sometimes “just doing the work” isn’t enough. Employees who take pride in their work feel better about their work product and earn the respect of their co-workers. In addition, pride is also about having pride in yourself, which means pride in your appearance as well.

Individual Activity

What: Take pride and earn respect

How: Answer the questions below.

Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

When have you seen your team take pride in their work?

How do you show that you are taking pride in your work? In your team’s work?

How does it make you feel when your team takes pride in their work?

Take Pride in Your Professional Appearance

The agencies for which we work should be committed to excellence in the delivery of services to their customers. As a representative of your agency, you should take pride in the work you do and in your professionalism in doing it.

Our professionalism is reflected both in our actual job performance, and in our appearance. A professional business appearance conveys an air of competence, confidence, respect, and efficiency. The more professional you look, the more professional you feel, and the more professional and credible you'll appear to others.

Small Group Discussion

What: Projecting a professional appearance

How: Brainstorm guidelines for projecting a professional appearance.

Notes:

PERSONAL ORGANIZATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

Personal organization helps you to project a professional image. It is a form of communication that enables you to be more productive. Managing time effectively is a critical personal organization skill for increasing your productivity and overall job performance. An analysis of how you use your time, your major problem areas in managing time, and your time wasters will enable you to identify whether you are doing the right job at the right time or whether you should be doing the job at all. With this information, you can effectively plan and control your work activities.

Individual Activity

What: Personal organization self-assessment

How: Respond to the following statements by checking “Seldom,” “Sometimes,” or “Almost Always.”

		Seldom	Sometimes	Almost Always
1.	I take time to regularly plan my work.			
2.	I prepare a daily “to do” list.			
3.	I avoid procrastinating on or postponing unpleasant or difficult tasks.			
4.	My work area is neat and organized.			
6.	I keep paper and pen by my telephone.			
7.	I use some type of system to set daily priorities.			
8.	I take a few minutes every day to review my priorities.			
9.	My files can be easily found.			
10.	I ask questions or get clarification when instructions are unclear.			

Strategies for Increasing Personal Organization

- Know your prime time.
- Plan your work.
- Keep a “To Do” list.
- Organize your work area/use organizers.
- Avoid fragmentation.
- Avoid procrastination.
- Block out time.
- Keep energy level up, take a break.
- Prepare for change.
- Periodically check your habits.

Time Management: Important Points

- Importance and immediacy are not the same thing—small matters sometimes take precedence.
- Apply the “Is this the best use of my time?” question.
- Your priorities today should not be abandoned without extremely good reasons.
- Knowing what to postpone is as important as deciding what must be done at once.
- With complex tasks, take the first step ASAP.
- Choosing the right method of action is almost as important as deciding what action to take.
- With matters involving other people, alert them as soon as possible.
- Planning helps you create time in which to think about the big picture.

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Answer the questions below to develop an action plan based on what you have learned in this class.

1. What have I learned that I can use as soon as I get back to the office? How soon can I make this change?
2. What resources do I need to make this change?
3. What is the deadline for accomplishing these goals?
4. How will I measure my success?
5. What single attribute would you like to see your staff as a whole improve upon?
6. What single attribute do you wish to improve upon as a professional supervisor?

APPENDIX

ATTITUDE

By: Charles Swindell

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say, or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one thing we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% of what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.

Time Wasters

- Telephone interruptions
- Drop-in visitors
- Meetings
- “Fire-fighting”
- Personal disorganization
- Lack of objectives
- Lack of deadlines
- Over commitment
- Unclear lines of responsibility or authority
- Poor information
- Procrastination
- Indecision
- Inability to say “no”
- Fatigue
- Poor filing system
- Lacking of planning
- Red tape
- Socializing
- Lack of (or unclear) communication
- Lack of procedures of the task
- Others:

Written Communication

- Think of your overall message before writing.
- Be concise and accurate.
- Proofread or have someone else proofread your work before sending it.
- Remember your tone can be misunderstood or misinterpreted by others.
- When providing information in a memo or fax, try to answer who, what, where, when, and why if necessary.
- Keep your emails professional at work.
- Always date your letters and memos.
- Always spell check any work or correspondence.
- Remember the written word can be shared—good or bad.
- Try not to write in anger; cool down before beginning.
- Check the address to avoid delays.

Good Manners and Proper Etiquette for your Team

- Do arrive on time; if you are going to be late call, if possible.
- Do expect delays so you can avoid time challenges.
- Do attend meetings prepared and ready to take notes.
- Do offer others assistance when you see they need it.
- Do defend the reputation of others when appropriate.
- Do keep you workplace neat and free of clutter.
- Do keep an organized agenda or calendar handy at all times so you can refer to appointments quickly.
- Do watch your eating and drinking at your workspace—no spills on important documents!
- Do offer others a seat when they enter your office or work space.
- Do see others to the door after your time with them.
- Do refrain from taking your bad day out on others.