Recent studies show that 96.0% of HR professionals report that an applicant’s professionalism affects the likelihood of being hired and 93% of manager’s report that employee professionalism has an impact on their likelihood of being promoted.* Below are some professionalism tips to ensure career success!

**Phone Etiquette**

Speaking over the phone may be your first interaction with a possible employer or client. When expecting a phone call of importance, make sure to:

- Answer the phone in as few rings as possible and record a professional voice message.
- Convey a friendly positive tone in all phone conversations and voice messages. Smile while you speak!
- Do not call repeatedly if they don’t pick up, but rather leave a message.
- Eliminate casual words such as “um”, “like” or “cool”, and replace with more professional-sounding language such as “yes,” “excellent” or “perfect.”
- Keep in mind that being concise is courteous for most business calls. Phone interviews are the exception.

If you have been sent to voicemail, be sure to:

- Leave a prepared, clear and concise message: address the person by name, state your reason for calling and clearly say your name and phone number twice.
- Speak slowly and enunciate your words.

**Email**

Email is the standard mode of professional communication. It is very important to represent yourself professionally in the emails you send. Remember to:

- Make sure the email subject line describes the purpose of the email.
- Always use a proper greeting such as Dear Ms. or Mr. or full name. (not “Hey”).
- Avoid casual abbreviations and acronyms such as LOL, BTW, etc.
- Do not use all capitals or lower case letters, use correct grammar and punctuation. Always proof read!
- Have a full signature at the end with name, title, organization, phone number, and URL. If currently a student, major and University of Minnesota can replace title and organization.
- Reply in a timely manner to emails, preferably within two days.
- Do not give negative feedback or use language that can be misinterpreted other than you had intended through email. (remember that an email can be around forever and forwarded to people you may not have expected to see it, so think before you send it).
- Sign your email with “sincerely” or just your name (not love or always).
- Use a professional-sounding email address such as your University account.

**LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com)/Facebook**

LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broad network of professionals. This tool provides you an opportunity to build your professional image and show it to the world.
• Always customize your connection requests with a friendly note and, if necessary, a reminder of where you met or what organization you have in common.
• When being introduced online, write a brief introduction of yourself and why you’d like to connect.
• Be selective and intentional about whom you connect with. The quality of your network and how you interact within it is more important than your number of contacts.
• Keep your profile current and updated and proof read everything before posting.
• Utilize LinkedIn fully and to your advantage by uploading a resume and any recommendation letters.
• It’s possible that potential employers may view your Facebook entries. Will your entries impress them or embarrass you? Understand and check your privacy settings.

In the Workplace

Communication:

• If you don’t know a person’s refer to them as “sir” or “ma’am” then ask how they would like to be addressed. Or, if they correct you (i.e. “Call me Bob”) address them in such a way in the future.
• Follow the hierarchy at work - check with your current supervisor before going to his/her manager.
• A “please” and “thank you” are essential in establishing all good working relationships.
• Do not interrupt a meeting/ conversation unless it is completely necessary. If you do need to interrupt, apologize and say “excuse me.”
• Always knock before entering an office or say “excuse me” if there is no door.
• Check in about colleagues’ availability before assuming they have time to answer your question or chat.

Personal Information:

• Never share others’ personal information and try not to eaves drop over cube walls.
• Understand your employer’s policies regarding workplace relationships and understand the complexity that can occur if one of you is promoted.
• Be respectful of your co-workers, supervisors or subordinates when they let you know they want to keep their relationships with you professional.
• Be aware of the message your workplace appearance sends to others. Is it professional? Welcoming?
• Do not bring personal problems to work.

Work Ethic:

Avoid the top reported problems with new employees that can lead to termination:

• Show Up! Avoid tardiness, leaving early, or numerous absences.
• Always acting in an urgent manner, completing all tasks as quickly as possible.
• Be aware of where you stand in the company and acting professionally in your position.
• Demonstrate a strong performance and work ethic; exceed expectations.
• Check in with your supervisor and/or co-workers about your projects especially if you have questions or may have trouble with the timeline. Are you on the right track? Do they have ideas or advice?
• Clean up after yourself in public spaces. Ensure your office is comfortable for others.
• Avoid Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites. Work computers are for workplace use.
• Keep personal calls or text messaging to a minimum and only use at appropriate times.

*Source: Center for Professional Excellence 2012.*