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each element independently would be a chore because they are very interrelated. Such a rigid structure of definition does not allow fair evaluation among professions. Further, the evaluation of professional performance is so subjective that a yes or no determination would be impossible.

There is no universally accepted definition of Professionalism. Nor can any one profession claim to be the most professional. In my mind, the most appropriate definition utilizes a simple High to Low scale of professionalism. To use this definition we examine each element of professionalism and answer, in our own minds, the extent that we possess each element. The following section examines each of the ten elements in detail.

1. Appearance

Do not underestimate the importance of your appearance during work. It is a key tool to regulate perception. Professionals provide services for clients. Because clients pay for that service, they rightfully formulate perceptions and make judgments based upon their perceptions. You are judged because the client wants to access the quality of service. This is especially true in a first impression situation. Of course your appearance is only one of the many attributes that you can be judged on.

Here is the important link: the clients' perception and judgment are derived from their own opinion of what is appropriate. If your attire does not coincide with their belief of what is appropriate, you will be marked lower, in their mind, on the scale of professionalism. Is this fair? Of course not! One's appearance is not a reliable indicator of professional ability. However, it is realistic to say that this type of judgment

occurs frequently.

There is a large degree of misconception that to be considered professional you must wear a suit and tie to work. Obviously this is because a suit and tie are appropriate for many well recognized professions. For other professionals, researchers and engineers for instance, that attire is not always appropriate. Look to the client to determine what is appropriate. If the membership of a private country club does not consider blue jeans appropriate for themselves, neither should the management. Success is when you modify your appearance to prevent a misconception about yourself and your profession.

2. Association

The professional's association protects and enhances the interest of its members. The association protects the profession from the laity by maintaining the integrity of its membership, also referred to as gatekeeping. The most common practice is to set minimum performance levels on certification exams. The CPA exam requires a score of 75% or better on each of the four sections to pass the exam. The association can further gatekeep by choosing the content of certification exams, and the number of credits for continuing education.

It's also the association's responsibility to enforce its code of ethics. Fair and proper enforcement have suffered due to high legal costs. It's a shame to see the conduct of a few people erode the professional credibility of many. Other association functions include development of political lobbies, fund raising for scholarships or research and maintaining relations with fellow associations. All these functions serve the same purpose: to look after the long term needs of the membership.

Members receive a long list of benefits from their association. Foremost is education. Timely information is a commodity. How often do you use it? The primary source of information is the professional journal. If you find it difficult to read it cover to cover, make sure to at least read the table of contents. This way you will know what information you are missing. Seminars, conferences and symposiums are extra special because they facilitate discussion with speakers and colleagues. Public relations, another benefit, is accomplished through direct advertising and sponsorship.

Informing the public about the significance of your profession and association is beneficial.

A successful public relations program does not use symbolism to create an illusion of professionalism, nor does it automatically make its members professionals. Professionalism within the profession is only accomplished by each member's performance and conduct.

3. Autonomy

Autonomy is perhaps the highest valued element of professionalism. It's the degree of freedom of choice in one's work. This is the element that allows us to choose how much creativity and responsibility we desire in our work. How much freedom do you have to make decisions with respect to: choice of clients, project initiation and direction, techniques, material selection and appropriation of money needed. The most pure form of autonomy allows the professional to have total control of the client's service.

Self-regulation is also a component of Autonomy. How many hours a day do you work with a senior (boss)? Are you given specific guidelines on how

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to perform your work? Are instructions rigid or open-ended with many possible outcomes? Do you need permission to work outside guidelines or organizational structure? What happens when you deviate from these guidelines? Is your individual judgment encouraged and valued? The answers to these questions provide an indication of your scale of Autonomy.

Professionals high on the scale of Autonomy look to their peers rather than their superiors for work performance evaluation. They consider the performance of their peers to be the most reliable source of comparison to determine self worth and evaluation. From this, they maintain their own standards of excellence and success.

4. Continuing Education

The premise of continuing education is "at what rate does the assumed knowledge of a profession change?" A profession must be rapidly changing. This demands that the professional keep pace with all aspects of change. They might include product development, new techniques or methods, regulations, political issues and concerns specific to a profession. The professional needs to pursue the education needed to fully understand the changes as they occur.

The continuing education element is one of the most important. It distinguishes pseudo-professionals from true professionals. The success of the latter is contingent upon each individual's ability to place himself at the leading edge of change. The university professor (researcher) is a classic example of a professional whose success is contingent upon changing knowledge. The pseudo-professional, however, does not risk success in the face of change. It's likely that the continuing education element will continue to be important in the future.

5. Education

It's clear in my mind that today's standards demand a minimum of a four-year bachelor degree to be recognized on the education scale of professionalism. The associate degree offers excellent opportunities. Graduates obtain well respected jobs and salaries. However, it does not provide even footing with a bachelor degree.

Education standards for all occupations increase through time. Indeed the standards have accelerated in the past 50 years. This is evidenced by the fact that many young professionals have a higher level of education than their se-

niors. This trend is not new. In 1924, Richard J. Walsh, editor of *Collier's Weekly* remarked,

"The self-made manager in business is nearing the end of his road. Despite his own blind faith in the 'practical'. He is already hiring professionally trained engineers, chemists, accountants and hygienists. . . He must himself turn to professional education or surrender control to those who do."

The point is not to undermine the value of experience. Practical and formal education are not substitutes for each other. The best approach is to treat them as complements of each other.

6. Ethics

"An ethic is a system of standards for moral judgment."¹ The last word "judgment" suggests that standards of ethics are personal and very diverse. All of us are responsible for our own actions or inactions. For this reason, each person needs to refer to his personal code of ethics to define ethical behavior. Professional standards of ethics insist that any source of persuasiveness or power that results from professional employment be used within the individual's personal code of ethics and the professional association's code of ethics. Every member needs to uphold professional standards of ethics. The extent to which this is accomplished will ultimately determine the reputation, integrity and character of the professional association and its members.

7. Expertise

This is the bread and butter element. It requires the basic assumption that the professional is able to profess knowledge to the client. What attributes distinguish the expert from the amateur? The expert offers a full time commitment to a single occupation. They receive in-depth intellectual training; using that knowledge as a foundation, they readily accept new knowledge to enhance their expertise. The professional is rich with work-related experience and constantly evaluates it to improve future work performance. He understands how to use two types of knowledge, theory and practice, to make intelligent and responsible decisions. Some professions are required to blend art and science to achieve goals. With all of this in mind, the professional applies these attributes to de-

liver first rate service to his clients.

8. Responsibility

This is probably the simplest element among the 10 elements of professionalism. Yet only a few professions can make a convincing case for it. You can think of it this way: how important is your work to the client? In other words, what are the consequences if you make a mistake? Is it possible to remedy the mistake or are the consequences irreversible? The medical profession and legal profession have a major claim on this element. Their responsibility to perform goes well beyond client satisfaction in order to maintain their job security. Their abilities or lack of abilities often have a permanent effect on their clients. Rightfully so, this element is the major reason for the high prestige of these two professions.

9. Salary

Why is salaried compensation an element of professionalism? There are two reasons. The first is overtime. Salaried professionals receive less compensation for their overtime hours than scheduled hours. This separates the wage earner from the salaried professional. They willingly provide extra service because it's a source of intrinsic satisfaction and part of their professional self-concept. The second reason relates to the professional person's strong service orientation. To provide competitive service requires a flexible schedule. Compensation here becomes tedious and sometimes very costly to the client. Perhaps the best reason for salaried compensation is the implied trust it fosters between the professional and organization to look after each others interests.

10. Social Behavior

Work related social events are a key component of professionalism. Since they are work related, professional conduct is appropriate. Disseminating harmful information about colleagues or the organizations they work for is sub-standard in all professions. Doing so always degrades the perpetrator's reputation more than the subject it was intended for.

The Values of Professional Work

So far the focus of this article is on what is required of professionals to do their work. This section asks the reverse question: what do professionals require from their work? Although the professional's goal and values toward work are individualistic, it's relatively safe to make some generalizations. A

¹ Dunham, R.B. *Organizational Behavior*. Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1984. 490-6

generalization can be made about the professional's work orientation. One writer, Dubin, describes the work-oriented professional as:

"A person who finds major satisfactions and rewards, as well as his deepest disappointments and frustrations, in his work. He is job-centered and values highly what happens at the workplace. He invests much physical and psychological energy in his work, and he expects much in return. The most loyal employees and the most bitter critics of the organization are to be found among work-oriented people."

The primary goals or values that professionals seek in their work can be summarized as: *individual satisfaction and career development, autonomy, economic security and enhancement, and occupational integrity and identification.*

It becomes clear that many professionals depend a great deal on their organizations to maintain their professional self-concept. Conflict develops when the professional cannot rely on the organization to support professional goals. It becomes a battle of service to the organization — versus service to the profession. The result is a person committed to work, but not necessarily to the employing organization. This situation is too often true with the young professional just out of college. A great deal of frustration (i.e. wasted energy) is realized as their newly adopted values and ideas from school are twisted and hammered to fit a real life working system of standards.

Another point of conflict occurs when the reward system, as controlled by the employer, does not agree with the professional's theoretical reward system which is based on peer judgment. Who is right? Conflict continues when the employer sets aside professional development in the interest of short-term increased productivity or savings. The same is true when the employer fails to specify who the client is. Is the professional, in the case of a golf course manager, expected to service the conflicting needs of the officers, board members, committee members or general membership? Professionals commonly complain that their organizations divert and underutilize their talent, making goal attainment difficult.

These are only a few of the needs that professionals ask of their organizations. If the structure of the organization, rather than the structure of the

profession, limits the opportunity for professional growth, low organizational loyalty and job satisfaction will occur.

Professionalization

As mentioned earlier, professionalization is the movement of an occupation, or members of an occupation, from non-professional status to professional status. Early in history there were only three, relatively unchallenged professions: medicine, law and ministry. In fact, the lines were drawn so clearly that even surgeons were considered non-professional because they worked with their hands.

The list of recognized professions today is considerably longer. Probably well over 150 occupations have gone forth to earn society's acceptance as a profession. What professions have been successful? That's a burning question for many where few are in agreement; it will not be addressed here. More importantly, one should ask, why the rapid influx of professions?

There are several reasons, all related to the push for progress. First, our society has long been in a trend of specialization of work. This is in response to demands for increased efficiency and new knowledge. Overlap of knowledge is not time efficient and wastes energy that is needed to further progress.

The second reason is the accelerated rate at which we are obtaining knowledge. A profession in computer science, for example, was unheard of 40 years ago. For both these reasons, individuals have been pushed to seek higher levels of education, continuing education, compensation, autonomy and other elements of professionalism to satisfy the demands placed on them.

Is the end in sight? Are we in the process of professionalizing the world? Two British writers, Lewis and Maude, have this view: "In the fullness of time, may John Smith, Chimney Sweep, become John Smith A.I.D.D. (Associate of the Institution of Domestic Decarbonizers)?"

It's worth identifying the stages involved to transform an occupation into a profession. The following were originally proposed by researchers Wilensky and Hughes. They are theoretical and not necessarily chronological.

1. Doing the work full-time.
2. Setting standards of work and education (certification).
3. Establish an association.
4. Delegate routine work to others (specialize).

5. Judge from within what is proper work.
6. Gain a monopoly of skills.
7. Establish a code of ethics.

Kleingartner suggests that occupations will encounter two types of resistance during professionalization: resistance from without and resistance from within. Outside resistance might be lack of government support for a certification program or competition from a related established profession. Doctors and hospitals have been a source of outside opposition for nurses. Registered nurses, on the other hand, oppose practical nurses from infringing on their turf, a source of resistance from within. Younger members in the profession often incur internal resistance from older members who have different views of the profession.

Summary and Conclusion

We apply the same type of thinking about the chemical elements as we do the professional elements. They are individual units identified with specific properties to help us understand the vast dynamics encountered when studied as a whole. The best definition of professionalism utilizes a simple high to low scale of each element. Evaluation of professional ability must consider that each element contains numerous situation dependent subelements. The 10 elements are appearance, association, autonomy, continuing education, education, ethics, expertise, responsibility, salary, and social behavior. Professionals tend to value a "live to work" attitude rather than a "work to live" attitude. They require professional work ideals for job satisfaction and are frustrated when their organizations conflict with them. Professionalization is how occupations become professions and is a result of a push for progress.

There once was a time when less than three or four professions could claim true professional status. This is just the point to be made; the determination of what is and what is not a profession can be only for one moment in time. This is because professional status changes with time. In 1990, there is more room than ever for society's acceptance of new professions. The demands and complexities for so many occupations have accelerated to the extent that many are equally interchangeable with the old standbys. One such occupation is golf course management, it exemplifies the elements of professionalism.