

## What's Tough About Becoming a Professional

Granted, defining professionalism is about as difficult as nailing Jello to a tree. The word seems to wriggle out of every attempt to nail down its meaning.

Even so, there's a tougher chore: taking the action that's necessary to become recognized as a professional. *Taking the action!*

Public utility arborists have organized. The Landscape Council has been formed. Good steps. But it's funny-strange, thinks Daniel Capper, writing about TLC on page 7, that many have hesitated to put their signature on the application card, "even though no money is being asked at this time." But that's the hard part. Actually signing up requires the commitment to *take action*.

Discussion at the International Shade Tree Conference pretty well covered what a professional is. There were many suggestions also on how to become one. One way helpful in achieving the objective is to analyze what other recognized professionals have done. For example:

Look over the examination that an accountant has to pass before he can be listed as a Certified Public Accountant.

Study doctors' and lawyers' codes of ethics.

Take note of the way certain trade unions, such as bricklayers, plumbers, and electricians, control their memberships and as one result enable them to demand a premium for their services.

Consider the stiff licensing laws that apply to pilots, pharmacists, and most ministers.

For the most part, these standards to live and work by were written by the respective professionals themselves. What's more significant is that the members recognize the standards as being so important that they have given their organizations the power to force individual members, when loyalty falters, to live up to those standards.

"Seek and ye shall find . . ." is the ancient and workable advice from the Good Book. Seek connotes action. The fact that there is so much talk about upgrading a given profession is an indication there hasn't been enough *real seeking*.

"The forestry profession has stayed in the woods too long," quipped John Mixon, Atlanta city forester. Perhaps his charge applies to all arborists; otherwise, it might have been an arborist who first announced his services by "hanging out his shingle."

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