

## PROFESSIONALISM

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I frequently hear from people, either from within our industry or from customers of our industry, about the lack of professionalism that seems so widespread in our business. How can we become more professional? Here is some advice from a book called "Shenson on Consulting" by Howard Shenson. The advice he gives applies to every type of business.

- 1) Always try to be viewed by your clients and other potential sources of referrals as giving 110%. You benefit when others perceive that you provide more and better services than they bargained for and than others in the business.
- 2) Don't over promise and don't take on customers that are beyond your capabilities. You will actually enhance your professional image and credibility by recommending that your services not be used for certain needs or by certain clients.
- 3) Be willing to admit errors and mistakes. Bring bad news to the customer immediately. Handling difficulties in a professional manner will enhance your image.
- 4) Never accept business from customers you feel don't really value your service or might ask you to do anything unethical or questionable.
- 5) Never refer another person or company that you do not trust completely. To do so will reflect on your judgment as a professional.
- 6) Avoid making criticizing or disparaging remarks about the competition or past customers. Doing so suggests unprofessional behavior and will only hurt business and referrals.

Being scrupulously professional in all your dealings with prospective customers, fellow professionals, and your competition will enhance your image and reputation, thereby increasing your business and your reputation.