2010 Professionalism In The Workplace
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Introduction
York College of Pennsylvania’s Center for Professional Excellence conducts an annual study on the state of professionalism in recent college graduates. Persons who are responsible for hiring decisions involving new college graduates are surveyed on a variety of topics related to professionalism. In addition to these decision-makers, this year’s research includes a survey with upper classmen and recent college graduates.

Findings from the annual study are used to track changes in the state and definitions of professionalism. They also help direct the content of the professionalism seminars that the Center for Professional Excellence offers every year to the college’s students, faculty, and administrators.

The content for the 2010 survey included key questions from the 2009 study to permit tracking changes over time plus new questions derived from discussions that occurred as a result of the 2009 research.

- Qualities associated with being a professional
- Experiences with recent college graduates relative to professionalism
- Influence of professionalism in the hiring process
- Reasons for changes in professionalism
- New college graduates’ interest in leadership or management positions
- Reactions to the Center for Professional Excellence’s efforts.

The first four sections of the report constitute an executive summary. These sections are Introduction, Research Design, Major Findings, and Observations.

The sections following the executive summary present the detailed findings. These findings are reported in both graphic and narrative forms.
Research Design
The sample for the hiring decision-maker portion of the study was obtained from two sampling frames:

- A nationwide random sample of persons responsible for making hiring decisions
- Community and business leaders who are familiar with York College of Pennsylvania.

The final sample size was 430.

The student sample was a nationwide random sample of upper classmen and recent college graduates. The size of this sample was 436.

The maximum margin of error associated with both samples is ± 4.7% at the 95% confidence level. This means the answers that would be obtained from either the population of all employment decision-makers or all upperclassmen would be within ± 4.7% of the samples’ answers 95% of the time.

Detailed information on the composition of the samples is presented in the Profile of Respondents section.

The data was collected using online surveys. Respondents were sent an e-mail from Dr. George Waldner, President of the College. The e-mail introduced the study and contained a link to the online survey.

The surveys were developed using input from the Center for Professional Excellence’s Advisory Board and questions that arose in response to the 2009 study. Some questions from the 2009 survey were retained to permit comparisons over time.

Prior to being administered, the surveys were reviewed and approved by the Advisory Board and the Center for Professional Excellence.
Data Analysis…. In addition to the total samples, the findings for each sample were statistically examined for any differences due to respondents' demographics.

In the employer sample, the demographics included the respondent’s age, education level, number of employees at all locations and in the human resources department, and industry type.

The demographics used from the student survey were major, employment during the past four years, year in school, age, gender, and whether or not either parent graduated from college.

Any statistically significant differences related to respondents’ demographics are reported in the text.

Where applicable, comparisons are made between the 2009 and 2010 findings. These are shown in the graphs.

Open-ended responses were coded into descriptive categories for presentation purposes. The report shows the predominant categories. The data tables can be consulted for a complete review of all the coded responses.

The findings for the employers are presented first. When the student survey asked the same questions as the employer survey, these findings follow.
Major Findings
Second Annual Survey Of Professionalism…

This second annual survey of professionalism in the workplace monitored some of the key measures of professionalism from the first survey, pursued answers to some of the questions that arose from the 2009 findings, and explored new areas related to professionalism and the activities of the Center for Professional Excellence. A new component of the study was a survey with students. Findings from the student survey are presented after the employers’ findings.

Qualities Of Professionalism…

The 2009 study firmly established that the term “professional” is no longer limited to specific positions. Everyone, regardless of their position, can be a professional. This study continued the exploration into what it means to be professional.

To avoid guiding respondents, initial questioning on the qualities of a professional were open-ended. When asked what qualities describe an employee who is considered to be a professional, respondents were free to give any answer they wanted.

Due to the consistency that exists in the descriptions of a professional in this and the 2009 study, the qualities that characterize professionalism are now clearly understood. Most respondents did not refer to expertise in one’s field when identifying the qualities of professionalism. Such expertise may be expected in veteran employees. However, it is low on the list for recent college graduates.

The qualities most often associated with professionalism and the percentage of respondents naming them in 2010 are:

• Communication skills (40.6%)
• Appearance (38.5%)
• Interpersonal skills, including courtesy and respect (38.5%)
• Work ethic (33.7%)
• Confidence (23.5%)
• Being knowledgeable (17.6%)
• Time management (16.9%).
Qualities Of Unprofessionalism...

There are three primary qualities associated with an employee who is not professional. The same three qualities were predominant in the 2009 study. These qualities and percentage identifying them in this study are:

- Poor work ethic (42.9%)
- Appearance – dress, tattoos, piercings (40.0%)
- Poor communication skills, including grammar (36.2%).

Two less often named qualities deserve comment.

First, being unfocused surfaced as a notable quality. In 2009, only 6.1% used this quality to describe the unprofessional employee. In 2010, 20.5% of the respondents referred to being unfocused and disorganized as a quality of unprofessionalism.

Second, a sense of entitlement is mentioned by 17.6% of the respondents, similar to 2009. This reinforces other findings in this study that a sense of entitlement is being experienced in the workplace.

Students On Professionalism...

Students tended to refer to the same qualities as employers when describing the professional and unprofessional employee. However, the percentage of students naming the qualities differed from employers with some frequency.

When describing a professional, students (38.9%) were notably more likely than employers (16.9%) to refer to time management. Looking at the specific answers given by students, they were often referring to being to work on time.

They (20.4%) were much less likely than employers (40.6%) to identify communication skills as a professional quality.
Looking at the qualities associated with being unprofessional, students are significantly more likely
to mention a poor work ethic (75.9% vs. employers, 42.9%) and being disrespectful, inconsiderate,
or rude (46.4% vs. employers, 22.9%).

Consistent with the qualities associated with being professional, students are considerably less
likely to refer to communication skills (17.4% vs. employers, 36.2%) and appearance (28.3% vs.
employers, 40.0%) when describing unprofessional.

Since students are in an position to place more emphasis on self-expression, it is reasonable to
expect them to question the inclusion of appearance as a quality of professionalism. This research
shows this to not be the case. In fact, 71.5% of the student respondents agreed that appearance
should be included.

Two statistically significant differences were discovered when developing a profile of who agrees
with the inclusion of appearance in the description of professional.

• Arts/fine arts majors (57.1%) were the least likely to agree that this quality should be included
  when defining professionalism. More surprising, engineering majors (61.5%) were the next least
  likely to agree that appearance is a part of professionalism.
• Females (77.6%) are significantly more likely than males (65.7%) to feel appearance should be
  included.

While not statistically significant, it is encouraging that as students progress through their college
careers more of them believe appearance belongs in discussions of professionalism.
The definition of professionalism was pursued further by having respondents rate 19 qualities according to how important they are for a position requiring professionalism. On a five point scale on which a 5 meant “very important,” five of the qualities were rated with a 5 by half of more of the respondents. These qualities and their mean ratings are:

- Accepts personal responsibility for decisions and actions (4.54)
- Displays a sense of ethics (4.48)
- Is competent in both verbal and written communication (4.48)
- Takes initiative (4.36)
- Projects a professional image (4.33).

At the other extreme, the qualities to which the least importance is assigned are:

- Is an expert in one’s field (3.34)
- Is concerned about opportunities for advancement (3.46).

The low rating given to being an expert in one’s field supports an earlier comment that expertise was not mentioned by many as a quality of professionalism in open-ended questioning. Those doing the hiring either take expertise as a given or understand that it will be developed on the job.

When these findings are combined with the open-ended results and the findings from 2009, a strong picture of the professional emerges.

Students’ ratings are basically the same as the ratings of employers. The largest gaps are:

- Students place less emphasis on doing creative work (3.58 vs. employers, 3.80) and demonstrating passion for one’s work (4.07 vs. employers, 4.25).
- Students place more importance on being an expert in one’s field (3.54 vs. employers, 3.34).
Prevalence Of Important Qualities…

While it is useful to know what qualities are important in a professional, it can also be helpful to know the extent to which the important qualities exist in newly hired college graduates. This was done by having the respondents rate the same 19 qualities on their presence in new employees. This time, the rating scale went from 1, very rare, to 5, very common.

Once again, the consistency of the findings in the 2009 and 2010 studies yields a clear picture of how closely new employees meet the standards for professionalism.

The one quality that distinguishes new employees is being concerned about opportunities for advancement. It has a mean rating of 3.93 and received a rating of 5, very common, from 33.7% of the respondents. Unfortunately, this quality is second lowest in importance. New employees may possess it, but it is not very important to employers.

One cannot help but speculate if there is connection between this concern about opportunities for advancement and new employees displaying a sense of entitlement.

Other qualities for which at least 10% of the respondents assigned a rating of 5 for very common are: tries to maintain a balance between work life and personal life (12.3%), displays a sense of ethics (10.5%), and is competent in both verbal and written communication (10.0%).

When comparing the importance and prevalence ratings, most striking is the gap between the two sets of ratings. New employees are lacking the professional qualities that are deemed to be important. The largest gaps exist for accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions and being open to criticism.

Of course, the ideal situation would be for employees to possess the qualities to which the greatest importance is attributed.
2010 Professionalism Study

Students’ Ratings…

As with the importance ratings, students’ ratings of the prevalence of the qualities associated with professionalism parallel those of employers. Similar to employers, they gave the highest ratings to being concerned about opportunities for advancement.

They often believed the qualities had a greater presence than employers indicated. Their ratings were especially higher than employers for: being flexible (3.61 vs. employers, 3.27), competence in verbal and written communication (3.46 vs. employers, 3.20), and completing the job within the required time (3.60 vs. employers, 3.37).

As with the employers, the largest gaps between importance and prevalence are for: accepts personal responsibility for decisions and actions and is open to criticism. These are prime areas to be addressed by the Center for Professional Excellence.

The State Of Professionalism…

Respondents varied in their assessments of the percentage of college graduates who exhibit professionalism in their first year of employment. One measure of professionalism is the percentage of first year employees who demonstrate professionalism. This year, 38.2% of the respondents reported that less than 50% of their new employees exhibited professionalism. Last year, the percentage was essentially the same (37.3%).

Consistent with their ratings of the prevalence of professional qualities, students tend to believe a higher percentage of job candidates demonstrate professionalism than do employers.

Changes In Professionalism…

To identify possible trends in professionalism, respondents described changes that have occurred in three areas over the past five years. The areas are:

- Changes in the percentage of new college graduates exhibiting professionalism in their first year of employment
- Changes in the percentage of first year college graduate employees exhibiting a sense of entitlement
- Changes in the incidence of problems with IT etiquette problems.
The assessment of trends in new employees' professionalism is mixed. A fourth of the respondents (23.7%) report that the percentage of new employees exhibiting professionalism has decreased over the past five years. However, this decline was not experienced by all respondents. In fact, 15.6% believes the percentage of new employees acting as professionals has increased over the same time period.

It is encouraging that the percentage referring to decreased professionalism is less in this study (23.7%) than in 2009 (33.2%). This does not necessarily mean things are improving. The percentages citing increased professionalism in 2009 (13.4%) and 2010 (15.6%) are comparable. The good news is things are not getting worse.

Over a fourth of the respondents who are under 35 (27.3%) compared to 8.0% of those over 55 believe the percentage of new employees acting professionally has increased. This suggests that assessment of professionalism in new employees may be partially age related.

A fifth of the respondents (21.5%) who perceive a decrease in professionalism refer to a sense of entitlement as the reason for this decline. This parallels the 2009 finding.

The most common reason for seeing an increase in professionalism relates to the state of the job market. With so few jobs available, there are more applicants from which to choose (52.3%). Consequently, respondents are seeing more applicants who exhibit the qualities of professionalism.

Students…

Students were more divided than employers in their assessment of changes in professionalism. While 38.3% felt professionalism has decreased over the past five years, 23.4% believed it has increased.
Students (continued)…

While none of the differences were large enough to be statistically significant, analysis did develop a profile of those who indicated professionalism has decreased.

- Females (44.9%) are more likely than males (34.3%) to report a decrease.
- Those who have worked while in college (41.8%) are more likely than those who have not (27.1%) to believe it decreased.
- As age increases, the respondent is more likely to feel professionalism has decreased.

Changes In Sense Of Entitlement…

The topic of entitlement was approached directly with a question on changes observed in the percentage of new employees having a sense of entitlement. As in 2009 when the percentage was 60.9%, the largest percentage of respondents (55.3%) have experienced an increased sense of entitlement over the past five years.

It would be reasonable to expect younger respondents are likely than older respondents to feel entitlement has increased. Their experiences growing up are obviously closer to those of new employees. However, the opposite occurred. While not statistically significant, it was found that as age of the respondent decreases, the percentage reporting an increase in the sense of entitlement increases.

Discussions that occurred in the classroom in reaction to the 2009 study discovered that college students, after some initial defensiveness, admit that they do have a sense of entitlement. It may be that the younger respondents in this study are able to look at the entitlement issue more objectively than anticipated.

Students…

The classroom discussions are reinforced by the findings from the student survey. Over half of the student respondents (52.2%) felt that graduates exhibiting a sense of entitlement have increased over the past five years. The remaining were divided between feeling it has remained the same (32.6%) and it has decreased (15.1%).
2010 Professionalism Study

Major Findings

Changes In IT Etiquette…
Anyone who has been in a college classroom in the past five years is aware of problems with IT etiquette and students’ desire to be in continuous contact with others. Apparently, this same behavior is carrying over to the workplace. A total of 38.4% of the respondents have seen an increase in IT etiquette problems over the past five years. Essentially, the same percentage (39.1%) reported an increase in 2009.

Different from 2009 is the percentage who has witnessed a decrease in these problems. This percentage has dropped from 44.8% in 2009 to 10.7% in 2010. In light of these findings, there is no reason to believe that problems with IT etiquette are going to disappear in the near future.

The problems being encountered most often are: text messaging at inappropriate times (78.2%), inappropriate use of the Internet (77.0%), excessive personal calls on cell phones (71.5%), and excessive twittering (67.3%).

Students…
As with other findings, students’ observations about IT etiquette problems are similar to those of employers. A total of 41.4% of the students thought there has been an increase in these types of problems among new employees over the past five years. They identified the same problems as did employers.

Reactions To Changes…
When the 2009 study discovered gaps in professionalism in new employees, an immediate question was whether gaps really existed or if the findings were due to an older generation being asked to evaluate a younger generation. In other words, if the study had been conducted 50 years ago, is it possible it would have produced the same findings? The employment decision-makers would have still found new employees to be lacking in professionalism simply due to generational differences.

A related question was, if the definition of professionalism does differ by generations, how should companies respond to these changes. Should the standards of professionalism be maintained or should they evolve to reflect cultural and generational changes?
Reactions To Changes (continued)…

In response to these questions, additions were made to the 2010 survey. First, a question on the respondent’s age was added. This would permit an examination of the effects of age on respondents’ answers. Second, three statements related to changes in professionalism were included. Respondents indicated the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement.

The three statements are listed below. The first two are the opposite of each other.

• Definitions of professionalism change with the generations. As a result, companies should adjust their standards of professionalism to take into account younger employees’ perceptions.

• Definitions of professionalism should not be seen as subject to change with different generations of employees.

• The perception that some new college graduates may be lacking in qualities associated with professionalism is largely due to the persons doing the hiring are older than those being hired.

The majority of respondents (60.1%) do not feel the definition of professionalism should change with time. Consistent with this, 55.8% disagree that definitions of professionalism should be adjusted to reflect younger employees’ perspectives.

While a majority may feel this way, there is a notable percentage who is comfortable with the definition of professionalism changing over time. A total of 22.1% of the respondents disagree that professionalism is not subject to change. An even larger percentage (30.7%) agree that companies should adjust to younger employees’ perceptions of professionalism.

With regards to the third statement, most respondents (62.0%) do not believe their observations concerning lack of professionalism are due to generational differences.
## 2010 Professionalism Study

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<td><strong>Professionalism And The Hiring Decision...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Students...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Developing Professionalism...</strong></td>
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Developing Professionalism (continued)...

Potential exists for a certificate in professionalism. This certificate would be awarded to students who satisfy specified requirements. When asked to what extent such a certificate would impact their hiring decision, 48.9% indicated it would have some impact as evidenced by ratings of 4 or 5 on a five point scale in which a 5 meant “significant impact.”

Students...

The parallels between the student and employer findings continue with the value placed on the seminars. The majority of students (72.9%) rated the college’s seminars with a 4 or 5, very valuable.

Other questioning found that students start to appreciate the importance of professionalism between their sophomore and junior years.

Promotions And Advancements...

A topic introduced in this study is the new employee and promotions and advancements. While the qualities that describe professionalism are now well understood, it was not known what qualities are important in a candidate for promotion or advancement. Respondents identified a large variety of qualities. As might be expected, skills and knowledge are more important for advancement than for initial hiring.

The qualities mentioned most often are: dedicated (14.3%), variety of skills (13.3%), leadership skills (12.5%), takes initiative (12.5%), teamwork (10.0%), ability to apply knowledge (9.5%), and persistence (9.5%).

New employees are often lacking in these qualities. Nearly 60% of the respondents (58.4%) believe that less than half of new employees possess the qualities needed for promotion.
Interest In Leadership Or Management Positions…

When planning this year’s study, one question that arose was whether new employees have a desire to occupy management positions. Anecdotal evidence suggested that this desire is increasingly lacking. Disillusionment over the image of being a manager and little interest in taking on more workplace pressure were advanced as two reasons for new employees wanting to avoid management positions.

To test this, respondents rated new college graduate employees’ interest in future promotions using a five point scale in which a rating of 5 meant “very interested.” Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62.0%) contradicted the hypothesis about lack of interest by assigning ratings of 4 or 5, very interested.

The most common reasons offered for those who do lack interest in advancement were more related to avoiding stress than to a negative image of management.

There is a segment of new employees who apparently do not have an interest in these positions. Over the past ten years, 17.7% of the respondents have seen a decrease in interest in leadership or management positions. However, experiences are mixed with 23.5% reporting increased interest.

Students…

Students’ aspirations do not match employers’ experiences. A greater percentage of student respondents indicated being very interested in leadership or management positions than employers reported.

Those who have limited interest in opportunities for promotion most often referred to a desire for a less stressful lifestyle rather than a negative image of management.
Observations
### 2010 Professionalism Study Observations

| Introduction... | Presented below are observations based upon the two nationwide professionalism studies that have now been conducted. These observations may function to stimulate more discussion on the findings, their causes, and their implications.

When reading these observations, it should be remembered that the findings apply to new college graduate employees nationwide. |
|---|---|
| Reliability And The Findings... | A potential liability in research that tracks measures over time is unexplained fluctuations can occur in the findings from one study to the next. While the effects of probability and random sampling usually can account for unexpected fluctuations, explaining how these factors can affect research findings can be a challenge. The good news is there is consistency between the findings in the 2009 and 2010 studies.

While changes are expected over time, there is little reason to anticipate significant changes within a one year period of time.

Any differences that do exist in the two studies are normally within the margin of error for the sample. Margin of error is one way of accounting for changes that occur from one sample to the next when the topic being studied does not really change.

The consistency between the two studies strengthens the findings. |
| New Findings... | While key measures of professionalism were repeated in this study and will be included in future studies to permit monitoring, the findings from this study go far beyond “more of the same.” In addition to new topics, such as promotion and advancement, this study began looking for the underlying causes of the state of professionalism in the workplace. Much of this exploration was prompted by the insightful questions asked by readers of the 2009 study. |
The state of professionalism among new employees continues to be less than desired by those hiring them. To track the state of professionalism over time, it is proposed that, similar to leading economic indicators, leading professionalism indicators be used. Measures that are candidates for inclusion as professionalism indicators are:

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<td>Professional qualities whose presence equals or exceeds their importance (Existence Rating – Importance Rating)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Concerned with opportunities for advancement</td>
<td>+.59</td>
<td>+.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of respondents feeling 50% or more of new employees exhibit professionalism in their first year</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of respondents experiencing an increase in the % of new employees demonstrating professionalism</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of respondents experiencing a decrease in the % of new employees exhibiting a sense of entitlement</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of respondents experiencing a decrease in IT etiquette problems</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
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With the exception of the first indicator, a trend towards more professionalism would have the percentages of each indicator increase.

There two noteworthy changes from 2009 to 2010.

The quality whose presence exceeds its importance rating – concern with opportunities for advancement - is probably the one that is least desirable to do so. Thus, it is a positive indicator that its gap has increased. Having new employees being concerned about advancements just as they begin their entry level job can be seen as a lack of judgment as easily as a sign of ambition.

The second change is more drastic. While the percentage of respondents reporting an increase in the number of IT etiquette problems has remained the same in 2010 (38.4%) and 2009 (39.1%), the percentage experiencing a decrease in these problems has dropped precipitously from 44.8% in 2009 to 10.7% in 2010. This is the largest change seen across the two studies.
IT Etiquette…

The IT etiquette problems seen in the workplace are the same behaviors seen in college classrooms. Students and employees alike are text messaging, surfing the Internet, and responding to cell phone calls at inappropriate times. It appears that for many the need to be in constant contact with friends and family has become an addiction. The addicted no longer see it as rude to be obsessively responding to calls or text messages.

A real problem can be those engaging in this behavior do not understand what is wrong. When a young student was asked why he needed to be constant contact with others, the response was “Because it can be done.” A discussion or seminar on this topic is worthy of consideration. Hearing both sides of the issue would undoubtedly lead to a lively debate.

Sense Of Entitlement…

The increased presence of a sense of entitlement continues to be intriguing. In both studies, a majority of the respondents observed an increase in this phenomenon. Responding to a 2009 question about why this sense of entitlement exists, the present study asked respondents for their insights. Two of the more interesting explanations were: a need for instant gratification (19.0%) and having been coddled or privileged while growing up (11.1%). As is often the case in research, these explanations prompt additional questions. Why is there a need for instant gratification? Is it accurate that today’s college students have been coddled? If it is accurate, who is doing the coddling?

Three factors come to mind when pondering these questions. First, this generation of college students grew up in an atmosphere in which self-esteem was emphasized. When young, all were taught they were winners. Trophies were received for simply being on the team, not necessarily playing or winning. While there are obvious positive results of this self-esteem movement, it can also lead to students and new employees to have unrealistic expectations given their actual abilities. One only has to think about the student in class who is certain they deserve a higher grade despite their less than stellar performance throughout the semester.
Second, this generation experienced what has been called the parenting deficit. The oil price shock of the early 70’s produced by OPEC’s actions has been identified at the point in American history when a husband with a high school degree could no longer provide his family with a middle class standard of living. The only action that countered “middle class slide” was the wife going to work leading to the dual wage-earner family. With both parents working, time with the children became limited. To make up for this parenting deficit, parents compensated by giving their children material objects which, of course, was made possible by the earnings from both parents working. Children received what they wanted when they wanted it. The concept of deferred gratification disappeared as mothers and fathers did what they believed was being good parents.

Advances in technology can further cultivate the expectation of instant gratification. Consider the student who becomes perturbed because the professor did not respond to their e-mail, asking about an assignment that is due at the next class meeting, sent a few hours before the class. A latent function of today’s communication technology is the further reinforcement of the expectation of instant gratification.

The quality that is considered to be most important in a position that requires professionalism is “accepts personal responsibility for decisions and actions.” A total of 90.9% of the respondents gave this quality a rating indicating it is important. In contrast, 25.8% of the respondents assigned it a rating indicating this quality is relatively common in new employees. This is the largest gap that exists between importance and existence ratings. Interestingly, the next largest gap is for “being open to criticism.”

Of course, the question becomes – Why does this gap exist?

One thought is this generation has been exposed to video games for its entire lifetime. A convenient feature of video games is the ability to hit the reset button when the game is not going well. Simply hit the button and start over again with no consequences for previous actions. Is it possible that this mentality, reinforced by parents wanting the best for their children, leads to the expectation that
there are no negative consequences for bad decisions. Everything can be fixed. Returning to the classroom experience, think about the student who has been marginal all semester. At the end of the semester, they inquire what they can do to get a better grade. There is an expectation that some type of extra credit work will be available.

This is compounded by the culture in which we live. It is common to try to blame someone else for a problem. Think about how reference is made to receiving a grade from a professor rather than the student earning the grade they deserve.

A finding that was not consistent with the 2009 study was the percentage of respondents referring to unfocused employees when describing qualities that describe an employee who is unprofessional. This percentage went from 6.1% in 2009 to 20.5% in 2010. An increase of this magnitude is beyond what is expected due to the effects of probability alone.

In the final Center for Professional Excellence seminar in the 2009-2010 academic year, Laura Wand, Director of Marketing for Johnson Controls, made a comment that multitasking is a myth. Other studies have found that persons are not as effective as they think they are when they multitask. Is it possible that companies are increasingly experiencing this with their new employees?

This is topic worthy of further investigation in the 2011 study.

The inclusion of a question on the respondents’ age in this study proved to be productive. While the majority of respondents do not feel definitions of professionalism should change to reflect the perspectives of younger employees, notable differences exist for respondents of different ages. There is an inverse relationship between the respondent’s age and the feeling that companies should adjust their standards of professionalism to take into account younger employees’ perceptions. Younger respondents are also more likely to believe that observations of lacking professionalism is due to those doing the hiring are older than those being hired. In short, they are more likely to feel there is a generation gap between employers and new employees.
### Age And Professionalism (continued)…

Given these age differences, it will be interesting to see in future studies if perceptions of professionalism change as older employers retire.

### Appearance…

Reactions to the 2009 study revealed that it is easy to focus on the one obvious quality of professionalism – appearance. The research does show that this quality occupies a predominant position when one’s professionalism is assessed and when qualities associated with both professionalism and unprofessionalism are described.

While it is important to go beyond this dimension of professionalism, it would be a disservice to students to not address appearance in some manner. Engaging in certain forms of self-expression when young may become a limitation to meaningful employment upon graduation. Furthermore, most students do agree that appearance should be included in the definition of professionalism.

### Promotions And Advancements…

This study did not discover a widespread lack of interest in management positions due to a negative image of management. To the extent that there is a lack of interest in these positions, it is more often the result of employees not wanting to take on more responsibility and stress.

It is recommended that the 2011 study include the same questions on promotion and advancement to substantiate these findings.

The findings on promotion and advancement did discover that few new employees possess the qualities needed to be considered for promotion. This presents an opportunity for the Center for Professional Excellence to expand its focus to include the development of these qualities.
Center For Professional Excellence...

The findings support the important role that the Center for Professional Excellence will play in developing professionalism. Companies expect colleges to be involved in developing professionalism in students. Only 36.5% of the responding companies have programs to orient new employees to professionalism in the workplace.

In addition to the seminars, a certificate in professionalism should be actively explored. This certificate would give students a physical document that can be submitted to potential employers.

Since not all companies have programs in professionalism, the Center can also develop programs that can be offered to companies. This, of course, will enhance the image of the Center.

Finally, the observations offered in this section of the report can become topics for further research, presentations, debates, and seminars.

Student Findings...

The correspondence between the findings from the employer and student surveys was unexpected. It was consistently surprising to see the extent to which students’ answers were similar to the employers. As would be expected, discrepancies between the student and employer findings are explained by the different perspectives these two groups have.

In general, students see themselves exhibiting more professionalism than do employers. They also see professionalism as having less influence on the hiring process than employers do.

The differences in the findings can be used as York College plans the contents of seminars and other professionalism related events. For example, students can be informed that getting to work on time is not a feat that deserves praise. It is a given that one reports to work at 8:00 a.m. if that is when the work day begins. This applies to even those who have avoided taking 8:00 a.m. classes.

Other qualities that can be addressed are communication skills and appearance. Students are noticeably less likely than employers to identify these as professional qualities.
While professionalism should be promoted as soon as a student arrives at the York College campus, the evidence shows that students will be most receptive to programs on professionalism when they become juniors.

The challenge, of course, is to motivate students to take advantage of the programs being offered. This research discovered, not surprisingly, that not all students either have gone to or plan to go to professionalism related programs their schools have offered.

Finally, some students need to realize that graduating from college is just the beginning. While an admirable accomplishment, graduation simply qualifies them to continue to strive for success. Paying one’s dues goes far beyond surviving four years of higher education.
Qualities Important In Professionalism
Qualities That Best Describe a Professional...

One of the original purposes of the professionalism research was to better understand how professionalism is defined in the workplace. This understanding assists in the development of programs for students. As in 2009, respondents answered an open-ended question asking what qualities describe an employee who is considered to be professional.

While future studies will continue to track the qualities of a professional, it can be concluded that the definition of what is professional at this point in time has been determined. The predominant qualities are the ability to communicate and listen (40.6%), appearance (39.0%), interpersonal skills (38.5%), and having a work ethic (33.7%).

The remainder of the qualities named by the respondents are shown in the data table.

Comparison To 2009...

While there are some variations in the 2009 and 2010 studies, the predominant qualities of a professional are common to both studies. While there has been a decrease in the percentage citing interpersonal skills, the importance of this quality is reinforced by it being mentioned as one means of assessing an applicant’s professionalism. The increases in the percentages referring to being knowledgeable and having good time management are worth watching in future studies to see if these percentages continue to increase.

Students...

The qualities named by the students were similar to those mentioned by the employers. However, the percentage of students citing them varied notably from the decision-makers. The largest differences are found for communication skills and time management. A smaller percentage of students (20.4%) than employers (40.6%) mentioned communication skills.

The opposite exists for time management. A larger percentage of students (38.9%) referred to this quality than did employers (16.9%). Interestingly, the students’ specific comments were often about being on time. What is taken as a given in the workplace is not necessarily seen this way on college campuses.
Qualities That Best Describe A Professional

- Communication skills
- Appearance
- Interpersonal skills
- Work ethic
- Confidence
- Knowledgeable
- Time management

2010 Professionalism Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>2009 N=433</th>
<th>2010 N=421</th>
<th>2010 Students N=406</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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York, Pennsylvania
Qualities That Describe Being Unprofessional...

What it takes to be professional can be further understood by examining what is considered unprofessional. This provides insight into what not to do in the workplace.

Three qualities are dominant when describing the unprofessional employee. These are poor work ethic (42.9%), appearance (40.0%), and poor communication skills which includes grammar (36.2%).

A review of the complete list presented in the data table does offer insight into what to avoid if one wants to be considered professional.

Comparison To 2009...

As with qualities of a professional, there is considerable correspondence between the 2009 and 2010 findings for qualities that are unprofessional. A most interesting difference is the increase in the percentage of respondents referring to employees being unfocused. This went from 6.1% in 2009 to 20.5% in this study. Comments concerning a lack of focus were also made by respondents who felt that the presence of professionalism in new college graduates has decreased over the past five years. This may be a new phenomenon related to the attention span of new graduates or their belief that multitasking is an effective mode of operation. Of course, this finding will be monitored in future research.

Students...

Similar to the qualities of professionalism, students name the same qualities as do employers. The differences are in the percentage of respondents mentioning the qualities. As seen students are more likely to mention a poor work ethic (75.9%) and being disrespectful and rude (46.4%).

They are less likely to name the other qualities named by employers. Looking at their descriptions of professional and unprofessional, students place less emphasis on good communication skills and appearance than do those hiring them.
2010 Professionalism Study  
Qualities Important In Professionalism  
Qualities That Describe Being Unprofessional

- Poor work ethic
- Appearance/dress/tattoos and piercings
- Poor grammar/communication skills
- Disrespectful/inconsiderate/rude
- Unfocused
- Poor attitude/manners/cocky
- Sense of entitlement

2009 N=427  
2010 N=420  
2010 Students N=407
Appearance Should Be Included In Professionalism…

Similar to this study, last year’s research found appearance to be an often mentioned quality associated with professionalism. In response to this finding, a question was included in the student survey asking if the respondent felt appearance should be included in the description of an employee who is considered to be professional. Appearance was described as including clothes, hair, tattoos, and body piercings.

The majority of the students (71.5%) indicated that appearance should be included. Another 16.2% was uncertain if it should be. The remaining 12.3% felt it should not be included.

As might be expected, arts (music, art, theater) majors (57.1%) were the least likely to agree that appearance should be part of professionalism. Interestingly, the major to next least often feel this way is engineering (61.5%). Females (77.6%) were more likely than males (65.7%) to believe appearance should be included.

The predominant reasons given for feeling it should or should not be included are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Should Be Included</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gives a first impression</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects upon the company</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects person’s beliefs, attitudes, behavior</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows a regard for professionalism</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates initiative</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=230

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons Should Not Be Included</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance is irrelevant</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance is an expression of individuality</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance is not related to skills</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=52
2010 Professionalism Study

Qualities Important In Professionalism

Appearance Should Be Included In Professionalism

- Yes: 71.5%
- No: 16.2%
- Uncertain: 12.3%

2010 Students N=396
Important Qualities In Professionalism…

Another approach to understanding professionalism is to have respondents rate qualities according to how important they are in a candidate for a position that requires professionalism. Respondents rated importance using a scale that ranged from 1, not important, to 5, very important.

The mean ratings went from 3.34 for being an expert in one’s field to 4.54 for accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions. To put the mean ratings in perspective, half or more of the respondents assigned a rating of 5, very important, to the first five qualities shown in the graph, from accepting personal responsibility to projecting a professional image. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (65.6%) assigned a 5 to accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions.

Comparison To 2009…

After reviewing and discussing the findings from 2009, several qualities were modified or added in this study. Modified qualities show the 2009 wording in parentheses in the graph. New qualities do not have bars for 2009.

The value of adding some new qualities is seen in the high importance ratings given to these added qualities: displays a sense of ethics (4.48), takes initiative (4.36), and is open to criticism (4.25).

While the mean ratings may differ from 2009 to 2010, the relative importance of the qualities remains the same. The exceptions are the two qualities with changed wording. The wording changes resulted in both being considered more important than in 2009. As in the graph, the 2009 wording is shown in parentheses.

These qualities are completes the job within the required time (without regard for the hours) (2009, 3.89 vs. 2010, 4.23) and exhibits commitment (loyalty) to the company (2009, 4.07 vs. 2010, 4.22).

Students…

What is most striking about the student findings is the correspondence that exists between their ratings and those of the employers. The greatest differences are:

• Students assign more importance to completing the job within the required time (4.52) and being an expert in one’s field (3.54)
• Students assign less importance to demonstrating a passion for one’s work (4.07).
2010 Professionalism Study

Important Qualities In Professionalism

Accepts personal responsibility for decisions/actions
Displays sense of ethics
Competent verbal & written communication
Takes initiative
Projects a professional image
Is able to think independently
Demonstrates a passion for one's work

Mean Ratings

2009 N=451-452  2010 N=430  2010 Students N=404

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## 2010 Professionalism Study

### Important Qualities In Professionalism (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>2009 N=451-452</th>
<th>2010 N=430</th>
<th>2010 Students N=404</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open to criticism</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes the job within required time (without regard for the hours)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to act independently</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits commitment (loyalty) to the company</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is flexible</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to critically evaluate data</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2010 N=451-452  2010 N=430  2010 Students N=404*
Demonstrates leadership ability
Sense of responsibility to greater community
Tries balance between work & personal life
Is able to do work that is creative
Concern for opportunities for advancement
Is an expert in one's field

2009 N=451-452  2010 N=430  2010 Students N=404
It is one thing to know what qualities are important in a professional. It is another to know the extent to which these qualities are present in first year college graduate employees. To measure this, respondents rated the same qualities now using a scale that went from 1, very rare, to 5, very common.

The only quality that approaches a mean rating of 4, indicating some prevalence in new employees, is being concerned about opportunities for advancement. (3.93). A third of the respondents (33.7%) gave this quality a rating of 5, very common.

The only other qualities receiving a rating of 5 for being very common by at least 10% of the respondents are: tries to maintain a balance between work life and personal life (12.3%), displays a sense of ethics (10.5%) and is competent in both verbal and written communication (10.0%).

With the exception of the reworded qualities, the findings are similar to 2009. The most notable change applies to completing the job within the required time period. Its prevalence rating went from 2.82 when the wording was “without regard for the hours it takes” to 3.37 with the current wording of “within the required time period.”

While there is general correspondence between the ratings of prevalence of professional qualities by students and employers, students clearly have an inflated view of the extent to which they demonstrate most qualities. In fact, for all but three of the qualities, students believe they are more prevalent than employers feel they are. Students’ ratings are especially higher than employers’ for: being flexible (+.34), competence in verbal and written communication (+.26), and completing the job within the required time (+.23).

While the students’ ratings tend to be higher than the employers, they are still relatively low. The only quality with a mean rating above 4 is being concerned about opportunities for advancement (4.08). This is the same as found for employers. A total of 41.0% of the respondents assigned a rating of 5, very common, to this quality. None of the other qualities had more than 20% of the students giving a rating of 5.

Those students who did not work while in college tend to rate the qualities as being more present than those who did work. For 14 of the 19 qualities, they gave higher ratings. Females also usually give higher ratings than males. Finally, younger students assigned higher ratings than older students.
2010 Professionalism Study

Qualities Important In Professionalism

Extent To Which Qualities Are Found In First Year Employees

- Concerned about opportunities for advancement
- Completes the job within required time (without regard for the hours)
- Displays sense of ethics
- Is flexible
- Is able to do work that is creative
- Projects a professional image
- Tries to balance work & personal life

Mean Ratings

Very Rare
1.00
2.00
3.00
4.00
Very Common
5.00

2009 N=447
2010 N=430
2010 Students N=398

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York, Pennsylvania
2010 Professionalism Study  Qualities Important In Professionalism
Extent To Which Qualities Are Found In First Year Employees (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities Important In Professionalism</th>
<th>Mean Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competent in verbal &amp; written communication</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to think independently</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a passion for one's work</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes initiative</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to act independently</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to critically evaluate data</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2009 N=447  2010 N=430  2010 Students N=398
2010 Professionalism Study  Qualities Important in Professionalism
Extent To Which Qualities Are Found In First Year Employees (continued)

- Demonstrates leadership ability
  - Mean Ratings: 2.94 (2009), 3.10 (2010), 3.00 (2010 Students)
  - Rating Scale: 1 (Very Rare) to 5 (Very Common)

- Accepts responsibility for decisions/actions
  - Mean Ratings: 2.78 (2009), 2.92 (2010), 2.84 (2010 Students)

- Exhibits commitment (loyalty) to the company
  - Mean Ratings: 2.67 (2009), 2.91 (2010), 2.87 (2010 Students)

- Sense of responsibility to the greater community
  - Mean Ratings: 2.84 (2009), 2.88 (2010), 2.87 (2010 Students)

- Open to criticism
  - Mean Ratings: 2.24 (2009), 2.41 (2010), 2.37 (2010 Students)

- Is an expert in one's field
  - Mean Ratings: 2.37 (2009), 2.41 (2010), 2.37 (2010 Students)

**Notes:**
- 2009 N=447
- 2010 N=430
- 2010 Students N=398
A benefit of having respondents rate both the importance and prevalence of qualities related to professionalism is the ability to compare the two sets of ratings. Doing so reveals gaps that exist between the ideal and reality. Looking at the graph, the larger the difference between the importance and prevalence bars, the greater the gap is between what is desired and what is experienced in new employees.

Similar to 2009, there is only one quality whose presence exceeds its importance. That is being concerned about opportunities for advancement. Unfortunately, this quality is of little importance when defining professionalism.

The largest deficits in professionalism exist for accepting personal responsibility for decisions and actions (gap=1.62) and being open to criticism (1.41). In 2009, the largest gap was also for accepting personal responsibility. Being open to criticism is new to this year’s study.
2010 Professionalism Study

Qualities Important In Professionalism

Gap Analysis – Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepts personal responsibility for decisions/actions</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays sense of ethics</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent verbal &amp; written communication</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes initiative</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects a professional image</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to think independently</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a passion for one’s work</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to criticism</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes the job within required time (without regard for the hours)</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to act independently</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Exhibits commitment (loyalty) to the company
Is able to be flexible
Is able to critically evaluate data
Demonstrates leadership ability
Sense of responsibility to greater community
Tries balance between work & personal life
Is able to do work that is creative
Concern for opportunities for advancement
Is an expert in one's field

Importance
Prevalence

2010 Professionalism Study Qualities Important In Professionalism
Gap Analysis – Employers (continued)
Gap Analysis – Students...

As would be expected given the previous findings, the gap analysis using the students’ ratings parallels the analysis for the employers. With the exception of one quality, the presence of the professional qualities is less than their importance. The exception is being concerned about opportunities for advancement. Here, its prevalence rating is greater than its importance rating.

It is interesting that the largest gaps in the students' ratings are the same as in the employers' ratings. The largest gaps between importance and prevalence are found for: accepts personal responsibility for decisions and actions (1.50) and open to criticism (1.38).
2010 Professionalism Study
Qualities Important In Professionalism
Gap Analysis – Students

- Accepts personal responsibility for decisions/actions
  Importance: 4.56  Prevalence: 3.06

- Completes the job within required time
  Importance: 4.52  Prevalence: 3.60

- Displays sense of ethics
  Importance: 4.48  Prevalence: 3.31

- Competent verbal & written communication
  Importance: 4.47  Prevalence: 3.46

- Projects a professional image
  Importance: 4.43  Prevalence: 3.33

- Open to criticism
  Importance: 4.38  Prevalence: 3.00

- Takes initiative
  Importance: 4.34  Prevalence: 3.27

- Is able to think independently
  Importance: 4.30  Prevalence: 3.26

- Is able to act independently
  Importance: 4.22  Prevalence: 3.21

- Exhibits commitment to the company
  Importance: 4.15  Prevalence: 3.04

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August 2010
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2010 Professionalism Study  
Qualities Important In Professionalism
Gap Analysis – Students (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities Important In Professionalism</th>
<th>Mean Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is able to critically evaluate data</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a passion for one's work</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to be flexible</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates leadership ability</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tries balance between work &amp; personal life</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of responsibility to greater community</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to do work that is creative</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for opportunities for advancement</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an expert in one's field</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Importance  Prevalence
State Of Professionalism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Of New College Graduates Exhibiting Professionalism During First Year...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As in 2009, respondents vary widely in the professionalism they see exhibited by recent college graduates in their first year of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A total of 13.7% report that less than 10% of the new graduates exhibit professionalism. At the other extreme, 15.7% observe that 90% or more demonstrates professionalism. The largest percentage of respondents (17.7%) are in the middle indicating that 50% to 59% exhibit professionalism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison To 2009...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A total of 38.2% feels that less than half of all new graduates exhibit professionalism in their first year of employment. This is essentially the same finding as in the 2009 study when 37.3% answered this way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to 2009, the increases in the percentages reporting that less than 10% and 90% or more exhibit professionalism are worth noting. This should be tracked over time to assess if this is a trend. It could be interesting to investigate why companies are having different experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are more likely than employers to believe a higher percentage of college graduates exhibit professional in the workplace. The exception to this is the percentage feeling 90% or more exhibit professionalism. This percentage (2.4%) is considerably lower than the 15.7% of the employers who felt this way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2010 Professionalism Study
Percentage Of New College Graduates Exhibiting Professionalism During First Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>2009 N=493</th>
<th>2010 N=429</th>
<th>2010 Students N=423</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% to 19%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% to 29%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% to 39%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% to 49%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to 59%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% to 69%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% to 79%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% to 89%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% or more</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism…

After reporting the percentage of new graduates who act professionally, respondents indicated if this percentage increased, remained the same, or decreased over the past five years. Most respondents (60.7%) feel the percentage of new graduates who exhibit professionalism has remained the same over the past five years.

Comparison To 2009…

This year’s findings are somewhat more positive than in 2009. The percentage who feels professionalism has increased has gone from 13.4% in 2009 to 15.6% in 2010. At the same time, the percentage observing a decrease in professionalism has gone down from 33.2% in 2009 to 23.7% in this study.

This strengthens the observation that a split may be occurring between companies. Further analysis revealed that respondents reporting 70% or less of their new employees exhibit professionalism are more likely than others to see a decrease in professionalism. In the opposite direction, respondents having 80% or more of their new employees acting as professionals are more likely to experience increased professionalism.

Comparison By Segments…

Companies with larger HR departments are more likely than others to see an increase in professionalism. This could be due to larger companies attracting a bigger pool of applicants. Consistent with this, companies with more employees are more likely to experience increased professionalism in new employees.

Looking at industry, the medical/health care industry is the most likely to experience a decrease in the professionalism of new employees with 38.7% of the respondents in this industry reporting a decrease. However, experiences are mixed in the medical field. This is seen in the 29.0% of the respondents in health care who indicate they are seeing an increase in professionalism.

There is a direct relationship between the respondents’ age and the perception that the presence of professionalism has increased. For example, 27.3% of those under 35 compared to 8.0% of those over 55 feels this way. This may be the first evidence that descriptions of professionalism vary by age.

Students…

Students are mixed in their assessment of changes in professionalism. They were more likely than employers to feel professionalism has increased (23.4%) or decreased (38.3%).
Changes In Exhibiting Professionalism

2010 Professionalism Study  State Of Professionalism

- Increased: 13.4% (2009 N=485), 15.6% (2010 N=430), 23.4% (2010 Students N=423)
- Remained the same: 53.4% (2009 N=485), 60.7% (2010 N=430), 38.3% (2010 Students N=423)
- Decreased: 33.2% (2009 N=485), 23.7% (2010 N=430), 38.3% (2010 Students N=423)
Reasons For Increases In Professionalism...

Respondents who experienced an increase in the percentage of new college graduates exhibiting professionalism most often refer to the presence of more competition due to the existence of fewer jobs as the reason for this increase (52.3%).

Schools doing a better job preparing students for the work world are mentioned next most often. Some respondents (15.9%) specifically comment on higher education having more awareness of the importance of professionalism. Others (11.4%) make general references to better education.

These reasons parallel those mentioned in the 2009 study.

The table on the next page presents all reasons given by three or more respondents. The data table in the Appendix contains a list of all answers given.

Reasons For Decreases In Professionalism...

Reasons for feeling that the presence of professionalism has decreased over the past five years are also similar to the findings for 2009.

The most common reason is a sense of entitlement, cited by 21.5%. It is important to note that this answer was given prior to any questions concerning entitlement being asked in the survey.

A lack of focus (15.1%), less emphasis on professionalism in society (14.0%), and schools not stressing professionalism (10.8%) were the next most frequently cited reasons for this decrease.

This table presents the answers given by five or more respondents. The data table should be consulted for the complete list of answers.

Students...

The reasons given by students for either increased or decreased professionalism parallel the answers by employers.

While not a primary answer among employers (4.3%), 9.7% of the students mentioned technology’s impact on lessening personal interaction as having a negative effect on one’s professionalism.
### Reasons For Increases In Professionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More competition due to fewer jobs</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More awareness in academia</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better education in schools</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology requiring training</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=44</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>N=86</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reasons For Decreases In Professionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of entitlement</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation/focus</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less emphasis in society on professionalism</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools not stressing professionalism</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased maturity/independence</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of social skills</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of work ethic</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of experience</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=93</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>N=145</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Entitlement was approached directly with a question asking if a sense of entitlement has increased, remained the same, or decreased among first year college graduates over the past five years. Entitlement was defined in the survey as “expecting rewards without putting in the work or effort to merit the rewards.”

The most important finding is the percentage who believe it has increased. Over half of the sample (55.3%) thinks it has. In the opposite direction, 6.0% reports it decreasing over the past five years. These findings are similar to 2009. The decrease in the percentage reporting an increase is worth noting. In 2009, 60.9% compared to 55.3% in 2010 feels it has increased. This change is close to the margin of error of 4.7%. Future studies will monitor this to determine if the sense of entitlement is peaking.

It would be logical to hypothesize that younger respondents, being closer to the life experiences of new employees, would be less likely to feel that the sense of entitlement has increased. While not statistically significant, the opposite happened. There is an inverse relationship between age of the respondent and the perception that a sense of entitlement has increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Increase In Sense of Entitlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 35</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-55</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of the students (52.2%) think a sense of entitlement among first year college educated employees has increased. This is close to the percentage of employers feeling this way. Students (15.1%) were over twice as likely as employers (6.0%) to believe a sense of entitlement has decreased.

Students (56.1%) who worked while in college were more likely than those who did not (40.7%) to feel entitlement has increased.
2010 Professionalism Study
State Of Professionalism
Change In Sense Of Entitlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 N=466</th>
<th>2010 N=430</th>
<th>2010 Students N=423</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained the same</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons For Increases In Entitlement...

Respondents who noted either an increase or decrease in the sense of entitlement were asked why they think it has changed.

Nearly a fifth of those respondents (19.0%) feeling a sense of entitlement has increased believe new employees have a need for instant gratification.

The next most common answers referred to new employees having been coddled or having a privileged existence (11.1%), a general feeling that new employees feel entitled (10.6%), and the perception that first year employees expect mid-career treatment (10.6%).

The complete list of reasons can be found in the data table.

Reasons For Decreases In Entitlement...

Nearly three-fourths of the 26 respondents (73.0%) who have seen a decrease in the sense of entitlement mentioned the lack of jobs due to the economy as the reason for this decrease. It should be recalled that this was also the predominant reason cited by respondents who experienced an increase in professionalism in new graduates.

All other answers were given by only one person.

Students...

The primary answers given by students for an increase in entitlement were: generational phenomenon (21.5%) and a feeling that graduating from college should result in rewards (17.8%). Relative to the latter explanation, students described an attitude that they have paid their dues by going to college.

They (5.2%) were notably less likely than employers (19.0%) to refer to a need for instant gratification.

Similar to the employers, most students (76.3%) who feel a sense of entitlement has decreased referred to the tough labor market.
### Reasons For Increases In Entitlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons For Increases In Entitlement</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for instant gratification</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have been coddled</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A general feeling</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New employees expect mid-career treatment</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of work ethic</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel paid dues simply by graduating</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generational phenomenon</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American culture</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=216 N=191
Changes In IT Etiquette…

Access to the Internet and the abundance of mobile communications devices can conceivably lead to problems in the workplace. In fact, other studies have discovered that misuse of companies’ computer technology has surfaced as a cause for termination of employment.

Over a third of the respondents (38.4%) in this study report that problems with IT etiquette among new employees have increased over the past five years. Half (50.9%) indicates that problems with IT etiquette have remained the same. Only 10.7% has experienced a decrease in these problems.

Comparison To 2009…

The percentage describing IT etiquette problems as having increased is essentially the same in 2009 (39.1%) and 2010 (38.4%). However, a major change is the percentage who feels these problems have decreased. In the 2009 study, 44.8% answered that the problems decreased compared to 10.7% feeling this way in 2010. Apparently, these problems are not going to disappear in the near future.

Comparison By Segments…

Larger companies, as defined by number of employees, are more likely than others to experience an increase. The threshold appears to be over 50 employees. In larger companies, employees may have more autonomy which gives them the freedom from supervision needed to engage in inappropriate IT behavior.

It is important to note that respondents of all ages are similar in the percentage reporting increased IT etiquette problems. Thus, perceptions of IT etiquette problems are not age specific.

Students…

Many students (41.4%) also recognize an increase in IT etiquette problems. This percentage is slightly higher than for employers (38.4%).
2010 Professionalism Study

State Of Professionalism

Changes In IT Etiquette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 N=471</th>
<th>2010 N=430</th>
<th>2010 Students N=420</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained the same</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polk-Lepson Research Group
York, Pennsylvania

August 2010
Page 75
Problems Being Experienced…

The IT etiquette problems that are being seen in the workplace are not surprising considering new employees' behaviors when they were in college. Respondents, who state the incidence of these problems has increased, note that they are seeing multiple problems.

The most common problems are text messaging at inappropriate times (78.2%), inappropriate use of the Internet (77.0%), and excessive personal calls on cell phones (71.5%).

Comparison To 2009…

These types of problems are not new to this study. Similar problems were found in the 2009 study.

Students…

There was general agreement between students and employers in their descriptions of the major IT problems being experienced. Probably reflecting the amount of social networking they do via the Internet, students (88.5%) were notably more likely than employers (67.3%) to name excessive twittering and use of Facebook as a problem.
2010 Professionalism Study

Problems Being Experienced

- Text messaging at inappropriate times: 78.2% (2010 N=165), 86.2% (2010 Students N=174)
- Inappropriate use of Internet: 77.0% (2010 N=165), 76.4% (2010 Students N=174)
- Excessive cell phone usage for personal calls: 71.5% (2010 N=165), 70.1% (2010 Students N=174)
- Excessive twittering/Facebook: 67.3% (2010 N=165), 88.5% (2010 Students N=174)
- Unauthorized access of company files: 15.8% (2010 N=165), 21.3% (2010 Students N=174)
- Other: 3.6% (2010 N=165), 0.6% (2010 Students N=174)
Changing Definitions Of Professionalism…

Discussions on the findings from the 2009 study raised two significant questions.

• Should the definition of professionalism be subject to change as culture and generations of employees change?

• Are perceived absences of professionalism in new employees due to generational differences between those doing the evaluating and new employees?

To pursue answers to these questions, this year’s survey included three statements related to changes in professionalism. Respondents indicated the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement.

Reviewing the ratings, most respondents (60.1%) do not see the definition of professionalism as subject to change with different generations of employees. Consistent with this, the majority of respondents (55.8%) disagree that companies should adjust their standards for professionalism in response to younger employees’ perceptions.

The statement that new employees are perceived lacking in professionalism is due to survey respondents being older than the evaluated employees was rejected by most respondents (62.0%).

Comparison By Segments…

Relationships involving age and answers to these three statements provide some evidence that generational differences may exist in definitions of professionalism. There is a statistically significant relationship between age and agreement that companies should adjust their standards of professionalism to take into account younger generations. While not strong enough to be statistically significant, there is also a relationship between age and agreement that some of the perceptions related to lack of professionalism may be due to the older age of those doing the hiring. Given these findings, it is curious that all ages are equal in agreeing that definitions of professionalism should not be subject to change.
2010 Professionalism Study

Changing Definitions Of Professionalism

Definitions of professionalism should not be subject to change

Definitions of professionalism should change with generations

Perception of lack of professionalism due to generational differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Definitions of professionalism should not be subject to change
| 25.6%          | 34.5% | 17.7%     | 16.3%    | 5.8%              |
| Definitions of professionalism should change with generations
| 25.1%          | 28.6% | 13.5%     | 27.2%    | 5.6%              |
| Perception of lack of professionalism due to generational differences
| 34.5%          | 27.5% | 19.8%     | 14.9%    | 3.3%              |
Assessment Of Professionalism
The importance of professionalism is clearly seen when 96.3% of the respondents answer that an assessment of an applicant's professionalism affects the hiring decision. This reinforces the 2009 finding when 97.7% of the respondents gave this answer.

Students understand the importance of being professional when going through the hiring process. Like employers, nearly all of them (96.0%) think an assessment of one's professionalism affects the hiring decision.

On the average, 60.8% of the hiring decision is influenced by an assessment of how professional the applicant will be on the job. For a third of the respondents (33.1%), 80% or more of the hiring decision is affected by an assessment of professionalism. These percentages parallel the 2009 findings.

Students tend to perceive professionalism as being less influential in the hiring decision than do employers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Of Hiring Decision Affected By Perceived Professionalism</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-39%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-59%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-79%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-100%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2010 Professionalism Study  
Assessment Of Professionalism  
Assessment Of Professionalism With Effect On Hiring Decision

![Chart showing percentages of hiring decisions.]

- **Yes:***
  - 2009: 97.7%
  - 2010: 96.3%
  - 2010 Students: 96.0%

- **No:**
  - 2009: 2.3%
  - 2010: 3.7%
  - 2010 Students: 4.0%

Legend:  
- Blue: 2009 N=472  
- Yellow: 2010 N=430  
- Red: 2010 Students N=420
Means Of Assessing Professionalism Potential…

Respondents whose hiring decisions are affected by the applicant’s professionalism described what they use to assess one’s potential to be professional.

It is interesting that the predominant means of assessment are not related to the applicant’s job experience or possession of skill sets. An assessment of the applicant’s character and their ability to interact socially are used by the majority of respondents. The most frequently mentioned means of assessment is the ability of the applicant to communicate and converse (43.7%).

The complete list of means of assessment is presented in the data table. A review of this table furthers illustrates what should be emphasized in the development of professionalism.

Comparison To 2009…

Once again, the 2009 findings are similar to those found in this study.
Development Of Professionalism
2010 Professionalism Study

Value Of Professionalism Seminars...

Last year’s study found that the business community definitely expects colleges to prepare students to be professional. Almost all of the respondents in the 2009 study (97.6%) believed this should be a role of colleges regardless of the student’s major.

The current study introduced respondents to the Center for Professional Excellence and its professional development seminars. After hearing about the seminars, respondents rated how valuable they think the seminars can be in developing professionalism in students.

As seen, three-fourths of the respondents (75.6%) assign value to the seminars as evidenced by ratings of 4 (33.5%) or 5, very valuable (42.1%).

Suggestions For Colleges...

Respondents were given the opportunity to suggest other activities colleges can do to develop professionalism. The most common suggestions are presented below. Similar suggestions were made in 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions For Colleges</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internships/hands-on experience</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes on etiquette</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach common courtesy and personal responsibility</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basics of interviewing</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client role playing to learn customer service</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team work</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=172

Students...

While most students recognize the value of professionalism seminars, they (31.0%) are less likely than employers (42.1%) to assign the highest rating of 5, very valuable.
2010 Professionalism Study

Value Of Professionalism Seminars

Development Of Professionalism

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>2010 N=430</th>
<th>2010 Students N=394</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, Not Valuable</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, Very Valuable</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Center for Professional Excellence could develop a certificate in professionalism. This certificate would be awarded to students who attend a specified number of seminars and engage in defined activities related to the development of their professionalism.

The 2009 study asked respondents if possession of the certificate would have an impact on their hiring decision. Possible answers were yes, no, and maybe. A total of 29.4% indicated the certificate would affect the hiring decision.

To assess to what degree the certificate would impact the hiring decision, respondents were asked to rate its impact. This was done using a five point rating scale that ranged from 1, no impact, to 5, significant impact.

Nearly half of the respondents (48.9%) feel the certificate would impact the hiring decision as indicated by ratings of 4 (29.8%) or 5, significant (19.1%).

The certificate will have the greatest impact in manufacturing and the medical/health care field.
2010 Professionalism Study
Development Of Professionalism
Impact Of Certificate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, No Impact</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, No Impact</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, Moderate</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, Significant</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, Significant Impact</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2010 N=430
Company Programs On Professionalism…

The important role that higher education can play in developing professionalism in students is reinforced by the finding that only 36.5% of the respondents’ companies have any type of program designed to specifically orient new employees to professional behavior.

Typically, when a program exists, this topic is covered as part of the company’s orientation program (93.6%). Over a fifth of the companies (22.4%) do send employees to outside programs on professionalism.

Comparison By Segments…

Companies with under 10 employees (21.1%) are the least likely to have a program on professionalism for new employees. Consistent with this, companies with human resource departments with only one or two employees (27.5%) are the least likely to have professionalism programs.
2010 Professionalism Study
Development Of Professionalism
Company Programs On Professionalism

![Bar Chart](image)

- Yes: 36.5%
- No: 63.5%

2010 N=430
Recognizing The Importance Of Professionalism…

Perhaps not surprising, as students progress through their college years, the extent to which they realize the importance of professionalism in getting a job increases. The largest increase occurs from the sophomore to the junior year.

As seen in the graph, only 7.1% of the students when they were freshmen thought about the importance of professionalism to a great extent, a rating of 5. In contrast, when they are a senior, 70.6% think about it to a great extent.
Recognizing Importance Of Professionalism

2010 Professionalism Study

Development Of Professionalism

Freshman N=394  Sophomore N=394  Junior N=391  Senior N=391

1, To No Extent
Freshman 22.3% Sophomore 32.5% Junior 20.8% Senior 9.9%

2
Freshman 9.9% Sophomore 20.8% Junior 5.1% Senior 2.3%

3
Freshman 32.5% Sophomore 25.1% Junior 19.4% Senior 4.6%

4
Freshman 25.1% Sophomore 12.9% Junior 21.6% Senior 12.9%

5, To Great Extent
Freshman 1.3% Sophomore 2.3% Junior 37.6% Senior 7.1%

70.6%
Program Activities…

Three-fourths of the students (75.4%) reported that their college or university has programs or activities designed to develop professionalism in students.

Seminars/presentations (87.2%), internships (81.8%), and outside speakers (73.4%) are the most common activities.

The gaps between the presence of these activities and students either having participated in or planning to participate in them indicates that not all take advantage of what is offered. About a fifth have neither participated in nor plan to participate in any professionalism programs.
Development Of Professionalism
Program Activities

2010 Professionalism Study

Seminars/presentations
- Existing Programs: 87.2%
- Participated In: 51.9%
- Plan To Do: 61.6%

Internships
- Existing Programs: 81.8%
- Participated In: 49.5%
- Plan To Do: 42.1%

Outside speakers
- Existing Programs: 73.4%
- Participated In: 44.1%
- Plan To Do: 37.0%

Classes on professionalism
- Existing Programs: 54.5%
- Participated In: 29.3%
- Plan To Do: 22.6%

None
- Existing Programs: 21.5%
- Participated In: 18.5%
- Plan To Do: 21.5%

2010 Students N=297
Some of the students had thoughts on what they would have liked their school to offer to develop professionalism.

The predominant suggestions were a professionalism class (26.8%) and more internships/on the job training (16.3%).
## Development Of Professionalism

### Desired Programs On Professionalism

- **Professionalism class**: 26.8%
- **Internships/on the job training**: 16.3%
- **Interview skills/resume building**: 9.2%
- **Business etiquette**: 7.8%
- **Employers' presentations**: 7.2%

*2010 Students N=153*
Promotions And Advancements
Qualities For Promotion/Advancement...

The 2009 study focused on professionalism in recently hired employees. A new topic researched in this study is the qualities required for promotion or advancement. This inquiry began with respondents describing the qualities, beyond those associated with professionalism, that are important in a person being considered for promotion or advancement.

Some of these qualities are new. Others are an enhancement of qualities associated with professionalism.

Qualities mentioned by 10% or more of the respondents are: dedicated (14.3%), possesses variety of skills (13.3%), leadership ability (12.5%), takes initiative (12.5%), and works well with others/teamwork (10.0%).

Students...

With a few exceptions, the students’ answers were similar to the employers. Students (38.0%) were notably more likely than the employers (14.3%) to refer to being dedicated and having a good work ethic.
2010 Professionalism Study
Qualities For Promotion/Advancement

2010 N=399  2010 Students N=379

- Dedicated/work ethic
- Variety of skills
- Leadership skills
- Takes initiative
- Teamwork
- Ability to apply knowledge
- Persistence
- Integrity
- Open to criticism
- Positive attitude
Earlier in this report, a graph showed the percentage of new college graduate employees who exhibit professionalism in their first year of work. The graph on the next page shows these same percentages along with the percentage of new employees who possess the qualities required to be a candidate for promotion or advancement.

The lower percentage possessing the qualities needed for advancement is notable. A total of 58.4% of the respondents report that less than 50% of new employees have the qualities that position them for promotion. This is compared to 38.2% of the respondents who feel that less than half of new employees exhibit professional qualities during their first year of employment.

Similar to the percentage of college graduates exhibiting professionalism on the job, students tend to believe that a greater percentage of new hires have the qualities necessary for promotion or advancement compared to employers. However, their answers do parallel those of the employer respondents.
2010 Professionalism Study
Promotions And Advancements
Percentage Of New College Graduates Exhibiting Qualities

Exhibit Professionalism N=493
Have Qualities For Advancement N=416
Have Qualities For Advancement - Students N=394
When planning the content of this year's survey, several observations were made that today's new employees are not interested in leadership or management positions. This was tested in this study with a rating question asking about new college graduate employees' interest in advancement.

As seen in the graph, 62.0% of the respondents indicate that new employees do have some interest in leadership/management positions as evidenced by ratings of 4 (35.3%) or 5, very interested (26.7%). Besides challenging the observation concerning lack of interest, this finding is striking because so few of these new employees have the qualities that will position them to be candidates for promotion.

When students were asked how interested they are in future promotions to leadership or management positions, they expressed more interest than employers experience. Over half of the students (53.8%) compared to 26.7% of the employers assigned a rating of 5, very interested.
2010 Professionalism Study
Promotions And Advancements
Interest In Leadership/Management Positions

2010 N=430
2010 Students N=394

- 1, Not Interested
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5, Very Interested

- 2.6% 0.5%
- 6.3% 2.5%
- 29.1% 12.9%
- 35.3% 30.2%
- 26.7% 53.8%
Changes In Interest…

Over the past ten years, new employees are more likely to have an increased interest (23.5%) rather than a decreased interest (17.7%) in leadership or management positions. The percentage who have witnessed a decreased interest does lend support to the observations of less interest.

Comparison By Segments…

Generally, as number of employees increases, the likelihood of seeing an increase in the interest in leadership positions also increases. For example, 12.6% of those with under 10 employees compared to 31.7% of those with over 500 employees reports increased interest. Possibly, employees in larger companies perceive the opportunity for more advancement than do those in smaller ones.

This finding is reinforced by a similar finding involving number of employees in human resources. As this number goes up, the likelihood of having new employees being interested in promotion also increases.
2010 Professionalism Study

Promotions And Advancements

Changes In Interest

- Increased: 23.5%
- Remained the same: 58.8%
- Decreased: 17.7%

N=430

Polk-Lepson Research Group
York, Pennsylvania
August 2010
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Reasons For Lack Of Interest…

One of the hypotheses that was suggested for a lack of interest in leadership positions is the negative view of management resulting from the actions on Wall Street and in corporate America.

When asked why some new employees lack interest in leadership positions, respondents give some support to this (27.4%). However, greater percentages refer to new employees being content with a lifestyle that does not include the pressures of being a manager. These more prevalent reasons for lack of interest are: greater interest in work/life balance (57.7%), not wanting the responsibility associated with managing people (54.1%), and being content with a less stressful position (53.8%).

Students…

Students who gave a rating of 3 or less to the question on level of interest in future promotions were asked why they are not especially interested in advancement.

The hypothesis that new employees are not interested in promotion due to a negative view of management received limited support (12.7%). Other reasons were mentioned more often. The most frequently cited reasons are related to a desired lifestyle. These were content with a less stressful position (65.1%) and interested in a work/life balance (65.1%).
2010 Professionalism Study

Promotions And Advancements

Reasons For Lack Of Interest

- Interest in work/life balance: 57.7% (2010 N=416), 65.1% (2010 Students N=63)
- Do not want responsibility: 54.1% (2010 N=416), 31.7% (2010 Students N=63)
- Content with less stress: 53.8% (2010 N=416), 65.1% (2010 Students N=63)
- Negative image of management: 27.4% (2010 N=416), 12.7% (2010 Students N=63)
Profile Of Employer Respondents
Means Of Recruiting…

Respondents were presented with a list of possible means of recruiting new college graduates.

As might be expected, applicants contacting the company directly (63.5%) is the most frequently mentioned means of recruiting. Employee referrals (62.1%) are used nearly as often.

Of special note is the extent to which electronic media are used for recruiting. Over half of the companies (53.6%) use their own web site to recruit. A total of 39.8% use other web sites like Monster, CareerBuilder, and Hotjobs.

Comparison To 2009…

Since the list was more extensive than the one presented in the 2009 survey, the findings across the two studies are not comparable.
2010 Professionalism Study

Profile Of Employer Respondents

Means Of Recruiting

- Applicant contacts: 63.5%
- Employee referrals: 62.1%
- Company's web site: 53.6%
- Other web sites: 39.8%
- Attendance at job fairs: 31.5%
- On-campus recruiting: 30.3%
- Ads in local papers: 26.3%
- Ads in trade publications: 14.9%
- Other referrals: 3.1%
- Recruiting agencies: 2.6%

2010 N=422
2010 Professionalism Study

Profile Of Employer Respondents

Introduction... The sample for this study was composed of a broader array of respondents than the 2009 sample in terms of company size and industries represented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Of Employees At All Locations...</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 10</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 50</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 100</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 to 250</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251 to 500</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 500</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Of Employees In HR Department...</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2010 Professionalism Study
### Profile Of Employer Respondents

#### Type Of Industry...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial/banking</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical/healthcare</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 429

#### Respondent’s Age...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 35</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-55</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 428
### Respondent’s Level Of Education…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate of less</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/technical school</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=</strong></td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Respondent’s Position…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President/CEO/CFO</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President/Sr Vice President</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=</strong></td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Position Of Person To Whom Report…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President/CEO</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP of Administration</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFO</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COO</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President/Senior VP</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=</strong></td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile Of Student Respondents
The sample for the student respondents is described below.

### Predominant Majors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business (management, marketing, accounting)</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics)</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences (history, pol. sci., economics)</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral sciences (anthropology, psych., sociology)</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing/health services</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/fine arts (music, art, theater)</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=</strong></td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The vast majority of the students (85.0%) had some type of job during their four years in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs While In College…</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time during school year</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer jobs</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time during school year</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year In College…</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent college graduate</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents College Graduates…</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix
2010 Professionalism Study Data Tables