



MECOP

Preparing for Professionalism

Introduction

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- OSU-Cascades Alum (2016)
 - Business Major
- Passion for student success



Why Does Professionalism Matter?

Shifting from Student to Professional

Key Differences: College and Career



▪ **College**

- Flexible deadlines
- Grades measure success
- Independent study
- Socially casual

▪ **Workplace**

- Firm deadlines & accountability
- Performance & results matter
- Collaboration & teamwork required
- Professional behavior & etiquette



Growth Mindset & Adaptability



Be **open to learning** and constructive feedback.



Adapt to different company cultures, expectations, and work styles.



Tip: Arrive **early**, ask questions, and take initiative.



Building Your Professional Brand

Personal Brand: Presenting Yourself



- **First impressions are key**
 - Be mindful of everything
- **Resumes – one page branding**
 - Utilize resources to create this document
- **Online presence matters**
 - **Google yourself** – what comes up?
 - **Social media** – is it public or private?
 - **Past posts** – will it **affect** you **now**?
 - **Update accordingly**



Etiquette & Best Practices

Before the Interview



- **Research the Company & Role**
 - Understand the company's mission
 - Review the job description & identify key skills
- **Prepare Your Answers**
 - STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
 - Be ready to answer common questions
- **Have Questions Ready to Ask**
 - This shows engagement and preparation



Day of the Interview



- **Dress the Part**
 - **In-Person:** Professional, even if company is casual
 - **Virtual:** Professional attire, in appropriate space
- **Arrive Early**
 - **In-Person:** 10-15 minutes early
 - **Virtual:** 5-10 minutes early
- **Greet Professionally**
 - **In-Person:** Good handshake, eye contact, smile
 - **Virtual:** Maintain eye contact, speak clearly, minimal distraction



During the Interview



- **Engage Actively**
 - Listen carefully and take brief notes
 - Use **positive body language**
- **Keep Answers Concise**
 - Aim for **45-90 second responses**
- **Stay Professional**
 - Avoid **negative talk** about experience
 - Keep tone confident and professional



After the Interview



- **Send a Thank-You Email**

- Email within 24 hours after interview
- Reiterate enthusiasm for the role
- Mention a specific part of the conversation you enjoyed

- **Example:**

- *Thank you for your time today! I enjoyed learning more about [**Company**] and the role. I'm especially excited about [**specific project/initiative mentioned**]. Looking forward to the next steps!*



Professional Communication Basics



- **Emails**
 - Keep them **concise, professional, and polite**
 - Use **clear** subject lines
- **Meetings**
 - Come prepared, listen actively, take notes, and contribute when necessary

*****Avoid using slang or overly casual language, especially with superiors*****



Understanding Workplace Culture



- **Observe Employee Interaction**

- Formal or relaxed?

- **Dress Code**

- What are the expectations?
- Refer to employee handbook

- **Set Boundaries**

- Understand what's appropriate to share
- Separate personal from professional



Networking & Relationship Building

Why Networking Matters?



- **Most jobs are found through networking**
- **Not just about finding a job**
 - It's about learning and growth
- **Build genuine connections**
 - Not transactional
 - Any relationship could be a benefit



Professional Intro (Elevator Pitch)

- **Formula**

- *“Hello, I’m [Name]. I’m studying [Major] and interested in [Industry/Job]. I recently [Internship/Project experience], and I’m looking to [Learn/Connect about something specific].”*

- **In Practice**

- *Hello, I’m Krystina. I’m a Business major interested in a job in the Marketing field. I recently completed my BS at Oregon State where I interned with the school paper, and I’m looking to speak with someone at your company about any marketing opportunities you may have.*



Ways to Network as a Student



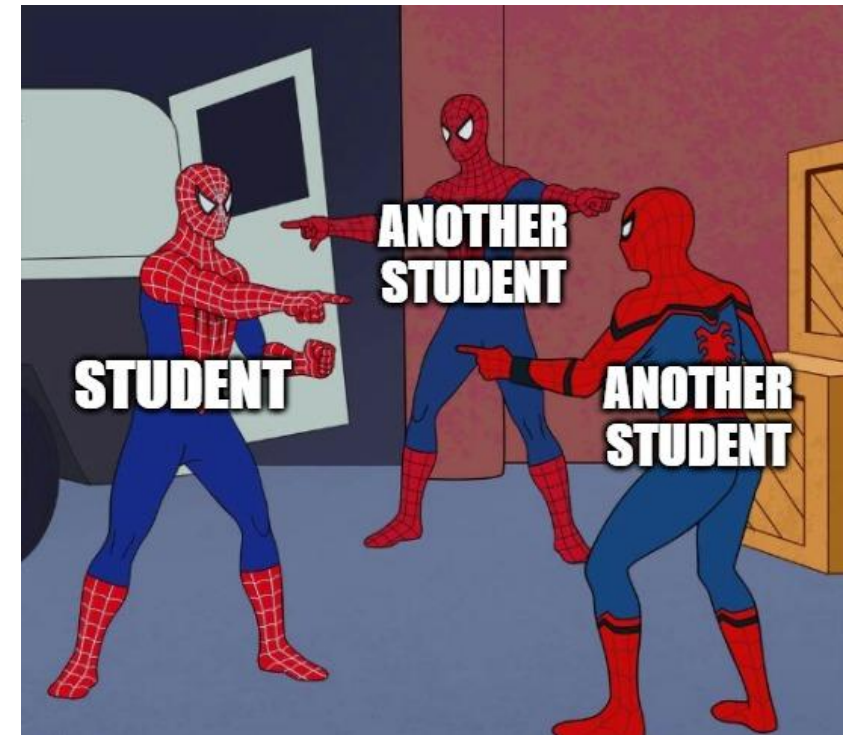
Attend industry events, career fairs, and alumni meetups



Engage with professionals on LinkedIn



Join student organizations and professional groups



Navigating Challenges & Growth

Common Early Career Struggles



Imposter Syndrome



Not handling constructive criticism



Making mistakes



Developing Resilience & Growth Mindset



Don't be afraid to ask questions



Build relationships/seek guidance



Take on challenges



Balancing Work and Life



Prioritize time management



Set healthy boundaries



Invest in mental health and stress management strategies



Key Takeaways & Final Advice

Most Important Takeaways

- **Professionalism matters** – be reliable, communicate well, and be proactive
- **Your brand is your reputation** – keep it professional
- **Networking is key** – build genuine connections that support your career
- **Embrace challenges** – learn, adapt, and grow from mistakes
- **Balance matters** – success is a marathon, not a sprint



Actions Steps You Can Take Now



- **Update your resume and LinkedIn**
- **Reach out to a professional or alumni on LinkedIn**
- **Practice your elevator pitch**
- **Identify one career event or networking opportunity to attend**



Q&A / Discussion

What questions do you have?



Thank you!

Questions?

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